

Cadbury Pastorate News

Weoley Castle &
Weoley Hill Churches



March 2024

From Christine Miles—

So it's Lent. I have to admit that it has not meant much to me for many years. I wonder if it should? 'Giving things up' is not practiced so much these days, but perhaps you still do so. Other approaches to Lent involve taking time to look at our own weakness, some self-criticism, with view to self-improvement, while spending time in prayer, as described by **Christina Rosetti** in her poem '**Lent**'

It is good to be last not first,
Pending the present distress;
It is good to hunger and thirst,
So it be for righteousness.
It is good to spend and be spent,
It is good to watch and to pray:
Life and Death make a goodly Lent
So it leads us to Easter Day.

George Herbert, in his poem also called '**Lent**' calls us to make an effort to seek and come closer to God.

It's true, we cannot reach Christ's fortieth day;
Yet to go part of that religious way,
Is better than to rest:

We cannot reach our Savior's purity;
Yet are bid, *Be holy ev'n as he.*
In both let 's do our best.

Who goeth in the way which Christ hath gone,
Is much more sure to meet with him, than one
That travelleth by-ways:

Perhaps my God, though he be far before,
May turn, and take me by the hand, and more
May strengthen my decays.

This year I was already thinking about the effects of war (not just those places the media focus on: there are many other parts of the world where war has been going on, for years, sometimes decades). Facing up to (I do not say 'trying to make sense of'...) this darker side of the world along with other troubles, feels an appropriate Lenten activity.

There is so much horror in war: deaths, the loss of lives or limbs or homes and livelihoods. Capture by the enemy and possible torture. People far from the ground battle experience fear, and the real consequences of bombs and drones.. Food shortage, loss of basic health services, and so much more often results in growth of hatred. People are suffering.

So many of the psalms are calls to God for help and protection from enemies.

Earthquakes, storms and other natural disasters also result in people losing their homes and livelihoods. And now climate change is bringing catastrophe to many. When we should be putting all our effort to helping the victims of 'natural' or inadvertent disaster, and preventing future trouble, instead money and time goes into the further damage and destruction of war.

In some places where there is no actual war, people are being oppressed, tortured, enslaved because of their religion, political views or ethnicity. Some share our beliefs, we may say they are our brothers and sisters, but do we really mean it? But others are our fellow humans, also made in God's image, into whom he has breathed life. Do we think God does not love them? Or can we, like Bonhoeffer, dare to say that he does.

Christians and Pagans, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in July 1944:

People turn to God when they're in need,
plead for help, contentment, and for bread,
for rescue from their sickness, guilt, and death.
They all do so, both Christian and pagan.

People turn to God in God's own need,
and find God poor, degraded, without roof or bread,
see God devoured by sin, weakness, and death.
Christians stand with God to share God's pain.

God turns to all people in their need,
nourishes body and soul with God's own bread,
takes up the cross for Christians and pagans, both,
and in forgiving both, is slain.

When things are at their worst, people often lose all sense of God's presence and feel abandoned. But it is not about our 'feelings'. Jesus too, at his worst moments felt abandoned by God. He has been there and we are always held in his love even when the worst happens.

We turn to God, the Father, who saw his beloved Son tortured to death, to the Son who embraced everything human including pain and fear, and the Spirit who is with us and comforts and strengthens us when times are hard.

But while feeling compassion, praying and helping however possible there can be no need to make ourselves miserable if we are not directly involved. To re-word Habakkuk 3 vv17-18:

"even if there are famines, earthquakes, the threat of nuclear winter, I will rejoice in the Lord"

because God loves us and is with us whatever happens. And even when there are horrors in the world, we can enjoy the company of our friends. And there are primroses ...

This has been about people far away. We may feel called to send money, and to spend time in prayer. Personally I have found I cannot pray for 'situations', just for people.

But there are needs at home too; there are people who are homeless, have lost all their possessions, people, living in fear, people with health problems, especially mental health, and so many more. We must not forget them

Indifference, by GA Studdert Kennedy

When Jesus came to Golgotha, they hanged Him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary;
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were His wounds and deep,
For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed Him by.
They would not hurt a hair of Him, they only let Him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give Him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do,'
And still it rained the winter rain that drenched Him through and through;

The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall, and cried for Calvary.

May God protect us from indifference.

Christine Miles 24 February 2024.



Prayer page

A prayer for Lent:

God of wilderness and water,
your Son was baptized and tempted as we are.
Guide us through this season,
that we may not avoid struggle,
but open ourselves to blessing,
through the cleansing depths of repentance
and the heaven-rending words of the Spirit.*

A prayer for the Pastorate:

Good shepherd, our future is uncertain and we may feel lost
and discouraged. Guide us, with Synod and other churches in
this area in finding our part in bringing your Word and your
love to our fellowships and to our neighbours.

A prayer for Holy Week:

Christ our God,
your love is poured out in death for our sakes.
Hold us in your embrace
as we wait for Easter's dawn.
Comfort us with the promise that no power on earth,
not even death itself,
can separate us from your love;
and strengthen us to wait
until you are revealed to us
in all your risen glory. *

Amen.

*Vanderbilt University Common Lectionary prayers

Pastorate News

Lent and Easter worship

Mothering Sunday 10 March *worship at usual times at Weoley Castle & Weoley Hill*

Palm Sunday 24 March *worship at usual times at Weoley Castle & Weoley Hill*

Maundy Thursday 28 March *7.30 PM at Weoley Hill led by the Rev'd David Tennant (joint with St David's), all welcome*

Good Friday 29 March *no Good Friday happening at Weoley Castle; 7.30 PM worship led by Ann Evans at Weoley Hill, all welcome*

Easter Sunday Pastorate worship at Weoley Hill *7.30 AM early Easter led by Ann Evans, Easter breakfast ca. 8.30 AM (all welcome, but numbers in advance please), 10.30 AM Easter Communion led by the Rev'd Brian Brown.*

News from Weoley Hill

Lent Groups

Lent groups are running—new participants are still welcome. We are using Christian Aid Materials. Act on Poverty. The groups are: Weoley Hill Tuesdays at 2 PM, Selly Oak Methodist Wednesdays at 2.30 PM and St Mary's Thursdays at 10.30 AM.

World Day of Prayer

Friday 1 March 10.30 AM, Weoley Hill URC

The service this year has been prepared by Palestinian Christians. We shall hear stories of their faith and struggles and continue to think of them in this time of conflict.

Sue Beeby



Michael Walpole 5 May 1928 – 17 January 2024

Former Church Secretary, Michael, who has died aged 95, was born in Clapham and educated at Battersea Grammar School. Most of his working life was spent in academic libraries, beginning in 1950 as an assistant in Wandsworth Public Library. Other notable posts were with the Technische Universität in West Berlin, Enfield College and the LSE, before moving to Africa for 12 years as Chief Librarian; firstly at the University of Lesotho and then the University of Ghana.

Michael returned to the UK in 1983 when he obtained the post of Chief Librarian at the Selly Oak Colleges. He enjoyed walking, and music was a passion. He joined the Halesowen Choral Society and the Midland Music Makers, performing in many concerts and operas with those groups. His faith was very important to him and he worshipped at the German-Speaking Church and our church up to the end of his life.

Michael had a wide circle of friends across the globe that especially enjoyed his impish sense of fun. He is survived by his niece and three nephews and several great nephews and nieces.

Bob Mundell

It was good to see so many family and friends gathering to celebrate Michael's life. Tom and Marieka Arthur made their first journey outside Cardiff in several years and Leonora returned to lead the service. Special thanks to Bob Mundell for delivering the eulogy and to everyone who contributed towards the meal or to setting up or clearing away. CT

Wedding Bells

The marriage of Grace Chung and Christopher Tomlinson will take place at the Nazarene Theological College, Didsbury, Manchester, on Saturday 6 April, 11 AM. We wish them much happiness in their life together.

Sue Beeby

Christian Aid in Palestine

We support Christian Aid's work in Palestine through Commitment for Life; so how have they been helping during the current situation? (Information is correct up to mid-February.)

Christian Aid's partners in Gaza have been responding to the crisis by providing medical and psychological care, and community-led initiatives such as food, shelter, sanitation and cash transfers to displaced people, as well as the building of mobile bathrooms in 4 shelters in Khan Younis.

Through PARC (Palestine Agricultural Relief Committee), it has been getting a weekly delivery of fresh food from local farmers to a community centre for displaced persons in Khan Younis, allowing them to get one, sometimes two meals a day. (Adults frequently miss a meal to allow the children to eat, and most people are malnourished.)

In Tel Aviv, Christian Aid is working with an organisation called Zochrot, to provide trauma-based psychological care to Israelis who also have been affected by the violent conflict.

In our prayers for all those affected by the horrific situation, we remember too, those who courageously try to bring some relief and aid.

Sue Beeby

Weoley Hill Calendar for March 2024

Friday	1	10.30 AM:	World Day of Prayer service at Weoley Hill
Sunday	3	10.30 AM:	Worship & communion led by Revd Graham Sweeny.
Tuesday	5	2 PM:	Lent Group at Weoley Hill
Wednesday	6	2.30 PM:	Lent Group at Selly Oak Methodist
Thursday		10.30 AM:	Lent Group at St Mary's
Sunday	10	10.30 AM:	Mothering Sunday worship led by Ann.
Tuesday	12	2 PM:	Lent Group at Weoley Hill
Wednesday	13		Northfield Manor School Easter Story assembly
		2.30 PM:	Lent Group at Selly Oak Methodist
		7.30 PM:	Elders' meeting
Thursday		10.30 AM:	Lent Group at St Mary's
Sunday	17	10.30 AM:	Worship led by Revd Ian Ring.
Tuesday	19	2 PM:	Lent Group at Weoley Hill
Wednesday	20	2 PM:	Lent Group at Selly Oak Methodist
Thursday		10.30 AM:	Lent Group at St Mary's
Sunday	24	10.30 AM:	Palm Sunday worship led by Alan.
Tuesday	26	2 PM:	Lent Group at Weoley Hill?
Wednesday	27	2 PM:	Lent Group at Selly Oak Methodist
Thursday	28	10.30 AM:	Lent Group at St Mary's
		7.30 PM:	Maundy Thursday worship led by the Revd David Tennant
Friday	29	7.30 PM:	Good Friday worship led by Ann.
Sunday	31	7 AM:	Early Easter worship led by Ann, breakfast afterwards
		10.30 AM:	Easter Pastorate Communion & worship led by Brian Brown

Wednesdays 10-12 AM: Art Club

Thursdays 10-11.30 AM: Coffee & Chat

Fridays 6.45-8 PM: Community Choir

CHURCH CHAIRS

The chairs in the lower hall, which were purchased about twenty years ago, have succumbed to wear and tear, and we are in the process of repairing them by recovering the seats. Some have worn very thin on the actual seat but most are ripped around the back, or on the sides where they join the frame, and foam seating has been picked off in some cases. We have looked at several materials and tried to colour match to the backs of the chairs as closely as possible. Thinner, and cheaper, cotton materials were discounted because they were not sturdy enough, and the thicker wool /tweed fabrics, as well as being more expensive, were too thick and would prevent the chairs from stacking correctly. Therefore a thick cotton drill, which is also flame retardant, was chosen at a cost of £42.00. Two donations, from Marius and Nancy, to cover costs have been received, one in memory of Michael, but we have found four more chairs so if anyone else would like to donate please give any small contribution to Linda. Extras will go into the refreshment fund. The new material will be stapled directly over the old seats so if you would like to help with any of this please come along on Wednesday 7 March 1 PM-3 PM., or the following Wednesday 13th if we haven't finished. Please bring a strong **gun** stapler if you have one!

Lorraine

QUIZ

As usual the February Quiz and Fish and Chip Supper was for Fairtrade and thanks to the 32 people who attended, and the many folk who donated raffle prizes from wine, photograph frame, fizzy pop and Easter eggs to chocolates and mugs. We managed to raise £175 which was passed directly to Chris later that evening. The theme was “Cowboys and Indians” so the winners won a tin of ‘cowboy’s breakfast’—baked beans—and the booby prize was a set of Wagon wheels... edible ones! Thanks must go to the Saturday morning work party who set out tables and

chairs, John Fletcher the scorer, Sarah Anderson, the runner, and particularly to Sue Beeby who was The-Lord-High-Everything-Else, in charge of washing up, making drinks, sorting recycling, and replacing all cutlery, glasses and pots ready for the next day. The cost for the food was £6.00 pp, leaving only £2.00 for the charity so the cost will probably rise next time. Everyone helped to clear the hall so we were finished by 10 o'clock! Many thanks to all who made this an enjoyable evening.
Lorraine

URC Finance Department
January 30, 2024
To Church Treasurers, Synod Treasurers and Synod
Moderators



Dear Friends,

M&M Contributions—2023

This is just a quick note to give Synods and churches a big “thank you” for your support of the M&M fund, through your contributions in 2023.

We are pleased to report that on our first run of the annual figures, your contributions amounted to £16.32 million, compared to a budget figure of £16.26 million. How good it is to exceed our expectations.

A full report on the 2023 year will be issued later this year, as usual.

Again, thank you all for your support.

Yours in Christ,

Alan Yates, URC Treasurer, and Vaughan Griffiths, URC Deputy Treasurer

The next issue will be available around 1 April. Contributions are requested! Send them to Ted Forgan at Weoley Castle or Cheryl Thornett at Weoley Hill.

News from Weoley Castle

Services: 11 AM on Sundays

Mar 3rd: a visit by Steve Faber—the Moderator

Mar 10th: (Mothering Sunday) led by Andy Vail—including Communion, and with music provided by the Northfield Baptist Youth Band.

Mar 17th: led by Chris Miles.

Mar 24th: (Palm Sunday) led by Blair Kessler

Mar 31st: Joint Easter Service at Weoley Hill 10.30; with Communion

The “Family Fun Day” on February 13th was most successful with well over 100 children and parents coming along. Volunteers also came along from St Gabriel’s to provide some games in addition to the craft activities. See the pictures. We are planning a repeat: an “Easter Fun Day” on Tuesday April 2nd from 10 AM to 2 PM with a snack lunch provided. This is instead of a “Good Friday Happening”, which will allow us to continue Incredible Surplus and Warm Welcome on the Friday.





The 'Warm Welcome' continues to be busy. There are pictures of the Incredible Surplus food pantry (Sam Poursain volunteering here) and Debbie's free goods exchange (like a jumble sale but everything is free!)



Be careful what you call your child!

Did you hear about Mr & Mrs Mee? They called their son Euan and their daughters Mary and Patricia (known as Pat).

The flexible Dover family with children Eileen & Benjamin

The King family blessed with sons Joseph & Lee

The Bird family who named their little son Richard

The Green family with daughters Theresa & Olive

The Perrins family with saucy daughter Leanne

The Wood family, who liked domestic implements, had a son Kenneth

The Key family with put-upon son Donald

The Hyde family with violent daughter Tanya

The Bull family with frightening son Terence

The Lyon family took pride in their son Rory

The Case family with children Justin & Natasha

The Driver family chose the career of their son Laurence

The Day family who panicked and called their daughter May

The Cadbury Pastorate

Weoley Castle Community Church, Quarry Rd:

Worship Sundays at 11 AM.

Weoley Hill URC, Greenmeadow Rd:

Worship at 10.30 AM.

Sunday worship can be still found on the Weoley Hill website in outline or in complete form.

Bournville URC has closed.

THE PASTORATE IS CURRENTLY IN VACANCY

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