



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

March 2020 Newsletter

*...so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting,
but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father,
who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

Matthew 6:18



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.

Dear All, as you read this we will have started Lent – the most important period in the Church calendar. As we all know, it is a forty-day period (in addition to the 6 Sundays) in preparation for Easter, the greatest feast of the Christian Year. It is a period of fasting, intense prayer, alms/money-giving, reflection and doing good in addition to our usual – so not a lot to ask of ourselves! But a reminder of all that Jesus did (and does) for us.

As we take time to consider all of this and how to follow Christ in his suffering to Calvary and further, I found the use of symbols helpful. These all help us to be able to think about the enormity of this period and the whole meaning of Lent:

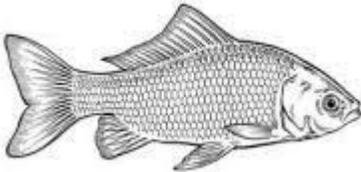


Ashes: They remind us of the creation story that we are made from dust (Genesis 2:7). They symbolize our human mortality and need for forgiveness, humility, purification and sorrow for our wrong doings. Similarly, the ashes remind us that we are vulnerable people before God and as it is written in Genesis (3:19) that, ‘we are dust and unto dust we shall return.’

Violet/purple colour: This is a somber colour for the Lenten season which signifies humility, willingness to repent, mourning for all the ‘wrongs’ and suffering with Jesus.



Stones: They remind us of Jesus' experience in the desert for forty days and being tempted by the devil. Jesus was tempted by the devil to change stones into bread but he did not heed to this. He remained steadfast and overcame the temptations. Are we able to do the same in any small way?



Fish: It is a symbol of lent which traditionally has called us to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It further reminds us of abstinence from meat on all the Fridays of Lent. As more of us become vegetarian (maybe even Vegan?) the importance is not just about not eating meat and fish but about being able to do without something that is usually important to us - as Jesus did. What does this feel like? Does it help us to think about others and be able to give to those who do need more than ourselves? Does it help us to truly reflect on what Jesus did for us?

Incense: It is a symbol of prayer, and as it is written in Palms (141:2) that 'Let my prayer come like incense before you.' Incense is a smell/an aroma that can surround you - like the love of prayer?



A money bag: It symbolizes the Lent practice of alms/money-giving. In the book of Tobit (12:8-9) in the Catholic Translations of the Bible, it says, ‘prayer and fasting are good, but better than either is alms-giving accompanied by righteousness.’ Are we able to give to provide for others who have little?

Thorns: It reminds us of physical suffering, loneliness and injustices in the world – something for us all to be praying for.

The Cross: It symbolizes victory over death - salvation and glory.

May these symbols help us to prepare spiritually during Lent – thinking about others; doing good and praying for all who are in need. God be with us all in Lent.

Angela Whitford

DIARY FOR MARCH

- Sunday 1st** **10am:** Worship including Communion – Ian Carnell
(First Sunday of Lent)
- Monday 2nd** **10am:** Moments
- Thursday 5th** **10am:** Tots & Tales
1:30pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Solihull URC
- Friday 6th** **10am:** World Day of Prayer service @ Solihull URC
7:30pm: World Day of Prayer service @ St
Margaret's, Olton
- Saturday 7th** **10am:** Saturday Café
- Sunday 8th** **10am:** Worship – Blair Kessler
- Monday 9th** **10am:** Moments
12:30pm: Elders Meeting
- Thursday 12th** **10am:** Tots & Tales
1:30pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Solihull URC
- Saturday 14th** **10am:** Saturday Cafe
- Sunday 15th** **10am:** Worship – Mary Burgess, followed by:
Annual Church Meeting including the election of
Elders
- Monday 16th** **10am:** Moments
10am: Shout Out for the Girls
- Wednesday 18th** **10:30am:** Churches Together in Central Solihull
Prayer Lunch
- Thursday 19th** **10am:** Tots & Tales
1:30pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Solihull URC
- Saturday 21st** **10am:** Saturday Café
- Sunday 22nd** **10am:** Worship (Mothering Sunday) – Gordon
Justham
- Monday 23th** **1pm:** Moments
- Thursday 26th** **10am:** Tots & Tales
1:30pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Solihull URC
- Saturday 28th** **10am:** Saturday Café
- Sunday 29th** **10am:** Worship – Linda Faber

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.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SOLIHULL

On Friday March 6th we are hosting, at Solihull United Reformed Church, "World Day of Prayer" at 10am. We need volunteers to help with welcome, take the offertory, and provide coffee. Please let Linda or myself know if you are able to help with this.

There is a leaflet called "Prayer Points and Reflections" produced by most of the Churches in Solihull. Please pick one up from the back of the Church.

800th Anniversary

As part of the 800 years of Christianity in Solihull there are several events that we are encouraged to participate in. There are leaflets in the Church so please pick one up and browse through it. I'm sure there will be plenty that you could take part in and support.

It started with the prayer of Christian Unity in January. Every Saturday from February 29th –April 4th, between 11am and 1pm during Lent, there will be a prayer tree in the centre of Solihull where we are encouraged to write prayers for others and the community. These will then be taken to several of the Solihull churches for the Sunday services. A minister will be available for those who wish for a more personal conversation.

April 10th at 11am will be the walk of witness starting at St Augustine's Catholic Church, finishing with hot cross buns at St Alpheges. If you are able to help marshal this, please let me know.

May 30th between 3.30 and 5.30pm - a Pentecost Picnic in Malvern Park, to which the Mayor has been invited, is being arranged. More information to follow.

Running throughout the year they are aiming to record more than 800 Acts of Kindness carried out in Solihull in 2020. There are cards available in the Church for more information and for you to record your kindness. Please take one and support this initiative.

I will keep you updated in the next newsletter but please pick up the 800th leaflet with all the information on it when you are next in church and pass it on to friends and family. **Elaine Jones**

IN REMEMBRANCE OF JUDITH KEMBERY

It was with great sadness that we heard that Judith Kembery died on the 3rd January 2020 after a short illness.

Judith was a long standing stalwart member of the church with strong Christian beliefs. Her commitment to Churches together in Solihull, Women's Day of Prayer and Prayer for Christian Unity was without falter, you could always rely on Judith. She was generous, kind, encouraging and sincere in all she did. She enjoyed life to the full particularly with her family and friends.

It was shown on 23rd January when over 200 people attended the service of "Celebration of her life "at Solihull United Reformed Church, how much she was loved and respected. We all have many and varied memories of Judith and she will be sorely missed.

Elaine Jones

Alan Kembery would like to thank all those who expressed their sympathy, by their kind words and by a large number of cards and letters, after the death of Judith. They were all much appreciated.

TOTS AND TALES

Following Judy Fisher moving on, Sue Plant and I are looking for someone else to join us in running Tots and Tales, our parent and Toddler group on Thursday mornings, Term time 10-11.30am. We would love to have someone who is willing to tell simple Bible stories as well as being friendly and welcoming to the adults and children. Please speak to me (**Linda Faber**) or **Sue Plant** for further information.

LUNCH CLUB FOR THE LONELY

You may know that we have been in conversation about starting a lunch club for the lonely of our town. I have only got two people who are interested in joining a rota to run the project. This isn't enough. Might you be able to offer a few hours once a month, or more often, to enable this project to move forward. Please come and see me if you are interested.

Linda Faber

YEW TREE SCHOOL AT EASTER

We have been invited in to Yew Tree School to lead 6 lessons this Easter on Tuesday 31st March in the afternoon and on Wednesday 1st April in the morning and afternoon. If you would like to help please speak to me. **Linda Faber**

COACH TRIPPERS UNITED 2020

A very, very Happy New Year to all Coach Trippers. I am pleased to tell you that 2020 trips are all booked.

First of all, as agreed at the AGM which again was very well attended, Thursday March 19th will be registration day for our new Loyalty Membership. A room has been booked at West Warwick Sport Club from 10.30am until 12.30pm for registration to take place. Don't forget you will have to have made 3 trips during 2019 to qualify and the one-off charge will be £5.

APRIL 16th	Trentham Gardens
MAY 21st	Goodrich Castle and Ross on Wye (Market Day)
JUNE 18th	Tyntesfield Somerset (National Trust)
JULY 16th	Melton Mowbray (Pork Pie Demonstration) and Cottesbrooke Gardens
AUGUST 20th	Attingham Park (National Trust)
SEPTEMBER 17th	Chavenage and Tetbury
OCTOBER 15th	BBC Studios (Salford) and the Arndale Centre Manchester
NOVEMBER 19th	AGM Details to follow

The trips will cost no more than £20 plus entrance fees (where applicable) and should be booked in the usual way through Val on 706 9687. Pick up will be 8.30 prompt from West Warwick. Cancellation charges as ratified at the AGM.

David Argall 704 4006

**It's coming !!!
Saturday 9th May**



coffee morning



Books Books **Books**

PAPER BACK BOOKS WANTED



Once again we will be supporting Christian Aid week by running a second hand book stall at the Christian Aid coffee morning to be held at Solihull Methodist Church on Saturday 9th May, 2020.

WE URGENTLY NEED YOUR PAPER BACK BOOKS. WE WILL START COLLECTING IN MARCH. PLEASE LOOK OUT FOR COLLECTION BOXES AT THE BACK OF THE CHURCH AND IN THE NATTERY.

Myles Ensor

TWENTY 20'S FOR 2020

In church I have introduced a prayer scheme designed to encourage more prayer for our town than we managed last year. It is a scheme designed to be used at home but can easily be used with a friends or in the house groups or anywhere else.

I am looking for people who are willing to pray for our town for twenty minutes, twenty times through the year. For some people twenty minutes prayer will be difficult so I am making available ample material to pray about for 20 minutes. Not a list of things to read out, but things to pray over for a minute or two each. And twenty minutes will soon pass. It might even help develop a regular prayer habit for some of you.

I have twenty topics to pray over, one for each of our twenty minute sessions. There are topics such a praying for families, councils, business, health and more. As part of the scheme there is a booklet for each topic and I suggest you pray over one of the topics each fortnight to spread them over the year. You get a little folder for you to keep all the booklets in.

If you would like to take part in this project let me know so I can give you the first instalment of booklets.

Linda Faber

THE WALL

You may be aware of the project to build a national landmark of hope called The Wall. It will be on our 'patch' in the West Midlands. It is an ambitious project calling attention to the millions of ways that God answers prayers. The planning application has been submitted and the latest requests for prayer are as follows:

- We are thrilled that our planning application has been submitted and the review is well underway. Please pray that this process continues to go smoothly, without significant obstacles or issues.
- We are so thankful for our current monthly donors. However, we need more in order to meet our increasing outgoings - please pray that God will meet our monthly needs.
- We are grateful to be receiving invites and opportunities to speak at churches and conferences throughout 2020. Please pray for us to secure opportunities that will lead to amazing connections and fruitful support.



BREAKFAST CLUB FOR THE HOMELESS

Some of you might know that we have been looking for a few years for a new way that we can help the homeless, and near homeless, of Solihull. In discussion with those who work closely with the problem, we have identified some needs that we can help alleviate through hosting a project that SIAS (Solihull Integrated Addiction Service) and the council will run. It will be a Breakfast Club. We will trial it for 2 days per week to begin with – the days are yet to be decided, though all parties expressed preferences.

The breakfast club will be from 9am-11am in the church café two non-consecutive days per week and, as well as providing food, it will be an access point for anyone with precarious housing needs to access all the information and help that they need. There are reasons why the Core isn't always the right place to do this. It is hoped that the NHS will send a nurse, dentist, chiropodist and optician fairly regularly too. None of the clients will be allowed to wander the building and it is expected that, to begin with, all clients will be brought here by some referring agency and so will be escorted whilst on our grounds too. This probably won't always be the case, though supervision at all times whilst in the building will continue. It is the nature of the project that the clients have problems of varying sizes and we will do all we can to ensure that these don't impact others. We anticipate only 8-10 regular clients in the first instance but we do not know what will happen in the future. We are looking in to having a washing machine available to the project too for which we can access outside funding almost certainly from Change into Action. SCAH have expressed an interest too.

SIAS anticipate they need 6-8 weeks to organise everything and we are meeting again in a month or so to finalise paperwork, detail progress and answer questions which have been raised.

I am happy to talk to you further about the project and answer any questions that you have but hope that you will pray over this work aimed at this very vulnerable section of our society. Linda Faber

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister

VACANT

Church Secretary

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

Website

www.solihullurc.org.uk

Hall Lettings 07925 573259

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

www.generationssolihull.org.uk generationssolihull@icloud.com

Moments

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

APRIL NEWSLETTER

Material for the April edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 22nd March please.