



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

March 2021 Newsletter

Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

Mark 9: 41



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)**

Gordon Laurie – **Elder**

Chris Harman - **Elder**

Liz Amos - **Treasurer**

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

WORSHIP DURING MARCH

At the time of writing the country is in National Lockdown and although the rules of lockdown permit churches to open for worship, the Elders have decided that it is safest for the congregation that we remain closed for communal worship. However, we will continue with offering an online service through Zoom. **We are planning on being able to open safely for worship from Easter Sunday.** However, we will also continue with the simultaneous broadcast of the service via Zoom for those unable to attend for whatever reason.

The Worship leaders for March are:

7th March	10:00am	Mr Ian Carnell (Communion)
14th March	10:00am	Revd. Mary Burgess
21st March	10:00am	Mrs Linda Faber
28th March	10:00am	Mr Gordon Justham

THE LECTIONARY

Readings for Sundays in March 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.

7th March	John 2.13-22; Exodus 20.1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1.18-25
14th March	John 3.14-21; Numbers 21.4-9; Psalm 107.1-3 & 17-22; Ephesians 2.1-10
21st March	John 12.20-33; Jeremiah 31.31-34; Psalm 51.1-12 or Psalm 119.9-16; Hebrews 5.5-10
28th March	Mark 11.1-11; Psalm 118.1-2 & 19-29 (Palm Sunday)

Gordon Justham

GLASS HALF FULL?

At this time of the year it is usual to make balance sheets looking back over the last 12 months. Perhaps we could apply that to our pandemic experience.

It would be all too easy to compile a list on the debit side: the pain of loss and we remember those who mourn and place them in God's tender care; isolation from family, financial worry and job insecurity, restrictions on our freedom etc. We could add many more things but let us instead turn to the opposite page and see if we can find any credits:

- Mention has already been made of the great gift of time. How many of us have said "If only I had time, I would clear the attic, exercise, learn the mandarin", add your own. Well, now we have and we have to find a different excuse.
- Next, another result of the crisis is the massive outpouring of bravery and dedication from our many front-line workers and the unexpected kindness of neighbours and strangers. Surely Jesus working among us...
- Then we have the reconnection with nature - the reassurance of the steady rhythm of the seasons and growth, the cleaner air, the beautiful sunsets. We give thanks for green spaces. Perhaps this will nudge us into taking greater care of our planet.
- Many of us have had a crash course in technology in learning how to zoom and 'facetime'. But what a blessing! My otherwise lonely Christmas was spent 'with' my sons all spread over 200 miles. Through the heroic efforts of our church leaders, we have been able to worship together if not chat. It has also given us the new phenomenon of working from home keeping the country running.
- We cannot leave out the amazing success of the scientists who have developed vaccines in such a short time. Surely a modern miracle. It is possible that the research involved may have opened new avenues in finding a cure for Alzheimers – an unexpected bonus.

- Finally, perhaps we have also come to realise how much we depend upon God when the going gets tough. We acknowledge our vulnerability and look to Him for hope and reassurance. He has given us time to get better acquainted with Him and shown us His love by the kind acts of those around us - sometimes at exactly the right moment - the timely phone call when we are feeling low. We can be confident that God is with us in this and will, in time, lead us by still waters.

Anne Cherry

USED POSTAGE STAMPS

In early February I sent a large packet of used stamps to the RNIB as agreed. I asked them if they would give me some information about what happens to the stamps when they are sent from the agency which handles them. I will keep you informed.

The packet I sent weighed over 600 grams (including packaging) which made me think there were probably more than a thousand stamps in it. Next time I will weigh them more accurately.

I inherited this job from Sheila Durant who was a keen stamp collector in her youth. Other collectors from years ago were Roy Thompson and Gordon Straight, Roy exhibited at exhibitions and won prizes in competitions. An interesting and educational hobby which flourished until electronic gadgetry appeared. However, it survives in a much-reduced form - each month there is a meeting of philatelists in the Knowle village hall.



Alan Kembery

HELPING HANDS FOODBANK

Whilst I have had a little bit less to do with the building being closed I have been working for 2 hours a week for the Helping Hands foodbank in Solihull. It is run by Renewal church on Lode Lane. I wondered if you would like to hear a little bit about it as it is where our harvest gifts go each year.

As an ex factory site they have plenty of room and the area next to the worship space is a dedicated warehouse. There is rear access for lorries to reverse right up to the door for deliveries and loading. Most of their produce is given by supermarkets in bulk and the gifts that were given last harvest time by the likes of you and I are long gone. Harvest donations during lockdown were much lower than in other years as schools etc didn't make a collection as usual.

The foodbank give out 3 different types of packages – those for people with a conventional cooker, those for people who only have a microwave and those for people in bed and breakfast accommodation who can only 'cook' using a kettle. As well as food they provide cleaning and personal hygiene essentials, nappies and pet food as well (though pet food is very rarely asked for and Renewal receive more than they need).

People donate plenty of teabags but rarely jars of coffee – the shelf is nearly always bare. And people rarely give sugar – again the shelf is nearly always bare. Jars of pasta sauce, kidney and baked beans are the most given items and there are loads and loads of those in stock. Multi packs of anything are acceptable but catering size tins or packets are of no use. Also items should have as long as possible until the use by date. Each day a morning and afternoon volunteer team of 4 people stack the shelves of the incoming produce and pack the boxes, and bags, for the donations to go out again. Fresh produce (such as bread and potatoes), which the church buys each week, is packed on the day for the number of packages which are to go out. The packages are designed to last a week and I estimate the total packages are worth £50-60, more for a family. The recipients are identified by referral agencies who are helping with accessing benefits and other statutory help people are entitled to so hopefully one week's food should be

enough. There are about 10-25 packages sent out twice a day five days a week, delivered by additional volunteer teams. Renewal have wheelie bins outside their building where donations can be given all year round.

Linda Faber

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The World Day of Prayer service will be held on Friday 5th March.

The Knowle, Dorridge, Bentley Heath and Hampton in Arden Churches have prepared a World Day of Prayer service. It will be available either via Dorridge Methodist Church Youtube Channel using this link https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYvS6IjMihAWWn45ussoSOQ?guided_help_flow=5

or on their facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/Dorridge-Methodist-Church-170842826259456> from mid-morning on Friday 5th

Or you can access a service from Vanuatu via the World day of Prayer website.

CONGRATULATIONS

We send our love and best wishes to Jeanne Brown who celebrated a 'special' birthday on 7th February. Hope you had a lovely day.

Sylvia Lidsey

Congratulations to Sheila Durant who is celebrating her 90th birthday on 11th March. We send her our love and best wishes and hope that she will have a happy day.

Gweno

LIFE ON MARS

Who does not know the iconic lyrics “The chances of anything coming from Mars are a million to one, he said.”

Well, thanks to the successful landing of the robot Perseverance we are going to get something, albeit not for another 10 years. Rock samples, which could reveal that at some time in the planet’s history there was some form of life.

I was clearing photos and videos out of my mobile phone the other day when I came across a photograph I took at the Burlington Quarry in Great Langdale last October of a plaque describing the beautiful green stone that they have been quarrying there for years. It originates from the Ordovician Period and was laid down some 450 million years ago.

I decided last month to enlist the help of a friend of mine who is a geologist and it transpires that the Ordovician Period gave way to the Silurian Period as part of what is known as a Mass Extinction. This was one of five unusually large extinctions involving the demise of vast numbers of species.

Scientists are split between climate change and large comets or asteroids striking Earth as the triggers for the Mass Extinctions. I asked my friend if we were currently in a Period and apparently, we are in the Quaternary Period which commenced about 2.7 million years ago and is divided into 2 or 3 epochs, the earliest being the Pleistocene which ended about 11,700 years ago and is associated with the Ice Age.

We are now in the Holocene epoch BUT some scientists are arguing that because of global warming there has been such a shift in the environment that we should now be in a new age called the Anthropocene which they argue began circa 1800 with the Industrial Revolution.

What is strikingly obvious to everyone is that we are on a downward slope as far as the custody of our own Planet Earth is concerned and we only have ourselves to blame as we, Homo Sapiens, are the single most destructive species in existence.

Planet Earth and Planet Mars are of the same age and my hope is that when we get the chance to analyse the rock samples brought back from Mars we may be able to add to our knowledge and understanding of the Red Planet. Did it once have some form of life, did it have Periods, did it have Mass Extinctions and if so why is it now a dustbowl? Will we be shocked?

See you in 10 years and in the meantime be good custodians of Planet Earth as Beverley encouraged us to be in last month's Newsletter

Gordon Laurie

THANK YOU

Ruth and David Cooper would like to say thank you for all the prayers, phone calls and beautiful flowers they have received. They are very much appreciated.



THANKS

It was lovely to have a visit from Linda Faber bearing gifts. However, what she thought of two hippies with longer hair than normal greeting her I do not know! Thank you, Linda, for spending your time visiting folk. It certainly meant a lot to me and made me feel part of our church fellowship very much.

Thank you also for your hard work and thought in producing the Lent Material. It is certainly very comprehensive and thought provoking. I am sure we will all learn a lot about ourselves and our faith journey.

I would also like to thank Gordon for his weekly Roots material that he sends through to us on email. Again this keeps us focused on our Christian journey.

God bless you all.

Rosalind Smart

PHILOSOPHY AND QUESTIONS

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schulz, the creator of the 'Peanuts' comic strip. You don't have to actually answer the questions. Just ponder on them.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Sydney to Hobart winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss Universe pageant.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.

6. Name the last five movies to win the Academy Award for best picture.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier?

The lesson is that the people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They simply are the ones who care the most.

Ian Carnell

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.generationssolihull.org.uk generationssolihull@icloud.com

Moments (currently not meeting)

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER

Material for the April 2021 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 21st March please.