



# SOLIHULL

## UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat  
Communities

**May 2022 Newsletter**

*“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”*

*– Ezekiel 36:26*



## **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](http://www.solihullurc.org.uk)**  
**[www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk](http://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)**

Ian Carnell – **Elder**

Howard Cotes – **Elder**

Gordon Laurie - **Elder**

Liz Amos - **Treasurer**

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

## WORSHIP DURING MAY

The United Reformed Church, through the Synod Moderators, have updated their Covid 19 guidance. **The Synod Moderators urge the continued use of face coverings in churches, including during singing, as well as maintaining good hand hygiene and appropriate physical distancing.**

The Elders have considered the guidance and recommend that it is followed but accept that this is a personal choice. The Government are now relying on everyone playing their part and taking personal responsibility for controlling the virus. We have to learn to live with it. Please continue to care for yourself and others by taking all reasonable measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

Thank you.

### **Gordon Justham**

The Worship leaders for May are:

<b>1<sup>st</sup> May</b>	10:00am	Mr Ian Carnell (includes communion)
<b>8<sup>th</sup> May</b>	10:00am	Mrs Linda Faber
<b>15<sup>th</sup> May</b>	10:00am	Mr Gordon Justham
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> May</b>	10:00am	Mr Ian Carnell
<b>29<sup>th</sup> May</b>	10:00am	Mr Alan Cotgreave

## THE LECTIONARY

Readings for Sundays in May 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.

### Gordon Justham

**1<sup>st</sup> May** Acts 9.1-6,(7-20); Psalm 30; Revelation 5.11-14; **John 21.1-19**

**8<sup>th</sup> May** Acts 9.36-43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7.9-17; **John 10.22-30**

**15<sup>th</sup> May** Acts 11.1-18; Psalm 148; Revelation 21.1-6; **John 13.31-35**

**22<sup>nd</sup> May** Acts 16.9-15; Psalm 67; Revelation 21.10,21.22-22.5; **John 5.1-9**

**29<sup>th</sup> May** Acts 16.16-34; Psalm 97; Revelation 22.12-14,16-17,20-21; **John 17.20-26**

## FOREWORD

We have just celebrated Easter and we now head towards Whitsun. In his book “Quiet Talks on Service”, S.D. Gordon provides an account of an imaginary conversation that took place between the angel Gabriel and Jesus following Jesus’ return to heaven after His ascension. The nub of the conversation is that Jesus had left his disciples to tell his story that he died for humanity. When asked what his back-up plan was he simply indicated that he had no back-up plan and that he was relying totally on them.

A number of us have just completed a lent study group where we participated in a course entitled “Talking Jesus”. This is designed to show us how we can share our faith to make the most of every opportunity to help friends, colleagues and family members to consider Jesus for themselves.

One of the attributes, the bible shows us that Jesus had, was the ability to be able to communicate with ordinary people. This was even in situations where at first sight the people involved would appear to have very little in common. One example of that is when Jesus meets the woman at the well. [John 4 v1-42]. She was a Samaritan woman and he a Jew. Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. However, very quickly they were conversing about eternal life.

One of our modern day challenges is to show non-Christians how Jesus, who lived 2000 years ago, is still relevant to us today. One of the stories which is well known to both Christians and non-Christians alike is the parable of the “Good Samaritan”. [Luke 10 v 25-37]. It starts with a lawyer asking Jesus “and who is my neighbour” and concludes at verse 37 with Jesus saying “go and do likewise”.

To be a “good neighbour” during the coronavirus lockdown was to practise “social distancing” or should that be “physical distancing”

rather than “social distancing”. That did not stop us communicating via the internet, the phone or over the garden fence.

Whether we like it or not we live in a global community where TV and the internet can bring us images from far and near right into our homes. In this connected world “my neighbour” is not only in my road but is also in more distant conflict zones and developing countries.

Steve Faber in his Easter Sunday service address on the theme of “The weekend that changed the world”, when talking about the resurrection, pointed out to us that you can only be a witness if you talk about what you have seen or experienced. So that is a challenge to us all as we head towards Whitsun when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. To whom are you going to talk about the coming of the Holy Spirit?

Every blessing to you all.

**Howard Cotes**

### **MAY 2022 DIARY DATES**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>** – Sunday Worship with communion led by Ian Carnell – 10am

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>** - Churches Together in Central Solihull Prayer lunch. All Welcome. Bring your own lunch and share news and prayer with members of other churches. In the café – 12:30pm

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>** – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>** - Singing for Pleasure - 2pm in the Hall

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>** - Saturday Café (under assessment to see if it’s worth continuing) – 9am

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>** - Sunday Worship led by Linda Faber – 10am  
**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>** – Moments Dementia Group – 10am  
**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>** – Shout Out for the Girls – 10am  
**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>** – Job Club – 10:30am  
**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>** – Dining Out Leisurely Lunch – 12:30pm  
**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>** – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall  
**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>** - Singing for Pleasure - 2pm in the Hall  
**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>** - Saturday Café (under assessment to see if it's worth continuing) – 9am  
**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>** – Sunday Worship led by Gordon Justham – 10am  
**Monday 16<sup>th</sup>** – Moments Dementia Group – 10am  
**Monday 16<sup>th</sup>** – Job Club – 10:30am  
**Monday 16<sup>th</sup>** – Elders Meeting – 12:15pm  
**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>** – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall  
**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>** - Singing for Pleasure - 2pm in the Hall  
**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>** - Saturday Café (under assessment to see if it's worth continuing) – 9am  
**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Sunday Worship led by Ian Carnell – 10am  
**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Moments Dementia Group – 10am  
**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Job Club – 10:30am  
**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Elders Meeting – 12:15pm  
**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>** – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall  
**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>** - Singing for Pleasure - 2pm in the Hall  
**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>** - Saturday Café (under assessment to see if it's worth continuing) – 9am  
**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>** – Sunday Worship led by Alan Cotgreave – 10am

## **SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR—NEW VOLUNTEER URGENTLY REQUIRED—NO ONE HAS COME FORWARD YET**

As part of ensuring that our church is a safe place for children and vulnerable adults to be welcomed all volunteers have to go through an application process. Part of that process is that each volunteer has to have their name checked against police and court records to ensure that they don't have any convictions which would make them unsuitable for this work.

We have to have a person in the church who is responsible for the paper work for this which is an occasional but not too onerous role. But also that person is the contact to liaise with the authorities should there be a problem uncovered or a complaint made. We are very thankful that no such problems have happened at our church so far. Angela has been our person in this role but now that she has moved away she has stepped down. We have to have a replacement. Would you consider if you might be a suitable person for this role?

There is some compulsory training which is offered by the Synod Safeguarding Officer, Donna Gordon, and she is always available for help and information as well as ongoing support. Please speak to Linda Faber or Gordon Justham if you are willing to consider the role.

## **SATURDAY CAFÉ**

The Saturday café is not running at a level that is financially sustainable. Since the reopening, following the pandemic, the numbers of customers has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. For the month of May, the café will be monitored but if numbers do not increase the Elders will consider its closure.

**Linda Faber**

## **MOVING ON**

Jackie and I are returning to Otley, West Yorkshire.

During my career, as an actuary advising employers regarding their occupational pension schemes, I was relocated twice. First from Scotland to West Yorkshire and then to the West Midlands. We have lived in Knowle for nearly thirty years. None of our immediate family are local and, since my retirement six years ago, we have thought about downsizing.

In early April an opportunity arose to sell our house which then focussed our minds on where should we move to. The upshot is that we have decided, as we move into the next phase of our lives, to return to Otley as this will be close to our eldest son, daughter-in-law and our two granddaughters. We also have some very good friends in Otley who continue to worship at the Bridge Church URC in central Otley.

We will of course be further away from our youngest son and his girlfriend who live in Southampton, but virtually the same distance, as the crow flies, from our other son, daughter-in-law and grandsons in Shanghai. We have enjoyed our time in the Midlands and have made some good friends locally both inside and outside of church. It has also been a pleasure for us to worship at and to serve the church locally for many years.

When it comes to the actual time to move, I am sure it will be a wrench for both of us and we will miss you all. However, we will be closer to the hills and dales and, as they say, Yorkshire is God's own county!

**Gordon Justham**

## DINING OUT LUNCH

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

on

10<sup>TH</sup> MAY AT 12:30 pm

£3.50

ALL ARE WELCOME



### MENU

BOILED HAM & PARSLEY SAUCE

ROAST POTATOES

BROAD BEANS

.....

FRUIT FLAN AND CREAM

.....

TEA OR COFFEE



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

**By Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May**

Solihull URC will be running the book stall.  
Any offers of help would be greatly appreciated either setting up or during  
the sale. Thank you – Myles Ensor

christian  
aid coffee  
morning

Saturday 14th May: 10am-2pm

SOLIHULL METHODIST CHURCH HALL

PLANTS

TOYS

BOOKS

BOOK STALL

PLOUGHMANS' LUNCHES

COFFEES & TEAS

JAMS & PRESERVES

CAKES

WOW! This Christian Aid Coffee Morning is fab!





**Every gift. Every action. Every prayer. Every one of us can change lives**

Drought starves. It robs women of the power to farm and grow food for their families. Women and men in Zimbabwe are hungry to provide a more hopeful future. Mums often skip meals to share with their children what little food they have.

One of these mums is Jessica Mwedzi. Drought makes every day a struggle for survival. Jessica is hungry. Hungry for a good meal. Hungry to earn a decent living. Hungry to provide a more hopeful future for her family.

**'My children crave a good meal, but I can't provide.'** Jessica says. **'It pains me to send them to bed hungry.'**

Your gift could help Jessica grow drought-resistant crops. You could help her set up a water tap on her farm and learn how to grow food in the harsh climate. She'll turn her dry, dusty land into a garden of hope.

This Christian Aid Week, you can be one of the hundreds of thousands of our supporters who give, act and pray – stepping out in love for our global neighbours. With you by our side, we won't stop until everyone can live a full life, free from poverty and hunger.

Christian Aid Week brings people together as one community helping those living in poverty to transform their own lives.

This Christian Aid Week (15-21 May), please:

- Give generously to help women grow crops that survive in the drought.
- Act and raise your voice for justice. Join our Loss and Damage campaign.
- Pray that families will stay strong during tough times of drought.

**Together, we can turn hunger into hope.**

For those people who would prefer to donate direct to Christian Aid, I have once again set up an e-envelope for Solihull URC. There will also be envelopes available at church for donations to be made which I will forward on.

<https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/envelope/solihull-united-reformed-church?channel=copy>

Myles Ensor

*Just for fun you can enjoy the following quiz to tax your brains and to encourage your donation to CAW. (Answers will be printed in June's newsletter)*

### **Round 1: General knowledge**

1. What was the most popular girls name in the UK in 2019?
2. What was the old name for a Snickers bar before it changed in 1990?
3. What is the smallest planet in our solar system?
4. Who was the youngest British Prime Minister?
5. The six main stars of Friends appeared in all 236 episodes. Who is the next most regular character to appear in the show?

### **Round 2: Family and kids**

1. The song How Far I'll Go features in which Disney film?
2. In Thomas the Tank Engine, what colour train is Percy?
3. In Harry Potter, what animal represents Hufflepuff house?
4. From what country does Lego originate?
5. What is the name of the tree that produces conkers?

### **Round 3: Christian Aid**

1. In what year was Christian Aid founded?
2. In what year did the first ever Christian Aid Week take place?
3. What was Christian Aid first known as before adopting its current name?
4. In what London borough is Christian Aid's head office located?  
a. Wandsworth b. Lambeth c. Westminster
5. How many people in Zimbabwe has Christian Aid's work assisted (so far) in being more resilient to the climate crisis?  
a. over 12,000 people b. over 18,000 people c. over 27,000 people

#### **Round 4: Geography**

1. What colour is found on 7% of the world's flags?
2. Which seaside is home to the longest pier in the UK?
3. What is the world's most spoken language?
4. Sofia is the capital of which country?
5. Which country has the longest coastline in the world?

#### **Round 5: Sport**

1. Which tennis Grand Slam is played on a clay surface?
2. Who won the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2019?
3. In which athletics event is 45 metres the maximum permitted run up?
4. In which year did the first London Marathon take place?
5. Who won sport personality of the year for 2021?

#### **Round 6: Climate change**

1. Where is the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, commonly referred to as COP27 climate talks due to take place?
2. Which iconic New York landmark is completely powered by wind?
3. What major tech company became carbon neutral in 2007?
4. A documentary narrated by David Attenborough released in 2021 showed the impact that lockdowns across the world (due to COVID-19) had on the climate and in nature. What is the documentary called?
5. True or False: Wasting less food is a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

**Myles Ensor**

## **CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION IS A GLOBAL REALITY**

At least 340 million Christians around the world experience systematic discrimination, unfair treatment and persecution. That means 1 in 8 Christians are affected by 'extreme', 'very high' or 'high' levels of persecution in 74 countries.

Open Doors assembles a list of the top 50 where there is the most extreme persecution and asks us to pray for them.

*This month: Nigeria*

More Christians are murdered for their faith in Nigeria than in any other country, and violence is increasing. Attacks by Islamic extremist groups are common in the north and middle belt of the country, and are becoming more common further south.

In these attacks, Christians are often murdered or have their property and means of livelihood destroyed. Christian women are often abducted and raped by these militant groups, and sometimes forced to marry Muslims.

*Pray*

- For those who are mourning for loved ones, to know God's peace.
- That God would lovingly heal women and girls suffering trauma after sexual attacks.
- That Nigeria's government will take decisive action to protect all citizens in the country.

**Linda Faber**

## **EXCUSES**

In one church, the minister, apparently fed up with all the excuses given over the years as to why people don't go to church, included "Ten reasons why I never wash" in the Sunday Pewsheets:

1. I was forced to as a child
2. People who wash are hypocrites – they think they are cleaner than everybody else
3. There are so many different kinds of soap, I can't decide which one is best.
4. I used to wash, but I got bored and stopped.
5. I wash only on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.
6. None of my friends wash
7. I'll start washing when I get older and dirtier.
8. I can't spare the time
9. The bathroom is never warm enough in winter or cool enough in summer
10. People who make soap are only after your money.

**Ian Carnell**

## **ECO CHURCH**

Large supermarkets are now collecting soft plastics like carrier bags and food wrappers. Have you started to collect them yet and take them along with you when you can?

**Linda Faber**

## **EASTER CHICKS**

I thank everyone who bought Easter Chicks and helped raise £80. This has been forwarded to the Red Cross Ukraine Fund.

**Gerry Candy**

### **“FULLY PAID WITH A GLASS OF MILK.”**

A certain poor boy had to support himself by selling goods door-to-door. This way he also sent himself to school. Often, life for him could be very trying and when things really went bad, he went hungry for days.

One particularly difficult day, he only had a dime and he was very hungry. He knocked at houses to ask for a meal. At one house, when a lovely young woman opened the door, the boy lost his nerve and instead of asking for a meal, he just asked for a glass of water.

Sensing that he was very hungry, the young woman went back into the house, got a large glass of milk and offered it to the boy. He gratefully accepted the glass, and slowly drank the milk. He then offered his dime to the woman but she refused to take it saying that her mother taught her never to accept payment for a kind deed.

Feeling physically strengthened by the glass of milk, Howard Kelly thanked the young woman and left the house with a renewed faith in God and in people. Before that, he was on the verge of totally giving up.

A few years later, misfortune fell on the young woman. She got afflicted with an uncommon illness and she could not get treatment from the local doctors and clinics. So she was sent to the big city where the hospitals had better facilities.

In the hospital to which she was taken, Dr. Howard Kelly was serving as a consultant and when he heard from what village the new patient came from, he became very interested and went to her room to see her. He immediately recognized her.

He personally attended to her and he showed keen devotion to her treatment, vowing to see to it that she would be well again. It was not long before she started showing signs of recovery and finally was about to be discharged from the hospital.

Dr. Kelly asked for her bills, reviewed these and scribbled something on the top sheet.

When the woman was handed the bills, she grew faint because she knew that the medical expenses would be very high and that she probably would be paying for them for the rest of her life.

She took a look at the bills, and instead of seeing a high amount to be paid, she saw a note that said: "Fully paid with a glass of milk."

**Ian Carnell**

## **SOLIHULL LINK**

We are delighted that the washing machine and tumble dryer have now been installed for the Solihull Link Group. Funding was found from other sources so we have not had to pay for any of that, including the installing of the new electrics needed to run the machines.

As the hosting sponsors of the group though we will be footing the bill for running the machines. We do not have the volunteers to be able to engage in this work with the homeless, or near homeless, but we are doing something that we are able to do—provide a place for the project to call home.

## **CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES**

It is never too early to start collecting things together for the Christmas shoebox gifts.

In each month Link To Hope suggest something that we can get so that we spread the cost of our gifts. This month of May they suggest that we collect or buy Toiletries.



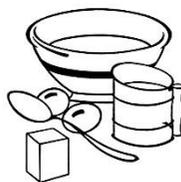
Suggestions are: soap/flannel, shampoo, razors, toothpaste & toothbrushes, small scissors.

**Linda Faber**

## FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH

### Double Mushroom Stroganoff

A classic stroganoff is made with beef, this version makes a lovely lunch dish with rice and salad.



### Serves 4

A knob of butter

800g (1  $\frac{3}{4}$  lbs) mixed button & small chestnut mushrooms halved

2 cloves of garlic crushed

1 tbsp paprika

300ml ( $\frac{1}{2}$  pint) double cream

1 tbsp Dijon mustard

1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

Juice of  $\frac{1}{2}$  lemon

3 tbsp chopped parsley

1 tsp caster sugar, or to taste

A small handful of gherkins, chopped to garnish (optional)

Cooked rice to serve

Place a large frying pan over a high heat until hot.

Add the butter and when it's foaming stir in the mushrooms.

Cover with a lid and cook for 2-3 mins.

Remove the lid, stir and continue to fry over a high heat for about 1 minute, to drive off the liquid and brown the mushrooms.

Add the garlic and paprika and fry for another 30 seconds.

Stir in the cream, mustard and Worcestershire sauce, season with salt and black pepper.

Bring to the boil then reduce the heat and simmer for a few minutes until the sauce has a coating consistency.

Stir in the lemon juice, chopped parsley and sugar to taste.

Sprinkle with chopped gherkins and serve with rice and side salad.

**Elaine Jones**

*If you would like to contribute a recipe for the 'Flavour of the Month' item, please let Elaine or myself know. Thank you.*

**Stuart Mills**

### **URC – ECO SYNODS**

The United Reformed Church (URC) is celebrating a significant milestone! All 12 Synods in England and Wales have now signed up to become an 'Eco Synod'.

This is part of the wider commitment made by the Church in 2019 to act urgently to reduce carbon emissions across the whole of church life.

Eco Synod is part of A Rocha UK's Eco Church scheme, which sees churches and synods awarded bronze, silver, or gold status as they take action to improve their environmental footprint.

Find out more at <https://urc.org.uk/urc-achieves-100-eco-synods-on-world-earth-day/>

**Stuart Mills**

## CHURCH GROWTH

Is your church a magic roundabout or a gospel train?

Older readers will remember the Magic Roundabout characters from the daily teatime TV programme. A magic roundabout church is one that trundles thoughtlessly around the church's year. If it is Christmas the church will 'do' Christmas, by which is meant repeating exactly as possible what was done last year.

The Bethlehem Carol Sheets will be located in the usual place, the same carols will occur just the same in the various traditional services. When it is mothering Sunday the daffodils will be provided as normal, there will be a march of witness on Good Friday because that is what you are supposed to do.

There is nothing wrong with marking the church's year—I've done it myself for decades. The problem lies in the unthinking repetitions. The church's life is not planned with the future in mind, it is composed of endlessly replicating the past. There is no need to make any decisions. Without strategy, intentionality or debate, the magic roundabout church goes through the motions, its strength gradually waning and its relevance gradually disappearing.

In a gospel-train church, however, members take stock of where they are, assessing what the church is like and what it does. Then they catch a vision of where they want to be—of what God is calling them to do.

Once the gospel-train church knows where it is and where it wants to get to, it will develop a travel plan. It will lay railway lines, get up a head of steam and move along intentionally to the destination. The magic roundabout church goes round in ever decreasing circles but the gospel-train church is travelling the line it is constructing into the future.

Many churches betray elements of magic roundabout and gospel-trin at the same time. Which is your church most like? Would someone else in your church have a different perspective to your own?

One of the key findings of the research programme “from anecdote to evidence” is that churches with a plan for change tend to grow better than those without a plan.

This is hardly surprising because to grow accidentally you need to get lucky. An isolated initiative in an otherwise aimless church may have an impact, but a strategy that pulls together the various elements and identifies priorities is much more likely to inspire the whole church and generate solid long-term growth.

*What Makes Churches Grow by Bob Jackson pg 74*

**Linda Faber**

### **BELATED BIRTHDAY WISHES**

Peggy Crosby celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. We send our congratulations and best wishes.

**Julia Ensor**

## KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

### **Minister**

VACANT

### **Church Secretary**

Mr. Gordon Justham: 07540 289855 - 01564 776229 -  
gordonjustham@talktalk.net

### **Church Phone Number**

0121 709 5505

### **Website**

[www.solihullurc.org.uk](http://www.solihullurc.org.uk)

**Hall Lettings:** 0121 709 5505

**Generations Project** - enabling the Church in care homes

[www.generationssolihull.org.uk](http://www.generationssolihull.org.uk) [generationssolihull@icloud.com](mailto:generationssolihull@icloud.com)

### **JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER**

Material for the June 2022 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

[stuartkmills@gmail.com](mailto:stuartkmills@gmail.com)

by Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May please.