

SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat – Olton

September 2018 Newsletter

How can you expect to dwell with God forever, if you so neglect and forsake Him here?

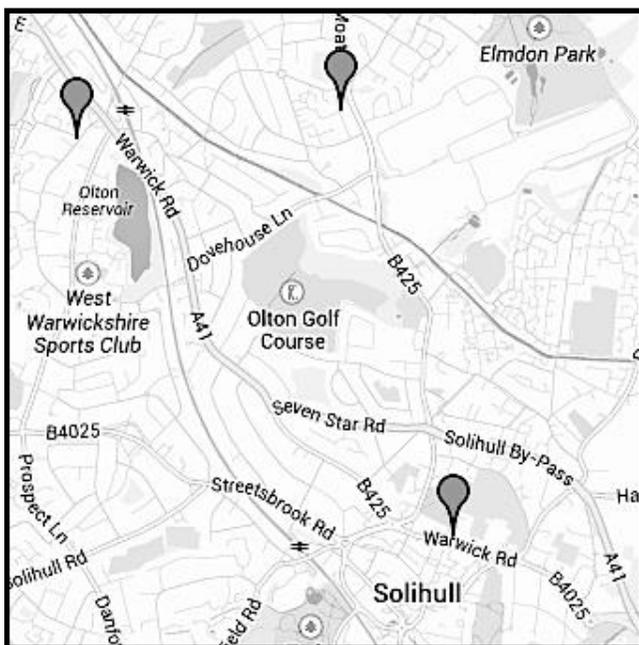
You contribute nothing to your salvation, but the sin that made it necessary.

Quotes from Jonathan Edwards, 1703-58 - Congregational preacher and theologian

A hint for all of us:

“You can’t start the next chapter of your life if you keep re-reading the last one!”





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

KEEP THE FOCUS WIDE TO DISCOVER GOD

Two perspectives give shape to Christian faith. In our prayers in Sunday worship, we usually acknowledge the greatness of God and his creation, along with the fact that there is much that remains beyond our human knowledge or understanding. We also acknowledge that this God has come very close to us as individuals in the person of Jesus Christ. The Biblical story may put centuries of history between him and us, but the Spirit makes him real in each of our lives in the present.

The transcendence and immanence of God are the two sides of a coin that we hold together and seek to make sense of.

This all sounds wonderfully theological and academic, such that we can easily dismiss it for consideration only by others who have time on their hands, except that it is fundamental to our life and to our faith.

We have in various ways explored our 'Front lines' as Christians, recognising that each of us individually have an impact on others, we have a witness to offer in the world.

The seed of our faith, its growth and its fruitfulness, all come from our having a place within the Church. Here, with others, our faith is encouraged, fed and shaped. We have a place in our local congregation and this is the first awareness that there is a dependence on others in the life of faith and others depend on us.

We then recognise that this Church of which we are a part is so much bigger and more varied than we tend to think. Just in central Solihull, denominations define us along with a spectrum of 'theology' (conservative-liberal) and nationalities with differing histories and cultures that shape faith. The Mar Thoma church, with roots going back to St Thomas evangelising India in 50AD, are in Hobs Moat. The Coptic Church, with its origins in the witness of St Mark in Alexandria, Egypt, in 42AD, is building its cathedral on the old St Ninian's site. These, along with our own Reformed tradition, the Anglican, Methodist and

Pentecostal are part of a global family of faith with a richness we barely glimpse.

In our world, of politics, economics and culture, there is an increasing impetus towards protectionism and nationalism. A desire to put up the shutters and make the world a smaller place where 'me and mine' are the prime focus also draws the curtains on the transcendent God who wants us to receive of his riches and his promise in Jesus.

As a congregation, we look toward a period of change. We have all wrestled with change and loss as three have joined to be one. I hope that in the midst of seeking to 'hold on' to what has been familiar to us, there has also been some recognition of the wider riches we have come to enjoy. The temptation in coming months may be to 'hold on tighter' to ensure that no more of the familiar is lost, but the constant reminder must be that it will be in embracing the widest view that the God who dwells within by his Spirit will be glimpsed.

In the July/August Newsletter I reflected on the theme of security and that, rather than the current trend for protectionism and nationalism, we find ours in the almighty God who is known in Jesus and lives within by his Spirit. It crosses my mind that to the 'isms' which narrow our faith we might add congregationalism, for our faith and security are beyond the church fellowship that is ours and is to be found in the eternal love which brought all things into being.

Mark

DIARY FOR SEPTEMBER

Sunday 2nd, 10am: Holy Communion

Monday 3rd, 10am: Moment Cafe

10:30am: Job Advice

Tuesday 4th, 11am: Worship @ St Francis Lodge

Wednesday 5th, 12:15pm: Churches Together in Olton - Friary

2pm: Hobs Moat Fellowship - AGM

Sunday 9th, 10am: Worship - Linda Faber

Monday 10th, 10am: Moments Cafe

10am – 12pm: Shout Out Workshop @ The Manse

12:30pm: Elders Meeting

Tuesday 11th, 10:30am: Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

11am: Holy Communion @ Hampton House

Wednesday 12th, 12:15pm: SCAH Open Lunch Meeting in the

Meeting Place

Thursday 13th, 10am: Tots & Tales

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 16th, 10am: Worship - Baptism of Harry Mills

11:45am: Worship @ Star & Garter

Monday 17th, 10am: Moments Cafe

10:30am: Job Advice

Tuesday 18th, 11am: Holy Communion @ Tudor Lodge

12:30pm: Solihull Churches Prayer Lunch

in the Meeting Place

Wednesday 19th, 10am: Worship @ The Grove

2pm: Hobs Moat Fellowship

Thursday 20th, 10am: Tots & Tales

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Saturday 22nd, 2pm: Friends of The Gideons -

@ Shirley Community Church

Sunday 23rd, 10am: Cafe Worship

Monday 24th, 10am: Moments Cafe

12pm: Charity Lunch for Colin Choyce House

in the Meeting Place

Tuesday 25th, 10:30am: Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

Thursday 27th, 10am: Tots & Tales

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Saturday 29th: Away Day @ Broadway URC

Sunday 30th: Harvest Festival Worship

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.

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.

SUNDAY WORSHIP IN 2019

As you know, Mark is retiring next February. This could give Janet Ince quite a huge headache in finding people to lead our services. Luckily, Linda Faber, Gordon Justham and Ian Carnell have all offered to lead our worship about once a month. This still leaves several Sundays when Janet has to find people to take a service.

We are hoping that the services on 17th March, 14th July, 29th September (Harvest) and 27th October (Cafe Style) would be led by a Cell Group, a newly formed Worship Group or - - - - -? 15th December is also a possibility.

Please give prayerful thought as to whether you would be willing to help lead our Worship and let either Janet or me know.

Maureen Butler

SOLIHULL CHURCHES ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

Open Lunch Meeting - Wednesday 12th September, 12:15pm

This is an informal opportunity for anyone to come and learn more about the work of this charity, which we have supported over the years. Just come along!

CHARITY LUNCH FOR COLIN CHOYCE HOUSE

Monday 24th September 11:30am – 1:30pm

This hostel for girls rescued from trafficking in Durgapour, India is being supported by us as one of our charities of the year. Please come and enjoy a nice lunch and help this vital cause by supporting us with a donation. A variety of soups with chunky bread will be available which you will enjoy eating with your friends. All are welcome. Do come!!!

CHURCH AWAY DAY

Saturday 29th September @ Broadway URC

Plans are underway for this important event. We will spend time in discussion, reflection and prayer, exploring ourselves as a church - who we are and what it is that God is calling us to with our particular gifts. This will contribute to the 'Profile' which is a key document in the calling of a new minister. Your participation in this will be valuable. Please sign up to come and for the coach.

SATURDAY CAFÉ URGENT REQUEST

We've had an excellent response for volunteers over the last 3 years which has meant that we each helped on a Saturday morning for between 3.5-4 hours approximately once every 6 weeks. We have found it very rewarding, in enabling us to have conversations with those who use the café and building relationships.

Unfortunately four of our volunteers have come off the rota which leaves us short especially if anyone is on holiday or unable to cover. If you are able to come and join us and help to keep the café open please contact me and I will talk to you about the details.

I look forward to speaking to you.

Many thanks, **Elaine Jones**

HOBBS MOAT WEDNESDAY CLUB PROGRAMME

September 5th - Our A.G.M. An opportunity to have your say.
Starts at 2pm. **Jeanne Brown**

HOBBS MOAT COFFEE MORNINGS

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

- 11 September
- 25 September
- 9 October
- 23 October
- 6 November
- 20 November
- 4 December
- 18 December

All are welcome for a cuppa and chat.

Annette

MARIAMA Sponsored child

Here is the latest message from MARIAMA. Her drawing is on the notice board.

Dear Sponsor. Mariama is extending her warmest wishes to and your family. She is a healthy girl. She goes to school at Jamagein Lower Basic School. Her school is 2 kms to and from and she walks there with her fellows.

The sun comes out every day with warm weather in the day and dark at night. Mariama's parents are farmers. They grow crops for the feeding of the family. *Jaliya Mboge.*

The accompanying letter (also on the NB.) tells us how ActionAid is helping the farmers by making community vegetable gardens where each member is allocated a plot, given tools and watering facilities and trained in modern growing techniques. This enables them to feed their families and make enough money to educate their children. Thank you all for your support.

Anne Cherry

COACH TRIPPERS BRISTOL

20th September 2018

Bristol is a city straddling the River Avon with a prosperous maritime history. Its former city centre port is now a cultural hub, the Harbourside, where the M Shed museum explores local social and industrial heritage.



The harbour's 19th century warehouses now contain restaurants, shops and cultural institutions such as the contemporary art gallery The Arnolfini. Other points of interest include the Clifton Suspension Bridge, Brunel's SS Great Britain, the Avon Gorge and Bristol Zoo.

As usual the coach will leave from our new departure point THE WEST WARWICKS SPORT CLUB, GRANGE ROAD, SOLIHULL B91 1DA at 8.30am. As agreed at the AGM the revised charge will be £20 a person excluding any entry fees but including a tip for the driver. May I respectfully remind you of the cancellation guide and that you should ring Val on 706 9687 to book at least 10 days before the event.

DAVID ARGALL (CHAIR)



ARE
RECRUITING
NEW
VOLUNTEERS

to join our team of **Pastoral Mentors**
working with **young people** in **local schools**
who are struggling to cope with
bereavement or family breakdown.

Contact Cheryl on 0121 439 9181
or **cheryl@twup.org.uk**
by 14th SEPTEMBER to discuss attending our next

2-day Induction training
on 26th & 27th September 2018

if you are a good listener, have a regular morning every
week & would like to be trained to support
young people dealing with loss.

HARVEST BOXES

Harvest Festival is on 30th September. Please will you bring your
Christian Aid Boxes to the service on this day if possible, if you are
unable to be there, kindly give them to Myles Ensor by the end of
October, Many Thanks.

Marian Vining says that she is doing well, also for Sheila Schwartz; she
is unchanged and enjoys being visited as she remains bed bound.

Bridget Goudie

A CHRISTENING AND AN OUTDOOR SACRED SPACE

Such excitement! We SURC's folk have a christening to look forward to in September – dear little Harry Mills – see church diary! As a full time carer I am never sure whether I can be with you for special occasions. But I'll be with you in spirit if not in body! Harry and his family will have plenty of christening prayers said for them I know.

Coincidentally I was given a miniature stoneware christening font during the summer. At first I wasn't quite sure where to put it. However I'd been thinking for quite a while I'd like to create a sacred space in the garden, which could be used for regular prayer – weather permitting! It has been such a beautiful summer, so it seemed only right to praise the Lord in the great outdoors and thank Him for all His mercies, His grace and the sheer beauty of this world He has created. I decided that, in the milder months of the year, the miniature christening font could reside in the garden, surrounded by flowers. On the patio, near the house, John and I have a number of pot plants. I love planting bulbs and summer bedding plants in pots. During the early summer, I'd planted pansies, pelargoniums, lilies, a pot of fragrant herbs and some impatiens or 'Busy-Lizzie's' as my Mum used to call them. I chose pink ones this year and they have been such a joy to behold. So, on a stone step, beside the Busy-Lizzie's and a pot of fragrant herbs I placed the miniature stone font. Every summer evening the pot plants were watered by me – or preferably God – and so was the font, to fill its little bowl!

At dusk each night I went into the garden to say my evening prayers – beside the font. Somehow the sight of the font made that spot in the garden feel particularly sacred. Despite my 70 years, my body is still, thankfully, very flexible and so I squatted down and, sitting on one heel, instinctively put my middle finger into the cool water of the font. Then, with the same finger, I painted a water-wet cross on my

forehead – just like I'd seen ministers and vicars do during a church christening.



The cool cross on my forehead felt wonderful and so right. I really felt like a child of God – and marking the cross on my forehead feels like an acknowledgment from me – ‘I am your child God and I love you!’ Effectively, while sitting on one heel, I am at child height and, looking outwards into the garden, the trees, shrubs and plants look different and surprisingly large. The trees tower high above me and I am aware just how small I am compared to some of God’s other creations in the world. I am aware of their detail too – the intricacies of nearby plants, at eye height, look even more amazing than when I look down on them.

The water in a font in church is blessed but so is the water in my little font, as it water given to us by God, so it is a blessing and thereby blessed! It is hard to describe to you the pleasure of this summer nightly experience. It is the same sort of joy that comes from my indoor space in which I have my Bible on its stand. I use that daily as you know. But an outdoor sacred space for prayer is honestly such a joy. Thank you Lord!

God bless you all, **Carol**

MOMENTS – VISIT TO NEWLANDS BISHOP FARM

At “Moments” which is held on a Monday morning, we do many different and varied activities but for the first time on the 16th July we ventured out to visit a farm off Hampton Lane.

“Newlands Bishop Farm” is a trust run by lads and lasses with learning difficulties and is open to the public. We arrived in time for coffee and then had a wonder around the farm set in extensive grounds. They were extremely happy to talk to you about their work, looking after their garden, pigs, goats, tortoise and birds, and you could tell they really enjoyed themselves.

We had a most enjoyable 1 ½ hours looking around and can thoroughly recommend a visit.



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.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 23rd September please.