

SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat – Olton

February 2019 Newsletter

*Christ has no body but yours, No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks Compassion on this world,*

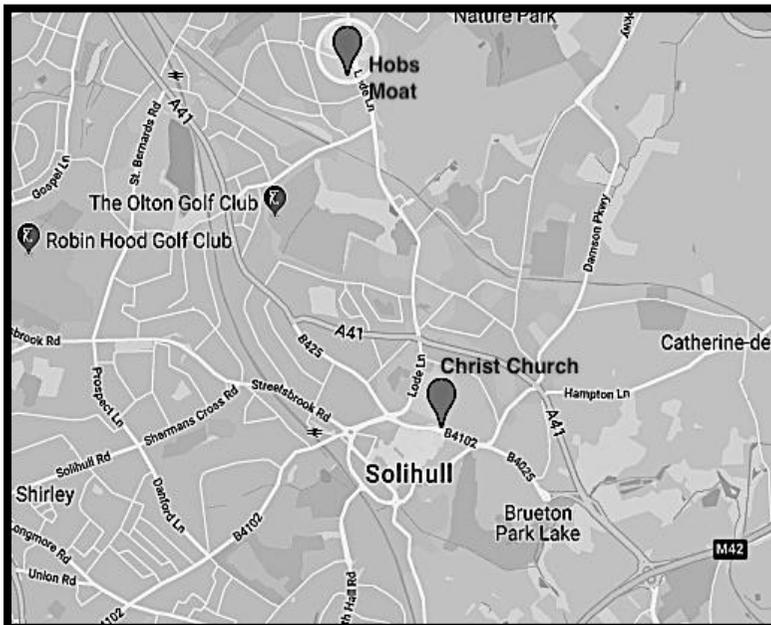
*Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good, Yours are the
hands, with which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours
are the feet, Yours are the eyes, you are his body.*

*Christ has no body now but yours, No hands, no feet on earth but
yours, Yours are the eyes with which he looks, compassion on this
world.*

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)





SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Solihull URC has united three congregations from Olton, Hobs Moat and Christ Church (town centre). We retain premises in Hobs Moat and at Christ Church. Sunday worship is focussed in the town centre, but we seek to witness in all three communities

We share our mission with other Churches and 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**

Chris Harman - **Treasurer & 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**

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

All Elders have responsibility for pastoral care.

IN THE HAND OF GOD....we are!

This sculpture by Swedish artist Carl Milles, which I have used before, offers a representation of humanity in the hand of God and presents the truth for each and all of us, whose life is a gift of his Holy Spirit. The thing that strikes me most significantly about this work is that the hand of God is represented as a human hand. Here lies another truth - that the creativity, forgiveness, love, life and grace of God are to be found within the richness of human experience.



As with the words that Theresa of Avila 'Christ has no hands one earth but yours'.

As I look back over my ministry, in local churches, for Birmingham Churches Together and the Free Churches Group nationally, I am very aware of the fact that God has his hand in it, including the sharpest challenges and through my failings. It is the human hand of God that I have experienced through the relationships I have enjoyed with the widest spectrum of Christian experience and practice, through the calling of the Church to a variety of ministries, but also through the challenges presented by witnessing to the Christian way in multi-faith and secular settings. It is within all these that the Almighty who is incarnate in Jesus, has guided, supported and strengthened. As the song affirms, 'He's got the whole world in his hands'.

In the early weeks of this year I have been sharing some key themes that have shaped my ministry and which I believe are important for any who seek God's presence and way in their lives:-

Change, new beginnings and fresh opportunities, are perennial themes at the turn of a year, but, of course, they come our way every day and we could grasp a fresh start with Jesus at any moment, trusting that beyond death is resurrection. My retirement brings big changes for

Judy and myself. A period of vacancy for the church affords opportunity for taking stock and re-aligning in the way Christ is leading.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity gave time to reflect on the ways in which we discover more of God and deepen our faith in Christ through what we gain from others within the whole breadth of Christian faith and expression. It comes, however, only through giving time for reflection and prayer, actively attentive to what God is saying through other people and being open to receive even when it seems way outside our own experience.

Our appreciation of 'home' comes from our human experience - provision for daily needs, familiarity, acceptance, support, forgiveness, unconditional love. It is these things that are also realities for our home in heaven, the life we look to beyond this, with God. They are our motivation to care for those who do not enjoy these things. Through the work of SCAH (Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness) it is a privilege to enable people to experience, in this world, something of what God promises for the next.

The work of RESTORE with asylum seekers across Birmingham and Solihull, the L'Arche Community creating family for those with learning disabilities, the need to communicate with those who are profoundly deaf and facing the challenges of frailty in age and dementia, are just some of the aspects of my ministry that have taken me to the edge of where the church usually is. There are equally many who are on the edge of relationship with Jesus Christ or commitment. All these are where we may find the focus of God's attention and where ours should be too. It is here that we will find some unexpected gifts for our own Christian journey.

In all these situations there has been a very real sense of being 'in the hand of God' who has made himself present through so many people and rich relationships. As we move on to whatever challenges lie ahead in our lives and faith may we all know the security and strength and adventure of being in God's hand. **Mark**

DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday 3rd, 10am: Holy Communion - Mark Fisher - 'On the edge'

Monday 4th, 10am: Moments Café

12:30pm: Elders Meeting

Wednesday 6th, 2pm: Hobs Moat Wednesday Club

Thursday 7th, 10am: Tots & Tales

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Saturday 9th, 7pm: This Way Up Quiz Night

Sunday 10th, 10am: Worship – Linda Faber

11am: Church Meeting

Monday 11th, 10am: Moments Café

Tuesday 12th, 10:30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

Wednesday 13th, 6:45pm: Churches Together in Central Solihull - Meeting Place

Thursday 14th, 10am – 12:30pm: Shout Out for Girls Workshop – Meeting Place

10am: Tots & Tales

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 17th, 10am: Worship - Mark Fisher - Thanksgiving for Ministry

12pm: Celebration Lunch

Tuesday 19th, 10:30am: Messy Church

Thursday 21st, 2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 24th, 10am: Worship – Gordon Justham

Monday 25th, 10am: Moments Cafe

Tuesday 26th, 10:30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

Thursday 28th, 10am: Tots & Tales

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Sunday 17th February will be Mark's final Sunday. Worship will be followed by a lunch, to which others connected with Mark's varied ministry are invited. All welcome. **Linda**

SUNDAY WORSHIP & THEMES

Leading up to my final service in February, I am planning to focus on some of the key Gospel themes that have helped to shape my ministry over the years. Below are some headings for Christmas and January and I look forward to sharing what are 'essential elements' for each of us. **Mark.**

3rd February

'On the edge' - A church on the margins

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.

SUNDAY DUTIES

The response to the recent plea for more volunteers to come forward to carry out some of the Sunday duties was a very pleasant success. Several members put their names down for the first time and there was little difficulty in covering the following months. Now I think there are some folk who are happy to do some of the duties but do not manage to get their name down in good time. I would ask these folk to try to get into the habit of looking at the table at the back of the Church every week. In addition to the rotas, there is usually plenty of other interesting material - it is worth a look. **Alan**

LEPROSY MISSION

On Sunday March 17th Heather Alford will be talking about the work of the Leprosy Mission in our morning worship. Please come and hear about this important work.

Janet

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The idea of having a world day of prayer came from Canada and the USA in the 19th century. In 1887 women from different denominations were joining together to organise days of prayer for missionary work at home and overseas. In 1910 they celebrated 50 years of women's missionary activity by organising a series of events across the USA, providing a powerful experience of ecumenical co-operation. The World Day of Prayer came into being in 1926 after copies of the worship service has been sent to many countries worldwide and been received with great enthusiasm.

By 1968 127 countries were participating. Scotland held its first service in 1930, followed 2 years later by England. Wales followed in 1933 and the Republic of Ireland in 1935. All participating countries have a national committee, with local committees in most of the large towns and cities. Each year one country is asked to provide a service which can be used by all the member countries on the chosen date. This is provided by the women of that country.

Today 170 countries participate and all hold their service on the first Friday in March. The first service is held in Samoa and great waves of prayer sweep through the world on the same day until the sun sets over American Samoa.

For many years the organisation was called "The Womens Day of Prayer". In 2018 each committee was invited to discuss whether or not they wished to revert to the name last used in 1935 - "The World Day of Prayer". In Solihull we decided it was time to drop 'Womens' from the title. An overwhelming majority of the committees came to the same decision. However the service will continue to be provided by the women of the country being celebrated.

This year we are celebrating Slovenia on 1st March in St Augustines Church at 10.30. All the churches in central Solihull will be participating. Refreshments provided by St Augustines will follow the service. Everyone is invited and it would be good if we could have a sizeable number from SURC - hope to see you there, both men and women. **Judith Kembery**

FRESH FROM THE WORD: THE BIBLE FOR A CHANGE

It is time to order the 2019 edition of this helpful IBRA book which will inspire your reading of the Bible in a changing world. It is led by theologians, scholars, creative writers, church leaders and activists from around the world, and offers notes, prayers and suggestions for further thought for every day of the year. It will be approx. £10. If you would like a copy, please contact Marian Batten (07855 516687) or Irene Bound (0121 449 6367).

HOBBS MOAT COFFEE MORNINGS

Dates for Tuesday Coffee Mornings at Hobs Moat from 10.30am until 12 noon.

- 12 February
- 26 February
- 12 March
- 26 March
- 9 April
- 23 April
- 7 May
- 21 May
- 4 June
- 18 June

All are welcome for a cuppa and chat.

Anne and Annette

MORE ABOUT LETTING OUR ROOMS OUT

Thank you to those who took the time to speak to me or write up your ideas following the question I put in the newsletter last month which we also spoke about at church meeting. I asked about our letting out of our rooms and if, or how, a church might undertake this activity differently to a community suite of rooms.

Some responded that they hoped there were some activities which would not be accommodated as they are not compatible with our faith and belief (such as extremist groups, combative groups).

We currently don't have a policy about this and we do currently have bookings for groups which we would not automatically accept if some such policy were in place (we don't have any extremist groups using the building – just to reassure you – but we do have a combative group and several groups whose activities come out of a philosophy contrary to Christian belief). Do you think it would be appropriate to put some such policy in place and what should we do about the existing users?

Some responded to the initial question by talking about hospitality and welcome. Is issuing keys and telling people to let themselves in, and turn their own heating on, the best that can be done? (Does the insurance company know we give out keys to 'anyone' and would they insure us if they did know?) We have uncovered in recent conversations that there are several people (from both buildings) who have been using the rooms for multiple decades who didn't know the buildings were churches. What does this say to us?

There is a lot that can be done differently. There are many other churches whose example we could learn from and possibilities that would be within our capabilities. You may have seen, or know, some yourself. I certainly have experience in this area which I think would be useful in this. Do we have the will to make the necessary changes though?

I would love to hear any more thoughts you have on this, or any other church related, issue.

Linda

COACH TRIPPERS UNITED

I pleased to tell you that the trips you have chosen for 2019 are all booked and are as follows:

- APRIL 18TH - ABBEY- CWM- HIR
- MAY 16TH - WATERPERRY GARDENS
- JUNE 20TH - DRAGONFLY CRUISE in BRECON
- JULY 18TH - POWIS CASTLE (NATIONAL TRUST)
- AUGUST 15TH - BELVOIR CASTLE
- SEPTEMBER 19TH - TINTERN ABBEY and CHEPSTOW
- OCTOBER 17TH - WINDSOR CASTLE
- NOVEMBER 21ST – AGM

All trips will start at 8.30 prompt from West Warwick Sports and Social Club and should be booked by ringing Val on 0121 706 9687 at least one week before the trip.

Cancellation charges will apply and the cost per trip will be £20 plus entry fees unless otherwise agreed.

This year's trips look a great choice and we will certainly know South Wales very well by the end of the year.

I look forward to a happy year with you all.

David Argall

A PRAYER

We thank you Jesus
Our saviour and friend
For suffering your
passion
To the bitter end

For the scourging
With whips
And the blood that
You shed
For the crowning
With thorns
On your innocent head

For the nails that
Were driven
In your hands and
Your feet
For suffering in agony
Our sins to defeat

For dying for all
Upon the cross
And for rising again
To make up our loss
Thank you Lord
Amen

The Prayer Trust

Solihull URC *All Welcome including:* Pancake Party

Tuesday
5th March
5.45-7.15pm

Job Club
Lunch Club
Messy Church
Moments Dementia Cafe
Neighbourhood Coffee Morning
Saturday Café
Shout Out for The Girls
Singing for Pleasure
Sunday Worshippers
Tots & Tales



Please
collect your
TICKETS from
Linda Faber
or the office
or a group leader.

Please feel free to invite family,
neighbours and friends. Children must be
accompanied by an adult

Adults £1, Children Free

GIFT AID

One source of income we have not pursued since the joining together of the three churches, is the tax refund from gift aid contributions. Since we are a 'new charity' we need to action this. It is not a straight forward process, hence the reason for the delay. Our weak financial performance has spurred us onto rectifying this shortcoming.

There are some Gift Aid forms on the table at the back of the church.

These are for taxpayers, and just require names, addresses, a signature and a date.

A few points...

- Gift aid can be claimed going back up to 4 years. I have the records going back to the joining of the three churches.
- If a husband and wife both have Freewill envelopes, and only one of you pay tax, then the tax payer can include the non-taxpayer's contribution in their return.

If you are unclear about anything please come and see me.

Chris Harman

WORSHIP GROUP

Many thanks to those who have volunteered to be part of a Worship Group which will organise at least one service in 2019. A meeting will be arranged in the New Year. It is not too late if anyone else would like to join this small group, just let me know.

In addition, anyone who is willing to prepare and read the Intercessionary Prayers occasionally, please tell me. **Maureen Butler**

FAMILY QUIZ - 3rd March

There will be a family quiz on Sunday 3 March starting promptly at 2:30 pm in the John Palmer Hall. It will finish around 5:00pm. Tickets priced £2.50 per person are available from Gordon and Jackie Justham who are your hosts and quizmasters for this event. It is designed for teams of up to six players but don't worry if you cannot get a team together as we will put folk together to create teams if necessary. There will be a wide range of questions and therefore a good mix of ages in your team may be appropriate! Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be served in the interval. Proceeds will go to the nominated Church Charities.

MARIAMA – SPONSORED CHILD

This is the latest message from Mariama's Field worker. You will find the original, together with her drawing, on the notice board:

Dear Sponsor,

Mariama is sending her best of regards to you and your family. She is a healthy girl and she goes to school every day from her home which is 2 kms away.

*The weather is sunny, warm and windy in the day and dark at night with lots of stars *** shining all over the sky.*

Her family are busy on the farm harvesting their crops for the feeding of the family. She has received the postcard that you sent for her and she likes the picture on it.

Also on the notice board there is further information about how local families are being helped.

I would be grateful to receive your annual donation of £12 in January. Thank you all for your support. **Anne Cherry**

JACK'S REPORT IS IN

Can I just check that everyone has taken the opportunity to look at the display about building issues at the back of the church. If you haven't please make yourself aware.

Over the last few newsletters I have been asking you to formulate your views about our buildings and how we use them and how we might want to use them in the future. Only a few people have taken the opportunity to tell me their thoughts. I would like the rest of you to engage in the conversation as it will have a long implications for our church. I am going to both of our Fellowship Groups to listen, but if you don't belong to one of those, either come along specially, or catch me for a conversation at another time.

We have begun consulting outside our congregation, as I told you in the last newsletter, inviting Jack Marris, a Christian building consulting friend of mine to come and look around. I received his report, about the Sanctuary area only, before Christmas and the Elders and I will be looking at it together at the next Elders meeting. It is not a plan that we will implement but a document to allow us to say 'yes, we like that idea.' Or 'no, that wouldn't work for us.' We will begin to make more widely known the bits that we might like to explore further, in due course. If you would like to read the whole report I can email it to you, just ask.

Keep thinking, keep praying, keep talking.

Linda Faber

HOBBS MOAT SINGING FOR PLEASURE

We were very pleased to donate £353 to our church charity Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness [SCAH]. This money had been collected after our Christmas Service at Deerhurst Court, our Carols and Mince Pies Evening and also from the Hobs Moat Tuesday Coffee Morning. **Janet and the singers.**

POSTAGE STAMPS

Many of you used to bring your old postage stamps to Church for Sheila Durant to send to a Leprosy Mission.

I believe that so far no one has picked up the baton since Sheila has been unable to attend our services, so I am suggesting we should start collecting again and send them to the RNIB - the Royal National Institute for the Blind. They will provide all that we need for the collection and the despatch to their Head Office in post-free envelopes. There are three rules they would like us to follow: -

- To trim the stamps with approximately 1 cm of the envelope left around the stamp.
- Not to collect the large PO printed labels, nor any pre-printed stamps.
- To separate British and Foreign stamps.

We can all start with the Christmas card envelopes! **Judith Kembery**

REQUEST

This request has come from the Solihull URC website.

In 1966 I visited Solihull with a group from the United Church of Christ, Geneva, Ohio. I am searching for the family I stayed with and unfortunately do not know the name. I am hoping someone in your congregation might remember the group & can help me locate them for a long overdue apology.

Thank you

Leslie Thackwell

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.

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.

FLOWERS

Do you enjoy the flowers each Sunday? Is it good that we can send them to someone who is unable to come to church? If you answer yes to both of these questions perhaps you could offer to bring in a bunch to stand on the Communion table for our worship and then to be taken out to a friend who needs cheering up!

We really need your help and you do not need to be a good flower arranger, just a willing shopper, who can put a bunch of flowers in a vase. This request is for men as well as ladies!! There may even be help available. Please let me know if you can help with this worthwhile task. Thank you. **Trixie.**



KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister

VACANT

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 – 07925 573259

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

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

Moments - a dementia cafe

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Christ Church

MARCH NEWSLETTER

Material for the March edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 17th February please.