



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

September 2021 Newsletter

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8: 31-32



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 SEPTEMBER

It is good to be back in church but due to the current infection rate in Solihull we ask that you adhere to the following Covid 19 restrictions even though this may be stricter than the law requires.

We recognise that many will have been double vaccinated but that doesn't, in itself, stop the spread of the disease. The Elders have decided that we should continue with some steps to mitigate the further spread of the virus. Basically for our services during September this means:

- please sign in (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 should be followed with no more than 6 people or 2 households grouping together indoors.
- Communal Singing: we have a large spacious building and as long as you are socially distanced and, ideally, wearing a mask then please feel free to sing along with the hymns

We will continue to offer the service via Zoom for those who are unable to get to Church or still feel uncomfortable about attending.

We appreciate that there can be technical difficulties at times, particularly, with sound quality but we keep experimenting to resolve these issues. Life is a continual learning curve!

Gordon Justham

The Worship leaders for September are:

5 September	10:00am	Mr Ian Carnell – Communion
12 September	10:00am	Mr Gordon Justham
19 September	10:00am	Mrs Linda Faber
26 September	10:00am	Leader TBC – Harvest Festival

THE LECTIONARY

Readings for Sundays in September 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. An interesting challenge is to try and understand the link between the readings for a particular day. **Gordon Justham**

5th September	Mark 7.24-37 ; Psalm 146; Isaiah 35.4-7a; James 2.1-17
12th September	Mark 8.27-38 ; Psalm 116.1-9; Isaiah 50.4-9a; James 3.1-12
19th September	Mark 9.30-37 ; Psalm 54; Jeremiah 11.18-20; James 3.13 – 4.3 & 7-8a
26th September	Mark 9.38-50 ; Psalm 19.7-14; Numbers 11.4-6, 10-16, & 24 -29 James 5.13-20

FOREWORD

Dear Friends,

While it may not have quite the widespread significance it used to have, I must admit I still have a soft spot for the Harvest Festival. Partly, it's nostalgia: it takes me back to the church of my childhood, when we Sunday School children would process up the aisle to present baskets of fruit, vegetables and flowers which, later, would be distributed to people and organisations in the local community, or auctioned off to raise funds at the harvest sale which usually took place the following evening.

I can still picture the scene in church: sheaves of corn, the rich autumnal flower displays, and the specially-made loaf from the local family bakery, which always had pride of place. There were a few other things in the display as well – the less colourful, but still essential fruits of the earth, such as a lump of coal; a glass of water; and a plate of soil. Perhaps you have similar memories: they can take us even further back in time, resonating with our collective past, when life was physically and economically hard for many, but people appeared to live in closer harmony with the natural cycle of the seasons, daily life and work being reliant upon sun and rain, light and darkness.

Harvest is somehow part of the liturgy of time, isn't it? But this month's festival on 26 September isn't just about the past; it is also about today and tomorrow. In the 21st century, though, and in the suburbs of the West Midlands, you might logically question why we sing about ploughing fields and scattering seeds, when most of us have no real connections to the agricultural world. Also, harvest in this country is not the life-and-death issue it once was. After all, even if the weather were to ruin things and the British harvest were to fail completely, the shops would no doubt still have produce brought in from all around the world – despite Brexit!!

As you walk round a supermarket – at any time of year – you can all too easily assume that harvest is now a year-long, rather than a seasonal, event. With the choice and abundance of food that marks our modern urban lifestyle in the Western world, not to mention the amount of food we throw away, the traditional harvest can seem little more than a distant, quaint folk-memory. We have largely lost touch with the rhythm of the seasons and their fruits.

Now we are the hunter-gatherers of the shopping mall or the mega-food chain – just as tenacious as our ancestors, but more attuned to shopping hours than to light and darkness, or sun and rain – with shopping hours increasingly meaning 24 a day. As time goes on, we seem to get even further removed from the experiences of earlier faith communities who, for centuries, offered the first fruits of their harvests to their gods in gratitude for all they had received.

So, the Harvest Festival in these times, can – if nothing else – serve as a reminder of our dependence upon the earth and its produce, and those who labour to bring it to our shops and homes. But a modern Harvest Festival can do **more** than that.

In recent decades we have become increasingly aware of the fragility of the environment. The industrial-scale looting of oceans and seas, the commercial destruction of natural habitats, the increasing threat of global warming, the polluting of the skies, the factory-like processing of sentient animals, and the continuing controversy over GM crops, are increasingly awakening in us a sense that the earth and the living things we take for granted are precious and vulnerable.

On Harvest Festival Day, we will come to give thanks to God for flowers, fruit and vegetables, and for all life's blessings. As the mediaeval mystic, Meister Eckhart, once said, *'If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is 'thank you', it will be enough'*. It's the shortest and simplest prayer imaginable, but one we perhaps too often forget. But this thanksgiving will find real meaning in an attitude

towards life and a response to life that can have any practical outcomes.

One of these might be the recognition that we, and our interests and needs, do not lie at the centre of the universe, but that we have responsibilities towards our planet and those we share it with, not least those who have little or no harvest – of **any** description – to celebrate. The gratitude we offer cannot complacently thank God that **we** are well provided for, when we know that vast numbers of people around our world struggle to survive, suffering and dying each day because of hunger, thirst, injustice and inequality.

So let us thank God today and every day for the goodness and loving kindness shown towards us, and bless God for our creation, preservation and all the benefits of this life. Because living a life based on gratitude, rather than one which constantly complains that nothing is ever right, can make all the difference.

But let our gratitude be more than just words. Instead, let it move our consciences, our wills, our actions and the choices we make, and take seriously the challenge to live more simply, more fairly, more sustainably and more harmoniously with both creator and created.

Loving God, we give thanks for those who produce our food: for farmers and fishermen, factory and shop workers. We pray for those for whom this has been a difficult couple of years: farmers who have battled the weather to grow food, delivery drivers and shop workers who kept working despite the pandemic. Help us to value and support each other. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Every blessing,

Ian D. Carnell

Elder and Lay Preacher

SATURDAY CAFÉ URGENT REQUEST

We have had an excellent response for volunteers over the last five years, and I would like to thank them for their support, however unfortunately we are in need of more help especially if anyone is on holiday or is unable to cover. We usually work in pairs.

We have found it very rewarding, enabling us to have conversations and build relationships with those who use the café.

The café is open every Saturday during term time from 9.15am -11.30 noon. 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.

Many thanks,
Elaine Jones

FUNDRAISING FOR NICE (NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION)

You may recall that NICE was chosen as one of this year's church charities. It is particularly close to our hearts as our grandson Harry (who has cerebral palsy), is benefitting from regular sessions held at their centre in Moseley. Without any access to face-to-face physiotherapy available because of Covid, Sam and Stuart have really appreciated the hands-on help and support the staff at NICE have offered, including teaching them how best to help Harry start standing and taking his first steps.

Conductive education originated in Hungary in the late 1940s as a unique form of education and rehabilitation for people with neurological movement disorders (eg cerebral palsy, Parkinson's disease, stroke, multiple sclerosis, brain injury). The aim of NICE is to provide a range of flexible services to both children and adults through the delivery of specialist movement-based programmes to teach

people with disabilities the full range of skills required to promote an active lifestyle. They recognise the importance of practical support to the whole family achieved through parent workshops, diagnosis specific carers groups and an open house policy where family members can observe sessions.

To help raise much needed funds, during September we will be selling jam (strawberry, blackcurrant and redcurrant jelly) made entirely from fruits grown in our garden and wildflower honey from the bees Myles keeps locally. All proceeds will go to NICE.

We are offering home delivery on a first come first served basis.
(0121 711 1040)

1lb jars of jam - £3.00

½ lb jars of redcurrant jelly - £2

1lb jars of honey - £6.50

Thank you for your support.

Julia and Myles Ensor

BELATED BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

We send our congratulations and best wishes to David Cooper who celebrated his 90th birthday on 28th July.

NEW BUILD IDEAS

On Saturday 4th September, from 10am to 4pm, the New Building of Dorridge St. Philip's Church centre is open for visitors at Manor Road, postcode B93 8DX. It might be useful for ideas for our new build.

Christine Evans

TALKING JESUS—WHAT CAN I DO? PART 3

'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.

Conversations about Jesus

ARE WE TALKING ABOUT JESUS?

Two thirds of adult practicing Christians in England had spoken about Jesus with a non-Christian in the month before the survey. Young people are even more likely to share what they know of Jesus (72%). Are the people we know hearing about Jesus?

Two thirds of non-Christian Adults (67%) say they know an active Christian. When asked if that active Christian had ever talked with them about their faith in Jesus Christ. Forty one percent said that the Christian person had never spoken to them about Jesus Could any of your family or friends say this about you?

HOW CONFIDENT ARE WE?

When it comes to adult practicing Christians, 77% said they feel they know how to talk to a non-Christian about Jesus, with 54% saying they regularly look for opportunities to talk about Jesus with others.

A third of adult practicing Christians told the survey that they are afraid of causing offence when they talk about Jesus, 34% think others are better suited to share than they are. 26% say they don't feel comfortable talking to non-Christians about Jesus and 21% feel they don't know how to talk about Jesus.

HOW THE CONVERSATIONS WENT

How do non-Christians react when we talk with them about Jesus? Here are the views of those who remained a non-Christian after the conversation

one in every 5 adult non-Christians say they are open to an experience or encounter with Jesus following a conversation about Him with

someone they know. 19% say they want to know more about Jesus following such a conversation. What an opportunity.

Bear in mind these results only tell us the responses of people who didn't become Christians in the end. Those who did accept Jesus after a conversation would now be answering the survey as Christians!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

one in five adults is open to an experience or encounter with Jesus after we speak with them about Him. What an encouragement for us to talk about Jesus with those around us.

Have you ever reflected on how your own family, friends or neighbours respond to conversations with you about Jesus? Ask yourself: Would those I know remember a time I have spoken to them about Jesus?

Did I follow up, offering them a chance to find out more?
How can I make sure I am sharing with people sensitively?
Am I praying regularly for them?

Good relationships are a great starting point for conversations about Jesus. Could you start praying regularly for five of your family, friends or acquaintances who don't know Jesus, and aim to share Him with at least one?

LOOKING AFTER GOD'S WORLD

Can I bring to your attention the article in last time's magazine looking for people who might be willing to do something with regards our church and its environmental care. I know the house group discussed the Eco award but I am still looking for some people to make a response and offer a little effort in this area. If you are willing to make a small contribution of time now and again, or regularly, please let me know.

Linda Faber

SINGING FOR PLEASURE

DO YOU ENJOY SINGING?

If so, why not come along and join our friendly SINGING FOR PLEASURE group. We sing a mixture of popular, folk, classical and sacred songs.

We will be meeting in the John Palmer Hall, a larger room to allow for more space, on Thursday afternoons at 2pm. Our first session is on Thursday 9th September. It only costs £2 a session.

More details from Janet Ince. Tel 0121 7060204

Janet Ince



SHOUT OUT FOR THE GIRLS

Shout out for the girls have recently handed over 70 sanitary packs that we have made for girls in Uganda. We now need more materials to make more. Could you please buy and donate microfibre cloths?

They seem to come in differing size squares from places like Dunelm and B&Q. Also, we are out of knickers, smaller ladies sizes are what we need. Also, if anyone wants to join us they would be most welcome; we next meet 13th September.

Judy Fisher



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: Somalia

It is impossible to admit your Christian faith in Somalia.

Islam is considered a crucial part of Somali identity, and if any Somali is suspected of having converted to Christianity, they are in great danger. Members of their family, clan or community will harass, intimidate or even kill them.

Christians are also in danger from the Muslim extremists al-Shabaab, who consider Christians from a Muslim background a 'high-value target'. They often execute believers on the spot, when discovered.

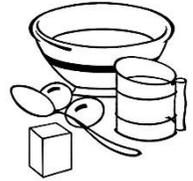
Pray

- That the families of those murdered for their faith will receive the comfort of their heavenly Father.
- For a strong church to grow among Somali people, relying on Jesus.
- For those who kill Christians to be convicted with the fear of the Lord.

Linda Faber

FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH

Tarragon adds a sweet, distinctive flavour to this creamy chicken dish.



Tarragon and Leek chicken

Serves four

25g (1oz) butter

4 Chicken breasts skinned

275g (10oz) leeks cut into 2.5/1" chunks

300ml (1/2 pint) chicken stock

2tsp Tarragon

1tbs cornflour

150ml (1/4 pint) single cream

Melt the butter in a large frying pan and fry the chicken and leeks for 3-4 minutes, turning occasionally.

Add the stock and Tarragon. Bring to the boil and simmer without a lid for 20 minutes or until the chicken is cooked.

Mix the cornflour with 2 tbs water, add to the pan with the cream. Bring back to the boil, stirring. Season to taste.

Enjoy with fresh vegetables and creamed potatoes.

Elaine Jones

EXCITING NEWS

Sam and I are very delighted to announce the arrival of our second son, and Harry's little brother.

Meet George Stanley Thomas Mills:



George was born at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital at 4:18pm on Tuesday 24th August by emergency c-section, weighing 7lb 8oz.

Mum and baby are both fine and the procedure went as well as it could. We hope to come to church in person when time allows so you can all meet George properly.

Stuart Mills

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister

VACANT

Church Secretary

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

Website

www.solihullurc.org.uk

Hall Lettings: 07925 573259

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

www.generationsssolihull.org.uk generationsssolihull@icloud.com

Moments (currently not meeting)

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Material for the October 2021 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 19th September please.