

BURY UNITARIAN CHURCH



Magnolia

April 2022

Letter from the Minister

Dear all,

Well, after a few days of glorious sunshine, during which I very nearly got my sandals out, it's now trying to snow, so my monthly weather report seems a bit confusing.

But whatever the weather is up to, we can revel in the fact that the days are longer: not only because the clocks went forward last week (and everyone made it to church on time, so far as I can tell), but also – and more importantly to me – because we have passed the Spring Equinox, and, regardless of what the clock says, the days are now longer than the nights. Only slightly so, as yet, but it's still an inarguable fact.

As we've taken to doing on the Pagan quarter days, a group of us gathered at Holebottom around the Equinox to celebrate the turning of the wheel of the year. If you'd like to join us sometime for one of these celebrations, you'd be very very welcome. Apart from anything else, it is a real privilege to have the former burial ground to spend some time in, and it's become one of the delights of my life to walk the dog there, seeing the trees develop and change and having any conversation drowned out by the birdsong.

At church, things continue to develop, too, and very excitingly. Last month we held our first monthly Saturday Social Gathering, and we resumed our monthly communions. By the time you read this we will be part way through our second 'Give and Take' event, and we will be looking forward to our first congregational lunch in well over two years. Next month – and there are more details of this later in the Calendar – we are planning the return of our always-popular quiz night.

Our regular activities continue, of course: on Sundays we worship at 11.15 in church and at 2pm on Zoom. The book club and camera club continue to meet; the church is normally open on Fridays for people to pop in either on 'business' or to chat with the minister; and we continue to thrive.

We will be marking Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter more thoroughly than we've been able to over the last two years, and you can read further details later in the Calendar. What a joy to be doing that in person again!

You will see elsewhere in the Calendar that I am dropping one Zoom service a month: now that we have communion on the first Sunday, it is too rushed to do both that and the Zoom service justice, so from May onwards, there will be no Zoom service on the first Sunday of each month. Please be assured this is not the start of phasing the Zoom out.

We've welcomed several new people recently, and that's always lovely to see. What's even lovelier to see is that the Bury Unitarian Church Welcome (which I still remember from the first time I set foot in the building one Saturday in 2016) is still in full force. It would be lovely to think that all churches are as welcoming, but I know from experience that that's not so: during my recent time off I went to worship elsewhere on one of the Sunday mornings (it doesn't matter where, but it wasn't a Unitarian church) and the welcome was not all it could have been. The worship itself was nourishing, but the welcome wasn't, and I actually left feeling quite sad and hurt. It made me very aware of how important it is to make everyone – new and not so new – feel that they are wanted in our places of worship. If someone doesn't feel welcome they won't come back, and whilst that's sad for the church, it's potentially heartbreaking for the individual.

I was very comforted by the fact that if there were visitors at Bury that Sunday, they wouldn't have left feeling that way. I know that Unitarianism isn't for everyone, and I actually have no problems at all if someone tries us once, or a few times, and decides we're not what they want or need, but if someone visited us and decided not to come back because they didn't feel welcome, I would be really upset. It is good to know how unlikely that is!

I think that we are in a good place as a community just now: things still feel tentative and unsure, but as the days lengthen, so too do our horizons.

As ever, I send you my love

Rev Kate Brady McKenna

Presidential matters

March, as I predicted, has been extremely busy, and April looks set fair to be similar, as I prepare to chair the GA Annual Meetings---a daunting task! I have already attended several meetings which provide much-needed background, and these have involved a wide variety of people; I've scribbled notes furiously, at each meeting, and added details from emails, and am just hoping that everything will come together, when necessary. There will be more to do, later!

March 6th took me to Scarborough, to lead their worship; seven of us, all told, were present, including me and Roger, but the service was appreciated; it was rather more informal than I'm accustomed to; whilst we sang the hymns, I perched on a chair at the front, with my back to the rest of the congregation, whilst everybody else remained seated, and the tune was played through a computer. Scarborough remained closed for a long time, after lockdown, and is still struggling to find its feet; I had promised to visit, in 2020, but was rather later than that. The actual chapel was destroyed by fire, in 1958, and was subsequently turned into flats for vulnerable people, so the Scarborough congregation uses what used to be the Sunday School Hall; it's a bright, cheerful, welcoming space, and well-suited to its needs. The first same-sex wedding in the whole of Scarborough is due to take place there soon, and this event is eagerly awaited.

We enjoyed a few days of holiday, visiting York, Malton, Whitby, and central Scarborough---places we've previously enjoyed. The weather was dry, but cold, but it was good to spend time in the fresh air, without having to worry about rain (for once!) We then drove to London, where I was due to attend a day of Executive Committee Meetings, at Essex Hall, on March 11th. Roger also had an appointment---to insulate the loft, at my sister's house. Everything was successfully accomplished, to everybody's satisfaction, by the end of the day! Attending EC Meetings has proved an interesting experience, during this past year, and I've been impressed by how hard its

eight members work, and by how committed they are; every meeting has taken place pleasantly, and the business has been completed very amicably. One decision taken, on this occasion, concerned the collection at the GA Anniversary Service; in a departure from tradition, the 2022 collection will be donated to Ukraine, rather than to GA funds, and individuals, congregations, districts, and participants alike are urged to contribute to this very worthy cause.

Our time in London was short; we drove back to Bury, the next day, so that I could take Dukinfield's service, on March 13th. As before, I found this congregation to be very hospitable and welcoming, and my service was enjoyed by larger than usual numbers. The stained-glass windows at Old Chapel are beautiful, especially when the sun shines through them, as it did, on that day, but it's a pity that the only person who can see them, during the service, is its leader! I did remind everybody to enjoy the sight, as they left! Sometimes, we take familiar sights for granted and fail to appreciate them as we should!

We were unable to attend the March 1st Vigil for Ukraine in person, but duly observed our silence, at home, which we found very meaningful and moving. My mind had been exercised as to whether a national Presidential message should be circulated, and I spent a goodly part of March 1st, thinking about this, consulting with others, and participating in various arrangements. The result of the combined efforts of half-a-dozen people produced a statement on behalf of the GA (written by Rev. Jo James, of Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds) and a message from me---a brilliant example of how quickly and efficiently tasks can be achieved, when goodwill exists. Both messages were posted on the UK Unitarians' website, on March 2nd, under the heading "Solidarity for Ukraine". A "Moment of Silence and Reflection for Ukraine" was held at 8 p.m; on March 18th; it was possible to join this event, conducted by Rev. Mark Hutchinson, via Facebook Live, which we did, or to observe the moment at home. And our own Vigil produced an excellent contribution to the appeal by the British Red Cross for funds for

Ukraine; there are so many ways of giving, and aid is so desperately needed.

Pepper Hill Chapel, Shelf, out on the moors near Halifax, which we visited on March 20th, is a beautiful little chapel, both inside and out; its exterior is immaculate, and its interior airy and well-proportioned, catering exactly to its congregation's needs. Before the service, I asked whether I should use the pulpit; the answer was that I should give the service from the lectern---although I would be asked to go into the pulpit, briefly, at the beginning of the service; this was, apparently, a tradition, and something of a joke, according to John Midgley. I played along---to be informed, after photographs had been taken, that I could now be admitted to the select company of those who had stood in the highest Unitarian Pulpit in England! Fame, at last! The congregation, augmented by a group from Bradford (some of whom I recognised from Uni-sing!) were friendly and appreciative, in the extreme; not only did they encourage me, as I led the service, but they laid on a delicious lunch, afterwards. This was indeed a wonderful experience! Nobody could remember an occasion on which Pepper Hill had ever been visited by the current GA President---and this has been a by-product of the pandemic. I understand that, usually, many of the larger Unitarian congregations in the country organise themselves to invite the President to their churches, every year; but, this year, when so much disruption has occurred, this hasn't necessarily been the case, with the result that I've been able to accept invitations to different, smaller, chapels; in the end, good has resulted from a seemingly negative situation.

My visit to Blackpool, on Mothering Sunday, was my third, in a year, but I feel I have come to know them well, in a short time; they are a very welcoming, friendly congregation, who enjoy their services, as well as their social-time; my service was well-received; every person present was given daffodils, which I distributed, at one point, and the recorded music we took

with us was greatly enjoyed; the final piece stopped abruptly, halfway through, to groans and protests, so Roger had no option but to play it all through again! We took a photograph of the whole congregation, after the service, outside the main door, in bright sunlight, to be used in Blackpool's next newsletter, which I am eager to see. This congregation works hard, too; they need expensive roof-repairs and hold a table-top sale, every Saturday morning, but are having two special Easter sales, to raise a little extra money. Our support of their efforts involved us in buying a great deal of cake---but that's another story!

Kate and Ade have enjoyed some holiday-time, during March, and I hope they have enjoyed the benefit of it; they have both worked long and hard, on behalf of our congregation, for which we are duly grateful; we are very fortunate to be able to call on them, so frequently, for a great variety of requirements. Kate broke her holiday in order to conduct a celebration of the Spring Equinox, on March 21st, and a small group of us attended a brief meditation-service, at Holebottom; signs of spring were all around us: buds on the trees and clusters of daffodils along the edge of the land. And, of course, we've all become aware of lighter evenings and mornings, even before British Summertime began. Let us hope that good weather, just now, presages a beautiful summer, which we can all enjoy. Roger and I send everybody our very best wishes; look after yourselves.

Love, Anne.

Kate would like to thank Anne for her fascinating and engaging Presidential Matters reports over the last two years. As most of you know, Anne's tenure as president of the GA finishes at the Annual Meetings later this month, and we wish her and Roger every blessing as they adjust back to 'normal' life. I also hope that they manage to have a well-deserved rest after a frantic and fascinating three years.

Worship:

Good Friday, April 15th:

I will be hosting a short Good Friday vigil and communion in the worship area at 3pm on Friday April 15th. Everyone is very welcome to join us for this, which was a very meaningful part of our church traditions prior to the pandemic. The service does, of course, mark the crucifixion of Jesus, and is free Christian in nature, but it is inclusive of people of any faith and none.

The service will last around forty minutes (perhaps an hour), and we will meet in the lounge for coffee and hot cross buns afterwards.

Easter Sunday, April 17th:

We will be meeting at our usual times (11.15 in church and 2pm on Zoom) on Easter Sunday. Please join us for a Unitarian celebration of the story of the resurrection: alleluias without dogma!

Inclusive Communion Services

There will be a communion service after the main service on Sunday April 3rd and Sunday May 1st. Everyone is very welcome to join us.

Midweek online meditations

These will continue, but from April onwards will be monthly, and take place on the second Tuesday of the month, at 3pm (this, as everything else with these meditation sessions, is on a let's-see-how-it-goes basis, so please speak to me about timings: I'm very happy to consider moving back to meeting in the evening!)

The April session, therefore, will be at 3pm on Tuesday April 12th.

News of our community.

Paul Kenyon

I am delighted that Paul, who has been in our prayers whilst he's been working as a war correspondent for the BBC in Ukraine, is home and safe. I know that our prayers and good wishes have been appreciated.

Kate

Stephen Ramsay

We continue to keep in touch with Stephen, who sends his best wishes to everybody at church, as well as thanks for their good wishes. Stephen has now undergone his heart operation, and is currently staying with his mother, whilst he recuperates and builds up his strength. He assures us that he will be back to play for us, as soon as he can, and we look forward to welcoming him again, as soon as he feels ready.

Anne.

Lorraine Hunter

Lorraine has been training as a hairdresser, and is now open for business: she's very happy to make home visits, and if you'd like to see some examples of her work I'm sure Jean would be happy to show off her own haircut, or you can look for her on Facebook under hopehairdesignx.

Anniversaries and remembrances

Although we are not currently in a position to dedicate church flowers to individuals each week (because the arrangements have changed), please know that we would all love to see anniversaries and remembrances in these pages: if you would like someone mentioned, please let either myself or Janet Thatcher know.

Bury Unitarian Church Congregational AGM 2022

Notice is hereby given that the 52nd Annual General Meeting of the Congregation will be held in the worship area on Sunday 29th May 2022, starting at 12.30pm. Coffee and biscuits will be served beforehand, at the end of a slightly shorter than usual service. The meeting should not last for more than an hour. The quorum for the meeting will be 25 people.

Nomination sheets for the election of Church Officers will be posted on the lounge notice board during May. The posts to be filled are

Chairman of the Congregation

Chairman of the Church Council

Church Secretary

Church Treasurer

Assistant Church Treasurer

We will also be seeking volunteers to serve on the Finance and General Purposes Committee and on the Worship Committee.

Janet Thatcher

Nomination forms will go up on the notice board in the lounge on Sunday May 1st.

Committee and other reports need to be with Janet by Sunday May 8th in order to be distributed in time for people to receive them before the meeting.

Gift Aid Records

We are required by HMRC to ensure our records of those eligible* to donate through the Gift Aid scheme are up to date (*i.e. if you are a UK taxpayer).

We also recognise that people's circumstances change over time and we want to ensure we are reflecting the current wishes of our members in relation to the donations they make to Bury Unitarian Church.

We are therefore distributing new Gift Aid declaration forms to all our members.

Gift Aid Declarations apply to *individual* tax payers. Therefore, if you require a form for an additional tax payer in the household, please ask for a copy. There will be some spare copies at Church.

If you are eligible to donate through the scheme and you wish the Church to claim Gift Aid on your behalf, please complete and sign the Gift Aid Declaration Form and return, sealed in the envelope provided to the Gift Aid Administrator, Val Chamberlain, either by hand or by leaving them in the clearly marked box which will be under the post table at the back of the worship area, or, if you prefer, by post addressed to Val, at Church **by Sunday May 1st.**

The information you provide will remain confidential, kept in a secure place and only the Gift Aid Administrator will have access to the details.

If you have any concerns please contact Val Chamberlain.

Thank you for helping us to update our records to enable us to make our annual claim. Reclaimed Gift Aid gives an important additional boost to Church funds.

Church collections: some explanation!

We've recently started receiving financial offerings as part of the service again, rather than asking for them to be placed in a bowl at the back. It's struck me that church collections are, for some people, one of those mysterious things that happen, without much explanation.

The money we collect on Sundays, and the money that some people pay by bank transfer, goes into general church funds, and is used to enable us to keep both the building and our work going.

You'll have noticed that some people use an envelope for their donations: this is simply so that we can claim Gift Aid on what we're given. If you're a UK taxpayer and therefore eligible for Gift Aid, please consider using an envelope so that we can claim this 25% extra from the government.

Financial offerings are only one part of what people contribute to church, of course: your spiritual and practical gifts are also valued and received with genuine gratitude.

If you're able to Gift Aid your contributions (either regular or one-off donations) please speak to Val Chamberlain, who can explain it all a lot more clearly than I can!

Readers

If you'd like to be added to the list of people who give readings during services, please just let Kate know. Having someone else's voice during the service enlivens it for everyone, and you'll never be asked to read something you disagree with!

Notes from the church property

We all know the phrase 'Running like clockwork', it means that something is running smoothly, cleanly, effectively, an almost frictionless beauty of efficiency. It's a really common phrase, and one that could only be exclaimed by someone who has failed to notice just how much maintenance clockwork requires to run anywhere near its peak efficiency.

The mechanical workings of our door locks run on the same principles as clockwork, and I don't know that our locks have been opened and serviced since the building was built. As a result they no longer work like the phrase insists they should. There's a fair amount of old dusty grease in most of them and the problem with grease is that it doesn't dissipate, it simply stops working as a lubricant should and effectively makes the door handles and locks much more difficult to use.

I first noticed it when I had to fight the electrical room door to get it open, it was a fierce battle involving keys, screwdrivers and copious amounts of screaming. Once the lock was apart, disassembled, degreased, reassembled and then reinstalled, it operated like absolute clockwork. Exactly the way it intended. It became a thing of beauty for me, instantly turning, without fuss, every time I used the key. Just like clockwork.

The only problem for me really is that no-one else will ever see it. But if you see a smile flicker on my face when I turn a lock, just know, that that lock is now probably working like clockwork.

Ade Brady

Regular Events:

Saturdays:

11am Zoom coffee morning

Last Saturday of each month (subject to change):

12-2 Saturday Social Gathering

Sundays:

11.15am Worship in person at Bury

2pm Zoom worship from Bury (except the first Sunday of each month)

First Sunday of each month

10.30am Worship in person at Ainsworth

12.30pm Inclusive Communion Service at Bury

Alternate Mondays

7pm Camera club (online and in person)

Second Tuesdays of each month:

4pm Online midweek meditation session

Last Wednesday of each month:

2pm: Book club

What's on: April 2022

- Saturday 2nd April:** 12-2, Saturday Social Gathering.
11-3, Give and Take event, in the upstairs hall.
- Sun 3rd April:** 11.15am Bury: Service in church
12.30pm Bury: Inclusive Communion Service
2pm: Zoom service (Zoom 849 7456 6116)
3pm: Ainsworth: Service, led by Rev John Allerton
Before and after church: Give and Take Event
- Fri 8th April:** Minister's vestry day
- Sat 9th April:** 11am: Coffee morning (Zoom 839 0159 23)
- Sun 10th April:** 11.15am Bury: Service in church (Palm Sunday)
12.30pm approx.: Congregational Lunch.
2pm: Zoom service (Zoom 849 7456 6116)
- Mon 11th April:** 7pm: Camera club (please contact Janet Thatcher for further details)
- Tues 12th April:** 3pm: Meditation (Zoom 812 3292 6975)
- Fri 15th April:** Minister's vestry day
3pm: Good Friday vigil and communion
6pm: Good Friday online communion
- Sat 16th April:** 11am: Coffee morning (Zoom 839 0159 23)
- Sun 17th April:** 11.15am Bury: Service in church (Easter)
2pm: Zoom service (Zoom 849 7456 6116)

Fri 22nd April:	Minister's vestry day
Sat 23rd April:	11am: Coffee morning (Zoom 839 0159 23)
Sun 24th April:	11.15am Bury: Service in church 2pm: Zoom service (Zoom 849 7456 6116)
Mon 25th April:	7pm: Camera club (please contact Janet Thatcher for further details)
Tues 26th April:	Deadline for entries for the May Calendar.
Wed 27th April:	7pm: book club, meeting to discuss <i>The Whistler</i> , by John Grisham. All welcome.
Fri 29th April:	Minister's vestry day
Sat 30th April:	12-2, Saturday social gathering Afternoon: Bury Pride parade.
Sun 1st May:	11.15am Bury: Service in church 12.30pm: Inclusive Communion service. 2pm: No Zoom service today. Nomination forms for church roles available.
7th May:	'Talking about prayer' workshop



Bury Unitarian Church Saturday social gatherings (in person)

Please join us on the following Saturdays between noon and 2pm.

Saturday 26th February

Saturday 2nd April

Saturday 30th April.

the kettle will be on; there will be biscuits, and there will be good company. Parking is available, and free.

Why not bring your knitting, or a project you're working on? You can also help us collate the next month's Church Calendar.

If you would like to join us, we would love to see you: everyone is welcome, no matter what.

Quiz night: a date for your diary

Plans are underway for a quiz night, to be held on Saturday 14th May. Please book the date in your diaries, and further details (and a sign-up sheet) will be available nearer the time.

As always, a meal will be provided.

It is really exciting to see this regular and popular event return!

Book Club

The book club will meet on Wednesday, 27th of April at 7pm. The book to be discussed is *The Whistler* by John Grisham. Our evening meetings have resumed so there is parking available. Copies of the book are available from the cupboard in the coffee lounge. Please sign up if you take a copy. All are welcome at our sociable book evenings, no need to have read the book!

Pam Gilbert

Camera Club

The camera club continues to meet two or three times a month, sometimes in person and sometimes over Zoom. They're always happy to meet newcomers, and you don't need any technical ability.

Ade Brady

Kate would like to thank the camera club, once again, for the covers of this month's Calendar: the members of the club provide a gorgeous selection of photos for the cover every single month, and Roger Mills very kindly prints them.

Could you help organise a concert?

We are hoping to host a concert by the Rossendale Male Voice Choir later in the year, but we need a group of people to organise the event. If you could bring a small group together to make all the arrangements, please speak to Kate, Betty, or Anne (you are not expected to do it yourself!)

Workshops

I am planning a series of workshops to be held over the lighter months of the year. They will normally fall on whichever Saturday the church is open for the Saturday Social Gathering, but the first one will be a week later, so that we don't clash with Bury Pride.

Some of the topics I'm planning include a death café (we have done this before but people felt it would bear repeating); workshops on Julian of Norwich (again, a repeat!) and Hildegard Von Bingen; a discussion of our favourite hymns and what we love about them; and a session on what our ideal church would look and feel like.

I would love to hear other ideas for future workshops, but in the meantime hope that you can join me for this first one.



Bury Unitarian Church Workshop series Saturday 7th May, 2.30pm Talking about Prayer

**a chance to engage with our feelings around prayer,
and to write our own, in an inclusive, open-hearted
and open-minded atmosphere.**

***these workshops will normally be on the last Saturday of the
month, but this one has been moved so that we can go to the
Pride parade.***

in the church lounge

**you can find us behind the Victoria Wood statue, less than five minutes'
walk from trams and buses. We have plenty of free parking, and
refreshments will be available.**

Everything you always wanted to know about Unitarianism but were afraid to ask.

Are there Unitarians in other countries?

How many Unitarians are there?

I didn't agree with the sermon – should I say so?

Is it okay if I believe [this]?

What does the chalice mean?

What's Holebottom?

What's Hucklow and is it as amazing as everyone says?

What's the GA?

When were we illegal?

Where did Unitarianism start?

Why do we celebrate Easter if we don't believe in the resurrection?

I am pretty confident that you sometimes hear things in church, either from whoever's leading worship, or in a meeting, or in chats over coffee after the service, and don't really know what the other person is talking about. I speak as someone who, genuinely thought for a little while that a couple of people from the church she then attended were going to the G8 meetings.

And sometimes you've heard people say the same thing for so long that you no longer feel confident to ask. Again, I speak as someone who for ten years didn't know what something was at her former church but was by then far too embarrassed to ask.

At some point in the next few months I'm planning a service in which I (with help from others!) will try to answer any of these questions, however trivial they might seem (if you're wondering it, so is someone else). Obviously, Unitarianism is far more about questions than answers, but if you're wondering something or confused by something, make a note of it and pop it in an envelope which will appear on the noticeboard in the next few days.

Support for our wider community

Ukraine

At the beginning of March we held a vigil in church to show our grief and pledge our support for the people of Ukraine as they experience the horrors of the Russian invasion.

It was a moving and heartfelt evening, and I would like to thank everyone who supported it in any way.

At that service, and at the two Sunday services either side we held a retiring collection for the Red Cross Ukraine appeal, and we raised a total of £205: thank you for your generosity.

Food bank and baby bank

Thank you all for your continued support for the food bank and baby bank. The contributions we send really do make a difference to them, and I know they appreciate our relationship with them. The need is ongoing, and with the increases in the cost of gas and electricity, as well as rising prices overall, it will only get worse, I'm afraid. I know that this means it will be harder for some of us who already support them to continue to do so at the same rate, but please continue to do what you can.

Beat the Street

Beat the Street are a project providing food to those most in need (we are hoping they will be able to use our premises soon).

Seven volunteers are currently providing hot meals to around 120 families and individuals around Bury, mostly delivered to people's homes or to where they are sleeping, and they would love more support if anyone is able to spare a couple of hours a week.

If you can, or know someone who can, please speak to Kate.

The Minister's schedule, April 2022

I will be away on Unitarian 'business' (the Ministerial Fellowship gathering followed by the General Assembly Annual Meetings) from Monday 18th to Thursday 21st April, and then taking a couple of days off.

I generally try to take Thursday as my day off, and sometimes Wednesday as well. This does change when necessary, and of course if there's an emergency, I'm available even on days off.

Some weeks I don't manage a day off, so occasionally I'll take an extra one here or there.

I am usually in the vestry between at least 10am and 3pm on Fridays, and if you'd like to pop in for a chat you are very welcome. I do sometimes pop out to run errands, so it's wise to call first!

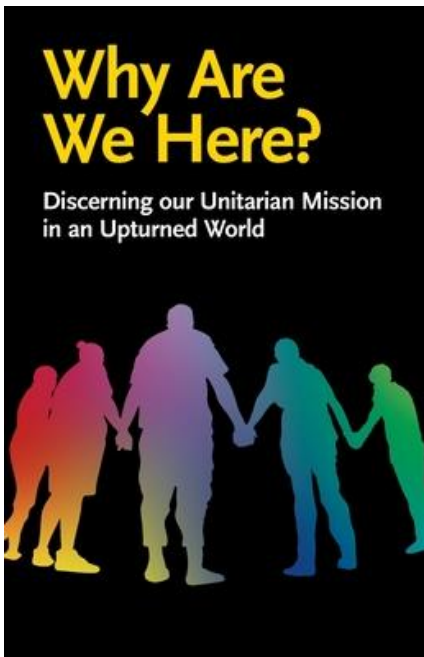
May Calendar.

The deadline for articles for the May Calendar will be teatime on Tuesday 26th April, and I will be editing it later that week. The church will be open for coffee and (I hope) cakes on Saturday 30th, and if you could join us that day to help collate and staple, that would be deeply appreciated!

The Calendar should be available on Sunday 1st May.

Another book to consider: **Why are we here? Discerning our Unitarian Mission in an Upturned World**

This new book, to be launched at the GA meetings, contains a theme talk by Kate.



A copy is available in the cupboard in the hallway, and they'll be on sale at the GA meetings if anyone would like one brought back.

In normal times, Unitarian thinkers and seekers come together each year at the Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow, Derbyshire, for a week-long Summer School. A team of speakers offer a series of hour-long talks connected the over-arching theme of the week. In 2021 the Covid pandemic resulted in the Summer School being conducted online instead of in person. The key question was *What is our Unitarian church for, anyway?*

Contributors explored how the landscape of 'doing church' had changed (especially during the pandemic), pondering how Unitarians can flex and adapt in turbulent times while remaining true to their religious roots, and offering some constructive visions for Unitarianism in the challenging landscape of the twenty-first century.

Bury Pride, Saturday April 30th.

Ade and I will be walking in the Bury Pride parade on Saturday April 30th and would love it if some of the congregation would join us. Further details nearer the time.

The world is still not safe enough or fair enough for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex or asexual people, and it is really important that people know there is a church in Bury where they will be welcome, valued, and affirmed, no matter what.

The church will be open before and after the parade, and there is a good chance you'll get to see Kate in her rainbow tutu.

If anyone has the time and energy to think about making a banner, Kate would love to hear about it. We do have a Unitarian Pride flag.



News from around the district

News from Ainsworth

The next service at Ainsworth will be held on April 3rd, at 3 p.m; this will be their 307th Anniversary Service. The service, to which all are welcome, will be conducted by Rev. John Allerton. Refreshments will be served, in the school-room, after the service.

NELUM

NELUM's AGM will be held on Monday, May 9th, 2022, at 7 p.m; at Unity Unitarian Chapel, Bolton; all are welcome.

I have papers for this meeting; please let me know if you require a copy.

Anne.

General Assembly Annual Meetings

At an Executive Committee Meeting, in January, there was considerable discussion about whether this year's Annual Meetings could, and should, take place in-person; eventually, it was decided that we would go ahead, as originally planned, at The Metropole Hotel, Birmingham, between April 19th and 21st. Booking opened, on February 1st, and closed on March 22nd; there was no late booking fee, this year. Further information will be available via UniNews and from the uk unitarians website. I understand that approximately 300 people have booked. There are 4 Motions for debate, and we will be discussing these, after the service, on April 3rd, so that we can instruct our delegates. Please attend, if you possibly can. Copies of the Motions and their background papers are now available from Kate.

Anne.

From the LCM: News of a new book

The Lancashire Collaborative Ministry has produced a book, to commemorate its eighteen months of lockdown, during 2020 and 2021; during this period, zoom services were held in Nazareth Unitarian Chapel, in Padiham, each Sunday, for the members of Unitarian congregations in Chorley, Padiham and Rawtenstall, primarily, but for all other interested parties, as well. The book, entitled 'Our Extraordinary Year', is now available for purchase, at a cost of £8.00 per copy, if collected personally, or £10.00, including postage and packing. 'Our Extraordinary Year' is a wonderful collection of sermons, written by such distinguished ministers as Rev. Jim Corrigall and Rev. Danny Crosby; by regular LCM service-leaders Rev'd. Dr. Shannon Ledbetter (who is also the book's editor), Tony Cann, Paul Hubbard, and Robert Foreman; and there are also two addresses by G.A. President, Anne Mills. As the services progressed, one of Padiham's members, David Cooke, set himself the task of writing at least one haiku, every week, to describe each service; he would read out his haikus, after the service ended. Sadly, David died, just before Christmas, last year, and the book pays tribute to his talents. Each item in the book has its author's permission for it to be used, so that copyright should not cause problems. For service-leaders, the book contains a wealth of quality material, which represents a valuable resource, from which full services could be constructed, at fairly short notice; it is, in addition, an historical document of some interest. A print-run of 100 copies has been ordered, initially, and we are hoping to sell them all; copies may be reserved by contacting Shannon Ledbetter, whose email address is: scledbetterosprey@gmail.com

Orders are now being accepted; thank you, in advance, for your interest.

Anti-Slavery service, Cairo Street, Warrington

I recently received an invitation from Ray Beecham, the Church Secretary at our Cairo Street Chapel, Warrington, to an Anti-Slavery Service; this has had to be postponed from last year, but now looks set to go ahead. Ray writes:

"The service will take place at Cairo Street Chapel, on Sunday May 8th at 3 p. m.

It will be led by the Chapel Lay Leadership Team, and the address will be of interest to all Unitarians. We at the chapel hope that you will inform all your members about the service, as we are eager to show you the internal alterations we have made to the chapel. Tea will be provided which, if the day is fine, you can enjoy outside in the garden, or in our refurbished chapel. Anne Mills, the GA Past President, will be present. On Sundays, parking is free in the Golden Squire Car Park. Cairo Street Chapel is easily accessible from the car park via Sankey Street. The Car park can be entered from Midland Way."

I have been asked to send Ray details of our congregation-members who will be attending, by the 24th Of April. If anyone requires further information, Ray can be contacted on 01229 586900, or by email: beebechamray@yahoo.co.uk

Please send me your names, if you wish to attend; thank you.

Anne.

By-Gone Times, by Betty Kenyon, number 23.

Do we understand our hymns?

From our church Calendar of July 1897

When teachers have a few minutes to spare at the end of a lesson, those minutes need never be wasted. They can most profitably be employed in explaining, in the simplest language, the hymns which the scholars already know by heart but do not understand. It is often the case that intelligent boys and girls who, in the day-school, have reached the fifth or sixth standards are hopelessly puzzled by expressions or allusions that are a little out of the common.

How many can explain these phrases from the 19th Century Sunday School hymnal?:

*healing reign;
sacred thirst;
the rod that flowers;
life's glad tree;
by the undying trod;
by cool Siloam's shady rill;
how beauteous are their feet;
Suppliant lo! thy children bend*

Are any of these in our present hymnals? — I think not!

We have a wide variety in the hymn books we use today and the words tend to be less esoteric.



Church information

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Church officers

Chair of trustees:	Susan Holt	07876 716563
Chair of church council:	Betty Kenyon	01204 887222
Chair of congregation:	Anne Mills	0161 762 0943
		5, Arley Avenue, Bury, BL9 5HD
<i>Church secretary:</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	
Church treasurer:	Roger Mills	0161 762 0943

Contact for room bookings and building maintenance

Property Manager	Adrian Brady	07736 107143
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Charity reg no: 107857

It's just a question of balance!





