



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

March 2023 Newsletter

*"Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint
against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has
forgiven you, so you also must forgive."*

Colossians 3:13



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)**

Gordon Laurie - **Church Secretary & Elder**

Liz Amos - **Treasurer**

Linda Faber - **Mission Enabler & Lettings Administration**

Maureen Butler - **Elder (worship & prayer, charities, social activities, children)**

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.

MARCH 2023 DIARY DATES

Thursday 2nd – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 2nd – Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Hall

Friday 3rd – World Day of Prayer 2023 - Drop in from 10am – 2:30pm at St Alphege. Prayers from the front at 12noon.

Saturday 4th – Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 5th – Sunday Worship with Communion led by Ian Carnell - 10am

Monday 6th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 6th – Job Club – 10:30am

Monday 6th – Elders Meeting – 12:15pm

Thursday 9th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 9th – Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Hall

Saturday 11th – Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 12th – Sunday Worship led by Kathy Lloyd-Roberts – 10am

Monday 13th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 13th – Shout Out for the Girls – 10am

Monday 13th – Job Club – 10:30am

Tuesday 14th – Leisurely Lunch – 12:30pm

Thursday 16th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 16th - Singing for Pleasure - 2pm in the Hall

Saturday 18th - Saturday Café – 9am

Saturday 18th – West Midlands URC Synod Meeting

Saturday 18th - Family Quiz and Supper Evening – 6:30pm in the Hall

Sunday 19th – Sunday Worship (Mothering Sunday) led by Linda Faber – 10am

Monday 20th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 20th – Job Club – 10:30am

Thursday 23rd – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 23rd - Singing for Pleasure - 2pm in the Hall

Saturday 25th - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 26th – Sunday Worship led by Rodger Charlton - 10am

Monday 27th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 27th – Job Club – 10:30am

Thursday 30th – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

Thursday 30th – Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Hall

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.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

You might just be reading this in time to remind you that the next World Day of Prayer is on Friday 3rd March. There will be opportunity to pray at any time of the morning or early afternoon at St Alphege using prayer stations of the type that we laid on when we hosted the event last year. There will be 20 minutes of prayers led from the front in the middle of the day for those who would like some community guided prayers as well as the opportunities to pray alone.

Do you know people who have got out of the habit of going to church who used to? This might be perfect for them. They don't have to engage with formal church but it is an opportunity to come into a building again and reawaken their faith and engage with God in a way that is bigger than their internal conversation with God.

St Alphege church will be open for this for private prayers using the prayer stations for inspiration and ideas 10am - 2.30pm with 20 minutes of prayers from the front at noon.

Linda Faber



Organised by Churches Together in Central Solihull

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2023

**Friday 3rd March
St Alphege, Solihull**

Drop in between

10am-2.30pm

for private prayer
inspired by
prayer stations.

**With Prayers led from
the front at 12 noon**

This year's theme chosen by the church in Taiwan.
The country of the Butterfly orchid.

ADVANCED NOTICE OF EASTER ARRANGEMENTS

We would like to **deliver leaflets** informing local residents of our Easter arrangements. If you are able to help by delivering leaflets through the doors of one of the streets near by then please let me know. I was delighted with the number of offers we had at Christmas and we easily shared the burden. We would like these delivered at your convenience between Monday 27th March and Saturday 1st April.

Palm Sunday is on 2nd April this year and we will not be having communion even though it is the first Sunday of the month. We will however be having our **Annual Church Meeting** following worship. Nominations for charities you may wish to be considered for our charity of the year (local and international) need to be with the Elders before their meeting on Monday 6th March so they can make a short list and distribute information. Two of our Elders will be standing for re-election at this year's ACM.

Thursday 6th April at 7pm we will once again be holding a **Maundy Thursday** Supper (bread and cheese) with integral communion led by Ian Carnell. Please sign up if you want to attend so that we can cater appropriately.

Friday 7th April there is a **Good Friday** march of witness in Central Solihull starting at St Augustine's (Catholic church) and one in Olton.

Easter Sunday 9th April our service will include communion and will be led by our Synod Moderator Steve Faber.

Linda Faber

Quiz Game* and supper Evening

Saturday

18th March 2023

6.30pm

John Palmer Hall

Tickets £4.50

Open to
everyone. Come
and join in.

Tickets from the church office
or email solihullurc@gmail.com

*Using the quiz game 'Linkee'. Answer the questions
in teams and find the link between the answers.

Organised by

SOLIHULL
United
Reformed
Church

MINISTRY UPDATE

I would like to bring the Fellowship up to date on the question of finding a Minister for our Church.

As we have no Minister at the moment we are allocated an Interim Moderator. This is Graham Sweeney who is the Area Minister for SE Birmingham and Solihull. Graham joined the Elders Meeting on 6th February.

Graham expressed his pleasure at being able to attend the meeting and apologised for his recent inactivity due to the surgery on his hand. He stressed that his role as our Interim Moderator really only became important once we were declared "In Vacancy". A precursor to this was the creation of our Pastoral Profile which we were able to confirm had recently been updated and was now available.

Graham confirmed that the strategy for SE Birmingham and Solihull remained the same in that one Full Time Minister was to be allocated with support from Fiona Elvins who is a Non Stipendiary Minister. The Full Time Minister would be based at SURC who would enjoy an 80% Scope. Whilst this was apparently an unchanged strategy, it was all news to the Elders but obviously well received. The vacancy at SURC is regarded as a priority.

The next stage was for SURC to submit their Pastoral Profile for consideration by The Ministerial Development Committee which is made up of 15 members including Church Staff. Graham assisted the Elders in a discussion to finalise the Pastoral Profile which was e-mailed the following day by LF to both Graham and the West Midlands Synod Office. Speed was of the essence as The Ministerial Development Committee (MDC) which approves the Profile only meets four times a year and the papers for their next meeting had to be available by Wednesday 8th February.

Assuming their approval the next stage in the process will involve debate at The Central Moderators Meeting and SURC will then formally be deemed "In Vacancy". They will seek to match a Minister to the Profile and it will be a month before any names are made public.

It is at this stage that Graham's role assumes its main function as he assists the Elders in their deliberations. Only Church Members can vote on the calling of the candidate and the Elders will determine the level of % vote that will be deemed appropriate. Initial feelings were that it should be in the region of 75% to 80% in favour. Arrangements would be made for those participating on Zoom.

The Elders will keep you informed as things develop.

Gordon Laurie, Church Secretary

BREAKING NEWS

The MDC has met and whilst our Profile was felt to be fine, the MDC requires more information from the other Churches in our grouping. Basically they all have to create a profile so that their needs are established. This means that we will be travelling forward at the speed of the slowest and our scoping may well reduce accordingly.

Gordon Laurie

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF CHURCH GROWTH

Last month I told you about a book that I am reading with the above title and how useful that I am finding it. I said that there was a good deal for us all of which to take note. I shared a few thoughts from the Archbishop of Canterbury from the foreword and today I am going to share just 5 of the bits that I made a note of from the introduction.

Some of the ideas might come up again as we progress through the book but I noted them at this point of the book and so will share them here. These are relevant to us so I have added a question to think about.

“Growth in the Christian church is never just about ‘bums on seats’. The New Testament is about God’s Kingly rule, into which the church has to fit—and which is not co-terminous with the church. The Gospel is incarnate in the small and overlooked as much as the large and spectacular. And ‘church growth’ is a wide concept. One influential definition sees growth in the church life as a three-fold balance, entailing growth in personal holiness, growth in societal transformation and the numerical growth of church congregations.”

QUESTION FOR SOLIHULL URC: Does our church life suggest that we take all three of these seriously?

“It remains a truth, almost universally acknowledged, that the church, so defined, in the modern west is in decline. But there is now, considerable empirical evidence to show that this assertion is a serious over statement. The church may be declining in places, but it is growing in many others.”

QUESTION FOR SOLIHULL URC: Do we buy into the wrong assumption that decline in the church is ‘inevitable’? How do our assumptions affect the way we organise our church in Solihull?

Looking at the New Testament (M Bonnington), “Personal conversion, community formation and lifestyle change were intertwined. Proclamation and conversion led people to change their lifestyles—and such change was crucial to the growth of churches, for conversion was a high commitment activity, particularly for the gentiles: A slave converted wanted to go out early or late to meet other believers. He made up for it by working harder. A household converted and the household gods disappeared from the corner of the room. The master avoided the temples but instead invited people to dine with him at his house. When he did so he omitted the traditional libation to his guild’s divinity but instead thanked the God of heaven for the meal. Insider and outsider alike knew something had changed and the reasons why were freely on offer.”

QUESTION FOR SOLIHULL URC: How distinctly do we live our lives as Christians today in Solihull or do we just accept the ways ‘everyone’ is living and join in?

Looking at the Incarnation and church Growth (M Warner) “Healthy well-functioning churches are places where people can be restored and become agents of change and renewal within the world beyond the church. The reason we need churches to grow is not to pay the bills, or to feel good about ourselves. It is to enable humanity, in tune with the Spirit of God, to fulfil its divine calling to care for and nurture the world which God has created.”

QUESTION FOR SOLIHULL URC: What do you think are good motivating reasons for us to seek church growth in Solihull URC?

Linda Faber

LIFE'S JOURNEY

Our walk with God is never a lonely walk, it is a family occasion, if taken in the company of God's children. If we lag behind there are those who will turn and offer words of encouragement, hold out a hand and offer assistance over stiles and other obstacles, share refreshments, help us from our knees when we stumble.

Our walk with God is never a lonely walk. It is a joyful experience as along the path others join us, attracted by the company of God's children, singing the same songs of praise that angels sing, following a path worn down by tears and joy and sacrifice.

Our walk with God is never a lonely walk, for he walks with us on a track that leads to a glorious destination.

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THANK YOU

We would like to thank everyone for their kindness, cards, flowers, phone calls and prayers over the past two months.

I am pleased to say that I am making good progress although it will take quite a while before I am back to 'normal'!

Trixie Harman

Howard Cotes would like to thank all members of the congregation for their prayers, cards, emails, phone calls and get well messages following his surgery. He is gradually recovering and should be back in church by the time you read this.

COACH TRIPPERS UNITED 2023 ITINERARY

APRIL 20TH Chester

MAY 18TH Gloucester Warwickshire Steam
Railway (Drop off Broadway/ Pick up Cheltenham)



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

SCHOOLS WORK

Having had a long time of not being able to go into schools because of Covid, I have finally been invited to go back into Yew Tree Primary School to discuss how we might be able to support their RE curriculum going forward. A number of people who used to come with me into the school have left in the intervening years so I really hope that some of you new people will be willing to join in.

We have usually taken activities into individual classes where we support whichever topic we have been asked to look at. The school ask for volunteers to have a DBS check but we will sort that out when we know when we are going in. It is a quick and easy process as they are so used to doing it now, we just have to show them the required ID documents.

Not having many children connected with the church, going into schools is an important way that we can stay connected with the next generation. I hope you will consider making yourself available when I ask, if at all possible.

Linda Faber

DINING OUT LUNCH

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

on

14th March at 12:30 pm

£4.00

ALL ARE WELCOME

MENU

Bulgarian Lamb Casserole

.....

Fruit Flan and Cream

.....

Tea or Coffee



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

By Thursday 9th March 2023

ATTEMPTED BREAK IN

At the beginning of February, we had an attempted break in to the office. The building was open for groups and someone just walked in.

Having had a look round all the rooms (we could see where he went on CCTV) he then headed for the office where he used his foot to try to kick the door in.

We are glad to say that the door held but unfortunately we have had to have a new door as there was too much damage.

Linda Faber

SATURDAY CAFE

Between January 2022 and December 2022, the Saturday café has raised £1,150.00.

£575 has been distributed to the Church, and £575 will be divided between our two church charities, which were St Basil's Birmingham and an Indian charity known as KSN.

Elaine Jones

“THE ROUGH WITH THE SMOOTH”

I told you last month about the book by Martin Tunncliffe who worships at St Alphege and is connected to our Moments Dementia Group.

He has written a book called The Rough with the Smooth. Copies cost £10 and the profits from the sale of the book are to be given for the benefit of Children and young people through the work of St Alphege. It is a collections of thoughts and articles shared through the parish magazine and seeking a wider audience. I now have ten copies in the office so ask me for your copy any time.

ECO CHURCH

I have taken the first box of old pens for recycling to the boys who asked us to collect them for charity. They used to attend our Toddler group and Messy Church, which is how they came to ask us.

I was delighted to hear that they had received an award from the Solihull Mayor in the Civic Honours Awards for being Inspirational Young People. Thank you to all of you who have brought your old pens to be recycled in this way and keep them coming. Any old pen of any brand or type.

The collection box is in the Central Foyer (Nattery).

Linda Faber

PANCAKE PARTY

Tuesday 21st February was the Church's Pancake Party, held in the John Palmer Hall. There was a welcome turn-out, with some bringing family, and there was plenty of pancakes for everyone. It was hard to turn down another pancake!

There were also plenty of games and a quiz for everyone to enjoy, as well as the customary pancake tossing which, as you'll see in the picture, all ages enjoyed.

Thank you to Elaine and everyone else involved in organising the event.

Stuart Mills



Photo supplied by Trixie Harman

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister

VACANT

Church Secretary

Mr. Gordon Laurie

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

APRIL 2023 NEWSLETTER

Material for the April 2023 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 19th March please.