



SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat – Olton

March 2018 Newsletter

"The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty saviour, who will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love."

Zephaniah 3:17





SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

A single fellowship of Christian people, our history leads us to offer our witness in three neighbourhoods (central Solihull, Hobs Moat and Olton). Our worship on a Sunday is focused at Christ Church, but is also offered at different times in a number of care homes and in our other premises.

We share our mission with other Churches and seek partnerships 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

“It’s fine!” - Mark wonders if it is

It becomes a bit of a joke - the way we, when asked how things are, respond without thinking “It’s fine!”, “I’m fine”. However, the quick response usually covers over many things which should, perhaps, be part of our response. Health issues, anxieties about things we think others will consider too small to worry about, changes in our lives to do with job, home or relatives. The “It’s fine!” mask pretends that none of these are significant when, of course, they are.

Conversely, “It’s fine!” may not say enough because life is actually so much better than simply “fine”. Again it may be big events for us or family that we celebrate, or we are feeling good because of something fresh in our lives, or we are feeling better following an illness. There are times when we might feel like jumping up and down (if we could!) or shouting from the rooftops yet, when asked, we respond “fine”. It doesn’t quite express how joyful we really are.

The joke becomes quite a serious issue for our church life, which we share with others in Christ because, if we cannot be open and honest about ourselves within the fellowship, we cannot share our true selves and we do not know how we might support and strengthen others. Paul writing to the Galatian church urged them to “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.” This is about allowing ourselves to be known and about knowing others well enough to offer support or share their joys. This is the way we are enabled to “love one another”. None of this can really happen if we are always “fine”.

I understand people's reticence about being open, as communities, such as church, are very good at being 'gossip shops'. It is, however, frustrating when you are prevented from offering support or sharing celebration because you simply did not know about something. If we are to be an effective and loving community, it is important that we do allow others to come close enough to know us, so that support or celebration may be shared appropriately.

Some practical outcomes from this reflection might be:

- Contribute to the Prayer Tree or the Good News Jar
- Ensure that the times we have to pray for others are conversations with God rather than opportunities to natter about the details of what we know.
- Do not assume that your need for prayerful support is known and be prepared to ask!

There is always a link between our human relationships and that which we share with God. If we block the involvement of faithful friends in our lives, then we will be missing out on what God wishes to share with us. If our prayer is "Please help me Lord" then we need to open the way for those who may offer it to us.

DIARY FOR MARCH

Thursday 1st, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 4th, 10am: Holy Communion @ Christ Church

Monday 5th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

10am-2pm: Shout out for Girls worship @ The Manse

Tuesday 6th, 11am: Worship @ St Francis Lodge

Wednesday 7th, 10am: Tapestry Workshop @ Christ Church

12noon: Lent Reflection & Lunch @ Christ Church

Thursday 8th, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 11th, 10am: Worship for Mother's Day @ Christ Church
– Linda Faber

Monday 12th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

Tuesday 13th, 10.30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @
Hobs Moat

11am: Holy Communion @ Hampton House

Wednesday 14th, 10am: Lent Reflection & Coffee break @ Christ
Church

12noon AGM of Solihull Churches Action on
Homelessness @ Christ Church

Thursday 15th, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Saturday 17th, 10am-4pm: West Midlands Synod @ Sutton
Coldfield

7.30pm: North Solihull Singers concert in support
of This Way up

Sunday 18th, 10am: Worship @ Christ Church

11.45am: Worship @ Star & Garter

Monday 19th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

Tuesday 20th, 10am: Fellowship Prayers @ Hobs Moat

11am: Holy Communion @ Tudor Lodge

12.30pm: Solihull Churches Prayer Lunch @ Christ Church

7.30pm: Music for Worship Planning @ The Manse

Wednesday 21st, 10am: Worship @ The Grove

12noon: Lent Reflection & Lunch @ Christ Church

Thursday 22nd, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

12noon: Linda's Reference Group @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 25th, 10am: Worship for Palm Sunday @ Christ Church

Monday 26th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

Tuesday 27th, 10.30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @
Hobs Moat

Thursday 29th, 7.30pm: Holy Communion for Maundy Thursday
@ Christ Church

Sunday 1st April, 10am: Easter Day Holy Communion @ Christ
Church



**SATURDAY 17th MARCH
7.30pm in CHRIST
CHURCH. Supporting
THIS WAY UP. Tickets £7
available**

are a community choir based in the North of Solihull. The group was set up over 11 years ago by Solihull musician Kris Chase-Byrne. They perform in 3 major concerts of their own a year and appear all over Solihull at other events. NSS firmly believe in all that the word 'community' means and raise thousands of pounds every year for local charities and are really happy to be supporting This Way Up in 2018. From musical theatre, to pop, and folk to more contemporary choral music, they pride themselves on a varied programme that is set to have something for everyone.

Parking @ Latter Day Saints' Offices (next door-but-one)

This is our major fund-raiser for this Christian charity offering support to young people through loss and bereavement. There are 280 tickets to sell. Please do what you can to ensure we have a 'full house' for what will be an enjoyable and varied evening with music for all tastes.

LENT 2018

Ash Wednesday is on 14th February when there will be an introduction and meditation followed by a simple lunch in the Meeting Place @ Christ Church.

During the weeks of Lent we will be exploring how, **through the experience of desolation in various aspects of our lives, Christ offers his life-giving presence.** The themes will be the focus for our Sunday and Maundy Thursday worship, right through to Easter Day. Material to aid further discussion and personal reflection will be available each week. Opportunity for discussion may be offered in Cell Groups, but will also be made on Wednesday lunch-times over a simple soup lunch in the Meeting Place.

Throughout, all are encouraged to contribute to the making of our Tapestry - on Sundays following worship, on Wednesdays from 10am to lunchtime and at other pre-arranged times for groups (Cell Groups, Moments etc.)

The Temptations of Jesus

Sunday 18th February - 'I am hungry!' - physical and spiritual hunger

Sunday 25th February - 'Fall-back Saviour' - all will be well?

Sunday 4th March - 'Kingdoms and Powers' - a dysfunctional world?

Mothers' Day

Sunday 11th March - 'Motherhood moments'

The Way of the Cross

Sunday 18th March - 'Indifferent friends and denial'

Palm Sunday 25th March - 'Empty Praise' - dangerous populism

Maundy Thursday 29th March - 'Hospitality, betrayal and death'

Good Friday 30th March - 'Abandonment and death' Easter Day
- 'Empty tomb - He is not there!'

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.

SOLIHULL CHURCHES ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

***The AGM is in the Meeting Place on Wednesday 14th March
12 noon in the Meeting Place @ Christ Church.***

This is an opportunity to learn more about the work of this charity that we support in various ways. All are welcome. Lunch is provided.

SOLIHULL CHURCHES PRAYER LUNCH

We host this opportunity to pray for the various churches in the town centre and their mission initiatives. Also, to discuss initiatives we share together.

Next: Tuesday 20th March 12.30pm in the Meeting Place

WEST MIDLANDS SYNOD of the UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

This meets on Saturday 17th March in Sutton Coldfield. It is the place where key policies and decisions are made for the churches across the region and impacts on our life in Solihull.

Irene Bound represents us, along with Mark. Steve Faber is the Synod Moderator. Please pray for this meeting, that the leading of the Holy Spirit may be evident in its discussions and decisions.

HOBBS MOAT COFFEE MORNINGS

Dates for Diary section re Tuesday Coffee Morning at Hobbs Moat.

- Tuesday 13th March
- Tuesday 27th March
- Tuesday 10th April
- Tuesday 24th April
- Tuesday 8th May
- Tuesday 22nd May
- Tuesday 5th June
- Tuesday 19th June

Many thanks, **Annette Williams**

RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY AND NEW WINE HAVE PUT TOGETHER A NEW SHOW ALL ABOUT FAITH IN FAMILIES.

The show is for parents, grandparents, church leaders, youth and children's workers and youth (Basically everyone 15+) and tackles some really important issues that we all face in churches and Christian homes. It's happening at Shirley Baptist Church (B90 3BD) on March 19th 7:30pm-9:30pm. Tickets are £10 and there are rumours of some free ice cream at the interval! Contact 0121 733 8089 for details and tickets.



Churches
Together in
Central Solihull

Walk of Witness

Good Friday
30th March 2018

Please join us from 11am by St Augustine's Church,
1 Herbert Rd, Solihull B91 3QE.

Please bring a Palm Cross with you if you can.

The Walk of Witness will silently follow a route along Station Road and High Street to Mell Square, and then on to St Alphege. We encourage people to join our short acts of worship especially in Mell Square. Please join us on the way if you cannot come to the start.

This is the main opportunity each year for an open act of worship from people in all the churches in Solihull, to give witness to our Lord.

The Walk of Witness should finish by 12.15pm at St Alphege and will be followed by **Coffee and Hot Cross Buns in the Oliver Bird Hall** nearby in Church Hill Road, to which everyone is invited.

STAMFORD AND BURGHLEY HOUSE

19th April 2018

Our tripping season kicks off with a visit to Stamford and the Burghley experience at one of England's greatest Elizabethan Houses.



The House, with its 18 State Rooms, as well as the Gardens of Surprise are open from 11am until 5pm. The Orangery Restaurant, overlooking the beautiful Rose Garden with views of the South Lawns, and the Garden Café, situated on the edge of the Parkland, are able to provide tea, coffee and homemade cakes after a long coach journey, delicious lunches in a picturesque setting, or a traditional afternoon tea as a perfect end to the day.

The coach will leave from our new departure point THE WEST WARWICK SPORTS CLUB, GRANGE ROAD, SOLIHULL, B91 1DA at our usual time of 8.30am.

As agreed at the AGM the revised charge will be £20 a person excluding any entry fees but including a tip for the driver. May I respectfully remind you of the cancellation guide and that you should ring Val on 706 9687 to book.

We look forward to your continued support and take the opportunity to wish you all a great Coach Trip New Year.

David Argall (Chair)

SHOUT OUT FOR THE GIRLS

At the end of October, about 30 people met at the manse to take part in a workshop to make sanitary products for girls in a village in Uganda. The project is part of ongoing work of friends of mine, who live in Cheshire and 3 of them Gill, Moria and Cilla came and spent the day with us, showing us how to make the sanitary towels and the little case to put them in.



The next workshop is on 5th March, 10am-2.30pm @ The Manse. Usual tea, coffee, cakes and lunch provided. We hope to complete some packs and need donations of new nickers (sizes 10, 12, 14). Please come if you can, remembering to bring your scissors with you! Please let Judy Fisher know if you hope to come.

18TH BIRTHDAY

Some of our Hobs Moat friends have expressed surprise that our granddaughter Lena is now 18, and suggested we mention it in the Newsletter.

Lena was born in Moscow on January 20th 2000 and then lived in a Babyhome. Our daughter Melody was working in Russia. Adopting a child had not entered her thoughts but when she happened to meet Lena the idea began to form.

Hobs Moat URC followed the tortuous adoption process and uplifted them with their prayers. When eventually Melody and Lena were able to come to England and live with us, the church took her to their hearts, and indeed have continued to pray for

her over the years. The first time she came to HM was appropriately Mothering Sunday 2005!

When Melody met and then married Andrew, he was able to adopt her as well. She enjoyed celebrating her birthday with a lovely mix of family and her friends. As part of our birthday tribute to her we reminded her that her Solihull church friends still asked about her and wanted to know how she was getting on, and this obviously meant a lot to her.

After some difficult times on and off as a teenager, at the moment she is coping well with a Catering course in the Post 16 group at school, and will be able to continue this at Tamworth College in September.

We are continually thankful to God that He has blessed Lena, and for how she has enriched our lives. **Jill and Chris Goddard.**

‘I HAVE A NAME’ SMC CHURCH PROJECT DATES 2018

Solihull Methodist Church, Blossomfield Road, in aid of SCAH

- March 3rd 7pm – “Welcome Spring” – concert featuring The AD concert band
- April 11th 1pm - Soupa Talks – A member of SCAH speaking about their aims and objectives
- April 22nd 10:30am – Homelessness themed morning service with Rev Mark Fisher from Christchurch
- April 28th 7pm – Quiz Night with Fish and Chip Supper
- June 30th 7pm – “Grand Finale” – The return of ‘The Choir With No Name’ for a night that promises to raise the roof!

Housebound or in care: Alf Andrews, Jean Mather, Joan Shaw, Beryl Pullin, Thelma and Phil Phillips, Kath Bishop, Sheila Schwartz, Norma Clement. Pam Tovey was discharged from Solihull Hospital on Friday 19th January and is now at Olton Grange Residential Home, 84 Warwick Road, Olton.

Health Issues or increased frailty: Margaret Agnew, Irene Kettle, Andrea and Phil Holt, Rosalind Smart, Peggy Crosby, Celia Stephens, Jean and Albert Holmes, Eric Bignell, Thea, the Jenkins Family, Margaret Toogood, Sheila Durant, and Ian and Jean Alder. Shirley Peck and her family are struggling with her dementia and all need our prayers. We pray for all of these friends and their carers and pray for God's blessing on each of them.

Thank You

My family and I would like to thank friends from Solihull URC for their support at the funeral of my late husband Jim Durant on Monday the 29th of January. A special thank you to Mark Fisher for his support following Jim's death. We have received around £200 in donations which will be passed on to Dementia UK. I am settling down at Blythe Court after a busy time in September. Sheila Durant

New Arrival

Sam and Stuart Mills wish to announce the new arrival of their baby boy Harry William Alan, born 20th February at 9:17pm. Mum and baby are doing well, and Dad is a very proud man!

SACRED SPACE PART 2

Hello everyone,

Out of sight is not out of mind – and I think of you so often even though I am not able to see you very often now I am a full time carer. I pray for you and ask God to bless you all.

One of the great comforts in my life now is my sacred space at home, which I was telling you about last time I wrote to you. I cannot recommend to you highly enough to make one for yourself - and it is not at all difficult. All you need is your Bible – in a very visible place, at home. Somewhere in your home which will draw you like a magnet – on a small table preferably. Don't leave that oh so precious holy book shut, in your bookshelf, like I have done for years on end. Believe me it is far more useful and instructive opened on a table.

At the moment the Psalms are my particular Biblical favourites: Some of the Psalms instruct us to praise the Lord – and to sing to him. The other advice is to play a stringed instrument. The lyre and the harp, mentioned in some of the Psalms, were particularly fashionable when the Old Testament was written - but I can't play either. And I drew the line at playing cymbals which are also recommended – especially the loud ones, which are specifically mentioned! John and the neighbours really would not approve I felt – despite the fact that King David clearly felt them to be an excellent way of praising God!

So I picked up my guitar and decided to sing the words of the Psalms, instead of just reading them. This instantly created a problem with the Bible opened flat on the table, as I couldn't

read the words while singing outwards and playing a guitar. Thus my Bible is now tilted on a small bookstand, which enables me to sing and play, while reading the words. Who needs to write lyrics for songs, when they are there already in the Psalms? Fitting them to music is quite a challenge though – but I enjoy it. My singing of these words may not make the top ten musically - but spiritually I find it immensely satisfying. Today's Psalm, lying open on my sacred space table, is 33 – have a read!

I'm starting to really love reading my Bible daily. My sacred space is not big and it doesn't overlook the garden, as I feel that would distract me – despite the fact that my husband says our garden is his sacred space! Your sacred space can be anywhere in your home - but not where there is footfall, as that would distract you. Other religions create sacred spaces at home and I am glad that Christians are also moving in this direction. My elder son teaches in a C of E school and has a designated sacred space for his pupils in his classroom. He tells me he has to watch that the children don't muddle the sacred space – it needs to be uncluttered. And he is right. As well as my Bible I have a praying hands plaster model, which my dear friend Jill Hughes gave me when I became elder. Those praying hands remind to pray in my sacred space. And there are some flowers too – and that is all. I wonder what you will put in your sacred space? The most important thing is the Bible – left open at a different page, as you read it day by day. Believe me you'll keep popping back to re-read the words – as I do. My last visit to my sacred space is just before I go to bed – what a comfort and joy it is, every single day!

Carol Andrews



SOLIHULL 26 FEB — 09 MARCH 2018

In partnership with local churches, bands and youth workers from the Message Trust will be visiting several secondary schools in Solihull from 26 Feb 2018. This 'Higher Tour' will culminate in a concert on Friday 9 March where young people can hear more about a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. Church Youth Leaders in Solihull invite YOU to join their United prayer group to pray for the Higher Tour at 7.30—9.30pm on:

- Thursday 1st Feb @ Christchurch URC*, Warwick Rd, B91 3DG
- Monday 26th Feb @ Knowle Parish Church, High St, Knowle, B93 0LN
- Friday 9th March - Christchurch URC*, Warwick Rd, B91 3DG.

**in the Meeting Place at the rear of the church (off Union Road)*

For more info contact Tina Brooker on 0121 705 7367

Prayer is powerful and effective (James 5:16)

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The service this year will be held at St. Helen's Church, St Helen's Road, Solihull on Friday the 2nd of March commencing at 10.30am. We would be very grateful to see as many people as possible from our church, both male and female, all are welcome. If anyone would like a lift please have a word with me and that will be arranged. There is plenty of parking at St. Helen's. This year we will be thinking about the people who live in Suriname which is a country in South America. The service will flow easily and there will not be a speaker, we will just use the booklet produced by the people of Suriname which is entitled ALL GOD'S CREATION IS VERY GOOD! Hope to see you there. **Judith Kembery**

INVITATION, INVITATION, INVITATION

I have spent the last term encouraging you to invite more of your friends, neighbours, relatives and vague acquaintances to the many activities that we have been undertaking as a Christian community. To encourage each other I asked you to colour in a rectangle on a lighthouse for each person you invited to something whether or not they came. If you haven't coloured any boxes showing people you have invited please do that. (The picture is at the back of church). At the time of writing about 100 boxes have been coloured in, which works out at about two invitations per person who attends church on a Sunday morning. And yet we have had more than 10 special occasion services or activities in that time plus our usual goings on. This is very concerning. I wonder if:

1. You haven't bothered/ got around to colouring in the boxes on the picture – please do that - it will encourage others to keep inviting too.
2. You are not comfortable with inviting so haven't done any inviting.
3. The activities we are organising are not the sorts of things you or your acquaintances want to come to so you haven't been inviting them.

I have concerns about all three of these explanations whichever, or combination, is true. For all three there is a problem with communication of one sort or another and secondly, for all three, there is a problem with being an active part of the Body of Christ because the Body of Christ is a family of people who invite – we are to be always inviting people into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Bringing people to church or church things is a small part of that journey to Christ. As people get to know Christians they have more examples of how the relationship with Christ works and more people to whom they can address their questions. If there is anything we, the church leadership, can do to help you be better at inviting people to things then please alert us to the need. Let me encourage you to take a step of courage and invite someone to something. Be encouraged that **we have had successes** through this initiative even in these 3 months. People have come to coffee mornings who have never been here before – a first step in getting to know the church and its people. Someone came to the Job club through invitations given out to the school children. New people keep coming along to Messy Church each time. We have had a few visitors to Sunday services. **We need this.** We need

this because this is what a Christian community is. A place where we invite people into a relationship with Christ and His church. A hospitable and welcoming people.

Let us pray together:

Heavenly Father, Your heart is open to all people and You constantly seek ways to show Your love and draw people to Yourself. Help us to be bold and active in reflecting Your heart; help us share what we have found to be true in You. Give us Your strength and courage to invite our friends, neighbours and relatives to come along and meet others who know You too so that their words and actions may be added to mine and make a difference on someone's journey towards You. Amen.

When I look back over the years at all the people who have said that I have played a part in bringing them to faith, or helped them make a critical faith step, they have never said it was because I have said or done anything major or fancy. It has always been little things. Inviting, including, listening, talking about my faith. The little things make such a difference. May I encourage you to keep being intentional about the little things. Most of the difference we will make will be 'out there' on our Frontlines. But our goal is to make disciples. I know that I can't possibly meet all the needs, or answer all the questions, of those I know, so I need the help of others. I need my friends to get to know other Christians too so they can have the best chance at seeing Christ for themselves. I want to get to know your friends and I would like you to get to know mine. Invitation is a part of that.

Linda Faber

GIVING UP WORRYING – FOR LENT!

As I write this for you, Lent is about to begin. ‘What shall I do for Lent this year?’ I wonder to myself.

Fasting naturally springs to mind; going without a meal or giving up a food I love – e.g. chocolate. Some friends at church do just this I know – especially the chocolate! But going without food is not a good plan for me as my knees go wobbly – and that doesn’t suit me at all, especially as I need all the energy I can muster now as John’s carer. I know my body all too well – it needs food regularly and in small amounts. I’m a ‘little and often’ person! If I get wobbly knees, a piece of dark chocolate cures the problem, so I need that too.

Two years ago, for Lent, I gave up criticising people. I’d heard on the grapevine that someone had criticized me behind my back. I don’t know who it was or what was said but just the knowledge that someone had said something unpleasant about me hurt. And then I realized that I too was critical of people sometimes – so I vowed that for Lent I would give up criticizing people. I never realized until then exactly how critical I was and how often. But that Lenten exercise was most effective and, whilst it hasn’t completely cured me, I know I am less critical of others now. ‘Judge not and you shall not be judged’, as St John rightly says!

So what am I planning for Lent this year? Don’t laugh – I am going to try giving up worrying! I can assure you it will be far harder than giving up criticizing, as I am a natural worrier! I worry about the future – living with someone you love dearly who has both Alzheimer’s and Dementia is scary I can assure you. Trying to ‘live in the moment’ and not fear for the future is hard. I worry about my family; sometimes I phone my lads to

see if they are OK. I think they can well do without mum worrying about them, as it is not beneficial at all. And I worry about you at church – yes really. I pray for you regularly in my sacred space and I help Janet at Singing for Pleasure but that is all I can do now. I worry because I can't help you more. God doesn't want us to worry and fret. We need to put down our burdens of worry at Jesus feet – it says so in the Bible. But I'm inclined to pick those worries up and start fretting again. Will this Lenten exercise cure me? – and make things easier for my family. Watch this space!

Smiles, Christian love and Lenten blessings to all, Carol



God will wash all our worries away
with the tide of life – if only we let Him.
It's all about 'Trust'!

Carol [Picture taken at Woolacombe Bay.]

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister

Revd. Mark Fisher: 07950 399615 - 0121 291 4726 - mjf.urc@me.com

Church Secretary

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

Website

www.solihullurc.org.uk

Hall Lettings in Hobs Moat, Olton or Christ Church - details are on the website.

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

www.generationssoalihull.org.uk generationssoalihull@icloud.com

Moments - a dementia cafe

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Christ Church

Details from Mark Fisher - contacts above

APRIL NEWSLETTER

Material for the April edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 18th March please.