



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

July/August 2019 Newsletter

*Remember His wonderful deeds which He has done, His
marvels and the judgments from His mouth.*

1 Chronicles, 16:12



SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Solihull URC has united three congregations from Olton, Hobs Moat and Christ Church (town centre). We retain premises in Hobs Moat and the town centre. Sunday worship is focused in the town centre, but we seek to witness in all three communities.

We share our mission with other churches and in partnership with others in the community. We invite you to join us as we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

www.solihullurc.org.uk
www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk

LEADERSHIP TEAM

VACANT - Minister

Gordon Justham - Church Secretary & Elder

Chris Harman - Treasurer & Elder

Linda Faber - Mission Enabler & Lettings Administration

Maureen Butler - Elder (worship & prayer, charities, social activities)

Trixie Harman - Elder (Youth & Children)

Barrie Jones - Elder (Property, Health & Safety)

Elaine Jones - Elder (Administration, Data protection, Catering)

Jackie Justham - Elder (charities, social activities)

Gordon Laurie – Elder

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

All Elders have responsibility for pastoral care.

Dear Friends,

Solihull URC reaches out to the community in many ways, all worthy of the highest praise, but in this letter I want to focus on one sphere of activity with which Iris and I have become familiar in recent times, namely the Moments Dementia Group.

“Moments”, as I’m sure you know, exists primarily to help sufferers from Alzheimer’s and Dementia, and their carers. Every Monday morning, including most Bank Holidays, a dedicated band of volunteers is ready and waiting to greet those who are now friends and members of the wider URC family. As I look around I see warm smiling faces of greeting, arms outstretched to help, kindly offers of a welcome “cuppa”. An atmosphere suffused with love, care and compassion.

The activities vary from dominoes to dancing, table-tennis to cooking, gardening to games, knitting to colouring, quizzes to occasional BBQ’s and last but not least (so Iris tells me!) chatting. All carefully aimed at mental and physical stimulation. Every meeting ends with community singing accompanied by our splendid pianist Jill. Every week the same familiar songs which memory loss seems to have by-passed. They are sung with gusto, sometimes conducted by one of the members who may, who knows? have been a choir-master in his younger days. Ian Carnell often leads the singing with a powerful amalgam of lyrical tenor and basso-profundo which is not easily defined in musical terms! Every session ends with the familiar strains of Edelweiss, a melodious indication that it’s time to go home.

I often wonder how many memories are locked away in those now not so active minds, how many varied and interesting careers that cannot now be spoken of, how many physical activities that have now been translated into lives of complete dependency. All that I know for certain is that here is a work of real Christian commitment, a practical expression of the well-loved hymn “Brother, sister, let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you”.

The “Moments” volunteers, inspirationally and energetically led by Elaine, come from the URC as well as other churches and backgrounds but they have in common, a desire to enrich and enhance the lives of people who live in private worlds, of who knows what memories or experiences, lives which are still rich and precious in the sight of God, lives which still deserve to be stimulated, loved and cherished. A hard and demanding task for their carers who are grateful for this brief weekly respite when they know that their loved ones are in good and caring hands.

So, in the coming days, please include in your prayers our Moments Group, remembering those for whom it has become an important part of their weekly routine. Remember also those dedicated volunteers who help to evoke memories of by-gone days, and pray also for those for whom caring has become a full-time commitment.

I will close in true “Moments” style, with the strains of Edelweiss coursing through my mind whilst, at the same time, giving thanks to God for having enabled me to experience at first-hand a wonderful example of what it truly means to translate Christian love into action.

With love from Iris and me,

Ron

DIARY FOR JULY

- Monday 1st** 10am: Moments
- Tuesday 2nd** 10:30am: Hobs Moat Neighbourhood Coffee Morning
- Thursday 4th** 10am: Tots & Tales
2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat
- Sunday 7th** 10am: Communion – Ian Carnell
- Monday 8th** 10am: Moments
12:30pm: Elders Meeting
- Thursday 11th** 10am: Tots & Tales
2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat
- Sunday 14th** 10am: Worship - Thursday Evening House Group
- Monday 15th** 10am: Moments
10am: Shout Out for the Girls Workshop
- Tuesday 16th** 10:30am: Hobs Moat Neighbourhood Coffee Morning
- Thursday 18th** 10am: Tots & Tales
- Sunday 21st** 10am: Worship (Church Meeting) - Linda Faber
- Monday 22nd** 10am: Moments
- Tuesday 23rd** 10:30am: Messy Church
- Sunday 28th** 10am: Worship (Café Style) – Gordon Justham
- Monday 29th** 10am: Moments
- Tuesday 30th** 10:30am: Hobs Moat Neighbourhood Coffee Morning

DIARY FOR AUGUST

- Sunday 4th** 10am: Communion – Ann Tempest
- Monday 5th** 10am: Moments
- Sunday 11th** 10am: Worship – Gordon Justham
- Monday 12th** 10am: Moments
- Tuesday 13th** 10:30am: Hobs Moat Neighbourhood Coffee Morning
- Sunday 18th** 10am: Worship – Linda Faber
- Monday 19th** 10am: Moments
- Sunday 25th** 10am: Worship – Rev Mike Wallace
- Monday 26th** 10am: Moments
- Tuesday 27th** 10:30am: Hobs Moat Neighbourhood Coffee Morning

All regular groups meet as usual. Please see your group leader for further information and ask them to put specific dates in the newsletter each month. Don't forget to use the calendar at the back of church.

HOBBS MOAT COFFEE MORNINGS

Dates for Tuesday Coffee Mornings at Hobs Moat from 10.30am until 12 noon.

- 2 July
- 16 July
- 30 July
- 13 August
- 27 August
- 10 September
- 24 September

All are welcome for a cuppa and chat. Please note 4 June is cancelled.

Anne and Annette

STILL NEEDED

Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (SCAH) give out emergency packages of items for people who have nothing who are moving in to accommodation. There are about 100 items in each pack such as kitchenware, bathroom ware and bedding. These all need purchasing by volunteers. Are you someone who can do some shopping on behalf of SCAH. Please see Linda or Bridget if you might be able to give some time for this project.



Many thanks go to all those who collected for Christian Aid in Olton! At times it seemed like a thankless task with little being collected but the overall total for Olton was a worthy £2473.46 which was more than last year. Gift Aid of about £245 will be added to this total. I am sure that those who are helped by Christian Aid will be truly grateful for our efforts.

Maureen Butler, Co-ordinator for Christian Aid in Olton.

Do you know you can send your old computer toner cartridges to Christian Aid? They send them on for recycling and receive £1 for each cartridge. Pick up a plastic envelope from the shelf at the back of church and send your cartridges free of charge. This is an on-going scheme and is not just for Christian Aid week, so keep on collecting.

Linda Faber

TOOLS WITH A MISSION (TWAM)

This is a charity which the church has supported a long time ago, and one which I have recently used. Their main work is collecting tools and equipment and then passing these on to the 400 partner communities. The tools are sorted into "trade kits" before being taken to their central depot where they are moved into containers which are shipped to the partner communities, mainly in Africa but also in Asia, the Americas and Eastern Europe.

The tools may be carpentry, building, plumbing, garden tools, computers, bicycles, wheel chairs etc.

TWAM is a Christian organisation with depots around the UK. Every year they send about 22 containers to their partners.

If you wish to contribute you may bring the tools etc., to my house where I have cleared a corner of the garage to store them. I will periodically take them to the TWAM depot in Coventry.

This is quite separate from the official Church charities which we have adopted at a Church Meeting.

Alan Kembery

FAIRTRADE

As most of you know I am now giving up selling Fairtrade goods. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported these sales over the past years. Your custom has been greatly appreciated and I feel that we helped to make Fairtrade a household name in the early years. We have also, through the 10% bonus, been able to contribute to Commitment for Life for many years.

Gerry

CALLING ALL SHOEBOXERS

If you are thinking ahead and starting to collect things for your shoebox on your summer travels you may find it useful to take a leaflet, with its list of suggested items, from the back of the church. The bad news is that the accompanying money for each box is now £3. If you don't get round to doing a box it would be helpful to return the leaflet. (I always run out!) If you have any questions see me.

Anne Cherry

TRULY A PLEASANT SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Having not been to a 'Pleasant Saturday (previously Sunday) afternoon' for some years, it was overwhelmingly delightful to be able to come to Hobs Moat and enjoy the joyous, the serious and the skill of those taking part, making a truly 'pleasant' occasion.

My apologies for 'making an entrance' rather late – it was because of an accident causing traffic jams, but still embarrassing - and yet what a welcome. There is something special about finding such warmth and acceptance especially when I compounded the situation by rattling on too long myself in a spot I was kindly given by Janet.

Most of you will not realise how special you are – those who were 'performing' and those in the audience. Yummy cakes and cups of tea and conversations reverberating afterwards, showed mutual care and friendship and love.

So I want to say a big 'Thank you' to all of you who made such an occasion possible and enjoyable. What a truly lovely way to spend a Saturday afternoon.

May God bless you all with joy and love in your hearts.

Mary Burgess



POWIS CASTLE, WALES. NATIONAL TRUST

Thursday 18th July

Once a stark, medieval fortress, Powis Castle has been transformed over 400 years into an extravagant family home with an exceptional collection of art, sculpture and furniture collected from Europe, India and the Orient. Outside you can enjoy the delights of a world famous garden with dramatic 17th Century terraces, lavish herbaceous borders and breathtaking panoramic views across the Severn Valley.

There is a shop and restaurant which serve lunches.

Please remember to bring your National Trust card.

Make your booking by ringing Val on 0121 706 9687 at least one week before the trip. All trips will start at 8:30 prompt from West Warwicks Sport and Social Club in Grange Road. Cancellation charges will apply and the cost for this trip will be £20 plus an entry fee for non N.T. members. A tip for the driver will be included.

DAVID ARGALL



BELVOIR CASTLE

Thursday 15th August

Belvoir Castle stands proudly in the Vale of Belvoir (Northamptonshire) and has been home to the Duke of Rutland's family since 1067 and is one of the finest examples of Regency architecture.

You are welcome to explore the castle and estate. There are many walks through the formal gardens on the castle terrace and into the woodland through the Japanese, Duchesses and Hermits gardens. Also as a bonus you can discover the best of country living, fashion and shopping in the new retail area now open. And of course there is a restaurant serving hot and cold meals.

The anticipated cost of the trip will be no more than £30 including a tip for the driver. As usual the coach will leave at 8:30 prompt from West Warwicks Sport and Social Club in Grange road and both trips can be booked by ringing Val on 0121 706 9687 at least one week before the trip. Cancellation costs will apply.

DAVID ARGALL

FLOWERS

Do you enjoy the flowers each Sunday? Is it good that we can send them to someone who is unable to come to church? If you answer yes to both of these questions perhaps you could offer to bring in a bunch to stand on the Communion table for our worship and then to be taken out to a friend who needs cheering up!

We really need your help and you do not need to be a good flower arranger, just a willing shopper, who can put a bunch of flowers in a vase. This request is for men as well as ladies!! There may even be help available. Please let me know if you can help with this worthwhile task. Thank you. **Trixie**

SUNDAY DUTIES

Recently there have been plenty of names put on the blank rotas but there are usually two or three gaps. Let us see if we can now get a full house each month. There are some folk who occasionally put their name down and might be tempted do it slightly more frequently. If anyone who has never done a duty wants to give it a go have a word with me, I will be very reassuring. **Alan Kembery**

THANK YOU

I wish to thank all the congregation for the lovely welcome they gave me on becoming a church member. Also, thank you to the children for making me a poster to remember my day.

God Bless, **Peggy Crosby**

SINGING FOR PLEASURE – AND OUR CHARITIES.

I guess that many of us have a favourite charity – or, more likely favourite charities, to which we give generously, because we empathise with their cause. Often it is because we have had some connection with the cause for which that charity works.

My husband John and I freely admit that one of the favourite charities which we support is Air Ambulance. This is because an Air Ambulance and crew came to rescue John on a quiet country lane in Earlswood after his accident with a lorry, while he was out cycling nine years ago. John only vaguely remembers the actual accident and subsequent journey to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the air ambulance but we will be forever grateful for it.

There are so many worthy charities but realistically, unless people are very wealthy indeed, we cannot support every one. So choices have to be made.

Our 'Singing for Pleasure' choir, led by Janet Ince, has always made its own choices when considering charities to support. We discuss the matter and the choice of charities is democratic. Members nominate various charities to consider – and it is a joy to sing in aid of the various chosen charities.

Our latest charity is 'Acorns' children's hospice. At the time of writing there are three Midland hospices for life limited children and their families. The nearest one to Solihull is in Selly Oak; there is one in Kidderminster and one in Walsall. We were very shocked to hear that the hospice in Walsall is to close – due to lack of funds. This seems appalling – 'Anyone who had a heart' to quote the title of a famous song from my youth, could not close a hospice for life limited children. It doesn't bear thinking of. That will leave just two Acorns' children's hospices and they too need funds.

So we sang in three different places in aid of 'Acorns' - firstly at Deerhurst Court in Solihull, at an Easter service led by one of our choir members, who is a lay preacher. One of the residents at Deerhurst told me [after my little talk on the subject of 'Acorns'] that she works as a

volunteer at the Knowle Acorns charity shop – and she is their oldest volunteer at age 93! God bless her and all the volunteers!

Then we sang for ‘Acorns’ charity at Brueton Place – a new venue for us and our visit was arranged by Ron Webb – thank you Ron! Raising money there was done in my little basket, which we left for offerings and the residents were very generous for which we were thankful.

And finally we sang at the last ‘Pleasant Saturday Afternoon’ event at Hobs Moat URC – where we raised over £300 when my little collection basket was taken round! Many thanks, to all who gave so generously. In total we have raised well over £500 for the ‘Acorn’s Children’s Hospice’ charity.

We shall continue to raise money for charities of course – it is a delightful spin off for doing something as pleasurable as Singing for Pleasure. And while I am on the subject of thanks, a big ‘thank you’ on behalf of the choir to our leader Janet Ince, who is an inspirational leader and a very dear friend to me and many. Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome to join the choir and after the summer break we shall be meeting in the Activity Room in our central Solihull building on Thursday afternoons. See the September newsletter for more details.

Carol Andrews



SINGING FOR PLEASURE

We have had an entertaining year of making music. We are a group of about 22 singers who have met every Thursday afternoon at our Hobs Moat premises. Our last session there before the Summer break will be on Thursday 11th July.

On Thursday September 12th we will be changing our venue to the Activity Room in our Central Solihull building with an earlier starting time of 1.30pm.

If you are interested please come and join us. We do have fun and there is no audition!

Janet

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CENTRAL SOLIHULL – MEETING REPORT

15 members were present on the 19th of June and our meeting commenced as usual with a meal.

We reviewed our most recent activities and were satisfied with the format for the Walk of Witness on Good Friday. Christian Aid week was well supported by street collectors and the coffee morning at the Methodist Church raised a sizeable amount of money for a worthy cause. Time was spent thinking about the 800th Anniversary of St Alphege next year, it will be celebrated at Pentecost. The rector, Jane Kenchington, is keen for all the churches to be involved and is also keen that the celebration should take place away from the church, it is likely that there will be some events in Brueton Park. A small group of people are looking for ideas and this is being hosted by the Methodist Church.

The Generation Project has been taken over by Dianne Webb who has produced a leaflet listing all the venues where we have a presence, contact numbers etc. We have agreed to have the leaflet published and it will be distributed to all the churches for information but also in the hope that more volunteers will be forthcoming. We received a report of a vision from John Flanner who feels it is very important to have a Christian Café and Bookshop in the centre of Solihull and asks for your prayers that this may come to fruition

We were sorry to say Goodbye to Ken Howcroft who has led our meetings for the last year and wished him well for his impending retirement, he was presented with a gift voucher.

The next Prayer Lunch is on Tuesday July 16th in the Meeting Place between 12.30pm and 1.30pm, please bring your own lunch but drinks will be provided and everyone will be welcome.

Judith Kembery

PRAYING IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH!

I rarely pray for myself in my prayers – you may well be the same. We pray for others including our families and friends of course. We pray for wisdom for our politicians. I often pray for the NHS and the emergency services and for children, their schools and their teachers. You probably do this too. But, from a personal perspective, I rarely pray for myself.

As a full time carer I intend to change this. My husband relies on my care 24/7. If I am ill I would not be able to care for him. So it was quite a shock recently when my GP showed considerable concern about my high blood pressure.

She said, 'I want you to take your blood pressure twice a day for a week and you can borrow a monitor from the surgery or buy your own'. A friend had kindly offered to lend his – which I gratefully accepted. So I started taking readings and could see why my doctor was concerned.

I read up on the internet about how foods can affect our blood pressure. I cut out full strength coffee but was very pleased to see that most internet sites said that dark chocolate is good for reducing blood pressure! Oh what lovely medicine – providing you don't choose a type that has lots of sugar of course!

But, despite some changes in my diet, my blood pressure refused to come down. I concluded that my high blood pressure problem is likely caused by stress. Life as a carer is unpredictable and every day is a challenge. I like order and routines and I like to plan and carry out the plans. Instead of which John and I have to live in the moment – some days he is well; others not – and my activities such as shopping are fitted around his well or sleeping times, when I feel it is relatively safe to leave him for a while.

I read more carefully the instructions in the blood pressure monitor – ‘take 3 deep and slow breaths before taking your blood pressure’. I also remembered that when I say my prayers I relax – sometimes I apologize to God when I say my evening prayers, as I start to nod off! So before taking my blood pressure I decided to say, ‘The Lord’s prayer’ slowly and prayerfully a couple of times, after taking the three deep breaths. I put the blood pressure cuff on my arm in readiness before the deep breaths and the prayers. So all I had to do was press the button to make the monitor work when I had finished my prayers.

The result was astonishing! On average the readings came down by 20 points for the Systolic reading which had previously been too high. And it worked every time. So that means that when I relax fully and talk to God – I relax! The deep breathing helps too of course – perhaps we should all that three deep breaths before we pray!

I am reminded of the words of a famous much loved hymn. ‘Be still for the presence of the Lord, is moving in this place’. And I am grateful to Jesus for His pattern prayer known as ‘The Lord’s Prayer’. As I age that prayer seems to mean more and more to me.

God bless you all, **Carol**

EDITOR'S POEM

Late August, given heavy rain and sun
For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.
At first, just one, a glossy purple clot
Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.
You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet
Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger
Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam-pots
Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.
Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills
We trekked and picked until the cans were full
Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned
Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered
With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.
We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.
But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.
The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush
The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair
That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

Seamus Heaney (1939 – 2013)



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Davis

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister

VACANT

Church Secretary

Mr. Gordon Justham: 07540 289855 - 01564 776229 -
gordonjustham@talktalk.net

Website

www.solihullurc.org.uk

Hall Lettings in Central Solihull – 07925 573259

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

www.generationsssolihull.org.uk generationsssolihull@icloud.com

Moments

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

Material for the September edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 18th August please.