



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

October 2020 Newsletter

*...but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not
grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

Isaiah 40:31



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)**

Gordon Laurie - **Elder**

Chris Harman - **Elder**

Liz Amos - **Treasurer**

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

DATES FOR OCTOBER

- Sunday 4th 10am:** Communion. Down but not out: When you are treated badly—Gordon Justham
- Sunday 11th 10am:** Worship. Down but not out: When you are in the wrong place—Ian Carnell
- 10.45am: Church Meeting**
- Sunday 18th 10am:** Worship. Down but not out: When you have fallen into sin—Linda Faber
- Sunday 25th 10am:** Worship. Down but not out: When you are lied about—Gordon Justham

All other regular groups are currently suspended. Please follow the current government protocols.

JOINING SUNDAY WORSHIP FROM HOME

We are looking at ways to include those who cannot join us in person for Sunday worship. We are wondering about recording the services for sound only and distributing the recording. Those who have computers can easily receive and listen to this but we are looking into different ways of distributing this to those who don't have a computer.

One of the factors to consider is how many people we are talking about—so we want to know **who is interested in receiving a sound recording of Sunday services who does not own a computer**. If you are one of those people can you either let me know (church phone Monday to Thursday mornings 07925573259) or tell the person who calls you regularly who will pass on your name.

Linda Faber

SOCIALISING AT CHURCH

We have missed being able to see each other through the long months of lockdown, but now that the church has re-opened for worship we must continue to exercise considerable restraint in how we socialise after worship.

It is a requirement that after worship we move outside as quickly as is safely possible.

Once outside, we must still keep 2 metres apart even whilst enjoying conversation. Please avoid standing for a chat where others will need to walk past you within 2 metres.

We must not meet in groups larger than 6 indoors or outdoors, and we should not move from group to group – the Government are asking us to “limit how many different people you see socially over a short period of time.” Not only will you be liable for a fine (fixed penalty notice) if you breach the “Rule of Six”, you will be giving a very bad witness to anyone who walks past the church and sees a large group of people standing outside talking.

Please leave the church premises quickly after worship, and keep in touch with your friends through the week by telephone or online. We’ve all been disturbed by the predictions of cases doubling every week or so – let us be scrupulously careful not to be responsible for adding to the numbers, or to put ourselves at unnecessary risk.

Remember that the great majority of members at Solihull are at greater risk of developing serious illness should they catch Coronavirus, because of age and health condition. By keeping our distance – physically rather than emotionally – we will be loving our neighbour as we love ourselves.

Steve Faber

THE LECTIONARY

Readings for Sundays in October 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 in any event.

- 4 October **Matthew 21.33-46**; Isaiah 5.1-7; Psalm 80.7-15; Philippians 3.4b-14;
- 11 October **Matthew 22.1-14**; Isaiah 25.1-9; Psalm 23; Philippians 4.1-9;
- 18 October **Matthew 22.15-22**; Isaiah 45.1-7; Psalm 96.1-9,(10-13); 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10;
- 25 October **Matthew 22.34-46**; Leviticus 19.1-2,15-18; Psalm 1; 1 Thessalonians 2.1-8;

CHURCH MEETING

It is a requirement within the United Reformed Church that we hold regular Church Meetings. However because of the restrictions in place because of Coronavirus we have not had the opportunity for a Church Meeting since March. It is therefore our intention to hold a Church Meeting on **11 October** after worship. This will be mainly for providing an update as to where things are with regard to a possible upgrade / redevelopment of the building and looking forward as to how the matter should be handled. Other matters will related to the manse and to the ongoing vacancy. There will be opportunity for discussion and questions.

HARVEST

At this time of year our thoughts turn to harvest. This is when we remember all the good things that God provides and makes us want to share with others who are not so fortunate.

Fiona and I enjoy walking and this year in particular we have done a lot of our walking close to home but we have been fortunate to be able to walk across a great deal of open countryside. We have been able to observe the crops growing in the fields from planting, through germination to ripening. The crops in those fields have changed over the years where previously there had been a great deal of oilseed rape instead this year we now have many fields of sweetcorn but some crops have remained the same e.g. barley and wheat.

The farmers have had a testing time this year, the extremes of the weather have been challenging. A wet winter followed by a drought in spring. Then just when the farmers were looking to harvest the grain along came storm Francis. It is not surprising that it is reported that this year is the worst wheat harvest for 40 years 40% down on an average year. As against that it, it is said to be a bumper year for apples.

On top of that the uncertainties of Brexit and the coronavirus have led to a lack of migrant workers eg fruit pickers for the crops. This has resulted in farmers trying to be innovative. They have appealed for furloughed workers to help them.

One farmer on the Isle of Wight put out a social media appeal for volunteers to get their vines up to spec after the lockdown. The farm was months behind with producing the grape harvest for their wine. Their appeal produced scores of volunteers to enable them to get back on track. The volunteers put in a day's labour and were rewarded with a couple of bottles of wine each. "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few" Matthew 9 v 37.

In the August Newsletter, writing about photography, Gordon asked us “What colour would best represent Sunday?” What picture does harvest conjure up for you? Perhaps you think of a field of wheat or baskets of apples but maybe you see a project that has come to fruition. For me it would be a picture of hay bales.

Yet the problems that the farmers face in this country pale into insignificance when compared with other parts of the world. In some parts of Kenya for instance there are huge swarms of locusts devouring the crops.

So this year as we thank God for the harvest, we remember the farmers, the pickers, the delivery drivers and all the workers that have played their part in producing and delivering our produce. At the same time we are mindful of those that are struggling to put food on the table in these difficult times and the 2,000+ food banks that have been set up to support them. They have reported an 89% increase in a need for emergency parcels following lockdown.

So in the following prayer we give thanks to God:

God our Father, you have created all things, we praise you for the harvest.

We thank you for your love for us, for those gifts which the sun and rain have nurtured, for the expertise and care of our farmers and for the food and drink we enjoy.

Make us always thankful and give us generous hearts to share what we have with those who have little; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Howard Cotes

WHAT IS OUR FRUITFULNESS AT THE CURRENT TIME?

I have a set of questions that I look at regularly when I am evaluating my role in the church as Mission Enabler, and the activities of the church, and I thought I would share them with you. I hope you will cut them out and keep them and go through them every few months yourself. They are listed further down.

Church is not a model of ‘minister does everything and the congregation expect to be looked after’—church like that is long gone even in the Church of England where the model has hung on longest. We in the URC have always been about ‘every member ministry’. So how has your ministry been going over the last few months? Life always has difficulties and challenges being thrown up—that is normal.

Someone caught my attention on the radio the other week when they said that Christianity is about being out of control—because we always seek to give God control. The Covid-19 virus problem has been unusual but just a part of us being out of control and letting God be in control. So how has He been leading your ministry recently? And what ideas has He been planting in you for the church in this new season?

— **What has happened since I last looked at these questions? - generally.**

What can be celebrated? What has been difficult? What has been a surprise? What is the Spirit saying in all this?

— **What Big Hairy Audacious Goals are we currently working on?**

— **When we last looked forward, what did we imagine that fruitfulness would be like in the coming months? Look at specific projects or areas of work.**

What has happened? What have we done since then? What else has happened? Have things turned out the way we prayerfully hoped? What is the Spirit teaching us?

— **What should we do next in the light of our experiences?**

Carry on? Change direction? Curtail something? Learn from the negatives as well as the positives.

- **What are the specific next steps?**
- **What will fruitfulness look like in 2-3 months' time?**
What could happen? As we look forward, what are the possibilities? What are we anxious about? What are we hopeful about? Where might the Spirit be leading us?

I would love to hear your thoughts if you have anything to share from your personal experiences or to contribute to our church plans and ideas. linda@faberfamily.org.uk or solihullurc@gmail.com or church phone 07925 573259 or letter, or arrange an appropriate meeting with me. **Linda Faber**



**“God doesn’t send the lost
into the church He
sends the found
into the
world.”**

‘BREAK-IN’

On Thursday night/ Friday morning the church was ‘broken-into’ by someone with a key to the Central Foyer (Nattery) door. This is not the first time this has happened this year. As a consequence we have had to change 4 locks. One of these changed locks is the entrance key to the Foyer (Nattery). We are not planning to replace all the previously issued keys. If you feel you need to have one because you need regular access, please speak to Linda.

THANK YOU JOHN

On behalf of Solihull United Reformed Church I would like to thank John Hackett for playing the organ regularly at our services. John has been a member of our piano and organ rota for several years but now wishes to retire.



John is a very able organist and musician. He started playing the organ at Olton URC in the early 1990s. He also led the church choir there for many years. During that time he was also Musical Director of the Solihull Male Voice Choir who practised at Hobs Moat URC. His organ skills will be sadly missed at Solihull. Hopefully he will continue to keep his keyboard skills alive over the next few years.

Thank you to Carol Andrews who took this photograph that features in this newsletter, she took this in December 2018. Can you spot Mark in the picture as well? **Janet Ince**



ETERNAL WALL

I have told you about the Wall project before, which is now called the Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer. For those who don't subscribe to receive news of this important Christian project I received this in my inbox:

Breaking news!

The highest authority in the land has granted **planning permission** for a national landmark about Jesus.

But we need your help.

Now is the time to be bold and declare to the nation that we believe in Jesus, the God who answers. Here's how you can help:

Please **pray** that we can spread this news far and wide; that the national press pick up this story so that we can spread hope to a nation in need.

You may have seen articles about it in the national press over the last few weeks. This landmark (think about the scale of the Angel of the North and its visual impact but this Eternal Wall will be more than twice as tall) will be on 'our patch' being built just outside Coleshill by the motorways. It will be made of a million bricks with each one representing an answered prayer sent in by the public. If you would like to contribute either financially or to send in a story about an answered prayer please look at their website. If you need help with this you will need to ask. **Linda Faber**



From: Ian Hardie, Treasurer of the United Reformed Church
and John Piper, Deputy Treasurer

August 2020

To: The members and friends of all our 1,400 URC congregations

‘THANK YOU’ for your unique and vital contribution to the life of the United Reformed Church, and for the work of the kingdom which we are able to do together in God’s name

We are living through an extraordinary and challenging time – a very anxious time for everyone; a difficult time for many; and a time of suffering and loss for some. Yet, the main purpose of this letter is to say **‘thank you’** to each of you for all that you have done for the Church in the past; for all that you continue to do even in these difficult times; and for what you will do in the future.

As we are treasurers, you will not be surprised that the focus of this letter is on finance. But we recognise that finance is only a means to the end which is our doing of God’s work together.

‘Thank you’ for your giving to your local church. Financially, this giving is the lifeblood of your own church and of the whole United Reformed Church across England, Scotland and Wales. It is this personal giving that enables your local church treasurer to pay your church’s bills. Typically, the largest of those ‘bills’ is the contribution your local church pays to the URC Ministry and Mission Fund. This Fund meets the central costs of the United Reformed Church. The total budget is around £20 million and is approved each year by Mission Council. Over 80% of this money is spent on ministers and church related community workers – their training, stipends and pensions. But the other 20% also achieves an enormous amount on

behalf of us all. General Assembly 2020 was severely constrained because of the Covid-19 lockdown, but the reports written for General Assembly are available on the URC website, and they paint pictures of all the work that has been done in our name over the last two years and much of that work is ongoing.

‘Thank you’ for your giving and the giving of your local church last year. In 2019, over £19.4 million was given by local churches and synods to the Ministry and Mission Fund. The total contributions from local churches reduced very slightly but the average giving per member has, once again and remarkably, gone up by more than inflation.

‘Thank you’ for your continued giving this year. We fully understand that circumstances this year are difficult. Most local churches have been unable to meet for over five months. We have not had the usual opportunities to make our offerings for the work of the Church. But most of the costs of the local church and of the denomination have not reduced and some have increased as a consequence of the pandemic. We are also aware that some have lost income or work this year and are therefore in great financial difficulty. But there are others on fixed incomes who are actually better off than they might otherwise have been. **So, please continue to give what you can in whatever way you can – or save it up until you can hand it over.**

Any giving of ours is a response to the amazing generosity and love of God which we see in Jesus. Nevertheless, **it is important for us to say ‘thank you’ to each and all of you.**

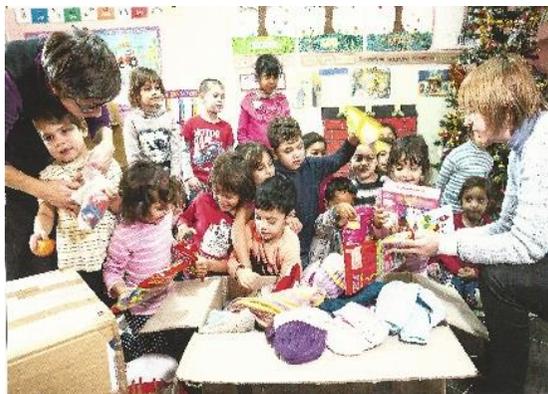
If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter then please speak to your church treasurer, who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ, Ian and John

SHOEBOXES

Hello everybody. I hope you are all surviving in this strange world that we all live in at the moment. A quote from the Link to Hope letter: "We are really grateful for your support and realise we shall have to work extra hard this year to send as many shoeboxes out to Eastern Europe as possible. We have project managers already asking for them and we don't want to disappoint them. The situation in Eastern Europe is currently worse than ours as they are without the health care and support we are fortunate enough to have in this country."

The shoe box collection is going ahead as usual so your made up boxes are still very welcome but because shopping is difficult for us we have



been invited, if we wish, to make a donation instead. The charity can then make up boxes for us. They also welcome bulk collections of items on the leaflet list such as knitted hats, scarves, gloves etc. Please look on the list to see what they need. Some of you may have made some of Linda's glove puppets and they, too, can be used by the organisers. If you are making your own box and need a leaflet please see me. (Or I have some in the church office/vestry-Linda) We need to be ready by the end of October.



Thank you for your support. **Anne Cherry**

CONTENTS LIST

1. We want everyone to receive a fun and useful box of **new and unused** gifts so **every shoebox should contain all items in this blue box.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Gloves or Scarf or Hat (new or knitted)	<input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush & Toothpaste
<input type="checkbox"/> Sweets or Chocolates (BB June 2021 EU Origin)	<input type="checkbox"/> Candles & Holders*
<input type="checkbox"/> Soap & Flannel	<input type="checkbox"/> Small Games (Travel Size Draughts/Dominoes/ Playing Cards)

*Holder is for safety and stability

2. Then please **ADD 5 or more items** (at least one of each item) from the **Red Box** for a **Family Shoebox** **OR** from the **Purple Box** to make a **Unisex Elderly Shoebox.**

FAMILY

- Colouring Pads (A5)
- Crayons/Pencils (with rubber and sharpener)
- Small Toys (yo-yo, skipping rope, toy cars)
- Soft toy/teddy (with CE label)
- Tape Measure/DIY Tool
- Head Scarf (lightweight)
- Shampoo (max 300ml)
- Solar-Powered Calculator
- Safety Razors
- Hairbrush/Comb
- Other Gifts
-
-

ELDERLY (UNISEX)

- Reading Glasses/Magnifier
- Mug/Wooden Spoon/Cutlery
- Sensory Item
(eg Lavender Bag)
- Hot Water Bottle
- Work Gloves
- Pen/Paper
- Socks/Tights (NEW)
- Wind-Up Radio/Torch
- Shampoo (max 300ml)
- Scissors/Nail Clippers
- Safety Razors
- Other Gifts
-
-

OR

PLEASE TRY TO REDUCE THE PACKAGING YOU PUT IN YOUR SHOEBOX

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.generationsssolihull.org.uk generationsssolihull@icloud.com

Moments (currently not meeting)

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

Material for the November edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 25th October please.