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SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat– Olton



March 2015 Newsletter

Lent is a time to take time to let the power
of our faith story take hold of us,
a time to let the events get up
and walk around in us,
a time to intensify our living unto Christ,
a time to hover over the thoughts of our hearts,
a time to place our feet in the streets of
Jerusalem or to walk along the sea and
listen to his Word,
a time to touch his robe
and feel the healing surge through us,
a time to ponder and a time to wonder...

Lent is a time to allow
a fresh new taste of God!
Perhaps we're afraid to have time to think,
for thoughts come unbidden.
Perhaps we're afraid to face our future
knowing our past.
Give us courage, O God,
to hear your Word
and to read our living into it.
Give us the trust to know we're forgiven
and give us the faith
to take up our lives and walk.

Ann Weems

APRIL NEWSLETTER

Material for the April edition is due to

Marian Batten 0121 689 8213

mborchard@blueyonder.co.uk

by Sunday, 22nd April, please.



SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Formerly three independent churches, Hobs Moat, Olton and Christ Church, are now united as a single church. We are now holding only one Sunday worship service - using the premises in the different neighbourhoods for a month at a time.

March - Christ Church

March 8th - Olton

April - Christ Church

As we develop our life together we continue to explore how we might continue to serve the two neighbourhoods and the town centre. This will involve some rationalisation and development of our various premises. Prayer is at the heart of what we are doing, as our desire is to be fulfilling God's calling to us as a Christian fellowship.

We invite you to join us on the exciting, and at times scary, journey and look forward to seeing you in Sunday worship - wherever.

COMMITMENT FOR LIFE PRAYER

We pray for those seeking ways to improve the nutrition and food security of more than 870 million people who are hungry around the world. For change in all our lives - that we may live less selfishly and allow everyone in the world to simply live.

WHAT SHALL WE TAKE?

So what shall we take to our new church do you think? For some of us it's like moving house. Time for a re-think - what do we value most? Time for de-cluttering too I'm sure.

I tried to think what I'd like to take from Olton. Vera Harrison's canvas work depiction of the history of our Olton church immediately sprang to mind. I'm always conscious that I wish I'd drawn the roof of the church tower better for her. But time was of the essence and I was trying to help many other students in the class too - so many outlines on the canvas were drawn far too rapidly for comfort.

Thinking further, I knew what was far more important to take with us, more important than anything else - people. All the people I love in the church family - and that is everybody. The building isn't important; the things don't really matter - though it is nice to see them of course. But nothing replaces the people. God put us together as a family and everyone is more precious than gold to me - and totally irreplaceable.

Vera's hands and my hands made the pictorial tapestry. But God's hands made the people. There is no comparison! Needless to say I hope to see you all there - in our new home!

Carol Andrews

ZIMBABWE - Extract from Stories for Change 107

The socio economic and political environment has gradually stabilised in Zimbabwe over the past year. Rainfall and yields were significantly better across the country than expected, averting fears of severe food insecurity, although gaps remain.

The country's 'hunger season' starts in October, when food supplies start to run low as many families are not able to grow enough food to see them through till the next harvest. The peak of the lean season is January to March. During last year's lean season there were an estimated 2.2 million people suffering from food shortages. This year the World Food Programme expects to assist around 430,000 people in 16 rural districts.

Christian Aid has seen some success in helping to build people's resilience through its projects with local partners. In Gwanda district, where Christian Aid has supported many poor and vulnerable households whose food and livelihood security had been badly affected by fast-track land reforms, inflation, unemployment, HIV/AIDS and recurrent erratic rainfall, the emphasis is gradually being placed on entrepreneurship and improved market access for poor producers.

More than 200 smallholder farmers have improved their vegetable yields because of improved training and extension services received from Christian Aid partner the Dabane Trust. The smallholder farmers have also increased their vegetable cropping areas thanks to the introduction of solar water pumps. This has reduced the amount of water lost as well as reducing the amount of labour required to pump water for irrigation. The installation of a solar pump at Ntandokazulu has resulted in significant improvements in garden activities. Land under cultivation has increased by over 40 per cent with diverse vegetables being grown including rape, spinach, onions and a variety of brassicas.

REFLECTING ON JOURNEYS - Mark

The month of July would see cardboard boxes appear around the house gradually filling with food packets and tins and household necessities. Piles of clothes would grow in the spare bedroom and there were restrictions on what you might wear now. The tent would be erected in the garden (dry day) to check all was in order and the car would get a thorough service and clean. All this, and more, in preparation for our usual month-long summer excursion to some previously unexplored part of Europe. Where were we going? Well, there was always a plan but the default was 'follow the sun', and while there were maps and Michelin Green Guides we might find ourselves somewhere different.

How do you prepare for what you do not know? So a sunny holiday in Italy finds us caught up in the 1965 floods, leading to a 'through the night' drive through deep snow in the Alps to somewhere that was not on the itinerary. And this is just a holiday!

We make journeys each day that are on a different scale, but still require preparation and planning. Where am I going? Have I got car keys/bus or train ticket/money/brolly? How do I get there? Do I know or do I need to look at a map or take the sat-nav? Is there enough petrol in the car? All these sorts of questions flash through our minds and get answered, all as part of our preparations as we dash out of the door.

And there are those who enable us to make the journey, for whom we give little thought. The bus/train driver, the makers of the car, those who have carefully signposted our route, the station staff who offer directions, the person in the passenger seat who has the map-book, etc, etc.

What then of our spiritual journey? How do we prepare and what guidance do we need? What do we take with us and who shares the journey? And most importantly, where are we going?

It is a life-time journey, but it is encapsulated each year in the few weeks of the season of Lent. It takes us to the high points - the Transfiguration and Palm Sunday; it challenges us in the garden of

Gethsemane, as we witness Jesus on trial by Pilate, and at the foot of the cross. We know the one who is 'the Way', but find him crucified. We understand our destination in the promise of eternal life, but it seems so distant and is so easily hidden amidst the challenges of every day. But we have the Bible, prayer, the riches of Christian history and tradition and the company of fellow Christians.

We might not be able to pack for every eventuality, but we have resources to hand. All we need to do is 'follow the Son'!

Mark Fisher

EXPLORING A VISION - a MEETING PLACE

Sunday 1st March - a half-hour following the service, in the John Palmer Hall to get a sense of what could be a welcoming comfortable space to engage with non-church folk.

Monday 2nd March 7.30pm - an hour to discuss ideas, opportunities and possibilities for using the Meeting Place as a 'tool for mission'. All welcome at Christ Church.

EXPLORING A THEME - JOURNEY

Thursday 5th March 3.15pm (after Singing for Pleasure)
at Hobs Moat

A 'think tank' session seeking ways in which we can use this theme both within our church life and as we seek to engage with those outside the church. All welcome. Come prepared to be imaginative.

CONCERT FOR EducAid AFRICA

The next fund raiser for EducAid Africa is a concert by the Fellowship Singers of Shirley, to be held at Solihull Methodist Church on 7th March at 7.30pm.



Entitled "That's Showbiz" it will feature songs from the shows. Tickets £7, Children £5. Pay at the door or contact Jenni on jenni.kitson@btinternet.com

to reserve in advance.

at £7 each (including refreshments) and due to high demand last year, it's advisable to purchase in advance as it's unlikely there will be any available on the night. For more information and to buy tickets, see the choir website www.singbentleyheath.org.uk or ring **07582 083651**.

Catherine Robinson

COACH TRIPPERS UNITED

We are having a few problems with the venues. Bletchley Park is full on 16th April, so we have changed over with Tatton Park.. The Forest of Dean Railway does not operate on Thursdays, so we have changed to the Gloucester & Warwick Railway which leaves from Cheltenham Racecourse. The itinerary now looks like this:

Thursday, 16 th April	Tatton Park
“ 21 st May	Bletchley Park
“ 18 th June	Nottingham & Boat trip on Trent
“ 16 th July	Gloucester & Warwick Railway
“ 20 th August	The Potteries, Stoke-on-Trent
“ 17 th September	Llangollen Canal-boat trip
“ 15 th October	Liverpool

It was agreed that the coach fare will remain at £18, which includes a tip for the driver, and any surplus will be used to subsidise admission fees. Surpluses will only occur if the trips are well supported, and we do hope that everyone will make an effort to come on as many trips as possible.

For 2015 there will only be one person to contact if you wish to come on a trip – Val Cross on 706 9687. Please contact her at least ten days before the event, so that the coach can be booked.



A 'SPRING SING!' AT CHRIST CHURCH

Local community choir, SING! BENTLEY HEATH whose members come from Solihull, Knowle and Dorridge has celebrated another successful year. As well as singing a variety of songs for fun, the choir perform for Solihull hospital, Marie Curie hospice and local care homes as well as raising much-needed funds for local good causes. They rounded off 2014 by presenting cheques to *Solihull Mind* (mental health charity) and *Warwickshire Air Ambulance* (emergency helicopter service) who were their chosen recipients for the year. Each charity was presented with a cheque for £1,156.50 at a Sing! Bentley Heath Christmas event.



On **Saturday 25th April**, the choir will be putting on their biggest concert of the year at our very own **Christ Church URC**, Warwick Road. Their "Spring Sing!" will be a fun concert for all the family and features songs on the theme of "Love and Friendship."

Chairman Bob Manekshaw said, "The choir are learning some fantastic music with popular songs from stars including The Bee Gees, Carole King, Ellie Goulding, The Drifters and Bryan Adams."

The choir's musical director Jane Perrins said, "We're thrilled to be performing at Christ Church in Solihull. It's such a wonderful venue and we can't wait to welcome local people and churchgoers of all ages to share this special evening with us".

This year the concert will be raising funds for the two new charities that have been chosen by the choir members: *Acorns Children's Hospice* and the *Motor Neurone Disease Association*. Donations will be used for local projects.

If you'd like to support the choir and enjoy a great night out, tickets are on sale for the concert which is on **Saturday 25th April** at 7.30pm at **Christ Church URC, 741 Warwick Road, Solihull**. Tickets are priced

PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHURCH LUNCH

It is a pleasure to have the Moderator, Revd. Roy Lowes, to lead our worship on Palm Sunday, prior to his retirement in the Summer. Roy and Avril are members with us, but because of Moderatorial duties are not with us very often.

As we celebrate the disciples and crowds following Jesus into Jerusalem, so we will be 'launched' as Solihull URC, following our Lord into his future for us.

The service will be followed by a 'sit-down, cooked' Church Lunch (probably around 12noon). Tickets will be available at a cost of £5 and all are welcome to this.

If you have transport issues for that Sunday, do please let us know so that we can ensure that all who wish can be there.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ZAIDIE

We are blessed with the gifts that Zaidie has been sharing with us during her placement as part of her training for ministry. We recognise how fortunate the Sheffield Team Ministry is as they have called her to serve there when her time at college concludes in the summer. Zaidie will be joining a ministry team serving 14 churches across the city, with much variety and, no doubt, a great many challenges.

CHRISTIAN AID IN CENTRAL SOLIHULL

We are seeking a new Treasurer in time for this year's Christian Aid Week (10th May). The duties are not onerous:

- Two committee meetings per year
- Representative on the Solihull Borough CA Committee
- Recording monies paid in by church street co-ordinators
- Dealing with all monies relating to the annual coffee morning/sale.

If you are able to support Christian Aid in this practical way, please contact: Revd. Mark Fisher mjf.urc@me.com Mob.07950399615

DIARY FOR MARCH

Sunday 1st 10am Holy Communion @ Christ Church (CC)
Thursday 5th 2pm Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat (HM)
Friday 6th 10.30am Women's World Day of Prayer (see also p. 8)
Saturday 7th 8am Lent Breakfast @ Assembly Rooms

Sunday 8th 10am Family Worship @ Olton
Monday 9th 12.30pm Generations Lunch Hour @ CC
7.15pm Elders Meeting @ HM
Tuesday 10th 10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM
11am Holy Communion @ Hampton House
Thursday 12th 2pm Singing for Pleasure @ HM
Saturday 14th 8am Lent Breakfast @ Assembly Rooms

Sunday 15th 10am Family Worship @ CC with Wilma Frew
11.45am Worship @ Star and Garter
Monday 16th 10 am Fellowship Prayers @ HM
Tuesday 17th 10.30 am Worship @ Dovehouse Court
Wednesday 18th 10am Worship @ The Grove
Thursday 19th 2pm Singing for Pleasure @ HM
Saturday 21st 8am Lent Breakfast @ Assembly Rooms
10am Synod Meeting @ Trinity Stafford

Sunday 22nd 10am Family Worship and Annual Church Meeting
Tuesday 24th 10am Praying with the Papers @ Olton
10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM
Thursday 26th 2pm Worship @ Deerhurst Court
Saturday 28th 8am Lent Breakfast @ Assembly Rooms

Sunday 29th 10am Palm Sunday Worship with The Moderator
followed by Church Lunch

OLTON

PRAYERS for, and NEWS of, OUR CHURCH FAMILY

In our thoughts and prayers we remember **Mark and Judy**, and all those included in our combined church family— we pray that God will keep us all in his care. At this time we are thinking especially of: **David Argall** who is finding the stent which is now fitted is making a great improvement to his state of health; **Josie Loftus** who is back home and making good progress following the surgery she had; and **Christine Yapp** who is receiving treatment to deal with the aftermath of her operation.

It was essential that **Cynthia Parker's** teenage granddaughter, **Courtney**, should have a long and complicated operation on her back and this she has just had. At the moment she is recovering as well as can be expected - quite an ordeal for a thirteen year old girl!

I'm sure those amongst you who knew **Val Bryan**, the church secretary at Hall Green URC, will be very sorry to learn that she passed away on 26th January following a stroke. We send her family our deepest sympathy for their loss.

Rita

I would like to thank all friends who kindly sent messages, cards and prayers following my stent operation. They were much appreciated.

David Argall

I would like to thank everyone for prayers, cards and good wishes after my operation.

Josie Loftus

Thank-you to all friends who sent their good wishes on the occasion of our Diamond Wedding.

Jim and Sheila Durant

HOBBS MOAT

We pray for God's blessing on these friends who are in need of our prayers at this time and for all on our prayer list. May His love surround them and all who care for the sick. Alf Andrews , Maureen Bellamy, Peggy and Harold Crosby, Jean and Brian Mather, Joan Shaw, Vera Thomas, Nita Renshaw, Irene Lambert and partner Keith, Irene Kettle, Thelma Phillips.

Congratulations to Irene Kettle who celebrated her 90th birthday on the 7th February. A number of us celebrated with her and her family at her birthday party at Church on the Sunday afternoon which we all enjoyed, especially Irene. All our love and best wishes, Irene, from all of your friends at Church.

Bereavement. It is with much sadness that we have heard of the death of Doreen Earl. Doreen has been in hospital for a while after a fall. She passed away in Solihull hospital on Saturday,14thFebruary. Please keep her family and friends in your thoughts at this sad and difficult time.

Jeanne

I would like to express my sincere thanks for the many cards and greetings I received on the occasion of my 90th birthday. I had a wonderful weekend, and greatly appreciated all the love shown to me.

Irene Kettle

CHRIST CHURCH

Prayers are asked for the following members of the congregation:

Marian Vining, Sheila Schwartz and Audrey Tarplee.

Judith

WORSHIP DURING MARCH

Sunday 1st Holy Communion @ Christ Church - Mark
Focus on the gifts that Christ Church offers to the new entity of Solihull URC.

Sunday 8th Family Worship @ Olton - Zaidie
Focus on the gifts that Olton offers to the new entity of Solihull URC.

Sunday 15th Family Worship @ Christ Church - Wilma Frew

Sunday 22nd Family Worship @ Christ Church
Followed by the Annual Church Meeting

Sunday 29th Worship for Palm Sunday @ Christ Church
lRevd. Roy Lowes, Moderator - followed by Church Lunch
(see details p.5)

Lectionary Readings

1st March Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 Psalm 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25 Mark 8:31-38

8th March Exodus 20:1-17 Psalm 19 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25
John 2: 13-22

15th March Numbers 21:4-9 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2: 1-10 John 3: 14-21

22nd March Jeremiah 31:31-34 Psalm 51:1-12 *or*
Psalm 119:9-16 Hebrews 5:5-10 John 12:20-33

29th March Isaiah 7:10-14 Psalm 45 *or Psalm 40:5-10*
Hebrews 10:4-10

**Women's World Day of Prayer
(Churches Together in Central Solihull)**

Friday, 6th March 10.30 am at Solihull URC (Christ Church)
We will be thinking about the people of The Bahamas in the presence of the Lady Mayor Kate Wild, and our MP, Lorely Burt.
Everyone will be very welcome

**Women's World Day of Prayer
(Churches Together in Hatchford Brook)**

Friday, 6th March 2 pm at Lyndon Methodist Church

**Women's World Day of Prayer
(Churches Together in Olton)**

Friday, 6th March 7.30pm at Olton URC, Kineton Green Road

PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON

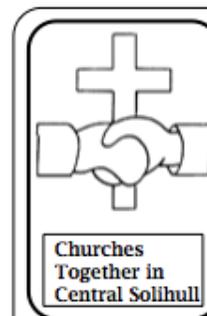
26th April at 2.30pm at Hobs Moat.

There will be yet another opportunity to enjoy home-spun entertainment of the highest quality, provided as usual by **'You, Yourself, Ladies and Gentlemen'**



We shall stick to the tried and tested format – so do start polishing up your party pieces, songs, music, monologues, sketches, conjuring tricks, recitations, etc. This will be followed by tea and cakes (please bring cakes). There will be a retiring collection.

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass.
It is about learning to dance in the rain.



Speaking of Faith

Breakfasts in Lent 2015

Great breakfast from Wetherspoons.

Plus inspiring talks - people from different spheres of life talk about their experience of living it with Jesus in the midst. At work, home and with family.

Come on Saturdays from 8am - finish by 9.30am

Speakers

28th February **Brian Healy** - Barrister

7th March **Don Maclean** - Comedian

14th March **Cyrille Regis** - Football Agent

21st March **Charlotte Nall** - Author - Founder Little Fingers Charity

28th March with **Bruce Richard** - Consultant Plastic Surgeon

Wetherspoon Assembly Rooms, 21 Poplar Road, Solihull, B91 3AD.

Cooked breakfast and Coffee/Tea - £4.20

Smaller cooked breakfast and Coffee/Tea - £3.40

Toast and Preserves and Coffee/Tea - £1.90

LEPROSY COFFEE MORNING



Thank you to all who came to the Leprosy Coffee Morning at Hobs Moat. We were able to send a cheque for £350 to the Leprosy Mission.

My thanks to those who gave gifts of money and also raffle prizes. A happy time was had by all.

Anne Lamb