



**SOLIHULL**

**UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat  
Communities

**August 2020 Newsletter**

*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows  
from it.*

***Proverbs 4: 23***



## **SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

Based in the town centre, Solihull URC seeks to minister and witness to the local community, the wider town and the areas of Olton and Hobs Moat where we have formerly had a worshipping presence.

We share our mission with other Churches and are in partnership 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](http://www.solihullurc.org.uk)**  
**[www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk](http://www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk)**

### **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**VACANT - Minister**

Gordon Justham - **Church Secretary & Elder**

Linda Faber - **Mission Enabler & Lettings Administration**

Maureen Butler - **Elder (worship & prayer, charities, social activities)**

Trixie Harman - **Elder (Youth & Children)**

Barrie Jones - **Elder (Property, Health & Safety)**

Elaine Jones - **Elder (Administration, Data protection, Catering)**

Jackie Justham - **Elder (charities, social activities)**

Gordon Laurie – **Elder**

Chris Harman - **Elder**

Liz Amos - **Treasurer**

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

**All of our worship services remain suspended until Sunday September 6<sup>th</sup> (see article below page 5). Other activities in our building will be assessed case by case in early September.**

## **COLOURS**

Many years ago, when I was still at school, I was very keen on photography. In an age before digital cameras it was very important to think carefully about the subject matter and to choose the correct shutter speed and aperture so that film was not wasted. Film, particularly, colour film was relatively expensive and so a lot of the photographs that I took were in black and white. Working in black and white was easier for developing the negatives at home and printing the pictures in the school's darkroom.

My mathematics teacher ran the school camera club and was helpful in guiding me towards my first "proper" camera – a Zeiss Werra – a camera that I still have although it has not been used for a good number of years. I used to take the "Amateur Photographer" magazine and it regularly held competitions. There was one competition that attracted my attention. I cannot remember the precise details but what I can remember is that, to fulfil the theme of the competition, I wanted a picture to represent "Sunday". At that time (around 1968) there was no Sunday trading. My thought was to photograph the main shopping street in my home town of Rochdale, to show it devoid of people and to show the empty market stalls. However I wanted the picture to be in colour and I wanted to use a colour filter so that the image would have a specific hue to it. I can clearly remember a lively discussion with a number of my mum's work colleagues about what colour would best represent Sunday. Blue was my choice. What would your choice have been?

It was some years later that I realised that there were liturgical colours that can be used to represent different seasons of the church's year. Colours that you are more likely to see adorning altar tables or the

vestments of priests in the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions rather than in the more down to earth reformed churches. It is not my intention to list these colours in this article. The world is full of colour. Psychologist tell us that some people think in colour, others think in pictures or words. I am very much a person who thinks in terms of pictures. However I can also imaging how things will look in different colours. Perhaps that's why I enjoy managing the lighting desk for Union Theatre. Coronavirus has, unfortunately, meant that Union Theatre has missed two productions so far this year and has not been able to meet for rehearsals since early March. Theatres and theatre groups nationally will have to adapt to a “new normal” as well as churches. Although lockdown measures are easing, it is still necessary to be cautious.

We are moving into August. I think of August as a golden month. Perhaps because its first two letters are the chemical symbol for gold but also because it is a summer month when we get the warmth of the sun. When we can sit in the garden and be lazy in the hazy sunshine and reflect on God’s creation. In the July Newsletter Julia asked us “Where is God?” I see God all around: in the beauty and symmetry of nature and in the work that so many undertake with the sick and bereaved, or with those with addictions and other problems contrary to social norms.

However we cannot sit back and let others do all the work. In our own ways, and we all have different gifts (or should I say our spectrum of abilities), lets us demonstrate God’s love for all mankind. And, as the colours of day dawn into the mind, let us give the message to the people we meet, that Jesus is living, his Spirit is here. So light up the fire and let the flame burn, open the door let Jesus return. Amen

**Gordon Justham**

## REOPENING THE CHURCH FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP

From Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September we are going to begin offering Sunday morning worship for those for whom it is appropriate to be going out and about in that way. You should consider carefully whether it is appropriate for you to join in or whether you should continue to be shielded at home at that time.

The fine details have yet to be worked out, but services will not include congregational singing and will probably only last 30-40minutes. Face masks will be worn by everyone (over the age of 3) throughout the service and marked seating spaces will be at least 2 metres from the next person in all directions (you may sit next to someone from your household/'bubble' eg spouse). There will be no opportunity to socialise before or afterwards. We encourage smiley eyes above your facemask and friendly waving, but no physical contact should be made with anyone not in your 'bubble'. We will not be offering communion until further notice. Cushions will not be made available, so if you think you will need one you will have to bring your own from home and take it home each time. Hymn books will not be issued either – if the worship leader wishes to refer to, or read together, the words of a hymn/song they will be on the screen or on a service sheet which you are asked to take home with you.

Any time you enter the building now you are asked to sanitise your hands (either using the sanitiser stations at the doors or wash with soap on your hands for at least 20 seconds, if sanitiser is not appropriate for you). Any time you are in the building with anyone else you must wear a face mask and observe 2m distance if possible. Every time you come in to the church building you must sign in so we can know who, and how many people, are coming and going.

All this is new to everyone and we will have to work it out as we go along, so please be flexible, and patient, as you may find you are asked to do different things from week to week as we work out what is most suitable.

Should there be a local rise in Covid 19 cases at any time in the future we may have to suspend the worship service again.

**The Lectionary readings for Sundays in August are as follows.**

**2 August** Matthew 14.13-21; Isaiah 55.1-5; Psalm 145.8-9 & 14-21;  
Romans 9.1-5

**9 August** Matthew 14.22-33; 1 Kings 19.9-18; Psalm 85.8-13;  
Romans 10.5-15

**16 August** Matthew 15.(10-20), 21-28; Isaiah 56.1 & 6-8; Psalm 67;  
Romans 11.1-2a & 29-32;

**23 August** Matthew 16.13-20; Isaiah 51.1-6; Psalm 138; Romans  
12.1-8;

**30 August** Matthew 16.21-28; Jeremiah 15.15-21; Psalm 26.1-8;  
Romans 12.9-21

**Thank you to Gordon Justham for putting together the weekly emails telling people what worship services are available to access. What a shame the TV let us all down by discontinuing the broadcast of Sunday worship services.**

**CONGRATULATIONS**

Our congratulations, love and best wishes are sent to Sue & Ron Plant and Carol & John Andrews who are both celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary (50 years) on the 1<sup>st</sup> August. May they have many more happy years.

## UPDATE – YEW TREE SCHOOL

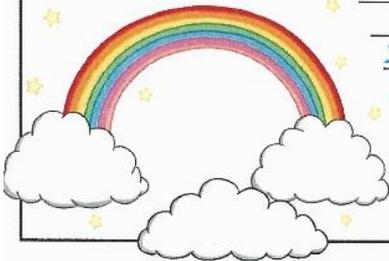
To Mrs. Faber,

Thank you so much for  
volunteering at our school this  
year.

We have really enjoyed all  
the work we have done with  
the Church, especially during  
Creative Arts Week.

We appreciate all of your  
hard work and we look  
forward to seeing you  
again soon.

From,  
All the children  
at Yew Tree



I received this letter from the children at Yew Tree School thanking us for the volunteering that we have done at the school this year. Hopefully we will be able to continue sometime in the future.

## CHURCH CLEANING

Bridget has expressed a wish to step down as the co-ordinator liaising with the cleaning company who clean our premises. The role involves communication with the cleaners regularly either in person, by phone or through notes left for them. Cleaning products and loo rolls also need regular ordering as is necessary to ensure stocks are sufficient. Please speak to her to find out about the role.

We thank Bridget for her faithful service as the co-ordinator of cleaning services. It is another of those essential roles which can remain unnoticed by many but from which we all benefit. Thank you Bridget.

## CHURCH PREMISES INTO THE FUTURE

The Elders have been looking again at the idea of renovating, or redeveloping, our church premises. Having explored renovating, redeveloping seems the most sensible option to resolve all our known issues, but no decision has been made yet. The decision will be made at a Church Meeting.

We would like to put together a 'wish list' for each of the groups which we organise ourselves. If you lead a group please could you speak to those who volunteer with you and put together such a list. We cannot promise that you will get everything, but it is a starting point. Consider how much space you use and whether you could use more or less. How much storage space do you need? Ideally does that need to be close by or would further away be acceptable? Do you have, or desire, special furniture or equipment which needs storage? Would outside space be useful? What would need to be included in that space? How close does a kitchen need to be? Does the inside or outside space need to be secure from people wandering through? Think carefully about how you operate. Would a different space enable you to do things better? What would help? What do you like about the current facilities? What do you really find unhelpful or off-putting? Please pass your thoughts to me or one of the Elders. **Linda Faber**

## **AN OLD LADY'S POEM**

When an old lady died in the geriatric ward of a small hospital near Dundee, Scotland, it was felt that she had nothing left of any value. Later, when the nurses were going through her meagre possessions, they found this poem. Its quality and content so impressed the staff that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital. One nurse took her copy to Ireland. The old lady's sole bequest to posterity has since appeared in the Christmas edition of the News Magazine of the North Ireland Association for Mental Health.

And now this little old Scottish lady, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this simple, yet eloquent, poem traveling the world by Internet. Goes to show that we all leave "SOME footprints in time"....

### **An Old Lady's Poem**

What do you see, nurses, what do you see?  
What are you thinking when you're looking at me?  
A crabby old woman, not very wise,  
Uncertain of habit, with faraway eyes?  
Who dribbles her food and makes no reply  
When you say in a loud voice, "I do wish you'd try!"  
Who seems not to notice the things that you do,  
And forever is losing a stocking or shoe.....  
Who, resisting or not, lets you do as you will,  
With bathing and feeding, the long day to fill....  
Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see?  
Then open your eyes, nurse; you're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still,  
As I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.  
I'm a small child of ten ...with a father and mother,  
Brothers and sisters, who love one another.  
A young girl of sixteen, with wings on her feet,

Dreaming that soon now a lover she'll meet.  
A bride soon at twenty -- my heart gives a leap,  
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.  
At twenty-five now, I have young of my own,  
Who need me to guide and a secure happy home.  
A woman of thirty, my young now grown fast,  
Bound to each other with ties that should last.  
At forty, my young sons have grown and are gone,  
But my man's beside me to see I don't mourn.  
At fifty once more, babies play round my knee,  
Again we know children, my loved one and me.  
Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead;  
I look at the future, I shudder with dread.  
For my young are all rearing young of their own,  
And I think of the years and the love that I've known.

I'm now an old woman ...and nature is cruel;  
'Tis jest to make old age look like a fool.  
The body, it crumbles, grace and vigour depart,  
There is now a stone where I once had a heart.  
But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells,  
And now and again my battered heart swells.  
I remember the joys, I remember the pain,  
And I'm loving and living life over again.  
I think of the years ....all too few, gone too fast,  
And accept the stark fact that nothing can last.

So open your eyes, nurses, open and see,  
...Not a crabby old woman; look closer ...see ME!!

Remember this poem when you next meet an old person who you  
might brush aside without looking at the young soul within ..... We will  
one day be there, too! **Ian Carnell**

## **‘WHERE DO ALL YOUR NEW SONGS COME FROM?’**

‘Where do all your new songs come from?’ a friend of mine wanted to know. I always feel slightly embarrassed when people ask this as I believe they come from God via his messenger ‘singing angels’. We should not be embarrassed about the wondrous things God can do of course but anything out of the ordinary does tend to shock people – and they maybe wonder about our sanity! New songs just come into my head as if they have always been there - and some sound so familiar to me. Yet when I test them in the Google facility such as ‘name that song’ I get no results. Google doesn’t recognise the tunes and songs as coming from another source or person.

Having said that I expect that there are some musical phrases which probably have stayed in my head for much of my life – particularly from my teenage years. I loved the songs of many pop stars of the 1960s – particularly the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. But my all-time fave singer was and still is Joan Baez.

Certainly there are elements of folk singing in my compositions. Throughout my three year teacher training I helped to run a folk club for St Mary’s and St Paul’s college in Cheltenham. There weren’t many women singers among the student teachers of my era and fewer still who played guitar – which was surprising really during my college years. Anyone who played an instrument, particularly piano or guitar, found it easy to get a teaching job for Primary Schools in those halcyon days, as most state schools had Christian assemblies and children’s voices sang hymns every day! So every Primary school needed at least one teacher who could play an instrument to accompany children singing.

But I have not been writing Christian songs for most of my life – far from it they are comparatively recent and there are well over 100 of my compositions now online under my online singing name of Carol Chick. To keep me safe on the internet I use a nom de plume – or aka – ‘otherwise known as’. My first ‘Carol sings Faith’ composition was ‘Sing

to the Lord' and if you type into Youtube 'Carol sings Faith – Sing to the Lord', hopefully you will find it. I have two Youtube channels as I lost the password for the first!

The words of 'Sing to the Lord' came to me in the middle of one night six years ago. So I wrote the words down and tried to get back to sleep. I thought I had written a poem – but then, as I tried to get to sleep, I could tell that a tune was coming and that it fitted the rhythm of the words. So, in the night, I quickly drew makeshift manuscript paper with ad hoc lines and then tried to record the notation as best I could. But I needn't have bothered as the words and tune were still with me when I awoke in the morning. By the afternoon of the same day I had recorded the song – the guitar part came as if it had always been there. It was on Youtube within hours of arriving in my head. Ian Carnell used that song at one of our services at Olton URC not long after it had been composed. The congregation soon picked it up and sang along! 'The rest', as they say 'is history!'

There are now far more than 100 of these new compositions in my second Youtube Carol Chick channel and during lockdown 2 or 3 new songs have been arriving each week, some of which have been regularly used at the weekly 10.30 a.m. Sunday morning service online from St Margaret's Church Olton.

During the pandemic I have also recorded two hymns each week sung solo at home. I think I have already told you I am a chorister at St Margaret's Church Olton. We have children and adults in our choir and quite a number of our choristers make individual weekly recordings of hymns and anthems. We sing to organ music, played by our organist Eddie, who also records at home. Then all the individual recordings are mixed together and we become an online choir. It is challenging - but exciting to hear our efforts, mixed together by two young people who have the skills to do this for us. It may be a while before choirs can physically meet together again unfortunately but recorded music can be used in live and online church services.

My musical life during lockdown has been more than busy – but I love it! Praise be to God and the singing angels for their musical messages during the pandemic. For the new songs I am merely the musical secretary and I shall always believe that I do not compose alone – God sends the songs to share! As the Bible rightly tells us ‘Sing a new song to the Lord’ and I do!

Smiles and musical blessings to all my friends at Solihull URC,

**Carol Andrews**



**Isiah 30:41**

**Those who hope in  
the LORD will renew  
their strength.**

**They will soar on  
wings like eagles;  
they will run  
and not grow weary,  
they will walk  
and not be faint.**

## PRAYERS

During the early days of 'lockdown, I, like so many others, did some tidying of cupboards and drawers. A drawer in a bedside cabinet was full of old service sheets with notes written by me during the sermon, (notes relating to the sermon, I hasten to add) Vision for Life pamphlets, books of prayers etc etc. In the following days I spent time reading the contents of the drawer. Some were discarded and the rest returned to the drawer.

One of the books of prayers is 'Prayers of Life' by Michel Quoist, A French Catholic priest, theologian and writer. I have had this book since 1968 and it is one I dip into quite often. The first two sentences in the book are 'Before being written these pages were both lived and prayed. They stem from the lives of committed Christians offered to God day by day'.

The prayers are not set prayers, they are meditations on life. Each set of prayers has one or more texts from scripture 'supplementing each other, the Gospel and life, the two channels through which God speaks to men'.

I knew exactly which prayer to share with you -The Telephone. Oh no, how about - The Brick.

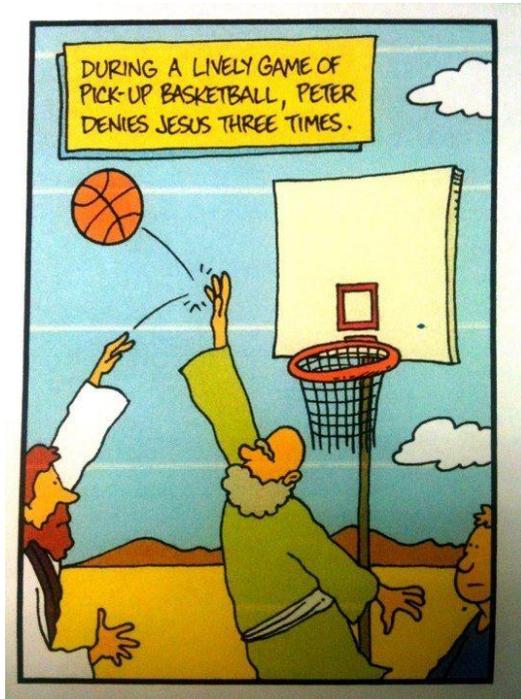
But while waiting for a friend come round for coffee in the garden, I reread a column written by Sheila Maxey in the June edition of 'Reform'. She was thinking about time, how busy she was before 'lockdown and how different time is in 'lockdown'. Something we have all had to come to terms with.

Sheila ended her column with a prayer from Michel Quoist which she had found very helpful in her 'hectically busy years. Today it speaks just as helpfully but in a different register'.

*Lord, I have time,  
I have plenty of time,  
All the time that you give me,  
The years of my life,  
The days of my years,  
The hours of my days.  
They are all mine.  
Mine to fill, quietly, calmly,  
But to fill completely, up to the brim . . . . .*

*I am not asking you tonight, Lord, for time to do this and then that,  
But for your grace to do conscientiously, in the time you give me, what  
you want me to do.*

I will try to make this my prayer every night. Will you join me?  
**Maureen Butler**



## ST SWITHIN'S CHURCH

At last I feel as though life is getting back to normal! At least to a new normal! I attended a church service on Sunday morning. No, not a BBC service or a Zoom service, but at a church!

St Swithin's Church in Barston, held their first service since lockdown, not in the church but in the garden of the former vicarage. Everything was done to keep everyone safe. Hands were sanitised and names were taken in case of a new outbreak of Covid 19, as we entered. We all kept our distance and there was no communal singing. It was a short service but how great it was to be able to worship together, to pray together and to meet with fellow Christians.

We sang "in our heads" and a solitary singer, who was well removed from the congregation, started the service by singing "Come, now is the time to worship", a hymn that was new to me but really set the spirit of the service.

Although It was not always easy to hear, we reflected on what we had learned during 'lockdown' and we prayed for all those in countries where there was no NHS and where even in 'normal' times life is far from easy.

We finished with the song...

*YOU SHALL GO OUT WITH JOY  
And be led forth with peace,  
And the mountains and the hill  
Shall break forth before you  
There'll be shouts of joy,  
And the trees of the field  
Shall clap their hands....  
And you'll go out with joy.*

We know that God is with us, even though we were in a different place, and is still looking over us. Let us pray that we will be able to meet together to worship him in our own Church soon. But a note of caution...we must do everything necessary to stay safe. **Trixie Harman**



# EducAidAfrica

## EDUCAID AFRICA

This year, as you will understand, things have been very different in Kenya with all schools being closed and

pupils sent home on March 15 with no organised preparations for home learning. Jenni and I were delighted that we had succeeded in visiting Kenya before the shutters fell.

We have recently heard that the Kenyan government has announced that all schools will remain closed for the rest of the year and will plan to reopen at the start of the next academic year, that is January 2021. The year 2020 has been written off for schools in Kenya, with no national exams taking place. All pupils will return and will retake the year whether in Primary or Secondary, even those in their final year.

From EducAid Africa's point of view, financially, all fees were paid up at the start of the year, in advance, which is the normal situation. The fact is that our pupils were there for the best part of one term before being sent home. We are hearing that the schools are intending to keep the money, but that two terms' worth will be used for next year and for this year they will just have used the first term's amount.

You will be pleased to know that, just as we locked down here, our treasurer was able to send an extra sum to our Mombasa account to be used to support any of our students who fell on hard times through the ensuing period, whether through lack of food or ill health. So far, some 20 young people have been assisted from this fund with varying amounts to help keep them safe.

So, we may not have been helping them in school but hopefully they will be well enough to restart their education when the time comes. Pandemic is in Kenya with 11252 cases to date but 209 recorded deaths.

As regards our request for contributions for the toilets at Malau School, the response has been amazing! We thought you would be pleased to know that we have already had donations amounting to nearly £2000

and, with known Gift Aid claims, this adds at least another £100+ and probably more, once the treasurer has cross checked with people on her list. So I should say we are almost there! Well done supporters!

One of our past sponsored pupils is now a teacher at Malau School and, when we visited at the beginning of the year, she gave us this poem that she had written:

*So weak I was,  
Ignorant and hungry  
No books to read  
No desks to sit at,  
No porridge to take  
No balls to play in the field*

*Strong now I am,  
Intelligent and healthy,  
The porridge every term  
The books I read and write  
The balls I play in the field  
All from Educaid*

*Not forgetting my teachers  
A stack of milk for tea  
Not just a privilege,  
But a favour to Malau village  
Thanks be to Educaid!*

*The giving hand is always up,  
God bless the giving hand  
God bless Educaid  
God bless our sponsors!*

*Written by Margaret Kombe. Class Teacher at Malau Primary School*

Thank you to you all for your support and prayers – we are certainly making a great difference to so many lives!

**Ian D. Carnell MBE,  
Chairman of the Trustees, EducAid Africa**

## NO COMPROMISE

When I was a student, one of the girls I shared a house with lent me a book called “No Compromise” by Melody Green. It is a biography of her late husband Keith Green who was a musician and who wrote some of the worship songs in Mission Praise. He was killed in an aeroplane crash. The book is called “No Compromise” because Melody thought that a relevant description of the character of her Christian husband who would not compromise over anything faith related. For him a lack of faith, or commitment to the Kingdom, wouldn’t do. As we contemplate returning to in-person gatherings at church on Sundays and in other matters, I wonder whether there have been areas of faith or Kingdom matters where we have compromised in the past that we should rethink now we have this ‘line in the sand’.

I don’t have a particular matter in mind, nor a particular axe to grind, but God has clearly said, “Stop”, “Take a breath”, “Refocus”. What does that mean for us? What have we compromised on that we should be doing better? How can we achieve this? - more prayer? Letting other things go? What does that mean for you? What does that mean for the church?

Our profile for a new minister was written before lock-down and has gone to Synod now. It is a written snapshot of where we were before lock-down. I wonder when we get to talk to a potential candidate (which still won’t be for some months, at best) how much will have moved on? Did we manage to encapsulate with honesty and reality how much we are willing, and able, to embrace change, because we said we could and we would? **Linda Faber**

## KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

### **Minister**

VACANT

### **Church Secretary**

Mr. Gordon Justham: 07540 289855 - 01564 776229 -  
gordonjustham@talktalk.net

### **Website**

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

**Hall Lettings:** 07925 573259

**Generations Project** - enabling the Church in care homes

[www.generationsssolihull.org.uk](http://www.generationsssolihull.org.uk) [generationsssolihull@icloud.com](mailto:generationsssolihull@icloud.com)

### **Moments**

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

## **SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER**

Material for the September edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

[stuartkmills@gmail.com](mailto:stuartkmills@gmail.com)

by Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August please.