

# **Bury Unitarian Church**



Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. We will remember them.

## **Calendar for November 2020**

## Welcome!

Dear all,

Welcome to the Bury Unitarian Church *Calendar* for November 2020.

As the interim editor I am really grateful for all the contributions I've received this month: there is the usual important information about services and events, both at Bury and elsewhere; news of our congregation and what various people have been doing; more fascinating historical insights; stories; poems and, as they say in the adverts "much much more".

Without your input the *Calendar* would be a list of what's going on, and a few words from the minister, and I am really pleased that it is always so much more than that.

The centre pages, as they usually are now, are where you will find the list of what's going on, and other bits of practical information. Once we are back to meeting en masse, they will also be where you'll find rotas for stewarding and refreshments. Once you've read through the rest of the *Calendar*, you may like to take the centre pages out so that you can keep hold of them.

I know that some of you keep your copies of the *Calendar* and have done for many years: if you don't and would ever like to refer back to them, please bear in mind that past copies are always available on our website, and even if you don't have access to the internet it is very easy for someone to print them off for you.

The next issue of the *Calendar* will be a joint issue for December 2020 and January 2021, and the deadline will be teatime on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November.

With love,

Kate Brady McKenna



**Camera Club picture**

## Letter from the Minister:

Dear all,

I write this on a cold, rainy, and frankly rather gloomy late October day. The clocks went back last weekend, and I'm increasingly aware that I always find this week rather tiresome and rather tiring. It settles down very quickly, as I get used to the darker evenings, but there are always a few days when I'm 'out of sorts' (or possibly 'under the weather', and maybe that's where that phrase comes from?).

I think we're more affected by the weather and the seasons than we sometimes realise. And I also think it's absolutely healthy to acknowledge that sometimes the effect is to make us feel a bit squished and flat. And this time, of course, we're also in a deeper lockdown than we expected.

I wonder if some of you find yourselves in a similar frame of mind for a few days round about now? If you do, I hope that you can do something to ease it, even if that something is very tiny.

By the time you receive this *Calendar*, Ade and I will have been in Bury for four years. We moved up on Halloween 2016 and moved into the Manse on November 1<sup>st</sup>. My first service was on November 6<sup>th</sup>. It's a cliché, but it sometimes still feels as though we're very new to the area, and sometimes as though we've always been here. Certainly, Bury now feels like home, and we both go "aww, the Peel Tower" as we approach when we've been away.

In that first service I talked about the bewildering nature of Bury's ring road, and I still hold to that, especially now I can drive around it. But I also spoke of the fact that we all needed to believe in each other and in our good will. I said that there would be times, as in any relationship, where we would frustrate and irritate each other, and where we would have to work hard to come to an arrangement which was okay for all of us. I know that those things have all happened, and we've weathered them. I also know that they

will continue to happen: in any group of people there will be things on which there is not total agreement.

I also said, though, that I was a bit in love with Bury and the church. And that absolutely remains true. I am very proud to live in Bury, and I love it when (when we are allowed visitors) people who haven't been here before suddenly seem to "get it". I well remember one friend from Norwich coming up for a couple of days early on, and on the second day, just saying "it's brilliant here. What are the house prices like?". I think I've said to some of you that before I moved here I thought I was moving to a suburb of Manchester, and that it didn't take long at all to realise how very much that is not the case. Bury is Bury, and has its own identity and character, and I love that identity and that character.

And I remain really proud of the congregation: it wasn't something any of us could have foreseen, but I am particularly proud of how everyone has responded to the pandemic and all the shocks this year has thrown at us. Something like this could easily have fractured us as a congregation, and led to people being left behind, but, thanks to every single member of our little community, that hasn't happened. We've put up with the slings and arrows, and although we've definitely reeled, and we've naturally grumbled, and we've wept, we've also got on with it, and it's been clear to me throughout that everyone's priority has been maintaining our strong sense of community and support.

. . and having started writing this feeling a bit gloomy, I realise that writing about how pleased I am that we made this move and took on this ministry has, in fact, lifted my spirits.

I hope that you are all warm and dry and well fed, and have something pleasurable to occupy you. These times will pass.

With love,

*Rev Kate Brady McKenna*

## **Presidential matters:**

I knew that October would be busy---and I was right! At the very end of September, I conducted a Zoom service at Kendal, and it was enjoyable to feel to be amongst friends; the service went well, but, unfortunately, afterwards, when we were all put into breakout-rooms, our internet-connection failed, and we found ourselves cut off; the same happened, the following week, after the Bury service. As I mention, elsewhere, I conducted Ainsworth's Harvest Festival for them, on October 4th, and found it a strange experience, after 7 months without live services! I managed to introduce the traditional Harvest-hymns into the service without singing them all; at least we had the pleasure of hearing them played on the organ. Despite fears that attendance would be low (the service was nearly cancelled), we attracted a good number, and all went well.

Over the weekend of the 9th and 10th of October, I found myself Zooming to Newcastle: on the Saturday, I attended the Northern Unitarian Union's AGM and gave them a talk about the duties of the GA Vice-President, both before and after Coronavirus struck; I had a picture of one couple on my screen, whilst I was speaking, and found their reactions very inspiring; I wish my audiences always looked so enthralled! On Sunday morning, I led worship for the NUA congregations; there are only two: Newcastle and Stockton, in this very small district, yet they work hard and make a significant contribution to our denomination. Again, all was well, and a large number of participants was present; this time, I managed to socialise, afterwards, too!

The following weekend should have seen me in Scarborough and Whitby, but it wasn't to be; Whitby cancelled early; they are a small congregation, and are struggling; Scarborough was very late in reaching a decision; I'm not sure whether they have been having services at all, during lockdown, and October 18th should have been their Re-opening. Alas, even the lure of being addressed by the Vice-President failed to attract; their COVID-19

cases were on the rise, and they decided to stay closed! But the negotiations that preceded this decision were lengthy and time-consuming; it was a good job that I didn't have a service to compose, as well! I was, however, asked to contribute to Padiham's service, then, as they were entertaining members of their local Sufi community; right at the last minute, I wrote and delivered Greetings for the GA; a Welcome to the Sufis, and an explanation of what the GA was, and how it worked; and a Reflection on my life during lockdown. Last weekend was almost a re-run of two weeks ago, when I was the guest-speaker at the Yorkshire Unitarian Union's AGM, on October 24th, before conducting morning-service at York, on the 25th. The week that follows should be more restful---only 5 official meetings, plus a few informal ones---so far!

Please note that, between November 1st and 17th, I shall be on leave; I feel that I'm in need of a rest and a break!

Kate is now back from her "holiday" and taking up the reins, once more; I hope she is feeling rested and refreshed; thanks to her for her efforts, at each end of October; thanks to Ade, for carrying out all his duties, too; there is much to be done, and we are grateful to both of them.

As you will know, we are now on the Third Tier, in our pandemic classification, and our restrictions remain stringent; what a testing time we've endured! It's been very pleasant to see everybody who has attended actual services, and I hope to see more members, this month, as we return to our usual morning-worship time. Roger and I send our love and best wishes to everyone; let us hope and pray that, by the end of November, we will feel that we have made progress towards the "new normal"!

Anne.

**A note from the minister: please try and remember that Anne and Roger will be taking a much-needed break between November 1<sup>st</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Please speak to me if you need anything they would normally have dealt with!**

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

There's not a lot of interesting news to report about the building at the moment; there's certainly an awful lot of work going on (just ask Howard, who is going to be leading the HARP team's investigation of the fire alarm system), and an awful lot more pending, but there's nothing really amazing to speak of, nothing to give you a giggle about, or to brighten your day with as an anecdote. There's the pot cupboard, which has been moved into the children's room, repainted, redressed and refilled (and I'll try and sneak a picture in somewhere of that), but the building itself has nothing much to share with you right now, but it does nevertheless, want to say a few words.

It wants to say a very big thank you to both Peter and Roger, who've not only been brilliant at helping with some of the ongoing jobs we've had on, but who also both stepped in to steward for the two services where Ade has been away.

And it's not just Roger and Peter that deserve to be thanked, it has to be said that so many of the church have continued with their ongoing work, from the Trustees, Council, committees and clubs there is an awful lot still going on and an awful lot of people still putting so much in despite the limitations the pandemic has put upon us, and all of you deserve a big thank you for that.

This pandemic has wrought such a heavy change in how we do things, and it's been wonderful how well everyone has adapted. But for every person putting their love and effort so fully into the church in a different way right now, there are just as many waiting to put their love back in as they did before. This pandemic has stolen from so many people, so much of the loving care with which they have gifted us all for so long; from all things socializing, to our flowers and music in our services and so much more.



So much of the love that has always gone into our worship and ministry has been stolen from those who dote on providing them for us.

The building remembers all of you, it's built on your energy, love and attention and it has asked that we all remember too, and thank, those who are not only doting on her now, but also those whose loving work has been stolen from us by these times we live in, to thank them not only for being so patient with the changes the pandemic has brought, but for a long history of hard work that has made the building the place for us as a church. Thank you, very, very much.



*Ade Brady.*

## Church flowers:

Normally, at this time of year, I would be asking for donations towards the cost of flowers in church next year. This year has, however, been a rather strange one because our services stopped in March as the coronavirus made its presence felt, and we have not had flower arrangements in church since then.

The money that was donated for flowers in services that did not take place in 2020 will instead be put towards flowers or plants for 2021. I will not link the donation to a particular week because we do not know whether or not we will be able to hold services every week in 2021. When the money that was donated last year is used up, I will once again be asking for donations.

Many people link their donation towards church flowers with a date that is special to them. To keep this opportunity for remembering, the “Church Flowers” section of the Calendar will be replaced by a “This month we remember” section, which is not linked at all to the flower donations. If there is a date that you would like to mark in the church Calendar, let me know the date (which does not have to be a Sunday) and the name or occasion that you wish to remember and I will compile a list for the Calendar. The Calendar entry will be something like

*On 1st March, Jane Smith will be remembering her father John Brown.*

*Or On 5th September Jane Smith will be remembering her mother Margaret’s birthday.*

My contact details are 01024 846573, or [janet.thatcher@gmail.com](mailto:janet.thatcher@gmail.com)

*Janet Thatcher*



**Camera Club picture.**

## Thanks . . .

. . . to two of our congregation for supplying services, in October, during Kate's absence. We have had the opportunity of reading both services, either before or after the delivered, afternoon, one; I waited until afterwards and was glad to have done so; I found a beautiful illustration and an apt quotation for each service, as well as appropriate hymns, plus the chance to think again about the sentiments expressed in the address and readings.

On October 11th, Susan Mitchell took "Forgiveness" as her theme, and referred to Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela to emphasise her points. We need to forgive others, if we have wronged them, but it is more important for us to forgive ourselves for real and imagined transgressions; often, we are far too harsh in our judgment of ourselves.

Betty Kenyon, the following week, spoke about "Time" and its quality; she explained that, all too often, we were inclined to rush about, from one task to another, without giving ourselves time to think: "time to stand and stare", as W. H. Davies puts it, in his poem, "Leisure". We should make sure that our days are filled, joyfully and meaningfully, so that we feel a sense of fulfilment.

Susan began her service by thanking Kate for all her work during lockdown, and also thanked the Church Officers for their efforts whilst the church has had to remain closed. On behalf of us all, may I reciprocate; a little appreciation goes a long way!

Writing, distributing, and delivering services is no mean feat; the process requires thought, hard work, and commitment; as I have often said before, we are very lucky that several of our members are willing to set aside time and energy to do this, on our behalf. Congratulations to our "visiting" service-leaders!

*Anne.*

## **Job Opportunity!**

You will be aware, from last month's 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, and no later than November 30th. 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. Thank you.

## **Church Collections:**

Just a reminder that Anne Mills is dealing with the collections, at present, and monies arrive, each week, either when people attend services, or when they send cheques through the post. Church-expenditure has continued, during our closed period: the premises have been maintained in good order; repairs have been carried out; the cleaners have been paid; and the piano has been tuned. The bowl to receive collections can be found at the back of the worship-area, every Sunday. All contributions will be gratefully received! Thank you!

## **Foodbank: an update.**

During the last six months when the Church has been closed, I have been collecting items for the foodbank from friends and neighbours and although this has not amounted to large quantities, I came to the conclusion that a little was better than none.

Sister Joan and her gang of volunteers have been working very hard as the number of families requiring food parcels rose from 30 in March to 150 at the peak of the lockdown and now the number has for a good few weeks been 60.

They have moved from the Community Centre to 2 cabins on the car park which has given them much more room for storing and distribution. A number of volunteers deliver some parcels to people who are unable to get out and to large families, the rest are collected in person on a Friday morning.

Supermarkets and some Churches have been taking their donations in regularly and fresh food, sandwiches and pies are being delivered on a weekly basis. The main concern at the moment is that the volunteers do not know how many items they will receive and how long the donations will be continue to be given as there does not seem to be an end of Covid 19 in sight.

Now that we are meeting at Church, I will be taking the foodbank donations each month and I hope that they will help the families in need over a very stressful time.

For food we give thanks and think of the hungry

For fellowship we give thanks and remember the lonely

May we try and do something for both

*Susan Holt*

## **Church meetings last month**

### **Worship Committee**

The worship committee met over Zoom on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October, mainly to discuss arrangements for Remembrance Sunday and the Christmas period. Details of the decisions made can be found elsewhere in this edition of the *Calendar*. The minister noted, in her report, that her report to the committee in January had ended with the words “I look forward to seeing what 2020 bring us in our worship life”. She regrets that.

Thanks were given to everyone who was involved in worship and other matters during Kate’s absence on holiday, and Kate was especially grateful that she had been able to be confident that the worship was in good and safe hands.

We decided that, although we would not be able to hold a formal Prizegiving service for the young people, they would still receive tokens of our appreciation for everything they bring to our church life.

We decided that for as long as it is inappropriate to have our normal beautiful fresh flower displays in church every week, we will purchase in-season flowering plants once a month to be displayed whilst they are still blooming. The plants will then be given to members of the congregation to enjoy at home.

### **Finance committee special meeting:**

There was a special meeting of the finance committee, also on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October, specifically to discuss arrangements for the role of treasurer once John Fitzpatrick moves away.

Elsewhere in the calendar you will find an invitation to consider standing for this role – either in its entirety or as a shared role with another member of the community.

### **Camera Club:**

Members will meet next, on Monday, November 2nd, when they will consider the technique of cut-outs---superimposing one photograph on top of another, in order to create a special, and unusual, effect. (You can see an example of this in our calendar-cover photograph, this month.) Everyone is welcome to come along and experiment! For Zoom joining-details, and other information, please contact Janet Thatcher.

### **Book Club:**

Arrangements are not yet fully in place for November, but there will be at least one meeting, this month. Please contact Anne Mills for further details. In October, we read and discussed a short story ("Holiday Home", by Elizabeth Noble); opinion on this was divided; some of us felt that the story had little to recommend it, whilst others were reminded, nostalgically, of favourite holiday-spots, which they were more than happy to visit again and again, without ever tiring of them. At a meeting on October 28th, the group will discuss R. L. Stevenson's adventure novel, "Treasure Island". Meetings last about an hour, and are held by Zoom. Come and join us!

### **Website:**

Roger has now added to our website's content, by including Sunday services on it. To access these, click on the list at the left-hand side of the Home page, where "Services" appears; after information about COVID and church-closure, if you scroll down, you will find a copy of the week's service.

Roger would like ideas for new and interesting sections that could be included on the website; shortly, he hopes to add some of the profiles of church-members that we began to compile, with a view to adding to them. Please speak to Roger, if you have suggestions to make; it is through our website that we often attract interest in our church.



## **News of our community:**

### **Dennis Crompton**

We have received the sad news that Dennis Crompton, husband of former GA President, Judith, died on October 16th; his funeral was due to take place on Tuesday, October 27th. He had been in failing health for some time. Both Dennis and Judith had long-standing connections with our Rivington, Chorley, and Bank Street Bolton, Chapels, and both were much involved in the wider Unitarian movement, also. Dennis will be greatly missed by all who knew him; a memorial service will be held for him, when circumstances permit. I have sent our condolences to Judith, in the meantime. Judith's address is 21 Woodfall, Astley Village, Chorley, PR7 1XD.

### **Pastoral conversations with the minister:**

You will no doubt know by now that people who can work from home are being encouraged to do so, and this means that for the foreseeable future my 'vestry days' will have to stop.

However, I know it might sometimes be very important that I am able to speak with you in person, so I will still be able to arrange to see you, in the worship area, socially distanced, if you need to discuss something and the telephone or Zoom don't feel as though they would be appropriate. I will need some notice, of course, in order to make sure we don't clash with someone else working in the building, but we will be able to arrange something, I'm sure.

## Worship in November

### Sunday November 1st:

**11.15am:** worship in person.

**2pm:** Zoom service.

### Sunday November 8<sup>th</sup>, 10.55am:

A service at the war memorial, during which we will mark the two-minutes' silence, followed by a service indoors. *Please let Kate know if you wish to attend either of both of these as space will be very limited, particularly inside.*

After the service Kate and Ade will be laying poppies at the war graves at Holebottom.

**2pm:** A Zoom service for Remembrance Sunday

### Wednesday November 11<sup>th</sup>, 10.45am:

A service of Remembrance, including the two-minutes' silence.

### Sunday November 15<sup>th</sup>:

**11.15am:** worship in person.

**2pm:** Zoom service.

### Sunday November 22<sup>nd</sup>:

**11.15am:** worship in person.

**2pm:** Zoom service.

### Sunday November 29<sup>th</sup>:

**11.15am:** worship in person.

**2pm:** Zoom service.

The church flowers on November 29<sup>th</sup> would have been donated by Roy Wilkinson, in loving memory of Joshua.

**We send our love to Roy.**

## **Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday and Remembrance Day.**

### **Sunday November 8<sup>th</sup>, 10.55am:**

A short act of Remembrance outside at the War Memorial (incorporating the two-minute silence), followed by a service in the worship area.

We will be marking spots in the garden to allow for appropriate social distancing as we mark this very important occasion, and you will be guided to your place. Seats will be available for those who need them.

The wreath will be laid by Lois Williams and Freddy.

*Please let Kate know as soon as possible (and definitely by Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November) if you intend to be at either or both parts of the Remembrance Sunday service.*

After the services, Kate and Ade will be laying poppies on the war graves at Holebottom.

### **Wednesday November 11<sup>th</sup>, 10.45am:**

A short reflective service in the worship area, incorporating the two-minute silence at 11am.

*There is no need to pre-book for this.*

If you are staying at home and have had any difficulties getting hold of a poppy, or if you would like a white poppy, please let Kate know and she will ensure that you have one.

## **What's on in November.**

**Saturdays 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November, 11am:**

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

**Sundays 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November,**

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

**2pm:** (including 8<sup>th</sup> November) Zoom worship (mtg no **849 7456 6116**)

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November, 10.45am:**

Remembrance Day service, in person.

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November, 10.30am:**

Remembrance service at Ainsworth Unitarian Chapel.

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 7pm:**

Camera club. Please contact Janet Thatcher for Zoom details.

**Monday November 9<sup>th</sup>, 7pm:**

Unitarian Youth Work Stakeholders Zoom: see Kate for details).

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 7pm:**

Book club. We will be discussing the Children's classic *The Secret Garden*,  
by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November, 10am:**

Unitarian Societies Day – hosted online (please see the poster published in  
this Calendar for further details)

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November, around teatime:**

Deadline for articles and entries for the December and January edition of  
*The Calendar*.

## Christmas services

The church officers, the minister, and the worship committee have had long and very difficult discussion about arrangements for worship for Advent and Christmas, and have made some arrangements about how we can best mark these hugely important festivals whilst still abiding by all the current legislation and safety requirements.

Services will go ahead as normal on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> December.

We will hold a Christingle service online on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December, to which our Junior Church will be particularly welcome. There will also be a service-in-person in the morning.

Although we have decided that we cannot hold our own Candlelight Carol Service, we are warmly invited to join with the Lancashire Collaborative Ministry and other NELUM churches for their Zoom carol service on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December at 4.30pm. If you don't have internet access or can't access Zoom, we are hoping to be able to show the service in the worship area at church: please speak to Kate if you would like to take advantage of this.

After much discussion, we have decided not to hold an in-person service on Christmas Day. There will be a Zoom service at 11.15am. If you do not have internet access, you are very welcome to join us by phone. Please talk to Kate who can talk you through how to do this.

There will be no services on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December.

If you know anyone who doesn't receive the *Calendar* but who might be expecting to come to any of our Christmas services, please can you let them know about these arrangements?

If you have any ideas for other ways we can ensure that Christmas is sacred and special, please don't hesitate to speak to Kate, who will be more than happy to listen to other ideas or requests.

*Kate Brady McKenna*

### **News from Ainsworth:**

On October 4th, Anne Mills conducted Ainsworth Chapel's Harvest Service; despite the fact that several of Ainsworth's regular attenders were unable to be present, the service attracted a good congregation, and everyone present enjoyed the celebrations; the traditional Harvest-hymns were played (but not necessarily sung!) and the chapel was attractively decorated with Harvest produce. Sadly, this year, it was not possible to offer the usual delicious Harvest Tea.

At the start of the service, Shirley Horrocks gave news of two of Ainsworth's stalwarts: Dorothy Roberts is still living at Elmhurst Residential Home; she recently spent a few days in hospital, but was soon back where she belongs; Quita Brooks is very settled in Kirkaldy, Fife, and continues to enjoy her new home, despite lockdown restrictions; at least her family-members are close by, so that they are able to keep an eye on her!

Ainsworth's next service will be held on Sunday, November 1st, at 10.30 a.m; when their traditional Remembrance observances will take place. Shirley Horrocks will lead this service, which is expected to last for approximately 40 minutes, and those present are welcome to say a few personal words of remembrance, if they wish.

Anne.

### **Houseplants in church**

As you will have seen in the report from the worship committee meeting, we have decided that it is neither safe nor practical to go back just yet to having our usual glorious displays of fresh flowers in church each week. We do really miss them, and I know that getting flower baskets was a lovely thing for people, but the fewer risks we all take, the quicker things will become safe again.

Instead, we are buying a new flowering plant at the beginning of each month, which will then be donated to a member of the congregation at the end of the month.

## **Traidcraft**

This year has been a nightmare, as far as buying and selling has been concerned; the stall has not been open since the beginning of March, and there is no sign of being able to start up again. I am more than grateful to those who have offered to buy short-dated items from me; I appreciate their generosity and concern; stocks are now at an all-time low, as there seems little point in restocking, at the moment. I can order Christmas items, if people would like them; there are a few Autumn/Winter brochures in the foyer; again, I am most grateful to those who have already placed such orders.

A year ago, The Bury Fair Trade Group began its "Rice Challenge", but, unfortunately, the timing was bad, and we are left with approximately 20 bags of rice. If anyone wishes to buy a bag (or two!) of rice, I would be more than happy to sell it; ideally, I would like to clear this, before the end of the year. Kilombero Rice makes excellent rice pudding, as members of our Lunch Circle can testify!

*Anne.*

## **Smartie tubes**

Church members will know that, throughout the year, we are encouraged to empty Smartie tubes of their contents and replace them with coins (ideally 20p pieces) and then to donate them towards church funds.

Brenda Ainsworth, who co-ordinates this project, would like to remind you that it is time to start bringing the filled tubes back into church. There will be a basket at the back of the worship area to receive them, and we will make arrangements for them to be collected in a Covid-safe way.

If you're not currently coming to church but have still been doing your best to eat through multiple tubes of Smarties, then a) we salute you and b) we can arrange to get the refilled tubes from you by various means.

## **News from the General Assembly (via Anne Mills):**

At the annual Remembrance Sunday observances, at Whitehall, our Chief Officer, Liz Slade, will represent the Unitarian denomination; the Executive Committee made this decision, in the light of our unusual circumstances, this year. It has been announced that there should be some form of Annual Meetings, in 2021, but these will not necessarily take place in March or April; nor will they follow the usual format. Watch this space!

### **2020/2021 GA Directory:**

I have been informed by Andrew Mason that the new GA Directory is now ready. However, this will be in pdf format only; there will not be a paper copy, this time. If you require a copy of your own, please contact Andrew, at: [amason@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:amason@unitarian.org.uk) and he will arrange for it to be emailed out to you.

### **The Wood Green Trust:**

We have received an offer from The Wood Green Trust, which is willing to sponsor churches which propose suitable initiatives leading towards growth; this will involve a great deal of thought, planning, and hard work; the date for applications has been extended, so, if anyone is interested in applying, please speak to Anne or Kate.

### **. . . and from further afield:**

We have received an invitation from the North Shore Unitarian Church in Chicago for us to join them for 'an Across Continents Coffee Morning' on Saturdays November 21<sup>st</sup>, December 5<sup>th</sup>, and January 9<sup>th</sup>, at 2pm our time. Kate and Anne will attend at least one of the sessions each: please contact them and they can forward the email to you.



Upcoming event:

# ZOOM SOCIETIES DAY

Saturday 21st November 2020

10.00 to 4.45

Have you ever wondered what our Societies get up to? Join us for a fascinating day, exploring what five of them do...

Welcome by Unitarian Chief Officer, Liz Slade

10.00—10.15

**Findhorn Unitarian Network**

*Role of the Network*

10.15—11.15

**Unitarian Renewal Group**

*God or no God?* Speakers: Laura

Dobson, Ant Howe, Stephen

Lingwood, Bridget Spain

11.30—12.30

**Unitarian Earth Spirit Network**

*The Wheel of the Year*

1.00—2.00

**Unitarian Peace Fellowship**

*Non violence*

2.15—3.15

**National Unitarian Fellowship**

*Outreach*

3.30—4.30

**Closing Devotions**

4.30—4.45



URG



Each Society hour includes:

- What our ethos is
- What we do
- Worship
- Discussions
- Membership

Register today for this  
FREE event with:

[revsuewoolley@gmail.com](mailto:revsuewoolley@gmail.com)

There will be presentations,  
samples of worship, break out  
rooms, time for coffee breaks,  
lunch and screen breaks.

Val Chamberlain

## GA Youth Update

We have received information from the GA Youth Officer, Gavin Howell, about current youth provision: this is summarised below, but if you would like to see the full email Kate can forward it to you.

**Bad Coffee Club:** this is the brainchild of three young Unitarians, and is a light-hearted, supportive online space built on mutual respect, kindness, and a desire to live life to the full. The group meets fortnightly, supported by the youth officer, but is led by and geared to the young people. Once the group is settled and running smoothly, it will be opened to everyone aged between 14 and 17.

**GA Online Congregational Youth Support:** this group meets monthly, for around an hour, to discuss the youth work initiatives in their own settings. It is very useful in terms of sharing knowledge, ideas, and resources. If anyone at Bury would like to get involved, please contact Gavin at [ghowell@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:ghowell@unitarian.org.uk). *(Kate would be interested in working with someone on this)*

**Our Whole Lives (OWL):** OWL is a lifespan sexuality education curriculum, devised and led by the UUA in the US, and Gavin is considering kickstarting it here in the UK.

**GA Online Student Engagement Groups:** Gavin is keen to investigate setting up an online programme for Unitarian students aged 18+ and would welcome further conversations about this.

**GA Online Youth Events:** A group has been looking into offering national youth events, and will be giving more information about this at the meetings below.

**GA Unitarian Youth Stakeholder Meeting:** Monday November 9<sup>th</sup>, 7pm (via Zoom). Kate will be attending this on behalf of the congregation, and you would be very welcome to join her. Please contact her for Zoom log in details.

## **Congregational Strategy Meetings**

The third and final session was held on October 7th, when Anne and Roger Mills attended, on behalf of our church; six congregations were represented. The homework from the previous session consisted of completing a Strategy Wheel and a SWOT Chart. Strategy Wheels encourage clear explanations, not so much of what we do, in our churches, but of what future plans we have in mind, with full project-details. SWOT Charts list Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, as an organisation engages in the task to be completed. A great deal of discussion ensued, at the session, and most points raised were common to all the congregations involved: ageing, declining membership; lack of energy; lack of suitable personnel; not all churches have ministers, and many are short of money, too. The course-organisers supplied much useful material, for future use, and, once we are able to meet together fully, we should consider the issues raised, and how they impact on us, as we recover from Coronavirus, Lockdown, and Tier Three. The course-organisers have sent participants all the materials used, and these could be used as part of our discussions.

### **A date for your diary:**

The Lancashire Collaborative Ministry is planning to organise a special Christmas Service, which will take place, by Zoom, on the afternoon of December 19th, at 4.30 p.m. Arrangements are in hand, and there will be further details in next month's calendar. The idea of this service is to bring together Unitarian churches in our area, and for churches to contribute to the service, if they wish. Our Worship Committee has decided to support the service, rather than holding our traditional Candlelight Carol Service, in a year when circumstances have been unusual and difficult. If there is sufficient interest, we can arrange for the service to be broadcast in our worship-area, so that those who cannot access Zoom will be able to participate, too. Please let Anne know if this might be of interest to you. It would be good to support and encourage the LCM's plan, so please keep the date free, and join in!

## Bygone Times (number 6): Sunday School

From the Calendar October 1889

Teachers' Preparation Class 8.30pm-9.15pm

While each teacher is still entirely free to follow his own wish and judgement in the selection of his lessons, attention is specially called to the Teachers' Preparation Class and the table of lessons for the month. At each meeting the minister will go carefully through the lesson for the following Sunday, giving hints and suggestions for class work and by this means, as well as conversation and discussion upon the passages selected, it is hoped to make the class helpful to teachers in the preparation of their lessons.

By December 1891, there were 29 female teachers and 33 male teachers, 267 girls and 220 boys attended the Sunday School.



TEACHERS. BANK STREET SUNDAY SCHOOL, BURY.

1894.

In March 1890, there is a very interesting article in the Calendar entitled *A Word to Teachers*, saying how they were: to be 'kept up to the mark' in the discharging of their duties and in attendance. Most were constant and rarely absent from their duties. However, a few were guilty of irregularity of attendance and of the upset that it caused.

The Sunday School Hymn book could be bought in various bindings: from 4½d to 1/- each. Parents were urged to provide their children with a hymn book. 'It would add greatly to the beauty and helpfulness of opening and closing services were this done.

### **In God's Good Time**

The ancient gardener shook his head:

"You dasn't hurry 'em," he said.

"Unless you lets 'em take their time,

You'll never see 'em in their prime.

You fidgits 'em wi' that and this,

But *summat's* sure to go amiss.

You thinks that they be goin' strong,

But *summat's* bound to come along,

And if they frostises be late,

You'll lose the lot, as sure as fate . . .

'Tis all the same wi' fruit and flowers –

In God's good time, and not in ours.

*Submitted by Brenda Ainsworth.*

## Hymn-pondering

In November, our thoughts turn to Remembrance, and this month's hymn will follow the same theme. I've been looking at 138, from "Sing your Faith": "Red the poppy-fields of Flanders", which was written by Rev. Cliff Reed, whose writings I always enjoy; they're direct, succinct, and accessible.

The tune is "Marching", to which I've sung a version of "Father, hear the prayer we offer"; the metre is 87.87, quite a popular one, so the choice of tune is quite wide.

*"Red the poppy-fields of Flanders, red the Western Desert Sands, red the  
snows of Mother Russia: red with blood that stains our hands.*

*We remember those who died there; we must not forget their pain. We  
remember all earth's children whom the gods of war have slain.*

*Some have died for truth and justice, died so others might be free. Some  
have died for cause ignoble, died the tools of tyranny.*

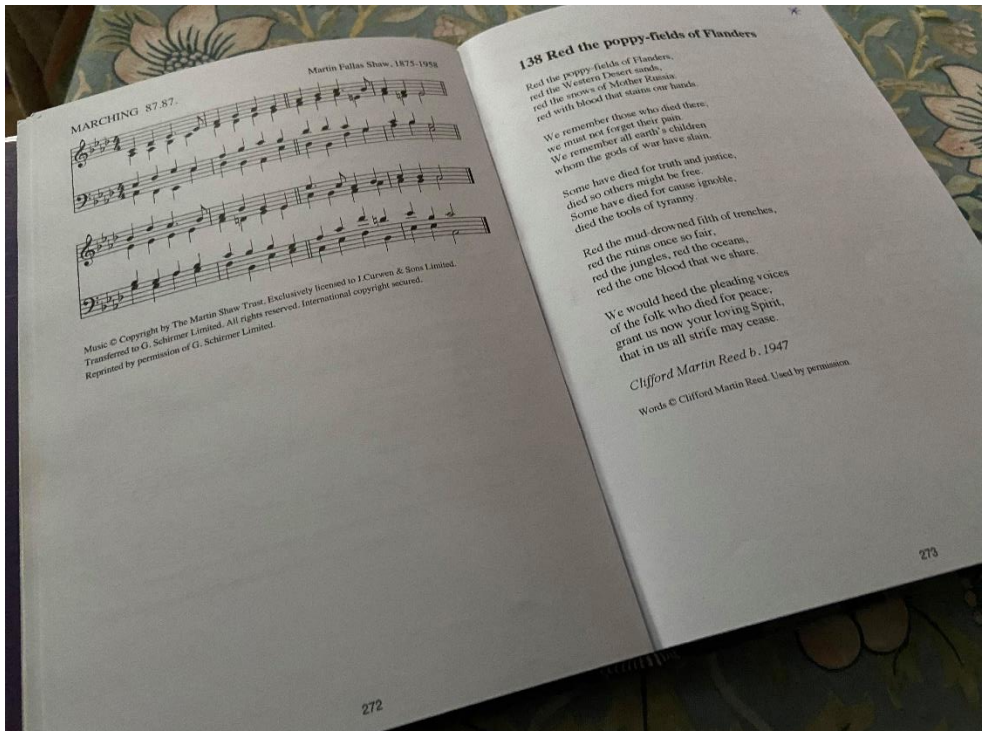
*Red the mud-drowned filth of trenches, red the ruins once so fair, red the  
jungles, red the oceans, red the one blood that we share.*

*We would heed the pleading voices of the folk who died for peace; grant  
us now your loving Spirit, that in us all strife may cease."*

The word "red" occurs nine times in this hymn; the repetition is deliberate, and we need to remind ourselves of the rich symbolism associated with this colour. It can represent blood, the life-force, sacrifice, loss of life, courage, passion, anger, love, and joy (to name but a few!) Verse 1 refers to wars which have happened during the last 100 years or so: Flanders represents World War 1; Mother Russia brings to mind the Russian Civil Revolution of 1917 and the October Revolution, which began in the same year; the Western Desert refers to World War 2. All these theatres of war caused

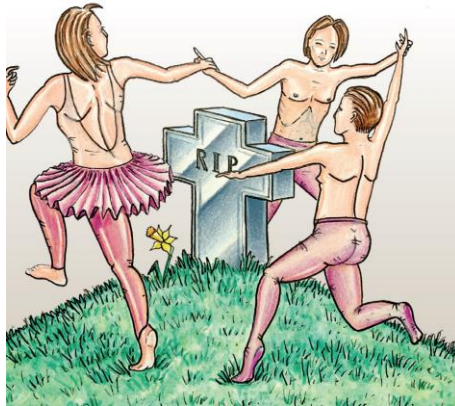
blood to be spilled, resulting in death, and guilt. All who fought believed in a cause, but Verse 2 mentions both worthy and unworthy ones; clearly, we should strive for truth, justice and freedom. The fourth verse returns to repetition of "red" and links it with the worst aspects of war, if we examine the words chosen; "mud-drowned filth" is especially strong and vivid. We're reminded, also, that those involved in war all belong to the human-race, whoever they are, and whatever they believe; "all earth's children" expresses the same idea. And verse 5 points out that our beliefs ought to be aimed at achieving peace, love, and a permanent end to fighting. Will you spare five minutes to read this hymn's words again, and reflect on the futility of war? Over to you!

*Anne Mills.*



## Book review:

### Dancing with Mortality: Reflections of a Lapsed Atheist



This book will hopefully be of interest to Unitarians, other religious free-thinkers and humanists. The chapters are based on sermons delivered over the years by Bert Clough at the Meadow and Oxford Unitarian chapels. They attempt to offer a third way: religious thinking centred on God being in our own hands not in the hands of a supernatural Being. So, although the chapters are eclectic there is a strong religious humanist thread running through them. Some of them attempt to understand religious issues through the lenses of spiritual leaders. They discuss the beliefs and authentic lives of spiritual teachers such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Buddha, Norbert Capek, Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Schweitzer. Other chapters ask challenging questions: Do we need a God? Is prayer effective? Should religion influence ethics and government? Is Christianity on the left or the right of politics? Can there be just wars? How could anti-Semitism have co-existed with established religion? Can religion move us from a meaningless existence to a meaningful life?

Copies are available for £10 including postage, by emailing [b.clough947@gmail.com](mailto:b.clough947@gmail.com).

*Submitted by Anne Mills.*



### **A story to think about:**

A 6-year-old boy was in the market with his 4-year-old sister. Suddenly the boy found that his sister was lagging behind. He stopped and looked back. His sister was standing in front of a toy-shop and was watching something with great interest.

The boy went back to her and asked, "Do you want something?" The sister pointed at the doll. The boy held her hand and, like a responsible elder brother, gave her the doll. His sister was very happy. The shopkeeper was watching everything and felt amused to see the mature behaviour of the boy.

The boy came to the counter and asked the shop-keeper, "What is the cost of this doll, sir?" The shop-keeper was a cool man and had experienced the odds of life, so he asked the boy, with much love and affection, "Well, what can you pay?"

The boy took out all the shells he had collected from the sea-shore from his pocket and gave them to the shopkeeper, who took them, and started counting as if he were counting currency. Then he looked at the boy. The boy asked him worriedly, "Is it too little?" The shopkeeper replied, "No, No... These are more than the cost, so I will return the remainder." Saying so, he kept only 4 shells and returned the rest.

The boy very happily replaced those shells in his pocket and went away with his sister.

One of the shop-assistants had been watching all this. He asked his master, "Sir? You gave away such a costly doll for just four shells? The shopkeeper said with a smile, "Well, for us, these are merely shells, but for the boy, they are very precious. And at his age he doesn't understand what money is--- but when he grows up, he definitely will. And when he remembers that he purchased a doll with shells, instead of money, he will remember me and

think that world is full of good people. It will help him to develop a positive attitude, and he, too, will feel motivated to be good.”

This mantra reminds us that whatever emotion we release into the world, it will spread. If you do good, goodness will spread. If you do evil, negativity will spread. Be aware that we provide a powerful source of energy. Good and evil return to us magnified---not in the ways we want it to, and probably not in ways we can understand, but it will come back.

*(Contributed by Anne Mills.)*

**Please note that the next edition of *The Calendar* will be a double issue covering December 2020 and January 2021, and the deadline for articles is teatime on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November.**

**As it's a Christmas edition and as we're still going to be in some sort of lockdown, I would particularly love it if you could send in Christmas related writings or poetry, or maybe a memory of a Christmas at church before Covid.**

**I'd also like to be able to include Christmas greetings to the congregation from other members, so if you would like to send me a few words, I will make sure they're printed.**



