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OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Material for the October edition is due to your Church Newsletter Correspondent or

Ailsa Betts: ailsa.betts@blueyonder.co.uk

by Sunday, **21st September**, please.

SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat - Olton



September 2014 Newsletter

“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months and then comes the harvest?’

Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest . Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

John 4: 35-36





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.

September - at Christ Church

October - at Olton

November - at Hobs Moat

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.

ZIMBABWE - Stories for Change No.101

Give thanks for:

Health care workers who provide medical aid and education to those infected with the HIV virus.

The Christian Council of Botswana and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches.

Marimbas, drums, mbiras (instruments made with tuned strips of metal and played with the thumbs) and shakers.

Choir festivals where singers join together in praise of Christ.

Those working for a better democracy in Zimbabwe.

Uncles, grandmothers and cousins taking care of children whose parents have died of AIDS.

Pray for:

The leaders of government and their success in bringing economic progress, education and health care to their people.

Landowners and the land workers, and those who are displaced by land reform.

Reconciliation between the races in Zimbabwe, leading to a society of equality and respect.

AIDS orphans.

Hope for those who have little to hope for.

Prayer

Dear God, our builder,
you have all the building materials needed to construct our societies.
You have all the strength to put wisdom on all that has fallen apart
in our lives.

You have the wisdom to reshape our world.

Inspire us with all your wisdom, strength and love,
to rebuild the broken walls in our community.

www.oikoumene.org.

we need to give some thought to how we frame our invitations (Back to Church Sunday, Harvest Festival, Remembrance) or inform the community about our Christmas services.

I am not suggesting that we embrace the digital age unreservedly, However, if it is the way in which we reach out and share our mission in conversation and partnership, then it is worth exploring. For those of you who are already connected as 'Digital Disciples', we look to you for support and guidance as we journey together to become comfortable in our digital skin.

Zaidie Orr

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

Thank you for your support of Christian Aid Week in May. We are pleased to report a successful year. The Coffee Morning and Sale raised £1,927 which is more than any previously. The Street Collections raised £10,941. With some church collections and special events through the year, the overall total is £14,700.

A 'BIG THANK YOU' to all who have contributed in any way, but do please continue to prayerfully support the work of Christian Aid as they enable us to respond to crises and need around the globe.

*God of the impossible,
We pray for justice, peace and reconciliation;
When the challenges seem too many,
Remind us of your resurrection power;
When the task seems overwhelming,
Remind us of the miracle of love;
And when apathy threatens us,
Remind us of your vision of a world made whole.
Help us to hope that the impossible can happen
And live as if it might do so today.*

Solihull Christian Aid Committee

Mark looks ahead a little

Returning to Christ Church for Sunday Worship during September is a reminder that time ticks by quite quickly. I am very aware of the concerns that exist about decisions for the future and that for some the focus for concern is our premises. I trust that we will get to a decision about this quite soon as we adopt a plan for our life and mission. However, I wish to stress that, if we are seeking a 'long term' future, decisions about how we engage with those outside the church and help them engage with Christian faith need to be our prior concern.

If our focus is on maintaining our current pattern of life as best we can, then it is likely that the future would be short, as our current engagement with others is slight and does not help them engage with Christian faith. We will not get very far by simply wringing our hands and complaining that people do not think of coming to church as they used to (although I'm not certain when the golden age was).

If we are to get anywhere, it will be by taking seriously both our faith and those who have not yet been challenged by it. We are exploring some ways in which Christian faith can be presented to those outside the church. We also need to consider some change within our life as the church, in order that those who may wish to pursue the challenge of faith can find the community of faith within which to do it.

I am conscious that much talk of mission sounds a bit like 'us and them'. However, the journey and the challenge of faith continues for us all. We need to be careful that talk of holding on to what is familiar does not shield us from those fresh challenges.

By the time this is read a Sunday service focusing on mission and our 'Church Chat' enabling some informal sharing about possible initiatives will have taken place, and I hope that the weeks ahead will find a 'buzz' of fresh purpose as we put some initiatives into actions.

Mark Fisher

CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER

Monday, 1st 7.30pm Monday Night Ladies (MNL): Tea/Coffee & Chat

Tuesday 2nd 10.30am Community Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

Thursday 4th 7.30pm Cell Group Leaders meet @ Jill Hughes

Saturday 6th 7.00pm Film 'Les Miserables' and formation of Cell Groups @ Hobs Moat

Monday 8th 7.30pm Elders' Meeting @ Christ Church

7.30pm MNL: The Shirley Singers Choir

Thursday 11th 7.30pm Hatchford Brook Churches Together

Monday, 15th 7.30pm MNL: A.G.M.

Tuesday 16th 10am Fellowship Prayers @ Hobs Moat

10.30am Community Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

Wednesday 17th 12.15pm Churches Together in Olton @ The Friary

Saturday 20th 7pm Harvest Supper @ Olton

Sunday 21st 10am Harvest Festival Service and Baptisms @ Christ Church



Monday, 22nd 7.30pm MNL: Musical Evening with Tony & Rob

Wednesday 24th 10am Praying with the Papers @ Olton

Friday 26th MacMillan Coffee Mornings - look out for details

Sunday 28th 11.30am Church Meeting which follows Worship @ Christ Church

Monday, 29th 7.30pm MNL: The Wyken Gentlemen Choir

Tuesday 30th Community Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

was 16% and now it is 77%. This has also influenced how we access the internet, with 57% of us using our mobile phones to connect to the web. There was a significant difference between children aged 6-15 years and adults when asked about their enthusiasm and reliance on technology. We now spend more time communicating than sleeping. If this is a clear trend then how as Christians do we connect with the whole concept of the digital age? How does all of this relate to the church and our mission? How do we make our mission relevant using the technology around us?

We have established the principle of having an on-line presence through our church website, but no doubt there is some degree of scepticism about the use of social media. The gospel is all about sharing the good news, and the web presents us with the opportunity to share information about our church. Do we know what it is that people wish to find out about our church? 1 Peter 3:15 reminds us to be ready with an answer if someone asks you about your faith and respond with gentleness and respect (ESV).

This does not replace the face-to-face contact which we all value, but in our busy lives and shrinking world we can use the web to have conversations, interact with each other and share the good news of Jesus. Over the past months we have been exploring together our mission and how that would influence what our church would be like in the future. We discussed the question of who are called to love. So, when we responded that it is those in our community, how many of us included those we connect to on social media, e.g., Facebook?

There is evidence to show that very few people now respond to advertising but instead would take action based on peer review/recommendation. So every time you shop or go out for a meal you may have noticed that you are asked to 'comment on the service you have received'.

As digital technology plays an increasing important part in our lives and as we look forward to the events in the coming three months,

ZAIDIE'S SUMMER SCHOOL

Social Media – Connect, Communicate and create Community

The highpoint of the summer for me was Summer School in Windermere. The weather was good, but as always the one free day which we were allocated was when it became overcast and it tried desperately to rain.

The theme of this year's Summer School was the **Church in a Digital Age: Using social media**. I toyed with the idea of attending and left it till the last minute to book my place. The subject of Social Media was not high on my agenda, in fact I would best be described as 'a bit of a dinosaur' or as someone referred to me as BBC (Born Before Computers) when it comes to these matters. I was pleased to meet a couple of people who were in a similar position on the course.

At first I tried to identify the reasons why I was reluctant to take the next steps in to the wider world of Smart phones, iPod or even an iPad. I am fairly happy with the phone (landline), a mobile phone (occasionally switched on), a laptop and e-mails. The new gadgets would mean that I would encounter Apps, Plus Google, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. It is difficult to keep up with the names of the various sites as they seem to change so fast. The ones I have listed are now seen as 'old hat' and others include Blogosphere, Flickr, Tumblr and Mashup. The barrier which I had to overcome was the language and the way in which words are spelt - or in my view misspelt. You may have noticed that Tumblr and Flickr do not include the letter 'e'. The use of the internet has changed the way we live and it has transformed everyday activities, such as shopping and our view of the world.



The recent survey carried out by Ofcom - Communications Market Report 2014 stated that in 2004 the number of homes with broadband

SUNDAY WORSHIP 10am

during September is at **Christ Church**

- 7th Ian Carnell leads, Mark will preside at Communion and receive Margaret Smith into membership.
- 14th Racial Justice Sunday - Zaidie leads
- 21st Harvest Festival - Mark leads
We welcome the Perks family for the baptism of Harry and George
- 28th Zaidie leads - Church Meeting is part of this service

CHRISTIAN AID FOR GAZA

Grateful Thanks to the congregation for being very generous. We were able to send £450.00 to the emergency appeal for Gaza.

Bridget.

LECTIONARY READINGS

September 7th

Exodus 12:1-14
Psalm 149
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20

September 21st

Exodus 16:2-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Philippians 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16

September 14th

Exodus 14:19-31
or 15:1b-11, 20-21
Psalm 114
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35

September 28th

Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
Philippians
Matthew 21:23-32

DON CLEMENT, an Appreciation

We mourn the passing a few weeks ago of Don Clement, a member of Olton Church for many years, and our thoughts are with his widow Norma, and his son Mark and his family, at this difficult time.

I first met Norma and Don in the early 1970s, long before we all joined Olton URC, when I became organist at the Church of Christ in Sparkhill where Don and Norma, and Don's parents, had been members for many years. We struck up a friendship then which has lasted through the years. Both Don and Norma, like Don's father, worked for Arthur Holden and Sons, an old-established firm of paint manufacturers in Birmingham. Edith Holden lived opposite the Church at Gowan Bank, and is renowned for her book 'The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady', a facsimile of her Nature Notes for 1906. Don had a long and successful career with the business, and for many years after his retirement he continued sharing his experience and expertise in a training role with the Paintmakers Federation.

Don had a wide range of interests including football, particularly in his support of Everton, and cricket, loving to be in the sunshine watching a match at Warwickshire CCC. He had a wide taste in music and was a singer of some renown. He and Norma enjoyed travel and for many years they loved relaxing at their caravan at Honeybourne in Worcestershire, spending much more time there after retirement and often worshipping at the URC in Broadway.

A very practical man, Don lived out his religion and put his energies to use in so many ways at Olton URC. He was one of the first to volunteer for the OURCARE committee which organised a huge number of activities to raise essential funds for the development of the Church buildings, but also which engaged large numbers of people from inside and outside the Church and which provided much fun and entertainment. He was a tireless worker for the Christmas Fayre year after year; he served as an elder, and whatever needed doing he was always ready to lend a hand.

Sadly Don suffered severely with arthritis for over 40 years but

UNITED COACH TRIPPERS

HAY ON WYE and the GOLDEN VALLEY

Thursday, 16th October

Our October trip takes us to Herefordshire, to the beautiful Golden Valley of the River Dore in the lee of the Black Mountains. It is a picturesque area of gently rolling countryside, and featured in the film Shadowlands, about the life of CS Lewis. Hay on Wye is a small market town renowned for its booksellers, and the ride through the Wye Valley will be another feast for the eyes.

John Robinson (745 3516) or Val Cross (706 0687) need to know numbers by Sunday, 5th October, to ensure that we have at least 26 people and are able to book the coach. We regret that late cancellations will incur a cost of £10.

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Monday, 15th September

Lorely Burt, MP, will meet us at 11.15am in Westminster Hall. There will be two tours, at 12.20 and at 12.25. We shall also visit Westminster Abbey. All seats on the coach have been taken.

SOLIHULL SINGING FOR PLEASURE

Solihull Singing for Pleasure meet three Wednesday afternoons a month at Solihull Methodist Church.

We sing anything from 'My Old Mans A Dustman' to 'Phantom Of The Opera'. No four-part harmony or reading of music, just a nice happy atmosphere with a cup of tea to boot.

Why not come and join in the fun? Give me a call for further details on 0121 704 4006.

David Argall

HOLLIE'S BAPTISM

It's quite a while since we had a christening in our Olton church, so what joy when we all witnessed young Hollie Butler being christened by Mark at Olton in July. Holly is Maureen Butler's granddaughter, who was ably supported by her older sister for the occasion – as well as her parents and Godparents of course! The two little girls looked so pretty in their pink dresses.



It was such a lovely service, part of which included the famous Biblical story of 'The sower and the seed'. The children in church enthusiastically helped Judy and Mark Fisher to 'sow seeds' among the congregation in the pews. Some of us were 'seeds sown on the path' so we hardly grew at all, other seeds were sown on stony ground so those did not grow well either. Other seeds were sown among thorns which choked them. The large congregation enacting the wilting and lack of growth of these unfortunate seeds was a sight to behold from the choir stalls! But some of us were lucky enough to be seeds sown on good soil – brought by Judy in a bag – and we grew and grew.

I was reminded of the wise Chinese proverb which says, 'I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand. That Biblical story and its message will stay in the minds of us all having enacted it; thank you Mark and Judy.

Carol Andrews

A Sunday School teacher said to her children: "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But there is a Higher Power. Can anyone tell me what it is?"

One child blurted out, "Aces!"

through most of that time he fought not to be too limited by it. Despite powerful medication, Don was often in pain.

Norma and Don enjoyed a long and happy marriage and Don was a caring and supportive father to Mark and grandpa to William and Zachary. He and Norma loved young people and my own three children, like many youngsters in the Church, adored them both from an early age. Don was loved and respected by all who knew him, and we shall all miss him greatly.

Peter Maskell

My family and I would like to thank everyone for their cards and messages of sympathy on the sad loss of Don. They were all very much appreciated.

Norma Clement

CHRISTMAS FAYRE, 29th NOVEMBER

Olton Christmas Fayre has been going for many years, and we are delighted that our extended Church family is so supportive and willing to help.



Over the next few weeks boxes will be at the back of the church for donated items, and individual stallholders will be asking for particular items via the weekly pewslips. Broadly we will be selling books, CDs, jigsaws, home-made cakes, jams, chutneys and marmalade, toys, filled mugs, sweets and chocolate, bric-a-brac, and Christmassy items of all kinds. There will be Tombola, raffles, competitions and games, and a barbecue, not to mention Father Christmas!

Stallholders have volunteered for each of the main stalls, but many people will be needed to help in different ways, and Elaine Jones (744 6067) will be very glad of any offers.

CHRIST CHURCH

PRAYERS

We pray for the following friends and relatives, and may God Bless them: Keith and Barbara Fisher, Brenda Cotes, Arthur Francis, Wendy Jarvis, Chris and Trixie Harman, Brian and Margaret Parry, Syd, Alan and Barbara Mence, Jayne Williams, Anne Lavery.

Bridget.

HOBBS MOAT

These friends need our thoughts and prayers at this time. They all have their individual needs which are known to their families and friends. We pray for God's Blessing on each of them: Maureen Bellamy, Peggy and Harold Crosby, Jean and Brian Mather, Sue Roberts, Joan Shaw, Vera Thomas, Norman Wilkins, Revd Neil and Elaine, Irene Lambert and partner Keith.

Congratulations to Jean Mather and Pat Combe who have celebrated " Special " birthdays during August. Love and best wishes from us all .

Engagement! Barrie and I are very pleased to announce the engagement of our son Craig to Ivannia Romirez whilst visiting her family in Costa Rica on the 23rd of August.

Jeanne Brown.

HOBBS MOAT SINGING FOR PLEASURE starts again on Thursday, 11th September, at 2 pm. Come and join us, new members are always welcome.

Janet Ince

Scouting.

I have to say that's when emotion kicked in! The picture reminded me of my time as a Scout in the 1960s, when I undertook the required overnight 'vigil' as part of the investiture at that time to become a Senior Scout. The picture just about sums up the scene of me in a local church in London about 1962, thinking about life and everything, searching my soul etc. Considering the message that the picture portrays, I have suggested that the picture should be displayed in the Scout HQ.



My thanks go to Sue and David for their presentations to me, together with thanks to all that have wished me well in my 'resting' period. As I've said, I'll still be retaining some link with the Group and Olton URC, and will support both on occasions. I wish both the Scout Group and the Church the very best for their immediate futures – futures that are currently a little unsettled – and hope that they become more certain soon.

Peter Mann, The 'resting' GSL, 2nd Olton Scout Group.

PS. For those interested, Earnest Stafford Carlos painted 'The Pathfinder' between 1907 and 1917, and the original is held by the Scout Association. Also, a copy of the painting is part of the set of Coronation Street and may be spotted in scenes set in the Barlow residence. The original painting hangs in The Baerlein Room in the Whitehouse at Gilwell Park, the HQ of Scouting. For those more interested in other Scouting paintings by him I suggest the internet.

PPS. **Our Scout Section is still looking for a Leader.** Any interest from anybody who may be able to help, or knows anybody who could be interested, should contact the 2nd Olton Scout Group via myself on 07866 781149, or a member of the URC at Olton.

CHURCH RAMBLE

What a wonderful summer we're having again, a time to be out and about to enjoy the sunshine. On Saturday 12th July nine of us took advantage of it and went on a four-mile ramble around Hatton. We met 10.30am at Hatton Locks and set off along the canal through fields enriched with wheat and barley, meadows where we stopped for our light refreshment, and a little road walking to Hatton Green.

Pauline had arranged for the interesting 16th century Church to be opened for us, where we were greeted by a very friendly warden who gave us the history of the Church and treated us to cold drinks and cups of tea. After spending some time looking around we set off across more fields back towards Hatton Locks.

Thank you Pauline, Helen and Nigel Motl for another wonderful walk, you always manage to make them most enjoyable and we hope that another one may follow next year.

Elaine Jones

GROUP SCOUT LEADER, 2nd Olton

As most in the Olton URC area are aware, I'm taking a rest from my duties as Group Scout Leader of 2nd Olton Scouts after nigh on 15 years in the role. I had already planned to take a step back as GSL at the end of the last Scouting year, not to leave the group altogether, but to relinquish the major part of the GSL duties and just continue with some lighter ones. It was therefore with surprise and a little emotion that I received two wonderful 'thank-you's from both the Scout group and Olton URC during the Parade service last July.

After a summary of my life with the Scout group, Sue Trzcinski, Beaver Leader, presented me with a mantle clock, and some wine. Then, on behalf of the church, David Argall presented me with a framed print of "The Pathfinder" - the original was painted by Earnest Stafford Carlos. The picture depicts a Scout of the early 1900s with the hand of Christ on his shoulder to emphasise the religious or spiritual dimension to

OLTON

PRAYERS for, and NEWS of, OLTON CHURCH FAMILY

Firstly, we pray for those in need: for Norma Clement and her family following their sad loss of Don; for Neil and Elaine; and for all those whose needs are known only to themselves.

We were happy to witness the baptism of Hollie Victoria Butler who is the daughter of Tim and Natalie, and the granddaughter of Maureen Butler. Tim is a former member of Junior Church.

Then we offer prayers of thanksgiving for the academic success of those younger folk who have just completed their degree courses: a 2.1 and a 1st for his final dissertation for Cameron Agnew; a 1st for Adam Lloyd who is continuing his university studies for an MA - Cameron and Adam were also former members of Junior Church - and a Masters degree (1st class) for Alexandra, Pam Tovey's granddaughter. Adam is Jill and Robin Lough-Scott's grandson, and another of them, Tom, now has 5 A*s at A Level and is going on to Oxford to read Medicine. Tom's younger brother, George, who is a Diabetes sufferer, took his GCSE Maths a year early. The night before the exam he only managed two hours sleep as he struggled to get his sugar levels right, but in spite of this he got an A* in the exam. We pray that all these young people's hard work will eventually lead them into worth-while careers. Congratulations to them all and also to Lanica Agnew on becoming head girl at Lode Heath School.

Finally for the latest news: Jill and Robin Lough-Scott celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 6th September, so congratulations, love and best wishes to them both.

Rita Routley.

I would like to thank all friends who have sent cards, letters, phone calls and visits while I have been ill. They have been a great comfort to me.

Christine Yapp

GARDEN PARTY, 19th July

Despite the variable weather nearly 40 people came to the Garden Party, which was held to raise funds for “EducAid Africa”, the church charity chosen for 2014. Approximately £240 was raised on the day, and surprisingly another £60 was donated afterwards, giving us a total of £302. This will be handed over to Educaid Africa at the end of the year.

There were two competitions - bagatelle and a quiz. The winner of the quiz was Maureen Butler, while Audrey Tarplee was the highest scoring lady with the bagatelle and Ian Carnell top-scored for the gents. Congratulations to them all.

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves .

Judith & Alan Kembery

When a butterfly settles.

God speaks in the silence, just listen to him,
he speaks in the stillness of life;
his voice is the message that speaks to our hearts,
and it settles our worries and strife.



So if we rush and bustle we won't hear a thing,
for his voice is a whisper, so wise.
He won't take decisions; he leaves that to us,
but he's there to suggest and advise.

Eyes closed in the silence, relax for he's there;
sit still with the world out of sight.
Then listen in stillness; he speaks to your heart,
and he'll bathe you in his healing light.

When a butterfly settles it opens its wings,
the pattern and beauty is shown;
when you and I settle and listen to God,
it is then that his message is known.

Carol Andrews

SHOE BOXES

For the past few years we have been sending shoe boxes to Eastern Europe through a charity now called Link to Hope. They are collected at the beginning of November and we normally have a 'conveyor belt' afternoon in October when we put them together.



There are various ways people can help:

1. Some people prefer to fill their own box guided by the leaflet which has to go with each box.
2. Different items to fill the boxes are gratefully accepted at any time in the year, including knitted hats and mittens.
3. Empty shoe boxes (up to size 8 and no boots) are always welcome.
4. Each box must have £2 attached, so financial help is very useful.
5. Help with packing and wrapping each box on our working afternoon.

Leaflets will be available in our churches together with lists of (cheap!) suggestions for box contents. There is also a poster showing how to fill a box for £10. In Olton there will be a display of photos showing where last year's boxes ended up.

If you have any questions, please see me.

Anne Cherry

SUMMER LUNCH

Thank you everyone who supported our Summer Lunch on the 22nd June. We are very pleased to say that £316.50 was made for the church charity. A big thank you to all those who worked so hard helping to make it a success.

We have found 2 folding chairs in the garage that do not belong to us. If anyone has lost them, please let us know!

Chris and Trixie