



SOLIHULL

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Serving Central Solihull, Olton and Hobs Moat
Communities

September 2022 Newsletter

*“But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run
and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint”*

Isaiah 40:31



Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972

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 Laurie - 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)

Ian Carnell – Elder

Howard Cotes – Elder

Liz Amos - Treasurer

Areas of special responsibility are listed in brackets.

SEPTEMBER 2022 DIARY DATES

- Sunday 4th** - Sunday Worship with communion led by Ian Carnell – 10am
- Monday 5th** – Moments Dementia Group – 10am
- Monday 5th** – Job Club – 10:30am
- Monday 5th** – Elders Meeting – 12:15pm
- Wednesday 7th** – Church Office reopens – 11am
- Thursday 8th** – No Tots and Tales
- Thursday 8th** – No Singing for Pleasure
- Saturday 10th** - Saturday Café – 9am
- Sunday 11th** – Sunday Worship led by Blair Kessler – 10am
- Monday 12th** – Moments Dementia Group – 10am
- Monday 12th** – Job Club – 10:30am
- Tuesday 13th** – Leisurely Lunch – 12:30pm
- Thursday 15th** – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall
- Thursday 15th** - Singing for Pleasure - 2pm in the Hall
- Saturday 17th** - Saturday Café – 9am
- Sunday 18th** – Sunday Worship led by Linda Faber – 10am
- Monday 19th** – Moments Dementia Group – 10am
- Monday 19th** – Shout Out for the Girls – 10am
- Monday 19th** – Job Club – 10:30am
- Thursday 22nd** – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall
- Thursday 22nd** - Singing for Pleasure - 2pm in the Hall
- Saturday 24th** - Saturday Café – 9am
- Sunday 25th** – Harvest Celebration Worship led by Rev Peter Bates – 10am
- Monday 26th** – Moments Dementia Group – 10am
- Monday 26th** – Job Club – 10:30am
- Monday 26th** – Elders Safeguarding Training (Zoom) – 6pm
- Thursday 29th** – Tots and Tales – 10am in the Hall
- Thursday 29th** - Singing for Pleasure - 2pm in the Hall

FOREWORD – AUTUMN REFLECTIONS

As I sit at home with windows and patio doors flung open, with my car having told me that it is 32 degrees outside, it is hard to believe that Autumn is just around the corner.

For many churches Harvest Festival is the Autumn Highlight, and whilst few, if any of us work directly on the land now, with the effects of global warming, we are all acutely aware of the changing seasons. I have many happy memories of harvest lunches and suppers at past churches where harvest was an opportunity for fellowship, sharing food as well as distributing it to those in need.

At Moments recently, we were discussing the Seasons. I said I loved Winter because Christmas is in Winter, but thinking about it afterwards, I love all the seasons, for different reasons.

I love the colours of Autumn. For many years I worked with a lady who struggled every Autumn, she felt Autumn was depressing and represented death and decay. I don't see or feel that way at all, but if any one does feel themselves struggling as the days get shorter and colder then, do reach out and talk to someone, I have found this to be a church blessed with practical Christians who strive to support and encourage each other.

I fear I had a somewhat romantic notion of the significance of Harvest within the Christian community and I was shocked to discover that the first link in this country between a Christian church and Harvest Festival, was in the mid-19th century. For centuries before it was a purely pagan festival. Like so many traditions that we now hold dear, it goes back only to the Victorians. It set me thinking on how easy it is to become distracted from what is really important in our church life, and to hold onto the things that give us pleasure rather than give us spiritual growth. How many of us at Christmas can get the balance right

between decorating the tree, organising the food and thanking God for sending Jesus to dwell among us. Can we be sure our Easters are more about the resurrection, than bunnies and chocolate?

If Harvest isn't even really a Christian Festival, then maybe we need to look again at how we celebrate it, to see if we are doing everything we can to make it a meaningful part of our church life. I love the harvest hymns, having never ploughed and scattered in my life! I see nothing wrong with thanking God for his bounty, but do we really only need to do that once a year, when the superfluity of what we have access to contrasts so greatly with the millions across the world who have no idea where the next meal is coming from, or have no access to clean water. If we know we have more food than we need, is it right that we distribute our surplus once a year?

This church does take a very practical approach to the Harvest gifts and in my view rightly so. A church I belonged to previously decorated the church with wheat sheaves, elaborate loaves, fresh fruit and vegetables, and when I asked how it was all distributed, I was told everybody took home with them what they had contributed. The church looked amazing but the whole thing was pointless.

Sometimes at church we need to be able to put our hands up and say, we do this because this is the way we like doing it, this is our way, it works for us, and we hope it is acceptable to God. Be honest about the fact that we cannot always say we are doing this because this is Gods way. Ian Carnell spoke recently about excuses people give for not coming to church and having accessible and enjoyable services cut off one avenue of excuses.

As we move towards having a new church building to take the church as a body of people forward, to serve God in Solihull, we will all inevitably face challenges, changes will be made and we will need to

ask ourselves; if a change makes us unhappy, is it because it is contrary to Gods' will or contrary to our preference?

The church elders and members of the Building Group will always need prayerful support from the church congregation, some of us most especially needing prayers for patience, as the post covid era practice of planners working from home, is causing very lengthy delays.

I wish you all a Happy Harvest and a season of Autumn when you are able to see and feel part of the beauty and harmony of God's creation.

Beverley Hands

ROTAS

Please remember to sign up on the rotas at the back of the church.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Linda and Steve who celebrated their Pearl (30yrs) Wedding Anniversary on the 8th August and to a wonderful achievement by Joyce and Dennis who celebrated their Platinum (70yrs) anniversary on the 9th August, our belated best wishes go them all.

FUNDRAISING APPEAL

Katy Candy, granddaughter of Gerry Candy, is asking for support in raising funds to work as a volunteer for a year, teaching in schools in Senegal. She will be doing this with Project Trust, who are an education-based charity. They recruit volunteers to teach in schools in different countries, and have placed over 8,000 young people in communities overseas where they are immersed in the local culture. The aim is for volunteers to add value to local communities and not take any work away from those already living there.

The funds are required to cover Katy's training, insurance, in-project support and other expenses. Funding will help Project Trust continue to make opportunities like these available to young people, and ensures volunteers do not rely on their communities for financial support.

If you would like to contribute to this work, please visit <https://justgiving.com/fundraising/katycandysenegalpt> or contact Katy Candy at katycandy46@gmail.com. Or you could speak with Gerry Candy who can discuss this further.

Thank you,

Stuart Mills

AWAY DAY

Our Church Away this year is going to be on Saturday 15th October 2022 from 10am-4pm. Please make sure you have got the correct date in your diary as I have managed to publish the wrong date on several occasions.

We will be meeting at Trinity Church, Athestone (URC/Methodist) Coleshill Road, Atherstone, Warwickshire CV9 1BW. It is about half an hour away.

Parking is at the Cattle Market Long stay carpark, off Station Street CV9 1DD a very short walk from the church. It is a pay and display carpark, charging £3 for a stay of over 4 hours. There is a possibility of some on street parking if you care to search for it. The church has no car park.

If you would like to come along, and need a lift, please let me know.

Linda Faber

GREETINGS FROM OTLEY

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for the unexpected gifts given to us on 10th July. We were staggered with the lovely presents and cheque which you so kindly and generously gave us.

We are slowly getting our house into some kind of order. Despite having a clear out before moving we have still too much "stuff". Clearly we were not ruthless enough with the downsizing and the local charity shops will benefit as we re-evaluate what we need to keep! The weather has been glorious since we moved in, tempting us to sit in the garden rather than do any work in it or the house. Nevertheless, some progress has been made.

We had thirty happy years in Solihull and made lots of friends, at church and in the wider community. Leaving Solihull was a difficult decision to make and we miss you all. However, we are much closer to our eldest son and his family. Grand-parenting duties have already been called upon!

We are now worshipping at the Bridge Church Otley which is where we worshipped when we lived in Otley many years ago. We have been warmly welcomed back.

Thank you once again for your very generous gifts. We shall not forget you and we will be back in Solihull occasionally and look forward to worshipping with you again.

God bless,
Much Love
Jackie & Gordon

DINING OUT LUNCH

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

on

13TH SEPTEMBER AT 12:30 pm

£3.50

ALL ARE WELCOME

MENU

PORK AND MUSHROOM CASSEROLE

POTATOES

CARROTS

.....

LEMON & BLUEBERRY TRIFLE

.....

TEA OR COFFEE



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

By Thursday 8th September 2022

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: Syria

A decade of civil war has made Syria a breeding ground for the persecution of Christians.

In areas controlled by Islamic extremist groups, public expressions of Christianity are banned and most churches have been seized or destroyed. Islamic dissidents are still active and violent attacks continue, while Covid 19 has exacerbated many vulnerabilities.

Christians from a Muslim background are vulnerable to pressure from their families and communities, who perceive conversion from Islam as dishonourable.

Pray

- That Syrian Christians will be able to return to their homes, communities and livelihoods.
- For Syrian believers to shine the light of hope in their communities.
- For Christian partners like Open Doors to reach those in urgent need.

Linda Faber

ECO CHURCH

Have you been trying to use less water over the summer as we were asked to do? If you have got into the habit of doing things more water efficiently why not carry on; it is a good environmental decision?

Keep a washing up bowl in the sink so you can use water that is mostly clean, a second time. Water the garden with it. Rinse a dirty cloth before a quick wash with clean water. Lots of things. Only flush the loo every other time it is used unless essential. choose to buy plants that aren't going to need watering in the future. have less paving so more rain water can go into the ground rather than having to be processed through our water companies. Change leaky washers quickly. All sorts of things you can do to use water more responsibly.

Linda Faber

CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES

It is never too early to start collecting things together for the Christmas shoebox gifts. In each month Link To Hope suggest something that we can get so that we spread the cost of our gifts. This month of September they suggest that we collect or buy Toys and games. Suggestions are: yoyo's, skipping ropes, toy cars, draughts, domino's playing cards. Remember nothing that has writing on it.



Linda Faber

PRAYER FOR REFUGEES

Almighty God, inspire us to meet the needs of refugees with generosity, understanding and compassion; may we look with mercy on all who long for a place to call home; bless those who work to bring them relief. Strengthen, in each of us, a resolve to build a society where all feel safe. Through the example we set, may our nation, and all the nations of the world, be guided towards that day when all will share in the riches of living in your Kingdom of justice and joy. May we not be defined by the evil of people traffickers nor by the drive to deport the desperate. We pray that through Jesus Christ our Lord, we can play our part in bringing peace, healing and a sense of belonging for all.

Amen

Ian Carnell

SINGING FOR PLEASURE

DO YOU ENJOY SINGING?

If so why not come along and join our friendly singing group. Bring a friend. We sing a mixture of popular, folk, classical and sacred tunes.



We meet in the John Palmer Hall every Thursday at 2pm. It costs £2.50 a session which includes the music and refreshments.

Our next session is Thursday 15th September at 2pm. More details from Janet 0121 7060204

Janet Ince

JOHN CH3 V16

I was away from our church for three different Sundays so we got the chance to visit 3 other churches to meet new people, worship differently, and see what they do.

The first Sunday we were at a village church for our grand-daughters baptism service. The Church Of England do not do these services as a part of a normal Sunday worship but in a separate service in the afternoon. Whilst there were a few church representatives, the majority of the congregation were non-Christian friends and family of my daughter and her husband. We were very pleased that the vicar gave 'permission' for those who didn't believe the promises being made about faith, to remain silent and so they would not be compromising themselves. This is something I am always aware of when choosing songs for our guest services. I don't want to ask our visitors to sing or say words that are not something that is true for them, such as 'I love you God' or 'I believe in Jesus'. Whilst we want opportunity to worship authentically ourselves, if we are trying specifically to include others, such as at a guest service, then let us not make them uncomfortable. Well done to that vicar in Lincolnshire.

The next weekend we were in London and joined in the service at an independent Baptist Church. We enjoyed the worship but what puzzled me was, as they were talking about evangelistic endeavours they were a part of, I wondered why they were doing these in a different community and not their own. If they were going elsewhere, and they were, who was witnessing in their own community? We are witnesses and community shapers where we are. We are most effective when we are witnesses amongst those we rub up against on a daily basis. Yes, it is ok to witness elsewhere, but let us make our greatest impact locally.

The last church we went to was a URC in Plymouth. We walked in and nobody was there. Nobody. The chairs were not set out for worship,

nothing! Steve wandered in to look for someone whilst the rest of the family stood in the church doorway. then, Steve having found no one, and coming back to us, someone emerged from a side room. 'oh' he said, 'we are worshipping outside at the back today. I suppose we should have put a notice on the door.' I should say so. We had researched the church online and there was no mention of worshipping outside for the whole of August which apparently is what they always do.

I was left wondering what awful gaffs we make in the eyes of visitors. What do we do, or not do, that would make a mountain of difference? Things that are normal for us but speak of thoughtlessness, or exclusivity, to the visitor.

What have you learnt by visiting other churches on your holidays this year? What can we learn from noticing contrasts with our own church? What seems odd? What good ideas have you seen? Let me know your thoughts or share an article in here next month.

Linda Faber

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Minister

VACANT

Church Secretary

Mr. Gordon Laurie

Church Phone Number

0121 709 5505

Website

www.solihullurc.org.uk

Hall Lettings: 0121 709 5505

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

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

OCTOBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Material for the October 2022 edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 18th September please.