

Stockton Unitarians



April gave us: Palm and Easter Sundays, Good Friday and Easter Monday, Birthday of Queen Elizabeth II, St George's Day, the clocks went forward and warm sunny days.

Church News

May 2022





Congratulations and Happy Birthday

to those Celebrating Birthdays in:

May: Grace Joy Whitham

June: Pamela Kelly;

Jeffery Bowes;

Jaynie Dixon-Oliver;

Paul Walker;

and **Victor Ball**

and in **July:**

Paul William Robinson;

and **Freda Laverick**



“Aim high in whatever you do, it doesn’t matter how long it takes to get there, just know that every step you take is upwards towards your goal”

Be Good to You!

Be yourself, truthfully.

Accept yourself, gratefully.

Value yourself, completely.

Treat yourself, generously.

Balance yourself, harmoniously.

Trust yourself, confidently.

Love yourself, wholeheartedly.

Empower yourself, immediately.

Express yourself, radiantly.

First Aid for the Soul



Don't cling to a mistake just because you spend a lot of time making it unknown.

If you want to end the war then instead of sending guns, send books. Instead of sending tanks, send pens. Instead of sending soldiers, send teachers.

Malala Yousafzai

from Peace Vespers at the 2022 GA Annual Meetings

Future of Stockton Unitarian Church

A Follow-up meeting to discuss the Future of Stockton Unitarian Church will be held on **Saturday 25th June 2022 at 11.00am**. Please make every effort to attend.

Report from Louise Reeve. On 7th May 2022, Unitarians from the Stockton and Newcastle congregations met to discuss future options for Stockton Unitarians. Over three hours, we considered how the building might become a resource for the local community, what Unitarianism has to offer people in the modern world, and who might be interested in joining a Unitarian congregation. The future holds challenges for all of us; here at Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians, we wish our sister congregation well and look forward to continuing to work with you!

Two poems from my Mum, Eva Rogers

Visit While Alive

I'd rather one little rose from the garden of a friend,
Than all the very choicest flowers when my stay on earth
should end.
I'd rather have one pleasant word in kindness said to me,
Than flattery when my heart is still and life has ceased to be.
I'd rather have a smile now from friends I know are true,
Than tears shed round my casket when I've bid this life adieu.
So give me please your flowers today, for whether white or red,
I'd rather have one blossom now, than a truck load when I'm dead.



Kindness

When some one does a kindness it always seems to me.
That's the way God up in heaven would like us all to be.
For when we bring some pleasure to another human heart.
We have followed in his footsteps and we've had a little part.
In serving him who loves us for I'm very sure it's true.
That servicing others round us we serve and please him too.

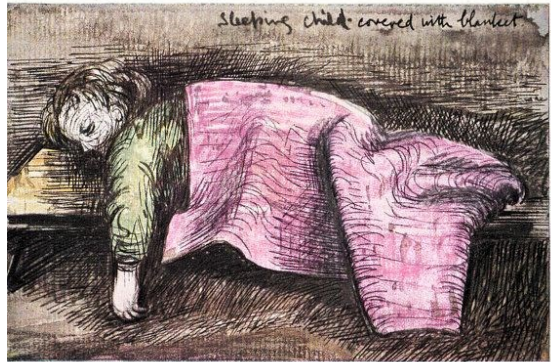
Review of Sunday services



27th March 2022 Rev Margaret Kirk led our Mothering Sunday service on the theme of 'Images of Love'. With opening words 'Night in Al-Hamra' by Saadi Youssef, a prayer 'For All Who Mother' by Victoria Weinstein and appropriate readings. Margaret read the story behind Praying Hands drawn by Albrecht Durer.

And shared images of Caring of a mother hugging her son;

a 'Sleeping Child Covered with Blanket' drawn by Henry Moore, with a quote from Saint Augustine "Thou wilt support us both when little and even to grey hairs."



also a drawing of a women and small child "Home from Market" drawn by Kathe Kollwitz with the last words of Freiderick Von Hugel "Caring is the greatest thing, caring matters most."

Members of the congregation were given cards and daffodils.

3rd April Christine Walker "Spring Time"

Christine was ably assisted by Poppy, Ollie, Freddie and Sam. Sam lit the chalice and extinguished it. The words for the



chalice lighting were by Melanie Morel-Ensminger. The hymns were Early in Life's Morning; Hope is born in Springtime; Morning and Gather the Spirit. Ollie and Freddie read the readings: "The origin of Spring"; "Burnt Norton" by TS Eliot and Ecclesiastes 3: 1-11 and Poppy read a Celtic Prayer. Christine talked about Permaculture This Spring. Permaculture is an ethically based method of designing integrated systems that lead to sustainability. The first three principles are:

1. **Observe and Interact:** acting with thought and attention creates more sustainable result. In pairs we were asked to discuss the following questions: What do I do for fun? What am I happy about in my life? What could be improved? How could my life be more sustainable and fulfilling?
2. **Catch and Store Energy:** Where do I put my energy? Are there outlets which drain you of energy which you could give less to? Are there things you gain energy from which you do not pay enough attention to?
3. **Obtain a yield:** Increase satisfaction with a project. Grow food. Learn. Improve health. Save money by fixing, instead of replacing. Connect with friends.

10th April Rev Michael Unwin "Palm Sunday"

Michael started off his service with a chalice lighting "Blessed is the

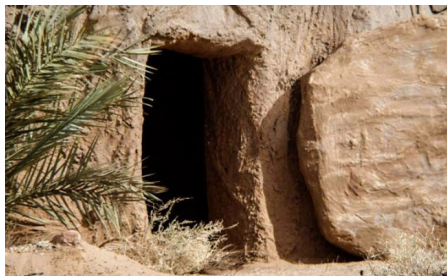


coming Kingdom of ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heavens!" (Mk 11:10). We light our chalice with a memorial flame for today we remember Jesus: his fateful ride into Jerusalem, the suffering and death awaited him. The flame burns too for all who have taken the same road. May our worship do them justice and strengthen us to follow them." We had the following hymns (HFL) Where cross the crowded ways of love (98); Dear Lord and

Father (101); The Vision of a World Set Free (223); All people that on earth do dwell (64); and ended with Rejoice in love we know and share (315). Michael and Joan shared readings from Zachariah 9:9-10; Mark 11:1-11; "To be a Pilgrim" by Cliff Reed and a prayer on Forgiveness - God of Love and Peace. Michael contrasted Jesus's entry into Jerusalem and his death on the cross.

17th April Rev Victor Ball - Easter "The Resurrection Mystery"

Victor shared readings from Mark 16:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:35-55 and "Buds" by Karel Capek. We sang these hymns: (266) The Awakening Season; (236) Thy Purpose Crowning All; (108) Death's Dominion is Past; (170) The Goal and ended with (311) as the vesper. Victor spoke of the mystery of the resurrection.



24th April 2022 Rev Margaret Kirk "And something always, always sings"

Margaret used the following readings:

"There is always a path through the Forest" from The Comfort Book by Matt Haigh; and "Moments of Joy" by Lindy Latham from With heart and Mind 1. We sang these hymns: (2) A promise through the ages rings; (181) Wake now my senses; and (11) Blessed spirit of my life.



1st May 2022 Bring and Share "Maytime"

We began with "Here comes the sun" by The Beatles, opening words and a chalice lighting read by Jean Watson; Margaret Whitham read about Spring from "A year on our farm" by Matt Baker and a prayer "Life's Good Gifts. Jean Watson related memories of being a May Queen and read the May Queen's hymn. Margaret Kirk talked about



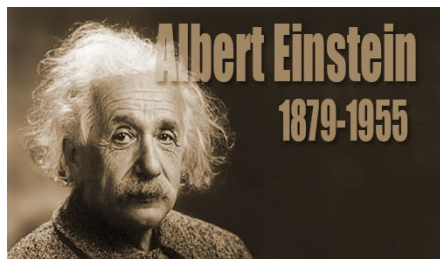
flowers and plants, followed by “We’ll gather lilacs in the spring” sung by Katherine Jenkins. We had a large vase of lilac on display, as well as the usual flowers. Michael Unwin read “May” by John Clare and led us in a prayer. Margaret Robinson’s contribution was May Day traditions from around the world, including the festival of Beltane, which is celebrated on 1st May, to mark the halfway between spring and summer. Both Mike and Jane Tomlin also contributed readings. We sang the following hymns, in-between the readings: Glad that I live am I; Think of a world; Lord of all hopefulness; The Awakening Season; Now is the Time and So simple is the Human Heart, chosen by members of the congregation. Mendelssohn’s Spring Song ended the service.

8th May 2022 Margaret Robinson “Education”

The service opened with “Joie De Vivre” Joy of Living by Chopin. We sang hymns: Come, come whoever you are; Spirit of Life, The Larger View - in their ancient isolation and Joy of Living.



The Readings were “The Magic Pebbles”, “The Little Boy” and “Families are for learning” by Everett Morre Baker. Margaret showed a video “What’s Education For?” Then she asked if our current education system is a help or a hinderance to people becoming their natural selves, a well-rounded citizen. Are we just teaching children to pass exams, to achieve targets and jump through hoops in order that schools may gain a higher place on the achievement tables? Should we be teaching young people to think for themselves and giving them opportunities to make mistakes and experiment. They should be getting skills for life. The congregation was then invited to give their experiences of education. The service ended with the playing of John Rutter’s “Look at the world” video.



Albert Einstein said “Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think!”

How to be a Unitarian

How indeed? It is a big question, and it's not certain anyone knows the answer, but at the start of 2022, a group of around 25 assorted Unitarians from across the UK and further afield led by Dr Jane Blackall at Kensington Unitarians were going to give it their best shot.

Jane put together a six-week course, with Unitarians meeting for two hours every other Thursday evening, in which we discussed this funny thing called 'modern UK Unitarianism'.

Many of the writings, though certainly not all, came from the American Unitarian Universalist tradition, and we had many discussions about how UK Unitarianism is in an interesting position; neither the more traditional 'Unitarian Christian' approach of Eastern Europe and the Asian and African Unitarian churches, nor the 'Unitarian Universalist' approach found in America and many other Western countries. Instead, we find ourselves between the two, with many different theological outlooks in our 150+ UK congregations.

Perhaps we should learn from the title of Rev. Sue Woolley's recent book, "United in Diversity"! Perhaps our diversity *is* what UK Unitarianism is, and we should embrace it. Certainly, many attendees towards the end spoke of the joy of being able to have constructive discussions with other Unitarians, rather than the "shouting matches" that we unfortunately sometimes see on Facebook and in the letters pages of the *Inquirer*. Perhaps also having an online space with Unitarians from other congregations made us feel more free and open, able to have spiritual and theological discussions without the constraints we might find in our congregations.

It can sometimes be hard on a Sunday morning to switch from "Mabel, can you give me a hand to do the dishes and check the burglar alarm is on" mode to "Mabel, do you believe in God?"

How to be a Unitarian (continued)

Over the six weeks, we covered the following topics:

6th January – Introduction to Unitarianism: Reflection on our Experience

20th January – Unitarian Theology: Sources, Values, Principles

3rd February – The Unitarian Denomination: Our Wider Movement

17th Feb – Being Unitarian in Community: Commitment to a Congregation

3rd March – Deepening Your Unitarianism: Doing Your own Spiritual Work

17th March – Being a Unitarian in the World: Living Your Faith Every Day

Through our discussions, we developed our views and collected insights on all the topics above. As an example, here's some insights from the first session, reflecting on our experiences:

“Unitarianism is a Religion ...we gather in community for a sacred purpose - for seeking and spreading the holy - and we engage with life's ultimate concerns. Our churches deal with 'serious things in a serious place'.

Unitarians are Free to Believe ...what their own life-experience tells them is true, and what the promptings of their conscience tells them is right, based on deep reflection and reasoning (it's not just a case of 'anything goes').

Unitarianism is Full of Contradictions! ...as individuals and as a denomination we can be both rational and intuitive, humanistic and theistic, scientific and mystical (and we generally find it healthy to hold these in balance).”

It was an excellent and enriching course, and if it runs again, thoroughly recommended!

Louise Reeve

Stockton Creative Village!

Local community interest company, Creative Village deliver art based workshops in the Teesside area. The workshops aim to teach people new skills, build confidence and provide a creative space for people to explore possibilities, supporting creative expression for all.

Over the years Creative Village have worked with many local organisations, teaching skills in jewellery, ceramics, print making and many other creative activities. Directors Lucy Addison & Jess Langford are excited to share their news. Creative Village are opening a studio on Stockton High Street.

The studio will become home to workshops including beginner and advanced jewellery making, ceramics short courses, print making, textiles and so much more! Currently under renovation, the studio will open in the spring, welcoming members of the public to join workshops and use the creative space and facilities.

Keep up to date with the renovation and opening via Creative Village's social media; Facebook www.facebook.com/CreativeVillageCIC
Instagram @creativevillagecic & new website launch coming soon!

AN EXCITING NEW BOOK!

The Lancashire Collaborative Ministry has produced a book, to commemorate its eighteen months of lockdown, during 2020 and 2021; during this period, zoom services were held in Nazareth Unitarian Chapel, in Padiham, each Sunday, for the members of Unitarian congregations in Chorley, Padiham and Rawtenstall, primarily, but for all other interested parties, as well. The book, entitled 'Our Extraordinary Year', is now available for purchase, at a cost of £8.00 per copy, if collected personally, or £10.00, including postage and packing. 'Our Extraordinary Year' is a wonderful collection of sermons, written by such distinguished ministers as Rev'd. Jim Corrigan and Rev'd. Danny Crosby; by regular LCM service-leaders Rev'd. Dr. Shannon Ledbetter, Tony Cann, Paul Hubbard, and Robert Foreman; and there are also two addresses by G.A. President, Anne Mills.

David Cooke, set himself the task of writing at least one haiku, every week, to describe each service; he would read out his haikus, after the service ended. Sadly, David died, just before Christmas, last year, and the book pays tribute to his talents. Each item in the book has its author's permission for it to be used, so that copyright should not cause problems.. For copies contact Shannon Ledbetter, whose email address is:

scledbetterosprey@gmail.com

(Anne Mills, LCM Secretary)

Stockton Volunteers Market Wednesday 1st June 2022

in Stockton High Street 9.30am to
3.00pm (Marquee in car park near Sun Inn)

Goods to sell would be appreciated, and
people to staff the stall would be helpful.



Please let Margaret Robinson
know if you are able to be on
the stall. Proceeds from the
sale of goods will go to our
church charity.

Stockton Unitarian Church



Sunday 3rd July 2022

Following evening service

Church members please come along and use
your vote.

Its 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.

York St Saviourgate Unitarian Church

Induction service for Rev
Stephanie Bisby Saturday
28th May 2022 at 14.00-
16.00. conducted by Rev
Ant Howe.

and

Celebrate their **350th
Anniversary** with a
service on Sunday **3rd
July 2022** at 11.00am



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.

Ministry of Cake

Newcastle Unitarian Church has quite a number of enthusiastic bakers. Every year we hold an Easter Miscellany Service, in which members of the congregation bring along their own contributions, such as music, poems, readings or their own pieces of writing, and this year we had a baking theme. All contributions were linked to cakes and bakes in some form, such as exploring the history of fruit cake in the UK, especially Simnel Cake, and traditional baked Easter treats from around the world. Sadly we had to meet mainly on Zoom this year, so although we couldn't share our baking in person, we showed them on Zoom and shared them with friends and family.

We had truly international ambitions this year, with a Torta della Nonna (Italian Grandmother's Tart – a lemon custard baked with nuts in a pastry case), Italian polenta cake (a dense cake made with ricotta and flavoured with lemon, topped with orange caramel and orange slices), Mexican (a kind of bread pudding using up stale bread slices, which are soaked with a cinnamon and clove syrup, then baked with raisins and cheese, in this case Red Leicester Cheese) and Spanish Tarta de Santiago (a medieval Galician tart of a pastry base with a quince paste filling and almond sponge topping).

Many of these have Christian significance too – in capirostada for instance, the bread represents the Body of Christ, the syrup his blood, cinnamon sticks the wood for the cross, cloves the nails on the cross and the melted cheese the Holy Shroud. For me, and I'm sure many of us bakers, any religious meaning aside, the true significance of baking is a chance to share time with dear family and friends as well as recall beloved absent relatives and shared recipes. And this coming together means all that much more now given the restrictions of the past two years. Happy baking! (and eating, obviously.)



Tarta de Santiago



Torta della Nonna

Dates for your Diary

Knit 'n' Natter Group meet on alternative Tuesdays from 11.00am to 1,00pm. **31st May; 14th and 28th June, 12th and 26th July.** 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.



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.

NUA Committee Meeting Wednesday 8th June at 7.30pm on Zoom

Sacred Stillness at 7.45pm on Tuesday **14th June** and **12th July 2022** on Zoom ID 89273758658

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: 21st May; 4th June; 18th June; 2nd and 16th July 2022

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" at Ilkley.

NEWS: Unitarians vote to affirm transgender rights



At the Annual Meetings of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches delegates voted overwhelmingly in favour of a motion to reaffirm transgender people's

rights and to support the adoption of a self-declaration model for gender recognition.

The following motions were discussed and voted in favour of at the GA Annual Meetings, so are now Resolutions:

1. That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports a well-funded NHS, free at the point of use and considers that the increased use of the private sector in delivering of NHS healthcare, benefitting shareholders at the expense of patients, is ethically reprehensible. We therefore call on the UK Government to make a renewed commitment to a well-funded NHS free at the point of use and to abandon plans and practices which further divert public resources to private healthcare companies.

For 102 Against 9 Abstentions 3

2. The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:
a) affirm with joy that each person's understanding and statement of their own gender identity is a matter of conscience; b) Affirms that transgender rights are human rights; c) Joins the British Medical Association, the Trades Union Congress and others in civil society in urging the adoption of a self-declaration model for gender recognition by the UK and devolved governments; and d) Requests that the Chief Officer lobby for this model in response to UK or devolved government consultations and on any other suitable occasion.

For 84, Against 16, Abstentions 15

GA Motions continued

3. That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches regrets **the lack of consultation over the rebranding exercise** and requests that the Executive Committee (EC) consults the constituent congregations and fellowships on whether to introduce the new logo or retain the traditional Chalice Design adopted in 2007 in the interests of maintaining a consistent denominational identity.

For 57, Against 49, Abstentions 14.

4. That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- (a) endorses a World Citizens Initiative “We the peoples Campaign”
- (b) joins with campaigns and petitions of other Faith groups who support this initiative.

For 97, Against 1, Abstentions 7.

5. The Lancashire Collaborative Ministry (LCM) was welcomed into Membership as an Affiliated Society. LCM are a group of churches including Padiham, Chorley and Rawtenstall.

13. Rev Sue Woolley was welcomed as the President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2022-2023.

14. The Assembly expressed its gratitude for the services provided by Anne Mills as President during the year 2021-2022.

Unitarian Penal & Social Affairs Panel (PSAP)

Important News – new Social Action Officer at Essex Hall Do you share the view of your PSAP that social responsibility and action in Unitarian religious practice are of vital importance. With kind financial support from the Bowland Trust, the new Officer post to help promote the work of the PSAP was announced at the 2022 GA meetings.

If you would like to receive PSAP News regularly, email bruce_childton@hotmail.com or if you have any News for PSAP News Send it with a link to fuller information to bruce_chilton@hotmail.com

Sunday Services for June and July 2022

Date	Time	Worship Leader	Flowers
29th May	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk	Victor Ball
5th June	6.00pm	Rev Victor Ball	Jane Tomlin
12th June	6.00pm	Jane Tomlin	Flower Fund
19th June	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk	M Robinson
26th June	6.00pm	Arek Malecki	Mrs Powley
3rd July	6.00pm	Rev Paul Walker	Mrs J Jobson
10th July	6.00pm	Margaret Whitham & Margaret Robinson	Flower Fund
17th July	6.00pm	Bring & Share - Holidays	Mrs Smith
24th July	6.00pm	Flower service	Gail Moore
31st July	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk	Flower Fund
25th September		Harvest service	
9th October		Rev Sue Woolley	
20th November		Send a Child to Hucklow 60th Anniversary service	



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

Whitby Gazette View from the Pews 19th May

A few years ago, I used to pick up my grandchildren from their local primary school and noticed that attached to the railings on one side of the playground was a large poster headed "Our Golden Rules". They were aspirational rules. Five in all, beginning with "We always do our best" and ending with "We are always honest and truthful." They were best practice guidelines emphasising kindness and thoughtfulness and respect for everyone and everything. I've no idea whether or not the children noticed them as they dashed about the playground letting off steam but I'm pretty sure their parents did and I know their teachers worked hard to encourage the children to put them into practice. Those words said something important about the school's ethos.

Many of us would call the advice on the posters as just behaving decently because, thank goodness, decency nowadays seems to have more to do with how we behave towards each other than how we're dressed. Wouldn't it be nice to think that the railings around the Houses of Parliament had posters with similar advice reminding our politicians that decency and honesty matter? Many of those members of parliament who serve us do behave in a way that deserves our respect but sadly, there are others who don't.

But I want our kids to have leaders they can look up to. I want them to know that the ethos their primary school provided for them is one they can see is alive and well in the world they are becoming a part of. I want them to believe that honesty matters and that telling the truth will always be important. Young children have an innate sense of justice: they are quick to call out wrongdoing when they see it. I don't want that sense of what is just and true to wither away and the work of dedicated teachers lost in a world where leaders have lost their moral compass.

A favourite children's hymn used at school assemblies throughout my childhood was about a knight from the stories of old who was 'gentle and brave' and 'gallant and bold.' This knight would have fitted well as a character in Lord of the Rings but in the hymn he simply represented honesty and bravery. An Idealistic myth it may be, but the values it enshrined still hold good. The last verse reads:

'Let faith be my shield and let joy be my steed
'Gainst the dragons of anger, the ogres of greed
And let me set free with the sword of my youth
From the castle of darkness the power of the truth.'

Margaret Kirk

**Follow-up meeting on the
Future of Stockton Unitarian Church**

meeting on

Saturday 25th June 2022

at 10.45am, for a prompt 11.00am start

Come along, bring your suggestions ideas

How are you willing to HELP?

**Are you willing to serve at a Coffee Morning or
Coffee afternoon?**

**Are you willing to organise and run an evening
or afternoon activity during the week?**

**Are you willing to organise and take a Sunday
service?**

What can or will you do?

**If you are unable to attend please email your
suggestions to Margaret Robinson**

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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

Worship Committee Co-ordinator: Margaret Whitham 01429 298641

Engagement Group on Zoom next meet on Wednesday 25th
May 2022 at 10.30am Topic "What or Who is your God?" led
by Margaret Whitham.

**Next Church Council Meeting Wednesday
27th July 2022 at 11.00am**

**Next Worship Group Meeting Wednesday 3rd August
2022 at 11.00am**

**Deadline for next edition of Stockton Church News -
Sunday 24th July 2022.** Please send your contributions for
the May edition to the Editor Margaret Robinson
at margaretrobinson81@gmail.com