

Roundabout



**The Cotteridge Church
Witnessing at the Heart of the Community**

July 2025

Dear siblings in Christ,

Some of you may not know me, I am Revd Farai Mapamula, Methodist Minister offering Methodist input into the life of the church at Cotteridge Church, working alongside Revd Tariro Mukoja. We are in the process of putting together a structure and systems to help us forge a way forward in this three-way Local Ecumenical Partnership. I have been encouraged by the entire leadership team at Cotteridge, who have worked tirelessly to uphold the God's Mission in this place. I find myself in place where everyone has been truly welcoming and affirming. Thank you!



I am also Co-Superintendent of the Birmingham Methodist Circuit; and as such, I speak from both the perspective of the local church and the wider Circuit.

As we move into the summer months of July and August - a time when many of us slow down, take holidays, and find moments of rest - we also pause to reflect on what fresh ways of being we can embrace. At the Birmingham Methodist Circuit, we have been exploring our priorities and aspirations. We have been exploring what it means to be a church where all are truly included, regardless of disability, ethnicity, mental health, gender, sexuality, poverty, or any other barrier that can separate us.

As ministers and lay leaders, we've taken time to listen deeply - to the experiences of others, to the movement of the Spirit, and to the radical inclusivity of the gospel. We've been challenged to move beyond welcome as a word on a noticeboard and instead embody it in our relationships, worship, leadership, and shared life together. I want to continue encouraging all of us, to work together towards equitable living for all peoples, paying attention to how we look after the planet on which we all inhabit.

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28 (NRSVA)

Paul's words to the Galatians remind us of the deep unity found in Christ - one that crosses boundaries of race, class, gender, and all the human divisions we so often cling to. This verse is not a denial of difference, but a radical affirmation that our identity in Christ binds us together in mutual belonging. As an LEP, let us continue to embrace all our three traditions - honouring our distinctive yet unique gifts and graces. We are called to live into this oneness - not erasing difference. So, I invite you to pray with me, for both our local church and the wider Circuit and Parish (Deanery?)

God of welcome and wonder, thank you for the rich tapestry of your people, woven together in your love and held in your grace. Help us to be a church where no one is left outside the circle, where each voice is heard, each gift is cherished, and each story honoured. Give us courage to challenge injustice, wisdom to listen well, and hearts wide enough to reflect your kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Yours in Christ's service,

Farai

Friends & Family.

Congratulations to Barbara & family for a very successful Christian Aid tea party which raised £1095.00

Janet Phillips, Mary Tyler, Stacey Murphy and Peggy Wright have died. We send our prayers and condolences to their families and friends. There will be a service of thanksgiving for Peggy Wright at St Nicholas Church, Kings Norton on Monday 12th July at 12.00.

Tina has been forced to leave her job with immediate effect because of health problems. Thank you for your service, Tina. We hope you have a good recovery.

Tuesday Fellowship is a group which is open to all. We meet on the 2nd and the 4th Tuesday of each month at 2.00pm in the Cotswold Room and below is a list of dates with the speakers /activities. Please feel free to come and join us.

Thank you. Linda Mann

TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP DATES -July 2025

DATE	TOPIC	OPENER
July 8 th	Don Hazzard: Suffragettes	D.H.
22 nd	Summer Afternoon Tea	L.M.

Have a great summer. Our first meeting in September will be September 9th when we will be talking about our holidays.

Services for July and August

	6th July	13th July	20th July	27th July	
10:30 am	Revd R. Collins All age Worship	Revd Tariro Mukoja HC	LA	Revd Farai Mapamula HC	
6:30 pm	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>	
	3rd August	10th August	17th August	24th August	31st August
10:30 am	Robert Matthews All age Worship	Revd Tariro Mukoja HC	Revd Anji Barker Morning Worship	Revd Farai Mapamula HC	Revd R. Collins HC
6:30 pm	<i>LA</i>	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>

Service types: HC - Holy Communion: P - Parade LA - Local Arrangement.

Communion Services are normally held each week at 10.00 am on Tuesdays

Zoom Services are normally held on Wednesday evenings from 7.30 pm

Revd Anji Barker - URC serving at Lodge Road Community Church.

Robert Matthews is a Methodist local preacher.

Pastorate Vacancy

On the afternoon of Sunday 8th June, members from The Cotteridge Church, Carrs Lane Church, Weoley Hill URC and Weoley Castle Community Church met together for a short Pentecost service.

A total of thirty members came together for the first of hopefully many joint services of the new South and Central Birmingham URC Pastorate.

There were readings and prayers led by members of each congregation, and the hymns had been chosen by members of the ministerial vacancy group, one hymn being chosen by each congregation. During the service each church received a piece of a wooden jigsaw engraved with the name of their church, the pieces, when fitted together symbolise the one pastorate, made up of the four distinct church congregations. Our piece will be displayed in church, together with a photograph of the complete jigsaw. Our individual piece will be used at a future service to symbolise our unity.



After numerous meetings, the Pastorate vacancy group has finally submitted the church profiles to the West Midland Synod. In due course it is hoped a Minister will be recommended to the Pastorate as a Candidate for the vacancy. At this point, the group will be called upon to decide if the Candidate should be invited to preach with a view.

I shall ensure details are notified to members once an invitation to preach has been issued. Following the preach to a view, members will have the opportunity to discuss calling the Candidate to fill the current vacancy.

Dorothy

Ensuring our wishes are followed should the unthinkable happen!

Have you thought of who will look after your finances, or make decisions concerning your health, should anything unthinkable happen to you?

Some years ago, Stephen and I made Wills to say who should take care of our children should we both be unable to. Later, we put in place Lasting Powers of Attorney for Finance, and for Health. These give specific family members the authority to make decisions on our behalf should we become incapable of doing so ourselves.

Recently, we have been keeping an eye on a friend whose health has declined rapidly, to the point where they are no longer able to care for themselves. With no family nearby, no Attorneys in place to act for them, they no longer have access to their money, their home and are unable to decide where they are to live.

I wish to encourage everyone to consider their own situation carefully.

Make the time to arrange LPA's for Finance and for Health. Talk to family and/or friends about your wishes. Take the time right now, to ensure that at a time when you may be at your weakest, that your wishes are carried out by those you trust.

Dorothy

A Tribute to Janet Phillips née Hughes Nov 1942 – April 2025

Janet Hughes was born on 9th Nov 1942. She was the second of twin sisters, the first was Norah. Her parents, David Joseph, and Gwladys Victoria were, at 49 and 41 years of age, considered elderly parents by the standard of the time, and Janet had a sister, Heulwen, who was 11 when the twins were born. As premature twins, they were tiny, so much so that, for the first months of their lives they slept in tomato boxes, padded and lined by their Aunt Nansi, Gwladys' younger sister.



It was in Yorkshire that our lives coincided. We had known one another at school, as casual acquaintances, and when Janet arrived in Ilkley I was in my second term at the University of Leeds. So, one Saturday in February, I was eating my breakfast of free samples on the delicatessen counter of Lewis's, when Janet popped up at my side. "You are John Phillips from Tredegar?" It transpired that she was there with some fellow first year students to buy food for a party at Ilkley pud school. She had been pressurised by her friends to ask me to bring some blokes to the party. I returned to my lodgings, and announced "Change of plan for tonight boys. We're going to a party in an all-girl's college". Skip forward 4 years; we were married on 7th August 1965, at Peniel Calvinistic Methodist Church in Tredegar.

In 1966 I got a job at the Central Electricity Generating Board and Janet was appointed at Selly Park Girls School, and so we arrived in Birmingham. On her first day at Selly Park, Janet was embarrassed to have to give her notice; she was expecting Kathryn. To her great relief, the headmistress was very understanding she recognised the realities of an institution which employed young women. For the next 8 years Janet was out of the classroom; she was mum, and housewife. We bought our first house, in Hall Green, and Kathryn was born on 22nd April 1967. When she was approaching her second Birthday, we decided that she needed a sibling. David was born on 21st Oct 1969.

In spring 1975 Janet started applying for jobs, including 2 at secondary schools - Hall Green and Swanshurst. Miss Tulloch at Swanshurst needed maternity leave cover for the summer term in the H.E. department; the decision was made - and what a life-changing decision it proved to be. Up to that time, Janet's self-confidence was always a bit fragile, so, the night before the return to work, she lay awake, crying and voicing self-doubts. She needn't have worried. During the next 26 years Swanshurst school enabled Janet to develop into the competent and confident woman she became, and empowered her to build a successful career in the field she loved. She established good professional and personal relationships with both staff and pupils. The story that typifies Janet's relationships with the pupils, we usually refer to as "Sheila's Fish". Sheila was not an easy young woman - angry, defensive, undisciplined, hated teachers as a matter of principle. The idea that Sheila would give a present to a teacher was unthinkable - or so everyone thought. One Christmas Janet came home with a present from Sheila - a 2 foot long red white and blue striped glass fish, and Janet loved it. In 1990 we celebrated our silver wedding anniversary with a party for 100 people at the CEGB social club. We had a string quartet. Janet catered to her own, very high standards, and the weather was really good. In 1992 we both took early retirement; the jobs and workplaces we

had loved were changing, and we both recognised the potential opportunities presented by new circumstances. But Janet was not finished with Swanshurst School; for the next 10 or so years she returned in the role of supply teacher, including one term of teaching French. She was also in demand from other schools, especially those expecting an Ofsted inspection. Another significant event occurred in the early 90's - Janet joined Muriel Hipsley-Smith's craft group, and that was the start of our involvement in Solihull u3a.

A much greater blow to Janet was the death of her twin sister, Norah, referred to by Janet as "My other half", died on the 6th Oct 2019, from cancer, and that really knocked the stuffing out of Janet. For the last 10 years of her life, Janet's health deteriorated progressively. Her musculoskeletal problems could probably be traced back to her being born one of twins, in the middle of world war 2. Toward the end, she was making definite progress, thanks largely to the treatment she received from a really excellent physiotherapist. She was able to get out of the house, into the car, climb 7 steps of the stairs, and was about to try walking with a stick. Her first outing from the house after almost 6 months was to the opticians, to get her specs tightened up. It was the start of that wonderful spell of weather we've just enjoyed, so I asked if she wanted to go anywhere, and she didn't hesitate - "up the pub". She had her last glass of sauvignon blanc at the Peacock, not normally recommended for anyone on large dosage of morphine, but what the hell! The following Sunday I took her to the church she had come to love during the last 3 years of her life, and then, on the following Wednesday we visited her oldest and best loved friend, Elaine Holmes, for coffee. It was all so positive.

Janet died peacefully in her sleep some time during the early hours of Good Friday 18th April. I thought at first she was sleeping deeply. In the words of Shane Williams, describing Leigh Halfpenny, she was a brave little bugger, and she was my brave little bugger. She was a woman of passions, the defining one being her deep Christian faith and commitment. It's no secret that I didn't share her belief; she sometimes introduced me to people as "My godless atheist". So how did that work? Well, we knew where we stood from the start, we understood the red lines, and by and large, the sleeping dogs lay undisturbed for 64 years. I mentioned earlier, our 25th wedding anniversary Nile cruise, and it gave us a taste for travel so that, over the next thirty years we visited the USA, India, Japan, China, South Africa, Namibia, Peru, Russia, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Turkey, most of Europe on both touring holidays and short city breaks. Janet loved Paris and she always had to visit two places. Travel also gave her the opportunity to indulge another unexpected aspect of her character - thrill-seeking. She loved white knuckle rides, and she enjoyed flying in light aircraft. She flew over the Mer de Glace in the French alps, and down the skeleton coast in Namibia. Then, in Peru, we flew over the Nazca Lines, this time in something a bit bigger - a 12-seat single-engined aircraft, which the pilot rolled from wing to wing, to enable passengers on both sides to get a good view, Most passengers disembarked clutching sick bags. In Namibia we joined a quadbike safari into the desert, and a video shows her doing her hell's granny act, roaring over huge sand dunes, probably with "Bat out of Hell" ringing in her ears.

Janet's was a life well lived. As I said, we disagreed profoundly on the questions of faith, creator, hereafter. She never tried to change my opinions, I would never have dared question hers, but, you know what - right now, possibly for the first time, I really wouldn't be sorry to be wrong.

John Phillips

Christian Aid Afternoon Tea

The final amount raised was £1,095.
It was a lovely sunny afternoon.
Many thanks to all those who helped.



Thank You!

The Afternoon Tea raised
£1051.65
We couldn't have done it
without you!



If you'd like to add to this you can still donate via the QR code or use the link below:
<https://giving.give-star.com/online/christian-aid/afternoon-tea-2025>

Photo designed by Arthur C of Cottingham Quakers

Barbara Calvert

The Cotteridge Church Garden Gang.

After seeking help for our garden, we are blessed with 2 willing, hardworking & cheerful volunteers; Brian & Janet, who come Mondays & Thursdays, giving Bob & me some much needed help.

Not only planting, digging & pruning, they have great ideas regarding the upgrading of the shed, greenhouse & planters.

Please take your drinks, meals, snacks etc & be amazed at the calmness being surrounded by roses, annuals & fruit trees.

There is always work to be done, so please join our "gang" & get involved.

It is now proven working or sitting in a garden reduces high blood pressure & calms the mind.

Chris Pascal



Let's Act On Poverty

**Listening event with
Al Carns M.P.**

All Welcome

7 - 8.15pm

Monday 21st July

The Cotteridge Church

Pershore Road

B30 3EJ

Administrator: 0121 433 5518

Church Action on Poverty Update

'Develop ways to raise awareness of social issues including peace and justice, locally, nationally and globally; to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.'

In the February edition of Roundabout, we announced that Cotteridge Church would be working with two ecumenical charities to further the aim above (taken from the church strategy document). On Sunday 9th March, worship was centred around **Church Action on Poverty** Sunday and more recently, in May we focussed on **Christian Aid** week.



Church Action on Poverty:

Poverty Media Unit:

This unit works with journalists and people in poverty, to generate powerful coverage that puts people first. They know that if you want to truly understand an issue, you must talk to the people who are living with it. People who are or have been trapped in poverty have an unmatched understanding of the systems and structures that hold people back – and a unique insight into what could loosen the chains. The UK media takes a great interest in poverty, but much of the coverage is flimsy or fleeting, failing to draw on that immense knowledge and wisdom in communities all over the country. The Poverty Media Unit works to improve the direct media representation of people with experience of poverty.

Church on the Margins:

Church Action on Poverty works to build a powerful movement within the churches based on genuine solidarity with people struggling to make ends meet. Since 2020 they have been researching how the UK's denominations allocate their resources and listening to people and churches in communities on the margins. Churches, at their best, are thriving hubs at the heart of their communities – open and inclusive to all believers and everyone else. They connect with and support the local area through local collaborations, shared spaces and resources, and genuine community. But Church Action on Poverty found that low-income communities are being disproportionately affected by church closures, and this has ramifications for Christians and entire neighbourhoods. If national church leaders reinvest instead of retreating, then churches can help whole communities to thrive and build better futures.

Speaking Truth to Power:

This programme supports people with direct experience of UK poverty to speak up and take action on its root causes. It brings together people with a diverse range of personal experiences to speak truth to power both locally and nationally. Working together to access and share tools, training and opportunities, people can unleash their own power. Participants develop the skills, training and support to speak confidently and powerfully to local and national media, politicians and other power-holders. As people become effective campaigners and spokespeople in their own right, they will inspire others to action.

For more information on these and other projects see the Church Action on Poverty website: <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/>

Alison S.



The Cotteridge Church
Joint Church Council

Summary of JCC meeting held on Tuesday 13th May 2025

Present: Stephen A., Dorothy A., Mike M., Mike R., Roger C., Jane S., Norman M., Phil A.,

and Alison S., Chris P., Sandra W., joined via Zoom.

Apologies: Pam W.,

The meeting began with a short devotion.

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and, as this is the last meeting that Chris and Sandra will attend, took the opportunity to thank them both for all they have done as Trustees over the last three years. They will remain members of the Worship and Pastoral Committee and, Property and Management Committee respectively.

Minutes of previous meeting: These had been circulated previously, they were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting held on 13th March 2025:

Matters arising:

AV system: An updated proposal has been received following our request for the adjustments requested to the original quotation. The new cost was approved, and the Administrator is to be asked to notify Practical AV in order for the work to be carried out.

Staff Handbook: This has been reviewed. The main amendments include general grammar recommendations and a general welcome page. These were accepted. The new handbook will be in place shortly.

Profile for the URC: The notification at the meeting that our church profile was lacking specific information was found to be inaccurate, the profile submitted to the Moderator was found to have been an old version. The updated version has been successfully submitted to the Synod and the vacancy will now go to the next Moderators meeting.

Alcohol on the church premises: This is an ongoing matter. Progress will be reported to JCC when any developments are known.

Finance: See later Agenda item.

Safeguarding: There have been no safeguarding issues reported.

Reports:

Finance: Finance figures were for the first quarter of 2025 against 2024.

Community Services: Members of the committee provided a verbal report of the last meeting. A large part of the meeting concerned the Vision actions.

Property and Management: A verbal report was given. Farai and Tariro were welcomed to the meeting, both participating fully with the discussions. Thanks were expressed to Mike R., for his work on arranging for the new windows in Cotswold Room, everyone agreed they have made a huge difference to the room.

Currently Clee room is being recarpeted, once complete, attention will be given to Clent.

Policies: The Safeguarding policies have been updated and will be on file in the church office. They will be on the website shortly. The Staff Handbook has been updated. Currently there are no policies requiring a review.

Dorothy A., stated that the viewpoint of members of the Property and Management Committee is that Policies should no longer be under P&M and should return to JCC. This was agreed.

Worship and Pastoral: A verbal report was given. The Vision actions have been reported during the year within the committee report. These will be presented to the AGM. The preaching plan is being put together by Farai following a ministers meeting.

The service on 11th May was discussed. It was generally agreed that the serving of Holy Communion went well, though following the service, two comments had been received from members of the congregation, how Communion is served will be an ongoing item on the agenda for future meetings.

There is to be a further 'Coming together', on June 21st.

CTB30: Minutes of the last meeting are being prepared. The AGM is on Thursday 15th May 2025.

Administrator's Report: The report was issued at the meeting. Apologies to those on Zoom.

Item 1 on the AV system was covered under Matters Arising.

Item 2 regarding staffing matters is an ongoing issue, further updates will be given once any decisions are required.

Item 3 regarding the church office door code being changed will be dealt with by Stephen A., as soon as possible.

Forthcoming events:

18th May AGM and lunch: We have nominations for Trustees from Pam W., Phil A., Jane S., and Monica T.,

21st June Coming Together

Correspondence:

None received from CofE nor the Methodist Church

URC: Issued the meeting was a proposal for a grant application to the URC Synod for a position to the new pastorate, the grant would cover employing someone to deal with the finances of the appointed minister and communications between the four churches. The meeting agreed with the grant application.

AOB: The recent death of Janet P., was noted. Details of her funeral will be notified once known.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:25 with the saying of The Grace.

Dates of future meetings: Wednesday 16th July (this will be primarily an Admin meeting following on from the AGM)

Thursday 18th September

Tuesday 11th November

Climate crisis...what we do, however small, does make a difference.

As I sit here writing the temperature outside is nearing 30° C, and when thinking of my theme this edition, WATER came to my mind immediately.

The hot weather means we need to drink more to stay hydrated, but of course the need, our supply and the quality of our water has recently been the subject of many news bulletins - as weather influences both in flooding and heatwaves.

I was alarmed when I heard that due to the lack of rain and, therefore low reservoirs it could mean water being taken from rivers to top up supplies. We all know and have read about the pollution that lurks in rivers. For an island surrounded by water it really is amazing that solutions to this are not at the forefront of technology.

However, let's return to what we can do to save water, save energy and save money. We use individually about 142 litres of water every day for showering, washing, cooking and drinking. Of course we are paying for that water whether through a water meter or by a standing charge. So I went to the website of the the energy saving trust and found some really interesting info there. These tips maybe will help us all to reduce the amounts we use daily.

From their website TOP TIPS!

- * spend less time in the shower.
- *Turn off the tap when cleaning your teeth.
- *Reuse water when you can in the garden.
- *Get a water butt to capture rain water.
- *Fill your kettle less.
- *Try and wash full loads in your washing machine and dishwasher.
- *Maintain appliances and try to buy eco friendly ones when replacing.

*Use the shower rather than a bath.

*Use water saving devices - some of these are:

An eco rated shower head.

A hot water dispenser for single cups of tea or a thermos flask.

Add a rainwater diversion from downpipes and guttering.

Just some ideas that might help us all.

Looking at the wider world picture we know that 50% of the world's population is experiencing severe water scarcity for at least part of the year. This number is, of course, expected to grow as a result of climate change and population growth.

When there are more than 2 billion people who do not have access to a safe water supply, it puts so many things in perspective. But it also reminds us of our responsibility in the world that God created and we live in.

We can all try to make a difference - however small.

Thank you, everyone, for all you are doing to make that difference in our lives and support the climate crisis.

Sandra





**CRAFT
WITH
COMMUNITY**

EVERY TUESDAY

AT

THE COTTERIDGE CHURCH

10:30AM - 1:00PM

**£3.00 INCLUDES A HOT DRINK
AND USE OF OUR EQUIPMENT**

GOOD CHATS

GREAT CRAFTS

EVERYONE IS WELCOME



Progress on our Church Strategic Plan

You may remember that in early 2024 we consulted with members and community users of the Cotteridge Church all about what we do and how we do things. This helped us to develop a three-year Strategic Plan to enable us to continue to be an effective centre for worship and community; it is a sustainable plan of action fit for the present times that ensures we make best use of our people, money and building. Since its adoption a year ago, the Joint Church Council (JCC) and its sub-Committees have been using the plan to oversee and guide all we do at The Cotteridge Church and will continue to do so in the coming years.

Below we highlight how we are progressing against each of the main headings of the action plan. In some areas we have made excellent progress, in other areas we have not progressed far because of factors not foreseen when the plan was written. This variation in progress is always to be expected in delivering the plan for an organisation with a wide range of aims and objectives. The next year of the plan will be adapted to incorporate actions not completed from year one, where they remain relevant.

A summary of progress in year one of the Strategic Plan is:

Worship

- Progress was limited because of the unforeseen retirement of Mike Claridge a few months after the adoption on the Strategic Plan, and the prolonged period with a limited ministerial team.
- Some progress was made in congregational involvement in delivering aspects of services and in ensuring variety.
- A new AV system has been planned and once in place will enhance worship and may allow live-streaming.

Caring and Learning

- The Pastoral Care system has been reviewed and regular meetings take place with Pastoral Carers.
- There has been progress on developing fellowship opportunities, but more to be done on (non-worship based) learning opportunities.
- All the year 1 actions to improve communication about JCC decisions and changes in the church have been achieved.

Service

- Improvements have been made in the café service and in the range of community activities, including community lunches and games days. Some are in partnership with outside partners, e.g. exercise classes and ladies' yoga, and a new crafting group with Beaumont Park.
- Stay and Play (Saplings) has continued (albeit simplified and smaller numbers). We lack other activities aimed at children and young people still – progress on a shared youth worker with other churches may be progressed once the ministerial team is in place.
- Limited progress on increasing the use of the garden as a community resource.

Social Justice

- A specific plan has been developed round this topic and is being put into action – successes so far are the increase awareness raising via services and

through Roundabout, news sheet and posters. Practical actions include the Lent meal voucher campaign for Foodbank.

Evangelism

- Progress limited until new ministerial team is in place

Ecumenism

- The local churches do already collaborate together, but with the diocese oversight, and the new URC pastorate coming into play very soon, it is hoped that far greater collaboration may take place.

Delivery

- As well as ongoing maintenance, two rooms have been redecorated making them more attractive for internal use and external hiring. Bigger refurbishments have been curtailed by failure to win an Eco Grant, but also difficulty in getting quotes from tradespeople.
- Room hire prices have been reviewed. Lettings continue to increase, but more could be done to provide catering for external users.

This is a very high-level summary of progress of a detailed plan, but it gives a flavour of the range and complexity of actions we are seeking to deliver as a church with a strong community focus. A fuller report on progress was shared via Sarah's Saturday email after the Church AGM. If you want to be sent a copy of this or the original plan, please ask Sarah or me.

As we move into Year two of the Strategic Plan, JCC and its sub-Committees will look at what is proposed for the next year, incorporation actions incomplete from the last year, and work out the best way that we can continue to deliver the actions. Following a recent meeting with Farai and Tariro to discuss the plan, we are hopeful that the establishment of the new ministerial team we will enable us to make good progress in the coming year!

Pam Waddell

RETURNED TREASURE

Last week a friend from Bournville told me she had lost her engagement ring when gardening! I have found several people's lost treasures over the years with my metal detector. Unfortunately a search of her garden with my detector failed to find the ring.

To the lady's delight her gardener saved the day when he emptied a newly planted pot of geraniums to reveal the lost ring. Bob Burton



Homonyms

When I was little I collected homonyms - which are pairs of words pronounced the same, but which have different meanings and [usually] spellings. I wrote them down in a little notebook, and got to about 300. It was a fun thing to do when you have to be sat still somewhere.

Can you work out these homonyms? [Answers: at the end of the magazine]

1. Table used in church services/Change something.
2. Song in church/Accusative case male
3. Gathering in church on Sundays/Collection of dinner crockery
4. 6 winged angel/ Small line at the base of a printed letter
5. Man such as Elijah/Make financial return on an investment

C.L

The Soldier We Never Forgot

In the 1920s my father went on an assisted passage to Canada to earn money to come back to England to marry my Mum. He worked on the prairies near a town called Brandon, not far from Winnipeg in Manitoba. He never forgot the kindness of the people he met.

Fast forward to WWII. He read in the paper that hospitality was being sought for young Canadian soldiers in England who had leave but nowhere to go. He and my Mum talked it through and soon a number of Canadians came to share our home in Midland Road. Usually it was just one but once two soldiers from the North Nova Scotia Rifles came together. I don't remember them but my Mum told me of one incident. One night they went to the Grant Arms for a drink. They must have had more than one because when they returned very late they sat in our little front garden and sang until well into the middle of the night. Next morning more than one neighbour came to complain. Now, normally my Mum was a kind person but with her soldiers she was like a mother bear with her 'cubs'. "You do realise," she said, "these two young men are going to fight for your freedom. They might not come back and you begrudge them one night of fun!" The neighbours retreated with their tails between their legs.

I only remember one soldier - Ben, a tall, broad shouldered half Cree First National. He was a member of The Regina Rifles from Saskatchewan and he was our favourite. My brother, Geoff, hero-worshipped him. When Ben left he gave Geoff his cap badge. Geoff treasured it. We wondered whether Ben got into trouble. When my brother died my niece asked if I would like it. You can guess what I said through my tears. It sits on a shelf in my lounge and will be passed down the family.



That's not the end of the story.

Just before COVID I wrote to the Mayor of Regina to see if I could find out anything about Ben or his family. I heard nothing so I forgot about it. You can imagine my surprise when on May 9th this year, the day after VE Day, a parcel arrived. The letter inside explained that there was a new Mayor in Regina and on clearing the office my letter had been found. An immediate search started led by the members of the regimental association. The photo I had sent of me being held by Ben was put into a local paper with a piece about an English family and an unnamed child! Not much could be found out about Ben's family but in the parcel was a copy of his funeral service and a picture of his grave. I was also sent a book about the history of the regiment, now The Royal Regina Rifles, an honour bestowed by our late Queen and

taken to Canada by the Colonel in Chief, Her Royal Highness Princess Anne.

I've just written back to thank everyone for taking so much trouble for that 'unnamed child'.

Rita Sutton

There really is never a dull moment around here as I'm sure you know and the last few weeks have certainly been a test so I wanted to update you on what's been going on and what we are hoping to achieve as we move forward.

We have been so sad to see her go but I can assure you it's definitely not a choice that has been made lightly. That said, her departure left us very exposed with only myself and Sonia able to cover the kitchen (which was far from ideal)



We are currently recruiting to find two people to join the art time basis and I'm confident that by the summer holidays new team to serve you and keep the great work going.

Sarah C.

If you have a few minutes to waste:

Words in Catteridge:- Answers

Inauguration of Pope Leo XIV



Bhai Sahib Ji attended the Inauguration of His Holiness



Pope Leo XIV and Interfaith Audience at the Vatican. Following the Mass, Bhai Sahib Ji had the honour of personally meeting several world leaders and dignitaries. He presented a copy of the Peace Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation to the Pope and discussed their common goal of promoting world peace and harmony. Bhai Sahib also presented the Peace Charter to President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, expressing solidarity and prayers for peace and healing in his country. He also shared the Peace Charter with the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen and discussed its relevance to peace building. Bhai Sahib also met His Royal Highness Prince Edward, representing His Majesty King Charles III, and spoke about the urgent need for moral leadership and collective forgiveness in global conflict resolution.

Reflecting on the occasion, Bhai Sahib Ji said: “To witness the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV was a deeply spiritual moment – a sacred invitation to renew our shared commitment to peace, dialogue, and reconciliation. His Holiness walks with humility, courage, and moral clarity, following the luminous path of Pope Francis.”



Would you like to join our **Exploring World Faiths** sessions. To do so, you would need to join the u3a – any of the South Birmingham u3as – Kings Norton, Kings Heath and Moseley, or Harborne and Edgbaston <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>.

Local programme – we meet monthly on a Thursday morning and are currently exploring Christianity.

For our May session, we visited the spectacular Serbian Orthodox Church in Bournville. This Byzantine masterpiece on land given by the Cadbury family was built by Serbian exiles in just 3 years. On entering the church, one is immediately immersed in a sea of colourful frescoes from Biblical scenes - the work of a single painter. Fr Nenad Popovic related many anecdotes to our u3a Exploring World Faiths group. It was interesting to note the increase in congregations at Orthodox churches. Our next 2 sessions will be - Thurs 17th July-Mormons or Quakers (to be confirmed)

Future Webinars.

These webinars are open to all members of the u3a and all start at 10.0am.

Mon 14th July - Friendship The International Day of Friendship takes place on Wed 30th July. Friendship can take many forms between individuals, in



neighbourhoods, places of worship, between faiths and between nations. In this webinar, we will explore approaches to friendship from different faith perspectives

Pope: Stop hostilities in Ukraine and Gaza now.

Pope Leo XIV appealed for an end to hostilities in Ukraine and Gaza, asking for dialogue, the cessation of violence, the freedom of Israeli hostages and for humanitarian law to be respected. His appeal comes as both Russia and Ukraine launched drone attacks against one another, despite claims from Moscow that it was finalising its own peace proposal to end the war that has been raging for three years. "I forcefully renew the appeal to stop the war and to support every initiative for dialogue and peace," Leo said, and asked the world to join him "in praying for peace in Ukraine and wherever there is suffering from war".

Trussell Trust charts extraordinary rise of need for food parcels in UK'

The Trussell Trust, a charity started by a Christian couple from a garden shed to feed people in need, says that 2.9 million emergency food parcels were provided to people facing hardship across the UK between April 2024 and March 2025, with more than a million of these provided for children. This is equivalent to one parcel every 11 seconds and a 51 per cent increase compared to five years ago. Families with children under five have seen a 32 per cent rise over the past five years.

Boys' Brigade

Our company weekend took place recently in the sunshine of Peckwood. 15 boys and 8 leaders had a good time playing games in



the woods. On the Saturday which was the warmest day of the year we walked down the lane to the park where the fête was in full swing. After the usual rounders/football games one of the organisers offered all the boys and leaders free ice cream which was accepted by everybody! Phil Adams was in the kitchen that afternoon preparing dinner.



This event was well supported by parents who offered lifts and made cakes for the weekend. Most of the lads and leaders were shattered by the time we arrived back at church but looking forward to next year.

At the June parade service everybody was given some beans by Barbara. Some have since died but as you can see Rob Seward and Orla's have really grown.

On Saturday 12th July we have our annual family outing to Weston-Super-Mare. Please enquire if any seats are still available. The cost is £20 and we leave from the church at 8-30am and departing Weston at 5-30pm.

Bob Hotchkiss

Homonyms

Answers: 1. Altar/ alter 2. Hymn/ him 3. Service/ service 4. seraph/ serif 5. Prophet/ profit



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roundabout@thecotteridgechurch.org.uk

The Cotteridge Church, Pershore Road South, Birmingham B30 3EJ

Tel: 0121 433 5518 Fax: 0121 459 6909

Email: administrator@thecotteridgechurch.org.uk

Website: www.thecotteridgechurch.org.uk

X [Twitter]: @CotteridgeChurc facebook.com/TheCotteridgeChurch

Instagram [the_cotteridge_church](https://www.instagram.com/the_cotteridge_church)

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