

SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat – Olton

November 2018 Newsletter

Words of the Apostle Paul....

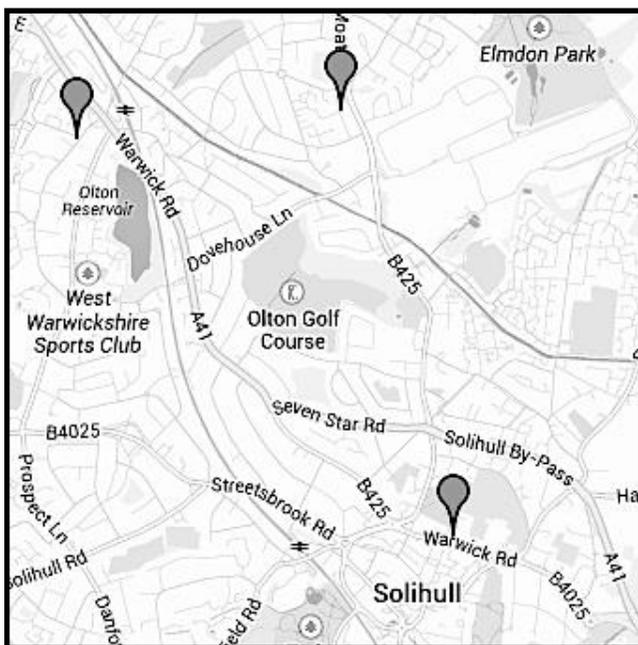
I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2.20

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Romans 8:11





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

PRESENCE - REAL OR OTHERWISE? MARK EXPLORES

How do you feel being in the world these days?

Frustration at human nature - selfishness and the viewpoint that puts 'me' at the centre, blindness towards the situation and needs of some of the most vulnerable.

Anger at the wilful destruction of the natural world, the livelihoods of others - especially the poor and the younger generations - for our own ends, what seems to be an instinctive greed and a reluctance to act to counter it.

Despair when you feel so impotent in the face of such enormous challenges which are not going away.

Annoyance that life is dominated by such feelings and moods, because the world is an enjoyable place and we want to feel better about it and have fun.

Is this you? Then you may reflect that you are experiencing something of Jesus and his presence in your daily life. His Spirit is stirring passions within!

The 'desolation' tapestry portraying the empty city, Gethsemane and the Cross, which we made as a focus for last Passiontide is now displayed at the back of the church. We might well comment on how well it turned out when only made from garden fencing and scraps material, but its purpose is for our reflection. Within it we see the experience of Jesus - the emptiness of the human 'city', frustration, anger, despair, annoyance - a facing up to human sinfulness, a desire for it to be taken away and a recognition that he must do something about it in offering his life.

So how is Jesus present and real in us? Can we acknowledge him with us in the empty and dark places, and offering us hope and life there?

The Gethsemane experience of Jesus highlights two things - a willingness, however reluctant, to give his life and an obedience to God.

Are we open to our lives being changed - focussing on the life we can give for others, through an obedience to God's Spirit of love, forgiveness and generosity? It is in these ways that the hope and life that Jesus offers come about.

Our thoughts and reflections over recent months, around our 'front lines', how we might be 'fruitful' for Jesus in everyday situations and encounters and focussing on our purpose as a church, can be rather superficial. We tend to concentrate on what we do, when often it is what motivates our actions that is more important.

Where are we led by our feelings of frustration, anger, despair and annoyance? Where are we led by a desire for greater compassion, more love and kind action in our world - the spirit of Jesus prompting us?

Our deepest passions may spring from negative feelings about the world, but they lead us to offer the greatest hope and richest life that is offered in Jesus becoming a real presence in and through our lives.

Theologians can discuss at length the 'real presence' of Christ in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, but what matters is the passionate presence of Jesus in our everyday lives, offered to the world as Jesus offers himself to us.

The Apostle Paul (quoted on the front cover) writes powerfully of the Jesus who lives within. It is Jesus' anger and frustration that we often feel. It is his life, eternally in relationship with God, which is the hope we have to offer our world.

DIARY FOR NOVEMBER

Thursday 1st, 2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 4th, 10am: Holy Communion - Mark Fisher

Monday 5th, 10am: Shout Out - workshop @ The Manse
Moments Cafe

Tuesday 6th, 10:30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat
11am: Worship @ St Francis Lodge

Wednesday 7th, 10:30am: Remembrance @ Newholme Gardens

Thursday 8th, 10am: Tots & Tales

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 11th, 10am: Worship for Remembrance Sunday - Mark Fisher

Monday 12th, 10am: Moments Cafe

12:30pm: Elders Meeting

Tuesday 13th, 11am: Holy Communion @ Hampton House

Wednesday 14th, 2pm: Hobs Moat Wednesday Club

Thursday 15th, 10am: Tots & Tales

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 18th, 10am: Cafe Worship - Mark Fisher

11:45am: Worship @ Star & Garter

Monday 19th, 10am: Moments Cafe

Tuesday 20th, 10:30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

11am: Holy Communion @ Tudor Lodge

12:30pm: Solihull Churches Prayer Lunch

Wednesday 21st, 10am: Worship @ The Grove

Thursday 22nd, 10am: Tots & Tales

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 25th, 10am: Worship - Mark Fisher

Monday 26th, 10am: Moments Cafe

Wednesday 27th, 2pm: Hobs Moat Wednesday Club

Thursday 29th, 10am: Tots & Tales

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

COMING IN EARLY DECEMBER

Saturday 1st, 10am: Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 2nd, 3pm: Blessing of the Crib - Mell Square

6pm: Olton Churches Together Advent Worship @
Langley School

CHRISTMAS GIFT SERVICE

This is to be on Sunday 9th December. Our gifts, for both children and mums, will be received by Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid for the residents of their Refuge. Gifts are not to be wrapped, please. Sadly there are too many mums and children who are forced to leave their homes because of family separation or domestic violence. Often little is taken with them, so children are without toys and mums without daily necessities and finance is usually very tight. Your generosity to enable Christmas to be a time of enjoyment will be appreciated greatly.

THIS WAY UP Unpacking Loss

CHARITY FUNDRAISER £12

THE JAMHOUNDS

The Oliver Bird Hall, Church Road, Solihull, B91 3RQ

★ SAT 17 NOVEMBER 7.30 - 10.30pm ★

This concert is supporting the work of This Way Up, working with young people through loss. The date is different from the last Newsletter. **Tickets are available from Judy Fisher.**

JOB ADVICE

Every Monday morning from 10.30am @ Christ Church (Story Room). If you know anyone in need of support or advice with CVs etc. let them know about this or speak to Trixie Harman.

SHOUT OUT FOR GIRLS WORKSHOPS

Producing sanitary packs for girls to enable more consistent education. Finished products are personally delivered to the Kimbuta Rural Development Programme supporting a village community in Eastern Uganda.

First Monday of the month 10am - 12 noon @ The Manse
5th November, 3rd December

HOLY HABITS - GLADNESS & GENEROSITY

Pursuing our calling as Disciples of Jesus and how we adopt the character of Jesus and witness for him to others, we have explored a little of our 'front lines' and how our daily lives may be 'fruitful' for God. There are some 'habits' which we understand were part of the life of the earliest Christian communities. Over future months these can offer key themes for our ongoing reflection about our individual Christian lives and our Church character. During the Autumn you will discover the theme of 'gladness and generosity' featuring in some of our worship.

Acts 2. 46-47

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

LETTER FROM ROSALIND

Hello to you all,

I have of recent months not been able to join you on the occasional Sundays I managed before. Since the end of July I have completed my course of steroids, which of course is good news. However, I have been experiencing withdrawal symptoms which means my energy levels are lowered. With Our Lord's help I have been managing, but my human voice has been one of frustration. I am learning now to accept and look forward in a more positive way.

During my quiet times I have been reading some of my Eddie Askew Books. As some of you know Eddie is associated with The Leprosy Mission. His thoughts and prayers have been of great assistance to me. I would like to share with you his thoughts which are connected to the reading Luke 12 v 29-31:

"Most of us yearn for something different. We look back to an ideal past when we think life was quiet and peaceful. But it wasn't and we have to live in the now. Today is where we begin and whether it is good or not, whether we like it or not, that's what we have to work with. We can only come to terms with the tumult of our world by facing it, not wishing it away. Today is what counts."

I personally feel we can all associate with these words. I hope they bring the comfort and guidance to you as they have to me.

I wish you much joy in knowing Our Lord and travelling with Him. God bless you all. **Rosalind**

LIFE MOVES US ON

Oh how many of us wish life would simply stay the same – so we could get into a nice predictable routine, plan for things and actually do them – and – dare we say it? – Never age! In fact it would be nice to get younger and have more energy. I'd quite like to dance the night away to pop music as my musical tastes have stayed young. Music on the radio often inspires me to dance around the kitchen or bathroom. I must look a funny sight sometimes, dancing around with my hands waving in the air - wearing pink washing up gloves!

But life moves us on – whether we like it or not!

As a full time carer my life has, to some degree, been turned upside down. And the greatest frustration is not being able to plan anything – and carry it out reliably. Even coming to church on Sunday mornings has now become very difficult if not impossible. 9.30 a.m. is simply too early to leave John safely and travel to Solihull, as sometimes he likes to cook porridge – and is liable to leave the pan on the stove with the gas lit! The latest problem is that occasionally he will lean something made of plastic against the toaster when it is on – and he has lost his sense of smell so wouldn't smell fumes.

So I can't come and see you my dear friends – and neither can I pay an occasional visit to my dear friends at Olton Baptist Church and share a service with them. Fortunately though, their sermons are online, so at least I can listen to them.

Thus it was that I found evensong at St Margaret's is possible and I really need to worship. By early evening we have had supper and I can relatively safely leave John reading, while I enjoy worship with friends at St Margaret's. I thank God for Olton Churches Together and the close links I have built up with them over many years.

St Margaret's is two minutes' walk from my house. It is a very beautiful old church, built in 1881. I grew up in the Church of England so I am no stranger to their ways. I was confirmed in the C of E, trained as a teacher in a C of E college – and got married in the C of E. So God sat me down in a pew – and I could almost feel the warm blanket of his love around me – as if he was saying, 'This is where you need to be

now'. But God doesn't leave us idle for long – even when we are worshipping. He whispers to us, tells us things – asks us to do things. And He was saying to me, 'I gave you a singing voice. It is a talent to share. You need to offer to join the choir for evensong.'

I didn't want to – was scared to offer I suppose, as I don't feel at all reliable and can't guarantee to be there each week. But still God kept whispering – insistently. And members of the congregation kept saying, 'You should be in the choir', as if to echo God's words. Finally I gave in – and offered. And I freely admit I love it. St Margaret's choir has children as well as adults – and you should hear those children sing! It is such a joy to sing beside them. It is also very humbling as the children read music very well indeed. So now I am in our SURC choir 'Singing for Pleasure' led by Janet Ince and St Margaret's choir led by Eddie Guard. I love both choirs and am so thankful that – so far at least, I can attend both most of the time. I don't know what lies ahead – but I do know that God is with me – and with you – and wraps his warm blanket of love around us whenever we are in need.

God bless you all, **Carol**

SUNDAY DUTIES

The response to the recent plea for more volunteers to come forward to carry out some of the Sunday duties was a very pleasant success. Several members put their names down for the first time and there was little difficulty in covering the following months. Now I think there are some folk who are happy to do some of the duties but do not manage to get their name down in good time. I would ask these folk to try to get into the habit of looking at the table at the back of the Church every week. In addition to the rotas. there is usually plenty of other interesting material - it is worth a look.

Alan

GEOFFREY DRAKE

Geoffrey now lives at Rayner House, 3 – 5 Damson Parkway, Solihull.
His phone number is now 07936176034

FISHER FAMILY

When I was 5 years old in the 1930's, I started attending Sunday School Classes at Small Heath Congregational Church, Birmingham. The minister was Revd. G.N Fisher. I remember him and his wife and their son Keith was who 3 years older than me. Then in 1940, the family left us to minister in Aylesbury, Bucks. In the 1950's, I married and we settled in Olton. I then attended Olton Congregational Church and became a member. Then in the early 2000's, we had a visiting minister and he said in his address that he was the 3rd generation of Congregational ministers. Of course I sat up! I asked Rev. Mark after the service if his grandfather was the minister at Small Heath Church in the 1930's and he said "yes he was". As Mark became minister of Solihull U.R.C and Olton sadly closed its doors, most of the Congregation (members & friends) attended Solihull U.R.C. I eventually met Mark's son Adam and then some time afterwards I saw his 2 young daughters. In all I have known or met 5 generations of the same family. But I know that after February 2019 it will be adieu from me to all the Fisher family.

God bless you all and thank you.

Enid Chapman

CHURCH MEETING

At church meeting (which is still ahead of me at the time of writing) I am going to be asking us to consider the following questions:

Should it be a different thing when a community centre lets out its rooms to community groups compared with a church letting out rooms? If you think yes, what should that difference be? - and how do we compare to your ideas? Or what about a café in the high street compared with our café?

I hope it will be (was) a fruitful discussion as it is very relevant to our circumstances. If you have thoughts you would like to share I am happy to have a conversation with you or drop me a note.

Linda Faber

CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING

There will be a Christmas Coffee Morning with Cake stall, raffle and Craft and Jewellery stall at Hobs Moat on Saturday 1st December from 10:30am-12pm. All proceeds to Christian Aid and the church fund. All welcome-please bring friends. Any donations and contributions to Janet, Annette, Caroline or Angela before or on the morning.

Many thanks

Caroline Clarke

CHRISTIAN AID EMERGENCY APPEAL

Contributions to Christian Aid, supporting The Kerala Floods Appeal and South Asia Floods Appeal raised £275.

Many thanks, **Myles Ensor**

CAROLS AND MINCE PIES AT CHRISTMAS
on Friday 21st December at 6.30pm
at Hobs Moat Church in Faulkner Road



Come and join us for our evening of Christmas carols and mince pies.

This is a light hearted Christmas celebration presented by the Singing For Pleasure Group.

There will be plenty of carol singing and seasonal readings followed by coffee, tea and mince pies. Afterwards there will be a collection for our chosen charity.

HOBS MOAT COFFEE MORNINGS

Dates for Tuesday Coffee Mornings at Hobs Moat from 10.30am to 12 noon, for the rest of 2018.

- 6 November
- 20 November
- 4 December
- 18 December

All are welcome for a cuppa and chat.

Annette

FRESH FROM THE WORD: THE BIBLE FOR A CHANGE

It is time to order the 2019 edition of this helpful IBRA book which will inspire your reading of the Bible in a changing world. It is led by theologians, scholars, creative writers, church leaders and activists from around the world, and offers notes, prayers and suggestions for further thought for every day of the year. It will be approx. £10.

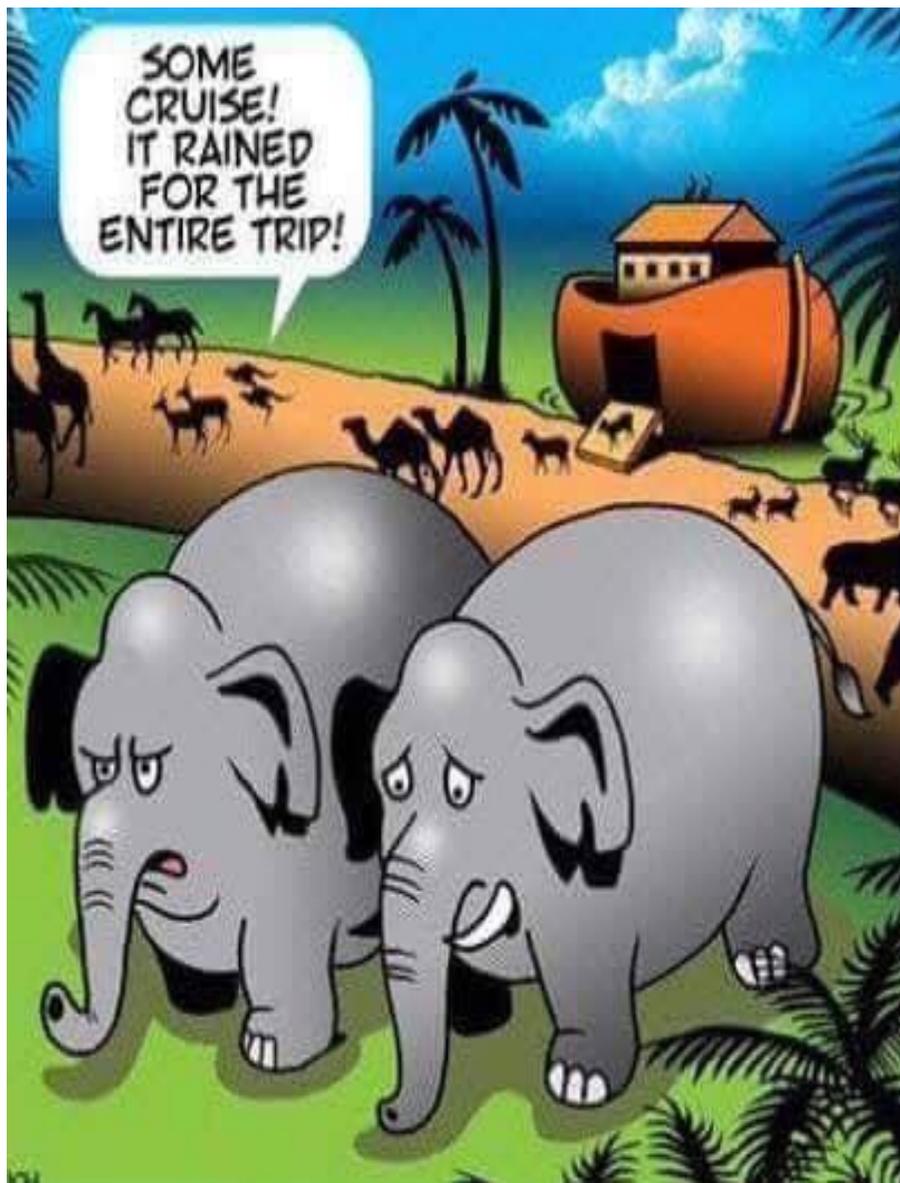
If you would like a copy, please contact Marian Batten (07855 516687) or Irene Bound (0121 449 6367).

FLOWERS

Everyone enjoys the flowers which are on the communion table every week but someone has to provide them. There is a calendar on the noticeboard at the back of the church inviting folk to select a date when they can provide the flowers. If you are not happy with arranging flowers that does not matter as someone else will do that for you but you might like to make a donation instead. We would encourage anyone visiting someone to take some flowers from church, they are always appreciated and there is paper and gift cards to go with the flowers, if you are unsure of where to find anything please have a word with a member of the flower committee. Now that the church is always locked it is a shame to leave them in situ where no-one will see them. **Judith Kembery**

HOSTING GUESTS TO OUR PREMISES

Each week we welcome around 40 different community groups into our premises either in Hobs Moat or Christ Church. It is a privilege, enabled by simply having the premises, and it is an opportunity to have a share in groups that support people through health, artistic, social and charitable activities. What we would like to do is to express our support in a more personal way. This has been modelled by Marcia and Judy as they have managed our lettings over recent years. We are now seeking volunteers who would be willing to 'pop in' to group meetings from time to time, to express interest and to be a personal link with the church and ensure that we serve groups in the best way possible. Hosts would also be the initial point of contact (by phone) if groups wish to raise matters with the church, although for practical matters this would be passed on for the appropriate person to respond. If you feel able to have responsibility for one session of a week (morning, afternoon, or evening), willing to occasionally visit or make contact with the groups who meet at that particular time, please sign up on the sheet at the back of church.



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 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

DECEMBER/JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Material for the December/January edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 25th November please.