

Stockton Unitarians



March brings 1st St David's Day, 13th Commonwealth Day, 17th St Patrick's Day, 19th Mother's Day, 20th Vernal Equinox (Spring Begins), and 26th British Summer Time Begins - clocks go forward.

April brings 1st April Fool's Day, 2nd Palm Sunday, 7th Good Friday, 9th Easter Sunday, 10th Easter Monday, 22nd Earth Day, and 23rd St George's Day.

Church News

March/April 2023



*Congratulations and Happy Birthday to
those Celebrating their Birthdays in*

February

Sam

Sarah Slaven

March

Margaret Kirk

April

Josie Jobson

Arthur Tyr Robinson

Carys Thompson

Grace Joy Whitham



and celebrating a Wedding Anniversary

Hazel and David Warhurst 54th in March

Unitarian Music Society Conference 2023

A Song on the Ocean Wave

The Unitarian Music Society

Summer Conference
11th - 14th
August 2023

Nightingale Centre,
Great Hucklow, Derbyshire
Workshops / Talks /
Quizzes / Socials

Contact UMS Secretary
Margaret Robinson
margaretrobinson81@gmail.com

Booking forms
available Jan 2023

Chocolate Quiz



Review of services 2023

January 15th “Change” Worship Leader Rev Paul Walker

Paul looked at all kinds of change, change is not always for the better

We had hymns 253 G 2P 128 P and 258G and David Bowie’s song “Changes”.



January 22nd “Music” Worship Leader Margaret Robinson

Margaret shared some music she enjoys including Spring Song by Felix

Mendelssohn; Look at the world by John Rutter; and Thank you for the music by ABBA. We sang hymns 230, 116, 132, 133 and 38 from SYF all with a music theme. We had the following readings: Listening by Richard S Gilbert; The song of the Tree by David Doel and Tale of the church piano by Doris Mary Hay. Then Margaret told us of her love of music, having had piano lessons from age 7 and singing lessons a few years later. Margaret belongs to Yarm Choral Society and has sung both in Durham and Cathedrals, she joined an online choir during Covid lockdown and has been in choirs since High School. Margaret then asked members of the congregation to share their thoughts on music.

January 29th Worship Leader Rev Margaret Kirk

“The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong.”

Ecclesiastes

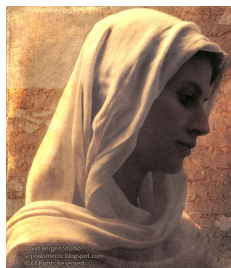
Margaret gave us the story of Chaitra and Maitra by Katha Sagar from Hindu Wisdom for Everyone, we sang hymns 43, 11,79 and 45 from Sing Your Faith. Margaret included a meditation and sharing of Joys and Concerns, where we looked at things that had happened to us that had given us joy or we were concerned about.

5th February Worship leader Rev Paul Walker

"Light" was Paul's theme and he looked at it from many angles. 40 days after a baby was born in Israel they were to be presented in the Temple in Jerusalem. 40 days after Christmas is February 2nd. While Matthew has Mary and Joseph fleeing to Egypt, Luke tells us that they duly brought Jesus to Jerusalem where he was seen by an old man, Simeon who called him a 'light to lighten the Gentiles'. On the 1st February is the pagan festival of Imbolc, the halfway point between the winter solstice and spring equinox. Imbolc is marked by the burning of lamps and bonfires, the Christian Feast is often called 'Candlemas' when all the church candles for the following year are blessed. Every week we light our chalice. We use the metaphor of light to describe so many things and on Sunday he explored the uses and misuses of that metaphor. For example how we have subtly confused light with white and dark with black.



12th February Worship leader Rev Victor Ball



Mary Magdalene – Saint or Sinner?
Mary Magdalene is mentioned in all four of the New Testament gospels and is the key figure in the discovery of an empty tomb. But who was she and why was she so closely associated Jesus and his mother and sister? And why was the "first witness" of Jesus' empty tomb later turned into a repentant sinner? These opposite portrayals of Mary shed light on how a movement for sexual equality became a bastion of patriarchy.

Stockton Unitarians actively encourage us to seek truth and meaning for ourselves.— beliefs, doubts, questions, and all Victor led a discussion of what truths the story of Mary Magdalene can offer us today.

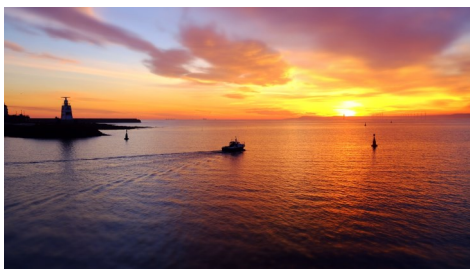
19th February Bring and Share service on the theme of “Spring”

a Zoom only service where we a group of five sharing our thoughts on Spring. Hazel read a poem on Aconites and her photo of her Aconites flowers is on the front of this Church News. Jane A gave us four poems on Daffodils. I had a reading about Spring and Autumn People and Jane T told us of planting Spring bulbs and shrubs in her front garden.

Hope is born in springtime though the cold wind chills;
hope as strong as snowdrops, gold as daffodils.
Hope be in our planting, hope be in our prayer,
be the key that opens hearts to greet the year.

26th February 26th “The Sea” worship leader Margaret Whitham

Margaret started the service with **Blow the Wind Southerly** sung by Kathleen Farrier. We had the readings **Sea Fever** by John



Masefield, The Shout (from RNLi magazine). Margaret told us of her experiences of the sea, going to Staithes as a child and walking on the beach at Seaton and Old Hartlepool. Reminding us all of our times spent by the sea. Among the hymns we sang “Eternal Father, strong to save” and “I listen, and I listen”. Margaret closed with music from Mendelssohn’s Hebrides Overture (Fingal’s Cave). A beautiful service with a congregation of eight in the chapel and two on Zoom.

(photo of the sea by Andrew Jobson)

Kevin Frank

We were sorry to hear of the death of Kevin Frank, aged 81, husband of Sandra (Lees). Sandra and Kevin were on holiday in Spain where Kevin sadly suffered a fatal heart attack. Kevin was a member of our church Youth Club, though he belonged to a Catholic Church. We extend our condolences to Sandra and her family.

New EC Members Named



John Bates and Rev. Wyn Thomas elected to the Executive Committee

We are pleased to announce the election of two new members to our Executive Committee: John Bates and Rev. Wyn Thomas. The Executive Committee act as trustees for the General Assembly (GA) and Nightingale Centre and work with the Chief Officer and other staff and volunteers to develop and oversee the strategic direction and smooth running of the GA.

Read more, including messages from John and Wyn, here:
<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/.../john-bates-wyn-thomas.../>

Junior Weekend - 24-26 March 2023



For more information visit:-
<https://www.unitariansinyorkshire.org.uk/events/junior-weekend-24->

Next year's Foy Conference

Open to non-Foy members

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

Healing Hands

Compassionate Hearts
and Intuitive Minds

Conference Leader: Gwyneth Roper

More information from our Conference Secretary
Joan Partington

coljopartington@gmail.com

28th April - 1st May, 2023

Bookings with

The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow

Unitarian Women's Group Conference

FRIDAY 20TH TO SUNDAY 22ND OCTOBER 2023

£170 from 4.00pm Friday to 2.00pm Sunday

(cost includes all meals and hot drinks)

at The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow

Exploring the Spiritual Quest and Women's Experience



Women of all ages are welcome to this weekend of friendship

We will explore the theme through workshops and discussion.

The conference will be facilitated by **Lynne Davies and Rev Celia Midgley**. Alongside the thoughtful exploration of the issues raised, there will be fun and laughter! For further information and Booking forms contact Margaret at margaretrobinson81@gmail.com or **01642 782219 or 07799896452**





Unitarian Weddings Initiative – “All you Need is Love”

Advertised as “Would you like your Chapel or Meeting House to become the perfect place for a wedding this year?”, this online event was hosted by Rev. Melda Grantham, who leads on the Unitarian Weddings Initiative. Unitarians from across the UK joined in to hear Rev. Melda Grantham, Rev. Phil Waldron and Joanna Drake share ideas, stories, and practical tips to help Unitarians develop their buildings as a wedding venue, ably hosted by Lizzie Kingston-Harrison on Monday 16 January 2023. We heard some excellent advice from some very experienced wedding venue managers, including what to do if your chapel is bang in the middle of a busy city centre with no parking!

What stood out was the need for professionalism, if your chapel or church is going to be a successful venue in the middle of a crowded market – this was especially emphasised by Rev. Waldron. It’s certainly the case that any congregation thinking of doing this should seriously consider if you have the resources in terms of experienced co-ordinators and organisers, and assistants – perhaps best of all, paid assistants – to offer people the best experience you possibly can. If not, it’s best to get the infrastructure in place first rather than risk letting people down. The stories were inspirational, and it’s great to hear Unitarians moving forwards. Many thanks to Rev. Grantham for organising it, and to the speakers!

Louise Reeve

Stockton Unitarians were the first place of worship in Stockton-on-Tees to register for same sex marriages.

Dates for your Diary

Knit 'n' Natter Group meet on alternate Tuesdays from 11.00am to 1.00pm. January. Bring along your crafts, knitting, crochet, and enjoy a cup of tea and a chat whilst you work. £1 contribution for the tea/coffee and biscuits. **7th and 21st March, 4th and 18th April 2023.**



Coffee Mornings every Saturday

10.00am to 11.30am

Come and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits and good conversation with a friendly and welcoming group.

Jane Tomlin is going as Stockton Unitarian Church Delegate to the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches 2023 Annual Meetings.

Stockton Unitarian Centre Lettings:

Alternate Tuesdays Age UK Carers Group; Fridays monthly Group from Tennant Street Medical Practice; Sunday occasional—Victor Ball

Church Council next meet on Saturday 11th March 2023 at 11.30am at church

Worship Group next meeting Wednesday 8th March 2023 at 10.30am at church

Uni-sing! A Zoom hymn singing group, on alternate **Saturday** afternoons at **3.00pm**, with break out groups for a chat in the middle. for more information email Louise Rogers louise.rogers256@gmail.com see [facebook.co/groups/ 687366168770017](https://facebook.co/groups/687366168770017)
Sessions: 18th March, 1st and 15th April 2023

Brian Michael Hopkins (4th Sept 1939 - 27th Dec 2022)

As confirmed by the reflections on his life and the tributes paid at his funeral, Brian's was certainly a life well lived and he was loved and respected by many.

I have so many memories of us growing up together in Thornaby with our parents and late brother Terry and later baby sister Janet, of our schooldays and our youth. Some of you will still remember Brian's early activities with the Unis – not only as Church secretary and for his role in the IRF, but also as a performer in youth club concerts and a player in the football team. His love of fishing starting in his teenage years is legendary.

Alan and I shared happy times with Brian and his late wife Merla in our younger days - at the folk club or on memorable holidays, making toys with "Taste", a company we set up as a hobby and later on, wonderful family times with Brian and Merla and their children Michael and Lynne along with us and Colin and Helen.

Good times were spent over the years with the growing family and there couldn't have been better hosts than Brian and Merla at numerous unforgettable occasions for the whole extended family.

How will I remember my brother Brian?

I will remember him first and foremost as a family man, devoted to his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren but equally caring for all members of the wider family. He was a man of his word – totally reliable and dependable.

Organised – if he and Merla were going on holiday, their cases and/or their caravan were always packed well in advance. Brian hated being late for anything. Helpful – always willing to make time for others. Honest – he was a man of few words but what he said was truly what he thought or believed. Hospitable – Brian and Merla were generous when inviting family or friends to their home.

Brian was also extremely brave and despite the pain he must have felt from the many serious falls he had in the last year or two of his life, he never complained. Asked how he was feeling after such an event, his answer more often than not was "Champion" or "Magic".

In short, I couldn't have wished for a better brother (or sister-in-law) than Brian and Merla. They are both very sadly missed.

My Brother Brian by Janet Hopkins

Down to earth, direct, plain-spoken
Brian's word was never broken
He would never make you wait
Rather half an hour early than one
minute late

Often quiet and of few words
He liked to watch the garden birds
But most of all, beyond a doubt
He loved to fish for roach and trout

Brian was a humorous bloke
He liked to tease and have a joke
His mimicry would make us smile
His humour had a special style

A memory like an elephant
Each detail that was relevant
Enthusiastically he'd tell
The stories that we knew so well

Of boyhood pranks and younger days
Of family adventures and holidays
Of facts picked up in books he'd read
So much knowledge inside his head

He loved to travel near and far
In caravan, boat, 'plane or car
At home great hospitality
He gave to friends and family

He'd have a go at anything
He liked to play guitar and sing
Camping, dancing and football
Wind-surfing, skiing, he tried them all



A young Brian fishing



Brian at building site of flats
where Janet and Gert now
live in Bad Soden, Germany

A helpful man he did much good
He gave an awful lot of blood
Was always there to lend a hand
Whenever, wherever the demand

Not often did he show emotion
Yet we all know of his devotion
To his wife and to his family
His dedication plain to see

Clever, athletic, successful career
A loving family and friends very dear
Full of activity - never dull
I'd say he lived life to the full

His final years were not so great
Loss, falls and illness were his fate
But no one could have had more care
Brian's Team was always there

But through the sadness and the pain
Never did Brian complain
In circumstances sometimes tragic
He'd still say that he felt "magic"

With sorrow that his loss will bring
Comes thanks there's no more suffering
May we find comfort in each other
We'll miss you Brian, my big brother



Brian with fish he'd
just caught

Hucklow Summer School

19th - 26th August 2023

For further details (when available):

www.hucklowsummerschool.co.uk



Sunday Services for 2023



Date	Time	Worship Leader
5th March	10.30am	Rev Paul Walker
12th March	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk
19th March	6.00pm	Mothering Sunday
26th March	6.00pm	tba
2nd April	10.30am	Christine Walker
9th April	6.00pm	Easter - Rev Victor Ball
16th April	6.00pm	Charity service "Butterfly Giving"
23rd April	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk
30th April	6.00pm	tba
7th May	10.30am	tba

Offers to lead worship would be appreciated, please contact Margaret Whitham 01429 298641

Flowers for 2023

5th March	Rev Margaret Kirk
12th March	Flower Fund
19th March	Hazel & David Warhurst
26th March	Mrs Josie Squires
2nd April	Mrs Jane Tomlin
9th April	Mrs P Coates
16th April	Hazel & David Warhurst
23rd April	Rev Margaret Kirk
30th April	Mrs Jean Watson
7th May	Mrs Joan Unwin
14th May	Mrs Josie Squires



Please note all services will be held in the church building. Most services will also be transmitted via Zoom, in a hybrid service. Joining instructions for Zoom will be sent out through email by the Church Secretary - Zoom: **6680459646**

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Address: Stockton Unitarian Church, Wellington Street,
Stockton-on-Tees, **TS18 1RF**

Telephone: 01642 671115 **email:** mail@stocktonunitarians.org.uk

website: www.stocktonunitarians.org.uk

facebook: Unitarians in and around Stockton-on-Tees

Twitter: Stockton Unitarian Centre

Chairperson and Flower Secretary: Jean Watson - 01642 658376

Margaret Robinson - Secretary and Church News Editor
telephone: 01642 782219 email: margaretrobinson81@gmail.com

3 Castle Dyke Wynd, Minerva Mews, Yarm, TS15 9DE

Worship Committee Co-ordinator: Margaret Whitham 01429 298641

Answers to Chocolate Quiz

1 Bouncy, 2 Lion Bar, 3 Mars Bar, 4 Reeses Nut Bar, 5 Double Decker,
6 Topic, 7 Star Bar, 8 Kit-Kat Chunky, 9 Yorkie, 10 Peppermint Aero,
11 Wisper Gold, 12 Boost, 13 Snickers, 13 Milky Way, 15 Fudge,
16 Toffee Crisp, 17 Cadbury's Caramel, 18 Turkish Delight, 19 Picnic,
20 Crunchie. **HOW MANY DID YOU GET RIGHT?**

“Newcastle Upon Tyne Unitarians welcome all who seek the meaning of life, and who believe that human spirituality is wider than any one tradition, and deeper than any one set of opinions. With a respect for our Christian origins, we seek to explore all truths from all sources. Our fellowship gives us strength and encouragement in daily living.”

Deadline for the next edition of Stockton Church News is Sunday 30th April 2023. Please send your contributions for the May/June edition to the Editor Margaret Robinson

[**margaretrobinson81@gmail.com**](mailto:margaretrobinson81@gmail.com)