

SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat – Olton

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

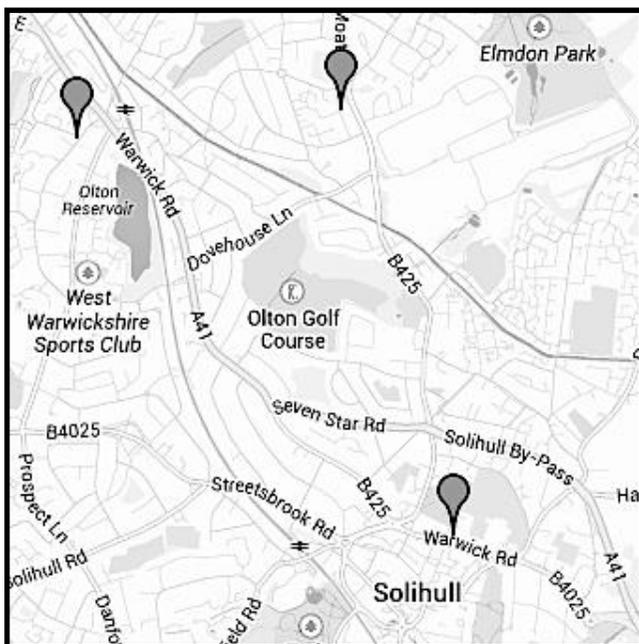
I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. For we are fellow workers in God's service; you are God's field.

1 Corinthians 3. 5-9

(In September we explore being disciples of Jesus, his call for us to make disciples and we celebrate Harvest Festival)





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

THE MAIN ACT - Mark wants to be there

When going to the cinema there is a lot seeking to grab your attention - adverts, trailers and messages about switching off your mobile or not crunching your popcorn too loudly - but it is the main film that you are there to see. If you go to a concert there will likely be a main item on the programme, perhaps with a particular soloist, with other pieces played beforehand, or there will be 'support' bands leading up to a main act.

Where do we find God's 'main act'?

We might well consider the vast wonders of creation to be it, as they are certainly large and impressive. However, our attention has been drawn to Jesus and the fact that God's whole story of creation and redemption, this world and the next, find a focus in human life. Jesus puts each of us in the frame, calling us to follow him, offering his Spirit to enable each to fulfil his purpose, promising his constant presence.

In the church context we have grown accustomed to viewing Sunday worship as the time and place when God's place in our lives is clearest or most evident. But what of Messy Church or Tots & Tales or Cell Groups, care homes or Prayer times? Jesus did not come to found a church institution, but moved the spotlight clearly onto each individual, called and faithful. So the 'main act' may be seen in each and all of these places and, more than that, in each of us as we go about our daily lives offering witness in various ways to the God we know in Jesus.

The idea of each of us having a 'front line' as disciples of Jesus has been introduced. These are the places where we spend the majority of our time outside the church, where we are in contact with others and, most specifically, non-Christians. We are each the 'main act',

enabling others to witness the ways and actions of God, and these are the places where the action takes place.

DIARY for SEPTEMBER

Saturday 2nd, 4pm - 7pm: Bar B Q @ The Manse, 118 Buryfield Road

Sunday 3rd, 10am: Holy Communion @ Christ Church - Mark Fisher

Monday 4th, 10am: Community Prayers @ Olton

10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

Tuesday 5th, 10.30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

11am: Worship @ St Francis Lodge

Wednesday 6th, 10am: Make & Mend - prep and prayer for our church life

Thursday 7th, 2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 10th, 10am: Worship @ Christ Church - Linda Faber

4.30pm: Prayers for the Olton Community @ Olton

Monday 11th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

Tuesday 12th, 11am: Holy Communion @ Hampton House

12.30pm: Elders Meeting @ Christ Church

Tuesday 12th, 4pm: Methodist Art Exhibition opens @ The Core

Wednesday 13th, 12.15pm: SCAH lunch & open meeting @ Christ Church

Thursday 14th, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 17th, 10am: Harvest Festival @ Christ Church - Mark Fisher

11.45am: Worship @ Star & Garter

Monday 18th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

Tuesday 19th, 10.30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

11am: Holy Communion @ Tudor Lodge

Wednesday 20th, 10am: Worship @ The Grove

10am: Prayer Fellowship @ Hobs Moat

12.30pm Churches Together in Olton @ The Friary

Thursday 21st, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Saturday 23rd, 7pm: This Way Up Celebration Bar B Q @ Coppice Wood Farm, Knowle (tickets)

Sunday 24th, 10am: Café Church @ Christ Church (John Palmer Hall)

Monday 25th, 10am – 12pm: MacMillan Coffee Morning @ Meeting Place

Monday 25th, 10am: Moments Café @ Christ Church

Tuesday 26th, 12.30pm: Solihull Prayer Lunch @ Meeting Place

Thursday 28th, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Manse Bar B Q

Saturday 2nd September 4-7pm 118 Buryfield Road B91 2DP

This is a relaxed opportunity for the various parts of our church fellowship to meet together (Sunday congregation, Messy Church,

Tots & Tails and others). Please sign up in church or let the Fishers know you are coming. If there are folk 'on the edge of church life' who you could invite, please do so.

Prayers for the Olton Community

Sunday 10th September 4.30pm @ Olton

We, along with friends from Churches Together in Olton and folk from the community, will have an opportunity to pray for the life of the community and particularly the various groups who use our premises, as all look to the New Year without community meeting space. Our prayers will include how Solihull URC may continue to have a 'mission presence' amongst the Olton churches.

Come and See - Methodist Modern Art Exhibition

Opens 7th September until 30th September

Works from the national Methodist Modern Art Collection are displayed in the Library and the Methodist Church.

SCAH lunch & open meeting

Wednesday 13th September 12.30pm in the Meeting Place

This is an opportunity to discover more about the work of Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness and discover how you may actively support. All are welcome.

Harvest Festival

Sunday 17th September 10am

In our worship we will look at harvest from several perspectives.

Donations of non-perishable food items are welcome. These will go to Helping Hands, our local food-bank. We will also have a money

collection for **Commitment for Life**, our particular support for the work of Christian Aid in Zimbabwe.

This Way Up Celebration

Saturday 23rd September 7pm

Coppice Wood Farm, Norton Green Lane, Knowle B93 8PH

TWUP and their work with bereaved young people is one of our annual charities and they have invited us to this celebration of their work, including bar b q and fireworks. **Free tickets are available from Judy Fisher.** Donations are welcome on the night.

Café Church

Sunday 24th September 10am in John Palmer Hall

The second occasion exploring Questions of Faith. From the Apostles Creed we reflect on *“He descended into Hell, The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven”* and our understandings of heaven and hell. You may find it helpful to have given this some consideration before the day, so that you might participate fully.

MacMillan Coffee Morning

Monday 25th September, 10.30am - 12.30pm in the Meeting Place

Our contribution to this annual fundraising event supporting those living with cancer. All welcome - bring your friends. Donations of cakes would be welcomed.

Solihull Prayer Lunch

Tuesday 26th September 12.30pm in the Meeting Place

Folk from the churches in central Solihull gather to share events and concerns and to pray for the churches and the community. Bring your own lunch - drinks provided. All are welcome.

A YEAR OF INVITATION AND WELCOME

There are two main things that we are going to be concentrating on this Autumn in this church. One is to be growing as a disciple and be better at telling the message of the Gospel through your life out there where you are from day to day. The other is to be better at inviting people in to experience the community that we are.

Mark is lining up a lot more ways and opportunities to be looking at that discipleship growth and how it will help you along in being disciple makers too. But I want to focus for a minute on inviting people in to experience our community and hospitality.

There is a direct link between people being invited to something and their likelihood of actually coming to that something. Personal invitation is incredibly effective.

This being so we are going to encourage and help you to be inviting a lot more people to things that are going on in the coming months. We have created some things to invite people to but we have also decided to place much more emphasis on the special seasonal occasions which happen throughout the autumn. This is not our original idea but we are making it our own for this time.

The seasonal occasions we are going to emphasise are the Sunday services of Harvest, Remembrance, the Toy service and Carol Service at Christmas. We would like to re-invite those who have been a part of the three churches in the past but have dropped out with all the reorganisation. There will be leaflets and invitations for you to specifically invite people. But who else do you know in your daily lives who might be open to coming along?

We know that most people find inviting people to things really difficult. In fact only about 5% of people find inviting easy. So in a church of people like ours only two people on a Sunday morning you will find this easy. So all the rest will be out of your comfort zone

when we are pursuing this through the Autumn. ‘Be strong and courageous’. The bible says, it also says ‘how can they respond if they have never heard?’ There is a direct link between people being invited to things and people coming to things. A personal invitation is really powerful.

Two more things to say. The first of these is that the measure of success for this season of invitation is not so much that people come to things, although we would like them to, but that people were invited. Let me say that again. You will have been successful if you have invited someone. If they come along—that is an extra bonus.

Over the next year I want us to have the aim of inviting 200 people to things. I have mentioned some of the things we have got planned for the Autumn but I assume there will be other things over the rest of the year the same as there were this year. And 200 invitations really isn’t beyond us if everyone invites people to things. And we are going to count the invitations made.

If you hand over an initiation to someone, and warmly invite them to come along to something, I want you to come back to church and colour a box on a light house picture that I have put up. I know how easy it is to take an invitation from church with every intention of inviting someone and then not getting round to inviting them. So as an extra little reminder and push to make the invitation we are going to be marking the lighthouse to see how we are actually doing. I can print off hundreds of invitations but if they just stay in your bag, or pocket, we are just kidding ourselves.

And the last thing I have got to say is this. People are much more likely to come to something if you pray and ask God who you should invite. I want you to sit down and ask God who you should invite to each thing. And listen out for His answer. A name may come to mind straight away—act on it, but you may need to be listening out for God’s voice through the week. **Linda Faber**

GOOD NEWS FROM MARIAN

I am happy to tell you that I have at last moved into my new home and am enjoying it very much. The address is Apt. 116, Longbridge Retirement Village, 2 Austin Way, Longbridge, Birmingham B31 2GE. I have also taken the opportunity to change my telephone to a mobile: 07855 516687 and have a new email address: mbatten116@gmail.com.

It is easy to find the building, which is at the end of Longbridge Lane on the Bristol Road. The 49 from Solihull runs all the way, though it takes an hour! If any friends would like to visit they will be most welcome, just give me a phone call first. The largest M&S in the West Midlands which is close by is an attraction to shoppers.

My apartment on the first floor is very comfortable and everything I wanted to bring has gone in, although the charity shops have had a field day! The ground floor is a welcoming place with seating, a restaurant, shop (not yet open), library and computer room, hairdressing salon, hobby room, snooker room and gym. These facilities are also open to the public. We are asked to volunteer to help run the 'village', and I have volunteered for library duties, which at present means sorting out all the books people have given on arrival here. Everyone is friendly as we walk about, and I am fortunate in having pleasant next-door neighbours. It is all built on the former Rover site, and references to it are everywhere, from photographs of cars to the naming of roads. I live on Issigonis Way, near to Rover Walk and Austin Seven Street!

Do come and see me, I shall enjoy showing you around.

Marian

Bereavements

Prayers for the family of Eunice Thomson who has recently died after a short illness. Our dear friend Eunice died on Monday the 14th of August aged 97 years. She had been a faithful member of Olton U R church for many years and held the church with great affection. A service of thanksgiving will be held at the Olton church on Monday the 4th of September at 1:30pm, following a committal service at Yardley crematorium at 12:30 pm. We thank God for her life and hold Ian, Hazel and family in our thoughts and prayers.

Our dear friend Vera Thomas passed away on the 19th July at the age of 93. She was a regular member of our congregation at Hobs Moat and joined the various clubs and activities held during the week. A lovely lady, always happy and cheerful, who is sadly missed by us all. A service of thanksgiving was held at Hobs Moat on the 11th August. Our thoughts and prayers are with Vera's daughter Elaine and son Graham her grandchildren and her many friends.

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

Health issues or increased frailty - Margaret Toogood, Sheila Durant. We also hold Enid Chapman and her sister in our prayers. Margaret Agnew, Irene Kettle, Andrea and Phil Holt, Pat and Tom Combe and family, Rosalind Smart, Peggy Crosby, Celia Stephens, Jean and Albert Holmes, Ian and Jean Alder.

Prayers for John Sloan's family following his death. Prayers for Sheila Schwartz who is now at home convalescing following her lengthy spell in hospital. Please remember Thea who is back in hospital and also Enid's sister who is very poorly.



Help the Homeless - simply by shopping online!

Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (SCAH), which has two St. Augustine's parishioners on its executive committee, works with and through S.M.B.C. social services and several housing associations, refuges and young persons' charities in the local area to relieve and prevent homelessness.

A lot of SCAH's work centres on the provision of 'starter packs' for people moving from a state of homelessness into accommodation. Recently homeless people often have few or no resources, so a 'starter pack' of bedding, towels, kitchen utensils, china and cutlery etc. helps them settle in to their new abode.

SCAH is a small, nimble charity which tries to be Christian and non-judgemental in its response to frequently desperate cases...and now you too can help...simply by shopping online!

SCAH has registered with www.giveasyoulive.com, a price comparison website 'with a heart'. Over 4,000 retailers support the website including Tesco, Asda, Waitrose, John Lewis...and many, many more. If you register with the website, nominating Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness as your charity, then every time you shop online, a small donation is made by the retailer to the charity.

So go to www.giveasyoulive.com/join/scah to join.

I've just 'signed up'....and frankly I was staggered at the number of big name retailers, sports clubs, airlines etc. that support this scheme so I can just sit at my computer, do the weekly shop, book a flight or

arrange some entertainment....and a small donation is made to a very worthwhile local charity at the same time.

**Please sign up and tell your families and friends about
www.giveasyoulive.com/join/scah!**

P.S. If you're feeling rich/generous please donate to SCAH at
mydonate.bt.com/charities/SolihullChurchesActiononHomelessness.

Rob Verrion, Honorary Treasurer

Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (www.scah.org.uk)

'I have a name'

Solihull Methodist Church Homelessness Project

2017-2018

OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR

This year after collaboration with the congregation and the church council, we have a project team who will be rolling out the church project commencing in October. The focus of the year is raising money as well as awareness for homelessness charities in our area. After much deliberation, we have chosen Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (SCAH) and The Choir with No Name (Birmingham branch).

SCAH work tirelessly throughout the year to support various projects for the homeless in Solihull with their various partners in order to make a real difference to those unfortunate enough to find themselves without a home. For more information about their most recent work, check out www.scah.org.uk.

The Choir with No Name in Birmingham was launched in 2011 and is made up of both homeless and previously homeless people. In the past year alone, over 185 vulnerable adults benefited from the

CWNN, and they have performed to a cumulative audience of nearly 4,000 people in Birmingham and the West Midlands. It improves self-confidence and skills as well as reducing stigma. There has been overwhelming positive feedback from the members who have experienced a true sense of worth from singing together. Check out their website www.choirwithnname.org

We are fortunate enough to have this choir singing for us at our launching event on Saturday 14th October 2017. It will be an evening of great tunes and singing from the heart, so don't miss it!

We are rolling out 3 further concerts during the coming year, all expected to showcase the talents of both our own congregation and visiting performers who will undoubtedly raise our spirits and thoroughly entertain us. The dates are 20th January 2018; 3rd March 2018 and 30th June 2018.

We are planning speakers from homelessness charities to come to visit us throughout the year to inform us about what is going on in our area for the homeless and how we can best help. We are also planning 1 or 2 Sunday services that will have homelessness as their central theme.

We hope you will all engage with us and our future exciting ideas for this year long project. We know you will relish the delights of the evenings we are planning. We just need you to come and enjoy what we have prepared for you! We are very enthusiastic and motivated to make this project a huge success and we depend on your wonderful generosity in being able to achieve this.

Supporting people in their faith journeys

As many of members and friends of Solihull URC will be aware, over the next few months we have several activities taking place aimed at supporting people in their journeys of faith.

We know that some people are very open to exploring Christian faith and have a positive impression of church. In 2007, the Christian charity Tearfund undertook some research which found that 6% of the adult population in the UK would accept an invitation to go to a Sunday service or church event if someone personally invited them.

Over the last few years, initiatives such as Back to Church Sunday (now reimagined and re-named - A Season of Invitation) have helped many church members to be more intentional and more confident about inviting their friends. As Linda reminded us in church a few weeks ago – success is not defined by the number of people who accept our invitation but rather the number of people we have invited. Significantly, when people do say ‘yes’ they are much more likely to actually turn up if you offer to go with them.

The adult population of the Borough of Solihull is approximately 160,000 people. So according to this research there are likely to be at least 9,600 people living in our area who would accept a personal invitation to come to church – it’s likely that you know some of them!

For some, the first step might be them coming to a social event, such as the BBQ we are hosting at the Manse on Saturday 2nd September or perhaps the fireworks night celebrating the work of the charity ‘This Way Up’ which as a church we are supporting this year (free tickets available from Judy Fisher). Others may be intrigued by the experience of Café Church – exploring different questions of faith on the fourth Sunday of each month. Physical invitations will be provided!

There will also be a new cell group on Wednesday evenings, led by Linda, which will be starting soon, and during regular Sunday services, Mark will be exploring what it means to think about our friends and people we know as the 'frontline' of our lives where people often have their first experiences of seeing Christians living out their faith.

Beyond those people who are already interested in exploring Christian faith further, there are many more who describe themselves as being interested in spirituality or the big questions of life. For these people, we are offering a new course called 'MyLife Workshop', which Tim Reith, our placement student, will be leading. This six-session course will start with 'taster' sessions in Olton, Hobs Moat and Central Solihull during the second week of September. Please speak to Tim (07825 220071) or see www.eventbrite.co.uk/mylife for more details.

Together all of these activities are intended to support people as they journey into faith. Please pray and invite others so that they too might 'know the reason for the hope that we have' in Jesus Christ.

With every blessing as we journey together,

Mark, Linda and Tim

Commitment for Life – July 2017

Stories for Change 134 - ZIMBABWE

This blog entry by Robin Gray is from the Commitment for Life trip to Zimbabwe in May. Other contributions can be read at www.cforl.org.uk.

Leading by example

On day 2 we visited projects run by the Dabane Trust. It confirmed for me from day 1 how important women are in rural communities and how such projects are aiding their empowerment. This was

exemplified by the numbers who were members of the garden projects, but also the particular case of Mrs Pauline Ndlovu. She had not only adopted conservation methods of farming and planted drought resistant crops, but was also a member of the Matshetshe Food Processing Centre. Her lead was now being followed by her neighbours.

Those projects funded by Christian Aid were clearly very highly valued as shown by the warmth of the welcome from everyone we met. In the drought-prone areas people were barely subsisting and changing farming practice through the application of technical know-how and the installation of things like solar pumps, pipes and storage tanks, for example, were making a real difference to small rural communities.

As a result, farmers were not only able to buy more basic household goods but, most importantly, were able to pay the fees and send their children to school.

The day also brought home to me the importance of choosing the right local partners. By the judicious use of relatively small sums, Christian Aid's current partners are able to secure long-term improvements in the lives of hard-pressed rural villagers.

Initially, I had two concerns as we moved around. They were the apparent reluctance of some farmers to switch to drought resistant crop varieties and the extent to which the schemes we saw were one-offs and not being replicated. However, my doubts were dispelled during the day by seeing whole communities coming together and many learning from others or from their neighbours, including the example of Pauline Ndlovu mentioned above.

Robin Gray, Working URC



Dear Supporters of EducAid Africa,

I wonder if any of you can help us. Three of our sponsored pupils have done so well that they have been offered places at University. This would never have happened if some of you hadn't kindly sponsored them for Secondary School. A degree from University will make all the difference to their career prospects and will be a natural progression for their careers. These students are:

Benjamin Mwasambu – he is offered a course to study Microbiology and Biotechnology

Ibrahim Kambu – he is offered a course for Psychology

Esther Charo – she is offered a place to study for a BSc in Human Resource Management

Courses are usually for 4 years and the cost is about £600 a year. We must have the sponsorship for the first-year ready for 1st August when the fees must be sent or the students lose their places. I understand that a sponsorship of that amount may be rather daunting for one individual but it could be possible for several sponsors to join to pay for a student. For example, 5 people might be prepared to pay £10 a month for 4 years and that would pay for a student's University fees.

If you feel that you can help or know someone else that might be interested in creating a real future for one of these students, please e-mail our treasurer, Jenni Kitson on info@educaid-africa.org

Thank you for all your continued help and support.

Ian Carnell, Chairman of the Trustees

A Harvest Prayer
By Brenda Williams

Thank you for the harvest
When fruit and berries grow.
Thank you for the ripening corn
Planted long ago.

Thank you for the autumn
And a warm and sunny day.
Thank you for the harvest
And crops to store away.

Thank you for the sugar beet
And fields of new mown hay.
To feed the cows and horses
When winter comes to stay.

Taken from
<http://www.brendawilliamspoet.co.uk/Harvestprayer.html>



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

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Material for the October edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 17th September please.