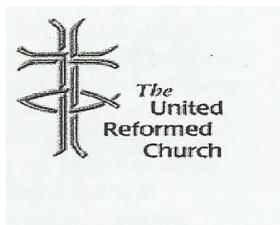


SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat— Olton



March 2016 Newsletter

I watch the sunrise lighting the sky,
casting its shadows near.
And on this morning, bright though it be,
I feel those shadows near me.
But you are always close to me,
following all my ways.
May I be always close to you,
following all your ways, Lord.

song by John Glynn





SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

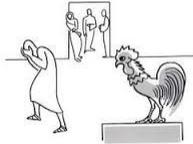
An amalgamation of three fellowships - Hobs Moat, Olton and Christ Church - Solihull URC seeks to continue serving the three communities in a different way. Sunday worship is focused at Christ Church, but opportunities at other times and in other places are being explored and developed.

Prayer is at the heart of what we are doing, as our desire is to fulfil God's calling to us as a Christian fellowship.

We invite you to join us on the exciting and challenging journey we are on, and look forward to seeing you in the future.

Mark reflects on Denial

Bethesda Church in Runcorn, which I left when I first came to Birmingham, will have put up two banners for Lent, the design for which came from the line illustrations by Swiss artist Annie Vallotton for the Good News Bible. The words are simply those of Jesus:



“You will deny me”

and

“Deny yourself”



... he must forget himself, carry his cross, and follow me." (8:34)

focusing our thoughts on poor Peter hearing the cock crow and the invitation for disciples to take up their cross to follow Jesus.

If we hear Jesus speaking to us, these words come as quite a shock. We would like to think that we do not deny Jesus and, perhaps, we do not say that we do not know him, but there is much in our lives and the way we live them that might suggest we have no relationship with Jesus. Certainly, the idea that Jesus is Lord of our lives is often far from self-evident to a casual observer. For Jesus to be our Lord some self-denial is required - and then the notion of taking up a cross suggests that total giving of our lives to Jesus is invited.

All this sounds ‘too much’, does it not? Except Jesus is ahead of us, showing that we need not be fearful of letting go of self. He knew how Peter would behave and he knows us as well. In inviting us to take up the cross he has done so first and demonstrated that the outcome of a life in God’s hands is nothing less than LIFE, with capital letters!

The sad thing is that even though we celebrate this God-given resurrection life with great enthusiasm, our denial tends to continue. What Christ offers us is eternal life, yet we behave as if it is finite. We mourn life that is past without celebrating the life that is to come.

As we journey through Lent and continue to explore what is ‘at the heart’ of our faith and life - let it be Christ. And may we not be shy about Jesus as Lord.

Mark Fisher

DIARY for MARCH

Thursday 3rd	2pm Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat
Monday 7th	10.30am Moments and Job Club @ Christ Church
Tuesday 8th	10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM
Thursday 10th	2pm Singing for Pleasure @ HM
Monday 14th	10.30am Moments and Job Club @ CC 12.30pm Generations Lunch Hour
Wednesday 16th	10am Fellowship Prayers @ HM
Thursday 17th	2pm Singing for Pleasure @ HM
Saturday 19th	10am Synod meets in Cirencester
Sunday 20th	12 noon Fellowship Lunch @ CC
Monday 21st	10.30am Moments and Job Club @ CC 7.30pm Elders' Meeting @ HM
Tuesday 22nd	10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ HM
Friday 25th	GOOD FRIDAY (Details of the Walks in Solihull and Olton will be advised on the pewslips nearer the time)
Sunday 27th	EASTER DAY

PALM SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP LUNCH

On Sunday 20th March there will be a 'Bring and Share' lunch following the morning service. The idea is that everyone brings a contribution to the meal, but there will be suggestion sheets in church during March for you to indicate what your contribution might be (just so we don't all bring sausage rolls!).

It is hoped that many of our fellowship will be able to share in this. Do bring other family members too, if you wish.

WORSHIP & PRAYER in MARCH

Tuesday 1st 10am Praying for the Community - Olton

Friday 4th Women's World Day of Prayer -
St.Alphege Solihull (10.30am).
RC Olton (7.30pm)

Sunday 6th 10am Holy Communion @ Christ Church - Mark Fisher
11.45am Worship @ Star and Garter

Tuesday 8th 11am Worship @ Hampton House

Sunday 13th 10am Worship @ Christ Church - Andy Vail

Tuesday 15th 11am Holy Communion @ Tudor Lodge

Wednesday 16th 10.30am Worship @ The Grove

Saturday 19th 7pm Rock Worship @ Olton

Sunday 20th 10am Palm Sunday Worship @ CC- Mark Fisher

Wednesday 23rd 11am Worship @ Fairfield, Olton
2.30pm Holy Week Service @ Newholme Gardens

Thursday 24th 10am Praying with the Papers @ Christ Church
3pm Holy Week Service @ Deerhurst Court
7.30pm Maundy Thursday Communion @ CC

Friday 25th Good Friday Walk of Witness - Solihull and Olton
(see pewslips for details)

Sunday 27th 10am Easter Holy Communion @ CC— Mark Fisher
2.30pm Easter Worship @ Star & Garter

OUR CHOIR

Our Choir is the backbone of our Church. They are appreciated by all who hear them sing. We also appreciate the people who play the norgan and the piano.

What would we do without them?

Mary Newbery

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CENTRAL SOLIHULL

Week of Christian Unity. 19 people attended the prayer and shared lunch from 12.00-2.00pm at Solihull URC (Christ Church). The Renewal Christian Centre was the venue for the well-attended ecumenical service on the Sunday evening at which all the local clergy participated. The address was given by Nick Cuthbert.

The CTCS committee meeting on 3rd February was held at Christ Church commencing with a meal. Tina Brooker, the Youth & Community Worker from Solihull Methodist Church gave a report of the work she is doing there with Linda Bates. They have formed an Ecumenical Children's and Youth Leaders' Prayer & Fellowship Group with 12 local churches, ourselves included. They still have to make contact with St Augustine's and the Quakers.

We spent time thinking about the Good Friday Walk of Witness when lots of ideas were put forward. There will be further details as the plans develop.

An informative talk was given by Peter Greenham concerning the welfare of refugees and migrants in both Calais and Dunkerque. He asked if anything was being done by the Churches in Solihull to promote justice in their treatment. Peter gave examples of the appalling conditions which had been reported to him by friends who had visited the camps. He spoke of the sterling work being done by volunteers, and reminded us that although there are problems in this country the refugees and migrants are also our neighbours, and are living in a desperate situation.

Peter left us with three questions:

1. Is your Church already engaged in practical, financial, political or prayer support for these people ?

2. What is your denomination doing in the Birmingham area ?
3. Is there someone in your Church who may have a calling to co-ordinate information for your congregation and is there any support offered by them ?

It was suggested that we might like to explore www.care4calais.org supporting the work being done at the camps.

Judith Kembery

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR MARCH

March 6th

Joshua 5:9-12 Psalm 32 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

March 13th

Isaiah 43:16-21 Psalm 126 Philippians 3:4b-14 John 12:1-8

March 20th Palm Sunday

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Luke 19:28-40

March 24th Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14 Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
1 Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-17, 31b-35

March 27th EASTER DAY

Isaiah 65:17-25 Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 1
Corinthians 15:19-26 *or* Acts 10:34-43 John



COACH TRIPPERS UNITED

The first trip of 2016 will be to
**Spetchley Park and Worcester on
Thursday, 21st April.**



The coach fare will remain at £18, which includes a tip for the driver, and any surplus will be used to subsidise admission fees.

The person to contact if you would like to come is Val Cross on 706 9687. Please contact her at least ten days before the event, so that the coach can be booked.

SHOE BOXES

The photographs of recipients of the shoeboxes have come and are now displayed at the back of the church.. There are news sheets at the side which tell the background to each picture; they are in numerical order.



The charity has put out a request for lap blankets and adult-size hats, which can be sent apart from the boxes. So if you feel the urge to knit.....

Thank you to all the folk who have contributed in any way.

Anne Cherry

A PLEASANT SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Hobs Moat Singing for Pleasure Group invite you and your friends to a

PLEASANT SATURDAY AFTERNOON

On 16th April at 2.30pm.

At Hobs Moat Church

Come and be entertained. You are invited to tell a funny story, read poetry, play an instrument, sing a song, tell a joke or just enjoy yourself listening. The entertainment will be followed by tea/coffee and cake. Donations will go to Christian Aid.



More information from Janet Ince, 706 0204.

RULES OF THE ROAD!

‘My driving instructor says that the main rules of the road begin with three C’s – Care, Courtesy and Consideration’, announced my Mum, when I was about eight years old. I’ve never forgotten that statement and, though I doubt these are listed in the manual of instructions given to novice drivers nowadays, I think the three C’s are just as relevant on the roads today.

I’m not allowed to drive again until October. After a drop attack it is the law that I must wait twelve months, which seems an eternity to me. Fellow drivers have been so kind at church offering me lifts, and I really appreciate this – thank you all. Thank you for the ‘Care, Courtesy and Consideration’, shown not only to fellow road users but also to me. God bless you all.

Carol Andrews

CHRIST CHURCH

Let us keep these people in our prayers:

Keith and Barbara, Gurmej and her family, Shirley, Brenda, Doris, Thea, Syd and Michelle, John Calvin, Gordon Straight, the Jenkins family, Marcia and Pedro and their family.

May God bless them all.

Bridget

OLTON

PRAYERS for, and NEWS of, OUR CHURCH FAMILY

We pray for our families and friends, for **Mark** and **Judy**, and for our congregation, thinking especially of those facing difficult times. Both **Pam Tovey** and **Sheila Durant** are due to have tests regarding the state of their health - tests which we trust will help the medical staff deal successfully with their problems.

A few weeks ago we were pleased to welcome **Norma Clement** to Sunday worship and we pray that she will soon feel able to be with us more often.

On Sunday **Maureen Butler** was back again after her lengthy visit to her family in Australia. We hope she enjoyed the time she spent with them, and we are thankful for her safe return home.

Lastly, we send our love and congratulations to **Lilian Bullock**, who will be celebrating her 100th Birthday on 13th March.

Rita

I'd like to thank every one for their good wishes and cards for my recent birthday. I've had a wonderful time and been thoroughly spoilt.

Elaine Jones

HOBBS MOAT

The following friends and families need our prayers and thoughts .
Alf Andrews, Peggy Crosby, Jean and Brian Mather, Maureen Bellamy,
Joan Shaw, Vera Thomas, Nita Renshaw and family, Irene Lambert
and partner Keith, and Thelma Phillips.

We ask for God's blessing on each of them and those who are carers.

Jeanne

I would like to thank Mark and all friends for their prayers and concern for my partner Keith. It has helped us both very much.

Irene Lambert

Monday Night Club programme for March.

7th Poetry Reading.

14th Songs From The 40's With Annuska.

21st Easter Bonnets and Craft Evening.

28th No Meeting - Bank Holiday.

Please come and join us. 7-30 To 9-30 at Hobs Moat for an enjoyable evening, with refreshments.

COME FISHING!

By this I am not suggesting we go and join the fisher folk who sit around Olton Mere catching fish, weighing them and then putting them back in the reservoir. Some fisher folk even camp around there – and it must be quite pleasant in the summer, though I can't help but feel the poor fish feel somewhat distressed to be suddenly plucked out of the water – swoosh – and then weighed. However at least they live on, once the weighing is done.



But I mean 'fishing' for Jesus – and with Jesus. 'I will make you fishers of men' he said – and by this he meant men, women and especially children. 'Suffer the little children to come unto me'. Yes he made it very plain – we must go fishing and spread His word.

'But we are too old Carol – far too old', I hear some muttering, 'and we can't go fishing anymore.' Now can you recall Jesus ever saying we could retire from the job? Just like the Queen, retirement isn't on our agenda. Jesus requires us to fish for him until we go to live with him in heaven. So retirement isn't an option – for any of us!

Some of our elderly Hobs Moat folk are excellent examples of fishing for Jesus. They are serving the community - while they still have breath. I'm not going to name anyone – but take it from me they are showing us that retirement from fishing and spreading the word is not an option for Christians. And even if we live in a retirement complex or sheltered housing we can still spread the word – as far as we are able. People of all ages need Jesus and having a faith is the most comforting thing for those who are older. Church is where we are!

We are very fortunate in having not one but three 'fishing boats' – our church buildings. These give shelter and help us to spread the word in three different places which is our mission. The old church at Olton has marvellous roof beams and is sometimes referred to as 'an upside down boat'. We got rather too comfortable in there so Jesus tipped us out for a while and sent Mark Fisher to teach us how to fish – wherever we happen to be. How apt his name is!

But there are lots of children who live and go to school very near to

the SURC's Olton fishing boat. And there are our uniformed organisations of course – five large groups of them. So our Olton fishing boat needs adapting and refurbishing. The future is bright – for us all and for the three areas in which we go fishing with Jesus. Watch this space!

Carol Andrews

ZIMBABWE – Stories for Change 117

Extracts from a letter by a Jesuit priest in Zimbabwe.

Meanwhile, we are still waiting. Waiting for the rains, with the meteorologists warning us that this year's El Niño threatens us with a record drought. Waiting too for an old man to retire or go to his reward, with no certainty about what will follow that.

A programme of daily 18-hour power cuts was announced recently, but we are getting electricity all day some days. To be able to do that, they have to keep the Karib river running and if there isn't good rain very soon, and a large increase of water in the dam, the level will drop below the turbine intakes around the end of the year. The heavy rains on the upper reach of the Zambezi take a couple of months to reach the lake, so unless it's raining well there now, our power cuts will last indefinitely. We've had to drill a borehole for our schools, as the municipal water is unpredictable, rare, either green or brown in colour and smells bad. We have 1500 children in the two schools, primary and secondary, on about 1 hectare and the borehole uses an electric pump. Most people use some kind of well right here in town, some with hand pumps, some electric. On a bad day, the queues at the pumps are long.

Commitment for Life Prayer

We pray for the people of Zimbabwe as they wait for the rains to come, and for Christian Aid and other organisations trying to help them with the provision of water.

IF JESUS CAME TO YOUR HOUSE

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two,
if He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do?

Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honoured Guest,
and all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best,
and you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there,
that serving Him in your own home is joy beyond compare.

But, when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door?
With arms outstretched in welcome to your Heavenly Visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in?
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?
Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard?
And wish you hadn't uttered that last loud hasty word?

Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder if the Saviour spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing the things you always do?
Would you go right on saying the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?

Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace?
And would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace?
Would you sing the songs you always sing and read the books you
read?

And let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed?
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you plan to go?
Or would you maybe change your plans for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends?
Or would you hope they'd stay away until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on?
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?

It might be interesting to know the things that you would do,
If Jesus Christ in person came to spend some time with you.

Lois Blanchard Eades

DID YOU KNOW?

Why does Easter date move?

Easter falls early this year (27th March), but why does it move, especially when Christmas has such a fixed date? Easter Sunday can land on any date from 22nd March to 25 April because Easter is based on the lunar calendar. Easter always falls on the first Sunday following the full moon after 21st March. If the full moon occurs on a Sunday then Easter is the following Sunday, and this is also why Easter is known as a moveable feast.

Taken from Countryfile Magazine Feb. 2016



