



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

November 2019 Newsletter

*Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life
for his friends.*

John 15: 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 formally 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**

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.

November is a time when we remember all those who lost their lives in wars. Remembrance Day is important as it highlights the horror of war and ideally it should help us to stop conflict, but does it do that? Of course not, there are conflicts going on in many parts of the world, people are still suffering pain, both physical and mental. We must remember, but more importantly we must forgive.

This year, for the first time, the British Legion has defined Remembrance Sunday as acknowledging: *'The sacrifice of the Armed Forces Community from Britain and the Commonwealth' and 'the innocent civilians, who have lost their lives in conflict and acts of terrorism'*.

Have you ever visited the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas? If not, do try and go there. It is a very moving experience. Every day they hold two minutes silence in the chapel at 11am and a light shines on the Altar and visitors are invited to stand still as they remember all those lost in conflict.

On an individual note: We must think of our own disagreements and arguments. We must try to live our lives without conflict with each other. We must listen to others and 'agree to differ' remembering that there is always more than one opinion on both important and trivial issues. We must forgive, even if we cannot forget. We must forgive as God forgives us.

When we say the Lord's Prayer, we must mean what we say and not just say it by rote: 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us'.

As we think about those who have given so much, let us also think of our own lives and ask God to help us to treat others as we would want to be treated, as Jesus treated those around him, with love and compassion.

Trixie Harman

DIARY FOR NOVEMBER

Saturday 2nd	10am: Saturday Café
Sunday 3rd	10am: Communion – Blair Kessler
Monday 4th	10am: Moments
Thursday 7th	10am: Tots & Tales 1:30pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Solihull URC
Saturday 9th	10am: Saturday Café
Sunday 10th	10am: Remembrance Sunday Service – Ian Carnell
Monday 11th	10am: Moments 12:30pm: Elders Meeting
Thursday 14th	10am: Tots & Tales 1:30pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Solihull URC
Saturday 16th	10am: Saturday Café
Sunday 17th,	10am: Worship – Mary Burgess
Monday 18th	10am: Moments 10am: Shout Out for the Girls
Wednesday 20th	12:30pm: Churches Together in Central Solihull Prayer Lunch – Café
Thursday 21st	10am: Tots & Tales 1:30pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Solihull URC
Saturday 23rd	10am: Saturday Café
Sunday 24th	10am: Worship (Café Church & Church Meeting) – Linda Faber
Monday 25th	10am: Moments
Thursday 28th	10am: Tots & Tales 1:30pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Solihull URC
Saturday 30th	10am: Saturday Café

All regular groups meet as usual. Please see your group leader for further information and ask them to put specific dates in the newsletter each month. Don't forget to use the calendar at the back of church.

FRESH FROM THE WORD: THE BIBLE FOR A CHANGE

It is time to order the 2020 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 just under £10. If you would like a copy, please contact Marian Batten (07855 516687) or Irene Bound (0121 449 6367).

CHURCH UPDATES

We are currently having discussions with different people about whether there may be scope to host two projects. One for lonely people which will probably be in the form of some kind of regular coffee morning and we would need volunteers to help with this. The other opportunity is to help plug a small gap in the work with the homeless or nearly homeless for which we are investigating whether we could install a shower and washing machine. We would not need to provide any volunteers for this scheme. If you want to know more, and the very latest, please ask.

In the next few weeks the Electrician will be in the building attending to some of the many electrical issues that we have to contend with. We have also had a visit from the Roofer to deal with the leak in the balcony over the office. Hopefully that is sorted now. **Linda**

CHURCH DIRECTORY

The church directory has now been published. If you asked for your name to be included please pick up and sign for your copy if you haven't done so already. I anticipate one or two errors will be found and will issue corrections all together on one sheet in a few weeks. Please check your entry and alert me if there is an error. **Linda**

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CENTRAL SOLIHULL

We met at 6.45pm on Wednesday 9th October at St Helens, commencing with a meal.

The **Halloween Prayer Walk** will take place as usual on 31st October. We will meet at 7 pm in the car park at Solihull Methodist Church and then walk along Homer Road, Church Hill Road and the High Street ending with refreshments at the Methodist Church. There is also the option of staying in the church for prayers.

The **Crib Service** will be on 1st December at 3pm in Mell Square. I will give further details later as there is a slight problem with a conflict of interest.

Prayer Lunches will continue on Wednesday November 20th, January 15th and March 18th, to which all are invited. They are held in our Meeting Place from 12.30 to 1.30. Please bring your own lunch. Drinks are provided.

The service in the week of Christian Unity will be held at St Alphege on January 17th and the preacher will be a Methodist minister.

The Walk of Witness will be on Good Friday starting from St Augustines Church. It will go via Mell Square, where a short service will be held, to St Alphege Church, concluding with Hot Cross Buns and coffee.

The Methodist Church is holding a **Pentecost Picnic** in Malvern Park next year. There will be activities for the children and everyone is invited.

Having dealt with the above events, most of the remaining time was taken up discussing **the 800th Anniversary of St Alphege**. All the churches have been invited to participate. A steering group has been set up and has already come up with some ideas, one of which is to

provide 800 acts of kindness. It is also hoped to have a display in the library where each church will be asked to show the history of their church in Solihull.

Generations project. The co-ordinator - Diane Webb - has produced an informative leaflet which is being supplied to each Church.

Christian Coffee/Book shop. John Flannery talked about his dream to set one up in Solihull. He has asked for our prayers for it to come to fruition.

Next Meeting will be at Solihull URC on February 5th.



**COACH TRIPPERS UNITED AGM
Thursday 21st November 2019**

Don't lose the opportunity to come to the AGM with your ideas for next year's trips. All ideas welcome. This will be held at 12.30 for a 1 o'clock free buffet lunch at West Warwicks Sport and Social Cub in Grange Road.

UPDATE FROM LONGBRIDGE RETIREMENT VILLAGE

The pleasant summer has allowed the garden to flourish more than the hot dry weather did last year. The many gardeners here are each responsible for a small bed, and the result has been very colourful. Also, most people have attractive displays on their balconies, and a competition was held; a nice photographic display followed. The Sensory garden is now in operation, the necessary arbours, raised beds and trellis fences being provided by men who enjoy woodwork, with the planting mostly done by ladies.

The sixty plus volunteers here are rewarded with an annual Volunteers' Party, which this year was attended by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham who expressed his thanks on behalf of the staff. Being able to volunteer gives purpose to one's daily life as well as providing lots of activities which otherwise the staff could not cope with. One such activity looks after pre-school children (often the grandchildren of residents) for one morning a week. It is good to mix the generations, everyone enjoys it.

Singing for Pleasure has been improved by the addition of seven men, and we are now attempting to sing in harmony, which is not easy for people who cannot read music. Our music teacher/pianist is a very patient lady, who knows how to get results. Several members once thought they couldn't sing but now find they can.

We are very interested in the progress of Solihull Village at the junction of Stratford Road and Haslucks Green Road. It too is an Extra Care village (opening in Spring 2021) and will have the same amenities as we have here. If anyone is interested, I can thoroughly recommend it.

Marian Batten

PEACE BE WITH YOU!

'Peace be with you' is a familiar phrase for many Christians. Sharing the peace usually takes place before Communion. We take the hands of other members of the congregation, look at one another and say, 'Peace be with you'. Passing the peace to one another is a tradition rooted in Scripture, which embodies our Christian desire to be peacemakers.

From the beginning Christians have exercised this practice. 'Peace be with you' is a greeting Jesus used to greet his disciples (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 26). The apostle Paul opened each of his letters with the words "Grace and peace be with you" (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2). Luke 24:36: "While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'"

John 20:19: "On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' John 20:21: 'Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' With these words Jesus clearly intended the peace – His peace; the peace of God – to be passed on to other people.

When translated from the Greek, the greeting suggests that Jesus is not only wishing the apostles peace, but also reminding them of their duty to be fair and just with others. It is a reminder that we must not judge others and thereby cause distress and disharmony. God is their judge - not us! So instead we must be peace givers among all. It is our Christian duty to actively build harmony where there is dissonance, as the famous Franciscan prayer reminds us: 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love.'

Peace and love needs to be exercised outside our own church community, as well as within. I have never used 'Peace be with you', as a greeting in the street or in the home with visitors. But for the month

of November [which contains Remembrance Day] I intend to start a new pattern and pass the peace to strangers and friends alike. I will start on the buses – I love riding on buses and I always thank the driver and say ‘God bless you’, as I alight. But in November I will thank them for the journey and then give the Christian words, ‘Peace be with you’. I’ll take it from there – maybe use it after being served in shops.

Might you like to try this idea too and thus spread the peace? I hope so! ‘Happy are those who work for peace. God will call them his children’ - from the Beatitudes, Matthew 5 v9.

Peace and love be with you all, **Carol Andrews**

OUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU, YES YOU

Alan Kembery every month puts out a rota for several duties that need filling for the continuation and smooth running of the Church worship. Apart from the duty elder and communion anyone who is able could assist in any of the other duties, welcome, reading, Sunday Club and serving coffee. These duties should not be dependant on the elders. The time will come when if the rota has no volunteer’s to help with the coffee, then there will not be any.

It is worth mentioning that there are other rotas covering Saturday morning coffee, the provisions of flowers, and maybe others.

A glance at the lists will show that many of these jobs are carried out by a fairly small group of volunteers. We should take care not to overburden these willing members.

Please give this careful consideration and make Alan’s and the elder’s responsibility a lot easier and fill in the rota which is always at the rear of the church.

Many thanks, **The Elders**

AWAY DAY

The theme for our Away Day in October this year was 'A church Between'. We looked at our own situation in light of the seven churches addressed in the second and third chapters of Revelation in the Bible. We looked at the circumstances that those churches found themselves between such as geographically important places, culture, religious thought, and history, and then then applied them to ourselves and how that might impact the way we 'do' church and mission.

I will tell you about our look at the seven churches another time but here you can read about our introductory discussion for the day.

I asked in what ways we are a church between. We broke up into small groups to discuss this point and then came back together to hear what was said. How do these things affect us as 'church'?

We discussed how our church building is between Solihull Town Centre and residential areas. We are between being three separate churches and still not quite one united church as some still identify themselves with, and associate with people from, the churches that once were. We are a church between ministers. We talked about how our discussions for new buildings place us in a position between having a church complex suitable for the world of the 1960's and having a structure suitable for today's needs and expectations. We are a church between the church governance model of 'one leader leading from the front' and a 'ministry of all believers' which is the only model of church which is bearing fruit in our country today. We have work to do on this.

Solihull is located between the city and countryside. We are in a period of history where our country is shifting from a 'Christian World View' to 'post-modernism'. We are in a period where our country is shifting from a kind of unity to being divided—particularly with reference to Brexit and potentially Scottish independence. We mentioned our

position in the range between conservatism and liberal thought and theology.

Some of these are modern day equivalents to the issues the early church were facing. We went on to look at what Jesus had to say into those circumstances. These things are what make us unique as a church. We need to celebrate and make the most of our uniqueness. None of these are excuses but are a context that we need to notice, and work with, as we go about our business which is making disciples.

Linda Faber



CHRISTMAS CHRISTIAN AID TEA AFTERNOON

ON SATURDAY 30TH NOVEMBER 2PM – 3:30PM

A pleasant afternoon of tea, coffee, cake and a chat in our café. All proceeds to Christian Aid. **Janet**

UNION THEATRE

Union Theatre's next production, a witty dramatisation of Roald Dahl's modern fairy tale "The Witches", will take place at St James the Great, Church Road, Shirley on 7 – 9 November. There are four performances: one each evening at 7:30pm and a matinee at 2:30pm on the Saturday. Tickets are priced at £12 (£10 children and concessions). A family ticket £40 is also available and there are discounts for large group bookings. Tickets are available from Gordon or Jackie Justham or via the box office on 0121 705 6762.

UPDATE

Many thanks for the many enquiries and prayers for Mum, Joan Whitford. While she has not been able to come to church recently she always enjoys reading the newsletter and knowing what is happening! Mum is now permanently in Ardenlea Grove (opposite Solihull Hospital on lode lane). Room 8 on the Sapphire floor. This is following a pacemaker being fitted and increasingly poor mobility. However at the tender age of 97 this is not too bad!!

Personally I have had a couple of weeks off work to begin to sort issues out and try and help Mum settle in, as it is a big move in life. I am now back at work and if anyone would ever like to visit Mum I know she would love this. They do good activities there but she loves more company!!

All the best to all. **Angela** xx

TOTS AND TALES

Following Judy Fisher moving on, Sue Plant and I are looking for someone else to join us in running Tots and Tales, our parent and Toddler group on Thursday mornings, Term time 10-11.30am. We would love to have someone who is willing to tell simple Bible stories as well as being friendly and welcoming to the adults and children. Please speak to me (Linda Faber) or Sue Plant for further information.

PRAYERS FROM THE HEART

Featuring prayers for every week of the year, the 2020 United Reformed Church (URC) Prayer Handbook - Prayers from the heart is now available.

Edited by Karen Campbell, a Church Related Community Worker, and the Revd Ian Fosten, a URC Minister, Prayers from the heart features a mixture of prayer styles and approaches for all readers.

Contributors were encouraged to offer prayers that expressed the whole depth and range of joy, hope, thankfulness, fear, frustration and yearning that might be found within their own prayerful relationship with God.

Karen and Ian said: "In offering this collection of prayers, we hope we have captured their raw authenticity; prayers which are beautifully written, deeply thoughtful but not overly clever.

"We have included pieces which came to us rough-hewn, unpolished or quirky, but all of which echoed the heartbeat of God's people crying out to our gracious God.

"In using this collection, we hope that you will catch an echo of your own thankfulness and desires for our beautiful, but often broken, world."

The A5 edition of the prayer handbook is £4.99 + p+p, or £4.49 for 10 or more copies. A new A4 Lectern (large print) edition, is available for £9.99 + p+p.

Buy your copy from the URC Shop at <https://urcshop.co.uk/>

TAKE TIME

Take time to think, it is the source of power,

Take time to pray, it is the greatest power on earth

Take time to laugh, it is the music of the soul,

Take time to give, it is too short a life to be selfish

Take time to love and be loved, it is a God- given privilege.

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

God will never do something great through us until He has done something significant in us first.

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 Central Solihull – 07925 573259

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

www.generationssoalihull.org.uk generationssoalihull@icloud.com

Moments

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

DECEMBER/JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Material for the December/January edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 24th November please.