



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

June 2020 Newsletter

*For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the
blood; and the three are in agreement.*

1 John 5: 7-8



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
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.

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

The Elders are considering how we may re-open the church as lockdown restrictions begin to ease. The Government have indicated that it may be possible for churches to open, with restrictions, from early July. We still await further government guidance on this matter. In addition, the central office of the URC have issued a document giving some thoughts on matters that need to be considered before we, as an individual congregation, can physically meet again. We hope to be able to give more detail in July's Newsletter.

Gordon Justham

The Lectionary readings for Sundays in June are as follows.

7 June Matthew 28.16-20; Genesis 1.1–2.4a; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13.11-13

14 June Matthew 9.35-10.8(9-23); Exodus 19.2-8a; Psalm 100; Romans 5.1-8

21 June Matthew 10.24-39; Jeremiah 20.7-13; Psalm 69.7-10,11-15,16-18; Romans 6.1b-11;

28 June Matthew 10.40-42; Jeremiah 28.5-9; Psalm 89.1-4,15-18; Romans 6.12-23;

*The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. **John 16:32***

Over the last weeks we have embarked on a journey that has changed our lives. The “normal” life we had will never be repeated because of the panic caused by Coronavirus. However, that normal had its problems: poverty, pollution and other environmental issues destroying our world, and greed and selfishness demonstrated in so many ways. It felt that people were forgetting the first two commandments: to love God and to love our neighbour.

During the lockdown we have seen great suffering and loss of life which is hard to take in, causing so much grief and sense of loss to so many. It is difficult, but helpful, to remember that God always walks with us to help us find meaning and hope in adversity. “When you saw only one set of footprints, It was then that I carried you.” God also calls us to comfort one another and to allow ourselves to be comforted by others.

Isolation and loneliness have caused distress and mental health issues to the most vulnerable, and families have struggled to find ways to remain positive and cheerful. Even for people who like solitude, isolation can bring about anxiety, fear and depression. It may be a comfort to think of the isolation of Jesus after his arrest, and the enforced isolation of people throughout the world who are in prison for their beliefs. We can keep our loved ones and other people in our hearts and minds, and connect with those we love, both by letter-writing, on the phone or screen, but also in our prayers.

Nurses, medical staff and other health related professionals have worked with dedication, kindness and understanding without thought of self. Their skills have saved so many lives, and so many behind the scenes have worked endlessly to keep our lives as normal as possible.

We have experienced neighbourhoods taking initiatives in offering help and support to the isolated and lonely. On a Thursday evening the whole country gathers outside homes to clap in appreciation of those dedicated to caring for others and as a result smile and wave to neighbours we may have never known or acknowledged before. When considering this, we can thank God for signs of his love and beauty.

But as we continue our journey what will the new “normal” look like? We pray that the wave of consideration and thoughtfulness in response to others’ needs during lockdown will help us hear your voice and grow in faith, that we follow in your footsteps in the path ahead knowing that “all will be well and all manner of things will be well”.

Marian Vining

THANK YOU

I would like to thank all those who attended Judith's cremation and the Service of Celebration. The large number of people who attended was a fitting tribute to her life, an acknowledgement that she had touched all our lives to some extent. A number of people apologised for not being able to attend. Judith will be missed greatly by her family and her friends. Thank you for all the cards and tributes. You will be glad to learn that Marie Curie benefitted from your generous donations to the tune of £1,562. To this we should add £210 raised on a Crowdfunding website by our Grandson, Dan Kembery who wanted, with his friends, to say 'thank you' to Nana. With the Gift Aid payments added the final total will be in the region of £2,000. **Alan Kembery**

Audrey Tarplee would like to thank everybody for helping her to celebrate her 90th birthday during lockdown by sending her birthday cards. She greatly appreciated the flowers from the church. She was treated to a lovely meal of duck, at home and she received many cards from her friends. Audrey hopes that it will not be too long before it is safe enough for us to meet up again as a congregation.

Thank you everyone who has contributed to the newsletter since we could no longer meet in church. It's been a great source of comfort and I've enjoyed receiving my copy through the letterbox. **Beryl Nix**

Chris Harman has reached 80 and would like to send his thanks for all the cards and messages that he has received.

I am sure that we are all very grateful to Gordon for the weekly information he sends us about the services we can get on our radios and TV and the material from Roots. It is so easy to forget the regular programmes and Gordon provides a timely reminder! So many thanks to Gordon for all that he had done in enabling us to share with others what is important to us in our lives particularly at this time. **Irene Bound**

I wish to convey my sincere thanks for the kind expressions of sympathy received in the many, many cards and letters, and also flowers and telephone calls, since the death of my beloved David on 20th April. The last few months have been a difficult time for me and my family, but especially the last ten weeks since 'lockdown' was imposed on us. Knowing that my church family has kept us in thought and prayer has gone some way towards easing the feeling of having to face this alone. With my love and thanks to you all. God Bless. **Sylvia Lidsey**

MY EXPERIENCES DURING THE LOCKDOWN

Like so many I am greatly missing all my family, friends, church and group activities. However I am finding great enjoyment in gardening and walks around my local area especially during this colourful spring time. The greater sense of community and acts of kindness have raised my spirits. Throughout all this period I have felt God's presence with me more deeply especially in my prayer and Bible study time. This feeling is captured by a photograph of a beautiful pink rose shown on the Leprosy Mission calendar with this Bible verse:

'Be still and know that I am God'. Psalm 46 verse 10

A great focus for my prayer time this year has been Linda Faber's prayer booklets called 'Twenty 20's for 2020'

I would recommend this prayer scheme as it focuses on our community of Solihull. It has been very informative and it challenges us to look more deeply into many aspects of our town life such as schools, youth, regional government, fire and ambulance services to name but a few.

With love from **Janet Ince**

SHOE BOXES

I hope you are all busy knitting teddies and dogs from the patterns that Linda has sent us (and being more successful at it than I am). If anyone would like the leaflet that tells us about what to put in the boxes I would gladly send you one if you give me your contact details.

You can ring me on 0121 707 4285 or email me at annecherry@talktalk.net

Keep knitting! **Anne Cherry**

**Christian Aid
Week
Goes Virtual**



Christian Aid's vital work continues both at home and overseas and with the current coronavirus affecting the globe their funds are even more stretched so there is an additional Coronavirus emergency appeal to provide help in 17 countries. Did you know that currently 40 % of the population - 3 billion people, do not have access to soap and water? Think how many times we are washing our hands every day. We take it for granted. Water stations are being installed in an attempt to protect people from the virus. Food packages are being provided to those in lockdown in many countries and vulnerable people are being

supported who face danger of violence and abuse. Coronavirus is impacting us all wherever we are in many different ways but think of all those forced to live in refugee camps so close together with multi-generational families in one tiny space where social distancing is totally impossible. Sharing in work on the ground with their local partners, Christian Aid is ensuring urgent health messages are getting through to try and keep people safe and prevent and delay infection.

Your donations can be made in any of the following ways.

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 30-97-78 A/n 00257130 ref caweek

4) Send a cheque to Linda Faber payable to Christian Aid

I hope you were able to join in with the Christian Aid week TV programme Quiz. For those who are still scratching their heads struggling with the clues, here are the answers.

Thank you, **Myles Ensor**

Answer sheet

Questions

- 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)
- 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)

Answers

- Home and Away
- Porridge
- A Touch of Frost
- New Tricks
- The Big Bang Theory
- Morse
- Upstairs, Downstairs
- Panorama
- The Magic Roundabout
- The Simpsons
- Goodnight Sweetheart
- Come Dine with Me
- The X Files
- Only Fools and Horses
- Blind Date
- Poldark
- Bargain Hunt
- Strictly Come Dancing
- Match of the Day
- Top Gear
- Doctor Who
- Catchphrase
- Third Rock From the Sun
- Last of the Summer Wine
- Who Do You Think You Are?
- E.R.
- Grand Designs
- Game of Thrones
- Gogglebox
- Friends



SOLIHULL CHURCHES ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

As a church we are very heavily interested in the work of Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (SCAH) providing a store room and hosting their meetings. Some of you are involved with the work personally and many others give financially and prayerfully to support the work. I receive their monthly report and accounts and thought some of you would be interested to hear how their work is continuing during lock down. The following is drawn from the report I received on 1st May.

(If you don't already know CiA, referred to further down, is Change into Action—the council giving scheme set up at the end of last year for the public to donate to to help the homeless rather than giving them change/money directly, which is counter-productive—the accounts are administered by SCAH).

“In April, due to the Covid-19 lockdown the number of clients who could be assisted reduced dramatically from the numbers seen in March. Just about all shoppers are ‘self-isolating’ as is entirely appropriate, safety of volunteers being paramount, but there have been a few requests which have been serviced via on-line shopping.

“Donations also reduced in April [but the bank] balance at the month end was healthy. At the moment SMBC has temporarily housed just about all of the homeless in Solihull...but at some point the extra money being received from central government to fund this may decrease or stop, as the lockdown eases, so the trustees of SCAH anticipate a substantial increase in assistance required in the future.

“April was a very good month for CiA. It has been very well funded [this month]...just as well, knowing that the ‘health crisis’ will be followed by the ‘economic crisis’ that may affect many people.”



Matthew ch 5 v14-16

'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'

In the school holidays, when I don't work, I like to make a little something using some craft skill or other that I have picked up along the way. Many times I will use the making time as a meditation exercise and contemplate a Bible verse that has been on my mind and that has inspired the making project. This Easter I had

been thinking about the verse 'A town built on a hill cannot be hidden' as the illustration Jesus used to describe the Good News that shines forth from the life of every Spirit filled Christian. I had been thinking about what that means when we are shut away in our homes. How do we shine when many of us are under extreme human shielding seeing almost no one?

And a junk-modelling project, that had caught my imagination on the internet some years ago, came to mind and I decided to do some sticking. I didn't quite get it finished in the holidays and as you see in the picture it is quite large and my poor husband has had to tolerate it in our bedroom where 'my' little bit of making space is, but it is finished now. Yes it is just a pile of junk boxes but I covered them, and stuck them together, with old local and national newspapers, all the while thinking about all the stories and people in our local community, and country, that those newspaper articles are about. I was thinking about the Good news of the Gospel, the message that they need to hear; the Good News that would have made a whole difference to their

life and story. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. How are we going to keep on shining forth, unhidden, in this 'stay away' phase of our lives?

Linda Faber

KEEPING FOCUSED ON TODAY

In this period where we are confined to our homes; missing fellowship with others and unable to view our world, only through perhaps the television or internet, let us think of Jesus's words written in Luke. We are told he visits Zaccheus in his home. Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house." We are all in reach of God's compassion. The important word to me is TODAY. Sometimes we allow the future to supplant the present. We take God's promises as something to be fulfilled in some distant time, which we cannot see clearly. We are unable to see the future and must leave it in God's safe hands.

When the world looks and feels a grim place, we often back off and dream of a wonderful time ahead. Life, however, must be lived now! Jesus tells us that the salvation He offers is for now. Let us not dwell on the future, wondering what it will be in weeks, months or even years. Let us experience life as it is today and fulfil God's purposes each day we are locked in our homes. Experience different riches and find the silver lining behind each cloud. Let us lift our eyes and look at Jesus. Listen to His words and carry out His plans. Jesus is still Lord and God has not pressed pause: He is continuing to build His Kingdom and He is inviting us all to be part of that work.

"Let us be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."
(Romans 12v12)

I pray that Our Lord will bless and keep you and those you love safe. In Christ, **Rosalind**

HORNINGSHAM

In the village of Horningsham is a chapel which claims to be the oldest Free Church in England still used for worship. It is situated on the border of the Longleat estate. The village of 400 inhabitants is owned by the Marquess of Bath (the 7th Marquess died very recently).

Whilst reading a history of the Church I made a few entirely unconnected notes, here they are:-

- Some of our worthy predecessors would preach for nearly an hour.
- Music was supplied by a bass viol and a flute
- their abominable service and the mocking of God by their singing prayers and piping organ and the exercise of religion in other manner than according to the liturgy and practice of the Church of England (this was part of the charge against a member after he had attended a service. He was fined 5 shillings for his offence)
- When a ministerial vacancy occurred in 1868 the church received replies from 16 ministers thanking her for her service as our Harmoniumist for 18 years.
- 6 tons of straw were needed to thatch the roof.
- Two of the ceilings in the manse collapsed, one in the middle of the night.

Alan Kembery

ELDERS MEETING

The Elders had a good go at holding an Elders meeting online last week. For the most part it went very well but there wasn't enough connection available in my house to sustain the connection very well - even after I had to tell all the children to get off and let me have it all! Enough was discussed before I got cut off and we are going to be getting together regularly now we have made it work.

I was connected long enough for the Elders to ask me to let you all know the bank details of the church, once again, so you can continue to give to the work of the church.

Please sustain your giving through this difficult time. A generous and meaningful gift each month, either set aside or transferred to the bank, will allow us to continue our work.

The bank details are:

Bank: Lloyds Bank, Solihull
Account name: Solihull United Reformed Church
Sort Code: 30 – 97 – 78
Account number: 00257130

Please let us know at Solihullurc@gmail.com that your giving is for the offertory so that we can place it in the right field in the accounts.

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.generationssoalihull.org.uk generationssoalihull@icloud.com

Moments

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

JULY/AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Material for the July/August edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 21st June please.