

Bury Unitarian Church



"Have yourself a merry little Christmas"

**Calendar for
December 2020
& January 2021**

Welcome!

Dear all,

When I was a child, the arrival of the double issues of my favourite comics and magazines was always a very exciting time. Twinkle, Bunty, Mandy, and – later – Just Seventeen, often came with a free gift folded into the front cover. Sadly, I can't offer you a plastic charm bracelet or a tube of lip gloss, but those of you who are regular attenders at church will have received a Christingle kit, so at least it's something. If you didn't, and would like to, we can easily put that right.

So welcome to the December 2020 and January 2021 edition of the Bury Unitarian Church *Calendar*. As always, it's far from just my work, and I am really grateful to everyone for their contributions.

Once again, the centre pages are a 'what's on' for the next month (and into January). Please bear in mind that everything is subject to change at the moment, so please keep your eye on emails and your weekly letter. If you're not on our regular email list and would like to be, please let me know: and if you would like more updates by post, please let me know that as well.

If there's something you'd like to see more of in the *Calendar*, please let me know! In these uncertain times it's more important than ever that we have effective ways of being in touch with other, and thanks to previous editors and continuing contributions, this *Calendar* is a good way of doing that.

The deadline for the February 2021 edition will be Wednesday 27th January, which will enable me to distribute it on Saturday 30th. I'm happy to receive things early, of course!

With love,

Kate Brady McKenna

Letter from the Minister:

Dear all,

Well, somewhat unbelievably, we are in Advent, and this is the Christmas edition of the *Calendar*.

And what a year it's been. Not a single one of us could have predicted, this time last year, that our lives would be as they are now and that the year would go as it has. Just that short time ago, we couldn't have predicted the pandemic, or the lockdown, or certainly the fact that we would be looking at a Christmas and new year unlike any other we've ever known

It has been a hard year: and realistically we know that 2021 will bring some of the same challenges. It's been a year which will, I think, change all of our lives forever. Who knows how long it will be before an effective vaccine becomes available, or until we will be able to see our friends and loved ones again without thinking about whether it's both allowed or safe? Who knows when we will next be surprised to see someone wearing a face mask? Who knows when we won't be scared, even if it's just at the back of our minds, for the health of those we love? Who knows when we will be able to gather again in large groups, and worship together in song and spoken prayer? Who knows when we gather together to socialise?

The truth is that none of us do, and as we move towards and through the solstice, and Christmas, and into the new year, we may need to adjust our thinking to this new knowledge. If we've learned things over the past few months, and we certainly have, one of those things is that we cannot know what comes next, and that we will, on the whole, cope with whatever it might be.

I am enormously proud of what we have achieved as a community during this year. Although we haven't managed to meet up as we would wish to, and although we've been unable to mark any of our usual social and charitable events, and although we haven't been able to worship together

in person more than a few times, we are still a community. And more than that, we have opened our arms to others, who join us for our Zoom meetings, or receive the services and the *Calendar*, or who keep in touch with us in other ways.

We have experienced loss this year, too: although we have so far all remained safe from the virus, we have lost people we loved, and we remember them and their loved ones particularly at this time of year.

And yet, with all this disruption, the year has still rolled round as it always does and always will. We have seen the days lengthen and shorten again, and the trees turn white and then green, and then brown, and then black, and already, on the bush in my back garden I am seeing buds. We have passed one solstice and will soon mark another, and we will mark our winter festivals with lights and with displays of love and affection.

This year has not been the same as any other, but some things have remained constant. We remain together as a community. The year still rolls out in its usual pattern. And we still receive and can give love and kindness and compassion.

This Christmas will not be like any other we have known. We know this. But just as we can every year, we can still – wholeheartedly – wish each other a Blessed Solstice, a Happy Christmas, and a peaceful new year. Because amidst all the turmoil and disruption, there are still blessings to be found, happiness to be savoured, and peace to be shared.

I wish you all the many blessings which are there to be found in these next weeks. I wish you all love, and peace, and a sense of faith and trust.

Everything passes.

With love,

Rev Kate Brady McKenna

Presidential matters:

November was, thankfully, a quieter month, which gave me the opportunity to relax, and to finish off various tasks which had been left in abeyance for far too long. Despite my "leave", I was kept busy during the Remembrance period; I contributed to our own service, and to the one at Golders Green, on Remembrance Sunday; gave a reading at The Lancashire Collaborative Ministry service, on Remembrance Day, and two further readings at the Uni-sing! Remembrance session, on November 15th. I supported Ainsworth's Remembrance Service, on November 1st---which, sadly, meant that I missed Bury's last service before Lockdown 2, when the organ was played for the first time in more than 8 months, which, thus, constituted a memorable occasion. On November 16th, we Zoomed to the service at Sheffield Fulwood and Underbank, where Rev. Maud Robinson delivered her service with great conviction. November 21st was the date of Zoom Societies Day, organised by the GA, which I attended, as did Kate and Val. Findhorn was represented and provided a most impressive presentation; the other societies participating were the Unitarian Renewal Group, the Earth Spirit Network, The Peace Fellowship, and The National Unitarian Fellowship. Every session was interesting and informative, and all present agreed that a similar day, next year, would be welcomed. On the following day, I was invited to attend the service at Bank Street Bolton, which I greatly enjoyed: I have conducted several services there and always feel that I am amongst friends. Sadly, their organist, Keith, has died, very recently; Keith was a man of great talents and will be much missed. Later that day, I attended the LCM's Interfaith Service, where, once more, I met friends whom I had not seen for many months and shared readings, music, and conversation with them. I hope to attend the service at Newcastle, on the last Sunday of the month, as Rev. Ralph Catts is supposed to be conducting the service then; Ralph served as the Minister at Hull, but now lives in Melbourne; he still supports various Findhorn initiatives, including meditation-sessions, each month. I am due to conduct Belper's service, on

November 24th, and am looking forward to that. December seems as if it will be busy, again, and I have several engagements to attend, and for which to prepare. Once more, we enter into unknown territory; will we be able to open, or not? No doubt all will be revealed, in due course!

Lockdown 2 has thrown our plans into confusion, and it is difficult to move forward, amid such uncertainty. Kate continues to provide a stable presence, both with her services, and with her personal communications, which I, for one, value. Once again, I thank her for her efforts, and I commend, especially, our Remembrance Sunday Service, at which those of us on Zoom, at least, were able to see our War Memorial, listen to The Last Post and Réveille, watch our wreath being laid, and hear the Roll of Honour read; we might not have been able to meet together, as we had hoped, but we knew that the acknowledgement of the day's significance had been made, in as heartfelt and sincere a manner as it usually is. I thank both Kate and Ade for a moving service; the technology was as necessary as the content, on that occasion.

As we approach Christmas, we are again beset by uncertainty; all we can be sure of is that this Christmas is unlikely to be what we would prefer, or enjoy. We can only accept what is necessary, and hope for the best possible outcome; let us make up our minds to count our blessings and try to see the most positive side of whatever happens. As usual, Roger joins me in sending all of you our love and very best wishes, not just in our day-to-day life, but during the Christmas season. We wish you a peaceful and healthy Christmas, and a New Year in which our hopes of every kind are fulfilled.

Anne Mills.

Notes from the church building:

Things are starting to come together for Christmas at the church. The building has had a Fire Risk Assessment, which after a lot of hard work from the HARP team (Howard, Ade, Roger, and Peter) has been a huge success. All of the outstanding issues that have been carried over from previous assessments have been addressed slowly over time and we are now on the brink of a spotless fire safety system (and given how strict regulation needs to be in regards to fire safety, that is no mean feat at all).

The only thing from keeping our record spotless now, is a Fire Alarm system that meets the very latest British Standards. It's a shame that even though the building has been very good this year, that she might have to wait for a slightly late Christmas Present in the form of a replacement system, but we want to make sure to get her just the right one, and this requires the discussion which is currently being had not only by the HARP team, but also the Trustees and very soon, our local Fire Authority.

It has been a big job to get us here and it's to the credit of a lot of hard work by a lot of people over a very long time that we look to be coming toward completion in this area now, many thanks are due to a lot of people, but in particular to Peter, Howard and Roger for all of their hard work in getting us to this point.

Even though the present will be coming late, the building will be marking Christmas, we are coming to an agreement on how that will look, but even if it isn't the traditional tree, we will make sure that the building, our building, is telling the town that it's Christmas, because even if it's not the Christmas we expected, the truth is it's still Christmas, and our building should reflect that for us.

Ade Brady.

News of our community:

Dorothy Roberts: Obituary:

Dorothy died peacefully, at Elmhurst Residential Home, Unsworth, on November 4th; she had become increasingly frail, during the previous two years, and was practically bed-bound, at the end of her life. Shirley Horrocks, Kate, and Roger and I visited her regularly, both in her own home, and elsewhere, and Shirley always kept the Ainsworth congregation informed about Dorothy's progress, so that she was not forgotten.

As well as being a long-term member and stalwart at Ainsworth Chapel, Dorothy was a member at Bury for several years, and she proved to be a loyal and generous supporter, too. When we used to hold a Retiring Collection, at Bury, on Christmas Day, Dorothy would always give me her donation to be included, if she was unable to attend; at social events, she bought fistfuls of raffle-tickets; she patronised the Traidcraft Stall, very regularly, and the Lunch Circle often benefited from an extra £1.00 or two, or wine, or chocolates, when Dorothy attended.

Quita Brooks, another Ainsworth stalwart, who now lives in Scotland, wrote to us, after Dorothy's death, to express her sadness, and her words express her affection for her friend:

"Kenneth and I were married in 1970, and Dorothy was part of our life, right from the start, both at Chapel and in Ainsworth Village, so I knew her for over 50 years. Kenneth lived in the same row as Dorothy did, and he remembered her arrival there, when he was 11 years old. Dorothy and I had a mutual interest in Scotland, as her father's family farmed near Luss, and a cousin's husband was a vet near Lanark. Dorothy was a mine of information on Chapel and Village history and often reminded Kenneth about dates and events; she took a great interest in the Parish Church, having attended the village school; she played in the rounders' team, and also joined the Methodist families in their various celebrations. I shall always remember her generosity and sense of humour; Ainsworth has lost a treasure."

Dorothy was an easy person to love; those of us who knew her will miss her and mourn her passing.

Anne.



Dorothy, on her 86th birthday in 2016.

Pat Mitton (née Twigg)

I was contacted by Pat, during November and we reminisced during a long phone-conversation; Pat suffered a heart-attack, in February, and developed complications afterwards, but is starting to feel much better nowadays. Pat wished to be remembered to everyone who knew her, especially from Chesham days; she is in touch with some of our members and would welcome contact from others. She asked after Molly, and was also anxious to know whether anybody had current contact-details for Michael Lord, also from the Chesham church, who relocated from the USA, two or three years ago, and is now living in this country again. Please let me know, if you can help with this; thank you.

Anne Mills

News from Ainsworth:

Ainsworth's Christmas Service will be held (if possible!) on Sunday, December 13th, at 10.30 a.m. This will be conducted by Anne Mills and will consist of seasonal readings and music. Everyone is welcome; please note that this will take place on the second Sunday of the month, and not on the more usual first Sunday.

Pastoral conversations, and quiet reflection:

Kate will be available (by prior arrangement because of Covid requirements) for face-to-face pastoral conversations on various days during December. If you would like to speak with her in church, please let her know.

The church will also be available at various times if you would like a time of personal reflection. Please watch the weekly letters for details of when this will be possible.

Church meetings last month:

Although there were no formal church meetings during November, please rest assured that the Church Officers and various other groups of people are still working behind the scenes to make sure that everything continues to run smoothly during this strange time in our church life.

Camera Club:

Meetings are being held once a fortnight, approximately, and the next two take place on November 30th and December 14th (both Mondays). At the first of these meetings, Ade will give a presentation, using a GIMP computer-program, about "layers"; this is a technique which employs the assembly of several different pictures into one final, built-up, photograph. As usual, all are welcome; for further information and joining-details, please contact Janet Thatcher.

Book Club:

Meetings will continue throughout December and January; the next two will be held on December 2nd and 16th. On the 2nd, we will discuss two novellas by Paul Gallico: "The Snow Goose" and "A Small Miracle"; copies are available from Anne Mills; on the 16th, those present are asked to bring a Christmas piece to read; seasonal refreshments will be consumed, at the end of both sessions! Details for January will be published as part of Kate's weekly letters, or can be requested from Anne; everyone is welcome.

Job Opportunity

You will be aware, from our October calendar, that John and Margaret will be leaving this area, next spring, and we wish them godspeed. But The Midlands' gain is our loss, as there will be many jobs to be filled which both of them have carried out, extremely well, for many years, and we thank them for everything they have done.

Chief amongst these tasks is the post of Church Treasurer; John has served as our Treasurer for the last 22 years, and acted as Assistant Treasurer for some years before that; we do now need to take steps to fill this key position. If you are interested in helping with the financial work of our church, or if you know somebody who might be willing to take it on, please speak to John, as soon as possible. It may be possible to divide the Treasurer's job into two or three parts, so that the load is shared. Roger will remain as Deputy Treasurer, and he will be on hand to support and advise.

It would be sensible for the person(s) appointed to work alongside John, for a period, from January 1st, 2021, which is why we are aiming to have plans in place by the beginning of next year. All offers of help will be gratefully received, so please give this matter your most urgent consideration.

At the time of writing (November 22nd), no expressions of interest have been received; the job of Church Treasurer is one of the most important tasks to be carried out, and we must have John's replacement ready to step into the breach, once he moves. The Finance Committee meets on December 7th, and future plans will then need to be made. Please contact John if you are able to help with even a small portion of the work. The deadline remains at November 30th; thank you.

Could you do any of these things?

You'll have seen Anne's request for a volunteer to take on the very important role of Treasurer for the church. John has been doing this huge job for many years, and will be very much missed.

It may be that you can't take on the whole job, but that you might be able to do some of it, so maybe you could run your eye down this list and see if you could volunteer for one, or a handful, of the aspects of this work?

Roger Mills has very kindly offered to deal with the cash aspects of the work, and as you'll see elsewhere Betty Kenyon will now be organising the payments for *The Inquirer*. Thanks to both of them.

We still need people to:

- Initiate all cheque/bank transfer payments as necessary.
- Receive details of weekly cash collections.
- Reconcile cash book and bank statements.
- File invoices and receipts.
- Provide accounts for Finance Committee meetings.
- Prepare annual accounts, full-year receipts, and payments accounts
- Prepare books, organise and attend annual audit.
- Liaise with the Gift Aid administrator; the membership secretary (for ordering offering envelopes and agreeing the GA quota figures); the Women's League treasurer; the organist's rota organiser; the 100 Club organiser.
- Monitor the treasurer's email account
- Process annual donations made by the church
- Deputise for membership secretary in collecting and banking weekly collections where necessary

If you think you could take on one of these jobs, please speak to John, who can give you more details and some training.

Unitarian Pies!

Some of you will know Paul Butcher-Fielding, and his husband Paul, from Stand Unitarian Church, and may have visited their café on Bury Market. Due to the current lockdown (and the ongoing restrictions) they are unable to trade from the market but are still liable for rent. They are offering (via Shammy, their minister) a safe, socially distanced, home delivery pie service. The pies are generously sized for one serving, come frozen ready to cook straight from the freezer, and are £1.50 each

The options are cheese and onion; leek and potato; meat and potato; steak pudding; Cornish pasty.

I have tried the cheese and onion pie, which was astonishing. I hear similar reports of the steak pudding, and I have others still to sample (which I will do, because I'm very noble). They really do come highly recommended. Pl

Foodbank:

You will have read Susan Holt's piece in the last *Calendar* about her deliveries to the local Foodbank, and I am very grateful that she is doing this.

Of course, the need doesn't go away because it is Christmas, and the Foodbank are still collecting food to feed the most vulnerable.

I know that delivering food to them can be tricky, and I've noticed that Lidl's supermarkets currently have a scheme where you can pay for various items with your own shopping (by scanning a leaflet) and they then provide that item, and another of the same value, to a local charity: if you use Lidl's you may like to make use of this system.

Ade and I have delivered twenty selection boxes to Sister Joan at the Radcliffe food bank for their families with children.

Collections:

Since our second lockdown period, we have, again, been unable to collect donations at church. However, Anne Mills is still willing to receive cheques, if anybody wishes to send them on to her. Several people are already fully paid-up, until the end of this year, and it is not too late for others to contribute, if they wish to do so. Early next year, changes will be introduced by HSBC which will affect the way we conduct the church banking-procedures, and it seems very likely that charges will increase considerably; John advises that payments made now would avoid the extra costs. All payments will be gratefully received; thank you!

The Inquirer.

Betty Kenyon has offered to take over this task, from the end of the year. If you wish to order next year's copies, and do not already take them, please speak to Betty; if you have received copies, this year, and do not wish to continue, let Betty know. Those who order copies will be asked to pay for them, either this month or next; copies, this year have cost £27.00, but we have not yet been informed about next year's prices. Thank you.

Ed's note: The Inquirer is the national newspaper of Unitarians and Free Christians in the UK. It is issued fortnightly, and by the time we read this will have published its eight thousandth edition. Our church traditionally sponsors a full-cover edition at Christmas, and will be doing so again this year.

Napkins!

When Ade and I got married last year, some of you very kindly lent or gave us fabric napkins to use during the wedding lunch. We still have them, and I'm really embarrassed to admit that we can no longer remember whose are which, and who asked for them back.

Please let me know, and I will make sure we return what is rightfully yours!

Unitarian Societies Day

Late in November Anne and I attended the Zoom 'Societies Day' : this was a one-day virtual experience of a weekend which normally takes place at Great Hucklow.

We were treated to presentations and worship from the Findhorn Unitarian Network; the Unitarian Earth Spirit Network; The Peace Fellowship; The Unitarian Renewal Group; and The National Unitarian Fellowship.

It was a rich and enjoyable day, and after twenty years in Unitarianism (and fifteen in preaching) I learned a lot that I hadn't known about some of these societies, and left keen to find out more and get more involved. Space is at a premium in this edition of the *Calendar* but watch out for more information about each society in future editions.

Young people

If you have young people in your circle who might appreciate the chance of a virtual 'Junior Church', you may be interested in the excellent weekly offerings from Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel in Hampstead: please speak to Kate for further details.

Executive Committee elections:

If you are on email you will have received a notice from Anne Mills about nominations for the Executive Committee of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. If you did not receive this and might be interested, in standing for election, please speak to Anne or Kate who will make sure you have all the relevant information.

Reflections in the windows:

You may have noticed posters in the windows of the Worship Area. Early on in the first lockdown I decided to display some of the prayers from our Sunday services-at-home, in case they caught the eye of any passers-by and offered them a moment of reflection.

I know of one person reading them and then wanting a conversation about Unitarianism, so for the next little while I'll continue to display them.

Next edition

The next edition of the *Calendar* will be the February 2021 issue, which should be delivered to you on the last Saturday of January. Please feel very welcome to submit anything you would like to see included: **the deadline is Wednesday 27th**, but I welcome earlier submissions where that's practical! Please keep your eye on emails, pastoral letters, and other contacts to keep up to date with what is happening.

Bury Unitarian Church Calendar:

‘What’s On’ for December 2020 and January 2021.

Please bear in mind that, given the current situation, anything listed here is liable to change at short notice. Please keep an eye on emails and the weekly letter, and please don’t hesitate to call Kate if anything is confusing or if you need clarification of anything.

Worship from Bury in December 2020

Sunday 6th December:

11.15am: worship in church (please book in advance).

2pm: Zoom service.

Sunday 13th December:

11.15am: worship in church (please book in advance).

2pm: Zoom service. This will be a virtual Christingle Service.

Sunday 20th December:

11.15am: worship in church (please book in advance).

2pm: Zoom service.

Thursday 24th December (Christmas Eve):

11.15am: Communion Service. This will be held online, but we are hoping to find a way to share it more widely. Please keep an eye on letters from the minister.

Thursday 25th December (Christmas Day):

11.15am: Christmas morning worship. This will be held online, and you are very welcome to join us by phone.

Sunday December 27th No worship from Bury. Please keep an eye out for details of services from other churches.

Happy Christmas!

You are welcome to join us for any of our Zoom events and services over Christmas and into the new year.

Zoom details for our regular services will be provided by email or in your weekly letter from the minister, but if you're not on either of those lists and would like to attend anything, please contact the minister and she will make sure that you have all the information you need.

If you don't have internet access, you can join our Zoom services by telephone, and although you can't see your friends on screen, you can still hear what is happening and join in with the singing.

If you would like to attend one of our services in person in the church, please let Kate know: due to the current restrictions (and the need to remain safe) we can only have sixteen people at each service so this needs to be arranged in advance.

As well as our own Sunday services, there will be a Communion Service on Christmas Eve: this will be hosted on Zoom but we are looking at ways to enable a few people to join in or watch from the church building: please look out for further information about this.

Strange though this year has been, one of the benefits has been that those of us with internet access have been able to 'attend' services from other churches, and there are several other events listed in these pages. Further details of some of them are in the *Calendar*, but please don't hesitate to ask Kate if you would like more information on any of them.

Everyone at Bury Unitarian Church wishes you a very happy Christmas, and we look forward to seeing you at one of our events.

What's on in December

Regular events:

Saturdays 5th, 12th, and 19th December, 11am:

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

Sundays 6th, 13th and 20th December: ,

11.15am: Service-in-person (please only attend if you have been invited)

2pm: Zoom worship (mtg no **849 7456 6116**)

Wednesdays 2nd and 16th December, 7pm: Book club (Zoom).

Friday 4th December, 7pm: Anthems for Advent, see advert in *Calendar*.

Saturday 12th December, 10am: The Four Candles of Advent, hosted by the Findhorn Unitarian Network (Zoom) (also on Tuesday 15th at 9.30am).

Sunday 13th December, 10.30am: Christmas Service at Ainsworth, conducted by Anne Mills.

Monday 14th December, 7pm: Camera club (Zoom).

Saturday 19th December, 4.30pm: Christmas Service hosted by the Lancashire Collaborative Ministry, see article in the *Calendar*.

Monday 21st December, 7pm: Unitarian Earth Spirit Network Winter Solstice Celebration. See article in the *Calendar*.

Thursday 24th December, 11.15am: Zoom communion service.

Thursday 24th December, 6.30pm: A Unitarian Christmas Eve, from Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Church, London. See article in the *Calendar*.

Friday 25th December (Christmas Day) 11.15am: Christmas Worship (Zoom)

Worship from Bury in January 2021

Sunday January 3rd:

11.15am: worship in church (please book in advance).

2pm: Zoom service.

Sunday January 10th:

11.15am: worship in church (please book in advance).

2pm: Zoom service.

Sunday January 17th:

11.15am: worship in church (please book in advance).

2pm: Zoom service.

Sunday January 24th:

11.15am: worship in church (please book in advance).

2pm: Zoom service.

Sunday January 31st:

11.15am: worship in church (please book in advance).

2pm: Zoom service.

What's on in January

Regular events:

Saturdays 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th January, 11am:

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

Sundays 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, and 31st January

11.15am: Service-in-person (please only attend if you have been invited)

2pm: Zoom worship (mtg no **849 7456 6116**)

Tuesday 19th January, 9.30am: A meditation on the breath, an event hosted by the Findhorn Unitarian Network, on Zoom.

Also on Saturday 23rd January

Mondays January 11th and 25th, 7pm: Leading change in the Congregation – online course. See details in *Calendar*.

Wednesday 27th January, around teatime: deadline for articles for the February edition of the *Calendar*.

Cross Street Unitarian Chapel

Manchester | Music@CrossStChapel.org.uk



ANTHEMS FOR ADVENT

"Joy and Woe are Woven Fine"

Streaming on Fri 4 Dec, 7.00 pm

CrossStChapel.org.uk/Anthems

*Featuring Members of Cross Street Chapel,
International Artists and
The Roundelay & Friends Virtual Choir
#CrossStMusic*

**Help
Musicians**

in aid of **HelpMusicians.org.uk**

Donate via tinyurl.com/CrossStMusic

Please see the What's On pages for further details of this event

Findhorn Unitarian Network

Findhorn Unitarian Network would love you to join one of the on line meditation sessions of offer in December and January. A quiet space for reflection and connection with other Unitarians. They are conducted via Zoom, and just like our church services can be accessed by phone as well as online.

The 4 candles of Advent: Hope, Peace, Love and Joy.

December 12th at 10 am;

or 15th at 9.30 am.

A meditation on the breath

January 2021 19th at 9.30 am or

23rd at 10 am

Please contact Val Chamberlain 01257 482314 or register directly with Ralph Catts on ralphunitarian@gmail.com

Solstice.

You are warmly invited to join the Unitarian Earth Spirit Network for our Winter Solstice celebration on Monday 21st December 2020 at 7 pm via Zoom. The return of the sun from standing still in the South is encouraged by lighting fires and candles. It is a time to decorate the house with evergreens and celebrate the turning of the year. We all have special memories of Yule and Christmas and there will be an opportunity to share them during our celebration.

If you would like to join us, please email Tony tony.mcneile@virgin.net who will send the link to join the meeting.



Sunday 13th December 2020, 2pm

Everyone is welcome to this Unitarian Christingle Service, hosted by **Bury Unitarian Church**. If you want to take a full part, please ask for details of how to create your own Christingle (church members have received a kit to help with this). You are welcome to join in without a Christingle, of course.

Zoom details will be provided on request.

Invitation to a special Christmas service:

On behalf of the Lancashire Collaborative Ministry, which comprises the Unitarian churches in Chorley, Padiham, and Rawtenstall, I am delighted to invite the members of your congregation to a special Christmas Service, to be held, by Zoom, on Saturday, December 19th, 2020, at 4.30 p.m. We will be inviting several congregations to join us, especially those in North Lancashire, and we sincerely hope that you will all be able to join us, and to make a contribution to the service. It would be wonderful to be able to celebrate the approach of Christmas and to know that we are all amongst friends who wish each other well.

I shall be present in my capacity as the LCM's Secretary, but also as The General Assembly Vice-President; I feel that it is important for all of us, at the end of a difficult year, to come together as one community of friends and fellow-Unitarians.

I will contact you again, nearer the time, to send further details of the service, and to ask whether you wish to contribute specifically. In the meantime, I send you my warmest wishes, and will look forward to "seeing" you all, next month.

I hope everybody is staying safe and well.

Please note: This service will replace our own Christmas Carol Service, this year, and we thought it would provide an excellent opportunity to renew contact with members of other Unitarian churches, nearby, and with some from further afield, too. Joining-details will be available, nearer the time; please do join in the celebrations, if you can! You are invited to bring along your own seasonal refreshments, for the social-time, after the service.

Anne.



Hosted on Zoom,
by Bury Unitarian Church

CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION

A sacred sharing of bread and
wine, open to everyone, of any
belief or none.

**11.15AM, THURSDAY 24TH
DECEMBER 2020
PLEASE CONTACT US FOR LOG IN
DETAILS**

Please see the What's On pages for further details of this event.

A Unitarian Christmas by Candlelight

24th December: Christmas Eve at 6.30pm via Zoom

Led by Rev Kate Dean and Unitarian Ministry friends

A service of music, carols and readings from Unitarian congregations around the country. To take part fully, please have a candle with you. We encourage you to decorate your 'Zoom space' festively for the part of the service when we all light our candles together. A full programme and song sheet will be available to download from the Rosslyn Hill Chapel website.

Christmas Card deliveries

Normally, during December, we have a post box in church for members to leave and collect greetings cards, and obviously, we can't do that this year (even if you are coming to services in person, please don't bring your cards in unless you know that you can hand them over directly).

I know that many of you will still want to send cards to your friends at church, but if you would struggle to get out to do so, or if you don't know people's addresses, you are welcome either to hand them over to me or Ade when we deliver your service on the 6th or 13th of December, or to post them to the manse in one envelope by Wednesday 16th December and we will either post them on (please put a stamp on!) or deliver them with the service on the 20th.

If there is any other way we can help with distributing Christmas cards between you, please don't hesitate to let me know.

LEADING CHANGE IN THE CONGREGATION

an online course

JAN-APR 2021



We need strong, inspiring and courageous leadership in our congregations more than ever. This course will equip you with the skills to lead change in your congregation, so that we can help support the spiritual, emotional, and organisational needs of our communities and play our part in making the world a better place.

This 8-session course is being run by Rev Andy Pakula and Rory Castle Jones, and takes place on 11th and 25th January, 8th and 22nd February, 8th and 22nd March, and 12th and 26th April. It is aimed at anyone with an interest in church leadership or in the administration of churches.

It covers leadership and change; the spiritual assumptions of leaders; systems theory as a way to look at your congregation; the spiritual journey of congregational change; the emotional cycle of congregations in change; congregational preferences in change; behaviour appropriate to a congregation; and wrapping it up and taking it home.

The organisers ask for a contribution of £20 per participant, and there is a course book you will need to obtain, but as this course will benefit the congregation as a whole, you should certainly not let the cost affect your decision about attending.

Please speak to Kate for more information on how to apply: the deadline is December 8th.

Tales of Christmas Past

Vera Stephenson tells me of the days when Chesham church (which at that time had around sixty children in the Sunday School, all of whom had to go to Sunday School twice every Sunday to get a First Class prize) held a regular New Year's Eve dance. There was a live band, and Vera's father would shave a candle on to the floor to make a suitable surface for dancing. The event went on til 2am, at which time the hall would have to be made ready either for chapel the next day, or for the pantomime, which always took place on New Year's Day.

Anne Mills writes: For years, whilst I was growing up and still living under my parents' roof, our family was supplied by a superb turkey for Christmas Day by my father's employers, Walmsleys. But there were only four of us for Christmas Dinner, and the turkey was huge---at least 20 lbs in weight! Wasting food was not encouraged, at our house, and every scrap of that turkey was eaten, until it was finished---and then the carcass was boiled up to make stock for soup. By the time we reached January, we had had more than sufficient of turkey and chips, turkey stew, and turkey sandwiches. We were always grateful for the turkey, but glad to vary our diet, once we could!

Our Christmas presents were always kept in a cupboard, under the eaves, in our parents' bedroom; one year, I'm afraid, my sister and I took advantage of our mother's absence and thoroughly explored the contents of the cupboard, carefully peeling away scraps of cellotape from our gifts, so that we could see the contents; once we'd looked, we sealed the presents again, until Christmas morning. That Christmas was the most disappointing I've ever experienced, and I can still remember the acute disappointment I felt: opening presents and pretending to be surprised and pleased at what was inside. I was never tempted to do the same again; I'd learned my lesson---the hard way!

Spotted, by Pam Oxley . . .

Just a small thing I read a few days ago in a brochure, which I thought quite amusing:

Diamond nail files – the only one you will ever need.

Pack of two £9.99.

Spotted, by Anne Evitts . . .

Seen in the bathroom of a Unitarian church in USA

What would have happened if the 3 wise men had been women:

They would have asked directions

Arrived on time

Helped deliver the baby

Cleaned the stable

Made a casserole and brought practical gifts!!

Dancing with Mortality:

This book, with the subtitle "Reflections of a Lapsed Atheist", has recently been published by Bert Clough, a member of our Oxford and Meadow congregations. It consists of 15 sermons, written by Bert, over the years, and should prove interesting and thought-provoking, especially to those who deliver services, from time to time. I have been in touch with Bert, recently, who tells me that sales are low, as he has experienced difficulty in contacting congregations, whilst so many of our churches remain closed. The cost of a copy is £10.00, which includes postage; you can order by emailing Bert (b.clough947@gmail.com) If you would like a copy but are not on email, Anne can provide further details, or order on your behalf.

By-Gone Times (number 7)

Clubs and Societies

Churches and chapels were a large part of everyone's life. Bank Street Chapel provided Sunday School and Education for children during the week. Times were certainly different in the late 1800s and into the 1900s, well before TV, computers and social media. There were societies and clubs for adults. Some in an evening and some daytime.

Evening Meetings often started at 8.00pm and sometimes 9.00pm. I do wonder about transport and street lighting—gas lamps or no lights!

There were the following classes:

Drawing, Cotton Manufacture, Basket work, Sewing, Cookery, Fancy Work, Book-keeping, Shorthand, Writing, Freehand, Drawing, Elocution, Model and Machine.

These classes were specially commended to the notice of the scholars who sought an opportunity of further self-improvement and thus could lead to better job prospects.

Also: *Debating Society, Girls' Social Club, Temperance Society, Reading Circle, Friendly Society Meeting, Savings, Ambulance, Art, Drama, Glee Club, Dorcas Society, Tonic Sol-Fa Class.* (Tonic sol-fa Class (or tonic sol-fah) is a pedagogical technique for teaching sight-singing, invented by Sarah Ann Glover (1785–1867) of Norwich.)

There were 2 Football teams, Cricket, Cycling.

Surely something for everyone.

The average number attending was 43 persons.

Fees for one class 6d per session, attendance at 2 or more classes fees were 1/-.

The Bury Football Club is interesting in that it was formed in 1885 by Aiden Arrowsmith following a meeting at the White Horse Hotel, between the Bury Unitarians and Bury Wesleyans Football Clubs.

The club's nickname—"The Shakers"—was first used at the 1892 Lancashire Cup final against Everton. Before the match, J. T. Ingham, the club's chairman manager, reportedly inspired the players by saying: "We shall shake 'em! In fact, we are the Shakers".



The team in 1892

Dorcas Society

Dorcas was known for her good works and acts of charity. The Dorcas Society met in an afternoon. Their annual excursion in July 1897 met at Bank Street at 2.00pm then they were taken by brakes to Ashworth Chapel for a picnic, forty members and friends went. The special interest of the excursion lay in the fact that Ashworth Chapel was associated with the memory of Henry Pendlebury.

Cycling Cub

Secretary: G.R. Kenyon (Neville's great uncle), Membership fee 1/-.

First run of the season 11th April 1891 to Middleton, 16 miles. There was a run every Saturday until the end of September. The longest run to Knutsford was 50 miles. All start from Bank Street at 2.30pm.

The Premier Cycle Company, Limited, Coventry.

15

The "Premier" Model "F."



IS an exceptionally strong and sound Bicycle at a very moderate price. Its special feature is a diamond-shaped framework of novel construction, formed of trough-shaped or semi-circular steel, fitted together in a way which gives it the appearance of a tubular frame, divided vertically, except for a few inches at the front part, and opened out about two inches at the centre. This formation gives great lateral stability—an important characteristic not possessed by many diamond-framed safeties. Nearly 15,000 of this model have now been sold, and with the most satisfactory results, so that we are able to offer it with increased confidence to our clients.

We do not fit pneumatic tyres to this machine.

PRICES.

With solid tyres	...	...	...	...	£10 10 0
„ cushion tyres (as shown above)	...	...	...	...	£12 0 0

EXTRAS.—Ball pedals, best quality (tubular middles between side plates), 15/-
„ „ 2nd „ (without tubes) 10/-

LONDON: 14, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.; 5, Lisle Street, Leicester Square, W.; and 133, Hammersmith Road, W.

Hymn-pondering

I have chosen a Christmas Carol on which to reflect, this month; it is not one of the best-known carols, but it seems to me to express the spirit of Christmas: mainly general rejoicing and hopes for the future, despite a little doubt. "I heard the bells on Christmas Day" is number 124, in "Hymns of Faith and Freedom"; the words are by H. W. Longfellow, an American Unitarian poet, who lived between 1807 and 1882, and it is sung to the tune of "Church Triumphant".

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day
their old familiar carols play,
and wild and sweet the words repeat,
of "Peace on earth, goodwill to men!"*

*I thought how, as the day had come,
the belfries of all Christendom
had rolled along the unbroken song
of "Peace on earth, goodwill to men!"*

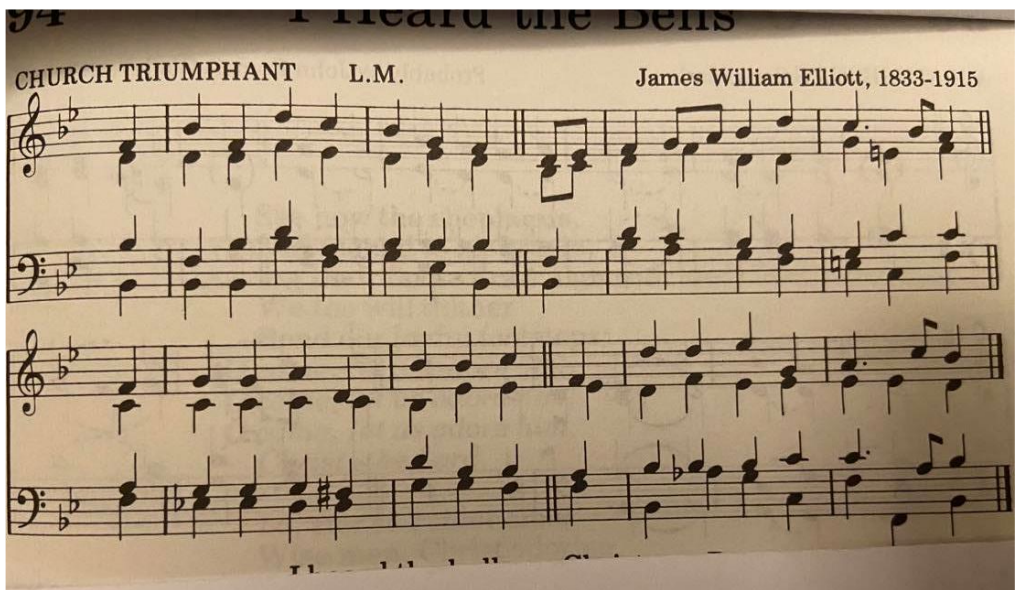
*Till ringing, singing on its way,
the world revolved from night to day,
a voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
of "Peace on earth, goodwill to men!"*

*And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said.
"For hate is strong and mocks the song
of Peace on earth, goodwill to men!"*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
with Peace on earth, goodwill to men!"*

The message is clear; it is repeated at the end of every line, and the word "Peace" is given a capital letter, every time it is used. We are reminded, in the first three verses, of well-established traditions which bring pleasure--- of Christmas as a happy time, of a life that is stable, caring and contented, of an environment in which sounds evoke feelings and thoughts. The mood changes somewhat, in verse 4, when the poet gives in to brooding doubts; "hate" is set against "peace", and the power of the music is rejected. However, the final verse changes negative feelings back to positive ones, in a statement of strength and faith. We have experienced the best part of a year now living with uncertainty; do the words of the last verse reassure you, or not? If not, what would give you greater confidence? Will you spend five minutes thinking about this? Over to you!

Anne.



A prayer for this strangest of all Christmases

This Winter is not like any other Winter we have known.

Let's allow ourselves space to grieve what we wish for. For more choice, more company, more singing, more gathering together. Let's allow ourselves that, because sadness is always within and around us, and is, in itself, a blessing.

This Solstice will not be like any other Solstice we have known.

And yet, no one has explained to nature that this is not like any other Solstice. The Sun and the Moon will still continue on their journeys through the sky, and the Solstice will still work its incredible, glorious, tiny, enormous magic. No one has told the days not to lengthen, the light not to return, or the spring not to start preparing itself.

As we prepare for this strange Solstice, let us remember that there will still be a Solstice.

This Christmas will not be like any other Christmas we have known.

And yet, no one has explained to those old, powerful stories, those stories that dwell deep within us, that this is not like any other Christmas. The stories will still be told, and will still be treasured, and Christmas will still work its incredible, glorious, tiny, enormous magic. No one has told the children not to be beside themselves with chocolate and hope, the grown ups not to love a little bit more generously, or the world not to sparkle a little more than normal.

As we prepare for this strange Christmas, let us remember that there will still be a Christmas.

Let us rejoice in what is good, and right, and holy.

Amen.



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Chair of church council: Betty Kenyon (01204 887222)

Chair of congregation: Anne Mills (5, Arley Avenue, Bury,
BL9 5HD, 0161 762 0943)

Church secretary: Anne Mills

Church treasurer: John Fitzpatrick (0161 764 6374)