



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

December 2023/January 2024 Newsletter

*“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will
toward men.”*

Luke 2: 14



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

Ian Carnell – Elder (Chair of the Elders, Worship & Prayer)

Gordon Laurie - Church Secretary & Elder

Liz Amos - Treasurer

Linda Faber - Mission Enabler & Lettings Administration

Howard Cotes – Elder

Bev Hands – Elder (Children’s work)

Barrie Jones - Elder (Property, Health & Safety)

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

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

DECEMBER 2023 DIARY DATES

Saturday 2nd – Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 3rd – Sunday Worship including Communion and Toy Service led by Ian Carnell – 10am

Monday 4th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 4th – Job Club – 10:30am

Monday 4th – Elders Meeting

Wednesday 6th – English Conversation Café - 10am

Thursday 7th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 7th - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Saturday 9th - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 10th – Sunday Worship led by Mike Claridge – 10am

Monday 11th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 11th – Shout Out for the Girls – 10am

Monday 11th – Job Club – 10:30am

Tuesday 12th – Dining Out Lunch – 12:30pm

Wednesday 13th – English Conversation Café - 10am

Thursday 14th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 14th – Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Sunday 17th – Carol Service led by Congregation Members – 10am

Monday 18th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 18th – Job Club – 10:30am

Sunday 24th – Christmas Eve Service led by Ian Carnell - 10am

Sunday 24th – “Celebrating Christmas Eve” all-age celebration led by Ian Carnell - 4pm

Monday 25th – Christmas Day all-age worship led by Linda Faber – 10am

Sunday 31st – Sunday Worship led by Linda Faber – 10am

JANUARY 2024 DIARY DATES

Saturday 6th - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 7th – Sunday Worship including Communion led by Ian Carnell – 10am

Monday 8th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 8th – Job Club – 10:30am

Monday 8th – Elders Meeting

Tuesday 9th – Dining Out Lunch – 12:30pm

Wednesday 10th – English Conversation Café - 10am

Thursday 11th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 11th - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Saturday 13th - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 14th – Joint Service with Hong Kong Christian Fellowship – 10am

Monday 15th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 15th – Shout Out for the Girls – 10am

Monday 15th – Job Club – 10:30am

Wednesday 17th – English Conversation Café - 10am

Thursday 18th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 18th - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Thursday 18th – 25th - *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*

Saturday 20th - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 21st – Sunday Worship for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity led by Debbie Collins – 10am

Monday 22nd – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 22nd – Job Club – 10:30am

Wednesday 24th – English Conversation Café - 10am

Thursday 25th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 25th - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Saturday 27th - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 28th – Sunday Worship led by Linda Faber – 10am

Monday 29th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 29th – Job Club – 10:30am

Wednesday 31st – English Conversation Café - 10am

ROTAS

Please sign the rotas at the back of church if you can serve in any of the following roles. Thank you to those who have volunteered:

Sunday Welcome (2 people needed each week)

Serving Coffee (2 people needed each week)

Providing flowers for the Communion Table

Please consider if you can learn how to serve in any of these ways for the first time. If you have no previous experience in serving in any of these ways, we would be more than happy to help you.

SYNOD REP

We still do not have a Synod Representative. The purpose of the role is to keep us in touch with what is happening in the wider church, help us to access resources and personnel that we could make use of, and to attend the Synod meetings only a couple of times a year.

Could you take on this role to keep us in touch with the wider church?
Please speak to Gordon Laurie if you are interested in finding out more.

Linda Faber

UNION THEATRE PRESENTS

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

THE MUSICAL

MUSIC BY
ALAN MENKEN

LYRICS BY
LYNN AHRENS

BOOK BY
MIKE OCKRENT &
LYNN AHRENS

BASED ON THE STORY BY CHARLES DICKENS

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UT UT UT
UT UT UT
UT UT UT

THU 7 - SAT 9 DEC 2023

SOLIHULL URC, 741 WARWICK ROAD, SOLIHULL B91 3DG

UNIONTHEATRESOLIHULL.CO.UK 0121 705 6762

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LEISURELY LUNCH

Come and enjoy a leisurely lunch and a chat in our café style restaurant

on

Tuesday 12th December at 12.30 pm

£6.00

ALL ARE WELCOME

MENU

Fillet of Pork

Roast Potatoes

Seasonal Vegetables

.....

Trifle

.....

Tea and Coffee or Mince Pies



Please book by contacting Elaine 0121 744 6067 or email vej46@yahoo.co.uk

By Thursday 7th December 2023

SCAH REQUESTS

Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (SCAH) are in particular need of towels, blankets, tea towels, and robust china. All goods need to be as new. If folk could pass items on to me, I will put them in the SCAH room which is in the foyer off the John Palmer Hall. Many thanks.

Bridget Goudie

SCAH store their spare stock of items for the home on our premises. They are looking for someone from our church to be an occasional pair of hands to keep an eye on stock in their store cupboard, help keep the store tidy and very occasionally help unload a car of larger donations of items of stock (eg. bedding, crockery, household items). If you can help please speak to me who will put you in touch with their secretary, Louise Cox.

Linda Faber

COME AND JOIN US FOR OUR

CAROLS AND MINCE PIES FOR CHRISTMAS



The Singing For Pleasure Group invite you to celebrate the start of the Christmas season



on SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER at 4pm in the Church Cafe.

There will be a chance to sing carols and hear some seasonal music and readings followed by mince pies/tea and coffee. There will be a retiring collection for a church charity.

Many thanks and best wishes,

Janet Ince

CHRISTMAS WISHES

Sheila Durrant wishes you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

A CHRISTMAS BLESSING

May you be blessed with the Spirit of Christmas, which is Peace
The Gladness of Christmas, which is Hope
And the heart of Christmas, which is Love.

Barrie and Elaine would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Peaceful New Year.

The Mills Family wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

FUNDRAISING APPEAL – THANK YOU

I would like to thank everyone who donated to my fundraising appeal for the NICE 10k run, which took place on Sunday 5th November. I raised £540, with a large amount of this coming from members of the congregation. This is an amazing amount and I'm very appreciative of the generosity of church members.

I completed the run in 50 minutes and 11 seconds, a new course record for me. Thank you again!

Stuart Mills

LEISURELY LUNCH

Come and enjoy a leisurely lunch and a chat in our café style restaurant

on

Tuesday 9th January at 12.30 pm

£4.00

ALL ARE WELCOME

MENU

Cottage Pie

Seasonal Vegetables

.....

Sponge Pudding and Custard

.....

Tea or Coffee



Please book by contacting Elaine 0121 744 6067 or email
vej46@yahoo.co.uk

By Thursday 4th January 2024

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE READING ASSOCIATION

It is now time to order / reorder your Bible Reading material 'Fresh from the Word' for next year from the IBRA which encourages people from around the world to read the Bible daily.

The Prime minister of Samoa writes, "As long as I can recall I bear witness to how much 'Fresh from the Word' has deepened my faith." It is encouraging to know that people throughout our world, at different times are reading and praying the same scriptures as us.

In 2024 we look at the whole story of the Bible, to understand each part. Then we dive into the breadth of Scripture, revealing Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, exploring Calling, Building the Church, seeing the arts in the Bible and so much more.

2024 themes include:

- Hope for the New Year
- The big story: Bible framework
- Reconciliation
- The Gospel according to Mark
- Civil Rights
- Philippians: Joy and unity in Christ
- Creation
- Remembering and Remembrance
- A God of surprises
- Hope at Advent

Please contact me with your order as soon as possible. Thank you.

Irene Bound

SHOE BOXES

Thank you all so much for your splendid effort on the shoe boxes. We managed 20 this year (21 last year) and a most generous £86 in donations (£50 last year).

They were picked up last Friday by a young policeman from Rhyl who was giving up his weeks holiday to travel round the country in a large van. The boxes will all find their way to Worthing before being shipped in much bigger lorries to East Europe including Ukraine. The charity usually shows a video of them being distributed on their website. Google ' Link to Hope' later in the year.

You can be sure all your hard work will bring much pleasure to many children and adults alike.

Anne Cherry

CHRISTMAS REQUESTS

As usual we will have available the large Christmas card for you to write greetings to one another in the church. Please donate the saved expenditure, at not having to write individual cards, to the church charities via the box, by the card, at the back of the church. Don't forget to read the greetings from others. As usual some of the entries will be read out on Christmas morning.

We plan to deliver, to those homes around the church, invitations to our Christmas services. If you are able to help with this please speak to Linda. Packs ready for delivery should be available from next week (3rd December).

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Thank you to all who attended our Remembrance Sunday service and for your kind comments. As we said, the current situation in Israel and Gaza is extremely worrying and we pray for a peaceful settlement. We agreed that the video of the Jakartan children singing “Let there be peace on earth” brought tears to our eyes as they sang with compassion and drive.

One of the poems that I read I copy to you now as it says a great deal for us today:

Grant peace, O Lord, across our strife-torn world,
Where war divides and greed and dogma drive.
Help us to learn the lessons from the past,
That all are human and all pay the price.

All life is dear and should be treated so;
Joined, not divided, is the way to go.
Protect, dear Lord, all who, on our behalf,
Now take the steps that place them in harm's way.

May they find courage for each task they face
By knowing they are in our thoughts always.
Then, duty done and missions at an end,
Return them safe to family and friends.

Grant rest, O Lord, to those no longer with us;
Who died protecting us and this their land.
Bring healing, Lord, to those who, through their service,
Bear conflict's scars on body or in mind.

With those who mourn, support and comfort share.
Give strength to those who for hurt loved-ones care.

And some there be who no memorial have;
Who perished are as though they'd never been.

For our tomorrows their today they gave,
And simply asked that in our hearts they'd live.
We heed their call and pledge ourselves again,
At dusk and dawn - we will remember them!

Every blessing,

Ian Carnell

THE WISE PROFESSOR: ROCKS, GRAVEL, SAND AND COFFEE

Seeing Linda fill a jar with flour the other Sunday reminded me of the story about a professor and the jar of life. It goes like this...

Standing at the front of his classroom he pulls out a large empty Kilner jar and he fills it with a number of big rocks. Holding the jar up, he asks the students if the jar is full. "Yes", they respond.

With a smile, he sets the jar back down and produces a bag of gravel which he dumps into the jar filling the spaces between the big rocks. Holding up the jar once again, he asks the students "Is the jar full now?" Not wanting to be caught out twice they declare that they are not so sure.

With an even bigger smile, the professor sets down the jar and reveals a container of sharp sand which he proceeds to pour into the jar and it fills the spaces between the gravel. Once again he asks if the jar is full and the students now assert that it is.

With a laugh the professor empties his mug of coffee into the jar and only then proclaims it full. The professor goes on to explain his point which is that the jar is meant to represent your life.

The big rocks symbolize what is truly essential in life, that is, the things that matter most to you. The gravel is what's important, but at a secondary level and the sand represents the minutiae of life. And the coffee? Well, there's always room to grab a coffee with a friend.

BIG ROCKS FIRST

Here is the point. All these things only fit in the jar if you put them in in the right order. If you start with the gravel and sand, you wind up trying to cram in the big rocks at the end, but they don't fit. You will never be able to fit it all in. There's an endless supply of gravel, sand and coffee so that is why it is important to start with the big rocks first. When you put the big rocks into your life and faith first you always take care of your biggest priorities. Even if you add nothing else to the jar, you can still call it "Full".

Gordon Laurie



CHRISTIAN AID – CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Thank you to everyone who has supported Christian Aid this year. There have been numerous emergency appeals reflecting the current profound difficulties being experienced across the world through war, famine and the many extreme weather events.

This year's Christmas appeal focuses on the many gifted young women in one of the poorest, most disaster-prone areas of Bangladesh. Poverty continues to push some girls into early marriage and often into very young motherhood. When they are able to get jobs, this can mean unsafe work outside the home.

The good news is that girls and women themselves hold the power to change this. With support they can learn the skills to run a business from home online. This provides safety, independence and the power to transform the future for themselves and also their families and communities. There are many stories of such women available on the website: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk>

We are as a church asked to pray for these remarkable young women and if you would like to donate there are Christian Aid envelopes available at the back of the worship space and once filled these can be put in the offertory basket.

Myles Ensor

Prayers for Ourselves and Our World (Christian Aid)

Let us pray to the Lord.

We say together as we pray:

It is you who lights my lamp;
the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.
We pray for our church community.
May we be ready to answer your call, Lord.
Help us to share the light of your love
And proclaim your message of justice, mercy and peace.

It is you who lights my lamp;
the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.
We pray for those who hold power that they may act with wisdom and
compassion.
We pray for the voices of the marginalised to be heard and acted upon.

Help us to nurture leaders and decision-makers who seek peace and
recognise the dignity of every person.

It is you who lights my lamp;
the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.
We pray for all the people of Bangladesh. We pray for all places where
women and girls face inequality. Inspire us to action that together we
may tear down barriers created by poverty and injustice.

It is you who lights my lamp;
the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.
We pray for our local community, that here too we will find ways to
end poverty.
We pray for all those struggling to see any light during dark and difficult
times.

Help us to welcome and care for all our neighbours in need.

It is you who lights my lamp;
the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.

We pray for those who are grieving, lost, or suffering. We pray for those who can see no way ahead. We ask that you light their path, Lord, and bring them comfort.

It is you who light my lamp;
the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.

Loving God, hear our prayers, through your son, the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, Amen.

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

“God’s angel sets up a circle of protection around us while we pray.” -

Psalm 34 v 7

Quoted from The Messenger

The prayer below is a prayer I use each day in my prayer time.

The Circle or Caim prayers date back to Saint Patrick and his followers when they would pray that God would encircle them with His love, blessings and protection. Sometimes people draw a circle in the air as they speak the prayer. I thought you would find this useful and full filling in your prayer time:

Circle me Lord:

Keep love within and hatred without.

Circle me Lord:

Keep light within and darkness without.

Circle me Lord:

Keep hope within and despair without.

Circle me Lord:

Keep peace within and fear without.

Circle me Lord:

Keep health within and sickness without.

Circle me Lord:

Keep joy within and sadness without.

Circle me, sacred three. Now and forever.

God bless you all and may Christmas bring you and your families rich blessings.

Rosalind Smart

ADVANCED NOTICE

2024 holds the 10th anniversary of Solihull URC forming from the three churches at Hobs Moat, Olton and Central Solihull. We are going to hold a special service on Sunday 17th March 2024. Please write the date in your diaries and come and celebrate the occasion with us if you can.

Looking further ahead, 2025 is the 200th anniversary of the formation of the nonconformist church of which we are the present-day congregation. Many changes, and ups & downs, have happened over those two centuries but we are still here! I want to make a whole year of celebrations but we will be holding a full weekend of activities on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd November 2025. Please avoid booking your holidays that weekend if you can, as we would like to have as many join in as possible.

If you would like to join a group thinking up ideas, and organising activities, for those bicentenary celebrations please speak to me. I am already putting into place some plans.

Linda Faber

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister

VACANT

Church Secretary

Mr. Gordon Laurie – 07500 902593 – gordonjlaurie@gmail.com

Church Phone Number

0121 709 5505

Website

www.solihullurc.org.uk

Hall Lettings: 0121 709 5505

Safeguarding: Melanie Tillman - 07511 084840

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

www.generationssolihull.org.uk generationssolihull@icloud.com

Zoom Details

Meeting ID: 865 7763 7936

Passcode: 986653

FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Material for the February 2024 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 21st January please.