

SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

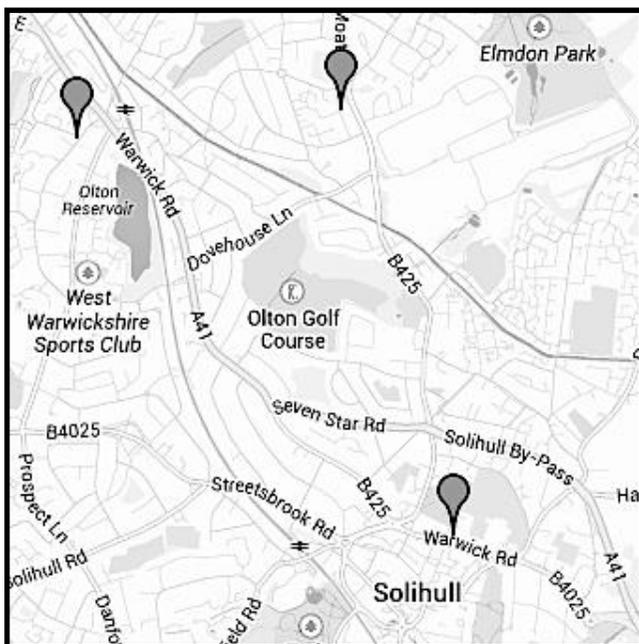
Christ Church - Hobs Moat – Olton

November 2017 Newsletter

I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3. 12-14





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

“BETTER TOGETHER” - Sounds good to Mark

My first pastorate after leaving theological college was a ‘straight’ URC church in Crosby. However, being in Liverpool and during the 1980s, this meant being caught up in the ecumenical enthusiasm in the city at the time, revolving around the relationship between Bishop David Sheppard (Anglican) and Archbishop Derek Worlock (Catholic). From the church point of view it was celebrated each Pentecost with a procession of witness between the two cathedrals, but more importantly it gave the churches a clear voice in and with the city on many social issues. “Better Together” is the title of the book that the Bishops co-authored about their experience, and that is the way it was.

In Hallwood Ecumenical Parish, where I ministered next, the URC/Methodist/Anglican partnership was again exciting. Not always easy, in terms of knitting three patterns of worship together, but in terms of being ‘the Church’ for the three estates of Runcorn new town we served it was certainly better.

Regular access into three primary and one secondary school, the place people turned to at significant moments in their lives (a father/son funeral following the Hillsborough Disaster stands out) and the privilege of being able to get things to happen for the community as a whole. All these springing from a denominational co-operation that I have not witnessed anywhere else.

Working for Birmingham Churches Together had a strong element of encouraging Ecumenical Partnerships and Churches Together Groups across the city, but also meant drawing Church Leaders together in their witness to the city through various initiatives, including the formation of RESTORE as support for asylum seekers and the Faith Leaders Meeting following the invasion of Iraq. Here too ‘better together’ is what it was all about. The Free Churches Group, with its England/Wales scope, enables its 28 member denominations to

participate in hospital and prison chaplaincy and is valued for giving disparate small denominations a voice with government and other national arenas, alongside the URC, Methodists and Baptists. The need to do things together is clearly felt if the Christian voice is to be heard in significant places.

This has been the experience of my ministry and which persuades me to say loudly to ourselves and our Christian partners in Solihull “it is better together” and often essential for our Christian witness to a society to whom our denominations mean little or nothing. At Church Meeting we agreed the renewal of a Covenant relationship with the other churches in the centre of Solihull. We value the combined witness we are able to make on occasions such as Good Friday, but also through Town Centre Chaplaincy and Welcome for refugees and asylum seekers. In Olton, when we have vacated our premises, we will depend greatly on our relationship with the three other churches if we are to maintain a mission presence and witness to this community. I have a feeling that this witness could be stronger than when, for the most part, we operated independently - because it is “better together”.

The same, of course, applies to us as a Christian fellowship. ‘Better together’ is not just about projects we ‘do’ together, but also the prayerful support we are able to offer one another. We are exploring much to do with our individual discipleship and how we offer witness to Jesus in our daily living. In this too I hope we begin to value more that we are in this together and that our individual witness is strengthened because we support and encourage each other. As with ecumenical relationships, together is only better if we are open and honest with each other regarding the support we need, not afraid to share our frailties as well as our strengths. Above all, together is only better if our shared focus is Jesus Christ. It is together with him that we fulfil our calling as Christians.

Mark

DIARY for NOVEMBER

Wednesday 1st, 10am: Make & Mend @ Christ Church

Thursday 2nd, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 5th, 10am: Holy Communion @ Christ Church

Monday 6th, 10am: Community Prayers @ Olton

Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

Job Advice @ Christ Church

Tuesday 7th, 11am: Worship @ St Francis Lodge

Thursday 9th, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 12th, 10am: Worship for Remembrance @ Christ Church -
Steve Faber

10.30am: Worship for Remembrance @ Star & Garter

Monday 13th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

10.30am: Job Advice @ Christ Church

Tuesday 14th, 10.30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs
Moat

11am: Worship @ Hampton House

Wednesday 15th, 10am: Worship @ The Grove

Thursday 16th, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 19th, 10am: Toy Service @ Christ Church - Linda Faber

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

Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

10.30am: Job Advice @ Christ Church

Tuesday 21st, 11am: Holy Communion @ Tudor Lodge

12.30pm: Elders Meeting @ Christ Church

Thursday 23rd, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

23rd - 25th: 'Wizard of Oz' - Union Theatre @ Christ Church

Sunday 26th, 10am: Café Worship @ Christ Church - Tim Reith

6pm: 'Christ the Light' - Churches Together worship @
Olton. The final service in our premises.

Monday 27th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

10.30am: Job Advice @ Christ Church

Tuesday 28th, 10.30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs
Moat

12.30pm: Solihull Prayer Lunch @ Christ Church

Wednesday 29th, 7.30pm: URC Birmingham Area @ Sutton Coldfield

Thursday 30th, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

“CHRIST THE LIGHT”

Sunday 26th November 6pm @ Olton

A celebration with Churches Together in Olton ahead of Advent

This will be our final worship in the Olton premises when we will
acknowledge the light that has shone for Christ over the years

through our fellowship there, and also how the light of Christ will continue to shine in the Olton community through Churches Together.

All are invited to be part of this celebration, at the end of which we will carry our lights out into the community. Refreshments will be served in St Margaret's hall.

Please bring a 'light' with you (battery candle, torch etc.)

URC Birmingham Area Meeting

Wednesday 29th November 7.30pm @ Sutton Coldfield

An opportunity to share with friends from other churches across the city and to learn of initiatives and key things that will affect our church life.

All are welcome. Please ask Mark if you would like a lift.

LIFE AS A CARER; PART 2

So what is God asking of me now? I'm a carer yet again. I've been here before, with my late mother in law Doris who started with dementia at around age 90. I was still teaching part time; John was working full time – and our lads were teenagers. To say 'that period was hard', is under-statement. I organised as much social care as possible for her – carers came in three times a day and we did the rest. She wanted to stay in her own home – so we enabled that and she lived until she was nearly 97 years old. Mom even woke us to chat in the middle of the night sometimes – by phone. She had irregular sleep patterns; we became exhausted. So you can imagine how I feel about a second time around – at an older age!

God tosses us about in what he asks of us. And the challenges he gives us are when we grow as people. Through all this, love remains – and often grows too. John is dependent on me now – and my love for him has grown for him because of this. I wouldn't say this love is a bed of roses – far from it because I get so incredibly tired. But we enjoy each other's company even more – recalling things from the past that he can still remember. And our family and friends are very supportive. We are so thankful for that.

I feel I am letting my church down because there is so much need in the church family too. But I simply cannot do more than I am doing and God is here holding my hand. God is changing me and re-shaping me yet again – challenging me but supporting me with his love and guidance. He is helping me to grow. In the 'university of life', the periods when we are challenged physically and emotionally are times when we become more truly sympathetic and empathetic as people.

At times like this God throws our old routines out of the window. There can be no such routines – and in any case it is so easy for all of us to get in a rut with routines. Nothing is predictable as a carer of a dementia patient. Every day is different and some days are better than others; some days John appears almost normal; other days definitely not. He can change from moment to moment and therein is the challenge. I can no longer offer to do things for church – he is my priority and everything here at home is unexpected. And so we learn to literally 'live in the moment' – and appreciate moments together – though if he is having an anxiety attack or has lost his spectacles, or some other object yet again, those moments can be very trying to even the most patient loving carer!

There are some amazing positives. Like a phone call from the Alzheimer's society – and an offer of their help and advice! And there is the joy of a loving family helping to bear the load. Thank you God – there is so much to be thankful for.

God bless you all, Carol

EDIT: A big thank you to the many folk in our church family who have contacted me supportively, having read my article on being a carer, in last month's newsletter. As you can see there is a further article on the same subject this month too but I want you all to know I really appreciate your love, understanding, compassion and support. It means a lot. God bless you all, Carol

Housebound or in care: Alf Roberts, Jean Mather, Joan Shaw, Beryl Pullin, Vera Atherley, Thelma and Phil Phillips, Kath Bishop, Sheila Schwartz, Pam Tovey, Norma Clement.

Health Issues or increased frailty: Margaret Agnew, Irene Kettle, Andrea and Phil Holt, Rosalind Smart, Peggy Crosby, Celia Stephens, Jean and Albert Holmes, Rosalind, Thea, the Jenkins Family, Margaret Toogood, Sheila Durant, Enid Chapman and her sister, and Ian and Jean Alder. Shirley Peck and her family are struggling with her dementia and all need our prayers. Marynol Agnew is recovering at home following surgery. We send her our best wishes for a speedy recovery. We pray for all of these friends and their carers and pray for God's blessing on each of them.

Bereavement

We remember Enid Chapman in our prayers after the loss of her dear sister Jean.

Congratulations

To Beryl Pullin who recently celebrated her 90th Birthday. Beryl was a member at Hobs Moat for many years and ran the art group there for as long as she was able. We send our love and best wishes to Beryl.

Lavender bags

Thank you to everyone who supported me on my stall, I raised £50 towards the hospice gardeners' fund.

Gweno

Carol Singing

If you enjoy singing carols, join Churches Together in Olton as they serenade commuters and passers-by outside Olton Station on Thursday 14th December from 5pm till 6pm (ish).

It is a lovely atmosphere and all are warmly welcome.

Maureen Butler

Carols and Mince Pies

FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER at HOBBS MOAT CHURCH at 6.30pm

Singing for Pleasure will be leading this evening of Christmas carols and festive music followed by tea, coffee and mince pies.

The singing group would welcome more singers. No audition needed. Thursdays at 2pm. See Janet for more details 0121706 0204 or any member of the group.

We are singing at Deerhurst and Hampton House as well during December.

Child Friendly Church Award

We have a hope of being able to apply for the Child Friendly Church Award. This will help give confidence to those who are thinking about joining in with our children's work that we have met a high standard in our approach to what we do.

In the last few months the criteria for receiving the award have been raised to a higher level than previously and we have to be able to show that we are working towards each of the levels given. The third of 88 questions asks, "Is the church's vision for children's work shared by everyone in the church?" I can't possibly answer that unless you tell me. I suspect the response of many of you would be, "what is the church's vision for children's work?"

I offered the following 4 statements to the elders which they have agreed should make up our vision statement for Children's work. What do you think about them?

SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH AIMS TO OFFER A SAFE AND WELCOMING PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO EXPERIENCE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND CHRISTIAN FAITH IN ACTION.

WE ARE A PLACE WHERE THOSE WHO WORK WITH THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO BE PROPERLY EQUIPPED WITH SKILLS AND RESOURCES TO ENABLE THEM TO PASS ON THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST. THIS WILL ENSURE THAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE GIVEN THE BEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO FIND FAITH OF THEIR OWN.

WE RECOGNISE THAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF FAITH ARE EQUAL PARTNERS WITH ADULTS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THEIR GIFTS AND FRUITFULNESS WILL BE EQUALLY VALUED IN THIS LOCAL BODY OF THE CHURCH.

WE ACCEPT THAT THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO WORSHIP AND LIVE OUT THEIR CHRISTIAN JOURNEY MAY NOT

ALWAYS OVERLAP THOSE OF ADULTS AND DUE CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN, AND OPPORTUNITY WILL BE MADE, AS APPROPRIATE.

Of course a vision statement is only ever a preferred picture of the future. Are we all really behind this vision to the extent that we want to make it a reality? That will take commitment, resources (financial, time and others) and prayer. Are you committed to make this happen? Let me know or I will be none the wiser. Jot down a note or email me at linda@faberfamily.org.uk

Linda Faber

COACH TRIPPERS UNITED

NOTICE OF AGM



There will be an AGM of Coach Trip Members on Thursday the 16th November 2017 at 12.30pm at Moseley Cricket ground (opposite Robin Hood Crematorium).

There will be a free buffet and the agenda will be 1) to discuss the future of the group, 2) Trips for 2018 dependant on the outcome of (1). We will be requiring suggestions for future trips which you should be prepared to present to the group for a vote to then take place.

This is a most important meeting for the future.

David Argall, Chair

CHURCH SECRETARY

I will shortly be taking over from Chris Harman as Church Treasurer and relinquishing my current role as Church Secretary. I would like to

thank Chris for all the hard work (and hours) in the service of the church. It has been a particularly onerous role with merging three church accounts and accounting systems into one. Therefore a big thank you Chris from all of us for a tremendous job well done.

However, we need to find a new Church Secretary. I cannot fulfil both roles. It would be stupid to even contemplate it. Therefore a volunteer needs to step forward. I summarise below some of the principal tasks associated with being Church Secretary

- Principal point of contact for Synod and Church House primarily for mailings
- Dealing with the Annual Return to Synod: not onerous
- Dealing with correspondence on behalf of the Church
- Assisting the Chairman of Elders' Meetings and Church Meetings in preparation of agendas
- Preparing the minutes of Elders' Meetings and Church Meetings (a task that could be delegated to a Minutes Secretary)
- Keeping records of Church Membership, Marriages, Baptisms etc for inclusion in the Annual Report (delegated to an administrator)

There is training available and, in fact, there is a Church Secretaries training and support day on Saturday 11 November at Wylde Green URU (10:00am start – 2:30pm finish) and session 1 of 3 is entitled "Being Church Secretary". I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the role. Please give prayerful consideration to whether you can respond to the call to be Church Secretary. Thanks.

Gordon Justham

MYLIFE WORKSHOP

Starting on Tuesday 17 October (7pm to 8:30pm), we will be running a six-week course called MyLife Workshop. The course location will be Starbucks in the Touchwood Centre.

The course is designed to help people reflect on their lives so far and work out what is important to them going forward, including of course, exploring the spiritual dimension to life, which people often overlook because they are focused on other areas such as career development or nurturing significant relationships. Each session has a theme based on a visual image – coin, book, bridge, music, band-aid, treasure – and individually all of course participants use these themes to develop their life insights using a MyLife map. There will be lots of opportunity for conversations amongst participants as they consider how their lives and their spiritual journeys intersect.

We will be ordering printed flyers to advertise the course and these will be delivered to people's homes in the Central Solihull, Hobs Moat and Olton areas. It would be great if as a church we could be praying regularly for this course over the coming weeks and for the participants who wish to explore the spiritual dimension of life.

Please do contact me if you would like any further information: 07825 220071 or tim.reith@live.co.uk.

Tim Reith

THE WIZARD OF OZ

Book by L. Frank Baum
Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg
Music by Harold Arlen
With music from the M.G.M. picture.
An amateur production by arrangement with MusicScope and Stage Musicals Ltd of New York



THURSDAY 23rd, FRIDAY 24th & SATURDAY 25th NOVEMBER 2017 at 7.30pm
SATURDAY MATINEE 25th NOVEMBER at 2.30pm

SOLIHULL URC, WARWICK ROAD, SOLIHULL, B91 3DG - Free Parking at Solihull School

ADULTS £14 | CONCESSIONS £12
SATURDAY MATINEE: UNDER 11'S only £6 | FAMILY RATES AVAILABLE!

*concessions are senior citizens & students in full time education & under 11's for evening performances

Book Online: uniontheatresolihull.co.uk
Box Office: 0121 705 6762 or
07949508478

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

DECEMBER/JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Material for the December/January edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 19th November please.