



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

July/August 2021 Newsletter

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.”

Ephesians 2: 4-5



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
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)**

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

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

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

Ian Carnell – **Elder**

Howard Cotes – **Elder**

Gordon Laurie - **Elder**

Liz Amos - **Treasurer**

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

WORSHIP DURING JULY AND AUGUST

At the time of writing the country is not yet fully out of measures to restrict the spread of Covid-19. However, the Elders have decided that it is safe to open the church for communal worship. Nevertheless we are aware that some people may feel uncomfortable in joining us for worship whilst Covid-19 is classed as a pandemic. We will therefore also broadcast the service via “Zoom” for those who would like to join us from home (or other location). Please be aware that if you are attending church for communal worship then the following rules need to be adhered to:

- please sign in when entering the church (either by using the NHS track and trace App or at the desk by the entrance)
- please use the hand sanitiser provided or wash your hands
- social distancing rules must be followed and no more than 6 people or 2 households can group together or meet indoors. Sorry but this does not mean you can move from group to group or person to person to chat inside the church. However, restrictions are less strict outside!
- there is to be no communal singing.

We hope that some, if not all, of these restrictions will be lifted in the near future but, in the meantime, we need to abide by the requirements laid down by the Government. **Gordon Justham**

The Worship leaders for July and August are:

4 July	10:00am	Mr Ian Carnell - includes Communion presided over by Rev Graham Sweeney
11 July	10:00am	Mrs Linda Faber
18 July	10:00am	Mr Gordon Justham
25 July	10:00am	Mr Blair Kessler
1 August	10:00am	Mr Gordon Justham - includes Communion
8 August	10:00am	Mr Ian Carnell
15 August	10:00am	Mrs Linda Faber
22 August	10:00am	Mrs Margaret Marshall
29 August	10:00am	Mrs Linda Faber

THE LECTIONARY

Readings for Sundays in July and August from the Revised Common Lectionary are as follows. Please note that worship leaders are not obliged to follow the lectionary but you may be interested to know what the lectionary readings are for the specified Sundays. The readings in bold are the gospel readings for the day. **Gordon Justham**

4th July - 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48; Ezekiel 2:1-5; Psalm 123; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; **Mark 6:1-13**

11th July - 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19; Psalm 24; Amos 7:7-15; Psalm 85:8-13; Ephesians 1:3-14; **Mark 6:14-29**

18th July - 2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Psalm 89:20-37; Jeremiah 23:1-6; Psalm 23; Ephesians 2:11-22; **Mark 6:30-34, 53-56**

25th July - 2 Samuel 11:1-15; Psalm 14; 2 Kings 4:42-44; Psalm 145:10-18; Ephesians 3:14-21; **John 6:1-21**

1st August - 2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a; Psalm 51:1-12; Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15; Psalm 78:23-29; Ephesians 4:1-16; **John 6:24-35**

8th August - 2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33; Psalm 130; 1 Kings 19:4-8; Psalm 34:1-8; Ephesians 4:25-5:2; **John 6:35, 41-51**

15th August - 1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14; Psalm 111; Proverbs 9:1-6; Psalm 34:9-14; Ephesians 5:15-20; **John 6:51-58**

22nd August - 1 Kings 8:(1,6,10-11), 22-30, 41-43; Psalm 84; Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18; Psalm 34:15-22; Ephesians 6:10-20; **John 6:56-69**

29th August - Song of Solomon 2:8-13; Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9; Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; Psalm 15; James 1:17-27; **Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

FOREWORD

Normal - what's that?

As someone who has read and written an awful lot about Covid rules and guidance in the last year and a half, it has been, well, an interesting experience. The URC's first major set of guidance, "Ready for the New Normal", and its successor, "Emerging into the New Normal" both started with me trying to understand what could be said to the churches of the West Midlands, and both of those documents, plus many, many more – rather like the Government's coronavirus web pages – have grown like Topsy.

It has been gratifying to learn how what started off as a (long-ish) To-Do list has been picked up and recognised very widely. Several other Christian denominations in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have used it as the basis for their own guidance (including gratitude being expressed at the recent Church of Scotland General Assembly), as has the Muslim Council of Britain!

One thing is clear. Coronavirus is permanent. Like 'flu we are almost certainly going to see it come in annual waves and we know that booster jabs are being trialled. Covid-19 is now with us forever, but thankfully we have learned so much more about treatment and whilst vaccinations don't guarantee we won't catch the disease, for almost everybody they will mean that the effects are much less serious. If you haven't had your jabs yet, I would encourage you to do so if you possibly can.

All of this means that we are NOT going back to what we used to regard as "normal." Even after the ending of most restrictions, it may well be that we are either encouraged or even required to carry on wearing face coverings and perhaps maintain social distancing. Despite regularly asking the Government we are still not getting any indication when we can start to sing indoors as a congregation. It seems that we're not going to be told before an announcement is made in a

Downing Street Press Conference – and the details won't be known until a few days after that. Like so many of you, I'm really hoping this particular change will come sooner rather than later.

No, the old "normal" has gone forever. But is that such a bad thing? The old normal was characterised by selfishness, over-work, anxiety and greed. That's what caused the fights over the last toilet rolls at the beginning of the first lockdown!

Wouldn't it be better to make our "new normal" – our regular, daily living – one that is marked out by us being kinder, more thoughtful, gentler on the planet?

Steve Faber

MEETING WITH JULIAN KNIGHT MP

The Eco group from Solihull Methodist church are keen to meet with Julian to discuss matter relating to the Climate Crisis and would like this to involve people from other churches. Their initial thoughts are to have a planning meeting and they have outlined a structure of:

- a) What is the Government doing about X Y Z?
- b) Has the Government thought about A B C?
- c) Do you know about D E F?

Would any of you be interested in taking part? And if so being willing to help fill in X,Y, Z etc with your issues or concerns. The planning meeting will not be in the immediate future as the leader the Methodist Eco group (Richard Balmer) is on holiday.

Elaine Jones



The climate emergency is one of the greatest injustices we face. Together we can stop this climate crisis.

CHRISTIAN AID 300,000 STEP CHALLENGE

Once again, I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who supported me with this challenge. I am pleased to be able to inform you that between Just Giving and other donations, £576.25 was raised for Christian Aid (including Gift Aid.)

Julia Ensor

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

I am pleased to be able to report that £618 was raised for Christian Aid. £352.50 was raised through the e-envelope I set up on Just Giving (including Gift Aid) with an additional £265.50 donated by cash or cheques (including Gift Aid). Therefore, along with the sponsorship from Julia's successful challenge, a total of £1,194.25 has been raised.

Many thanks for all your support.

Myles Ensor

GLOBAL HUNGER APPEAL

Christian Aid are issuing a Global Hunger Appeal. £30 million people are teetering on the brink of famine and they are appealing for funds to help intervene to help. If you would like to make a donation for this appeal please do so online or place a gift in the offertory in a Christian Aid envelope which are still available at church.

Linda Faber

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION IS A GLOBAL REALITY

At least 340 million Christians around the world experience systematic discrimination, unfair treatment and persecution. That means 1 in 8 Christians are affected by 'extreme', 'very high' or 'high' levels of persecution in 74 countries.

Open Doors assembles a list of the top 50 where there is the most extreme persecution and asks us to pray for them.

This month: Afghanistan

It is impossible to live openly as a Christian in Afghanistan. Leaving Islam is considered shameful, and Christian converts from a Muslim background face dire consequences if their new faith is discovered. Either they have to flee the country or they will be killed. If a Christian's family discovers they have converted, their family clan or tribe has to save its 'honour' by disowning the believer, or even killing them. Christians from a Muslim background can also be sectioned in a psychiatric hospital, because leaving Islam is considered a sign of insanity.

Pray

- That God would make 'seeing eyes blind' and that any persecutors looking for secret Afghan Christians would not discover them.
- That despite their isolation, Afghan believers would be strengthened and encouraged in their faith.
- That God would be at work, changing the hearts of Islamic extremists and turning them to Him.

Linda Faber

FLOWERS

We would love to have fresh flowers at the front for our worship service. Afterwards they can be distributed to those who are in need of an extra bit of love or to those with whom we celebrate something special.



We can only do this if they are supplied by someone! Would you be willing to provide the flowers one Sunday? There is a list where you can sign up at the back of church. Vases are kept in the cupboard the other side of the vestry/office. The duty Elder organises who the flowers are given to.

Linda Faber

LUNCH CLUB

We are looking to start a new venture to reach out to the community and others by providing lunches. We hope to commence this in September and initially providing the meal once or twice a month - depending on volunteers.

If you are interested, or know of anyone who might like to help with this mission project, please contact **Elaine** or **Linda** so that we can work on the finer details.

THANK YOU

Chris and Trixie would like to thank all their Solihull URC friends for the cards, phone calls and visits that they have received, as well as the gifts of food that have helped Chris as he has developed his cooking skills during this rather difficult time!



We have appreciated your visits to brighten our days here as we have been unable to get out! I think that I have only 3 or 4 more weeks of this sort of Lockdown!

We have enjoyed the Zoom services and are very grateful to Linda, Gordon and Ian for the work that they have done to provide us all with the meaningful and thought-provoking services. We hope to be able to join you all, at the church soon.

Chris and Trixie Harman

NEWSLETTERS

If you receive your newsletter by email but would prefer a paper copy please feel free to pick up a copy from the church.

POEM

As you may know, I am a Governor at a local secondary school and this poem was written some time ago by one of the students there who was a young carer for her mum.

Carer for Mum

Dearest mum, I'll look after you in your darkest days,
To pick you up when you're sad, to make sure you're ok
You see I'll never see you struggle,
Soon you'll be right as a ray,
To hold and forever snuggle,
And worship everything you say.

It's not going to be dandelions and daisies,
It's going to be extremely hard
But I'll treasure every moment that I see flying past.
'Cos to me you are my future,
The world which is spinning on many angles
Without you I cannot picture,

Nor could I even handle.

From the womb to your chest,
Compressed to your heartbeat,
Love is what's best
You are what defines me.

You cradled and cared for me in your arms,
Now you're weak I shall do my part,
We'll hold each other and soon we shall start
To begin a new future palm by palm
Carer for mum

Ian Carnell

TALKING JESUS—WHAT CAN I DO? PART 2

‘Talking Jesus’ is a handbook reporting a major piece of research about the Christian faith in this country conducted on behalf of the Church of England, Evangelical Alliance and HOPE. Here is some information from it.

What do people think of Jesus?

Four in 10 of all adults in England either don’t believe (22%) or aren’t sure (18%) that Jesus was a real person who lived on earth. With such a wealth of historical evidence about Jesus’ existence, this statistic is an enormous challenge to the church. Those of black or minority ethnic backgrounds are much more likely to believe that Jesus was real than those who are white British.

Some people will be convinced if they are shown evidence. How are we going to help expose them to the facts in our community?

Jesus Identity

Approximately one in 5 adults believe Jesus was God in human form, and 3 in 10 believing he was a prophet. 17% believe he was a normal human being. This is alongside the 22% who believe Jesus is a mythical or fictional figure. With others not knowing or having some other idea. But no matter who they think he was 43% of adults believe that Jesus rose from the dead.

What does this mean for me?

It seems that lots of the population aren’t even sure if Jesus was a real historic figure. How can you equip yourself to explain to people the evidence that Jesus did exist?

Through words and actions, how can you let people know that Jesus's resurrection isn't just something for the history books, but can have a powerful impact on their lives today?

The book we looked at through Lent "Who do you say I am?" explains who Jesus is, why He died and the impact He has today. Is there someone you could give it to? I have more copies available if you have someone to give them to.

Linda Faber

URC LAUNCHES NEW PODCAST

The United Reformed Church (URC) has launched a new fortnightly podcast, that explores the denomination's focus on Christian discipleship, mission and what it means to be Walking the Way of Jesus today.

The podcast will explore what it means to be a disciple across all aspects of our lives, as we respond to the concerns, issues and topics that we encounter.

New episodes will be published every other Wednesday. In the first series, topics to be discussed include climate justice, Christians at work, coronavirus a year on, Walking the Way, money, and racism.

The podcast is available on Anchor, Spotify and all major podcast platforms. Listen at <https://anchor.fm/theurcpodcast>

Stuart Mills

LOOKING AFTER GOD'S WORLD

Is there a group of people who would be interested in looking into how we might become a more environmentally aware church and put in place better practices?

In time it might be appropriate to pursue the A Rocha Eco Church Award. The questions asked in their survey can be viewed online if you are interested in the sorts of things we might do. They can be viewed here:

ecochurch.arocha.org.uk Choose "View the survey questions" which is the third menu heading across from the right.

As well as looking at our buildings they encourage us to think about our outside space, survey our lifestyles and challenge us to become involved in local and international projects.

There are some easy things we could do at church, for example could we put some bird boxes in our mature bushes outside. Put recycling bins where we have rubbish bins in each room. Commit to use Fairtrade produce and recycled products, and loads more.

But it needs people to care enough to bother to do something about it. This isn't something that one person can do but needs a core group of people to sustain change and encourage us all to do better. Might you be one of those people? I am going to be asking the Elders to look at it but they shouldn't be doing everything. What contribution can you make?

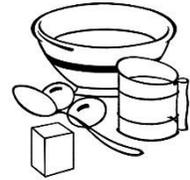
Linda Faber

FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH

This refreshing dessert is great for the summer months.

Rhubarb Tart

- 1lb rhubarb
- 2 tblsp water
- 2 tblsp red currant Jelly
- 1 raspberry jelly



- Small carton of plain yoghurt.
- 1x 8x1/2in shallow tin foil pie plate.
- Basic shortcrust pastry (I used 6oz plain flour)

Make the pastry and line the plate, let it rest in the fridge for 30mins, prick with a fork and then bake blind. (Line the pastry case with parchment and fill with baking beans, bake for 15mins then remove the beans and parchment and return to the oven for a further 15 mins)
Wash the rhubarb, trim and cut into chunks. Simmer with the water and redcurrant jelly until tender, then liquidise. Make up the puree to $\frac{3}{4}$ pt with water if necessary. Melt the raspberry jelly in $\frac{1}{4}$ pint of boiling water and stir into the puree. Leave till almost set and pour into the pastry case. Drizzle over some of the yoghurt in circles and feather with a skewer. Leave to fully set. Enjoy.

Elaine Jones

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister

VACANT

Church Secretary

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gordonjustham@talktalk.net

Website

www.solihullurc.org.uk

Hall Lettings: 07925 573259

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

www.generationssoalihull.org.uk generationssoalihull@icloud.com

Moments (currently not meeting)

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

SEPTEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Material for the September 2021 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 22nd August please.