



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

October 2021 Newsletter

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

Colossians: 3:12



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 OCTOBER

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 October 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 October are:

3rd October	10:00am	Mrs Linda Faber - includes Communion
10th October	10:00am	Mr Ian Carnell
17th October	10:00am	Mrs Linda Faber
24th October	10:00am	Mr Gordon Justham
31st October	10:00am	Revd. Mary Burgess

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 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

3rd October Genesis 2.18-24; Psalm 8; Hebrews 1.1-4; 2.5-12; **Mark 10.2-16**

10th October Amos 5.6-7, 10-15; Psalm 90.12-17; Hebrews 4.12-16; **Mark 10.17-31**

17th October Isaiah 53.4-12; Psalm 91.1-2, 9-16; Hebrews 5.1-10; **Mark 10.35-45**

24th October Jeremiah 31.7-9; Psalm 126; Hebrews 7.23-28; **Mark 10.46-52**

31st October Deuteronomy 6.1-9; Psalm 119.1-8; Hebrews 9.11-14; **Mark 12.28-34**

FOREWORD

“Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul. While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.” – Psalm 146

How is your praying going? Are you guilty of just going through the motions or feel that your prayer will not make any difference to global situations?

Prayer is of course a very personal thing and I hope we all still regard it as one of the most effective things that we can do as Christians. I have heard it said that there is no need to pray, as the Lord always knows what is in our mind and soul. I refute that. It is not a perfect analogy, there never is, but to my mind it's a bit like loving someone deeply but never telling them.

As Ian wrote last month, “Thank you” is the shortest and simplest prayer and we should all be capable of that at any time and anywhere. My prayers of thanks normally exceed my prayers of request on a ratio of 10:1. This year it has been more like 50:50 with Fiona's surgery and subsequent chemotherapy.

Many years ago when our daughters were just little girls I attended a Thursday evening prayer session led by our then Minister, Wilfred Biggs. What I took from that meeting was that apparently you could pray for absolutely anything you wanted! Well, that was it. Eight score draws please for those who remember life before the Lottery. Needless to say they did not materialise and “needless” is probably where that prayer should be parked.

Curiously, that same Saturday we went to the Donkey Derby in Shirley where there was a stand offering a goldfish if you could throw a ping pong ball into an angled bucket and keep it there. With a bit of spin on

the old thumb I succeeded, much to the annoyance of the stallholder but to the absolute delight of two little daughters who leapt into my arms. As my ears grew like a donkey, I realised that I had already won the equivalent of the football coupon. It did, however, cost me a proper bowl and a replacement after a week but my girls' enjoyment was well worth it. I see now, incidentally, that the authorities in Bristol are going to ban the practice of giving away a goldfish in a poly bag. Not before time.

At that same Thursday evening prayer meeting Wilfred asked for suggestions for the theme of the coming Sunday's sermon. He accepted a request for unanswered prayer. I have personally experienced this twice in my life and did not handle it graciously but on both occasions my faith was strengthened by the events of the following Easter.

I do not think there is any better example of faith and acceptance of unanswered prayer than the inscription I saw on a headstone in the War Graves Commission Cemetery at Orvieto in central Italy. I visited it with my cousin Iain Laurie in 2014. Our fathers, sons of Nairn, both fought their way up through Italy and both survived World War Two, unlike the 190 who fell at Orvieto in June 1944.

We were there on the 70th anniversary of the battle with two weeks to go before the action that took their lives. The following inscription on one of the headstones will always remain with me:

GOD CALLED YOU HOME
SO YOU MAY REST
I LOVED YOU DEARLY
BUT HE KNEW BEST

All the inscriptions are in the same vein but some headstones have none and I can understand that.

Obviously unanswered prayer can only come after prayer and I maintain that it would have served no purpose to have not prayed in the first instance. So, a fear of not having your prayers answered is not a recipe for avoiding prayer in the first place. Yes, our Lord knows what you are thinking and yes he will always be at our side, regardless, but please pray with all your heart and soul and do it with gusto. I pray that your most frequent prayer will be "Thank You".

Amen

Gordon Laurie

CONDOLENCES

It was with sadness that we learnt of the deaths of two of our Olton friends:

Ray Yule leaves a widow Ann, son Stephen, daughter Debbie and family.

Robin Lough - Scott leaves two daughters Fiona and Jeanette and their families.

We send our sincere condolences to these families in their great loss.

Gweno Nichols

We have been informed that Margaret Toogood, who was a member of Olton URC from 2006 to 2015, sadly passed away at Solihull Hospital on 5th September, aged 95. We send our love and greetings.

Linda Faber

SHOE BOXES

This is just a reminder to shoe boxers that the boxes need to be ready by the end of October, please. All the instructions are on the leaflet to be found on the tea at the back of the church.

If you have not managed a box in these difficult times and still wish to contribute, cash donations are very welcome. Contact me if there are any problems. 0121 707 4285. Thank you all for your help.

Anne Cherry

UPDATE

Dear All,

Apologies this is late in the day as at the very end of June my family and myself moved home to Sambourne in Warwickshire! I know a lot of you are aware of this but in case you wonder why I have not been at church so regularly this is why! Our new address is: Oaklands, Perrymill Lane, Sambourne. B96 6PD. Steve and myself decided we would have a new adventure in life so we are now living next door to horses and sheep!

If anyone is ever passing this way please do stop by as it would be lovely to see you. At present I am still coming – or joining virtually - to Solihull church as often as possible (and then on to visit Mum who is still in Ardenlea Grove care home) so I hope to see you then.

Love and best wishes to all. God bless.

Angela Whitford

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

CS LEWIS ON GIVING

I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc., is up to the standard common amongst those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we would like to do and cannot do because our charity expenditure excludes them.

For many of us the great obstacle to charity lies not in our luxurious living or desire for more money, but in our fear—fear of insecurity. This must often be recognised as a temptation. Sometimes our pride also hinders our charity; we are tempted to spend more than we ought on the showy forms of generosity (tipping, hospitality) and less than we ought on those who really need our help. - from Mere Christianity CS Lewis

Linda Faber

LEISURELY LUNCH

We are launching our regular social lunch on Tuesday 12th October. Food served at 12.30pm. Further lunches are planned for 9th November and 14th December.

If you are interested in joining, please get your ticket before Tuesday 5th October from Elaine or Linda, in the office. The cost is £3.50.

12th October menu: Jacket Potato with cheese, chilli or baked beans. Side salad. Apple Pie and custard, tea or coffee.

Elaine Jones

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.

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

If you are in the circle you can initiate the circle if you receive a request for prayer, or you will be contacted by phone by the person before you on the list. When you receive the request, you phone the person after you on the list and pass the request on. If that person is not at home you phone the following person until you are able to pass the message to someone in person. Whoever initiated the request will receive contact when the request has gone all round the circle and got back to them.

This is not a scheme to pass on gossip or news, members are required to protect the privacy of the person being prayed for and to remember to pray. We do hope that it will include requests for prayer for thanks and celebration as well as help/need.

Linda Faber

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: Libya

There is no freedom of speech, no freedom of religion, and no possibility of public church in Libya.

Though there are around 34,500 Christians in the country, only a tiny number (approximately 150) are Libyan—the majority are migrant workers.

Libyan Christians from a Muslim background face violent and intense pressure from their family and the wider community to renounce their faith. They are also vulnerable to abduction, murder or sexual assault by Islamic militant groups and organised crime groups.

Pray

- For Libyan Christians under immense pressure to know God's peace.
- That new and isolated believers will find faith others to share with and learn from.
- For those in power in Libya. Pray for peace and stability, and for an end to the proxy civil war.

Linda Faber

FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH

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



CHICKEN AND CHORIZO JAMBALAYA

Serves 4.

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 Chicken Breasts
- 1 Onion thinly sliced
- 1 Red Pepper
- 2 Garlic cloves crushed
- 75g/2.5oz chorizo sliced
- 1 tbsp Cajun Seasoning
- 250g/9oz long-grain rice
- 400g can plum tomatoes
- 350ml/12fl oz chicken stock

Heat the oil in a large frying pan with a lid and brown the chicken for five to eight minutes until golden.

Remove and set aside.

Tip in the onion and cook for three to four minutes until soft.

Add the pepper, garlic, chorizo and Cajun seasoning, and cook for five minutes more.

Stir the chicken back in with the rice and add the tomatoes and stock.

Cover and simmer for 20-25 mins until the rice is tender.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE AND COP26 – UPDATE

Please see an update on the climate change correspondence with Julian Knight MP, this has been provided by Christine Evans.

Dear Julian Knight,

Thank you for your reply dated 22nd July. We are sorry we were unable to meet in person but are grateful for your promise to take forward some questions and suggestions.

We believe success at COP26 is critical to avoiding a global catastrophe. We commend the Government for the progress it has made, its commitment to \$100M/yr climate finance, and the amount of cross-party support (which we believe essential) achieved so far, but we believe success requires the UK not only to demonstrate practical routes to net zero emissions but having actual commitments in place. An addendum follows but we would ask you particularly to call upon government to make 4 major policy changes:

Move to a post-consumerist economy: Current political success is measured by ‘standard of living’, GDP, the quantity of ‘stuff’ and services we can buy. Life can be far more balanced than that. Much advertising accelerates demand, offering doubtful promises and generating dissatisfaction. This advertising ‘hype’ at least should be banned.

Steadily shift taxation onto carbon: A shift of taxation over, say, 10 years, would give time for households to adopt lower carbon lifestyles like moving closer to schools, using public transport more, flying less and so on. A carbon import duty, to stop home industry being undercut by imports, would be an advantage (the EU are already developing this¹) and could lead to the benefit of repatriating industry and more home food production.

Re-measure GHG emissions: The figure should be those the UK is responsible for not just emitted here. It should include international flights and shipping, and embedded carbon from imports, less exports. Estimated figures would be better than none at all.

Adopt a population policy: Population multiplies environmental harm and cannot be ignored. Couples should be encouraged to 'Stop at 2' with schools and maternity services advancing the message and easy access to contraceptive information and technology be the norm. Girls' education and family planning should be protected parts of UK aid.

*Yours sincerely Signed by Richard Balmer
on behalf of*

Beryl Moppett MBE: St. Helen's John Adams: Shirley Methodist Christine Evans: Solihull URC Janet White: Quakers Wendy Magee: Lyndon Methodist Dr Catherine Crocker: St. James, Shirley Dr Sue Balmer and Richard Balmer CEng: Solihull Methodist

TALKING JESUS—WHAT CAN I DO? PART 4

'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.

How have people come to know Jesus?

God works in people's lives in so many ways, and each of us has our own story of how we came to faith in Jesus. For adult practicing Christians, many of whom may have come to faith as children, 41% attribute coming to faith with growing up in a Christian family.

As we are praying for those we know to come to know Jesus, let's be open to the different ways he might be working in their lives and drawing them towards himself.

How do practicing Christians describe their journey to faith in Jesus?

15% say there was one sudden decision or experience. 18% say there were several key decisions or experiences over time. Nearly a quarter (23%) say there was a journey or process over time. the largest group of 41% grew up in a Christian family. 2% describe their journey in another way.

What helps people find faith?

The survey asked practicing Christians which factors most positively influenced them in coming to faith (they could select the top two or three). 41% said they grew up in a Christian family and that was the biggest influence on them. 36% said having conversations was the key to them coming to faith. 28% attended a standard (not special occasion) church service. 27% reported reading the Bible as important in their journey to faith. 24% had an experience of the love of Jesus. 17% had an unexplained spiritual experience.

What does this mean for me?

Conversations are one of the top influences on people coming to faith—so it's clear that talking about Jesus is really important. Do you feel prepared to have something to say about Jesus to your friends, neighbours, colleagues or children? Sharing your story of the difference Jesus makes in your life is a great way to start.

- The Bible is the other key influence for adults and young people. Let's also be prepared with materials to give people—not underestimating the power of God's Word.
- We can also be intentional about offering an invitation—invite people to church services and events where they can encounter Jesus.
- Let's also be encouraged to pray for people, that they might experience Jesus' love for themselves.

From Linda—I have lots of brief leaflets in the office on loads of topics. If you want to come and look at them for some that you might find useful to give away, please come and see me.

Linda Faber

CHRIST CHURCH HALL GREEN

The minister of Christ Church Hall Green retired at Easter and, as during lockdown I didn't have so much to do, it was suggested that I work for them for a few hours each week to help them formulate their mission plans for the near future. It will also help them to put together their ministerial profile to help them find a new minister just as we have done. It is likely that we will be sharing ministry with them in some way as the deployment of ministers in the area is having to undergo reorganisation. This is because there is a continuing pattern of church closures, and a shortage of ministers to manage as well. So it would be good to get to know them better for this reason too. As it happens, it has taken so long to sort things out I am now beginning to work with them just as everything is starting up again at our church!

I am now regularly working for them for 5 hours per week that I used to have available at Solihull. This may mean that I am not in the office

as often and I will occasionally visit them on a Sunday too. This is not a 'forever' arrangement though we have not set a time limit.

Linda Faber (as Mission Enabler)

ECO CHURCH

We all know that we don't have the most eco-friendly of buildings but there are lots of things that we could do to make what we have better. One easy thing to help nature would be to build a bug hotel in our bushes. Here is a photo on one I saw some years ago. It is made from bits and pieces that people have lying around. It provides shelter from the wind, cold and rain. Might you be the person to organise putting one together for us? Speak to Linda Faber if you might be interested. Or what about some bird boxes? Could you provide one of those that we can hang up?



THE PERFECT CHURCH [by Mavis Williams -- from Aiken Drum]

If you should find the perfect church
Without one fault or smear,
For goodness sake! Don't join that church;
You'd spoil the atmosphere.

If you should find the perfect church
Where all anxieties cease
Then pass it by, lest joining it
You'd mar the masterpiece.

If you should find the perfect church
Then don't you ever dare,
To tread upon such holy ground;
You'd be a misfit there.

But since no perfect church exists
Made of imperfect men,
Then let's cease looking for that church
And love the church we're in.

Of course, it's not a perfect church,
That's simple to discern
But you and I and all of us
Could cause the tide to turn.

What fools we are to flee our post
In that unfruitful search
To find at last where problems loom
God proudly builds His church.

So let's keep working in our church
Until the resurrection.
And then we each will join that church
Without an imperfection.

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.generationssoalihull.org.uk generationssoalihull@icloud.com

Moments

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Central Solihull

NOVEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Material for the November 2021 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 24th October please.