



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

June 2023 Newsletter

"Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,"

1 Peter 1:8



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

Barrie Jones - Elder (Property, Health & Safety)

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

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

JUNE 2023 DIARY DATES

Thursday 1st – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 1st - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Saturday 3rd - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 4th – Sunday Worship and Communion led by Ian Carnell – 10am

Monday 5th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 5th – Job Club – 10:30am

Monday 5th – Elders Meeting – 12:15pm

Thursday 8th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 8th - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Saturday 10th - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 11th – Sunday Worship led by Linda Faber followed by ‘Away Day at Home’ including Bring & Share lunch – 10am to 3:30pm

Monday 12th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 12th – Shout Out for the Girls – 10am

Monday 12th – Job Club – 10:30am

Tuesday 13th – Leisurely Lunch – 12:30pm

Tuesday 13th – Linda Faber leading a lesson at Yew Tree Primary School – 1:30pm

Wednesday 14th – Churches Together planning meeting at St Helens

Thursday 15th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 15th - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Saturday 17th - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 18th – Sunday Worship (Father’s Day service) led by Rev Nick Stanyon - 10am

Monday 19th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 19th – Job Club – 10:30am

Wednesday 21st – SCAH Executive Meeting

Thursday 22nd – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 22nd – Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Saturday 24th - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 25th – Sunday Worship led by Linda Faber – 10am

Monday 26th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 26th – Job Club – 10:30am

Wednesday 28th - Linda Faber leading a lesson at Yew Tree Primary School – 1:30pm

Thursday 29th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 29th - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

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

It is more than a year since our last synod representative stepped down from her role and we would like a new volunteer. 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 we could make use of and to attend the Synod meetings only a couple of times a year.

Linda Faber

AWAY DAY AT HOME

We are going to hold an 'away day at home' on Sunday June 11th. The content of the day will be Sunday worship followed by discussion and fellowship over an extended time together. We will begin the day with our normal Sunday worship service followed by refreshments as usual. If you are then interested in staying we will have a discussion followed by a bring and share lunch. Following that time together we will again have some teaching and discussion time and aim to finish at about 3.30pm. The Elders have chosen the topic for the day.

Linda Faber

A PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON SUNDAY 16TH JULY AT 2.30PM

This will a light-hearted event presented by the Singing For Pleasure Group in the Church Cafe. There will be a chance for anyone in the audience to tell a funny story, read a poem, sing a song or play an instrument. Also join in with some singing. The afternoon will be followed by tea/coffee and cake. There will be a retiring collection for a charity. More details to come. Many thanks.



Janet Ince

CHRISTIAN AID COFFEE MORNING

Thank you to those who made donations of books and to everyone who helped on the day. I am pleased to report that the book stall raised £122 and the Coffee Morning raised a total of £2630.



Myles Ensor

DINING OUT LUNCH

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

on

13th JUNE at 12.30 pm

£4.00

ALL ARE WELCOME

MENU

Cottage Pie

Carrots & Cauliflower

.....

Gooseberry Crumble & Custard

.....

Tea or Coffee



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

By Thursday 8th JUNE 2023

SCHOOLS WORK

I have had the opportunity to go in Yew Tree school to lead two lessons now. I went on my own as no one has indicated an interest in coming with me as yet. If you would like to join me for future lessons please speak to me. The next two are Tuesday 13th June with Year 2 who will be exploring the Parable of the lost sheep and Wednesday 28th June with Year 4 who will be exploring the life of Moses.



You need to get a DBS check from the school, and two character references, before you can come along. I would love to take some people with me as we did before! All the lessons are 1.30-2.30pm

INSURANCE CLAIMS

Our insurance claim for loss of income during the Pandemic has finally been settled. We were awarded £17,080.03. We have also claimed for a replacement carpet for the office/vestry following our flood and we have received £1,323. The office will have to be emptied ready for the new carpet. If you (or a family member) are able to offer any assistance in this large task please speak to Barrie or Linda as it is not an easy room to clear because of the very awkward architecture.

Linda Faber

UNION THEATRE PRESENTS

A CHORUS DISAPPROVAL *of*

By Alan Ayckbourn



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THU 15 - SAT 17 JUN 2023

SOLIHULL URC, 741 WARWICK ROAD, SOLIHULL B91 3DG

UNIONTHEATRESOLIHULL.CO.UK 0121 705 6762

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ENGLISH CLASSES

We are pressing ahead with our proposed English conversation classes for people who want to develop English as a second language. The sessions will be led By Tim Freeman (from the Job Club) and myself and we are looking for people who will join a rota to chat to those who come along on a given topic of the day. If you could come to chat with, or maybe even befriend, some of these overseas residents on a monthly, or more frequent basis, I would be glad to hear from you. We will also have some input from Elisa who has some experience of learning, and teaching, English as a foreign language. The classes will only meet during the school term time and will begin in September.

Linda Faber

FAMILY NEWS

Steve and Linda Faber are delighted with the safe arrival of their third grandchild on Wednesday 17th May.



THANK YOU

Elaine Jones would like to thank everyone for their good wishes, messages and cards for the recovery of her recent operation.

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF CHURCH GROWTH

Continuing through the book 'Towards a theology of Church growth' this month we look at the conclusion of the chapter titled 'The Kingdom of God and Church Growth in the New Testament' by Mark Bonnington.

“Two thousand years of Christian history and a presumed familiarity with the Christian church, its faith and the gospel that drives them are brute facts of our religious (or irreligious) landscape.

Nonetheless we are left wondering whether some key contributions to church growth in earliest Christianity are not basically the same now as then: a gospel and movement rooted in the ministry and message of Jesus; a combination of fixity and itinerancy in ministry; sacrificial missional leadership; a combination of deliberate and incidental evangelism; convincing living to back the claim of a life-changing message; human-sized communities where relationships are real and discipleship serious; sacrificial life-styles that reflect the seriousness with which the message is taken; a focus on the communal context of discipleship as communities of resistance in a dominant culture; a degree of daily social openness and vulnerability that offers bridges for the good news; evidence of changed lives as a spur to sustained discipleship and further mission; a serious balance between inclusion and transformation where everyone experiences the cost of change; diversity in the local church which highlights common life in Christ. And a sense of momentum—that by the wind of the Spirit, ultimately, they are running with the tide of history. Which we are.”

QUESTION FOR SOLIHULL URC: There are 13 points in the above paragraphs which characterise the early church and are parallel to the call for the church today. About each one ask yourself:

- 1. “Are we a...”Where are we in relation to this point and where do we want to be?***

2. *What action do we need to take to move forward (see growth) in this area? Be specific.*
3. *If I am not prepared to think about this, who will?*

Please take the time to share your thoughts about these questions with the Elders.

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT WE MIGHT MAKE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THIS SERIES OF ARTICLES. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN A GROUP TO TALK THROUGH SOME OF THESE QUESTIONS, PLEASE LET ME KNOW AND WE WILL SEE IF THERE IS A VIABLE OPPORTUNITY.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCES EXHIBITION

The Christian Resources Exhibition is a 'trade' show where people with anything and everything to do with church and mission exhibit their wares, to sell stuff or just inform the wider church about what they do. There will be everything from banners to Bibles, heating to seating, puppets to pulpits all with stands. There is a full list of exhibitors of the CRE website. There are going to be about 150 stands included.

This year they are coming to our doorstep, for the first time, to Cranmore Park in Shirley on 8th and 9th of November 2023. The Elders are going on the 8th so if anyone else wants to go, let me know asap and I can include you in the group ticket. Group ticket prices are £3 per person, or if you are buying individually £4 in advance, or tickets are £8 on the door.

Linda Faber

COACH TRIPPERS UNITED 2023 ITINERARY

JUNE 15TH Weston-Super-Mare
JULY 20TH Llangollan Viaduct boat trip
AUGUST 17TH Crich Tram Museum/Matlock Bath



SEPTEMBER 21ST Salford Quays

OCTOBER 19TH Oxford

Pick up point West Warwick Sport & Social Club, Grange Road, Solihull at 8:30am.

The cost will be £25 including car parking and driver tip plus entrance fees where appropriate in cash.

To book contact David Argall on davidargall185@btinternet.com or 0121 704 4006.

Anne Cherry

BIRD BOX

You might like to know that we have a coaltit nesting in the bird box that we put up at church. The picture is a bit blurry but you get the idea – the bird is flying away from delivering food to those inside! He/she is busy going in and out every few minutes.



CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES

You might remember that last year we put in the newsletter each month a suggested item to buy for the Christmas shoebox appeal. This was so people didn't have to buy many things all at once in the autumn. Similarly, I have put the list, with a collection box, in the Central Foyer (Nattery) so that people can make contributions all through the year if they want to. Please consider putting together a whole box of your own (leaflets are usually available in September) or contribute through this community box if you want to spread your giving.

Linda Faber

SHOE BOXES

I have put out this year's leaflets in case people want to start collecting things when they see them. This spreads the expense and avoids a last-minute rush. The charity is hoping to make a special effort this year because of the hardship Ukraine and other countries are experiencing.

If you haven't done a shoebox before, the leaflet explains clearly how to do it. If you want to know more, please see me. Thank you in anticipation.

Anne Cherry

ON SEEDING STORIES AND PARABLES

Oral storytelling was the original form of literature in all parts of the world. In this way, the Hebrews told the Pentateuch to one another long before Moses wrote the five books. It was also the way European fairy tales were passed from generation to generation for many centuries. Even in the "New World," in my native Brazil, this was how Brazilian Indians told their children about the Curupira, a kind of tropical gnome, protector of the forests (they, too, had their ecological concerns!). And so on, in every continent, storytelling was at the birth of civilizations, written accounts having followed much later.

This brings me to the narratives I heard from my mother when I was a girl, growing up in Rio. She had a natural talent for putting emotion into her stories which made them unforgettable. Back in the early 40's, often at night, she would take us up to the roof-terrace from where we could see the Statue of Christ the Redeemer. There, she would tell us tales from the Bible and sing "Brilha, brilha, estrelinha" (Twinkle, twinkle, Little Star) with us. In 1947, we moved to Ipanema, one of the world's most beautiful beaches. There, very appropriately, she would

tell us stories about Jesus and the fishermen in the Sea of Galilee, Jesus' parables, and other Christian stories.

Sometimes she would simply read to us, but even this was very special. I vividly remember a detailed account taken from the Brazilian "Readers' Digest" of a climbing expedition by two alpinists, where during a blizzard one of them had a fall resulting in spinal injury. Hearing my mother, I could easily visualize the Alps covered in white and the two friends on the top of the peak, agonizing over the decision of their lifetime: Should the healthy one go down for help, or should they both try to make their way back, the injured one supported by his friend? After discussing this, the one not willing to abandon the other, they started the descent. I could imagine them in the blizzard, the wind howling, a small figure dressed in a snowman's suit, painfully carrying the other one on his back in the middle of a sea of white.

The storm worsened, and my mother's voice stressed the young man's effort and his courage: "It was freezing. He was tired, very tired, but he couldn't possibly leave his friend who was, by now, unconscious. He tripped and nearly fell into the abyss."

"We are going to die, both of us," he thought. "But still, I could never abandon him here." The words seemed terrible to me. My sisters and I were in suspense.

Finally, the hero and the injured man arrived in the little town at the foot of the mountain from where their journey had begun. They were met by a small group and taken to the local hospital. Once there, the doctor simply declared, "He's been dead for a couple of hours now," and added, "but apparently it was his body-heat, added to the effort you made to get here, that saved your life. We were expecting five other people back from the mountain today, and up to now, none of them has shown up."

My mother ended this story with her own quotation: "For he who is willing to give his life will save it, while he who wants to save his life will lose it."

During the 70's, I was a divorced mother with two young children in a country where single mothers had no help from the Government, so things were extremely difficult. Society was going through major changes, women were stepping out into the world, going into business, starting to travel on their own, and were sometimes too busy to sit with their children and talk to them.

So it happened to me. And it was still my mother who would sit with my kids at bedtime and tell them Christian stories and those of Jesus by the sea or on the mountain, just as she had done to her children years before.

My son grew up to be, among other things, a musician. Just imagine my surprise when, here in England, and out of the blue, I received a tape containing a series of four short fugues of a rather liturgical melody and harmony. There was no doubt about the source of his inspiration, especially because the title was written on the tape cover – "THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER". He said he had recently re-read the parable his granny had told him when he was a boy. Apparently, it had been lying dormant in his memory, waiting to surface in the form of his music. Music inspired by words...

Like seeds, words can also come to life and perhaps take over our lives. Our faith comes from a great story. The SOWER needed by it is often simply a storyteller!

Elisa Gusmao



As one of our church charities, I want to keep you informed of the good that we can do as a church to support these children's education. We have 2 or 3 pupils who have been paid for by our charity's fund but have no sponsor to which to write. If you would like to keep in contact with a pupil with no cost involved, please let Ian know.

It's been quite busy this year when 3 of our trustees visited Kenya and met our sponsored pupils and students at their schools or at a meeting on the Saturday. As usual our trustees went at their own expense. I have been able to send details and pictures of individual pupils/students to their sponsor.

In addition, I enjoyed visiting the annual Mini Marathon at Streetsbrook Infant and Nursery School where they raise money for EducAid Africa by sponsorship to the marathon. As usual they were wonderful and showed great energy, enthusiasm and superb behaviour. I also led an assembly at Greswold School where I was Head nearly 17 years ago! They too are going to raise funds via a mini marathon.

We take education for granted but, as you know, Secondary Education comes at a cost which so many can't afford and they are denied being able to attend despite their obvious ability and, as you will read, they are so grateful to their sponsors for changing their lives and expectations through generous giving by people such as yourselves. Just read these extracts which illustrate their grateful thanks:

I thank God for sending you into my life. You have been a blessing and I am very glad for your help. May God bless you all.

Praise the living God, I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to my sponsor through the EducAid Africa programme. I feel much honoured to be given this golden chance of joining this school through the sponsorship of my full year school fees.

I should like to express my uttermost gratitude for the gifts I have received. I am thankful to have people like you who care and love me. You, paying for my school fees was already a very big gift and no thank you can ever be enough!



I am thankful to God for how far He has brought me despite the challenges, the ups and the downs, I am working hard and I won't give up until I get where I want to be. I also hope to see you all one day and personally get the chance to thank you for the great support that you have given me. May God bless you all.

I return thanks for the presents that I received from you, indeed you are more than awesome. I used the money to buy a summary of a set book notes, a watch and a school jacket due to the cold seasons that are experienced.

Thank you so much for your support – not only in payment of my school fees but also taking responsibilities in other levies that support my stay in school. May the Lord shower you with countless blessings and keep you safe together with your family members.

I am very grateful for the support that you are offering me so that my academic journey can keep continuing. I have been receiving your letters and I am very grateful as I take it as a way of motivation. It is very great to see that there is someone concerned about my education and really caring so that I can meet my ambitions.

I would like to say thank you for the letter that I got from you and your visit to our new school. I highly appreciate you for the hand of mercy you showed me to enter the school. The first term has been good for me. I spend most of my evening preps in the library reading novels and other revision books. I have also joined some clubs such as the Christian Union and the football team.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the presents that I received from you. They really helped me and I am happy to inform you that I enjoyed them. I must confess that I was mesmerised by the gifts I received.

It is my prayer that the glory of the Lord will be with you in all your plans and may God fulfil your pockets and your desires because you deserve it. May he also strengthen your life and be happy and healthy.

I want to send wave upon wave of uncharted love to you my sponsors for the infinite support and kindness you freely gave to me, sacrificing your comfort for my upkeep at school which can never go unappreciated for sure. I don't know where I would be if it were not for you. I have no better words to say to you as a reciprocal for your compassion. All I can say is thank you and God bless you abundantly.

When our three Trustees visited, as you have read, they brought with them gifts – including monetary gifts from their sponsors and EducAid Africa and these were well received by our pupils. Some of the money was spent on educational visits which were certainly well received. During the visit our trustees visited the kitchen which had been paid for by the family of one of our supporters (also a governor at my school) who had sadly passed away. It has a plaque in memory of him.



It was so good to meet with members from England of your organisation, I really enjoyed their visit to our school. They are so friendly and we shared a lot with them. I also say thank you for the gifts they brought for us. I do appreciate the love and care they show us. It's my prayer that you all never lack in any good thing in your life. I really thank you for supporting me to get the chance to go for the trip to Naivasha. It was so enjoyable to interact with students from Alliance Girls' High School. We were taken to a geothermal power station where we were taught how electric power is generated. We were also taken to a park where we saw different types of wild animals. Later we went to Kenyatta University which was amazing and I saw it as a privilege to visit such an institution. It really motivated me and I wished to join it for further studies. The science department organised an educational trip to Gongoni at Malindi Salt Works where we studied the process of salt formation. We really enjoyed this trip.

Several of the pupils had recently joined the school and this was their first letter to their sponsors. Again, being able to participate in Educational Visits was a highlight of their school life.

Since I joined this school, I have encountered many things, I have met with teachers who are very helpful and co-operative to each one of us. The first day I was enrolled in this school I am studying 11 subjects being, mathematics, English, Kiswahili, chemistry, physics, biology, agriculture, history, geography, religious education and computer studies. Our programme of learning starts at 5am until 9pm.

When I joined High School I had a hard time on health reasons because the pace was so cold. Now I have adapted to the climate and I am OK. In the next term I will work hard on my studies to make sure I get a higher grade.

As a member of the St John's Ambulance Club, we participated in an environmentally friendly activity where we joined hands in cleaning Jomo Kenyatta beach as part of the termly activities.

The school where I am is really competitive and I will work with all my zeal to succeed in all my exams. Through its competitive nature it also gave me a lot of strength and desire to work hard.

This term we had an historical trip to Fort Jesus in Mombasa and Jumba la Mtwana in Mtwapa. I used some of the money you gave me to pay for the trip. Fort Jesus building was designed just as how Jesus was crucified at the cross with a thorn crown on his head. I also saw some tunnels which the Portuguese used to attack their enemies' ship before they could reach them, the tools they used for defence, clothes and the food they used to eat. At Mtwapa I saw a lot of old buildings, wells and mosques. The walls were very strong to hold the heavy roofing and also to prevent the slaves from escaping. The trip was so educative and enjoyable.

The weather is now rainy and we experienced the cold season which enables us to wake up early and study. I am still working harder and I promise to give you the best at the end of the four years. I will give you nothing but the best because hard work pays.

The school is of high discipline quality since the school rules and regulations are strictly followed and observed as it has teachers who do not entertain nonsense though they look humble and friendly.



Life is good here. We have got a new principal and she is very loving. Some teachers have transferred and other new teachers have been admitted. Teachers are still good and very hardworking and they put all their efforts to help us.

I am really working hard as we are approaching the final examination which will determine my way forward. I am also making good use of the revision materials that you have provided so that I can get the best from them.

I do hope that these extracts have helped you to get a clearer picture of what great good you are giving to these very deserving pupils/students. It is certainly making a great difference to their lives both currently and in the future. This last picture is of one of our sponsored pupils who has gone through secondary school and university and has now graduated – all from humble beginnings! An example of your concern and support changing a life so much. With grateful thanks for all your kind and generous support.

Ian Carnell, Chairman of the Trustees of EducAid Africa on behalf of all the Trustees.

LOOKING FORWARD

The next two years hold a couple of special anniversaries for us as a church. 2024 is the 10th anniversary of Solihull URC being formed when Olton URC, Hobs Moat URC and Christ Church, Solihull came together. Whilst this was, rightly, a slightly fluid affair of feeling the route to coming together, we would like to pick a weekend in the early spring when we will celebrate that new chapter in the church's history. Discussing what we might do is something that will be a little part of our 'Away Day at home' afternoon on 11th June.

2025 is another year to remember and we hope to make the whole year one of celebration as we mark 200 years since the founding of the non-conformist church in Solihull, of which we are the descendants. (The Olton church came about through a church split from Solihull and then the Hobs Moat Church was planted from Olton on the new housing estates of the 1950's, so both have their roots in the central Solihull church that we are once again.) Similarly, we will have opportunity to discuss this at the 'Away Day at home' afternoon on 11th June.

Please have a think about ideas that we might use to mark these events. For 2025 we would like to form a planning group to take up ideas that are offered (and add other ideas, maybe) so if you would like to be a part of this please speak up – newcomers are just as welcome as those who have been here longer. We are going to need all sorts of people with all sorts of different skills and experiences to make a truly memorable, and big, splash in the town.

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.generationsssolihull.org.uk generationsssolihull@icloud.com

Zoom Details

Meeting ID: 865 7763 7936

Passcode: 986653

JUNE 2023 NEWSLETTER

Material for the June 2023 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 21st May please.