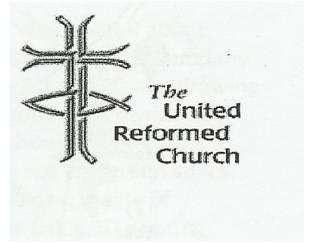


# SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat - Olton



## JUNE 2015 NEWSLETTER

Spirit of life

Fill our emptiness with your fullness

Spirit of power

Stir our hearts afresh

Spirit of love

Touch us, and through us, our neighbour

Spirit of Creativity

Enable and empower the gifts you have given

Spirit of Eternity

Draw us ever deeper into your Kingdom,





## 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 a different way. Sunday worship is focused 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.

## Seeking confidence in the Church ... Mark Reflects

Those who are reflecting on the theme of 'journey' in cell groups are creating a life-time-line indicating all the ups and downs they have experienced over the years and identifying where in it all the presence of God has been known. The same could be done for the life of the church. Being a community of individuals the same ups and downs are experienced and there are times of optimism and joy along with those of struggle and sadness.

The temptation is to see God in the positive and feel that he is absent when things are less so. It is easy to mis-read the situation. The church with a large membership and a lot of activities can become quite insular and focused on its own life, and the Lord is found in the midst of the 'two or three gathered together'. A wealthy church might see itself as successful, when the Gospel speaks of very different values.

We have all experienced things that seem less than positive in the life of the church - declining numbers, loss of valued places and customs, etc. From a personal perspective, I have devoted much of my ministry to an ecumenical journey that has been focused on the institutional denomination. This is no longer seen as the way forward, and the institutional denominations are themselves struggling with how they enable Christian discipleship and ministry.

We ask ourselves 'Where was God in all this?'. Were we just misguided during the past years, or is God in the current 'troughs' teaching us some important lessons, as he was in the 'peaks' of past years?

I sense that perhaps the Church, and we who are a part of it, have not been close enough to God or sensitive to his leading, but is hard to not be complacent when things seem good. However it is also good to know that God has not abandoned us when things get difficult, and is encouraging us to discover afresh the strength and the life which he offers. It is this that encourages me that, as long as we continue to faithfully seek God, we may have confidence in his Church.

Mark Fisher

**GET YOUR TICKETS for .....**

**A Concert of Popular and Folk Music**

Friday 12th June 7.30pm @ Hobs Moat

Colin McIlwaine (minister in Hall Green) and Carol Andrews will entertain us, raising money for our charities. £5 inc. refreshments.

**Garden Lunch**

Sunday 28th June 12noon @ The Harmans', Barston

An afternoon of food and fellowship (and hopefully some sun) with some activities and concluding worship to help us 'Celebrate Summer'.

**You are invited to bring something with you to the morning service that 'says something about Summer' for you.**

This might be a post-card of a favourite place, photos, music, poem, flowers, food, weather-forecast, or summer clothes. It might be something conjuring memories of the past or it might that dream for the future. It might be something you like or something you do not (airport queues, crowded motorways etc.!).

Clearly, it needs to be something that is fairly portable, to have in church.

We look forward to sharing an interesting variety!

**ZAIDIE ORR'S ORDINATION & INDUCTION**

**Saturday 1st August 2pm in Central URC, Sheffield.**

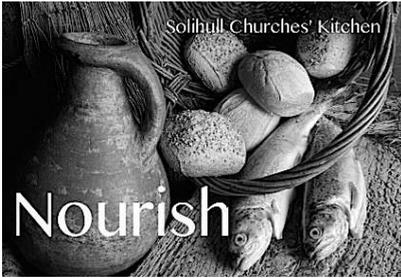
There is a coach going (leaving at around 11.30am), so sign up as soon as possible to reserve your place. The cost is £15.

Create

Saturday 19th September

Put the date in your diary - to join 'Harvest of Talents'.

It does not require talent! - you may come and learn something new - art, craft, music, cookery - and whatever you contribute.



## **Nourish - Solihull Churches Kitchen is a new project for Solihull Churches.**

The provision of a hot meal for needy individuals and families is the initiative of the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral or St. Mary and the Archangel Michael (the old St Ninian's).

This will be taking place at Christ Church on a Friday evening starting in the near future, and volunteer support from other churches is welcomed. There is a response form on the Churches Together website: [www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk](http://www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk) if you would like to offer your time for picking up shopping, setting tables, cooking, serving, washing-up etc.

### **AN INITIATIVE OF OUR OWN ....**

Thinking around 'Meeting Place' has, from the outset, included the possibility of hosting a 'Dementia Café' offering support and space for a self-help group for dementia sufferers and their carers. The situation of guests attending the screening of a video on dementia at the Generations Lunch Hour has highlighted the desperate need of many in this situation, and has persuaded us that the initiative should be progressed before the Meeting Place development.

The idea is that we offer space where people can meet in a relaxed environment, gain support from the experience of others in a similar situation as well as learning of resources and support from professional agencies. We will also seek to provide some appropriate activities to help stimulate people.

Some Elders are taking this forward. If you are interested in the possibility of helping in this, please let Jacky Justham know in the first instance.

The Generations Project continues to explore the encouragement of a continued spiritual life for those suffering from dementia.

**CALENDAR** (please also see Worship Diary)

- Tuesday 2nd 10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM  
1.30pm Memorial Service for Pam Nunn @ Knowle UR
- Thursday 4th 2.00pm Singing for Pleasure @ HM
- Saturday 6th 2.00pm Wedding of Sam Ensor and Stuart Mills @ CC
- Monday 8th 12.30pm Generations Lunch Hour @ CC  
7.30pm Elders' Meeting @ HM
- Wednesday 10th 6.45pm CT in Central Solihull @CC
- Thursday 11th 6.00pm Solihull Faiths Forum AGM @ Shirley Baptist  
Church (use Parkgate entrance & Asda CP)  
7.30pm Hatchford Brook CT AGM @ St Mary's HM
- Friday 12th 7.30pm Fundraising Concert @ HM
- Tuesday 16th 10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM
- Wednesday 17th 10.00am Worship @ The Grove
- Thursday 18th 8.30am Coach Trip to Nottingham (from Olton)  
2.00pm Singing for Pleasure @ HM
- Thursday 25th 2.00pm Singing for Pleasure @ HM
- Saturday 27th 12noon Vines Renewal of Wedding Vows @ Olton
- Sunday 28th 12noon Garden Lunch @ Harmans', Barston
- Tuesday 30th 10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM



**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The wedding of Sam Ensor and Stuart Mills will take place at Christ Church on Saturday 6th June 2015 at 2 pm. All are very welcome at the church.

## WORSHIP DIARY for JUNE

Monday 1st 10am Word & Prayer @ Olton

**Sunday 7th** 10am Holy Communion - Mark Fisher

Monday 8th 11.30am Word & Prayer @ Christ Church

Tuesday 9th 11am Holy Communion @ Hampton House

2pm Word & Prayer @ Hobs Moat

**Sunday 14th** 10am Family Worship - Revd Pat Nimmo

Tuesday 16th 10am Fellowship Prayers @ Christ Church

Wednesday 17th 10am Worship @ The Grove

**Sunday 21st** 10am Family Worship

with presentation by the Gideons

11.45am Worship @ Star & Garter

**Sunday 28th** 10am Family Worship with 'Thank you' to Zaidie

**NOTE: Word & Prayer @ Olton changed to the 1st of the month**

## LECTIONARY READINGS

### 7th June

Genesis 3:8-15 and Psalm 130 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 Mark 3:20-35

### 14th June

1 Samuel 15:34 - 16:13 and Psalm 20 Ezekiel 17:22-24 and Psalm 92: 1-4,  
12-15 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, (11-13), 14-17 Mark 4:26-34

### 21st June

1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4-11, 19-23), 32-49 and Psalm 9:9-20 **or**

1 Samuel 17:57-18:5, 18:10-16 and Psalm 133 Job 38:1-11 and

Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32 2 Corinthians 6:1-13 Mark 4:35-41

### 28th June

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27 and Psalm 130 Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-15,  
2:23-24 *or* Lamentations 3:22-33 and Psalm 30.

2 Corinthians 8: 7-15 Mark 5:21-43



### Sanctuary

This is a holy place,  
So sit awhile and pray.  
Be still and know  
that the Lord is here;  
He's here for you today.

Rest, close your eyes: relax,  
And fill your soul with prayer.

Then go in peace  
my friend and know,  
The Lord is everywhere.  
Yes the Lord is everywhere.

### WORD AND PRAYER IN OLTON

It was a gem of a service – do come to the next one. As the service started I sang ‘Sanctuary’ as an introit. The service was centred round ‘the Olton community’ and we prayed for various Olton folk and groups – including the school next door. As we prayed we could hear the nursery children playing in their little playground – what joy in Olton! Thank you Lord for Olton, for its people – and for Mark.

Carol

### CREAM TEAS AT BARNES CLOSE

We are expanding our popular Sunday afternoon Cream Teas at Barnes Close this year. Come along and enjoy the peace and tranquillity as you tuck into homemade scones and tea or coffee.

Sundays 14th & 28th June, 19th & 26th July and 13th September,  
3pm to 5pm

Irene Bound

## CHRISTIAN AID

A very big Thank-You to everyone for their efforts with raising monies for Christian Aid recently:

The coffee and lunch morning held at Solihull Methodist Church Hall ,which included a bookstall, raised £2000+.

Coffee morning and quiz sales held at Hobs Moat and master-minded by Janet Ince raised £300.00.

Gerry Candy had a sale and tea party, which raised £355.60.

Our Sunday evening service yielded £150.

Generations lunch the following day made £50.00.

Trixie's and Owen's cake sale made £44.00.

There have also been a number of generous contributions.

So, well done everybody, what a great joint effort from our three joined churches.

Bridget.



Please accept my thanks for all the messages I have received from friends at church. Your kind thoughts and prayers have encouraged and supported me more than I can say. I am making steady progress thanks to the expert care in hospital and now at home by Alan!

Marian Vining

I would like to thank everyone who sent me cards and good wishes during my illness, and Mark for his visit. I have received good news and do not have to have further surgery, as hopefully all the cancer has been removed.

Josie Loftus

I would like to thank everyone for cards and good wishes whilst I have not been well. I hope to see you all soon.

Sheila Durant

## **COACH TRIPPERS UNITED**

### **NOTTINGHAM RIVER CRUISE Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> June**

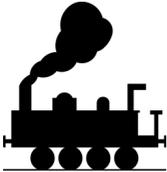


We look forward to going to Nottingham for a 3-hour cruise with Princess River Cruises, which will include a hot meal.

If you would like to come, please contact Val Cross (706 9687) by Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> June. The inclusive cost of the coach and cruise will be £25.00. The coach will leave Olton URC promptly at 8.30 am.

### **GLOUCESTERSHIRE WARWICKSHIRE STEAM RAILWAY THURSDAY, 16<sup>th</sup> JULY**

In July we are going on a ride on a steam train, leaving Toddington and calling at Winchcombe, Gotherington, Cheltenham Racecourse and Laverton. The trains run half-hourly. Light refreshments are available at Winchcombe station, and more substantial ones at Toddington station.



The inclusive cost of the coach and the train will be £25.

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

Have courage for the great sorrows of life and patience for the small ones, and when you have laboriously accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace. God is awake.

Victor Hugo

## HATS!

Mark is wanting us to bring something that says 'Summer' to our service at the end of June. So have you ladies got such a thing as a summer hat, I wonder? We can bring other summery things of course – including a posy of flowers. But wouldn't it be lovely to see some summer hats in church that day too? Nothing says 'Summer' to me more than a sun hat!



The men have some sun hats that they wore to the garden party at Chris and Trixie's last year. But there weren't many of us ladies wearing summer hats. So how about it this year? You could wear a hat or fascinator that you'd bought for a wedding maybe? What an opportunity to wear it again – any excuse!

Or a simple summer straw hat like the one I hope to wear. I bought it from a student friend who sells vintage things to eke out her earnings to pay for university. I can't wait to show you - so hopefully I'll wear it that day! "Please Lord can we have sunshine – and preferably not too much wind to disturb our hats?" I'll bet Zaidie's Mum will be wearing one – so let's join her and wear one too. Celebrate – with summer hats!

Carol

## IT'S A REAL GIVE-AWAY

I gave it to the milkman, just at the start of day,  
then passed it to the postman as he went on his way.

The dustmen trundled down the street, so they received one too;  
then I saw the window-cleaner – well, what else could I do?

It really is quite clever, it has a little knack  
as every time you give one out, you always get it back!

It doesn't cost a penny, a guinea or a pound,  
so you can give it freely, and spread it all around.

So come that day, tomorrow, stop and think a while,  
as you could be a donor, giving everyone a smile.

Anon

## **GANESH KUMAR Our sponsored child**

This is the latest message from Ganesh- unaltered.

Dear Supporter

Greetings! Your sponsored child Ganesh Kumar says that I am fine and well here and I hope that you will be also fine there.

I have drawn the picture of big tree. Now I know many things like multiplication. Hope you will like this. I go to school daily with my friends.

Update on the child:

Ganesh Kumar is intelligent and also humble. He is very much fond of sketching and drawing. Nowadays he is doing extremely well in his studies. He never misses his class. He goes to school daily. He just loves watering various plant. His parents are proud of their child. His parents always pray for your better future. Thanks for your kind support.

With best regards. Bambam lal Das

The report that comes with the message highlights some success stories

- The introduction of cash and grain banks has freed Dalit families from debt and bonded labour, enabling them to buy livestock for food and trading.
- A road has been built giving access to markets and medical care.
- Training for School Management Committees and establishing children's clubs has improved teaching quality and reduces drop outs and absences.
- A request for crisis centres to help women affected by domestic violence.

More information and Ganesh's drawing can be seen on the notice board. Thank you to all his sponsors.

Anne Cherry

## **JOURNEYING TOGETHER**

At the time of writing we're about to start focusing on the subject of 'Journey' - with Mark as a guide. I'm really looking forward to it. For one who has a travel phobia to be excited about the subject of 'Journey' is really saying something! So why am I excited? I think it will be healing and helpful to us all – and personally I am hoping it will help to heal my travel phobia too.

It's the uncertainty about journeying that bothers me – and I'm not alone in this fear of course. Yet God is always with us and, as we journey as a church family we are together and there is love between us, so that helps enormously. It's hardly as if we have only just started on this journey – we've been journeying together for some time now.

What should we have packed in our suitcases and do we need to buy anything more? Well no – I doubt it. You see those suitcases really only need to contain one thing – love! And the more we travel together the more I find I love the church family around me. I am still discovering things that I didn't know about people, and I'm thoroughly enjoying it.

Where are we going? We don't know what will happen and our direction may change – the paths may twist and turn. We may finish up in a different place. It is all in God's hands, and learning to trust is really hard for us. Yet God knows we are journeying together and that we find our journey difficult at times. The only certainty is that he is with us all the time.

So far God and the angels have sent me 4 songs about journeying to share with you. If you type into Google, 'Carol sings Faith – Journey with Our Lord' you should find the first one. There's a poem too which I hope to share with you before long. God will support us all the way on our journey, and the ultimate destination for us all is heaven. Meanwhile there is plenty of journeying to do here on earth, and this intrepid traveller intends to be with you – God willing! My suitcase is full of love for you all.

Carol

## ZIMBABWE - Extract from Stories for Change 110

### Growing empowerment and vegetables

The Zimbabwe Project Trust (ZIMPRO) has worked with the Sukumani Garden Project committee to build a small market where they can sell the produce from their gardens. The profits they make are used for the families to pay school fees and support their



husbands (many of whom are unemployed). They are able to buy stationery items for use by school children and they can buy ‘good’ food which makes them healthier. Originally the members were not good at working together, so they came up with the idea of a constitution and now things work much more smoothly.

By having the market they are able to make the best use of their produce. They no longer have to travel long distances to buy food; now they grow their own. There are 7 gardens, bringing a large variety of crops to sell in the market. They sell not only to local people but also to other areas. A recently acquired drying machine has increased their selling opportunities too.

Even with this success they still face challenges. Sometimes the animals (Kudo) get into the garden and eat the crops, and some gardens struggle to get water during winter. They know they must extend their range of produce and would like to grow oranges or bananas, sweet potatoes, ground nuts and sunflowers.

“ZIMPRO assisted by opening our eyes and minds to development” explains the market manager.

Other members commented that ZIMPRO had worked very hard for and with them. The agricultural techniques training has enabled them to make the best use of the gardens and, by following up each project, ensured success. The market is seen as the future for their children.

*Image. The Market stall© Geoff Daintree*

## **Commitment for Life Prayer**

We pray for the Zimbabwe Project Trust, which opens eyes and minds to the development of market facilities, helps the people co-operate together, and to grow and sell food for the betterment of their families.

## **CHRIST CHURCH**

### **Prayer Fellowship**

Let us pray for the friends and relatives of our Church Family:

Barbara and Keith Fisher, Brenda Cotes, Michael Hogg,

Syd and Michelle, the Jenkins Family, Doris Thompson, John Calvin.

The family of Brian Gibbs in their bereavement.

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.

## HOBBS MOAT

### Prayers

The following friends need our thoughts and prayers. They all have to cope each day with their individual health problems. We pray for God's love and peace to surround them and their carers:

Alf Andrews, Peggy and Harold Crosby, Jean and Brian Mather, Maureen Bellamy, Joan Shaw, Vera Thomas, Nita Renshaw, Irene Lambert and partner Keith, Thelma Phillips, and Margaret McWilliam.

### Congratulations !

To Iris and Ron on the safe arrival of their fourth great grandchild, Violet, on the 9th May. Love to you all from all of us.

Jeanne.

## OLTON

### Prayers for, and News of our Church Family

Our thoughts and prayers are with **Mark** and **Judy**, and our whole Church Family. We remember, particularly, those who need **God's** special care: The surgery which **Sheila Durant** had to fit a stent went well, but it is taking a while to sort out the correct medication she needs after the operation, so we pray that that this problem will soon be solved.

Following recent tests, **Josie Loftus** is now assured that she is clear of cancer and we join her in giving thanks to **God** for this healing.

Those amongst you who knew **Pam Nunn** will be sad to learn that she has passed away. We offer our deepest sympathy to her daughters and their families. Please note that a memorial service will be held at Knowle URC on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June at 1.30pm.

Rita

## CWM and LEPROSY MISSION

I have sent £13 to the Council for World Mission. We are not continuing to collect for CWM, but I would like to thank all friends who have supported us in the past.

I have also sent £191.44 to the Leprosy Mission, and there is a receipt on the board at the back of the church. Thank you to all who have supported the Leprosy Mission, for which future donations will be sent in the name of Solihull URC. If any new friends would like a box, please speak to me.

Sue Plant

Colin Mellwaine



# CONCERT OF FOLK & POPULAR MUSIC



Carol Andrews  
supporting

raising funds for:

**SCAH**

- Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness

**OPEN DOORS**

- supporting the persecuted Church

**Tickets**  
**£5**

*including refreshments*

**FRIDAY 12TH JUNE**

**7.30PM**

**UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

**FAULKNER ROAD, HOBS**

## Extract from a Letter from EcuAid Africa



Dear Supporters,

Well the year is quickly passing by and we have received some letters from our sponsored pupils based on their first term of their academic year. For some of them it was their very first term at Secondary School and this was the beginning of a new and important venture for their future. One boy writes:

'I vividly remember the day when I came to my school (St George's) – it was on the 11<sup>th</sup> February this year. After I had been admitted to be a student at the school, the first thing I did was to make my timetable. This is like having a compass direction pointing the person to whatever has to be done. We have 11 subjects which are compulsory for all students – not only reading them but also understanding them as well. I am proud of how I do in Mathematics (Grade A) because it is in my mind. All the time my heart skips a beat when I do mathematics.'

A girl writes:

'I am fine and am also doing well here in my new school. Thank you for the great opportunity that you have given me. In my new school (Ribe Girls). I am doing well in my studies. The environment is good and conducive to learning. The teachers here are friendly and good. They are always ready to help in terms of solving any problems I have. In addition to that I also like participating in activities such as the music festival - particularly in dancing and singing.'

For some pupils this is the first time that they have lived away from home and their thoughts naturally go to their families. Some have good news and some bad news:

'I live with my mother, father and my three siblings. My father is a casual worker while my mother is a housewife. We have a small shamba (*plot of land*) where we cultivate to get our daily food.'

'I am sorry to inform you that on Good Friday my mother passed away. As I told you, I was a single-parented child with only a mother but now I am a total orphan. Certainly a huge gap has been created, since my

mother was the only provider of our family. It is my great hope that the Almighty God will provide a way out for everything.'

Life at school is always a popular topic in the letters and their experiences vary.

'After our exams there were inter-house athletic competitions. In my house I managed to be one of the participants, representing it in the competitions. I entered the 100m race where I managed to come first, however by the end of the competition my house was announced to be in last place. I was very sad because the winning house was rewarded with two goats.

'I am doing well at school. Life at the school runs well and smoothly. My class teacher is called Mr Timothy and I like him because he is fun and talkative. The teachers are helpful and I am promising to be a hard working girl. I would like to become a lawyer and to improve my family background and care for the orphans. Please pray for my studies and my family.'

Unfortunately our proposed visit in February could not take place because of the current dangerous situation caused by the terrorist situation. This is recognised in one of the letters.

'The big problem in our country now are the issues of security. You see it is not safe here. Have you heard about the terrorist attacks in the University of Garrissa? It is sad that we lost 147 Kenyans with others in a critical condition.'

I hope that these extracts have helped you to learn more about their lives at school. Thank you for your continued support. It really does make a great difference.

Best wishes,

Ian Carnell – Chairman of the Trustees.

*The complete letter can be found on the noticeboard  
at the back of the church*

## KEY CONTACTS

### Minister

Mark Fisher                      mjf.urc@me.com                      07950 399615

### Church Contacts

Olton

Duty Elder    07961 216867

Hobs Moat

Duty Elder    07549 610765

Christ Church

Gordon Justham      gordonjustham@talktalk.net      01564 776229

### Worship Rotas

Enid Chapman    0121 706 1851

Janet Ince                      artist4you@btinternet.com      0121 706 0204

Gordon Justham      gordonjustham@talktalk.net      01564 776229

### Website

[www.solihullurc.org.uk](http://www.solihullurc.org.uk)

## JULY/AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Material for the July/August edition is due to

**Marian Batten 0121 689 8213**

**mborchard@blueyonder.co.uk**

**by Sunday, 21st June, please**