SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat– Olton

MARCH 2017 NEWSLETTER

LOOKING FOR LIFE - Lent 2017

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

The life appeared, we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard.

1 John 1

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

Look for Life - Mark gives some pointers

Gus had a career as an top-rank astro-physicist until he suffered a brain aneurism which removed his ability to create new memories, while old ones remain. His life is now shaped by post-it notes all over his apartment which serve to remind him of almost every detail of his life and what he needs to do. In the romantic drama 'Remember Sunday' Gus meets Molly and they begin a relationship. This is, for Gus, similarly shaped by notes and memory boxes, but he does remember his research into how, in galaxies way beyond the naked eye's vision, the coming together of matter may indicate the beginnings of life that led to the birth of human life.

The contrast between the two glimpses of life - the nitty gritty detail of everyday catalogued on numerous post-its, and the awesome vastness of space somehow giving birth to human life - could not be greater. A life lived in the moment and one that spans trillions of light-years. But then there is the growing relationship and love between Molly and Gus, who struggles to recall the person, but senses the love when they meet and the new life it opens up for him.

During Lent we will be 'Looking for Life' and seeking to be clearer about where we find the authentic life that God offers us in both creation and redemption. Without presuming the outcome of our search, I imagine that we will see life in the 'big picture', while much mystery remains in the vastness of God's creation. I trust that in the everyday business of making sense of the complexities of our existence and our post-it notes we will recognise that God's life is in the present moment - (for us who spend so much time living within our plans for the future this seems most important). I know too that when we sense an authentic love between ourselves and others, there we find the life that is God's gift in Jesus Christ.

I trust that all will find some way to share the search - in Lent Groups, Woodland walk, Sunday worship, Lantern Walk or personal reflections - and be led to a real celebration of life at Easter. And in the search I trust too that you will be blessed.

Mark Fisher

MAKE & MEND

Wednesday mornings @ Christ Church from 10am

An opportunity to share in a variety of ways towards our life and mission.

- Painting some bookshelves for the Meeting Place. These will house books and jig-saws for loan/exchange.
- Creation of a large paper lantern in preparation for the Lantern Walk on Easter Saturday - soldering frame, artwork, assembly.
- Preparing the display of the 'Looking for Life' Collage.

WE ARE SEEKING - AN EDITOR FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Marian Batten is moving away and we are looking for someone to take on the role of Newsletter Editor.

This requires some IT skills and a bit of flair for layout and editing articles. If interested, ask Marian for more information and talk to Mark.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

We will be holding our service on March 3rd commencing at 10.30 am at the Methodist Church in Blossomfield Road. The mayor of Solihull, Councillor Mike Roberts, will be in attendance and this year we will be praying for the women of the Philippines. If you have not joined one of these events we would be very happy to see you. We are hoping for a good congregation and all are welcome, both women and men, so we hope to see you there.

Judith Kembery

LOOKING FOR LIFE

A Lenten exploration of the gifts of God in Christ,

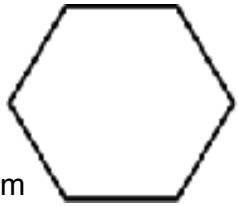
Two events are for all to join in, including those in the wider community. Please invite friends, family and neighbours. Details on the back page of this leaflet …..

In our church life we will make our explorations

- during Sunday worship,
- on Tuesday lunchtimes (12 noon) at Hobs Moat which will include a Simple Lunch (bread and cheese)
- on Wednesday evenings (7.30pm) in the Meeting Place @ Christ Church.

Individually you are invited to contribute to a collage illustrating our discovery of God in our lives.

LOOKING FOR LIFE TOGETHER



We make a giant collage bit - by - bit

Hexagon template and ideas sheets available from

church premises (Christ Church, Hobs Moat, Olton)

Or download from www.solihullurc.org.uk/Lent17

- Consider how you might illustrate your search for life, or where you find life.
- Post your contribution in one of the boxes in any of our churches.
- Come and see the finished collages at Christ Church 10am ,on Easter Day, 16th April.
- Or see them displayed in each church after Easter.

In Sunday worship and in our week-day reflections on
Tuesday - 12 noon @ Hobs Moat with bread & cheese lunch
Wednesday - 7.30pm in the Meeting Place @ Christ Church
we look for life in the experience of our world and ourselves and in the witness of scripture and the ministry of Jesus.
The dates are those of the Sunday, with the following Tuesday and Wednesdays offering opportunity for further reflection and discussion.

March 1 Ash Wednesday 10am @ Olton
Luke 9:51-62 (Psalm 5:7-8)
Jesus starts for Jerusalem and even in rejection encourages putting your hand to the plough and not turning back.
What of our journey with Jesus, to discover his life?

March 5 Luke 10:25-42 The Parable of the Good Samaritan
We reflect on the nature of compassion and how it is expressed to those who are 'different' from ourselves.

March 12 Luke 13:1-9, 31-35 The tower in Siloam and need for repentance, the fruitless fig tree and a lament over Jerusalem.
We reflect on personal change required to appreciate Jesus.
Society knows of need for change, but for what?

March 19 Luke 15:1-32 Parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son.
We reflect on forgiveness, conflict resolution between peoples and the rehabilitation of offenders.

March 26 Luke 16:19-31 Parable of the rich man and Lazarus.
We reflect on the wealth and poverty of our world and the values of Jesus.

April 2 Luke 18:31–19:10 Healing a blind man, meeting Zacchaeus.
We reflect on the sight of faith as we look for life.

Churches Together in Central Solihull

Lent Matters

Evening Sessions 2017

Inspiring talks - people from different spheres of life talk about matters affecting our lives today

Come on **Tuesday Evenings at 7.30pm**

Speakers

7th March	**Revd Sam McBratney - Human Sexuality**
14th March	**Tess Ward - Matters of Life and Death**
21st March	**Steve Squires - Technology and Mission - connecting with Generations Y & Z**
28th March	**Earth Centred Spirituality**
4th April	**Caroline Spelman - Brexit**

Solihull Methodist Church, B91 1LG (by Solihull Station - you can park in the Church Car Park off Station Approach)

Members of all churches and none are welcome - do bring friends.

Leprosy

Thank you to everyone who collects for the Leprosy Mission. You have enabled me to send a cheque for £383.93 to the Mission

Sue Plant

DIARY for MARCH

Wednesday 1[s]	10am	Worship for Ash Wednesday @ Olton followed by a 'round-up' from the Cell Groups
Thursday 2nd	10am	Tots & Tales @ Christ Church
	2pm	Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat
Sunday 5th	10am	Holy Communion @ Christ Church
	11am	Looking for Life in Nature @ Cold Lands Wood
Monday 6th	10am	Moments Cafe
	10.30am	Job Club
Tuesday 7th	10.30am	Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM
	11am	Worship @ St Francis Lodge
	12noon	Lent Reflections & Simple Lunch @ Hobs Moat
Wednesday 8th	10am	Make & Mend @ Christ Church
	7.30pm	Lent Reflections @ Christ Church
Thursday 9th	10am	Tots & Tales @ Christ Church
	2pm	Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat
Sunday 12th	10am	Worship @ Christ Church
Monday 13th	10am	Moments Cafe @ Christ Church
	10.30am	Job Club @ Christ Church
	12noon	Generations Lunch Hour & Round-up
Tuesday 14th	11am	Holy Communion @ Hampton House
	12noon	Lent Reflections & Simple Lunch @ Hobs Moat
Wednesday 15th	10am	Make & Mend @ Christ Church
	10.30am	Worship @ The Grove
	7.30pm	Lent Reflections @ Christ Church
Thursday 16th	10am	Tots & Tales @ Christ Church
	2pm	Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat
Sunday 19th	10am	Worship @ Christ Church
	11.45am	Worship @ Star & Garter

Monday 20th	10am	Moments Cafe @ Christ Church
		Prayer Fellowship @ Hobs Moat
	10.30am	Job Club @ Christ Church
Tuesday 21st	10.30am	Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM
	11am	Holy Communion @ Tudor Lodge
	12noon	Lent Reflections & Simple Lunch @ HM
Wednesday 22nd	10am	Make & Mend @ Christ Church
	11am	SCAH AGM & Lunch @ Christ Church
	7.30pm	Lent Reflections @ Christ Church
Thursday 23rd	10am	Tots & Tales @ Christ Church
	2pm	Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat
Sunday 26th	10am	Worship @ Christ Church
Monday 27th	10am	Moments Cafe @ Christ Church
	10.30am	Job Club @ Christ Church
Tuesday 28th	12noon	Lent Reflections & Simple Lunch @ HM
Wednesday 29th	10am	Make & Mend @ Christ Church
	7.30am	Lent Reflections @ Christ Church
Thursday 30th	10am	Tots & Tales @ Christ Church
	2pm	Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

THIS WAY UP Unpacking Loss

ARE RECRUITING NEW VOLUNTEERS

to join our teams of Pastoral Mentors working with young people in local schools.
Contact Cheryl on **0121 439 9181** or **cheryl@twup.org**
to discuss attending our next 2-day induction training
o**n 8th and 9th March**

Saturday 20 May
the whole URC is invited to enjoy

The Big Day Out at Warwick Castle.

This is a festival for all ages where activities will run from 10am to 5pm in the historic and beautiful setting. Individuals and groups, with their church communities and wider family and friends, are all welcome to be part of what promises to be a day to remember.

Tickets include access to the castle and attractions where visitors can have a go at archery, watch birds of prey in flight, take part in worship with hundreds of others, listen to influential and engaging speakers – including General Secretary John Proctor; visit the beautiful conservatory tea house, relax in the peacock garden, and enjoy a celebratory picnic.

This event forms part of the United Reformed Church's 2017 theme of Feast and Festivals, and organisers have asked as many church groups as possible to bring a colourful banner on the day!

Ticket prices are:
17 and over, £16.50 per person

Four to 16 years, £11 per person

Under four, free

Booking forms (to be returned by 31st March, available from feastsandfestivals@urc.org.uk or 020 7916 8637

.**COACH TRIPPERS UNITED**

CAMBRIDGE
20TH April 2017

Our tripping season kicks off with a visit to the famous university city of Cambridge on the river Cam, where there is much on offer. Among the many elegant college buildings is Christ Church, famous for its chapel ceiling and its choir, Behind it are the Backs which provide a pleasant stroll along the river

Other sites of interest are the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Botanical Gardens, and the Eagle pub where Crick and Watson announced their discovery of DNA.

The easiest way to see more of the city is on the open top bus (£12 for concessions). Punt rides are available on the river for the energetic and adventurous.

The coach will leave Olton URC at 8.30am. The fare will remain at £18, which includes a tip for the driver. The person to contact if you would like to come Val Cross on 706 9687. Please contact her at least ten days before the event, so that the coach can be booked.

A SPRING SING!

Local community choir **Sing! Bentley Heath** will be performing their welcome to Springtime this April. The 80 singers, under the musical direction of Jane Perrins, will be performing in Christ Church URC, Solihull on **Saturday 8th of April at 7:30pm**. The programme wil include a range of musical styles with some great pop classics and harmonies provided by the all-age mixed choir and their 5 piece backing band.

The charity 'SPRING SING!' evening is suitable for the whole family and tickets (in advance only) are £8.50 (including refreshments) from The Core Box Office.

1. Daily ask God to help us see the people around us as He sees them (our friends, neighbours & relatives; our contacts eg shop assistants, health professionals, bus drivers, people in queues with us etc.).
2. Ask God for opportunities to share what we know of the church and of God with those we contact each day.
3. Ask God for courage to make the most of the opportunities that he sends!
4. Keep praying for the people that you share something with no matter how small the moment was. In your prayer time ask God to show you anything specific about them that He would like you to pray about.
5. Keep encouraging one another in the church to keep sharing outside the church.

A MESSAGE FROM MARY BURGESS

Dear Friends, I do hope that you are all happy and well, and particularly feeling the embrace of God's rich blessings upon you.

I do apologise for being so poor at keeping in touch, but life seems to be busy with work in the three pastorates here in Leicestershire, a Pastoral Consultancy role, and family 'duties' with four grandchildren and an aged father-in-law.

And now, this year, I'm busy sorting and downsizing, ready for our next move. This one will be the major shift that comes with retirement.

I am sifting through papers, books and resources that have been part of my 19 years in ordained ministry, plus many more in less formal areas of service prior to that. Inevitably, it includes rediscovering many reminders of very happy times with you in Solihull, at Olton and Christ Church, but particularly at St Ninian's and Hobs Moat, of course – for which I am truly thankful to the Lord.

John has already half retired, completing his West Midlands Synod role, while still continuing with his TLS work.

I will be retiring from pastoral ministry in July of this year and, although I will miss several aspects of it, I am looking forward to new opportunities of service in the future – as well as enjoying increased 'Grandma time', and more quality time with John, too, of course!

My last service will take place at Earl Shilton United Reformed Church (LE9 7DH), on Sunday 2nd July at 3.00 p.m. If any of you happen to be in the area, or would like to come, you would be most welcome, and my time with you will be mentioned and celebrated within the service, as well as the years before and after.

Whether or not you can come to Leicestershire in July, I hope I may find time to pop over to Solihull from time to time and enjoy catching up with some of you, once I've retired.

Meanwhile, I continue to think of you with thanksgiving, love and prayers.

Mary

FELLOWSHIP PRAYERS

Housebound or in Care

The Jenkins family, Sheila Schwartz.
Joan Shaw, Vera Thomas, Thelma & Phil Phillip, Alf Andrews, Vera Atherley
Norma Clement – moving to the Marjorie Jones Unit at Rayner House on 28th February.

Health issues or increased frailty

We pray for God's blessing on our friends who need our thoughts and prayers at this time:
Irene Lambert & partner Keith, Margaret Agnew, Peggy Crosby, Andrea & Phil Holt, Pat and family, Rosalind Smart, Beryl Pullin, Natalie and Baby Harvey, Irene Kettle, Thea.
Eunice Thomson, Margaret Toogood, Pam Tovey Sheila Durant.

We send love and prayers to all our friends mentioned above, and think about all their carers too. May all our friends and neighbours who are in need feel the strength of our support.

Bereavement

We pray for the family and friends of **Hazel Taylor** who passed away recently in Solihull hospital. Hazel was known to many of us at the Monday Night Club and was our treasurer for a number of years. Our thoughts are especially with David, Hazel's husband.=

Edith Harwood has been a faithful member of Hobs Moat congregation for a number of years now, and gave us valued ideas during our amalgamation of the three Churches from her previous church experience. We shall miss her kindly nature and reliable appearances in church. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family after her sudden death.

Alan Vining. It was a shock for us to learn on Sunday 5th February that Alan had died peacefully that morning. He had returned home from hospital the day before, enjoying watching the rugby with his

HOLY WEEK offers further opportunity to us to Look for Life. God's passion for his people is expressed in the Passion of Jesus - a life offered and given and eternal.
The life we find in Jesus we seek to share with those around us, which we will do symbolically in the Lantern Walk on Easter Saturday.

April 9 Palm Sunday *10am @ Christ Church*
Luke 19:29-44
Jesus enters Jerusalem and weeps over the city that does not know peace.
We reflect on the city and the world that still does not know peace and why?

April 13 Maundy Thursday *7.30pm @ Christ Church*
Luke 22:1-27
In sharing bread and wine we recall the Last Supper, acknowledge Jesus as one who serves and a life offered.

April 14 Good Friday
Life given. We share the Way of the Cross and the life given us in Christ.
Olton 10.30am from Dovehouse Parade
Central Solihull 11am from St Alphege

April 15 Easter Eve *from 6pm @ Olton*
Darkness to Light
We share our journey with the wider community in a Lantern Walk in Olton and simple prayer outside our church.

April 16 EASTER *10am @ Christ Church*
Luke 24:1-12 (Psalm 118:17-24)
Life is celebrated

Looking for Life in Nature

All welcome to join in

Come and explore the emerging Spring life in the woods.
Collect samples in a matchbox (provided)
Prizes for the most!
Take photos for our web-gallery. Spot the wild-life. Look up things you don't know.

Sunday 5th March
11am Cold Lands Wood
accessed from Buryfield, St Helen's and Naseby Roads, Solihull

Further details from the Contacts overleaf
Look for Stewards - Base-camp will be on the field - follow the arrows!

Lantern Walk - Easter Saturday

CELEBRATING LIFE

15th April from 6pm URC Olton, Kineton Green Road

Make a paper lantern beforehand
(in groups perhaps - designs on the website)
or come at 6pm to make one on Easter Saturday
(battery tea-lights only - we can supply)

Enjoy refreshments - Join a short walk - Share the lighting of an 'Easter fire' - Celebrate Life!

FULL DETAILS - IN CHURCH - OR ON THE WEBSITE
www.solihullurc.org.uk/Lent17

sons. Alan's 87 years saw him at the centre of a close supportive family, along with Marian. A quantity surveyor by profession and good with detail and figures, Alan was also a creative person and appreciated the whole - a building, a pot, his family. His faith was lived in practical concern for others and in serving the church in various ways. We thank God for his rich life.

Others to whom we relate within our life and mission:

For our friends in the Moments Café living, coping and struggling with the impact of dementia, including those who are carers.

For the pre-school children and their parents/carers who enjoy Tots & Tales.

For those who gather for the Neighbourhood Coffee Morning.

For the uniformed organisations and their leaders (Cubs, Beavers, Brownies and Rainbows).

For the 'Olton Community Centre Joint Management Group, including some of our own folk, as we work together seeking means to maintain our premises for the use of the community and as a resource for us.

Thank You

Philip and Heather and I would like to thank you all for the very kind thoughts, cards, flowers, messages and donations on the loss of David. Thank you also to those from Solihull URC who attended his funeral service, which was a bit overwhelming but wonderful. To me he was just David, the man I would have been married to for 49 years in April. I didn't realise he was so well respected by so many people. Thanking you all once again.

Val Cross

SCRIBBLE ON YOUR PEWSLIP!

Do you scribble on your pewslip during the sermon? 'No!' I thought you probably didn't, though generally I tend to be too busy scribbling on mine to notice what you are up to – if anything!

'Whatever next - Carol scribbles on her pew slip? And she's an elder too – tut-tut!' So now I'll shock you even more – I'm not the only one! Mark has spotted two of us doing it – and he doesn't mind, as he knows exactly what we are up to. We are taking notes of what he is saying – as reminders. Often I write out whole sentences, word for word – so they are quotes. I long ago discovered our minister is very erudite. I take my pewslips home and enjoy reading them again. It's so much easier to recall a sermon if I have taken some notes!

I suppose the note-taking habit started in my college days when we took lecture notes. Such activities become habitual – well they did for me. Unlike my mother who knew shorthand, I learned to write fast – even if it did look a bit scribbled!

My weekly pewslip has become a treasure – more so now the Bible readings are printed on it too. Those Bible readings are a joy – so please don't leave your pewslip in a pew! Take it home and enjoy recalling the hymns and the readings, even if you don't scribble quotes on it. I always feel so sad if I have to throw any pewslips away after service, when I am on elder duty. And while talking of pewslips, a big thank you to Marcia Leon who produces them for us each week.

I have quite a collection of pewslips – all scribbled on with plenty of quotes. Sometimes I type some of the quotes beside my digital photos – you may have noticed a few which appear in our newsletter from time to time. There are quotes from visiting ministers and lay preachers too - visiting preachers are not exempt from my scribbles during the sermon!

So try it. I guarantee Mark doesn't mind a bit – and I also guarantee that I won't notice you scribbling on your pewslip as I am far too busy

scribbling on mine! Don't forget to bring a pen or pencil to church though – as you can't scribble on your pew-slip without one!

ZIMBABWE Extract from Stories for Change 129

Current statistics show that over 4 million people in Zimbabwe are food insecure as a result of the El Nino induced drought, especially as the peak of the hunger season sets in. Food is therefore the major priority for rural households at the moment, at the expense of some longer term programme work geared towards building long term resilience. This means projects such as gardening projects are being neglected due to both water shortages and households spending. Much time is spent looking for food.

The majority of crops planted during 2015/16 season were a complete write off. In Binga, where the programme is focussing on formal and informal education, drops in school attendances are being reported where there are no complimentary school feeding programmes. Unfortunately, the programme has not managed to get sufficient funding to integrate food assistance in all its areas of operation. The current emergency funding has been raised through the ACT Appeal process and is available up to the end of December 2016. So far only Insiza and Lupane districts are receiving assistance, reaching out to just over 8,000 individuals.

Christian Aid has noted that communities are resorting to negative and asset depleting coping strategies in the face of the ongoing food crisis. For example, where emergency interventions are providing cash for the purchase of both food and seeds, communities are tending only to buy food, and not think ahead to the importance of planting seeds for the next season.

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister
Revd. Mark Fisher 07950399615 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.generationssolihull.org.uk
generationssolihull@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 Marian Batten 07855 516687

mborchard@blueyonder.co.uk

by Sunday, 19th March, please.