

# SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

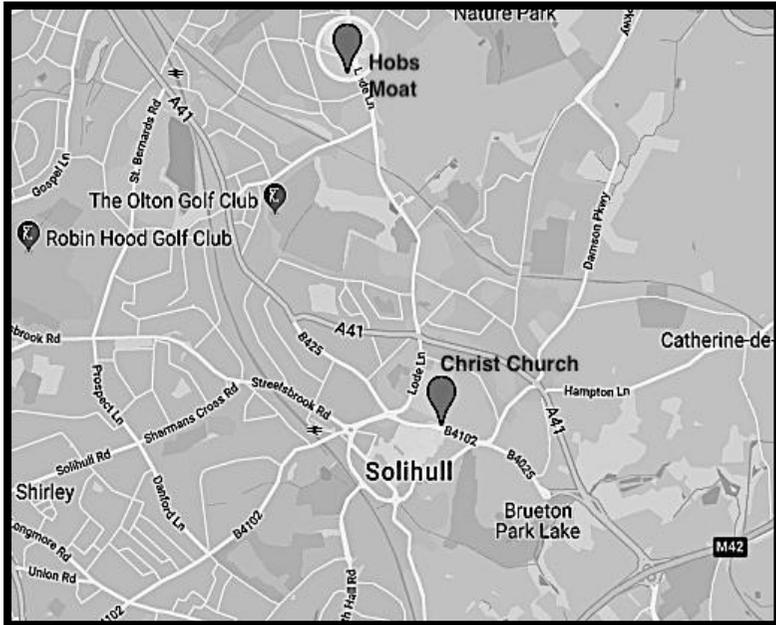
Christ Church - Hobs Moat – Olton

## May 2019 Newsletter

*God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

***Philippians 2:8 – 11***





## **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 at Christ Church. Sunday worship is focussed 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](http://www.solihullurc.org.uk)**

**[www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk](http://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.

Last month, on Maundy Thursday, I shared in Communion with 25 others in the Church cafe. Different from usual? Yes in many ways. We sat in a large square sharing a delicious meal of assorted crusty breads and an array of cheeses. We enjoyed ourselves and lively conversations flowed. Ian Carnell led our worship and again, different. Two verses of a hymn interspersed with words from Ian followed by our responses, and the same format again another twice. Trixie read a poem called Love Like This (more of this later). A large crusty loaf passed round for each of us to tear off a piece during communion. Certainly different from our usual practice! This service was a wonderful time of fellowship. I enjoyed it and am sure others did too.

Fast forward to Easter Sunday, the happiest day for Christians, I awoke to find that this Easter Sunday would be very different. Unbelievable and horrific. Bombers targeting Churches where Christians were celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord, and also targeting hotels killed over 200 people, with the death rate likely to climb even higher. Those killed were Christians, non-Christians and those professing no faith at all. At times like this some people ask 'Why did God let this happen? This immediately brought to mind something I had shared the morning Lent bible study group. Just after the massacre in Dunblane, of 16 small children and their teacher, I watched a service from Dunblane Cathedral, on television, led by a young minister. His first words were 'God's was first of all our hearts to break'. And there it was, so simply put. God's heart is broken time and time again by the choices his people make. John 3 v16 tells us that God so loved the world that he sacrificed his only son for us. He showed the depth of His love and still many of His people ignore him or ridicule him. He constantly shows us His love. 1 Corinthians 13 v13 says 'Three things will last forever, Faith, Hope and Love, but the greatest of these is Love'. The poem that Trixie read at the Communion service was as follows:

Love like this  
This is love that is broken  
This is love poured out  
Hope for those is turmoil  
Reassurance for those in doubt  
This is love that is torn up  
This is love that's been shed  
Love that sees our suffering  
And takes our place instead  
This is love for sustenance  
Love coursing through our veins  
Love that lifts us when we're down  
A comfort for the pain  
This love can absolve the guilt  
This is love for loss  
Love that went through hell for us  
Was nailed to a cross  
This is love like bread  
This is love like wine  
Love to bring life to the dead  
To bring us love divine  
This is love that gives its body  
Love whose blood is shed  
And we in memory sit still  
And share the wine and bread

'Different' can be good or bad as we know from many of our own experiences. I think we all liked the different Communion service and as a congregation we must accept differences due to our being in vacancy. Different preachers with different styles of preaching, different hymns which we may not know. All these can sometimes be a challenge for us but 'different' can help us to grow as we assimilate what we have seen and heard. As we approach our Annual Church

Meeting and discuss the future direction of our Church, how different do we want to be? **Jackie Justham**

## **DIARY FOR MAY**

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup>, 2pm:** Hobs Moat Wednesday Club

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10am:** Tots & Tales

**2pm:** Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>, 10am:** Holy Communion – Ian Carnell

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup>, 10am:** Moments

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>, 10:30am:** Hobs Moat Neighbourhood Coffee Morning

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>, 10am:** Shout Out for the Girls (Activity Room)

Tots & Tales

**2pm:** Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>, 10am:** Christian Aid Worship – Rita's Cell Group & Anna Burden

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup>, 10am:** Moments

**12:30pm:** Elders Meeting

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup>, 10am:** Tots & Tales

**2pm:** Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>, 10am:** Worship – Gordon Justham, followed by our Annual Church Meeting. You are invited to stay for Lunch and an afternoon discussing our plans and ministry needs for the future. Finishing at 4pm.

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup>, 10am:** Moments

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:30am:** Hobs Moat Neighbourhood Coffee Morning

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2pm:** Singing for Pleasure @ Brueton Place

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>, 10am:** Worship (Café Style) – Linda Faber & Nick Stanyon

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup>, 10am:** Moments

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>, 10:30am:** Messy Church

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup>, 2pm:** Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

*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.*

### **JOB ADVICE**

Every Monday morning from 10.30am @ Christ Church (Story Room). If you know anyone in need of support or advice with CVs etc. let them know about this or speak to Trixie Harman.

### **HOBBS MOAT COFFEE MORNINGS**

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

- 7 May
- 21 May
- 4 June
- 18 June

All are welcome for a cuppa and chat.

Anne and Annette

### **LEPROSY MISSION**

The final total raised for the Leprosy Mission was £340.08. Many thanks once again to all those who generously supported this charity.

**Sue Plant**

### **SUNDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE**

Our Communion service will be led by Rev Mary Burgess. Our dear friend Mary was a former minister at Hobs Moat URC. She is looking forward to seeing you all.

## **GIFT AID**

One source of income we have not pursued since the joining together of the three churches, is the tax refund from gift aid contributions. Since we are a 'new charity' we need to action this. It is not a straight forward process, hence the reason for the delay. Our weak financial performance has spurred us onto rectifying this shortcoming.

There are some Gift Aid forms on the table at the back of the church. These are for taxpayers, and just require names, addresses, a signature and a date.

A few points...

- Gift aid can be claimed going back up to 4 years. I have the records going back to the joining of the three churches.
- If a husband and wife both have Freewill envelopes, and only one of you pay tax, then the tax payer can include the non-taxpayer's contribution in their return.

If you are unclear about anything please come and see me. **Chris Harman**

## **NATIONAL WEEKEND OF INVITATION**

Sunday 23rd June 2019 is the National Weekend of invitation. We are planning to join in with this initiative aimed at encouraging Christians to invite those they know to come to church with them. There will be details circulated soon but please begin praying about who you might invite. **Linda Faber**

## UPDATES FOR YOUR ATTENTION

For the last couple of years there has been a calendar on the noticeboard at the back of church. With no minister it is especially important that everyone puts their events and activities on this calendar to aid communications (Mark was pretty good at knowing what was going on). Please also check it before planning events to try to minimise disappointment when clashes occur.

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.

Schools work at Yew Tree Primary week beginning 8th April – could you help with a lesson or two? Please Speak to Linda Faber.

## SUNDAY DUTIES

The response to the recent plea for more volunteers to come forward to carry out some of the Sunday duties was a very pleasant success. Several members put their names down for the first time and there was little difficulty in covering the following months. Now I think there are some folk who are happy to do some of the duties but do not manage to get their name down in good time. I would ask these folk to try to get into the habit of looking at the table at the back of the Church every week. In addition to the rotas, there is usually plenty of other interesting material - it is worth a look. **Alan**



**Christian Aid  
Coffee Morning  
Solihull Methodist Church Hall**

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

**10am – 2pm**

Tea, coffee, lunches, books and plants

Please put this date in your diary. If you have half an hour to help run the bookstall during this event please contact Myles Ensor – 0121 711 1040.

Thank you for all the paperback books already contributed towards this event. Please leave any further contributions in the yellow box at the back of the church. **Myles Ensor**

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**

## **CHRISTIAN AID COFFEE MORNING AT HOBBS MOAT ON 23RD MARCH**

We are thrilled to report that a wonderful total of about £375 was raised that weekend from cake sales and donations. Thank you from Janet, Annette and Caroline.

## **CHRISTIAN AID SUNDAY 12TH MAY**

Anna Burden is coming to talk about her visit to see Christian Aid's work in Burundi. She said there are many links from there with the Christian Aid Week story in Sierra Leone. The service will be led by members of Rita's Cell Group. Please come and hear about Christian Aid's wonderful work.

## **POSTAGE STAMPS**

Many of you used to bring your old postage stamps to Church for Sheila Durant to send to a Leprosy Mission.

I believe that so far no one has picked up the baton since Sheila has been unable to attend our services, so I am suggesting we should start collecting again and send them to the RNIB - the Royal National Institute for the Blind. They will provide all that we need for the collection and the despatch to their Head Office in post-free envelopes.

There are three rules they would like us to follow: -

- To trim the stamps with approximately 1 cm of the envelope left around the stamp.
- Not to collect the large PO printed labels, nor any pre-printed stamps.
- To separate British and Foreign stamps.

**Judith Kembery**

## CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

“If any church in Solihull had not increased its membership in the last few years, it would need to take a long hard look at itself.” So said Rev John Palmer, quoted in the opening sentence of a public magazine article from the time when the ‘new’ church was being built – our church in Warwick Road. The article is called, ‘The church with the ever-open door.’ by Janet Lilly but I can’t see the name of the magazine anywhere.

I wonder if John Palmer would say the same today. Should we be taking ‘a long hard look at ourselves’ because we have not seen an increase in membership over the last few years, or can we make excuses that times are different? There is no doubt that times are different. We are into the second and third generations of people who have no church education at all. And yet all over the country there are churches reaching out to their communities where they are making a difference to lives, sharing the gospel, and seeing people give their lives over to Christ. And these people are then joining the church. In fact, nationally the church in this country is no longer shrinking but churches which still behave in the ‘old way’ are still closing. The churches which are growing are those who have changed their methods or are ministering to communities who are hungry for family such as amongst immigrant communities.

In the afternoon of May 19th (following our Annual church Meeting and lunch together) we are going to be looking at our way forward and the ministry that we might want to call to help us in it. I do hope you will think and pray about the topic and come along as everyone’s views are very important.

Mark Fisher (our recently retired minister) was very concerned for us to keep half an eye on our ‘capacity’, by that he meant that there are lots of things that we might want to do, and could do, but we have few

spare volunteer hours to do them with. One of the things which we can think about is how our primary purposes as church are to worship God and share the Gospel – it is not our primary purpose to tell stories or meet together in friendship groups (These are important but are not our primary purposes). These activities should only be one step on the way, a means to an end. So next time you are preparing to meet together, or pass on a story, ask yourself how this will help to increase faith.

If you have no idea how this will increase faith then maybe you need to try to do something differently that will hit the spot better. It is very easy to settle in a rut, and drift along, but this does not make new people of faith. Every member of this church is a disciple maker and we need to be actively sharing our faith on our front line. How are we doing in this personally? How are we facilitating this as a church? What leadership do we want in the future to help us to do this better and effectively? **Linda Faber**

#### **EDITOR'S POEM**

When despair for the world grows in me  
And I wake in the night at the least sound  
In fear of what my life and my children's live may be  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
Rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds  
I come into the peace of wild things  
Who do not tax their lives with forethought  
Of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a  
time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry (1934- )



## **WATERPERRY GARDENS, OXFORDSHIRE**

**Thursday 16th May**

Waterperry Gardens have been delighting visitors for years with 8 acres of historic and inspirational gardens, featuring a 200 foot herbaceous border along with rose and formal gardens, a lily canal and a riverside walk. In addition there is a plant shop, Art-Action Gallery and a Gift Barn.

The Rural Life Museum is packed with quirky ephemera and the Saxon church has original 13th century stained glass windows.

The tea shop serves hot and cold lunches, afternoon teas and cakes.

All trips will start at 8.30 prompt from West Warwicks Sport and Social Club in Grange Road and should be booked by ringing Val on 0121 706 9687 at least one week before the trip.

Cancellation costs will apply and the cost for Waterperry will be no more than £27 all in including a tip for the driver.

**David Argall**



## **DRAGONFLY CRUISE, BRECON**

### **Thursday 20th June**

We shall be having a 3 hour cruise from Brecon at twelve noon. There are drinks available on board but a picnic is recommended and there are tables to facilitate this.

The Monmouth and Brecon Canal hugs the mountainside above the River Usk. Throughout the four seasons there are superb views and an abundance of wildlife to be seen. With 200 years of history you can travel on this fantastic feat of engineering built before roads and railways. Cruise through a canal lock and over an aqueduct over the river Usk.

This will be a popular trip so book early 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 no more than £37 including a tip for the driver.

**David Argall**

## **UPDATE FROM LONGBRIDGE RETIREMENT VILLAGE**

The mild and sunny winter has given our gardeners the opportunity to set out plantings which they were unable to do in the hot summer. It was also decided to make a Sensory Garden, with interesting scents from flowers and herbs. This is in course of preparation and is being made with raised beds so that people in wheelchairs can garden. There are two willow arbours, and plants will be trained up the surrounding trellis fences. I am lucky in that it is set just underneath my balcony, so I shall get the benefit of the scents.

I have joined the Knit and Natter group; I didn't at first because I thought my hands would not let me knit (they have never properly recovered from the carpal tunnel operations). But I was persuaded to try, and I find I can do simple knitting, and also crochet. There are some very talented painting and craft people here, many ready to help those less gifted - there are a lot of ex-teachers among them. At Christmas many people knitted 'Christmas puddings' to go over chocolate oranges, and for Easter they have made 'chickens' to go over small filled eggs. These sell very well at the fortnightly market. I have also started to play Seated Bowls, which is a lot of fun in two teams of 10 or 12. We even play away matches with Hagley Road Village, for which there is a silver cup which we won a few weeks ago. I can't pick up the balls between rounds, so I have to sit and wait for mine with the other old ladies!

My balance has become worse and I don't venture outside without my shopping trolley to push and hold on to. I am sorry not to have come to Church recently, but I just don't feel safe where there are steps. On a brighter note, the Singing for Pleasure group is going strong, with another concert on 30th April. We mostly sing songs from the shows, which people like. We now have half-a-dozen men, and hope to start learning to sing in harmony soon so that we can call ourselves a proper choir.

**Marian Batten**

## UNION THEATRE

Union Theatre is 40 years old this year. Its founder – Pauline Brand – was a member of Christ Church for many years. The group was, effectively, the church drama group and many of our current congregation have been involved with it in one capacity or another over the years from pantomime dame to stage manager. Rehearsals are normally twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) at 7:30pm in the Youth Room. The group also encourages young people to be involved in theatre through its Saturday morning Star Workshops which are normally held during term time from 10am until 11am in the church.

The group classes itself as a repertory theatre company and will tackle most styles of play or musical theatre. These days it will undertake 3 or 4 productions each year although, in the past, it used to be a little more ambitious! In addition the Group will undertake the occasional one off “road show” for local charities. Over the years the repertoire has included, Shakespeare, restoration comedy, classical and modern plays and musicals. The group has performed at various venues including Dorridge Village Hall, St James the Great (Shirley), St Ethelburgha’s (Yardley), the Core Theatre, The Manor House (Solihull), Maxstoke Castle, James Gillespies High School (Edinburgh) and The Friends’ Meeting House (Edinburgh) as well as in the Church. For many years the group used to take their summer production to Edinburgh for the Fringe Festival.

The group’s production of Good Night Mr Tom, which was performed at Solihull URC in November 2018, has recently been awarded a NODA (National Operatic and Dramatic Association) award for best drama production in the region in 2018. It is not the first time that the group has won an award for their work but it is the most recent and is a tremendous achievement for our current troupe.

Many people have passed through the group over the years some of whom have gone on to work in the professional theatre and some who

appear regularly as extras in film and television. Union Theatre thinks of itself as a family and we have been there for some who have needed friendship and support through difficult periods of the lives. We are a 'not for profit' organisation, we do it for the love of theatre and often give charitable donations. We like to also support local charities that our members may be involved in such as Solihull Action Through Advocacy.

Our forthcoming productions include “Songs from Movie Musicals” (4th to 6th July at St James the Great, Shirley) and It’s a Wonderful Life (5th to 7th December at Solihull URC). All in all it has been a fantastic journey over the last 40 years and we are very grateful for your and the church’s continuing support. Thank you. **Union Theatre**

### **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**

## **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - CENTRAL SOLIHULL**

I recently received the following letter from the Mayor of Solihull and thought I should share it with you all. The next service will be in our Church in March 2020 when we will be thinking about Zimbabwe.

**Judith**

Dear Judith,

Thank you for inviting me to the World Day of Prayer Service recently; I had such a wonderful time that I thought I would write to show my appreciation and gratitude for the invitation.

I was made to feel very welcome and the service was so enjoyable and interesting; it was a pleasure to be there. Would you please thank everyone for looking after me so well and all those involved in putting the service together.

Thank you once again and may I wish you all at World Day of Prayer continued success in the years to come.

Kind regards,

Councillor Mrs Flo Nash

**Mayor of Solihull**

## 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 Hobs Moat or Christ Church – 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@ Christ Church

## **JUNE NEWSLETTER**

Material for the June edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

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

by Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May please.