

Stockton Unitarians



March gave us: Shrove Tuesday, St David's Day, Ash Wednesday, International Women's Day, St Patrick's Day, Vernal Equinox, Church Membership service, Mothering Sunday, and British Summer Time began

Church News March 2022





Congratulations

to all those who had Birthdays or Anniversaries in March.

Happy Birthday to

those with Birthdays in **April:** Josie Jobson, Arthur Tyr Robinson and Carys Thompson and in

May: Hazel Warhurst



Email from Rev Sue Chew (vicar of St Andrew's Church, Sadberg), in reply to Margaret Whitham's email - both dated 13th March 2022

Hello Margaret
Thank you for the newsletter, you did Paul proud and you were obviously very kind to him as part of your church family.

We don't have anything other than our Sunday Service, but we are hoping to hold a fund raising coffee morning in the village hall.



St Andrew's Church, Sadberg

Best wishes
Sue

Hello Sue
I thought you might like to see the newsletter we sent out to members and friends about Paul Bell. What an interesting man he was. We will certainly miss him.

Do you have anything happening mid-week eg coffee morning, that we could attend sometime and pay our respects to Paul at the same time?

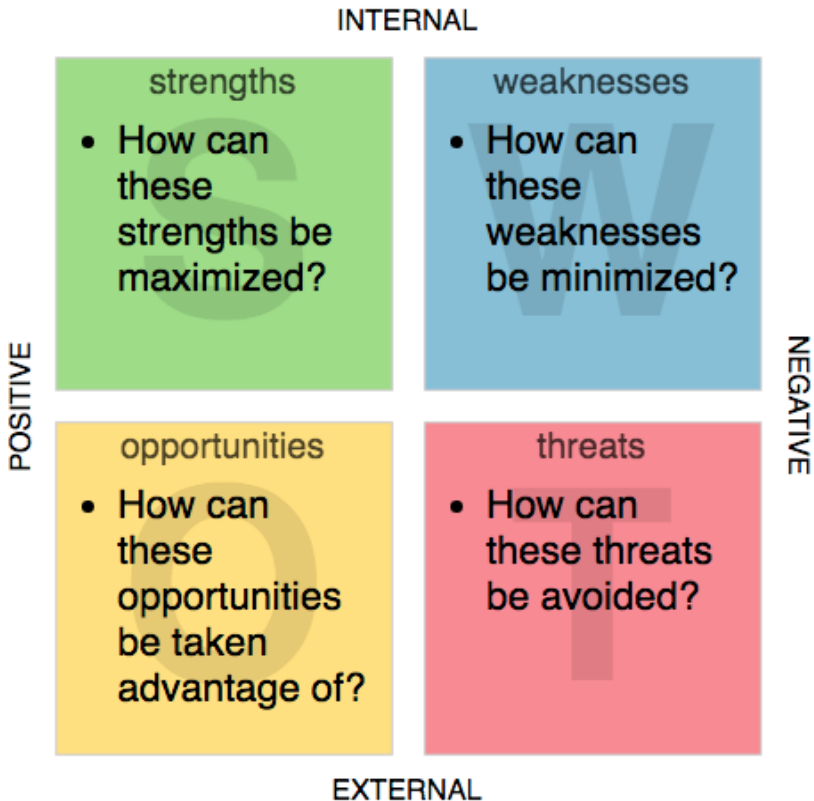
With my best wishes
Margaret Whitham

Future of Stockton Unitarian Church

meeting on

Saturday 7th May 2022

at 10.45am, for a prompt 11.00am start



Come along, bring your suggestions ideas and ways in which **YOU** can help

Some things to think about for our meeting on 2nd April 2022

What are?

1. **Our Aim:** To maintain a Unitarian witness in Stockton and the surrounding area.
2. **Our Objectives:** Where are we going?
3. **Our Goals:** How are we going to know (and can measure) when we get there? Aims must be Meaningful, Measurable and Memorable
4. **Our Policy:** Who is doing what, when and how
5. **Our Offer:** What we do (and don't do)
6. **Our Target Market:** Who we wish to reach
7. **Our Marketing:** How we communicate with potential members
8. **Our Services:** How we engage and retain our members
9. **Our facilities:** What are our physical assets and how do we use them
10. **Our members:** What are their responsibilities and how can they contribute
11. **Our Volunteers:** How we recruit and develop volunteers
12. **Purchasing:** How we deal with suppliers
13. **Innovation:** How we innovate —introducing new ideas
14. **Finance:** How we make best use of our physical assets and control our finances
15. **Governance:** How we provide oversight and governance
16. **Community:** How we can engage with the local community

Please make every effort to attend this IMPORTANT meeting on Saturday 2nd April 2022. We invite you to send in written suggestions prior to the meeting.

We need everyone's thoughts, ideas and support.

Review of services

February 20th Louise Reeve, from Newcastle Unitarians, gave a service on “**Ministry of Cake**”, the readings included “The Secret Meaning of Cake” by Alysa Levene and “Saints, Cakes, and Redemption”, together with A Traditional Prayer to St. Phanourius and a Musical Interlude: ‘Roots and Wings’ by Elizabeth Hornby. Louise brought a Phanouropita cake, which she had baked to share with the congregation.



February 27th Rev Margaret Kirk's theme was ‘**Blessings**’ Her readings included,; from Benedictus – A Book of Blessings by John O'Donoghue and The Beatitudes – Matthew 5 v 1-11. Margaret looked at all kinds of Blessings.



March 6th Rev Paul Walker's theme was “**Ukraine: Reflections**” Margaret Whitham read and played ‘A Prayer for Ukraine’ music by Mykola Lysenko a Ukrainian composer, pianist and conductor. Born in 1842 and died in 1912.

One reading was from a newspaper article, the account of a mother giving birth in a dusty, crumbling hospital cellar, while the town was under fire and sirens going off. Paul reminded us that there were other wars going on, which seemed to have gone from people's minds. We should remember all people everywhere who are suffering the loss of life, loved ones and homes. We ended by singing This is My Song — Song of Peace, music by Jean Sibelius. Sibelius wrote the tune ‘Finlandia’ in 1899 when Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire. The piece was composed for the Press Celebrations of 1899, a covert protest against increasing censorship from the Russian Empire.

Services continued

March 13th Rev Victor Ball's theme "What is Truth?"

This prayer was included in the service:

Light, Love, and Peace to the east and west,

Light, Love, and Peace to the north and south,

Light, Love, and Peace unto you above and below,

Light, Love, and Peace that transcends all, embraces all.

The Peace of quiet lakes and hills and forests,

The Light of Summer evenings and the Peace of a starry sky,

The Peace of the calm sea and the Light of moonlit nights,

Love for faithful and contented hearts.

May Light, Love, and Peace flow throughout the whole world.

Light, Love, and Peace to all Beings,

Light, Love, and Peace . . . Peace . . . Peace.

March 20th Membership service led by **Jean Watson**, where we remembered those who had died during the last year: Richard McLaren; Ray McLaren; David Sickling; Merla Hopkins and Paul Bell.

Those present re-affirmed their Church Membership with our Church Affirmation

I value the fellowship at this Church
and seek to enrich it

I value my giving to this Church
and seek to give

I value my receiving from this Church
and seek to receive

I value my yearnings within this Church
and seek to be satisfied

I value my faith embodied here
and seek to develop it

I value my worship with this Church
and seek to heighten it

I value my membership of this Church
and seek to declare it.

The impotence and responsibilities of being a Church Member

By becoming a Member of the Church, you are making a commitment to contribute to Church life by taking part in worship services and other Church events; to offer your skills, abilities, knowledge and time to help ensure that the Church can flourish; to contribute financially according to your means to the work of the Church and the upkeep of its buildings and the support of its ministry.

The Church co-operates with other like-minded congregations through its affiliation to the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Church (General Assembly) whose constituent congregations, societies and individual members unite in a spirit of mutual sympathy, tolerance and respect. The General Assembly recognises the worth and dignity of all people and their freedom to believe as their conscience dictate; and holds that truth is best served where the mind and conscience are free. The General Assembly's 'Object' is: To promote a free and enquiring religion through the worship of God and the celebration of life; the service to humanity and respect for all creation; and the upholding of the liberal Christian tradition; encourage and unite in fellowship with bodies which uphold the religious liberty of their members, unconstrained by the imposition of creeds; affirm the liberal religious heritage and learn from the spiritual, cultural and intellectual insights of all humanity.

Church membership keeps us accountable. When we join a church we are offering ourselves to one another to be encouraged, rebuked, corrected, and served.

Church membership is our opportunity to grasp hold of each other in responsibility and love. Words from Jean Watson

Mothers

Some mothers are like **forsythia** spilling over the neighbour's fence – almost unbearably cheerful, energetic, and determinedly curious, insinuating themselves into our lives.

Some mothers are like **daises** by the side of the road – humble, perhaps a little frayed around the edges.

Some mothers are like irises in **formal gardens** – austere and complicated, holding themselves back as we try in vain to discover what's really inside.

Some mothers are like **roses** displayed on a trellis – lovely, sweet-smelling, sure of their favoured place in our hearts.

Some mothers are like **thistles** in a field – their sharpness wounding us as we try to get close.

Some mothers are like **violets** coming up in the lawn – unassuming, but tenderly loyal; always there regardless of how we take them for granted.

Some mothers are like **ivy** on a brick wall – holding us too tightly, unwilling, or unable to let go.

Some mothers are like beds of **peonies** – bosomy, overdressed, embarrassing us with their lavishness and lipstick marks they leave on our cheeks.

Some mothers are like **lilac** bushes beside the kitchen door – welcoming, familiar, reminding us that we can always come home again.

Living or dead, perfect, or flawed, gorgeous, or plain, they are our others, and they did their best they could. Let us love them for what we can love in them, and honour them the best we can, flawed as we are too. From them we were given the gift of life. Let us say thank you, each in our own way,

Meeting the Progressive Christian Network

On 11th January 2022, the Newcastle Progressive Christian Network group invited Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians to join them, with Louise Reeve (chairperson at Newcastle Unitarians and a lay worship leader) giving a talk on "United in Diversity: Unitarians and Christianity". Louise traced the development of Unitarian thought in the UK and its views on Christ and Christianity, before looking at how UK Unitarianism is becoming a more diverse and interfaith movement, albeit one with strongly Christian roots. The group had a very stimulating discussion afterwards, with Unitarians and Progressive Christians sharing ideas and exploring together. We hope we'll be working together again in future!

It's easy to be pleasant
when life goes along with a song.
But the person who's worthwhile
is the one who can smile
when everything goes wrong.

Engagement Group

Wednesday April 27th 2022 at 10.30am
on Zoom. Topic: Easter customs,
celebrations and traditions led by Susan
Scafton





“Humanist? Christian? - We are all Unitarian”

9 February 2022

A select group of four of us attended this event organised by Unitarian Transformers: “Humanist? Christian? We are all Unitarians”, which in itself provided interesting food for thought. Four attendees, including Rev. Mark Hutchinson and Rev. Wyn Thomas, discussed why this has become of the most critical Unitarian debates of our age, and how we can get more people talking constructively about it. Mark and Wyn have recorded an excellent video about this, which I encourage you to watch – it’s here: I think we need to pursue this, as I do indeed take a Unitarian stance; humanism and Christianity are both great human spiritual philosophies – but there are so many others, and to define ourselves along these binary lines is not only sad, it means we will fail to learn so much from our fellow human beings.

Louise Reeve

Unitarian Transformers: East Meets West

Organised by Unitarian Transformers, and very well attended for a Saturday night, this online gathering introduced a spiritual community many of those present hadn't heard of: the Brahma Samaj in India, who describe themselves as a: "community of worshippers of the one highest reality". Led by Rev. Laura Dobson, the event was inspired by Rev. Kate Dean's work looking at the connections between Brahma Samaj, and the Unitarian movement, with inspirational words and music by Ram Mohan Roy and Rabindranath Tagore, silence, and the opportunity to share our reflections with each other. I find myself thinking of the hymn lyrics: "How wonderful this world of thine!" There are so many spiritual human traditions we know nothing of, and how wonderful it is that our Unitarian movement is finding new ways for us to learn about them and explore them. And it's never a bad thing to connect with your fellow Unitarians of an evening!

Brahmo Samaj website here: <https://www.thebrahmosamaj.net/>
Rev. Kate Dean's sermon on the links between this community and Unitarianism here: https://www.thebrahmosamaj.net/articles/brahmosamajlinks_katedean.html



Dates for your Diary

Knit 'n' Natter Group meet on Tuesdays 11.00am to 1.00pm on alternative Tuesdays. 5th April 2022, 3rd and 17th May. Bring along your knitting, crochet, crafts and enjoy a cup of tea a chat whilst you work. £1 contribution for the tea/coffee and biscuits.



Coffee Mornings every Saturday

10.00am to 11.30am

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

Uni-sing! A Zoom hymn singing group, on alternative **Saturday** afternoons at 3.00pm, with break out groups for chat in the middle. for more information email Louise Rogers louise.rogers256@gmail.com see facebook.co/groups/687366168770017

**Sessions April 2nd Lesley Hartley and Rosemary Ruston;
16th April Sue Good; 7th and 21st May**

UMS (Unitarian Music Society)

email unitarianmusicsociety@hotmail.com for link.

UMS Summer Conference 12th to 15th August 2022 at The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow, Derbyshire with Oliver's Journey Home World premiere at Ilkley on Sunday 14th August

Deadline for next edition of Stockton Church News - Sunday 22nd May 2022. Please send your contributions for the May edition to the Editor Margaret Robinson at margaretrobinson81@gmail.com



Candles

Do you have any candles that are no longer useable? There is a company that recycles them and uses them to make new candles. I am going to send off some soon.

By post: If you're sending your donations by post, we're aware this can be costly. We recommend either staying inside the parameters of a small parcel by

Royal Mail, which has dimensions of 45cm x 35cm x 16cm and weighing under 2KG. the small parcel is far cheaper to post than a medium parcel.

Post your scrap wax to: The Recycled Candle Company, 6 Gandy Street, Exeter, Devon, EX4 3LS

What you can donate

Your donations can be any type of old candles; any colour, scent, size and in all types of container including glass. Remember, we'll take the aluminium sustainers from tealights, and these will be recycled too. Together we can reduce the millions of candles that go to landfill every year.

When things are bad, remember:

It won't always be this way.

Take one day at a time.

These things too will pass.

When things are good, remember:

It won't always be this way.

Enjoy every great moment.

Aluminium foil is used in the **packaging** of all types of medications such as **pills**, and capsules.

Do you have any? Hazel Warhurst has a neighbour who takes these to be recycled.

Contact Hazel for details.



Unitarian Bible Studies



Group by Unitarian Christian Blogs

Unitarian & Free Christian Bible Discussion

6:30pm - Mondays

Link to Facebook Group:-

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/689768408524659>

Touching The Spirit



Touching the Spirit

7.30pm / Every Thursday /
Online

Listening: there are chosen words and phrases and we listen to others as they express how those words relate to or affect them today.

Readings: poetry, reflection, the host reads to the spirit of the gathering.

Discussion: a short period reflecting our experience of the gathering

Silent meditation: we finish together in silence.

The gathering will last an hour.

Host Rev. Mark Hutchinson is a Unitarian Minister offering these online gatherings to all who are open to exploring guidance from sources and

connection unforeseen.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94223648779...>

Meeting ID: 942 2364 8779

Passcode: 3c9Pb1

Service for April and May 2022

Date	Time	Worship Leader	Flowers
April 3rd	6.00pm	Christine Walker	Jane Tomlin
April 10th	6.00pm	Rev Michael Unwin	Mrs Coates
April 17th	6.00pm	Rev Victor Ball	Hazel & David Warhurst
April 24th	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk	Jean Watson
May 1st	6.00pm		Margaret Kirk
May 8th	6.00pm	Margaret Robinson	Joan Unwin
May 15th	6.00pm	Dr Barry Thomas	Josie Squires
May 22nd	6.00pm	Arek Malecki	Margaret Whitham
May 29th	6/00pm		Victor Ball

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

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Address: Stockton Unitarian Church, Wellington Street, Stockton-on-Tees, **TS18 1RF (please note post code)**

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

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facebook: Unitarians in and around Stockton-on-Tees

Chair 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

What do Unitarians believe?

The essence of Unitarianism is freedom to explore faith and religion and to build a personal statement of belief.

The Unitarian religion is engaging with the high principles of a spiritual life, together with service toward our fellow beings in the world.

Tony McNeile

“To promote a free and inquiring religion through worship of God and the celebration of life; the service of humanity and respect for all creation; and the upholding of the liberal Christian tradition”

From the **GA Object**, passed by the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

From Stockton Unitarian Church's Constitution (1st July 2012)

AIM - The aim of the congregation is to maintain a Unitarian witness within and around the area of the former county of Cleveland.

OBJECTIVES - The objectives of the Congregation are:

- a. To serve the existing members and satisfy their needs, pastoral and spiritual.
- b. To serve the community.
- c. To maintain a distinctive Unitarian approach to worship.
- d. To be known as a caring community, for both own members and others.
- e. To maintain a Unitarian religious voice in the area, and to make sure we are heard.
- f. To keep a close working link with other churches in social responsibility.
- g. To continue to provide better facilities for the community.
- h. To continue to play an active part in District and national Unitarian affairs.
- i. To encourage people to expand their own personal religion.
- j. To grow.
- k. To promote religion in accordance with the principles of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, as stated in the Directory, which is issued periodically to member congregations. (see Object above)