



SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

An amalgamation of three fellowships - Hobs Moat, Olton and Christ Church - Solihull URC seeks to continue serving the three communities in different way. Sunday worship is focussed at Christ Church, but opportunities at other times and in other places are being explored and developed.

Prayer is at the heart of what we are doing, as our desire is to fulfil God’s calling to us as a Christian fellowship.

We invite you to join us on the exciting and challenging journey we are on, and look forward to seeing you in the future.

a secure safe home free from violence. We supply starter packs tailored to individual need, and below is a sample list of items which form the basis of such a pack.

Just to finish: we received this note from one of the mothers who had received a pack:

“It is nice to know that in times of darkness that there are people there to help us see the light again. I hope one day I will be in a position to repay my gratitude to you all.”

How privileged we are to help where we can.

Marian Vining

Sample items for “Starter Pack”

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Duvet | Pillows | Microwave oven |
| Pillows | Iron | Ironing board |
| Duvet sets | Towels | Tea towels |
| Kettle | Toaster | Cooking utensils |
| Dinner set | Clock | Cooking dishes |
| Cutlery | Mirror | Laundry ainer |
| Mugs | Glasses | Laundry powder |
| Sieve | Grater | Cleaning cloths |
| Scissors | Plastic spoon | Washing up liquid |
| Plastic slice | Tin opener | All-purpose cleaner |
| Waste bin | Washing up bowl | Cleaning stuff |
| Toilet roll | Toilet brush | Toilet cleaner |



Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness - S.C.A.H.

SCAH's vision is to relieve poverty within the borough of Solihull, in particular but not exclusively by support to the homeless and vulnerable people moving into permanent accommodation, enabling them to live secure and independent lives.

The charity was set up in 1993 by an ecumenical group in response to hardship caused by government legislation regarding rental schemes etc in the mid 80s and 90s.

In 1997 we joined with a generous benefactor and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council in buying and setting up Mildenhall House, to accommodate five young homeless people (now twelve).

SCAH went on to establish a Rent Deposit Scheme with private landlords to enable vulnerable people to rent their own homes. Because of its success it was later passed on to the Council to run with a full time manager.

The "starter packs" of basic household goods, and a response to other individual assessed needs are an ongoing activity and form a large part of our work. SCAH works closely with SMBC's Homelessness Team and contributes to its strategy. We take referrals from support workers in statutory agencies, charities and individuals. Clients include ex-offenders, young asylum seekers, referrals from Mind, Women's Aid, Citizens' Advice Bureau and from individuals.

As part of the SMBC Homelessness Forum we are able to be aware of current legislation regarding benefits/housing likely to affect vulnerable people. We also know specific areas of need within the borough and the many organisations and support workers with whom we are privileged to work.

My particular contact is with Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid Services. The scheme provides support to women and children who have experienced domestic violence. The overall aim is to enable women and children to rebuild their lives, and set up and maintain

Our journey continues

Mark reflects

On 24th May Zaidie will help us to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples and many others at Pentecost. Following on from Easter celebrations it may be too easy to focus on the triumph and the promise of eternal life, but we do ourselves no favours if we believe that with this promise and the gift of God's constant presence in our lives through His Holy Spirit life will be plain sailing.

Life experience clearly tells us otherwise, and people are led to question God with questions such as 'Why suffering?', doubt their own faith, or feel they are being judged harshly.

How come we so easily forget the trial and suffering of Jesus? To remember this, which we do each month through the sacrament of Holy Communion, is to acknowledge that the gift of the Holy Spirit is to enable us to live through the hardships of life and our own suffering. The Spirit is indeed both strength and comforter, but is no panacea.

The promise in Christ that we will enjoy eternal life in him is about our relationship with him in this life and the next - a constant presence which we experience through the Holy Spirit in our lives.

So on Sunday 24th May we will celebrate God's promised gift of his Holy Spirit and the faith, hope, love, joy, patience, kindness and all the other means whereby God's presence is made real in our human lives, and which we are called to share with others.

For ourselves to be God's presence - in the lives of those who suffer, who do not have the security of faith in Jesus Christ, who are weighed down by an unjustified sense of guilt, who need to know God's love and forgiveness - is our calling. It is in these every-day relationships that we may discover the fruit of God's presence.

Mark Fisher

WORD & PRAYER in Central Solihull, Hobs Moat & Olton

These are worship opportunities with a focus on the three communities we seek to serve. They will enable a worshipping presence in each of our premises, and time to pray for the community and about how we are called to serve.

It has been hard to identify the best days and times so the following is a 'starter suggestion' that can be altered in the light of experience.

2nd Monday of the month - 11.30am @ Christ Church

2nd Tuesday of the month - 2pm @ Hobs Moat

3rd Tuesday of the month - 10am @ Olton

In May

Monday 11th 11.30am @ Christ Church

Tuesday 12th 2pm @ Hobs Moat

Tuesday 19th 10am @ Olton

Please 'spread the word' about these opportunities - particularly to those who cannot travel on a Sunday to Christ Church.

GENERATIONS PRESENTATION LUNCH HOUR

Monday 11th May 12.30 - 3pm @ CC (Mayflower Room)

A simple lunch (soup and cottage pie) followed by an opportunity to learn more about the Generations Project (enabling the Church in Care Homes) and to share issues around dementia (supporting the spiritual life of sufferers and carers).

A short video will be shown 'A Glorious Opportunity' which helps explain some aspects of dementia from the point of view of both a medic and a sufferer.

It is hoped that this occasion will help us to be 'dementia friendly' as a church and in our personal relationships. All are welcome

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL

THE TABLETS OF THE WORD

I and the Lord are one. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.

Fear not. I am the first and the last. I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of Hell and of Death.

Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life.

When the Comforter is come, which I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father he shall testify of me, and ye shall bear witness.

I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abides in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit. Abide in me, for apart from me ye can do nothing.

A new commandment I give you, that ye love one another as I have loved you.

Come unto me alive that labour heavy, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, lean on me for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest.

The Son of Man is come, to seek and to save that which is lost. The Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

seen by Mary Newbery

Happiness is like a butterfly; the more you chase it, the more it will elude you, but if you turn your attention to other things, it will come and sit softly on your shoulder.

Thoreau

ZIMBABWE - Extract from Stories for Change 109 April 2015

Increased access to high value and viable markets for small groups through Dabane Trust

Follow-up mentorship visits to the micro-entrepreneurship workshop held for 51 (19 men, 32 women) revealed that daily operations have improved. Sales have increased to \$420 in November from an average of \$250 in September and October. The increase was attributed to improved marketing strategies that involve distributing products to group members for sale on a monthly basis, and participation in market fairs. The marketing officer plans to engage retailers and supermarkets in Bulawayo for products such as sorghum meal, which is in demand as evidenced by sales at market fairs held in there. Despite the improved sales, the average income is still low, due to low productivity levels.

Strengthening Producer Organization

As a result of a series of business management and leadership training and coaching sessions, the smallholder producers have significantly improved their record keeping and accounting books to enable them to monitor their income and expenditure and ensure profitability of their enterprises. For example, income and expenditure records, costing, pricing, cash flow budgets and income statements have significantly improved in presentation and content. Committee management meetings are being held more regularly on a monthly basis and the marketing officer gives a detailed report on the operations and finances. The group continues to diversify their products to include climate smart products such as indigenous fruits and Mopane worms.

Commitment for Life prayer

We pray and give thanks for all those who encourage and support smallholders in learning marketing skills, and for all who contribute by buying Fairtrade goods.

CELEBRATING SUMMER

Sunday 28th June

The Worship Group are shaping our worship for this Sunday.

We are all encouraged to bring something to church that says something about Summer for us. This might be a post-card or photos, music, poem, flowers, food, weather-forecast - please use your imagination!

Our church service will be the occasion when we say 'Thank you' to Zaidie for all that she has shared with us over the past two years. All are then welcome at the Harman's home in Barston for our 'Garden Lunch' when our celebration of Summer will continue, and conclude with some worship.

In preparation for our 'Celebrating Summer' Worship following the Garden Lunch, folk are asked to consider what are those things that make Summer for them? There will be more in the June Newsletter asking for something to be brought on that occasion to illustrate this.

SOME DATES FOR THE FUTURE

Popular and Folk Music Concert

Friday 12th June 7.30pm @HM

Colin McIlwaine and Carol Andrews - watch out for tickets!

**'Thank You Zaidie' - Garden Lunch at the Harman's home -
Celebrate Summer Worship on**

Sunday 28th June, following morning worship.

Garden Party at the Kembery's home:

Saturday 18th July 2-4pm

**Zaidie Orr's Ordination & induction Service
on Saturday, 1st August**

A coach will be organised - look out for details.

CALENDAR FOR MAY

- Tuesday 5th 10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM
- Thursday 7th 2pm Singing for Pleasure @ HM
- Saturday 9th 10.30-12.30 Christian Aid Coffee Morning at Hobs Moat
10am -2pm Christian Aid Coffee Morning
at Solihull Methodist Church
- Sunday 10th** Christian Aid Week begins
6.30pm Christian Aid Service @ Christ Church
- Monday 11th 12.30pm Generations Presentation Lunch Hour
- Thursday 14th 2pm Singing for Pleasure @HM
- Friday 15th 10am SCAH Coffee Morning & Sale at
19 Lovelace Avenue
- Saturday 16th Fellowship Prayers @ HM
- Sunday 17th** **11am Church Meeting**, following worship
- Monday 18th 7.30pm Elders' Meeting @HM
- Tuesday 19th 10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM
- Thursday 21st 2pm Singing for Pleasure @ HM
7.30pm Social Events Planning @ CC
- Sunday 24th** Praying with the Papers - in morning worship

ANNOUNCEMENT



Myles and Julia Ensor are delighted to announce the wedding of their daughter Sam Ensor to Stuart Mills at Christ Church on Saturday 2nd June 2015 at 2 pm. All are welcome at the church.

CHRIST CHURCH

We pray for:

Barbara and Keith Fisher, Brian Gibbs, Brenda Cotes, Michael Hogg. Alan and Barbara Mense, Syd and Michelle, Gordon Straight, the Jenkins Family, Doris Thompson, John Calvin.

Our prayers are for these people and their families.

Bridget.

CHARITY BINS

Charity Bins may be found at the back of Christ Church.

The following is a list of requirements for the different bins, which may be brought at any time.

Welcome (asylum seekers)

Clothes of reasonable quality (not jumble) for all ages, from baby to adult. Shoes are really appreciated.

Helping Hands (in need of food)

TINS of soups, stews, casseroles, corned beef, spam, chicken/steak pies, baked beans, spaghetti, fish, vegetables and puddings.

PACKETS of tea bags, sugar, long-life milk, breakfast cereals, biscuits, pasta, rice and spaghetti.

JARS of sandwich spreads, jam and pasta sauce.

HOBS MOAT

These friends need our thoughts and prayers at this time. they all have their individual needs which are known to their families and close friends. We pray for God's blessing on each of them: Alf Andrews, Joan Shaw, Irene Lambert & partner. Keith, Thelma Phillips, Vera Thomas and Nita Renshaw. Please remember these folk in your daily prayers.

Congratulations!

To Hazel Smart and Marc Taylor who celebrated their wedding on Good Friday. Hazel is the daughter of Rosalind and John Smart of Hobs Moat). We send our love and good wishes for their future happiness together.

Jeanne

OLTON

PRAYERS for, and NEWS of OUR CHURCH FAMILY

At this time our thoughts and prayers are with **Mark** and **Judy** and our whole **Church Family**, particularly those in need of **God's** special care. We pray for: **Norma Clement** who recently suffered a mild stroke from which she is now recovering well; for **Josie Loftus** and **Christine Yapp**; and for all those who are no longer able to join us in worship due to health problems.

We are pleased to have **Anne Cherry** and **Gweno Nichols** safely back home after their adventures in the Galapagos Islands and the Far East, respectively.

And, finally, what a joy it was to welcome the **Bradburn-Cunningham** family and their friends to witness the baptism of baby **Luke**.

Rita

WORSHIP & PRAYER IN MAY

- Sunday 3rd** 10am Holy Communion - Mark Fisher
including Ordination & Induction of Elders
- Sunday 10th** 10am Family Worship - focus on Christian Aid
6.30pm Solihull Christian Aid Service
- Monday 11th 11.30am Central Solihull Word & Prayer
- Tuesday 12th 11am Holy Communion @ Hampton House
2pm Hobs Moat Word & Prayer
- Thursday 14th Ascension Day
- Saturday 16th 10am Fellowship Prayers @HM
- Sunday 17th** 10am Family Worship - Mark Fisher
11.45am Worship @ Star & Garter
- Tuesday 19th 10am Olton Word & Prayer
- Wednesday 20th 10.30am Worship @ The Grove
- Sunday 24th** 10am Pentecost Worship - Zaidie Orr & Praying
with the Papers
- Sunday 31st** 10am Family Worship & Baptism - Mark Fisher

Lectionary Readings

May 3rd

Acts 8:26-40 Psalm 22:25-31 1 John 4:7-21 John 15:1-8

May 10th

Acts 10:44-48 Psalm 98 1 John 5:1-6 John 15:9-17

May 17th

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26 Psalm 1 1 John 5:9-13 John 17:6-19

May 24th

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14 Psalm 104:24-34, 35b Romans 8:22-27
or Acts 2:1-21 John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

May 31st

Isaiah 6:1-8 and Psalm 29 Romans 8:12-17 John 3:1-17

PALM SUNDAY

A truly superb service and meal for Palm Sunday 2015! Thank you to everyone who made the day so special for us.

I feel we were richly blessed by the occasion in celebration of joining together as one United Reformed Church in the Borough of Solihull. The Moderator, Revd. Roy Lowes, led our celebration service at Christ Church and inducted Mark to the new pastorate. He then preached a sermon full of encouragement to us all.



And the meal? Well, Elaine and helpers, it couldn't have been any tastier and better served in a top restaurant – and the food presentation was superb! The room and table decorations looked so attractive too. Thank you all so much.

Carol Andrews

EASTER FLOWERS



I would like to express our appreciation for all the lovely flowers on Easter Sunday, and for the way the Cross was decorated.

Thank you also for the beautiful camellias I was given as I left the church.

Iris Webb

Hazel and Marc's Wedding Blessing 4th April

Rosalind and John would like to thank everyone who made this special day even more special with the presence of so many friends. God Bless you all.



URGENT PRAYERS NEEDED

From Canon Andrew White, (The Vicar of Baghdad)

The crisis in Iraq has got worse than ever. Scores have been murdered (beheaded, raped) homes and churches destroyed. We always think it can't get worse and it does. Dr Sarah is in Erbil and her stories today are just too awful to tell.

From A Trusted Source:

The Islamist group (ISIS) just took over **Quaragosh**, the biggest Christian city in Iraq. There are hundreds of men, women and children that are being beheaded. The people are asking for prayers to be made on their behalf concerning the ongoing atrocity in their country. Please take one minute to pray for them. Pass the message across to all your contacts so that the prayer chain will not be broken.

They asked for this special prayer. Please, ensure you pass across the prayer request to the body of Christ for fervent prayers offered on behalf of the brothers, sisters and children in Iraq.

To all Serving Ministers and Church Secretaries:

This is an urgent SOS message please. Thank you for your concern. May the Lord bless you and yours, and always send help your way.

Amen.

BE A PART; TAKE A PART—BUT DON'T BE APART!

Be a part. A sense of belonging is important to us all. We humans need to love and be loved to be really happy. Our enlarged church family is amazing and it's a loving family which is gradually knitting together and forming strong bonds. Many of us have now reached the stage where it is almost unthinkable to be three separate churches again – we would miss members of our enlarged church family too much. We still don't yet know every member well, though 'getting to know some of you better' is really exciting!



It is said that 'families that play together stay together' and it is true – so we look forward to more social occasions at which we 'play together' and enjoy one another's company.

Take a part. "But I don't want to do outreach!" Yes I've heard it said. Think of this - each time you smile you are outreaching to someone. It can be as simple as that and everybody is capable of a smile, I hope! Pick up the phone and talk to someone who is a part of our church family but still feeling lost and confused about changes. Even if we are....shhh.....whisper it.....'elderly' we can still phone someone for a chat! What's the betting you'll make someone's day? Chatting to someone makes us feel better too. Yes we can all 'take a part' – we may not all be able to make a meal for 50 people – or even sing – but we can still take a part as we all have something of ourselves to offer.

Be apart? Perish the thought - don't even think of it as you'd miss far too much fun, joy and love. If you know someone who is really part of our church family but hurting and staying away, draw them back in. Pick up the phone or go and see them. Yes, that is outreach and you too can do it! Tell the 'lost folk' that we miss them; we love them and want them back with us again. Outreach begins with the person next to you. Be like Jesus and gather in those lost sheep!

Carol Andrews

CHRISTIAN AID QUIZZES



I shall be selling these quizzes again this year at a £1 each at Christ Church on a Sunday morning. They are different this year as they are based on Christian Aid work in 42 countries.

How much do you know about these countries?

Christian Aid Coffee Morning at Hobs Moat on Saturday 9th May 10.30--12noon



Please come and enjoy coffee/tea and cake.

Raffle and quizzes as well. if you can offer help please see me.

Janet Ince

USED POSTAGE STAMPS

We welcome your continued support for the Leprosy Mission by saving used postage stamps.

The TLM Stamp Bureau raises funds by selling these stamps individually or in bulk. British and foreign stamps are all welcome. They ask that the stamps are cut off envelopes with a small margin of paper. Do not attempt to peel them off envelopes.



There is a small box at the back of the church for your donations, or please see me for more details.

Sheila Durant





Add your support to activities around
Christian Aid Week
10 - 16 MAY 2015

Saturday 9th May 10am - 2pm @ The Methodist Church

COFFEE MORNING & SALE

Refreshments, soup & ploughman's lunches, children's menu, books, jewellery, cosmetics, fair trade, home-made jams, cakes etc., plants for the garden, hand-car-wash. Special events

Biscuit Decorating Competition.

For children of all ages, everything provided



Groovy Little Movers

Singing and dancing sessions.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK SERVICE

Sunday 10th May 6.30pm @ Christ Church 741 Warwick Road B91 3DG

Time to reflect on needs around our world and pray for those engaged on our behalf - and our street-collectors. We welcome Christian Aid Youth Intern, Shona Day to speak about her visit to Ethiopia and the particular needs there Christian Aid are addressing.

STREET COLLECTION

Last year Central Solihull raised over £13,000 during Christian Aid Week so, while door knocking is not everyone's favourite activity, it is a core element of our fundraising.

If you feel able to volunteer, please see the co-ordinator in your church, who will be happy to kit you out with all the necessary.

If you cannot collect, then do 'Count your Blessings' during Lent, or invite friends and neighbours to a Super Soup Lunch - and come and pray for our collectors at the service.

Many more ideas and info: www.christianaid.org.uk

COACH TRIPPERS UNITED

BLETCHLEY PARK
Thursday, 21st May

We look forward to exploring the mansion, garages, exhibitions and code-breaking challenges where during World War II the German secret codes were broken, and hearing the sounds and noises of wartime Britain. There is a coffee shop and a café serving hot and cold meals.

If you would like to come, please contact Val Cross (706 9687) by **Sunday, 10th May**. The cost of the coach is £18, plus entrance fee of £12 - £30 in all. The coach will leave Olton URC promptly at **8.30 am**.

In June we are going to Nottingham for a 3-hour cruise with Princess River Cruises. The inclusive cost of the coach and cruise will be £25.00.



Please note that in all cases bookings for future events can only be taken by Val after the previous outing, to prevent mix-ups.

GOOD NEWS

URC helps raise millions for maternal health care in Kenya

Thanks to the help of the United Reformed Church, the Christian Aid Christmas appeal was a resounding success, raising just over £3.6 million! As the UK government matched all eligible donations pound for pound, this means an additional £3 million for maternal and child health projects in Kenya, Malawi and beyond.