

BURY UNITARIAN CHURCH



The Robin knows that winter's nearly over!

FEBRUARY 2022

Letter from the Minister

Dear all,

It seems a very long time since I last wrote a letter for the church *Calendar*, although it's actually only two months.

It was, of course, quite a busy two months in church life, with Christmas and the Solstice. Of course, we still weren't able to celebrate as fully as we would have liked, but it was a real joy to be able to hold our Carols by Candlelight service again, after being unable to last year.

And now we have made it into 2022, and although we're several weeks into the year I do wish you a very happy new year (I think that it's okay still to say it, as it's still technically Christmas as I write this!).

This time two years ago the world was very different. In my letter I was looking forward to us carrying on with all our wonderful social events, and to having a rich and fruitful year: we had no idea of the lockdown that was coming only a very few weeks later. Things are definitely not as happy and carefree as they were then. But this time last year things were much bleaker than they are now: we were about to enter another lockdown, and we didn't meet in church during February or March, so whilst things aren't as good as they seemed in January 2020, they are a lot better than they were in January 2021.

This isn't the carefree life we got used to, that's for sure. But we are seeing progress, and I know that we all continue to pray for things to start settling back to something a lot more recognisable. I do wonder if things will ever be quite the same again, and we need to continue to be gentle with ourselves as we navigate these new lives. It's okay if you're tired and anxious and not feeling like you used to: we're all living through a trauma, and we need to acknowledge that. We also need to bear in mind that although we're well past the Solstice we're still in the darker, chillier part of the year, and that that can sap our energy levels really noticeably.

But all that said, the seasons are still turning. Our Sunday afternoon routine, after the Zoom service, is to take the dog for a walk at Holebottom (our church's former burial ground, on the edge of Bury) and it's really noticeable that we're having to rush less and less in order to get there and back in the light. It's actually a very exciting time of year up there despite the cold and the mud: some of the trees are starting to bud, and the birdsong, even though the site is so close to the motorway, is always glorious and very loud, once you've tuned your ears in to hear it.

Holebottom really is an asset to our community, and if you haven't visited, or haven't visited for a while, it's worth trying to get up there. I should warn you that the ground is rough and often muddy, so it's not that accessible to people with reduced mobility, but for those of us who can manage it, it is a lovely quiet haven. We're using it more and more for worship (we try to mark the Solstices and Equinoxes up there where it's possible) so those are good times if you'd like to be there in company.

Particularly at the moment it's great that we have an outside space we can use for worship and activities – and it will be even more beneficial once the weather improves. If you have any other ideas for how we can use that lovely space, please let us know and we'll see how we can make them happen.

Who knows, perhaps when the weather improves we can try and have a picnic up there one afternoon. I know that we all desperately miss our social events, and I promise you there are lots of conversations taking place about how we can manage this safely. I really hope that there might be some more definite news in the March Calendar.

As we move forward into spring, I send you blessings for whatever comes: whatever else comes, the light is returning, the flowers are appearing, and the birds are singing. There are always blessings.

As ever, I send you my love.

Rev Kate Brady McKenna

Presidential matters

On November 28th, I conducted the service at Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead, taking as my theme "Parallels in History", which fitted in with their month of "History" services generally. A group from the chapel met, that evening, to discuss my service---a small group, but an interesting discussion, according to Rev. Kate Dean. Rev. Jim Corrigan, now the London District Minister, attended the service (as did Derek McAuley) and stayed on for lunch with a group of us. December 2nd brought an Open Meeting of The Women's League, at Cross Street Manchester; 19 people were present, and we spoke at length about the need to revitalise the League, to confront contemporary issues (such as debt, homelessness, and drug and alcohol abuse, and to continue with our fund-raising efforts. The mood of the meeting was positive, and the message to the denomination is that WL is very much alive and kicking! On December 7th, we were invited to attend Dukinfield's Christmas Social Evening, which was very enjoyable; we were asked to take a reading, if we wished to contribute (preferably a humorous one); the piece I found ("The 12 Days of Turkey") reminded me of the days when my father's employer always sent a huge turkey to him, for Christmas; by the time we'd eaten turkey sandwiches, stews and soups for a week, we were heartily sick of turkey!

December 12th saw me at Padiham, to conduct a Nativity Service, in the morning, in person, and at Oxford, by zoom, in the evening, to lead a Christmas Service. Both went well, despite concerns from both congregations. Padiham, who have had great success with zoom meetings, have found it difficult to transfer to hybrid worship; however, at my service, everything worked perfectly! Oxford, who had discovered that Omicron covid had invaded the university, just at the end of term, were instructed not to hold live services, for the time being, and the December 12th morning live service was cancelled at very short notice. My theme was "The Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come", which we all enjoyed.

The following Sunday found me in the Blackpool area: at Ansdell, first, to conduct a service of Readings and Carols, in the afternoon, and to enjoy a

late lunch; and a raffle offered a chance to raise money for a local charity. I'm not sure what happened, but we seemed to go home with far more than we'd taken, as did everyone else! We decided to stay on, in order to attend Blackpool's Carol Service, that evening; within two minutes of entering the church-premises, I'd been asked to give one of the readings, as a volunteer hadn't turned up! We enjoyed ten readings and ten carols, and even managed a short trip through the illuminations, on a day which was long, but very pleasant.

Roger and I attended Bury's Christmas Day service, suitably fortified with bacon butties, sherry and shortbread, and it was good to attend a service in which I was not required to officiate, in any way; opportunities for that, these days, are few and far between! We were able to do the same, on Boxing Day, when we zoomed to Altrincham, to share in their worship. On January 1st, in the evening, I had been invited to participate in a Sheffield District New Year's Day Service, via zoom; I contributed the Welcome, the GA Greetings, and the Chalice-Lighting and Words, when I read a prose poem, "The Fourth Candle", which sent a strong message of hope to those present. I even splashed out on a new candle for the occasion! January 2nd involved more zooming, when I conducted a service on "Change" for the members of Bolton Bank Street Chapel; they have taken the decision to close, probably in April, when one last service will be held, in person, in the chapel; until then, all their services will be zoom ones. We decided to attend Newcastle's zoom service, on January 9th, as Rev. Sue Woolley was leading worship for them; we were glad we had; Sue's service ("The Seven Paths to Wisdom") was excellent and very thought-provoking. The attendance, however, was fairly small, as it seems to have been in many places, and I am concerned that numbers generally are falling; the longer we remain under restrictions and prone to covid, despite vaccines, the more likelihood there seems to be of congregations diminishing, and we must give this some attention. If numbers continue to fall, it could be difficult to restore them, in the future. That evening, we attended an Interfaith Service at Rawtenstall; again, low numbers prevailed, and all those present were Unitarians---although a regular attender, from one of Chorley's Roman Catholic Churches, had sent a reading. We were considering the subject of

"Communities", to which I contributed an article written by Rev Stephen Lingwood, on "Hospitality". January 16th found me at Ansdell, again; where numbers were small, but appreciative; the church there is small, but very attractive, and always kept immaculate; it is a pleasure to visit.

Other work done, recently, has included the writing of the President's Christmas Message to the denomination; the compilation of the President's Annual Report, in preparation for the 2022 Annual Meetings; the composition of an article for the January "Inquirer"; a contribution to a congratulatory message for the people of Wahmawlein Village, near Meghalaya, in north-eastern India, as they celebrate their Silver Jubilee, later this month; and a Presidential Report for the Executive Committee's latest meeting.

Once again, thanks are due to Kate and Ade for all their efforts to keep our congregation together, in continuing, difficult times. On January 9th, when Kate was unwell and awaiting the much-delayed results of a PCR test, Ade set to work to erect a screen in the worship-area, so that Kate could broadcast her service to the in-person congregation; this was over and above the call of duty, and we owe them both huge thanks. Luckily, the test-result was negative, so all was well.

We have all managed to survive most of the first month of 2022, even if the general situation doesn't seem to be a great deal improved; Boris Johnson's Plan B restrictions end, on January 25th, which would seem to indicate progress---but we've been here before and, perhaps, are rather less optimistic than we might have been, at this time last year. Roger and I send everybody our very best wishes, in hopes that the winter weather becomes a little warmer and less muddy, underfoot. I am booked to take the service at Kendal, on January 23rd, so we will use the opportunity to spend a few days in Silverdale---always a pleasure for us! Look after yourselves, and keep safe.

Anne.

Allan Hodgert, 1928-2022

In late January we were very saddened to hear of the unexpected death, at home, of our friend Allan Hodgert. Allan had been a member of our church for many years, and both liked, and was liked by, everyone.

He was a funny, charming, loving, hugely intelligent and knowledgeable man, who was always interested in other people and went out of his way to welcome newcomers and visitors. He seldom missed church, and was always in the thick of the conversation in the lounge after services, never losing his sharp wit and his sense of humour.

We send our special love and support to Barbara, his partner of many years, who he loved deeply and who will miss him enormously, and to his family and the many people whose lives were enriched by his presence.

We do not yet have details of Allan's funeral, but will of course let people know as soon as we do.

Our world was made better by Allan's presence in it: may he rest in peace and may those who mourn him know comfort.



News of our community.

John and Margaret Fitzpatrick

John and Margaret are hopeful that their move to the Midlands is now approaching: they have found a house and are hoping that the contracts will be exchanged soon. We will miss them, of course, but I know that our love and best wishes go with them on this new stage in their lives. Unfortunately, John suffered a stroke whilst they were in Birmingham over Christmas: he is recovering well, and we send him our love and hope that his recovery continues speedily.

Stephen Ramsay

Many of you will know that Stephen, who plays the piano for us on the first Sunday of every month, also suffered a stroke, on New Year's Eve. Stephen is still in hospital, and it may be some time before we see him in church again. Anne Mills has sent him a card on behalf of us all, and has received a reply thanking her. I am in touch with him by text, and I know that you will join me in prayers for a full and speedy recovery.

Marguerite and Terry Brady

Marguerite and Terry (Marguerite is a regular attender at our Zoom services) have both been struggling recently. Terry was admitted to hospital with an infection on New Year's Eve, and Marguerite recently sustained nasty bruises in a fall down the stairs: they are taking good care of each other with the help of excellent neighbours, and Ade is visiting as frequently as he can.

A note from Valerie Walker

Many of you will know Valerie, who is a regular at our Zoom services and coffee mornings. Valerie sent this to us before Christmas, but there wasn't room for it in the December Calendar (sorry, Valerie!).

December 2021

Dear Bury Unitarians

Some of you I have met, some only on screen via Zoom, and to others my name will be quite unknown.

Every month I receive your Calendar so I know what goes on in your chapel lives, and also I enjoy those historical gems that appear.

As someone living in a Unitarian desert (in Buckinghamshire) I have really appreciated the Zoom facility for joining services over the last many months (although the original reason for them becoming so prevalent was sad).

Most congregations are now meeting again in person, but those ministers who are still offering a Zoom service are much appreciated and the thoughtful and thought-provoking addresses that Kate has delivered week after week have been inspiring and comforting.

I must also add that the Saturday morning chats have been such a tonic for me living alone, week-ends used to be VERY quiet.

So thank you all for being there and for letting me join you.

Maybe we will meet in person one day.

Valerie Walker (Stoke Mandeville)

News of people, from Anne Mills.

David and Doreen Willis:

Whilst we were out walking, early in the New Year, we chanced to meet Doreen and David Willis, who used to attend our in-person Saturday Coffee Mornings regularly, and who also visited some of our zoom coffee-sessions. They are well and were on a mission to find pasties at the Buckhurst Lodge Cafe. We enjoyed a chat with them, and it was good to catch up with their news. Women's League members may remember that Doreen is the daughter of the late Dorothy Luxton.

David Cooke:

In 2009, we were joined by David Cooke, who attended our services for some time, after his wife died; Rev. Jeff Gould conducted her funeral. David subsequently transferred to our church in Padiham and settled there, becoming a stalwart of the congregation. David suffered problems with chest-infections during the second half of last year, and was eventually diagnosed as having a clot on his lungs; he died, in hospital, on December 19th, and his funeral was held on January 11th. Anne and Roger were present at this service, which was well-attended by family, friends and congregation-members. David was a kind, gentle man, and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Dorothea and Pat Twigg:

The zoom Christmas Service I conducted for Oxford Unitarians was attended by Rev. Peter Hewis, who asked whether I remembered the three Twigg sisters, who attended our Chesham church. The youngest sister, Dorothea, was in my class at primary school, and elder sister, Pat, (now Mitton) is still in touch, from time to time. It's a small world!

Notes from the church property

One of my favourite religious concepts, one that I've picked up from Kate, is that ministry comes in many forms, and does in fact come from all of us. We minister to each other, and we minister to our community in many, many ways. From working on committees in the background, to flower arranging for the service, to making tea and coffee afterwards, everything we do in the community with each other in mind is a form of ministry.

With that in mind, I'm really looking forward to the return of community stewarding, not because I don't enjoy providing it myself, but because one steward really isn't an effective form of this ministry and it really is something that others in the congregation can be offering to each other much more effectively.

There's so much to do at the church both before and after a service, that more of the congregation than I would like have not seen me in the vestibule when they arrive, and not seen me as much more than a shadow out of the corner of the eye when the service is over. It's not effective as a form of ministry, and although I do my best to make myself available, I do feel that it doesn't make the space as welcoming to the congregation or to visitors as we really should be making it.

So I'm really looking forward to a return of the congregational stewards, the welcome that Bury Unitarians gives has always been brilliant, and taking this step out of the pandemic, is another tiny step back to where we were and that feels like another giant leap forward.

Can you help us sometimes?

There are all sorts of little jobs which go on at church which might not always be seen, but which are really important: could you help us with one or more of them sometimes? If you can help with any of these as a one-off, or on a regular basis, please do speak to Kate or Betty.

Some of the jobs are:

Collating (or even guest-editing) the monthly Calendar

Co-ordinating a rota for flowers

Helping organise one-off social events.

Helping with tea and coffee after services

Providing flowers for the weeks when our florists are unavailable

Reading in services (in-person or over Zoom)

Stewarding for Sunday morning services

We'd also love to hear about any other ideas you have for things we could be doing to make things run even more smoothly and pleasantly than they do. Have you ever found yourself thinking "I wish we did . . ." or "I wonder how it would be if . . ." ? If so, please let someone know and we will do what we can to make it happen: sometimes fresh eyes and fresh ideas can make a huge difference!

Book Club

The Book Club will meet on Wednesday 23rd February, at 1.30pm. We hope to meet in church, but please watch and listen for confirmation.

The book we are discussing this month is *Rebecca*, by Daphne Du Maurier.

We always welcome new members, and you don't need to have enjoyed (or even read!) the book.

Camera Club

The Camera Club is hoping to meet on the 14th and 28th of February: at the moment we are mostly meeting on Zoom only, but if we meet in person at all, we always bring our zoom members with us. Although we meet on a twice monthly basis, we tend to pencil these meetings in on a meeting by meeting basis, so if you have received your calendar early, we do have a meeting confirmed for the 31st of January to which, everyone is welcome, as always.

We don't insist on a knowledge of cameras, or of a professional quality of images, far from it! If you have a phone and would like to share your snaps, you are more than welcome to join us, we've always got a place available.

If you want to know more before joining us, please feel free to talk to Janet or Roger if you are at church or call Ade whose number is listed under property manager in the contacts section of the calendar.

What's on: February 2022

- Tues 1st February:** 7pm: Meditation (Zoom 812 3292 6975)
- Fri 4th February:** Minister's vestry day
- Sat 5th February:** 11am: Coffee morning (Zoom 839 0159 23)
- Sun 6th February:** 10.30am: Ainsworth: Service, led by Rev Abi Elliott-McGuffie
11.15am Bury: Service in church
2pm: Zoom service (Zoom 849 7456 6116)
- Fri 11th February:** Minister's vestry day
- Sat 12th February:** 11am: Coffee morning (Zoom 839 0159 23)
- Sun 13th February:** 11.15am Bury: Service in church
2pm: Zoom service (Zoom 849 7456 6116)
- Mon 14th February:** 7pm: Camera club (online)
- Tues 15th February:** 7pm: Meditation (Zoom 812 3292 6975)
- Sat 19th February:** 11am: Coffee morning (Zoom 839 0159 23)
- Sun 20th February:** 11.15am Bury: Service in church
2pm: Zoom service (Zoom 849 7456 6116)
- Weds 23rd February:** Book club, 1.30pm (in person, but watch this space)
- Sat 26th February:** 11am: Coffee morning (Zoom 839 0159 23)
- Sun 27th February:** 11.15am Bury: Service in church
2pm: Zoom service (Zoom 849 7456 6116)
- Mon 28th February:** 7pm: Camera club (online)
- Mon 28th February:** 7pm: Finance committee meeting (in person).

The Annual General Meeting, May 2022

We usually hold our AGM in March. Last year, because of Covid, we did not hold an actual meeting, but managed to complete the formalities with a mixture of email and postal voting. Consequently, the Church Council feels that it is important that this year we are able to meet in person for our AGM, but that with a currently high infection rate of an easily transmitted variant of Covid, it would be better to postpone the AGM until the infection rate is lower.

We are therefore suggesting that the AGM is delayed until Sunday May 29th, after the morning service.

In the absence of a Church Secretary, who would usually organise the church AGM, I have volunteered to organise it. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to help me.

We have struggled on this year with no Church Secretary. We really need to fill this post for next year. Requests for nominations will appear in the April Calendar. Please give this some serious thought.

Janet Thatcher on behalf of the Church Council

Editor's note: we will be opening the nominations process very soon, and all church members are encouraged to nominate people for Church Officer posts and committee membership. Please don't assume that someone else will nominate anyone, even if that person is already in post.

The nominations will remain open until Sunday 1st May, so you have plenty of time to consider whether you'd like to take up a formal role within the church community.

Regular Zoom events

Bury Unitarian Church

In-person worship

Every Sunday at 11.15am

Bury Unitarian Church, Bank St, Bury, BL9 0DN
(by the Victoria Wood statue!).

Please join us for a service of words, music, prayer, and silence. We are a welcoming community from a variety of backgrounds, and our services cover a wide range of topics.

face coverings are required in the building, unless you are exempt

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

Bury Unitarian Church

Zoom worship

Every Sunday at 2pm

Meeting ID: 849 7456 6116

Please join us for a service of words, music, prayer, and silence. The service lasts around forty minutes, and then we gather for conversation.

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

BURY UNITARIAN CHURCH

COFFEE MORNING

Every Saturday at
11am, on Zoom

Zoom:
839 0159 0623

**If you would like to join us, we would love to see you
You are welcome, no matter what.**

From Sunday 6th February we will once again be having stewards for Sunday morning services, and we will be going back to taking the collection in person. If you would like to be on the stewarding rota, please do speak to Betty Kenyon. Stewarding is a lovely way to get to meet new people, and a really helpful job.

Church Information

Minister:	Rev. Kate Brady McKenna 0161 460 3363 / 07751 240886 revkatemckenna@gmail.com
Church address:	1 Bank Street, Bury, BL9 0DN
Church phone:	0161 761 3785
Website:	www.bury-unitarian-church.org.uk
Facebook:	Bury Unitarian Church

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

Traidcraft

After a great deal of thought, during the last few months, I have decided, reluctantly, not to continue with our Sunday Traidcraft Stall. The stall has not been able to function during the last two years, and, even now, would not be able to open in any recognisable form. I have worked hard to sell surplus stock, before it went out-of-date, and only a few items now remain to be disposed of. At present, I feel that I lack the energy and enthusiasm to continue with a task which consumes so much time and effort. I would like to thank everyone who has supported the stall, over the years, and especially those who have helped to run it, as Jean Brookhouse has done for several years now. Over the last seventeen or so years, we have raised a great deal of money for the Fair Trade cause---a most praiseworthy effort. Fair Trade items are available from a variety of shops, nowadays, and online, so please don't forget to continue your support; thank you.

Anne.

I would like to thank Anne for all the very hard work she has done in setting up the Traidcraft stall at church and for running it so successfully for such a long time. I know that I'm not alone in having really appreciated the availability of such a good range of items, and we really have been blessed by all of Anne's hard work and commitment.

As Anne says, it is now possible to buy a range of fairly traded items in the high street and at supermarkets, and I really hope that people will still choose to do so.

We will keep up our commitment to being a Fairtrade church, of course.

Kate.

Social and Fundraising Committee

At the recent Church Council meeting, it was decided that, *just in the short term*, the Social and Fundraising Committee will take a break.

We still hope to plan social events, but on an ad-hoc basis. If you have an idea for a social event, please let one of the Church Officers know and we will do everything we can to help make it happen.

I am really grateful for all the work everyone on the Social committee does, and we will definitely meet again when things are more settled!

Foodbank and baby bank.

Thank you to everyone for your ongoing and generous donations of both food and cash for the Foodbank, and thank you to Susan who regularly takes the contributions to the Foodbank at Trinity Baptist Church. We have built up a good relationship with the organisers, and I promise that your contributions really do make a difference. Thank you also to Anne and Roger, who dealt with the deliveries whilst Susan was unable to drive for a while last year.

I have recently been contacted by Bury Baby Bank, who work closely with the Foodbank: they are based in Brandlesholme and support families with young children. They are particularly in need of dummies, children's pyjamas, and baby bottles (the dummies and the bottles must be new).

You will find separate boxes under the vestibule table, and any contributions would be very gratefully received.

Accessibility

We try really hard to make everything at church as accessible as it can be to as many people as possible: thanks to the trustees we now have a lift; one of our toilets is accessible to most people with mobility problems; we produce everything we can in large print versions or on audio; we have a loop system; we have a wheelchair available should it be necessary; and the minister is looking into how we can make our services as accessible as we can for people who are neuro diverse.

There is almost certainly something we're getting wrong, or at least something we're not getting right. If you spot something we can do to make it easier for you to feel fully at ease in our activities, please tell us!

Sound system and microphones

One thing that I know has been an increasing problem for quite a few people is the sound system in the worship area. We do have a loop system and that works for most people, but even so I know it has caused difficulties.

Ade and Roger are looking into sourcing a system which works better for the needs we have now (which are very different from when the church opened), and which will enable us to host Zoom events more successfully from church.

One change which has already been made is that the service leader now has a standing microphone instead of a lapel microphone: **please let Ade, Roger, or Kate know if you've noticed an improvement or if this has made things worse for you!**

No one will be upset if you tell us you're struggling to hear, or to read something, but we'd be very sad if you were struggling and didn't let us know.

The Minister's schedule, February 2022

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 generally 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!

I don't have anything planned during February which will take me away from Bury, either on a personal or a work-related basis.

Calendar deadline.

The deadline for entries for the March Calendar is the evening of Tuesday 22nd February, and I'd be grateful for visitors to help put it together on either Saturday 26th.

News from Ainsworth

Ainsworth's February Service will take place on Sunday, February 6th, 2022, at 10.30 a.m. Rev. Abi Elliott-McGuffie will conduct the service. Everyone will be welcome to attend, and to support Abi, on this occasion.

Last year's services

One of the many joys of Unitarian worship is the variety of topics we can cover in our services: this is a list of the services the minister led last year.

If any of them intrigue you, let Kate know and she'll send you the text.

A whole year round
Being like the innkeeper
Beltane
Blue Christmas
Christingle
Christmas
Day of remembrance for
transgender people
Disturb us, O Lord
Easter
Freedom to travel
Halloween
Harvest
Healing like the trees
Huge tiny histories
Imbolc
It always was glorious
Julian's hazelnut
Laying it all down
Looking back and looking
forwards
Marking the days
One more step
Ordinary time
Oscar Romero
Other kinds of Sunday

Our daily bread
Palm Sunday
Pentecost
Plough Sunday
Rabindranath Tagore
Remembrance Sunday
Society isn't broken
Staying in love with the world
Stillness
Taking it slowly
The Golden Rule
The high cost of poverty
The joy and pain of learning
The mouth of a shark
The privilege pot
The sacred joys of being silly
Things people love
Time well wasted
Triumph and disaster
We can do it, together
What the bees can teach us
Where two or more are
gathered
Who wrote that (and does it
matter?)
Winter Solstice meditation

News from around the denomination

FUSE

The Festival of Unitarians in the South East, organised by the London District Association, takes place on the weekend of February 19th and 20th, 2022, when the theme will be "The Pilgrimage of Life: Journeys of spiritual unfolding". The keynote speakers will be Alastair McIntosh and Jennifer Kavanagh. This will be an online gathering, with a full day on the Saturday, followed by a Sunday morning service, conducted by Rev. Jim Corrigan, the District Minister.

For booking and further details, visit www.LDPAunitarians.org/fuse2022

General Assembly Annual Meetings, 2022

At an Executive Committee Meeting, on January 14th, 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 will open, on February 1st, and will close on February 25th; late bookings, for which there is an additional charge, will be accepted until March 22nd. All bookings are to be made online, although a telephone service will be supplied for those who do not have computer-access. Further information will be available via UniNews and from the uk unitarians website.

We are entitled to send two delegates to the Annual Meetings; if you wish to attend this worthwhile experience, please speak to Betty Kenyon or to our Minister.

Anne.

The Great Unitarian Bake-ON

As a movement, we have many keen and talented bakers. There isn't a week that goes by in which I don't spot a picture of a baked good of sorts on a fellow Unitarian's social media profile. And from my observations, we appear to be a community open to embracing the lot; from cakes, cookies, and scones to bread, pies, and pasties.

What an inclusive bunch! We welcome the many varied sweet and savoury mouthfuls which grace our palates and take great pleasure in the joy experienced in each bite. Some of you whip something together as an excuse to pop by and check in on a neighbour, whilst others craft great signature bakes as expressions of love and gratitude to be enjoyed at church and family gatherings.

Shamelessly, before sharing my wares, I portion off a very generous serving for myself to enjoy as a late a morning treat. Though sometimes, if I'm honest, I also find the Spirit calls me to partake in a late afternoon treat too... Well, really, who am I to question the will of the Divine? Of course, the eating is only a tiny, though incredibly satisfying, part of the whole experience. For me, when done well, from start to finish the entire baking process is a deeply joyful one as I savour the many different sensations which arise at each stage. My favourite being the moment I first catch a hint of that sweet scent emanating from the kitchen and the anticipation which follows. Yum

So, there's quite a lot in this whole baking malarkey. It's quite an expansive ministry. The whole ritual, from ingredient prep to tucking in, provides deep nourishment to many and in different ways. Inspired by this revelation, The

Unitarian Youth Programme is teaming up with The Inquirer to launch our Winter Bake Ministry. We say don't bother with all those New Year resolutions to join gyms and lose weight etc. Way too much hard work. Instead, we're encouraging you to get baking and enjoy good health and wellness in the spiritual realm.

And with this being a Unitarian ministry, we're leaving it with you to explore and come to your own understanding of what a Winter Bake Ministry might mean for you. If you wish, you could invite others to join you – Fellow pilgrims on the journey. Perhaps this might be a fun activity for a family to do together - An excuse to cocreate your own unique signature culinary masterpiece?

Some might use it to hold a congregational get together – a bring-and-share coffee morning of sorts? We encourage you to play with the idea. Really go for it! Naturally, we'd be very interested in what you come up with. So, bake something individually or with your family or congregation – on a Unitarian theme. Write and tell us about what you did and how it worked out. Send photographs and stories to Inquirer@btinternet.com or to ghowell@unitarian.org.uk. The deadline is 11 March. We'll publish stories and photos in the spring. Good luck, have fun and enjoy!

Thanks to Anne for noticing this piece in the Inquirer: let me know if it's something you'd like to make happen at church, and we'll see what we can do to help.

By-Gone Times, by Betty Kenyon, Number 21

The Bury Museum has an exhibition called *Spirit of a Place*





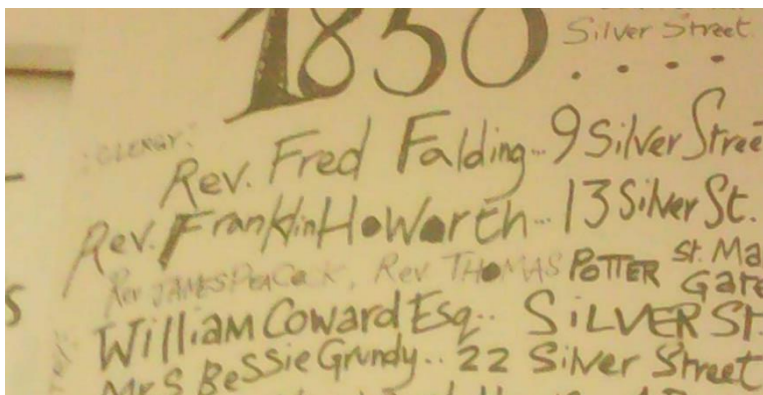
Rev Thomas Braddock 1719-1770 would have preached with the pulpit bearing this plaque. His grave stone is still visible in our church gardens.





Our bell is now situated at the front of the worship area of the present church which is the fourth on this site. It was previously hung in all of the previous churches and was originally cast for the 1st chapel which was built in 1719.

It is inscribed "Come away make no delay" and carries the date 1777 with the initials 'T R', either side of a bell, indicating it was cast by Thomas Rudhall of Gloucester.



Rev Franklin Howarth also gets a mention on another display.

He was our minister from 1832-1853. He lived at 13 Silver Street.

People born before 1940:

this article has been submitted by “the old codger”.

We are survivors!

We were born before television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, videos, and the pill.

We were born before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens. Before dishwashers, tumble driers, washing machines, electric blankets, air-conditioners, drip-dry clothes, and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint is that?)

We thought fast food was what you ate in Lent, a Big Mac was an oversized raincoat, and crumpet was what we had for tea.

We existed before house-husbands, computer dating, and sheltered accommodation was where you waited for a bus. We were before day-centres, group homes, and disposable nappies.

We had never heard of FM radio, tape decks, word processors, or young men wearing earrings.

For us, time-sharing meant togetherness, a ‘chip’ was a piece of wood or a fried potato, ‘hardware’ was nuts and bolts, and ‘software’ was not a word.

Before 1940 ‘Made In Japan’ meant junk. The term ‘making out’ referred to how you did in your exams. A stud was what you fastened on your collar to a shirt and ‘going all the way’ meant staying on the bus til the terminus.

In our day smoking was fashionable, grass was mown, coke was kept in the coalhouse, and pot was something you cooked in.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make.

No wonder there is a generation gap today but, by the grace of God, we have survived.

Some camera club pictures taken this month:



Numbers and letters (there are seven members of the Camera Club!)



Wood not trees



Wood not trees