



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

November 2021 Newsletter

*"For I know the plans I have for you', declares the Lord,
'plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a
hope."*

Jeremiah 29:11



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)**

Ian Carnell – **Elder**

Howard Cotes – **Elder**

Gordon Laurie - **Elder**

Liz Amos - **Treasurer**

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

WORSHIP DURING NOVEMBER

It is good to be back in church. However due to the current infection rate in Solihull and the potential for further increases in cases as we move into autumn, we ask that you adhere to the following Covid 19 restrictions even though these may be stricter than the law requires.

We recognise that many will have been double vaccinated but that doesn't, in itself, stop the spread of the disease. The Elders have decided that we should continue with some steps to mitigate the further spread of the virus. Basically, for our services during November this means:

- please sign in (either by using the NHS track and trace App or at the desk by the entrance)
- please use the hand sanitiser provided or wash your hands
- social distancing rules should be followed with no more than 6 people or 2 households grouping together indoors.
- Communal Singing: we have a large spacious building and as long as you are socially distanced and, ideally, wearing a mask then please feel free to sing along with the hymns

We will continue to offer the service via Zoom for those who are unable to get to Church or still feel uncomfortable about attending.

We appreciate that there can be technical difficulties at times, particularly, with sound quality but we keep experimenting to resolve these issues. Life is a continual learning curve!

It is also our intention to serve tea and coffee at the end of the service subject to having sufficient volunteers to prepare the drinks.

Gordon Justham

The Worship leaders for November are:

7th November	10:00am	Mrs Linda Faber (no communion)
14th November	10:15am	Mr Gordon Justham (Remembrance Sunday: includes communion)
21st November	10:00am	Mr Ian Carnell
28th November	10:00am	Mrs Linda Faber (Gift Service)

THE LECTIONARY

Readings for Sundays in November 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. **Gordon Justham**

7th November 1 Kings 17.8-16; Psalm 146; Hebrews 9.24-28; **Mark 12.38-44**

14th November Daniel 12.1-3; Psalm 16; Hebrews 10.11-14(15-18)19-25; **Mark 13.1-8**

21st November Daniel 7.9-10,13-14; Psalm 93; Revelation 1.4b-8; **John 18.33-37**

28th November Jeremiah 33.14-16; Psalm 25.1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3.9-13; **Luke 21.25-36**

FOREWORD – THE WORD “LOVE”

Over these many difficult months the word **love** has been dominant in our lives – projected by the media in the form of **caring**. Caring for those in need. Looking out for one another. We have all been involved in this form of **love** and still are, as this pandemic is not over. But what is the true meaning of **love**, have we really been carrying out **true love**?

Naturally as practising Christians we look to God through Jesus for our answer. In Psalm 130 v7 we are told to put our hope in the Lord, for with him is full redemption. In Psalm 34 v8 we are asked to taste and see that the Lord is good.

I like to think that God loves us with all our faults. That despite our faults, he’s still prepared to accept us as we are. God does not demand perfection before he loves us. He loves us as we are, with all our faults. I believe that having accepted us he begins to work with us, renewing, repairing, recreating us. A 12th century nun recorded in a music manuscript a description of herself “as a feather on the breath of God.” Meaning someone, utterly at God’s command. Ready for the spirit’s direction. Surrendered to his will. Carried along by his strength. Not only does the breath of God give a sense of purpose, but it gives life itself. We are told in Genesis 2v7 that when God made humanity, he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

When you think about how God loves us, it must be that way, because if God loved us more the better we became, it will imply that God loves some people more and other people less. That simply cannot be true. It would also mean that we could earn God’s love and that cannot be true. **love** is God’s free gift, and he gives it to us as we are, with all our faults.

If that’s the way God loves us, then maybe that’s the way we ought to **love** each other! That’s the joy of Christian life and, it’s responsibility.

In Ephesian's 5v1 we are asked to be "imitators of God, therefore as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

I would like to close with a meditation originally published by 'Mother's Union' (permission has been given).

*To risk, to rescue.
And sometimes I hear, distinctly,
That same voice from higher up the river.
Reminding me it's not enough merely to offer help
To those already in the water.
You're asking me to make the river safe.*

*Lord help me now
To think of all who struggle,
Whose lives are flooded with care.
Help me to grasp each opportunity to help.
To change things in my world,
Our world, your world.
And help recognise, however faintly,
That you are with them.
Swimming against the current.
Buoying them up.
Offering them the waters of life.*

Quote from September's Newsletter: Colossians 3 v12

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience."

I would recommend reading the book "Love has a Face" by Michelle Perry

ISBN 978-0-8007-9478-1

This the life story of one woman's miraculous journey with Jesus in Sudan. She is actively involved in mobilising a movement of those called to live in love and carry God's light into the darkest and hardest places on earth.

God bless you. In Christ **Rosalind Smart**.

ADDITIONAL DIARY DATES

1st November - 12pm - Elders pastoral meeting

8th November - 12pm - Elders meeting

10th November - 12:30pm - Churches Together Prayer Lunch in our cafe. Bring your own packed lunch and hear about what is going on in each of the churches and pray together, drinks will be provided

19th December - Carol Service

24th December - 4pm - All-Age service

25th December - 10am - Christmas celebration service

26th December - No Sunday service

The launch of the Breakfast Club which is going to be run by SIAS has been delayed further due to circumstances beyond our control but we have now applied for funding for the new washing machine, dryer and cupboards.

THANK YOU

Thank you for the many kind words and cards sent following the death of Ruth. Deborah and I very much appreciate your support at this sad time.

David Cooper

PRAYER CIRCLE

We are planning to launch a prayer circle following feedback from the survey of the congregation that we did a few months back. I wrote about it last month but we haven't had very much response.

If you are interested in being someone on the list to be contacted with prayer requests, please contact Rosalind Smart who is going to oversee the project and keep records for us. She can be reached on 0121 743 5358 or mob 07449 517091 or email rosalindsmart@gmail.com

Linda Faber

LEAFLETS

Someone suggested that there should be leaflets available at church that you can take away and give to people. Well there are some. I keep them in the office. I have a whole range available, most of them very short.

I wondered if there was someone in the congregation who would be willing to read some and to write about one each month for the newsletter so people can get to know what is there. Come and speak to me or email me, if that might be you.

Linda Faber

FUNDRAISING FOR NICE (NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION)

Through the generosity of donations or the purchasing of our jams and honey we are very pleased to be able to report that £495 has been raised for the above organisation which is one of our church's charities for this year. Thank you to everyone who supported us.

Julia and Myles Ensor

DINING OUT LUNCH

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

on

9TH NOVEMBER 2021 AT 12.30 pm

£3.50

ALL ARE WELCOME

MENU

BEEF CASSEROLE
CREAMED POTATOES
SEASONAL VEGETABLES

.....

FRESH FRUIT SALAD WITH CREAM

.....

TEA OR COFFEE



Please book by contacting Elaine 0121 744 6067 or email vej46@yahoo.co.uk by **Thursday 4th November**.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCES EXHIBITION

Steve and I went to the Christian Resources Exhibition last week at Sandown Park in Surrey. It is a trade show kind of thing with all sorts of businesses, charities, collages, traders etc having a stand where you can find out about things, or buy things, relevant to church life.

There is also a programme of seminars on all sorts of subjects. Steve and I went to three. The first one was about designing church buildings to make them suitable for mission. The second was about web streaming Sunday services and lastly we went to a Care for the Family seminar about reconnecting with families after covid. I bought some books for Tots and Tales at a discounted special Exhibition price as well as Steve and I buying other books for our own interest (and our Christmas cards!).

I talked to people about church heating, lighting, furniture, Fair trade coffee, children's work, puppets and lots more besides. I picked up inspiration for some things we might do missionally in the run up to Christmas. And picked up an order form for a Good News newspaper which we could use in the café or with friends/neighbours. We bumped into people we know from other places and had a chat and we caught a sense of what is happening in the church Universal in the UK and abroad. And there was lots more that wasn't on our agenda too.

This exhibition was the national event which is the largest one held each year (except last year due to Covid) but there are sometimes smaller local events—there was one just before lockdown at Stoneleigh which I went to too. It is well worth getting along for ideas, encouragement and inspiration for church life and personal discipleship growth, so look out for publicity.

Linda Faber

URGENT PLEA

"Moments" are in need of a pianist, if you, or anyone you know, would be willing to play the piano, or any other instrument, to help with the singing please could you contact Elaine. The group meets every Monday morning between 10-12 noon in our church rooms and we normally sing for the last 1/2 hour but that's not set in stone. We would be grateful for any input and if we were fortunate enough to have more than one volunteer we could start a rota.

Please give it some thought as it makes all the difference. Many thanks.

Elaine Jones

TOY SERVICE

We are holding our annual toy service on the 28th November and your gift will be going to Solihull Women's Refuge, as they did last year and they are extremely grateful. An indication of gender and ages are girls 18mth, 2yrs,4yrs,5yrs,9yrs. Boys 6mths, 7mths,1yr, 2yrs, 3yrs,5yr,7yrs, 8yrs, 10yrs, 13yrs.

They would be also grateful for gifts for Ladies such as toiletries etc. Gifts are to be left unwrapped please.

Thank you for your support.

Elaine Jones

MARIAMA - SPONSORED CHILD

After a long gap we have received a message and drawing from Mariama in the Gambia which I shall put on the noticeboard.

Mariama's future will be made safer by Action Aid working to promote women's rights and thus preventing situations where widowed and divorced women are forced to return their family home to their husbands' families leaving them and their children destitute.

I cannot reproduce the drawings but here is the message from the field worker.

Dear sponsors,

Mariama is sending her warmest greetings to you and your families.

She is a healthy girl and she goes to school regularly from Mondays to Fridays and her school has two shifts, morning g and afternoon and for her she is in the morning and classes start at 8am - 2pm each day.

It is dry season in The Gambia. The rural women are all busy with the vegetable garden watering their crops.

The weather is sunny, warm and windy in the day and dark at night.

Mariama was very happy after receiving the post card from you and she says once again a big thank you.

Thank you all for your support of this project.

Anne Cherry

ECO CHURCH

Following my appeal for a 'bug hotel' or bird boxes last month we have received a bird box to put up in our bushes. Hopefully by the time you read this it will be out in our garden. Whilst it is obviously the wrong time of year for nesting birds it might provide a space for insects to shelter and hide in the colder and rougher weather.

This month Glasgow hosts the COP26 climate summit. COP stands for Conference Of the Parties and will be attended by representatives of the countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a treaty that came into force in 1994. The '26' is because it is the 26th meeting of this group. This is a particularly important meeting because it will set the strategy for the next decade.

Please pray that the nations leaders will attend as they have the power to negotiate further than their representatives are likely to be allowed. Pray for the safety of those demonstrating outside about various important issues and for those policing and stewarding the demonstrations.

A personal note expressing personal views—Following a copy of the letter sent to our MP by a group of Christians in Solihull about climate change, being included in newsletter last month, I wrote to the group to express two things. Firstly I asked that in future that they should be clearer that they were representing their own views and not those of the church. We do not have a church policy about climate change and if we were minded to formulate one at a Church Meeting it would also have to be in line with General Assembly policy (I am not implying that anything included in the letter contravenes General Assembly policy). The way the letter was signed off looked as if the signatories were representing the church they attend, which they did not. Secondly, I raised the point particularly because the letter did not represent my views in respect to their asking the MP to promote the adoption of a

Population Policy. However useful such a policy might be towards climate change, I don't believe it is ever the business of governments to tell people how many children they should have. Children are a blessing from God and should always be seen as such and not as a problem. If you are interested in the further reasoning I gave to the group about my views and how they fit with my faith I would be happy to share them, and discuss the matter further, if invited to do so.

Linda Faber

WOW CHURCH

When I was leading worship a few weeks ago I was telling the congregation about the response of our church cleaner when she saw us in action for the first time once Moments and other groups were up and running at the beginning of September. She had begun to work for us during lockdown and was used to an empty building. When she saw what was going on she said to me, "Wow, this is amazing".

When relating her response in my talk, I coined the phrase 'wow church'. I spoke about a vision to increase what we do as church so that many more people will say 'wow' and see the attraction of the Kingdom of God through our welcome and friendship. This may even lead them to find out more and get involved further.

'Wow Church' just means great church and Christian community that makes people say 'wow' and may well overturn preconceived ideas they have about what we are and do.

'Wow church' as a phrase has stuck in my head and has been inspiring me ever since. We want to keep on aiming at a level of Worship, Outreach and Welcome that makes many more people say 'wow, I want to be a part of that'.

Linda Faber

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CENTRAL SOLIHULL

During the pandemic, we have held our meetings via zoom. Our last meeting was on 6th October.

Monthly prayer lunches

These will re-start on Wednesday 10th November 12.30-1.30 pm at Solihull United Reformed Church. This is an open invitation to anyone who would like to attend. Drinks will be provided but please bring your own lunch if you would like to. Everyone will be most welcome.

Hampton House

Volunteers are being sought to go into Hampton House on Hampton Lane. It is an Abbeyfield retirement home with 33 one or two bedroomed flats. Bridget Goudie already has regular links there and runs a 'knit and natter' group. She would welcome others to help with this established group.

Additionally, some residents do not have local family to visit them and volunteers are being sought to establish links and undertake some 1:1 visits with individual residents. A DBS check would be required but can easily be arranged. For further information please speak to Bridget Goudie, Elaine Jones or Julia Ensor.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18th-25th January 2022)

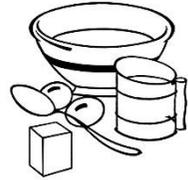
A service will be held at Solihull Methodist Church on Sunday 23rd January 2022 at 6.30 p.m.

Please put this date in your diary. Further information to follow.

Julia Ensor

FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH

This easy one-pot dish is packed with flavour and its low fat too.



SWEET POTATO SOUP WITH SWEETCORN SALSA

- 1 Kg (about 3 medium) sweet potato
- 200g Maris Piper potatoes (I used what I had)
- 50g butter or vegetable oil
- 4 shallots, peeled and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic peeled and crushed
- 1 bay leaf
- 1.2 litres chicken or vegetable stock
- 1x326g tin sweetcorn in water drained. (I used half the quantity)

Peel and cut all the potatoes into small cubes. In a large saucepan heat the butter or oil over a medium heat. Add the shallots, garlic and bay leaf and cook gently for 5 mins taking care not to let them brown. Add the potatoes and cook for 5 mins. Pour in the stock and season. Simmer for 15-20 mins until the vegetables are cooked. Add the sweetcorn and remove the bay leaf. Blend in a food processor in batches or with a hand blender, the smoother the better. Season to taste, remembering that the flavour will be lifted by the salsa.

THE SALSA

- 2 Spring onions trimmed
- Juice of 2 limes and zest of 1
- 1 medium red chilli, deseeded and roughly chopped
- 2 tsp soft light brown sugar
- 2tsp thai fish sauce or light soy sauce or 1 tsp salt.
- 1x 326g sweetcorn in water drained (I used half the quantity)

Put all the ingredients except the sweetcorn in a food processor and blend until it is all ground to the same texture (don't leave it too

chunky as you don't want the pieces of chilli to be too big). Tip into a glass bowl and stir in the sweetcorn. Serve a dollop of salsa on top of the soup.

Enjoy.

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

TALKING JESUS—WHAT CAN I DO? PART 5

'Talking Jesus' is a handbook reporting a major piece of research about the Christian faith in this country conducted on behalf of the Church of England, Evangelical Alliance and HOPE. Here is some information from it:

What can I do? Next Steps

1. Some people to pray for

One in five adults who we speak to about Jesus is open to an encounter with Him. Also 18% of adults say they don't know who Jesus is. They could be open to finding out more. What an opportunity! Commit to praying for 5 people you know to come to faith in Jesus. Pray with expectation that at least one of these five will respond positively. Also pray for yourself, for opportunities and boldness to talk about Jesus.

2. Something to say

Let's look out for opportunities to share our personal story with at least five friends or family members, telling them about the difference Jesus made in our everyday life. While some may reject our message, let's

keep the conversations going, knowing that one in five who hears us is open to encountering Jesus. And let's follow up on the conversations we have, praying for the people we meet.

3. Something to give

Many Christians say that reading the Bible was a key influence in them coming to faith in Jesus. Do you have a Gospel or something Bible based to give to people you speak with? Why not carry something with you so that you are always prepared? (Linda—We have New Testaments in church that you can take for friends—don't let them get all dog-eared in your bag though if you don't get to give them away quickly!)

4. An invitation to offer

Attending a church service was a key factor in many people's journey to faith. Are you on the lookout for opportunities to invite people to a church event where they can hear more about Jesus, and have the chance to respond? How can you make the most of opportunities throughout the year to invite people to events, such as guest services at Christmas and Easter? (Linda—Remembrance Sunday is an opportunity coming up. What about the carol Service on the Sunday before Christmas or the Christmas Eve service? Who could you invite?)

5. Someone new to get to know

With a third of non-Christian adults saying they don't know, or aren't sure they know, a Christian, who could you spend time and energy getting to know? Could you commit to making one new friend from outside your normal friendship group?

Linda Faber

BIBLE READING MATERIAL FOR 2022

I have received the order form for Bible Reading material, 'Fresh from the Word' from the International Bible Reading Association that some of you use each year. I think it looks very exciting and stimulating this year.

The theme is "Walking in the light", a wonderful springboard of hope; later in the year it will walk through "Facing the Darkness", covering despair, worry, doubt and fear. God offers us ways to lift us out of the darkness, helping to, 'strip off every weight that slows us down'. The plan is to walk this year through Luke's gospel, Jonah's journey, Ezekiel's experiences, God's weather warnings, Being church, the Beauty of Holiness- and many other themes.

A comment from a last year reader was 'every morning I am reminded that God is by my side. We know that every time we open the Bible to read that God is speaking to us, giving comfort, guidance and strength'.

It is also good to know that in reading we are reminded that we are part of a global community who are reading God's word together which is a lovely thought as the readings are translated into 13 languages.

Please let me know if you want a copy this year. The cost is £10.99 but I should get a little discount depending on the number ordered.

Irene Bound

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

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

DECEMBER 2021/JANUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Material for the December 2021/January 2022 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 21st November please.