

# Bury Unitarian Church



Leaving Lockdown

## Calendar for August 2020

## Welcome!

Dear all,

Welcome to the August edition of the Bury Unitarian Church *Calendar*. This is normally combined with the July edition, of course, but given the strange and unique circumstances we're in, August 2020 gets its very own.

As well as all the usual mix of articles and news, this edition contains some important information about our plans to begin to reopen for worship in person in September. Please try and make a point of reading through this – there will be lots of things which aren't exactly as we would want them, but it is still exciting news! It's in the centre pages, so if you want to keep it separate, you can easily pull it out (some of you will have already received this with your service on the last Sunday of July, but it's such an important matter that it's included here as well).

I am still hugely grateful for everything people are continuing to send for the *Calendar*. Especially now that we're not gathering (even when we start to meet, we won't all be able to be there at once) I'm always especially grateful for input from you as individuals. My editorial style is best described as 'relaxed': if it's legal, it's probably going to find its way in!

I hope that you find the *Calendar* useful and interesting: if there's anything you'd like to see included either regularly or as a one-off, please let me know, and I'll see what I can do.

I'm sure you know that there are other Unitarian publications out there: there is now only one which is produced 'on paper', and that's *The Inquirer*: if you'd like to see some copies from the past few months, please let me know and I can either show you where you can read them online, or arrange to drop some copies off with you next time I deliver your service.

Enjoy this edition, and thank you to everyone who has contributed.

*Kate Brady McKenna (editor!)*

## Letter from the Minister:

Dear all,

Four and a half months in, and we're still communicating by post, email, and phone, rather than in person: I know it's really hard on everyone, and I know none of us expected this to go on so long. I'm not sure how we'd have reacted if we'd known back in March that we weren't only closing for a few weeks, but that we'd be closed for months and that even when we started to open, things would be very, very different.

I am genuinely proud of how we, as a community, have responded to this unprecedented event. Not one of us has ever experienced anything like this before, and for the last four months every time we have got used to something, it has changed. But everyone's been very accepting of and resigned to the situation, and everyone has been at least as much concerned about other people's wellbeing as they are about their own, and that is truly moving.

And things are changing again.

You will know by now that we have plans to open in September, although this will be for services which won't look a bit like what we're used to. We can only fit a few people into the worship area at a time, and the content of the service will be very different.

But it is still a great joy that we can do even this much. It seemed for a while as though we would have to be closed for very much longer than that, so although this isn't ideal, it is still huge progress and I am delighted that it looks possible.

I know that many of you still have concerns, and that's understandable: if you are able to join us on Zoom on Thursday next week (either by phone or the internet) you can ask any questions you may have and we can try to answer them – you may also have suggestions: remember that none of us are experts in this!

I am confident that when the next big change happens, our congregation will handle it well. There will be difficulties, and things will crop up that we can't possibly foresee, and I'm sure there will be times of frustration as we start to settle back.

But if someone had told us a year ago that in March we'd have to close the church and retreat to our homes and that we wouldn't be back for months, firstly we wouldn't have believed them and secondly we would have thought we couldn't handle that. We've proved that we can, and I know that we will manage the next difficult and strange time which is coming.

As you will know, I had a couple of weeks off during July, and I really appreciated the time. It was quiet, and that was ideal. I'm very grateful that no crises occurred: I will admit it was lovely that the phone didn't ring! Special thanks are due to Anne Mills, for taking care of both Saturday coffee mornings and one of the services: I know that they all went really well, and that the service was in good hands.

I will be taking more leave, of course, before the year is out: if you would like to volunteer to lead any of the activities, I would be very glad to hear from you!

Last time I wrote this letter for the *Calendar*, I was commenting on the ridiculous heat we were experiencing: that's certainly not the situation now! I can't remember the last day on which it didn't rain at least some of the time, and when we're out with the dog I keep thinking what a lovely autumn day it is, before realising it's actually still July. But it's just weather, and it changes, and it always will.

I hope that whatever you're doing and whatever the weather is doing, you manage to find a way to enjoy yourselves and to find some rest and respite as we prepare ourselves for the world to continue to move into a new form of normal.

As always, I send you my love.

*Kate Brady McKenna (minister!)*



## **Moving towards reopening.**

You will almost certainly know by now that we are planning to resume holding gathered worship again from Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September, at 2pm. The Church Officers, as well as several other members, and myself, have spent many hours discussing and planning and arranging for this, and I am very grateful to all the hard work people have done and the difficult decisions people have helped to make.

There is a copy of the details of how worship will look in the centre pages of this *Calendar*.

But I do know that it is complicated, and many of you have concerns, questions, and suggestions, so we have arranged a meeting over Zoom on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August at 2pm. You can join this meeting over the internet, or just by using your phone. If you would like to join that way, please contact Kate and she will talk you through how to do it. It isn't as hard as you might think!

The phone numbers are the same as for all our Zoom meetings, and if you are on email you will get the link that way.

The meeting number is **849 9363 1562**, and I really hope to see several of you there: there are no stupid questions, and no silly worries!

Please let Kate know what your intentions are around coming back to church, and which weeks you might like to attend.

## What's on.

Most of the events listed here are, of course, virtual – anyone can join in with our Zoom meetings, whether over the internet or by phone.

**Saturdays 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> August, 11am:**

**Zoom coffee morning (mtg no 839 0159 0623)**

**Sundays 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> August, 11am for 11.15 start:**

**Zoom worship (mtg no 849 7456 6116)**

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> Aug, 7pm: Zoom Book club (mtg no **885 0522 3984**)

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> Aug, 2pm: Zoom chat about reopening (mtg 849 9363 1562)**

*Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> Aug, 11am: Ainsworth Chapel reopening service (please note this event takes place in person).*

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> Aug, 7pm: Zoom camera club (mtg no **832 9647 8073**)

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> Aug, 10am: Church officers' mtg (mtg no **833 0096 5738**)

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> Aug, 7pm: Zoom Book club (mtg no **885 0522 3984**)

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Aug, 7pm: Zoom camera club (mtg no **832 9647 8073**)

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> Aug, 10am: Church officers' mtg (mtg no **833 0096 5738**)

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> – Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August: Virtual Summer School (speak to Kate for details).

## Presidential Matters:

July has not been especially busy, as regards V-P duties, unless I count crossing out cancelled engagements, that is!

Now I am beginning to face a new problem; as our churches begin to reopen, I'm starting to be asked whether I'll be able to fulfil promises I made, months ago, when this world was vastly different. The short answer to the question is that I don't know! The problem is that I need to phrase my answer diplomatically, without being too specific! I am busy preparing two Zoom services for August---one for Padiham, and one for Edinburgh---and I conducted my first ever Zoom service, for Bury, on July 19th. This seemed to go well, although there were some technical challenges, and I do thank those people who supported me.

I spent many hours in July Zooming, including participation in a course entitled "Leading us out of Lockdown", aimed at helping those who conducted online worship and chaired online meetings, and found it very interesting and helpful. Zoom services vary from church to church: Edinburgh places great emphasis on sharing---exchanging news, feelings and ideas, and this is also the case at Altrincham. Padiham's service fits very neatly with Bury's, finishing just in time for us to log in to ours; it is similar in shape, uses a variety of service-leaders, and covers many interesting topics.

July 26th offered me the opportunity to visit Dublin Unitarians, in their beautiful church on St. Stephen's Green. The church is open again, now, although it was obvious that restrictions were firmly in place. The occasion was an arranged Zoom visit from Padiham Unitarians, with a service conducted by Pamela McCarthy, one of the Lancashire Collaborative Ministry team. Thirty Dublin members were actually present, and numbers were more than doubled by Zoom participants; the service was thought-

provoking and enjoyable, and the resident congregation gave the visitors a warm welcome. Modern technology made the experience possible---one of the more positive experiences to emerge from a prolonged period of lockdown. We are beginning to attract visitors of our own---from Rochdale, Belper, and Padiham, and it is good to welcome them; they seem to be impressed by what we have to offer, too!

Having stood in for Kate, during her two-week leave, I have been amazed at the amount of work involved: devising and typing services, emailing material, printing off and delivering copies, and leading worship. All this requires time and effort, and has to be done, every week. In addition, Kate joins our several church-groups on Zoom, setting up the arrangements, and chairing, whenever necessary; she also carries out pastoral work, at a distance, and edits the calendar, each month. Thank you, Kate, and thanks, too, to Ade for all his support of Kate, both in personal and in technical terms.

I know that many people are longing to be back at church, and I hope this time will not now be long in coming. However, church cannot be as we have known it; the Church Officers, and other interested parties, have been working hard to reintroduce attended worship at Bury; there is much to be done, and the health of the congregation has, at all times, been both a priority and of paramount concern; government guidelines must be followed, too, so please be patient, if all is not as you would prefer, just yet; we are working on it!

Roger joins me in sending love and best wishes to you all,

*Anne Mills*

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### **Church flowers:**

The church flowers this month would have been sponsored by the following people:

August 2<sup>nd</sup>: Val Chamberlain, in memory of Madie and Jim Hargreaves

August 16<sup>th</sup>: Kathryn Jackson and Sally Broadhurst, in memory of Irene Rogers.

**We send our love to Val, Kathryn, and Sally.**

### **Ainsworth Chapel re-opening, Sunday 9th August, 11am.**

Ainsworth are holding a short service, led by Shirley Horrocks and with music from Barry Scanlon, on Sunday 9th August at 11am (please note this is different from their usual service time).

All social distancing precautions will be being followed, and there will be no hymn books or singing. You are requested to wear a face covering during the service.



## **Keeping in touch:**

If you would like to join our email mailing list, you would be very welcome. You will get the weekly service-at-home, with a letter from the minister, and invitation links to the Zoom coffee morning and the Sunday service-at-home, as well as various emails as things crop up during the week. The minister tries very hard to remember to hide everyone's email address, so whilst there is never any guarantee that you won't receive spam, it shouldn't happen.

Contact Kate on [revkatemckenna@gmail.com](mailto:revkatemckenna@gmail.com) if you'd like to be added to the list so that you're informed about everything we're doing.

## **Church website:**

Roger has been working hard to update our website; why not take a look? The home page has been improved, and there is a great deal of information to be found there. In particular, there are now several excellent videos, prepared by our resident filmographer, Dave Lloyd, available, and these can be accessed by clicking on the links provided. This is a very straightforward process; you can use your laptop, tablet, or mobile phone---as long as you have internet-provision---to reach the pictures. Many of these involve clips of our 300th Anniversary year events, and people who have already watched them have been impressed. Give them a try!

## **Facebook:**

You can also stay in contact with us on Facebook, where you can see updates, the text of services, and other snippets of news.

## The importance of keeping in touch

A friend of mine recently confided in me that she was dissatisfied with her church. She does not live in this area, and the church is not a Unitarian one. Since lockdown, apart from one Council Meeting, and one request for money, she has received no contact from anybody at her church. She is a single-parent, and this is well-known in the congregation, yet, still, there has been no contact. At the meeting, the minister declared himself to be very stressed; he announced that he would not be opening the church-premises, for any reason whatsoever, and no services have been sent out to his flock during the last 4 months. This is a great pity, as the reason my friend originally began to attend the church, 17 years ago, was that she happened to visit it, on the first Sunday after she moved into her new area, and was made so welcome then that she stayed.

During the last 4 months, our congregation has made every effort to keep in touch, whether by letter, email, phone, or personal visit, and many of our members have willingly involved themselves in such communications, giving freely of their time and effort. We all owe our thanks and appreciation to our fellow-members for everything they have done; we can be proud of them, and they can be equally proud of themselves. We may not be able to worship together, at present, but we are still thinking about others and wishing them well---which is as it should be.

As for my friend: she will probably not bother returning to a church which, she feels, has forsaken her; she thinks that it will probably not recover financially from the after-effects of the pandemic and will soon be closed permanently. How sad!

*Anne Mills*

## **Updating contact details**

Just a reminder that, if you change any of your details (address, telephone number, or email, or if you acquire or give up your computer), it would be helpful to let us know; we can then keep the church-records up-to-date. Please let us know, too, whether you are willing, or not, to let other church-members have this information. The people to contact are: Anne Mills, Marian Price, and Kate. Thank you.

### **Margaret Pollard**

Many of you will know that Margaret has successfully moved into her new home in Ramsbottom – congratulations to Margaret on making what was a very difficult move at a very difficult time!

Her new contact details are:

Margaret Pollard  
Apartment 52  
The Cottons  
Factory Street  
Ramsbottom  
BLO 9BT

Her phone number will be 01706 824 664, but there have been some problems getting it connected, so Margaret asks you not to be too worried if you can't get through.



## **Notes from the church building:**

It's been a strange summer so far, it seems that even the season knows that things aren't right and it too is acting somehow in accordance with the rest of the general oddness that has come along to the world in this strangest of all possible years. We can't make it all about that oddness though, it's not everything that's different, it's not everything that's strange. The building for instance, has stood still, as it was supposed to, there, as ever, waiting for us to return to it, as if it is a home awaiting its loving family.

But even the building isn't entirely the same, even the building has changed, and will change further by the time we return. The roof has had its repairs, the electrical system has been re-modeled, and the front door automation has been upgraded, and now the building is entering a time of servicing. We are working now towards confirming services on the boilers and lifts, a very important fire, health and safety review being carried out by Howard, Roger and Peter, and a new social distancing system for travel through the building being implemented by me and Kate under the direction of the church officers. As more and more people are starting to pass through the doors doing the work of bringing our building out of her slumber, the feeling of the place is starting to change; starting to get less odd, less strange, more... purposeful. The building feels now, as if it itself is preparing to welcome its church, home.

*Ade Brady*

*You can see pictures of how the worship area will be laid out when we return in September, on the inside cover of the calendar. Thanks to Roger for the photography!*

## **Camera club**

Members of the Camera Club continue to meet regularly, but have decided to change to fortnightly, rather than weekly, get-togethers. The August dates are the 10th and the 24th, at 7 p.m. If you wish to attend, by Zoom, or to gather further information, the person to contact is Janet Thatcher. At present, items are being selected ready for the next exhibition---whenever that might be! A different subject is selected for each meeting; photographs placed online since the previous meeting are discussed, and decisions made. The Camera Club currently chooses the picture for each Calendar cover, which is selected on the basis of how representative it is to our congregation, as regards what is happening, or who is in the limelight. All are welcome!

Thanks, as always, to the camera club for their work on providing the cover and illustrations for the Calendar. This month's cover photo is by Janet Thatcher.

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## **Traidcraft**

Just a reminder that, although we can't run the stall, at the moment, there are still goods available. If there's anything you would like, please let me know, and I'll arrange a delivery, if I can. I still have stocks of Kilombero Rice to sell, as part of the Bury Fair Trade Group's Rice Challenge, so you can place an order, if you'd like some. Most of the chocolate has now gone, thanks to various customers, but there are plenty of other items are in stock.

*Anne Mills*

## Book club

Members meet approximately once a fortnight, and the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 5th, at 7 p.m. Contact Anne Mills, if you'd like to join, and details will be forthcoming. In July, we held a (fairly) Literary Quiz, which was won by the Minister! We also held a session which involved all present in selecting and reading a short piece of their choice, after which comments were shared. This was so popular that it is to be repeated on August 5th; however, supplying a piece isn't obligatory. Please join us, if you're interested.

As a taster, the books which were mentioned in the last two meetings are:

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Julian Barnes: The Sense of an Ending  
Amanda Brooke: Another Way to Fall.  
Simon Brett: The Liar in the Library  
Anne Cleves: Various detective novels.  
Suzanne Collins: The Hunger Games (trilogy)  
Jilly Cooper: Wicked  
Sebastian Faulks: Human Traces  
Antonia Forest: Girls' School Stories.  
Neil Gaiman: The Ocean at the End of the Lane  
Jane Gardam: Crusoe's Daughter, and The People of Privilege Hill  
Lauren James: The Quiet at the End of the World  
PD James: A Certain Justice  
Felicity Kendal: White Cargo  
Harper Lee: To Kill a Mockingbird  
Laurie Lee: Cider with Rosie  
Amy Liptrott: The Outrun  
VS Naipaul: The Bend in the River.  
Delia Owens: Where the Crawdads Sing  
Philip Pullman: The Amber Spyglass.  
Lucinda Riley: the 'Seven Sisters' series  
William Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice  
Rosie Walsh: The Man Who Didn't Call  
Psalm 121

## In a library: Emily Dickinson

A precious mouldering pleasure 'tis  
To meet an antique book,  
In just the dress his century wore;  
A privilege, I think!

His venerable hand to take,  
And warming in our own,  
A passage back, or two, to make  
To times when he was young.

His quaint opinions to inspect,  
His knowledge to unfold  
On what concerns our mutual mind,  
The literature of old;

What interested scholars most,  
What competitions ran  
When Plato was a certainty,  
And Sophocles a man;  
When Sappho was a living girl,  
And Beatrice wore  
The gown that Dante deified.  
Facts, centuries before,

He traverses familiar,  
As one should come to town  
And tell you all your dreams were true;  
He lived where dreams were sown.

His presence is enchantment,  
You beg him not to go;  
Old volumes shake their vellum heads  
And tantalize, just so.

*Thanks to Anne Mills for submitting this poem for the Calendar.*

## **Book loans:**

Kate and Ade are still very happy to drop books from the church bookstall off at your doorstep if you're running out of things to read, and we have a small supply at home from generous members of the congregation. Just shout if you'd like me to pop round. I can't promise anything specific, and I can't promise you won't have read something already!

## **Recorded Calendars and services**

If you (or someone you know) would like to have a recorded version of the *Calendar* or the Sunday services on a memory stick or CD, please speak to Kate, who can very easily make it happen (with the very kind assistance of Ade and his recording thingy).

The services won't normally be available in audio form until a few days after the relevant Sunday, but the Calendar is normally done at around the same time as the printed version.

## **A poem by Connie Diggle**

I want to tickle the cheeks of the new baby said Grandfather  
I want to go to the beach with my bucket and spade and make sand  
castles said the little brother of the baby .  
I want to go to my ballet class said the sister of the baby.  
I want to go to the hairdresser said the mother of the new baby  
I want to go to the football match said the father of the new baby  
I want to go to the luncheon club said the grandmother of the new baby  
And I want grandfather to tickle my cheeks said the new baby.  
"YOU WILL DO WHAT I SAY," SAID TIME.

## Virtual Summer School:



For the last 25 years, there has been a Unitarian Summer School at Great Hucklow in Derbyshire, and for many people this is now a highlight of their year. It is a week of spiritual development and community living, and a vision of how Unitarianism (and the world) could be at their very best.

Obviously, Summer School itself can't happen this year, but the panel have arranged for a series of Theme Talks to be offered over Zoom during the week. The Theme Talks are a central component of Summer School, and although nothing can match the experience of taking part, we hope that the Zoom talks will give a good taste of what is on offer.

The timetable is below: you will need to preregister for the Zoom events in order to get a place, but the event is free.

Please speak to Kate for more details.

**Saturday 22nd August, 7pm: A Celebration of Summer School** (worship led by Kate McKenna and Michael Allured)

**Monday 24th August, 7pm** – Talk by Louise Baumberg

**Tuesday 25th August, 7pm** – Talk by Ann Peart

**Wednesday 26th August, 7pm** – Talk by Stephanie Bisby

**Thursday 27th August – 7pm** – Talk by Mel Prideaux

**Friday 28th August – 7pm** – Talk by Linda Hart

## **Unitarian hymn-singing**

Louise Rogers and Myrna Michell have been organising hymn-singing sessions for a few weeks now. At first, the technical difficulties proved challenging, but these were quickly resolved, and the meetings are proving very enjoyable. You may have seen details about this hymn-singing on Facebook; it appears in the Uni-Sing! group posts. Alternatively, Anne can supply contact-details. Sessions take place on Saturday-afternoons, at 3 p.m; each week, by Zoom, although there have been suggestions that an alternative time might be considered. Most of the hymns chosen are in the purple or green books, and the words are always displayed on-screen. The session lasts for about an hour and usually contains a reading from one of the people present, plus a short break-out meeting. It provides a good opportunity for singing (individually, though!) if you're missing your usual Sunday sing-a-long.

## **Focolore**

Recently, in my current novel, I came across a description of a Vatican Mass, at which a representative of Focolore gave one of the readings. A week earlier, I wouldn't have understood the reference, but, since I attended a day's workshop run by Focolore, I've become better informed. This organisation was started by an Italian woman, called Chiara Lubich, whose centenary occurs, this year; it began in 1943, with the intention of spreading Unity, Peace, Love, and Fraternity throughout the world; 182 countries and 2 million people are now involved. My invitation reached me via the Interfaith Services held at Rawtenstall Unitarian Church and organised by the Lancashire Collaborative Ministry. Focolore is Christian in its aims, but non-denominational; diversity is respected and valued, and members are encouraged to pursue their own faith and conscience. I was interested by what I heard and hope to learn more, in time, as there would seem to be some similarities at least with Unitarianism.

*Anne Mills*

## Face-coverings:

You will have seen that when we reopen for worship in person, you will be required to wear a face mask whilst in the building. We will have a good supply of these ready, so do not worry if you either don't have one or forget to bring one with you.



Jean Maden has been making mask-extendors to make wearing a face covering more comfortable. These go round the back of your head, and you fix the mask elastic to the buttons instead of chafing your ears. She has very kindly offered to make a few for anyone who would benefit from one. If you have any pairs of buttons (they need to be matching pairs), Jean would be very grateful for them.



## **Bygone Times: Do times change?**

*An Excerpt from 'Memorials of Christian Church Bury', by T H Hayhurst published by The Bury Times in 1910. It is the story of Rev Franklin Howorth who was appointed minister to Bank Street Chapel in 1832. He was a major contributor to the heritage we enjoy today.*

What precise influences in the Unitarian circles of Bury prompted the call of Franklin Howorth from his Rochdale pastorate it is now almost impossible to ascertain. That some of the trustees connected with the old Silver Street Presbyterian Chapel were already familiar with the intellectual and spiritual attainments of the young pastor lies beyond doubt. Admittedly the leading families of the town were associated with Silver Street and closely following the tenets of the Unitarian doctrine.

The Philippses, Grundys, Wrigleys, Gregs, Parkses and Holkers alone possessed financial ability to maintain the most costly church regime in the town and as a matter of fact did so. These families were among those who contributed to the unanimity with which the call of Franklin Howorth was signalled in 1832 and among whom his initial ministerial efforts in Bury were made.

The church in Silver Street had the stamp of high respectability and high intellectuality among its members. The church stands in bold uniqueness among the Unitarian churches of Lancashire.

This is a fascinating account of how this minister gradually moved into Trinitarianism and after almost 30 years at Bank Street founded Christian Church on Rochdale Road. You can imagine the reaction of the Bank Street trustees!

*From The Calendar of 1893*

The purpose of these sermons is not controversial, not doctrinal but to be helpful to the religious life, to kindle devotion and to strengthen faith in God and man.

The world is in little doubt as to what we don't believe. The thing that most needs doing is how to show that our religion is a source of positive, healing, helpful assurance to us, able to give us guidance amid life's duties and needs and to build us up in faith and hope and charity.

Here are some of the Sunday Evening Lectures:

Social Sins, Irreverence, Gambling, Impurity, War, Slander, Wages of Sin, The Problem of Poverty, Christian Work and Workers, Body and Soul.  
Are these relevant in today's world?

Or how about these: Christ in His Day and Ours, The Earthly Christ, Christ the Consoler, Christ the Saviour, Christ the Son of Man, Christ and the Creeds, Christ the Leader, Claims of Earth and Hope of Heaven.

*Are these relevant in today's world?*

*Would all of these topics/themes be viable today?*

*Some most definitely and others certainly not! What do you think?*

*Betty Kenyon*

## Walking in Chesham Woods: update

Last month, I wrote about a miniature tree-garden, in Chesham Green Wood, where we found Norman's Folly. Since then, we've discovered a little more about it. A visit, on the afternoon of Father's Day, showed that the garden had been tidied; fresh plants, decorative stones and ornaments introduced; and loving messages added; these were addressed to "Grandad", so the garden was clearly dedicated to a person; we suspect that it was quite new when we first spotted it. As we stood considering the scene, a couple joined us; they were able to tell us that they, too, often stopped to admire the sight; they had once met Norman's widow and had a conversation with her. She was proud of her handiwork and had told them that she didn't mind in the slightest if others added items to the garden. A day or two ago, we spotted that new plants had again been supplied, and old ones removed, so the lady is obviously working hard. Maybe, one day, we'll manage to meet her, but no sign yet!

I'm indebted to Vera, who first inspired our walks and aroused our curiosity about this area of Chesham; there is a great deal of material in the Bury Archives to be explored. These are some of Vera's memories. \*She recalled a Miss Parr, who, during World War II, had some connection with Chesham Unitarians. The building which used to house Chesham Unitarian Church was originally a billiard-hall, by the way. \*At the top of Lowes Road, where The Brickworks' development is now being built, used to stand The White House; beside this were tennis-courts and a putting-green, and a hut where fees had to be paid. \*The field beside Chesham House was known as Miss Walker's Field, after its owner; Vera recalls that the field, usually full of cows, had a bomb dropped in it, during the war, and the dip it created can still be seen. A high wall, with a pond next to it, bordered the field, and Vera once fell into the pond thereby ruining the clothes she was wearing; much to her sister's disgust, Vera was bought a brand-new dress and coat! \*Members of the Chesham Unitarians' Sunday School often used to take walks to Birtle Dean, where there were many paths to explore; the walk was accessed via Danesmoor Road, which now runs by the side of the new Clarence Gardens Apartments, at the top of Chesham Road. \*Happy Memories!

*Anne Mills*

## **Art in the time of Covid-19**

Since I retired, 23 years ago, I've travelled and have enjoyed visiting art galleries in various cities. I am interested but not knowledgeable – there is so much to learn. Last week I joined a Zoom presentation by a young art historian, Sara Riccardi, who had given some illustrated talks in Manchester earlier in the year. At present people working in the arts are having a difficult time so this was a means of giving support and being entertained. Sara has taken to Zoom in an effort to continue to work. Her event was free, donations invited, and a proportion of any donation would be given to an appropriate charity.

Her subject was 'Summer' and was focussed on six of the ancient Roman festivals from 100BC to 100 AD which were concerned with activities indulged in by the Romans on certain days during the season; themes of fire, family, Summer nights, romance, wedding parties, Solstice, harvest, sun, warmth, holiday, rest, camping, nature, sea and beach, as illustrated by painters from 1400 to 2015 were shown and discussed by Sara, who is herself Italian and accustomed to long, hot Summers in Italy. I found the variety of paintings interesting. It was stimulating to have been exposed to her thoughts on the subject for an hour. I'm looking forward to Autumn, Winter and Spring, hopefully out of Lockdown at some point!

*Pam Gilbert*

## Answers to last month's quiz:

I hope you enjoyed the quiz, and didn't find it just plain frustrating!

HWCNKPFMSNGNG: How can I keep from singing?

WNDRSSTLLTHWRLDSHLLWTNSS: Wonders still the world shall witness.

WLLBLDLNDWHRWBNDPTHBRKN: We'll build a land where we bind up the broken.

HRKTHHRLDNGLSSNG: Hark, the herald angels sing.

NMNNMDHDDNNDSHWN: Name unnamed, hidden and shown.

NCTVYYMNNDNTN: Once to every man and nation.

DRLRDNFTHRFMNKND: Dear Lord and Father of mankind.

SPRTFRTHRSTNNDRT: Spirit of earth, root, stone, and tree.

CMCMWHVRYR: Come, come, whoever you are.

LTTLWNFBTHLHM: O, little town of Bethlehem.

SPRTFLFCMNTM: Spirit of life, come unto me.

LLTHNGSBRGHTNDBTFL: All things bright and beautiful.

## The Chalice

You will know that at the beginning of our services, we light our chalice candle. You may not know why. The following is taken from an article on the website of the Unitarian Universalist Association's website. The 'UUA' are our sister denomination in the USA.



A visitor, watching the reverent lighting of the flaming chalice in our churches, might be forgiven for imagining that this symbol had originated in antiquity. Flame is among the oldest of religious symbols, and the chalice has been associated with communion since the early centuries of Christianity.

But the unique combination of these items—fire and a drinking vessel—is the invention of the artist Hans Deutsch in 1941. Commissioned during World War II as the symbol of the Unitarian Service Committee (USC), the flaming chalice first appeared as a symbol for the UUA 35 years later on the title page of the 1976-77 UUA Directory. The ritual lighting of the chalice in a worship service became widespread only in the last 20 years. Like so much about our faith, the flaming chalice combines ancient elements in relatively new ways.

The Rev. Dr. Charles Rhind Joy, commissioner for Europe of the newly founded Unitarian Service Committee, was instrumental in the flaming chalice's creation. Known in the medical and relief communities for his translations of the works of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, in the Christian community as author of Harper's Topical Concordance, and among Unitarians as a former administrative vice president of the American Unitarian Association, Joy was a natural choice in 1940 to direct the Lisbon, Portugal, office of the USC. Lisbon, the only open port in Europe in the early

1940s, was the preferred destination for millions of refugees. The USC took special interest in helping artists, intellectuals, and dissidents escape the Nazis. And so while Joy worked with people from all walks of life, his clientele included many famous authors, scientists, and politicians.

Many of the refugees fled without the identification papers they needed to cross borders, so the Lisbon office concentrated especially on helping them obtain replacement papers. Joy introduced an innovation: travel documents issued by the USC itself. "*It may amuse you a bit,*" he wrote to the Boston office of the USC, "*to know that we are now issuing navicerts to pass emigrants to the new world through the British blockade. We are certifying that they are politically safe and sound.*"

Joy believed these documents needed a seal. He asked Hans Deutsch, an Austrian refugee artist working in Lisbon, to create one. The result was essentially the flaming chalice as we know it now.

What did the flaming chalice mean to its creator? We have only Joy's report to Boston, January 31, 1941:

*It represents, as you see, a chalice with a flame, the kind of chalice which the Greeks and Romans put on their altars. The holy oil burning in it is a symbol of helpfulness and sacrifice. In ancient and medieval art this chalice is frequently found, and the design itself, modernized and stylized, though it is, reminds one of the signs seen on the old monastic manuscripts. This was in the mind of the artist. The fact, however, that it remotely suggests a cross was not in his mind, but to me this also has its merit. We do not limit our work to Christians. Indeed, at the present moment, our work is nine-tenths for the Jews, yet we do stem from the Christian tradition, and the cross does symbolize Christianity and its central theme of sacrificial love."*

*Rev Dan Hotchkiss*

Ed's note: not everyone in our movement likes the chalice as a symbol or chalice lighting as a ritual. Where do you stand?

## **Two more Unitarian books:**

These are far from the most recent Unitarian publications, but if you are looking at building up your library, you may find them interesting (it's very likely someone in the congregation can lend you a copy if you'd rather reduce spending and limit the amount of printed material floating around!).

### ***Twelve Steps to Spiritual Health***

By Rev David Usher

A uniquely Unitarian guide to achieving spiritual health. Spiritual health gives life meaning and purpose. It is about being open to all life's possibilities. It is manifest in serenity in the face of hardship, and in being faithful to one's own best convictions. Drawing on both his youthful employment as a jackaroo on sheep stations in Australia, and his thirty years' experience as a minister in the England and America, David Usher provides simple yet lively illustrations of spirit enhancing activities and perceptions.

### ***The Unitarian life: Voices from the Past and Present***

*edited by Stephen Lingwood*

A thematic anthology of short texts by a wide range of Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists, presenting essential insights into a faith which is not always easy to define. Voices from the past are presented alongside voices from the present. Famous names appear alongside less well-known ones. This is a book to be used for personal reflection and public worship, and as a starting point for dialogue. The author hopes that it will be 'thumbed through, written on, and meditated with, not simply read once and put on a shelf'.



# Inside our Church



**Chairs have been re-arranged to provide  
for "social distancing"**