

Roundabout



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

May 2026

A message

from our new URC Minister.

My name is Revd Naomi Sakala, and it is a joy and a privilege to introduce myself to you. I am married to my husband, Gideon, and together we are blessed with two sons, Nathan and Ethan. As a family, we have known God's faithfulness in many seasons of life, and it is from that place of gratitude that I come to share in ministry with you.

I was raised in a Christian home where faith was part of everyday life through prayer, worship, and the reading of Scripture. Over time, I began

to sense that God was calling me not only to believe, but to serve. One of my earliest steps into that calling began in a simple but meaningful way, gathering a few children in our home to share Bible stories and songs when they were unable to get to church. What began as a small group soon grew, and in those moments I began to understand the joy of walking alongside others in faith.

Like many journeys of faith, mine has not always been straightforward. There were moments of uncertainty, yet God, in His grace, continued to guide me. In time, I responded fully to His call and went on to study theology. Over the past twelve years, I have had the privilege of serving in different communities, each one shaping me and deepening my understanding of God's love and His people.

At the heart of my ministry is a desire to walk alongside others, to listen, to encourage, and to share in both the joys and challenges of life. I value deeply the wisdom of older generations, the energy of young people and children, and the everyday stories that make each community unique. I believe that each one of us has a place within the body of Christ, and that together we grow as we support and care for one another.

As we journey through the Lenten season towards Easter, I am reminded of the richness and diversity of how we experience this sacred time. In Zambia, where I have lived and ministered, the climax of Lent is the Easter weekend, a time that is vibrant, joyful, and deeply spiritual. It is often marked by what we call revival prayers, where congregations gather with great expectation. Churches invite guest preachers who bring fresh insight and new perspectives on a shared theme, and sometimes several preachers are scheduled across the weekend.

Choirs, whether for youth, women, or men, prepare songs that carry the message of the season, filling the gatherings with joyful and powerful worship. The services are unhurried and immersive. On Good Friday, we gather in the morning for several hours of worship, take a short break, and then return again in the afternoon for continued prayer, preaching, and song. It is a time of deep spiritual renewal and strong community connection.

On Saturday, many come dressed in their fellowship uniforms, a beautiful expression of identity, unity, and belonging. In Zambia, these uniforms are unique to each group and are greatly treasured. The youths often wear white and black,



with a blue scarf/necktie bearing the church logo, and include groups such as the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade. The women's fellowship typically wears white and black with a black headband, while the men's fellowship is often dressed in black suits, white shirts, and a black necktie with a church logo. These colourful expressions add joy to the gathering and reflect the shared commitment of each group within the church family.

The day continues with worship and important moments in the life of the church, including confirmations, welcoming those beginning their journey in Bible study, and preparation for Holy Communion.

Then comes Easter Sunday, the great celebration of the resurrection. It is a joyful and full service, often including Holy Communion, confirmations, and baptisms for both infants and adults. The celebration continues beyond the service as people gather in fellowship, sometimes sharing a traditional drink known as thobwa, celebrating not only Christ's victory over death, but also life together as a community of faith.

Here in Seychelles, I have experienced Easter in a different, yet equally meaningful way. Good Friday is observed with a more reflective tone, with services that allow space for prayer and contemplation. On Saturday, there is often a quieter rhythm, sometimes including online prayers, creating a sense of connection even when gathered in different places. Then on Sunday, we come together in joyful celebration of the resurrection, sharing in worship and fellowship as a community.

Experiencing these different traditions has been a gift. They remind me that while our ways of worship may differ, we are united in the same hope and the same risen Christ.

As I look ahead to this new chapter of ministry in the United Kingdom, I do so with hope and openness. I look forward to journeying together with the communities of Weoley Castle, Weoley Hill, Cotteridge, and Carrs Lane, getting to know one another, sharing in worship, and discovering how God is at work among us.

The message of Easter reminds us that God is always bringing new life, even in unexpected places. As Scripture reminds us, "He is not here; he has risen!" (Luke 24:6). This good news encourages us to live as people of hope, trusting in God's power to renew, restore, and transform our lives and our communities.

My prayer is that we may walk together in faith, hope, and love, encouraging one another and shining the light of Christ in our communities.

May God bless us all as we journey together. Amen.

Friends & Family.

We look forward to getting to know our new URC minister Revd Naomi Sakala.

Barbara Calvert has a new grandson Henry, born to her daughter Rosie.

I'm sorry to start with sad news that Steven Battle-Welch, one of the founding directors of C2U sadly passed away last week. Steven had Cerebral Palsy but didn't let that stop him from anything. He lived independently, used his computer to communicate, worked for C2U, was a bit of an adrenaline junkie on the side and enriched the lives of so many others. He came to the church weekly for the rehearsal sessions and we will miss him terribly.

We send our very best wishes to Don for a speedy recovery from his fall.

Tuesday Fellowship is a group which is open to all. We meet on the 2nd and the 4th Tuesday of each month at 2.00 pm 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 -May & June 2026

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>OPENER</u>
May 12th	Celia - Lovely gardens	L.M
26th	Beetle drive	H.P.
June 9th	Make us laugh-bring a joke	L.W.
23rd	John Smith Radio Memories.	L.M.

Thank you all for your support over the year.

Services in May and June 2026

	3rd May 5th of Easter	10th May 6th of Easter	17th May 7th of Easter	24th May Pentecost	31st May Trinity Sunday
10:30 am	Revd B. Calvert P. & All age Worship	Revd Tariro Mukoja HC	Revd Roger Collins	Revd Farai Mapamula HC	Revd Caroline Homan
	7th June	14th June	21st June	28th June	
10:30 am	No information	Revd Tariro Mukoja HC	No information	Methodist cover	

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

Revd Caroline Homan is a supernumerary methodist minister Selly Oak Methodists/SCM??

Tuesdays: 10.00 am: There will be a short service of Holy Communion at the Church. Please note that the wine served at Communion on the second Sunday of the month will be alcoholic. The Communion elements will continue to be brought to the congregation in their seats.

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

CHURCH AGM: Sunday 10th May.

This will take place after the morning service.

Please do attend this important meeting. Relevant paperwork will be available beforehand.

We would like to thank all those who have served our church community during the past year.

Norman Mann

Boys Brigade



Our annual charity Quiz took place in April and we raised a fantastic £360. This has been shared by the Cotteridge Church and The Birmingham Hospice.



We would like to thank everybody who supported us either by turning up on the night or making donations [raffle prizes and cash]. Also thanks to Celia, Jo, Joy and Phil for making cakes for the bake sale. We have been running the quiz for over 30 years and Mike



Meadows has been our quiz master every year. Thanks Mike.

Jane Stephens has agreed to read one of her stories to the Juniors one Friday and we look forward to that.

Team name	Round									Total Score	Current Position
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
We Thought This Was Speed Dating	9	9	10	8	9	9	18	7	6	85	1st
Welsh Dragons	9	9	9	8	8	8	16	5	3	74	2nd
R U SURE	8	7	9	9	8	20	3	4		74	2nd
Steven's Angel	8	6	8	8	9	8	16	7	4	74	2nd
Last Chance Saloon	3	6	7	5	8	6	14	2	3	54	3rd

We are now starting to look forward to Summer and our Peckwood weekend in June. Also booked is our coach outing to Weston Super Mare in July.

Bob Hotchkiss

A glimpse from the Past

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF COTTERIDGE

Here at the shops of Cotteridge
Where as a child, I bought the ring
With the green stone in the centre,
And cherished it, though it was naught.

The Misses Fryers' Emporium
Spending an hour or more, choosing
The silks for embroidery and
Never your custom a bore

Mister Bullock the Grocer,
Moustachio stiff and waxed,
Standing outside on the pavement
As the twenty-three bus goes past.

St. Agnes church hall at Christmas,
A bun feast by the Home Guard,
Receiving a whole tin of toffees
Which my brother so quickly devoured.

Nights in the Anderson shelter,
Sleeping six in that small place,
Dad would be wearing his tin hat
And Mother her anxious face.

The apple trees at the station,
Were good for many a lark,
Gym knickers filled with apples
Then a "share-out" in the park.

Carnival time at Cotteridge,
Jazz band in yellow and blue,
My friend won a beautiful bicycle
And I'd bought a ticket too...

The "Savoy" for the Saturday pictures,
Roy Rogers is riding the plain,
"My hat's crammed over my face, Betty
The Injuns are coming again."

To church on a Sunday evening,
Then Middleton Hall for a stroll,
Seeing houses with maids in aprons,
Chauffeur, gardener and all.

Here at the shops of Cotteridge,
In Woolworths crowded store,
Are my children buying their memories
to keep for evermore?



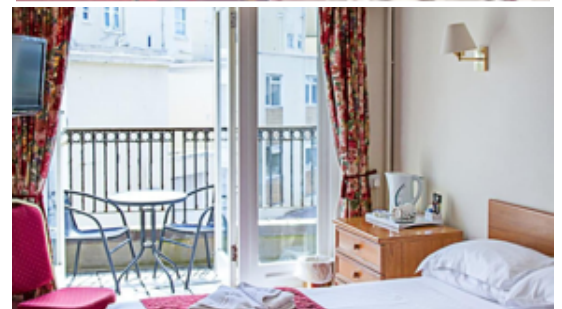
Pennine Way Trips - Eastbourne 2026

Join us on a 5 day break to Eastbourne
Monday 5th October - Friday 9th October
Cost per person £455.00 (twin) or £485.00 (single)



Cost includes:

Travel
Half board accommodation at The Afton Hotel
(full English breakfast & 3 course evening meal)
Porterage Evening entertainment
1 coach trip during the week.



The Afton Hotel is situated opposite the pier and Carpet Gardens, with a level walk to the promenades and shopping centre, which is only 2 minutes away.

The hotel offers excellent value for money. All rooms have a private en-suite bathroom, and include hairdryer, towels, TV, and tea & coffee making facilities.

A deposit of £50 is required to confirm a room booking with the balance due by August 14th.

An added bonus! We have our driver Norman coming along with us!!

A weekly or monthly payment plan can be set up with Sarah Canning at The Cotteridge Church. Cash, cheques and bank transfers are accepted.

To discuss this, pop in and see Sarah (Mon-Fri 9:30 am - 1:30 pm)
call 0121 433 5518, or email administrator@thecotteridgechurch.org.uk

Rita Sutton

Chuck Norris

Chuck Norris, a TV and film star, died in March this year, aged 86. He was perhaps best known as the lead in the TV programme called Walker, Texas Ranger. He was also a martial arts expert. Now, I hear you say, what has this to do with a church magazine?

Well, read on. For his martial arts teaching he developed a code of honour and rules to live by. Here are just a few.

I will forget the mistakes of the past and press on to greater achievement.

I will look for the good in all people and make them feel worthwhile.

If I have nothing good to say about people I will say nothing.

I will maintain an attitude of open mindedness.

I will always remain loyal to my God, my country, my family and my friends.

I think Chuck Norris could teach us a thing or two.

Rita Sutton



Thoughts of Summer



Now we are all looking forward to the warmer months, thoughts may turn to holidays. If you have any old postcards, how about painting a holiday picture as I have done?

Southwold is a thriving seaside town with colourful beach huts, an iconic lighthouse and a clean beach. It is home to the famous Adnams Brewery which was originally established in 1872.

It is a lovely place to visit and was a favourite spot of my late parents, Jack and June Burton whom some of you may remember.

Best wishes

Bob Burton

10-16 May 2026

Christian Aid Week

Your faith. Make it count.

7 days to make a difference – what will you do?

Last year Christian Aid celebrated 80 years of activity with a reminder of the "Unstoppable Power of Hope" and expressed a heartfelt thank you to all its supporters since its origins in 1945 when the Churches of Britain and Ireland united to support Second World War refugees.

Sadly we still live in a very troubled world and Christian Aid currently have 96 projects. In Gaza they have helped locals to create a camp for 100 disabled people and provided community clay ovens. In Ukraine they have financed lightweight, battery operated, mobile incubators to help with the increase in premature births during wartime. And in Lebanon they are supporting local charities in providing portable showers, laundry facilities and food parcels.

However, Christian Aid prefer to support long term projects rather than emergencies. This year Christian Aid Week appeal is focussing on urban poverty in the densely packed sprawling informal settlement of Dagoretti in Nairobi, Kenya. Here people live in rented corrugated metal shelters, without running water and sharing toilet facilities. Christian Aid is in partnership with a local organisation called Beacon of Hope which is training urban farmers to cultivate their own vegetables in small unused city spaces. This enables parents not only to feed their own families with nutritious produce, but also to sell the surplus on to the market and generate income for rent, school fees, medical help and so on.

Christian Aid Week is our shared moment to come together – across churches, communities and households – to stand alongside people living in poverty.

This Christian Aid Week, your support could help mothers in Nairobi, Kenya, facing the devastating reality of urban poverty and the daily struggle to feed their children.

For one focused week, thousands of people across Britain and Ireland give, fundraise, pray and act together.

We no longer take part in the house-to-house collections so please give generously through Christian Aid envelopes available in church or donate online:

Christianaid.org.uk

The **garden tea party** for Christian Aid will be back next year!

Barbara Calvert



Fridah lives with her children and grandson in a rented corrugated metal shelter. There is no running water, and space is extremely limited.

Like many families in Dagoretti, life is unpredictable. Some days there is enough. Some days there is not. The worry returns every morning.

To support her family, Fridah sells vegetables at a market stall. She travels long distances to buy produce, making the journey six days a week.

Without refrigeration or storage, everything depends on what she can sell that day.

Fridah's situation began to change when she joined Imarisha Kilimo, an urban farming project run by Christian Aid's partner, Beacon of Hope.

At first, the idea felt impossible: 'I was wondering, where can someone farm here?'

But through training, tools and seeds, Fridah began to see what was possible - even in the smallest spaces.

'I discovered I could sow here. Right where I stand,' she shared.

Hidden at the end of a narrow alley, behind a simple gate, Fridah has created something remarkable. In a place where you'd never expect it, vegetables now grow in repurposed containers, and leafy greens climb every available space.

Here, in the heart of the city, Fridah is growing her own food.

Fridah now grows kale, tomatoes and indigenous vegetables - some to feed her family, and some to sell at her market stall. For the first time, she has a more reliable source of income. As she puts it, 'Now I can plan. I can buy this; I can buy that. I can help my family.'

Her small urban farm is doing more than putting food on the table. It's bringing stability and new possibilities. Watching her crops grow brings a deep sense of pride: 'When what I have planted grows - that is what makes me happy,' she says. 'When I get money that I have earned - that is what makes me happy.'

That pride runs through everything she does. 'I am proud to eat what I've produced. This is my own work.' Despite the challenges she faces, Fridah's faith remains strong. It gives her the strength to keep going each day, even when life feels uncertain. Her urban farm is small, but it carries big hopes. Hopes for education, independence and a future beyond daily uncertainty.



From our Friends in Peru: Marcés Mailing



'I the Lord
do not change"
(Malachi 3:6)

Our night-flowering
cactus...



Juan Carlos & Penny will be in the UK from mid April to July, and will visit Malvern, Redditch and Harborne & Edgbaston in Birmingham. This will be the last visit to link the churches, after a partnership of 40 years with some. If you would like more details, please contact Jean Morgan.

The Anglican church in Peru is seeing changes. It was decided recently that churches will be “paired”, and so San Juan Evangelista and Jesús el Nazareno will become a “pair”. These pairs are NOT a permanent unification of the 2, but the idea is that there will be sharing of leadership

Juan Carlos has in fact NOT been in overall charge of San Juan Evangelista for several months; at the end of last year. Juan Rivera was instituted as Rector. This is a great answer to prayer as to who could take over when we retire. Juan has arrived at a time when people in the Church have been deepening their commitment to the Lord and to Church, and there is now a healthy group of leaders for different aspects of ministry. Juan Rivera is not new to the Church – he began his Christian life there and indeed Penny taught him when she first arrived in Peru, when he was 11.

In Jesús el Nazareno we continue to be very encouraged by the group of 12 - 13 years olds who are about to finish studying **Acts**. Over the last year they will have literally read and studied every verse in Mark and Acts – considerably more than most adults have achieved. Whilst talking about Paul’s report to the Church in Jerusalem in Acts 15 they were asked “What do you think I will say about YOU in the UK?”, opening up a teaching session on what exactly we DO



whilst in UK; most people think we are having a long holiday. It was also interesting to see how they perceived what MIGHT actually be said. Having seen that the next book in the Bible after Acts is Romans, they asked if we would study that next - what do you think the answer was? We will finished Acts just in time for the celebration (pizza) before we left for our UK trip. There is no one to replace Penny in this group, so we have to decide how to continue to encourage them to read the Bible whilst we are over 6,000 miles apart. These young teens are also part of the teenagers’ group, some of whom were able to attend a Diocesan camp in Feb on the theme “Faith in a difficult world”.

Juan Carlos & Penny Marcés

Kokodemas

Lots of folk enjoyed making these Japanese moss balls on 28th March 2026.



Years.

I am one of those people who love everything to be logical, and precise, and I have to try to explain things which do not seem to be like that. Dates provide lots of examples for me to work on. I can understand that our planet takes just over 365 days to move around the sun, so we have to have an extra day in our year every four years, so seasons etc don't get out of place.

Originally, January 1st was the date of the new year in the Julian calendar, but after the fall of the Roman Empire, the date gradually changed in various parts of Europe to March 25, to conform with Christian festival of the Annunciation. England adopted March 25th as New Year's day in the twelfth century. The tax year begins on April 5th. WHY? Because the change of year number happened on March 25th. the year 1752 was shortened by 11 days (when we went over to the Gregorian calendar), but in order to keep the tax year 1752 at 365 days its ending was moved to 5 April 1753, to ensure no loss of revenue!

We now celebrate the beginning of the New Year on January 1st. That and the year number represent our celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. BUT we celebrate his birth a week earlier on 25th December. Why are they different?

The academic year begins in September, and ends in July. Why? This is because when we were largely a farming nation, all the children were needed to help with the harvest, and so were kept away from the schools.

The first day of the Chinese New Year falls on the new moon that appears between 21st January and 20th February, and thus is variable. [Tuesday 17th February in 2026]

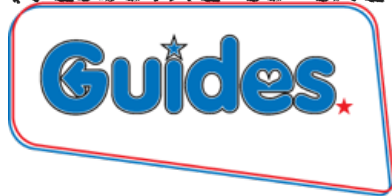
The Hindu calendar also depends on the moon, and has 354 days only. Thus their new year also varies considerably, & does not synchronise with seasons, though this matter less if you are near the equator.

Jewish New Year Rosh Hashanah is on the anniversary of the creation of Adam & Eve - late summer/early autumn in the Northern Hemisphere. In 2026 that will be , Friday 11th Sept – Sunday, 13th Sept & the year is currently 5786, rather than 2026 as it assumes Adam & Eve were created 3760 years BC.

I am sure you will be able to find lots more examples!

Celia Lester

Welcome to the world Baby Owl



At the end of March we welcomed a new addition and owl to the family. Our daughter Mary-Anne (Little Owl) gave birth to a little baby girl Isabella Rose weighing 6lb 3oz.

Isabella was originally due on Easter Sunday but she decided she wanted to be here a little earlier allowing them to celebrate their first Easter as a family of 3 Mum, (who has been a Rainbow, Brownie, Guide and Ranger at Cotteridge church) and baby are doing well and Dad Michael is doing a brilliant job taking care of them both.

We've been looking forward to being grandparents since we found out the news in August.

Isabella is our first grandchild and she is absolutely adorable and we're looking forward to making lots of memories with her.

Grandad (Mr Owl) will be putting his hand into his pocket forever more (haha)
Ana Leech (Brown Owl)



COTTERIDGE

If you have a few minutes to waste:

How many words can you make from the letters in Cotteridge, which begin with an "E"?

[Words which are NOT abbreviations, or personal names or slang]

Answers below.

Words in Cotteridge:- Answers
eco ego ere erg edge edit ergo edict egret eider erect ergot erode
editor erotic

News from Peter Rookes

We congratulate Dame Sarah Mulally at this historic moment of becoming the first woman to be installed as Archbishop of Canterbury, which marks a significant milestone for the Church of England. It is 39 years since women were allowed to become deacons, 32 years since they could be ordained priests and 12 years since they could be bishops. Her appointment as leader of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion, smashed a glass ceiling that had held for 1500 years.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is the first among equals in the Anglican Communion, one of the “instruments of communion” which holds the 42 provinces together. But the role is disputed by traditionalist bishops and congregations who have formed another group, Gafcon, in opposition to changes including women’s ordination.



She spoke of “a church for the whole nation and for the world, which looks for ways of joining with people of all faiths and none, in acts of service that will transform”. Representatives from a broad range of traditions including Jewish, Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Jains were present, alongside leaders from all main Christian denominations in England.

Have Your Say on the 5 Ways to Wellbeing

Birmingham Public Health Division is running engagement sessions to hear from Birmingham residents and community groups about how they use the 5 Ways to Wellbeing to support their health, and how these approaches can be better supported across the city.

Wed 15th April, Wed 6th May (Teams), Wed 20th May

As part of this work, we are especially interested in understanding the cultural perspectives, practices, and experiences that shape how different communities engage with the 5 ways for wellbeing. Birmingham is a diverse city, and capturing these cultural insights will help ensure the resource is meaningful, relevant, and reflective of the people who live here. The feedback gathered will directly shape a new local 5 Ways to Wellbeing booklet. Learn more about the project: - <https://healthexchange.org.uk/birmingham-voices-for-wellbeing/> Can't attend? - Share your views via the survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FiveWaysToWellbeing>



BCF Faiths Promoting Health and Wellbeing Forum

Our March Forum discussed -

National Cancer Strategy 2026 and our Mobile Cervical Screening Van with Kafilla Munir

Integrated Care Board consultation on Urgent Treatment Centres and GP Out of Hours Services (click the link for more info) – Dr Barbara King

<https://www.birminghamsolihull.icb.nhs.uk/get-involved/birmingham-and-solihull-utc-review>

The next Forum will be Thurs 21st May at 2.0pm – Full agenda in May Update and Events available from pjrookes@gmail.com

Birmingham Device Bank

ReCognition Circular has announced the opening of the Birmingham Device Bank, providing refurbished laptops to organisations across Birmingham. Devices are donated by local businesses, professionally wiped, refurbished and tested before being supplied to charities, community groups, schools or support organisations in Birmingham who need access to a computer.

Shape Birmingham's Ageing Well Strategy - Until Tuesday 28th July

The Council and its partners are excited to launch the Ageing Well Survey and need your voice to help shape a Birmingham where everyone can age with dignity, independence and connection. As our city's older population grows, it's vital that the services, spaces and support we design truly reflect what people need — and the best way to do that is by hearing directly from you.



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 in

Kings Norton, Kings Heath and Moseley, or Harborne and Edgbaston

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/>. There are 2 programmes.

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

Mon 11th May Faith and the Media

World Press Freedom Day occurs on 3rd May. We will explore how is Faith presented in the media. Guests will include Ruth Peacock from the Religion Media Centre and a member of the team from ITV Midlands

Mon 13th July Faith and Humanitarianism

World Humanitarian Day occurs in August. We will explore how 3 different faiths manifest humanitarianism in their beliefs and practice.

Mon 14th Sept – Faith and Mental Health

Please book on Eventbrite in the usual way by clicking -

u3a website - Learn - Subject Advice - Exploring World Faiths - Upcoming Webinar These webinars are open to all members of the u3a and start at 10.0am.

Further details - Dr. Peter Rookes, National Subject Advisor

u3a Exploring World Faiths, 077033 36088 pjrookes@gmail.com,



Roundabout is the bi-monthly newsletter of The Cotteridge Church.
Large print issue is available to download from our web site.

Your Editor from January 2017 is Celia Lester

Please send copy for the July 2026 edition before 23rd June 2026 to
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