



# **SOLIHULL**

## **UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat  
Communities

### **May 2020 Newsletter**

*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

***Acts 4:31***



## **SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

Based in the town centre, Solihull URC seeks to minister and witness to the local community, the wider town and the areas of Olton and Hobs Moat where we have formerly had a worshipping presence.

We share our mission with other Churches and are 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](http://www.solihullurc.org.uk)**  
**[www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk](http://www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk)**

### **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**VACANT - Minister**

Gordon Justham - **Church Secretary & 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**

Chris Harman - **Elder**

Liz Amos - **Treasurer**

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

Dear Friends,

There doesn't seem to be much to be thankful for just now: people losing loved ones, those losing employment or fear of, people stranded abroad, isolation, loneliness, and the financial situation; Charities facing loss of revenue so affecting their ability to help those in need during this very difficult time.

But there is an enormous amount we can give thanks for. We have been taken off the roundabout and given time to re-evaluate our way of life. We have been given the opportunity to slow down, to think what is important in our lives. We can take advantage of the relative peace to watch and listen to what is around us, the spring flowers, the birds singing in the trees, the rustling of the leaves in the gentle breeze, the butterflies and you might even hear the Cuckoo, we thank God for all of his good gifts.

We have learnt to be more resourceful, communities coming together to help the vulnerable; we've found new ways, through technology, to talk to each other and to listen to acts of worship, we speak to those we meet on our daily walks, it can make such a difference.

Those we have to give grateful thanks for are those who are working under extremely difficult circumstances to keep us safe and well, everyone in the NHS, emergency services, key workers, the government, supermarket employees, delivery drivers- not forgetting the armed forces.

We look forward with hope and faith in ourselves and each other; and pray that God will help us to continue to be more patient and to take time to appreciate all he has given us.

As we have taken our daily walks we couldn't help noticing - and puts a smile on our faces- how many children have put rainbow pictures in the windows, their ray of hope and light which will come out of the darkness and difficult times. With this poem, therefore, comes hope and love.

TAKE CARE, KEEP WELL. **Elaine Jones**

## *THE RAINBOW*

The pureness of light  
My eyes cannot see  
God divided it out  
Made a spectrum for me

Beauty for the heart  
My eyes to behold  
Joy for the young  
Promise for the old

Reflection of the sun  
Alive, joyful and bright  
A backdrop of rain  
Colours the fire of light

Arch through the sky  
Gift of his care  
The presence of God  
In a rainbow to share.

*Sandra Jolly-Kalnasy*

The prayer for our time:

*Lord Jesus, In the midst of a storm, You said, 'Peace be still.' bid our anxious fears subside, sustain your church in faith, hope and love.*

*Bring our nation through this tumult. Grant wisdom to those with heavy responsibilities, And healing and hope to those who are infected.*

*Amen.*



**All of our worship services, and other activities in our building, remain suspended until government restrictions on gatherings are lifted.**

## **The Lectionary readings for Sundays in May are as follows.**

3 May - **John 10.1-10**; Acts 2.42-47; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2.19-25

10 May - **John 14.1-14**; Acts 7.55-60; Psalm 31.1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter 2.2-10

17 May - **John 14.15-21**; Acts 17.22-31; Psalm 66.8-20; 1 Peter 3.13-22

24 May - **John 17.1-11**; Acts 1.6-14; Psalm 68.1-10, 32-35; 1 Peter 4.12-14; 5.6-11

31 May - **John 7.37-39**; Acts 2.1-21; Psalm 104.24-34,35b; 1 Corinthians 12.3b-13

## **EASTER SUNDAY**

Many thanks to Steve and Linda Faber for providing us with an online Easter Communion Service. It was very moving and although we were viewing either alone or in family groups it meant a great deal. The service was greatly appreciated by many and they were not just members of our own congregation. Folk joined us from around the West Midlands Synod and further afield. Thanks also to Steve for the technical software knowledge, and ability to put it together. The early testing allowed a couple of glitches to be resolved and enabled people to watch either on their smartphones, tablets or home computers. In fact I am aware some people watched it more than once. Thank you Steve and Linda for helping us to celebrate Easter. **Gordon Justham**

## **PASTORAL NEWS**

### **CHRIS GODDARD**

Many have heard already but we were sad to receive the news that Chris Goddard died in Hospital on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April. Jill says, "Chris had to go into Heartlands on March 19th, and his scheduled operation was thus brought forward to the 23rd. Three days after this he became very poorly with Covid19 and was not expected to survive. But he did recover and was doing very well till Sunday when he had a sudden relapse and died within 4 hours.

His disabled brother Michael in Banbury who we prayed for a lot in 2017 also became extra poorly on Sunday evening and died in hospital on Monday. So our daughter is now having to deal with the formalities of both. We thank you all for your support and prayers, I know you will be thinking about us and would appreciate no phone calls at the moment."

### **DAVID LIDSEY**

We were also sorry to hear the news that David Lidsey died in hospital on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April. Sylvia was able to visit David on Thursday to say her 'good byes' and I understand that the staff looking after him were wonderful and that David was not alone in his last minutes. Sylvia would also appreciate not being contacted at the moment.

### **JOHN PAYNE**

Those of you who were regular worshippers at Olton may remember John Payne. We have received the following from his family:

*John Frederick Payne passed away on 17th April after a short illness aged 93. Loving husband and father to Mavis and Sally, Guy & Tim. Will be sadly missed by Guy and Deb, Tim and Michelle. Also grandchildren Ashley, George, Oliver, Eve and William.*

**Cancellation of  
Christian Aid  
Coffee Morning  
2020**



Given the current unprecedented circumstances it will come as no surprise to you that the Christian Aid Coffee Morning on May 9th will NOT be taking place.

Likewise, Christian Aid have said that house to house collections will not go ahead in Christian Aid week .

In due course we will have to see if something can be arranged which allows us to get together and at least raise some funding for Christian Aid.

Thank you for the donations of paperback books already received. These will be stored and sold at a later date in aid of the charity.

Thank you.

**Myles Ensor**

**Please see page 14 for further information about how we are raising some money for Christian Aid.**

## **IN MEMORY OF MARIAN BATTEN**

We were greatly saddened to learn that Marian passed away on Wednesday 15th April.

We have, and so have many others from the Church, so many happy memories of Marian. I personally have known Marian for over forty years through the Church and it has been a privilege to have known this kind, gentle, loving, unassuming and sincere lady. She was always there with a quiet encouraging word and being so supportive.

Marian was a longstanding stalwart member of the Church with strong Christian beliefs. She participated in so many aspects of Church life such as secretary for many years, junior church, the choir, eldership and so many committees too many to name. It was only in moving to Longbridge she found unable to travel to Solihull United Reformed Church. Marian will be sorely missed.

The funeral will take place at 2:30pm on Wednesday 6th May. I have asked the family if they could let me know if in the future they decide to have a memorial service for her. If you wish to make any donations in memory of Marian, please make them to the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) charity.

**Elaine Jones**

## LOSS NEEDS HOPE

I don't know if you saw, and joined in with, the call for Christians at Easter time to make a cross-shaped 'wreath' to hang outside their homes. I was made aware of the idea by my husband who had seen it on-line somewhere.



Casting about for something light-weight, but a bit bulky, to form the core of my cross on to which I could tie my bits of greenery, my eye alighted on the remains of our Christmas tree languishing by the compost heap in the garden, still not chopped up. The Christmas tree branches, with needles, which are still firmly attached, made a good foundation for my cross when tied together. So I made a 'wreath' and we hung it outside along with a message in our landing

window. Our living space is mainly at the back of the house so I don't see people outside but my neighbour opposite says lots of people stop to read the message with at least one photographing it. What ways are you finding to spread the message of hope in these strange covid-19 influenced times?

Using our Christmas tree like this reminded me of the practice of the Methodist Church in our former town of residence that every Easter uses the trunk of their Christmas tree to make a cross for the front of their church. (I see the Methodist Church here does it too – perhaps it is a Methodist thing.) The purpose of doing this is to remind everyone that the Good News of 'Immanuel God with us' is inextricably tied to the Easter message of Hope for the world.



Our world is passing through a valley of loss and grief. No one is untouched. Whether it has been through the death of a loved one, the loss of human contact, the loss of mental health through the strains of this trial, the loss of comforting routine, the loss of freedom, the loss of communal activity, the loss of educational opportunities, the loss of... you can think of so many more in the same way I can. And loss

needs grieving and healing. Loss needs hope. Loss causes change, plenty of those changes not welcome. The world will not return to 'normal' as if nothing ever happened. Something is happening in our world and God is at work within it, despite it, but not because of it—He has always been at work making a way for people to come to Him. God is using this situation to get people to pay attention. The church of Jesus Christ, of which we are a part in Solihull, is the plan that Jesus put in to place to spread that message of hope and healing. That means every one of us has to find a way to pass on that hope and healing to our community broken by loss. Our community is looking and we need to be showing them the way.

The internet platform that we used to host our Easter service online was used similarly by many other churches and on Easter day many people joined in who might never normally worship on Easter Sunday. We can rejoice and be encouraged in our isolated situations that from all those services over 70,000 people gave their life to Christ as their Lord and Saviour on Easter day this year. More people have gained Eternal Life this Easter than have died of Covid-19.

This is great, and don't let me diminish the greatness of it, but for most of us this is somewhat remote. It will take a while for those people to 'plug in' to a local church where they can be taught and 'disciplined'. But the local church is where the growth takes place and the character is developed.

The chances are your friends and acquaintances aren't amongst those 70,000. In your communications take the opportunity to talk about your faith and how God is all sufficient to meet your needs in this trying time. Talk about what you are finding difficult and how God sustains and supplies. Talk about how supernatural healing works and how God can supply a peace which surpasses all understanding. Be brave and offer to pray over the phone with your friends and family if they have expressed a need for hope or healing, strength or peace. We are all changed and we need to be, and do, church in a way that we have never done before. We need to keep in step with what God is doing and listen for His opportunities on a daily basis.

**Linda Faber**

### **A MOMENT OF HUMOUR**

**Our family especially like a good pun but any good joke will do. Here are some lockdown jokes:**

**Q: What are the best sort of jokes during the coronavirus lock down?**

A: Inside Jokes

**Q: What's the difference between Romeo & Juliet and the pandemic?**

A: One's a Verona crisis and the other is a corona virus.

Well, Anna and I thought they were funny. Linda

## WHAT JESUS SAYS TO US IN 2020

One of the things that I had in mind to do through the year is to keep revisiting the three elements that we believed that God has given us for our church for this year. I last spoke about them in February and as another quarter of a year has passed since then, and the whole landscape has changed, I think it is time to take another look.

How times *have* changed! But God always knew how this year would unfold for us and this is what He had to say. So let's revisit them with our new view point.

To remind you, the three elements for us this year are that we should 'be bold in faith' and 'move forward' and be 'filled with the Spirit'.

### Jesus tells us to be bold in faith

I said in my sermon on this point that, "God will never do something great through us until he has done something great in us first. People keep asking me why this church is not thriving and my answer is this: because we have not allowed God to do something great in us first."

I went on to speak about the need to deepen our worship, to deepen and mature our prayer life and to deepen our passion for the Word of God.

I think that this time of enforced isolation is exposing the strength, or otherwise, of people's faith. God is all sufficient for us. Do we believe that, and live that, even when things are going well, or have we been propped up by the institution of church expecting to be spoon-fed, and have others write our prayers? Do we know our Scriptures and how to apply them in a relevant way for our neighbours? How great is the thing that God has been doing in us over the years or have we only allowed Him to scratch the surface?

This time is exposing where our faith is. This is the time to repent and let God further in.

## Jesus tells us to move forward

When I spoke about this topic in November we looked at the foul water of Jericho in the time of Elisha and how Elisha brought healing to that water supply making it useable, and fresh, for the whole city and I asked, “Did anyone in Jericho fail to notice that God’s Grace had been poured out there?”

Jericho was a city in need of healing and we find ourselves in a town that needs healing, even more than it did when we looked at this back in November. We have to pour out God’s grace to our town in our day. We have had to stop being a cosy huddle of believers and move our faith out of the church building and into the community. We have had to make community in places we never imagined existed. To exercise, and apply, our faith in ways we have never thought of before. What is happening to us through this lockdown is exactly in line with this calling Jesus has for us. Move. Be church in a different place.

## Jesus tells us to be filled with the Spirit

When we looked at being a church filled with the Holy Spirit we paid attention to four truths which were by no means exhaustive but they were:

1. Releasing the Spirit to operate is to involve others in our prayers and actions.
2. A Spirit filled Church will sometimes close the doors so that we can be focused on spending time exclusively with God. (How relevant as it turns out! Make sure you are getting in deeper with God in this time.)
3. Being a church willing to let the Holy Spirit lead will mean pushing through the normal and taking steps of faith.
4. Being people of the Holy Spirit involves pushing on through the first flush of out pouring to the next and the next.

Please think about these three elements of calling for us once again and reinterpret them for this time. **Linda Faber**

**Christian Aid  
Week  
Goes Virtual**



Despite these challenging times, Christian Aid are continuing their vital work across the globe, reaching out to people in poorer countries. Many are already living with reduced health resilience because of extreme poverty, or in overcrowded humanitarian camps and in countries which do not have the healthcare infrastructures needed to combat widespread disease.

**What we can do during Christian Aid Week**

During the Coronavirus crisis, it is more important than ever that we come together as a community to worship and to share fun and fellowship. That is why during Christian Aid Week they will be live-streaming worship each day and hosting a fun daily quiz to join and raise funds. To sign up and take part in these activities visit.

<http://caweek.org/payin> and click on *Virtual Fundraisers*. I would encourage as many of you as possible to join in and show love for our neighbours near and far, as a global family.

As you are all aware, the usual house-to-house collections and coffee morning have had to be cancelled. Christian Aid desperately needs us to maintain our fundraising so we have looked at ways we can still continue to give. I am including a quiz which some of you may enjoy and the answers will be available in a subsequent newsletter or online

from 31<sup>st</sup> May. Your donations can be made in any of the following ways. If you have any questions or any difficulties, please contact me.

- 1) Donations can be made online to Christian Aid at <http://caweek.org/payin>
- 2) or <http://Justgiving.com/campaign/CAWeek2020>
- 3) Donations to the church account 0-97-78 A/n 00257130 ref caweek
- 4) Send a cheque to Linda Faber (22 Ferndown Road, Solihull B91 2AT) payable to Christian Aid

Thank you, **Myles Ensor**

# Quiz

## TV Programmes



Can you identify these TV programmes from the cryptic clues?

- 1 In and out (4,3,4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Stir cereal (8) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 A wee bit chilly (1,5,2,5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 What you can't teach Old Shep (3,6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Explosive idea (3,3,4,6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Codename (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Attic and basement (8,10) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Orphan's view (8) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Fabulous fair ride (3,5,10) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 Yellow family (3,8) \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 Off to bed, pet (9,10) \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 Let's eat at my place (4,4,4,2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 Unknown documents (3,1,5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 Just cons and nags (4,5,3,6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 15 Can't see what's on the calendar (5,4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 16 Short survey before the light goes (7) \_\_\_\_\_



# Quiz

## TV Programmes



- 17 Negotiate search (7,4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 Stern invitation to boogie (8,4,7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 19 Saturday's big wedding (5,2,3,3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 20 Designer clothes (3,4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 21 Tamper with the World Health Organization (6,3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 22 Overhear a few words (11) \_\_\_\_\_
- 23 Our place in the universe (5,4,4,3,3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 24 Endure seasonal drink (4,2,3,6,4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 25 Questioning identity (3,2,3,5,3,3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 26 Where the Queen might be treated (1,1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 27 Built to impress (5,7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 28 What people play on their loos (4,2,7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 29 Gawp at cube (9) \_\_\_\_\_
- 30 Those close to us (7) \_\_\_\_\_



Thank you for supporting Christian Aid using our fundraising quiz. Answers will be published online on 31 May 2020 at [caweek.org/quizanswers](http://caweek.org/quizanswers) If you need the answers for your event, please email [CAW@christian-aid.org](mailto:CAW@christian-aid.org) If you're taking part in this quiz as part of a local competition where a prize is up for grabs, please ask your local Christian Aid contact about how to submit your quiz entry.

## **COULD IT HAVE BEEN YOU?**

Here we have a whole page of space where it would have been great to have included contributions from you all that you could share with one another, but no one has found the time to write something in the last month, and send it in.

How are you finding lockdown? How is it affecting the way you worship? What are you learning about yourself? What new ways are you finding to exercise your spiritual gifts to enlarge the Kingdom?

We are in an unusual season but there is much growing to do and much preparation – particularly in thought and prayer to be ready for when people are allowed to meet again. Are you giving it any thought and prayer? What ideas, conclusions are you reaching?

What else have you been up to? How are you being a friend to others? Have you found any other ways to serve? Are you still working and how are you finding that? Please tell us something ready to print next month.

## SHINE YOUTH (PREVIOUSLY THIS WAY UP)

Shine Youth works in schools right across the borough giving grief, loss and mental health support to young people. We supported This Way Up as our church charity a couple of years ago but due to a lack of sufficient funding the charity had to close and change the way it operated and restarted as Shine Youth.

In their latest newsletter they say:

“All of our face-to-face mentoring sessions in schools were suspended on the 20th March due to schools closing in line with the Government’s instructions. Thankfully, we had been able to prepare all of the young people we were working with for the likely disruption to school and their mentoring sessions, and to direct them to additional online sources of support. Since then we have been developing our ability to support young people remotely. Schools have also requested training to enable them to support students to process the many different losses, mental health challenges and, perhaps even bereavements that may have impacted on them during this period.

Unfortunately, the current social distancing measures have also meant that we had to cancel our planned fundraising events. As a small charity our finances are particularly impacted by this.”

If you felt that you wanted to support this charity at this time please contact me (Linda Faber) for details or go to their brand new website at [www.shineyouth.org.uk](http://www.shineyouth.org.uk)



## KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

### **Minister**

VACANT

### **Church Secretary**

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

### **Website**

[www.solihullurc.org.uk](http://www.solihullurc.org.uk)

**Hall Lettings** in Central Solihull – 07925 573259

**Generations Project** - enabling the Church in care homes

[www.generationsssolihull.org.uk](http://www.generationsssolihull.org.uk) [generationsssolihull@icloud.com](mailto:generationsssolihull@icloud.com)

### **Moments**

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

## **JUNE NEWSLETTER**

Material for the June edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

[stuartkmills@gmail.com](mailto:stuartkmills@gmail.com)

by Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May please.