



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

November 2023 Newsletter

*"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to
shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his
countenance upon you and give you peace."*

Numbers 6: 24-26



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
www.centralsolihullchurches.org.uk

LEADERSHIP TEAM

VACANT - Minister

Ian Carnell – Elder (Chair of the Elders, Worship & Prayer)

Gordon Laurie - Church Secretary & Elder

Liz Amos - Treasurer

Linda Faber - Mission Enabler & Lettings Administration

Howard Cotes – Elder

Bev Hands – Elder (Children’s work)

Barrie Jones - Elder (Property, Health & Safety)

Elaine Jones - Elder (Administration, Data protection, Catering)

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

NOVEMBER 2023 DIARY DATES

Thursday 2nd - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Sunday 5th – Sunday Worship led by Linda Faber, followed by Church Meeting – 10am

Monday 6th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 6th – Job Club – 10:30am

Monday 6th – Elders Meeting

Wednesday 8th – Elders attending Christian Resources Exhibition in Shirley

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

Thursday 9th - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Saturday 11th - Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 12th – Remembrance Sunday Worship (including Communion) led by Ian Carnell, refreshments before Worship – 10:15am

Monday 13th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

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

Monday 13th – Job Club – 10:30am

Tuesday 14th – Dining Out Lunch – 12:30pm

Wednesday 15th – English Conversation Café - 10am

Wednesday 15th – Churches Together in Central Solihull meeting at St Helen's Church

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

Thursday 16th – Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Saturday 18th – Saturday Café – 9am

Sunday 19th – Sunday Worship led by Rodger Charlton – 10am

Monday 20th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 20th – Job Club – 10:30am

Wednesday 22nd – English Conversation Café - 10am

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

Thursday 23rd - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

Saturday 25th – Saturday Café – 9am

Saturday 25th – Afternoon Tea in the Café – 3:30pm

Sunday 26th – Sunday Worship led by Kathy Lloyd Roberts – 10am

Sunday 26th – Blessing of the Crib in Mell Square – 3pm

Monday 27th – Moments Dementia Group – 10am

Monday 27th – Job Club – 10:30am

Wednesday 29th – English Conversation Café - 10am

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

Thursday 30th - Singing for Pleasure – 2pm in the Meeting Room

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.

HOLIDAY INN AT THE AIRPORT

In the middle of October, the Synod held its latest meeting (at the Holiday Inn at the airport) to which all churches were invited as usual. Once again we do not know what was discussed nor did we get opportunity to influence any of the decisions made because we do not have anyone willing, and able, to represent our church there. If you think that you could make yourself available to attend a Synod meeting twice a year to represent our church and report back what was discussed, and decided, please could you let Gordon Laurie know.

Linda Faber

CHRISTIAN RESOURCES EXHIBITION

The Christian Resources Exhibition is a 'trade' show where people with anything and everything to do with church and mission exhibit their wares, to sell stuff or just inform the wider church about what they do. There will be everything from banners to Bibles, heating to seating, puppets to pulpits all with stands. There is a full list of exhibitors of the CRE website. There are going to be about 150 stands included.

This year they are coming to our doorstep, for the first time, to Cranmore Park in Shirley on 8th and 9th of November 2023. The Elders are going on the 8th so if anyone else wants to go you need to buy your ticket online, £4 in advance, or tickets are £8 on the door.

ADVENT

Please look out for material and events linked with advent as the next newsletter will be short notice for some things, or you may even have missed them by the time you get to read it.

Linda Faber

SOUP LUNCH

I would like to thank those who so generously gave £95 for the Soup Lunch, for the Church Charities on 16th October.

Elaine Jones

DINING OUT LUNCH

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

on

Tuesday 14th November at 12.30 pm

£4.00

ALL ARE WELCOME

MENU

Fish and Chips

Peas

Bread and Butter

.....

Bakewell Tart and Custard

.....

Tea or Coffee



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

By Thursday 9th November 2023

SCAH REQUESTS

Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (SCAH) are in particular need of towels, blankets, tea towels, and robust china. All goods need to be as new. If folk could pass items on to me, I will put them in the SCAH room which is in the foyer off the John Palmer Hall. Many thanks.

Bridget Goudie

SCAH store their spare stock of items for the home on our premises. They are looking for someone from our church to be an occasional pair of hands to keep an eye on stock in their store cupboard, help keep the store tidy and very occasionally help unload a car of larger donations of items of stock (eg. bedding, crockery, household items). If you can help please speak to me who will put you in touch with their secretary, Louise Cox.

Linda Faber

COME AND JOIN US FOR OUR

CAROLS AND MINCE PIES FOR CHRISTMAS

The Singing For Pleasure Group invite you to celebrate the start of the Christmas season on **SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER** at 4pm in the

Church Cafe. There will be a chance to sing carols and hear some seasonal music and readings followed by mince pies/tea and coffee.

There will be a retiring collection for a church charity.



Many thanks and best wishes,

Janet Ince



Better than
Christmas Wishes
Afternoon Tea

Tickets
£6

Saturday 25th
November
3:30pm
Solihull URC café



Tickets must be
purchased in advance
from the church office.

0121 709 5505
solihullurc@gmail.com

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE READING ASSOCIATION

It is now time to order / reorder your Bible Reading material 'Fresh from the Word' for next year from the IBRA which encourages people from around the world to read the Bible daily.

The Prime minister of Samoa writes, "As long as I can recall I bear witness to how much 'Fresh from the Word' has deepened my faith." It is encouraging to know that people throughout our world, at different times are reading and praying the same scriptures as us.

In 2024 we look at the whole story of the Bible, to understand each part. Then we dive into the breadth of Scripture, revealing Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, exploring Calling, Building the Church, seeing the arts in the Bible and so much more.

2024 themes include:

- Hope for the New Year
- The big story: Bible framework
- Reconciliation
- The Gospel according to Mark
- Civil Rights
- Philippians: Joy and unity in Christ
- Creation
- Remembering and Remembrance
- A God of surprises
- Hope at Advent

Please contact me with your order as soon as possible. Thank you.

Irene Bound

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF CHURCH GROWTH

Continuing through the book 'Towards a theology of Church growth' this month we continue to look at chapter 6 titled 'Incarnation and church growth' by Martin Warner. I will share a few paragraphs that caught my attention and some questions about how we might think about, and use, what we read.

"One thing that inhibits many people [from sharing the Gospel] is the fear of ridicule. This should not be disregarded lightly; it is a serious comment on the perception of contemporary systematic hostility to the enterprise of faith in God generally, and to institutional Christianity in particular.

A Christian apologetic would do well to direct its attention to areas that suggest commonality of experience, interest, and need, rather than areas of divergent opinion and conflict."

QUESTION FOR SOLIHULL URC: Is the fear of ridicule something which inhibits you when it comes to sharing the Gospel? If yes, how can you take steps to become free of this fear?

"What is also obvious about gatherings of Christians that attract large numbers, is that the quality of worship is one of the drivers in sustaining and expanding their number."

QUESTION FOR SOLIHULL URC: In what ways could we improve our quality of worship?

"A significant percentage of Christians in Britain today understand themselves to be the Church that meets in a building that is not 'a church'. Most of these Christian communities are rapidly growing in number."

QUESTION FOR SOLIHULL URC: In what ways does having a church building of our own a help or hinder our pursuit of church growth?

On speaking about churches that are growing and don't have traditional church buildings: *"Stained glass ... might not be part of the fabric of the building, but the use of modern technology supplies visual images in abundance. And often these images are drawn from creations, using a process of imagination that invites us to an emotional response to God as our creator. Look, for example, at the Hillsong website. The images are a profoundly anthropological meditation on the theological quality of communion, koinonia, in Greek. Imagery is used very provocatively as an apologetic for the self-understanding of this Church which is 'about God and people'."*

QUESTION FOR SOLIHULL URC: Are we imaginative enough in our use of imagery to promote, and educate in, our church?

Linda Faber

SHOE BOXES

I have put out this year's leaflets in case people want to start collecting things when they see them. This spreads the expense and avoids a last-minute rush. The charity is hoping to make a special effort this year because of the hardship Ukraine and other countries are experiencing.

If you haven't done a shoebox before, the leaflet explains clearly how to do it. If you want to know more, please see me. Thank you in anticipation.

Anne Cherry

CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES

You might remember that last year we put in the newsletter each month a suggested item to buy for the Christmas shoebox appeal. This was so people didn't have to buy many things all at once in the autumn. Similarly, I have put the list, with a collection box, in the Central Foyer (Nattery) so that people can make contributions all through the year if they want to. Please consider putting together a whole box of your own (leaflets are available now) or contribute through this community box if you want to spread your giving.

Linda Faber

FUNDRAISING APPEAL

I'm running the 2023 NICE 10k race on Sunday 5th November, taking place in Cannon Hill Park.

For those who aren't aware, NICE (National Institute of Conductive Education) are a charity based in Moseley providing a range of flexible services, such as physical therapy, to adults and children with movement disorders. Harry, our eldest, has attended services at NICE since 2020, and has benefitted greatly.

NICE organize an annual 10k race every year, and I'm taking part to help support the charity with their work. If you would like to make a donation towards their work, please let me know either in-person, or call or email me. My details are at the end of the newsletter. Thank you.

Stuart Mills

KATY CANDY IN SENEGAL

Katy left the UK for Senegal on the 30th September and after a few days arrived in the village (Joal) where she will spend the next 11 months with her friend Isabel.

The village is a small community on the west African coast, beautiful and rural. They live in the upstairs flat of a house belonging to their Senegalese hosts who will look after them during their time in Senegal. It is very basic but the family are very friendly. They have shown Katy and Isabel the local places but only one member of the family speaks English so they have spent time playing simple games like Uno with them which is helping them learn some of the local language (Wolof). I think that both girls have found it a bit tricky and tiring, always overthinking every small thing and whether it is acceptable and how to say it in a different language but they are making progress.

They are now going into the school, have met the pupils and shadowed the teachers to learn the ropes. Soon they will be teaching the pupils English (with a Scottish accent) and have already been teaching some of them to swim.

Once again thank you to all who sponsored Katy. Please remember both the girls in your prayers as they learn to adapt to their new environment and commitment.

Gerry Candy

From Our Postbag October 2023

We continue to get letters from nearly all our sponsored pupils for their very kind sponsors. Let me share some of the comments that they make which help to illustrate their life at school, the progress they make and the gratitude they show for having their future lives changed so much for the better by people like you in the UK.

After viewing some of the “plates” the pupils were using we sent them a good number of plastic school plates which are now being well used.



Here are some examples of the thankfulness of the pupils for the opportunity of education which people have created for them through their sponsorship.

I always put all of you in my prayers – not forgetting all that you have done for me. I do hope to meet all of you one day. May God bless you all.

I am happy to inform you that I am doing well with my studies despite the few challenges faced in school. Being in school has also enabled me to learn many things that I was not aware of which are very important in life. I also thank you for supporting me in my education by ensuring my school fees are fully paid. I promise to work extra hard and smart to improve to the best grade.

I received your letter and I feel really encouraged as I take it as a way of motivation. I am very grateful to see that there is someone concerned with my education and really supportive in shaping up my future life goals.

I want to thank you for your support from Form One up to now that I am in Form Four. Surely you were the one who kept my academic journey continuing and may God bless you and the work of your hands.

Thank you for holding my hand and supporting me in my studies and I apologise for not writing this letter earlier because there was no electricity to photocopy my results sheet on the day of going home.

I am facing hardship in the raised cost of living in our country but, through your financial support, I have been able to be in school. I say thanks for your financial support for my journey of education. I pray for your long life and may God fill your pockets where they are reduced.

I am thrilled to embark upon this educational journey and eager to make the most of this opportunity. Your sponsorship has not only provided me with the funds to pursue my studies but also given me the confidence to take on new challenges. Your investment in my education will not go in vain and I will do my best to make you proud.

Time has been moving so fast and my four-year assignment at the High School is eventually coming to an end courtesy of your big hearts. I

thank you my dear sponsor for the infinite support you gave me through paying my school fees, surely sacrificing your own comfort to allow me to go to school, can never go unappreciated. May the good God bless you abundantly.

During the term the pupils spend a good deal of time studying but also have the opportunity for other experiences such as educational visits, joining in sports and other activities with other schools and cultural experiences.

We had a cultural day this term and we celebrated it at school The day was so enjoyable and very interesting. Different cultures were represented including European weddings and Chinese weddings. I was so interested in European weddings on their mode of dressing and the actual wedding service.

We had a prize giving ceremony this term and thankfully I was among the awarded students. I got a prize for being a champion in history and another one for being 6th out of 305 in Form One. I got a hand watch and a book.

We had a sports day this term. It involved ball games, races and fun races. The fun races included potato races, sack races and three-legged race. I took part in the three-legged race and the sack race and I was able to get a certificate for representing our dormitory well.

We, as students prepared a surprise party for all our workers and cooks to thank and appreciate them for all they have been doing for us. All students contributed what they could and we bought shopping for them. We also gave them a day off and we were the ones doing the work that they usually do for us, such as cook, wash the dishes and clean the compound. They were really happy.

In games we do well, especially the hockey and most of the time our school is the champion and this has motivated many students to join.

I appreciate and acknowledge the support that you offered me when I needed money for a trip that the school had planned to take the students out for more learning. You have been much caring and concerned about my education and it is my prayer that God will bless you abundantly.

Life has been good because this term we had some contests in school. I am happy to inform you that I participated in both internal and external contests. The contests were good since they helped me to know my weak areas and to gain courage.

We had our weekend challenge this term when we had different religious leaders visit us. This year's theme was getting busy with what matters most and the thing that matters most to me is my education.

This term has had a number of cross-curricular activities such as drama festivals, a talent day and a cultural day when we were able to showcase diverse cultures and talents from every corner of the country. This event was among the most enjoyable events that the school planned for us to break the monotony of continuous reading and learning.

At the end of each term there are examinations to take and so revision is so important. In Year 3 we pay for revision books for them to use which they find very useful – even when they are on holiday at home. We finished our syllabus in all the subjects and we are now doing a very serious revision, preparing for our national examinations which will determine our way forward. I am also making good use of the revision books which you provided and all in all getting good output from them.

During my holiday I was quite busy because on the weekdays from 8am to 1pm I would go for tuition and from 2pm to 4.30pm I was in church.

Here teachers are working hard to ensure that we pass the exam. There is a revision programme for all subjects and I find it very useful. Facilitators and motivational speakers also frequently come to talk to us. I do not know how I should thank you enough for helping me come this far. Thank you very much and may God shower you with blessings.

Life at school is not without its challenges but they work hard to overcome them.

In life there are challenges that come to strengthen you if you deal with them positively. I am dealing with the challenges that I face without giving up since there is no gain without pain and challenges makes one move from one point to the next.

My stay here at school was well though I was faced by some health problems. During this term I suffered from eye problems which made me not able to concentrate much on my studies since I regularly visited the nurse for optical consultation.

I do hope that these extracts have helped you to get a clearer picture of what great good you are giving to these very deserving pupils. It is certainly making a great difference to their lives both currently and in the future. With grateful thanks for all your kind and generous support.

**Ian D. Carnell MBE
Chairman of the Trustees - on behalf of all the trustees.**

EducAid Africa - info@educaidafrica.org

ADVANCED NOTICE

2024 holds the 10th anniversary of Solihull URC forming from the three churches at Hobs Moat, Olton and Central Solihull. We are going to hold a special service on Sunday 17th March 2024. Please write the date in your diaries and come and celebrate the occasion with us if you can.

Looking further ahead, 2025 is the 200th anniversary of the formation of the nonconformist church of which we are the present-day congregation. Many changes, and ups & downs, have happened over those two centuries but we are still here! I want to make a whole year of celebrations but we will be holding a full weekend of activities on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd November 2025. Please avoid booking your holidays that weekend if you can, as we would like to have as many join in as possible.

If you would like to join a group thinking up ideas, and organising activities, for those bicentenary celebrations please speak to me. I am already putting into place some plans.

Linda Faber

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister

VACANT

Church Secretary

Mr. Gordon Laurie – 07500 902593 – gordonjlaurie@gmail.com

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.generationsssolihull.org.uk generationsssolihull@icloud.com

Zoom Details

Meeting ID: 865 7763 7936

Passcode: 986653

DECEMBER 2023/JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Material for the December 2023/January 2024 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 19th November please.