

Weoley Hill & Weoley Castle Church News



November 2025

From the Editor—

Remember, remember....

Bonfire night and Remembrance Sunday get most of the attention in the UK, but November also sees All Saints and All Souls days.

Bonfire night and Remembrance have their roots in violence, and ideally would remind us that religious hatred and warfare are evil and that we should remember them in order to prevent them in future. How well is that working? How well has it ever worked?

But perhaps we are more in sympathy with All Saints and All Souls. In the URC we may not subscribe to the Catholic tradition of praying to saints or for the dead, but there's much to be said for commemorating many more of those who have gone before us. Not just saints as officially recognised by the Roman church, but **all** the saints who have preached, taught, converted, spread the word, comforted, strengthened, and generally lived as followers of Christ. And the people who were important parts of our own lives, still present in our memories.

In recent years, various groups of people have campaigned to widen the categories included in Remembrance parades and wreath-laying ceremonies, often successfully. Most, it seems, had a fairly direct connection with the wars—for example, the women who flew aircraft around the country to air bases, an essential and dangerous role. Hidden activities like codebreaking are celebrated, not secret now.

But what about the many whose names will never be known, not as Unknown Soldiers honoured with wreathes, just people who quietly arranged for someone to leave Germany or occupied territory before it was too late, who sheltered a fleeing family for a night, who provided clothes, a meal, a bed to a bombed-out neighbour or stranger, the many who risked their lives (in any country) to pull

people out of collapsed buildings, those who simply refused to go along with authoritarian regimes of any kind, in any year?

The list could go on and on, and if we are talking about saints, would certainly include risks taken and sacrifices made in contexts besides times of war.

A recent Daily Devotion was based on Matthew 5: 14—16, ‘you are the light of the world.’ It’s worth reflecting that in Jesus’s time, the light most people had was a small clay saucer or gravy boat shape with a bit of olive oil and a small wick. There’s not a lot of light in one of little lamps, and a basket would easily hide one. But set it up on a stand on a dark night and it would be visible for quite a distance, just as people were told in WWII that a lighted match would be visible to a bomber in the night. (True? No idea.)

Most of us are not asked to be spotlights or stadium lights, just to be a candle or night light in a dark world. As so many of God’s saints have been. And out there in the dark world are acts of kindness, voices speaking out for their neighbours, people standing up to authoritarianism, people praying and working for peace, people helping others at cost to themselves, health workers and carers who persist at the risk of their own lives in pandemics and disasters, and so many more. All points of light in the dark.

‘Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning’—I don’t know why Rejoice & Sing dropped that verse, given that it’s a biblical reference. Let’s give thanks for the lamps and candles that have lighted our ways and pray that our own lights continue to shine out faithfully.

Cheryl



Prayer page

Light of the World, we thank you for your presence in our hearts and minds, and for the example by word and deed of all the souls who have radiated your light into the world.

We give thanks for:

- † The saints, known and unknown who heard your Word and spread it throughout the world and do so today.
- † The countless souls who have loved their neighbour as themselves, giving time, money and care where it was and is needed.
- † All those souls who have given their lives to defend or rescue others.

We pray for:

- † Our brothers and sisters who are not able to worship and witness openly and suffer ostracism, imprisonment and even death when they do.
- † Carers, family or professional; campaigners for justice and peace; all who work towards the Kingdom.
- † A world of peace between and within nations, with no more need for military force; for true repentance on the part of those now pursuing war.
- † For the victims of war and violence, including the men, women and children who bear or have born arms.
- † Those who mourn
- † Those whose burdens are too heavy to carry alone; give us the grace and strength to bear them with them.

Pastorate News

Weoley Hill News

November's retiring collection is for British Limbless Ex-service Personnel



HARVEST

One again we had a wonderful display of fresh and tinned foods. Tins and packets were donated to our usual food bank at Cotteridge and fresh fruit and vegetables to a second food bank in Smethwick. (The Salvation Army in town no longer has a kitchen available.)

Thanks to the Guides who gave six boxes of foodstuffs and one box of toiletries, to the many Beavers, Cubs and Scouts who brought items and helped bring other bags up to the main table as well as baking a special Harvest sheaf loaf, and to those who came on Saturday to help decorate the church: Ann, Sue, Cheryl, Norma, Nancy and Lorraine.

There were so many items John and Ann had to organise a van to collect it all, so many thanks for your generous donations.

Lorraine

It was great to have a good turn out of Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. The Guides were elsewhere, but provided 6 wrapped boxes of food and essential toiletries.

Celebration Meal

On Sunday 19 October members of Weoley Hill URC and the Birmingham Korean church joined together to celebrate our annual Harvest lunch and their 42nd anniversary of the founding of the BKC.

The welcome and prayers were led by Ann, Norma did the reading from Acts and the main reflection was by Rev Samson Park who gave us thoughts on the release of Paul and Silas from the prison in Philippi after the earthquake, about justice and looking forward to the future with hope. There was musical accompaniment from a quartet of guitars, drums and keyboard to many hymns with both English and Korean words projected on the screen.

Everyone then went into the JK Hall for an excellent lunch of chicken, chili, cheese and chocolate chip cake, dumplings and doughnuts, sauces, salads, and strawberry scones, oodles of noodles and lots more. There was plenty for over fifty members and even some left over for tea later!

Many thanks to all those who contributed food items and special thanks to Norma who did the flowers and helped set out tables, to Emlyn for setting out chairs, to Juliet, our dishwasher 'extraordinaire', who washed all the crockery and cutlery by hand when our electric dishwasher went on strike, to those who collected used items and helped in the kitchen, to Ina who took home all the tablecloths to be washed and ironed ready for our next event and to the many young Koreans who speedily cleared and cleaned the hall so that by 2.00 PM no-one would have guessed anything had happened there. It was an excellent lunch, and a great example of teamwork. Many thanks to all.
Lorraine

To be confirmed: *we haven't decided which week to decorate the church for Christmas, the last week of November or the first week of December. Please let Lorraine or Cheryl know if one is better for you.*

Advance notice: *There will be a short meeting after church on 2 November to discuss/organise a Christmas meal.*

Weoley Hill Calendar for November 2025

Sunday	2	10.30 AM: Worship & communion led by Ian Ring.
Sunday	9	10.30 AM: Remembrance Sunday Worship led by Annette Sampson.
Sunday	16	10.30 AM: Worship led by Revd Ian Thornley.
Monday	17	7.30 PM: Elders meeting
Sunday	23	10.30 AM: Worship led by Alan Cotgreave
Sunday	30	10.30 AM: Advent I. Joint Worship at Weoley Hill led by Ian Carnell.

1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 10.30 am: **Tuesday Fellowship**. See Sue or Chris for details.

Fridays 6.45-8 pm in term time, **Community Choir**. See Gordon or Alan for details.

Auditing your lifestyle

from www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk

Most people who returned their questionnaire recently had no idea about their carbon footprint. Here is something about it from A Rocha, the organisation behind the Eco awards.

Auditing your personal carbon footprint in detail enables you to set goals to reduce it and to offset the carbon you can't eliminate. Climate Stewards have versions of their calculator suitable for individual households: <https://www.climatestewards.org/offset/>. Exploring this website can help you work out your carbon footprint.

Take action by looking at 'Count us in'. This website recommends 16 manageable steps you can take to reduce your own carbon footprint and to challenge world leaders. Each step shows the impact and the effort required. As you pledge to join, your personal CO2 saving is aggregated with others around the world. It is an inspiring global drive to reduce our collective footprint: [https:// www.count-us-in.org/en-gb/](https://www.count-us-in.org/en-gb/)

The audits all point to things you can do to reduce our personal carbon footprint. Top tips are ‘consume’ (buy) less, eat less red meat and reduce your travel. Flying particularly is a problem as, mile for mile, it is the most damaging way to travel for the climate. More than 80% of the world has never flown, many of whom suffer most from climate change. If you do fly, air travel will take up a large percentage of your carbon footprint. Offset it into projects which improve carbon efficiency around the world—whether by tree planting or more efficient cooking methods. Offsetting is controversial as it is still better not to fly! Climate Stewards provide an easy way to pay a calculated offset: <https://www.climatestewards.org/offset/> (select the aeroplane icon).

You can find alternative ways to do your journey through websites such as <https://www.rome2rio.com/> or <https://www.seat61.com/>.

Longer reads & other resources

Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity’s demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year. In 2021, it was 29 July. If everyone lived the same way as people in the UK, it would have been 19 May; for China 7 June:

<https://www.overshootday.org/>

<https://www.overshootday.org/newsroom/country-overshoot-days/>

Both The Times and The Guardian newspapers have sustainable or ethical living sections in their papers and on the website. They make thought-provoking and up-to-date reads:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/environment>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ethical-living>

I hope this helps your understanding of how we can all in some small way reduce our carbon footprint.

Ann

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

Weoley Castle News

Sunday morning services: 11 AM at Weoley Castle Community Church—except Nov 30th: 10.30 AM for a joint service at Weoley Hill

Nov 2nd: Bible Study—led by Sam

Nov 9th: led by Alison Geary—Remembrance Sunday—and including communion

Nov 16th: led by Ted

Nov 23rd: led by Joe Bevan

Nov 30th: joint service at Weoley Hill—led by Ian Carnell

Dec 7th: led by Richard Alford

Sunday afternoons at 4 pm. These alternate between informal family services, with tea and eats, and community celebrations, with games and pizza—or food cooked by the community. These are led by Sam & Katie, Susie & Jonah. On Nov 2nd, 16th & 30th are family services; Nov 9th & 23rd have community celebrations.



Harvest Festival was celebrated at 4 pm on October 5th. This had an informal messy church / café church feel and was enjoyed by both regular congregation and local community. It included serving a 'community soup' made from donated vegetables, a 'thankyou tree' and donations of items for the food pantry. See the picture of the communion table.



We held a half-term 'Family Fun Day' on Tuesday 28th October, with crafts for children and a free light lunch for all, prepared by Kim & Rona. 99 children came with their parents—more than ever before! See the picture of one of the crafts they did.

Monday and Friday mornings: There will continue to be a free drop-in café on Mondays from 10 until about 11.30, although numbers without the Swap Shop are likely to be small. The **'Warm Welcome' on Fridays** with food pantry, café and free lunch will continue as usual from 9.30 until about 2.30. We are extremely grateful to Ann Turbill for filling in some of the gaps in the kitchen caused by Chris Hopkins' absence.

The 'Foot-Man': Mo Yasin, a chiropodist is intending to come to the building in the morning on the second Monday of each month. On the notice board outside the vestry, there is a sign-up sheet for an appointment with him on Monday 10th November. His phone number is 07961069982.

Commitment for Life: please remember to return donation envelopes for 'World Development' via the Church letterbox as soon as possible in November.

News of the Fellowship

Diane and Keith Twamley had a quiet but happy **golden wedding celebration** on Saturday October 11th.

Chris Hopkins has again been unwell, and needs to take things easy. She has had lots of tests and scans, which have not revealed any 'nasties'.

Autumn: a time for cobwebs

What is a spider's favourite part of a computer?

The webcam.

What do you call it when you have too many spiders in your house?

A no-fly zone.

A man is eating at a restaurant when he notices there's a spider in his soup. He calls over the waiter and complains.

"I'm deeply sorry, sir," the waiter replies. "But the fly asked to take the day off!"

Why are all the spiders in Paris overweight?

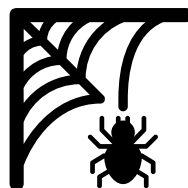
They eat a lot of French flies.

Why did the fly fly?

Because the spider spied her.

How tall is a spider?

Eight feet.



What's the difference between a computer programmer and a spider?
Programmers don't like bugs.

People in Iran are scared of spiders

But in Iraq, no phobia.

What do you call a spider with 20 eyes?

Spiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiider

I asked my kid for a phone book. They rolled their eyes and said: "We don't use those anymore" and handed me their phone.

Now their phone is smashed and they are furious, but I killed the spider!

What are a spider's favourite days of the week?

Websday and Flyday.

What do you call it when a shark, a crocodile, and a giant spider walk into a bar?

Another typical day in Australia!

What app do spiders use to listen to music?

Spot-a-fly.

Weoley Castle & Weoley Hill Churches

Weoley Castle Community Church, Quarry Rd:

Worship Sundays at 11 AM.

Sunday afternoons at 4 PM: *Informal, family-friendly services with food*

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.

We are forming a new Pastorate with Cotteridge & Carrs Lane churches and hope to call a minister to the Pastorate soon

WEOLEY HILL CHURCH Office: 244 6711

Secretary: Ann Evans 628 4558

B29 4DE

weoleyhillchurch.org.uk

WEOLEY CASTLE COMMUNITY CHURCH: 475 3841

weoleycastlecommunitychurchurc.org.uk

weoleycastlecommunitychurch50@gmail.com

B29 5LE

