

Stockton Unitarians



January brings us: Epiphany, Twelfth Night, Holocaust Memorial Day, St Valentine's Day, RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, Raynaud's Awareness Month, Sikh Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh,

February brings us: Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, NSPCC Number Day, World Cancer Day, Chinese Lunar New Year, Buddhist Parinirvana Day, Islamic Lailat al-Isra wa-l-Mi'raj (Prophet's Ascension),

Church News January / February 2024



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



January

*Susan Scrafton
Margaret Robinson
Joan Unwin
Margaret Whitham
Aaron R H Robinson
Arthur Whitham*



February

*William Dixon Oliver
Pat Wilkinson
Sam Walker*

We are sorry to hear that Pam Coates (formally Price) has lost her son Nigel, after a long illness. Our thoughts are with her.

We have many tools within us. For every challenge, we just need to identify the necessary tool and learn how best to use it to make our life a masterpiece.

Date for your Diary

Knit 'n' Natter Group meet on alternative Tuesdays from 11.00am to 1.00pm. Bring along your crafts, knitting, crochet, sewing and enjoy a cup of tea and a chat whilst you work.



£1 contribution for the tea/coffee biscuits. **Dates: 9th and 23rd January, 6th and 20th February, 5th March and 19th 2024**

Coffee Mornings every Saturday

10.00am to 11.30am

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



Pat Wilkinson sent the following good news.

Congratulations Millie!

Millie Burdon (Brian and Merla's granddaughter) footballled her way through several heats of the selection process to the finals of the England School-girls' Under 15 Squad and has been awarded a place. The entire family are delighted for her, none more so than her parents Lynne and Kenneth who have always supported her in her football ambitions. How proud of her Brian and Merla would be too, as we all are, if they were still with us.

Well done Millie!



JANUARY 2024 WRITING CHALLENGE

Are you looking for a creative challenge? Why not stay in the warm during the cold January evenings and write some beautiful and meaningful worship resources to inspire others.

The challenge is to write four pieces of worship material by 31st January. To give focus and inspiration they could (but don't have to be) related to the theme of 'Seasons'. Pieces can be prayers, readings/poems, opening/closing/blessing words, hymn words.

- Week 1: Write about winter by 7 Jan
- Week 2: Write about spring by 14 Jan
- Week 3: Write about summer by 21 Jan
- Week 4: Write about autumn by 28 Jan

Polish and submit by email to worship@rosslynhillchapel.org.uk by 31st January!

With your permission, entries will be shared on the **Worship Words website** - a collection of high-quality Unitarian resources for worship.



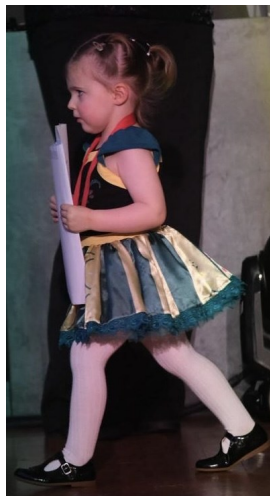
Congratulations Grace and Josie

Josie, Jane and Grace took part in their dance schools ten year Anniversary show, which was Disney themed and included songs from Little Mermaid, Mulan, Mary Poppins, Lion King and various other Disney films. They also received their exam results where they all achieved highly commended and

received excellent feedback from the examiner.

Grace after receiving her exam results.

Grace with her anniversary medal dressed in her 'When you wish upon a star' dress.



Josie and
dancing to music



friend Hollie
from Mulan

A lovely evening of celebration and dance put together in a very short time with a lot of hard work. So again I was a very proud mum and granny

Margaret Whitham

Congratulations Danni

My Granddaughter Dannielle (Danni) is in The Royal Engineers and is currently training officers at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Their motto is **Serve to lead.**

Captain Davies with her sergeant.

Danni has just received the news that as from July 2024 she will be known as Major Davies.

We are all delighted and very proud of her.

A very proud Nana

Margaret Whitham



CHRISTMAS ANAGRAMS

How many can you solve?

1. IT'S LEN T
2. INSERT EGG G
3. EMMA POINT P
4. STOLE ITEM M
5. TITAL IVY N
6. PRESS TEN P
7. SNOG TICK S
8. DUNG DIP P
9. RODEO ANTICS D
10. WILD LEGO G

11. TEN ROMANS O
12. THE WAR W
13. BARREN CRY C
14. HIS LEG S
15. RELOCATE BIN C
16. LIFT VASE F
17. HOLD PRU R
18. BED CRÈME D
19. END VAT A
20. RED ERNIE R

Answers on page 17



Save the Date: Next Juniors Weekend 15th-17th March 2024

Fun Activities for 7-11 year olds at The Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow include singing, dancing, games, and planning and leading

Tony McNeile sent these Greetings for Yule from the Unitarian Earth Spirit Network.

Blessed Yule and the winter solstice. A celebration of the shortest day, when the sun seems to be standing still over the Tropic of Capricorn before turning to push its light and warmth back towards the North. It was a time for lighting fires to encourage the sun to begin its return journey. Yule is a celebration of the light and evergreens. The Norse Goddess Frigda was said to weave the fates of a person's life into a ring and from that we have the tradition of the wreath placed on the door of the house. Holly and Ivy was brought into the house, so too was a young tree as a place for the forest sprite to stay. The exchange of gifts came from the Roman feast of Saturnalia. Not only were gifts exchanged, so too were places. The master waited on the servant. The slave became the master. People dressed up as the opposite sex. This lives on in the tradition of the pantomime, a fairy tale story where the Principal Boy is played by a girl and the female villain by a man.

May your celebrations be joyful and the coming year bring light and warmth into every heart.

Using conkers for laundry — the recipe I use is as follows: Collect as many conkers as you can. You take the green prickly shells off. Not the brown seed shells.

- Chop the conkers from the Horse chestnut tree in food processor until they are in small pieces. Dry them in the oven on a low heat.
- Once totally dry they will keep until you need them.
- Put 40grms of dried conkers in a 500ml jug.
- Fill jug to 500mls with boiling water and soak for at least 10 mins, but 30 minutes is better.
- You get a lovely creamy feeling liquid. Sometimes it is thicker than others.
- Sieve liquid into another jar.
- Re-soak the conkers with more hot water - this time for at least an hour.
- Sieve the liquid from the conkers again and re-soak for a 3rd time (this time for at least 2 hours or over night if you can).
- Each soak the liquid gets "thinner". You can see when your conkers are "spent" they change from a yellow colour to white. The liquid will have a lovely tree/soapy/woodland smell. This disappears by the 3rd soak.
- Use the liquid from the first wash for your dirtiest washing. For very dirty clothes I would use the whole lot, for normal washing half the liquid per wash.
- The liquid from the second wash I don't divide and use the whole lot for one wash.
- The 3rd lot of liquid I use for towels and things that need a light wash.
- I got the recipe instructions from a Facebook post but I can't remember who it was.



Karen Hicks

If your life seems full of darkness, look and see if it is you who is blocking the light.

Life is simpler than you think - take the time today to enjoy something simple but wonderful in your life that normally goes unnoticed.

Thought I would send you this recipe for home made **disinfectant cleaner**. It can be used on counter worktops.

How to make a disinfectant spray

1/2 Cup Witch Hazel

1/2 Cup Water

15-20 Drops Lemon essential oil

10 Drops Eucalyptus Oil

10 Drops Tea Tree Oil



Which Hazel



Tea Tree

In place of the witch hazel, you can use white vinegar.

I like witch hazel because I think it smells nice.

Combine all the ingredients in a spray bottle, shake it up and you are ready to disinfect.

Karen Hicks

Some comments from our readers:

November/December 2023 - A good and interesting calendar, as always. It's always beautifully laid out, with good pictures and clear graphics. I hadn't realised you supported three charities – very active you are!

Rosemary Ruston

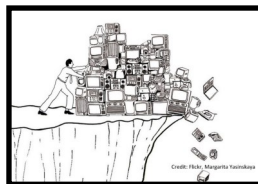
Just a word to say I much appreciate your keeping me so thoroughly in touch – the calendar and other messages are read with great interest. Much amused by the tin of rice pudding at the front of the pile (Harvest 2023 picture), labelled as essential. Aged ten, in September 1940 I was shipped out to relatives in Newfoundland who were told, accurately, that if I made a fuss over anything, rice pudding was the only item I really couldn't stand – and happily my trans-Atlantic guardian had exactly the same view of it! Paul Harvey

Everything happens for a reason, but we don't always need to know what that reason is. Enjoy the surprises as your life unfolds.

Services for October, November and December 2023

22nd October 2023 Rev Margaret Kirk led the service on the theme of “Want, Find, Purchase, Consume”

Margaret opened her service with the following words by Jacob Trapp:



Religion as a set of right beliefs
And right observances
become divisive and abused.
Religion as walking with others,
listening to others, sharing with others,
is not a creed but a way of life.
To be religious is to be grateful
for the much we are given
and to give in return as much as we can.
Religion is a way of life
with sympathy, responsiveness,
reverence for sacred potential,
respect for another,
for mother earth and all her creatures -
A way of life makes beautiful.

Margaret's readings were from “Consumerism is bad for your health (and the planet's)” by Bob Janis - from Cherishing the Earth, Nourishing the Spirit and a Sonnet by William Wordsworth “The World is Too Much with Us” We sang Let us renew our covenant, Spirit of Earth, What shall we say to them and Spirit of Life.

29th October 2023 Dr Barry Thomas led the service where he asked us to comment on a number of paintings and drawings.

1.



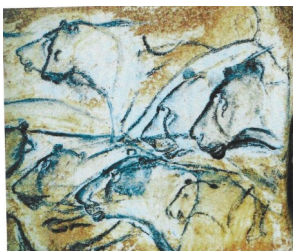
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3



4.



5.

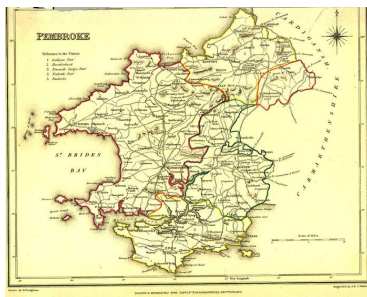


We sang 76 Immortal, Invisible, 50 Gid of every stone and pebble, 213 Where science serves and art inspires, 287 The Day Thou Gavest. We had 5 people in the chapel and 2 on Zoom

1. Portrait of Ruth Bromberg - Frank Auerbach 1994
2. Saskia Asleep in Bed Rembrandt circa 1635
3. Self Portrait Tracy Emin
4. The Panel of Lions Chauvet Caves circa 30,000 years ago
5. Heads of Two Apostles Raphael circa 1517

5th November 2023 Hazel & David Warhurst led the service

100th Anniversary of irf (International Religious Fellowship) and the oldies reunion week in Wales. They showed slides of the various places they visited during their stay, of people and the service. We sang 33 Enter Rejoice and come in, 143 Die Gedanken Sind Frei, 198 For the Healing of the Nations, 148 Spirit of Life.



12th November 2023 Rev Victor Ball led the service and we sang hymns 79 For All The Saints, 227 Sing your Country's Anthem, 229 One World This, 171 What Love Can Do and 314 Let peace encircle all the world. We had 8 people in the chapel and 3 on Zoom.

19th November 2023 Rev Paul Walker led the service with thoughts of the people involved in the recent bombings in Israel and Palestine.

We sang 298 Living and Dying, 229 One World This, 131 Out of the depths I call to you, 193 We laugh, we cry. M Whitham played "Let the world rejoice together" We had 8 people in the chapel and 3 on Zoom.

26th November 2023

Rev Margaret Kirk led a service on the theme of “Further Reflections on Home and Homeland”



We had readings by Terese Mailhot (an Indian from British Colombia). “The land we came from: My people are my homeland” and by Kathy Galloway “Promised Land 11” from Talking to the Bones. We sang 30 Immortal Love; 198 The Healing of the Nations; 226 Song of Peace and 317 Shalom Havayreem.

The Litany was “For Healing The Earth” from UN Environmental Sabbath programme from Earth prayers Ed by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon.

We join with the earth and with each other
To bring new life to the land
To restore the waters
To refresh the air

We join with the earth and with each other
To renew the forest
To care for the plants
To protect the creatures

We join with the earth and with each other
To celebrate the seas
To rejoice in the sunlight
To sing the song of the stars

We join with the earth and with each other
To recreate the human community
To promote justice and peace
To remember our children

We join with the earth and with each other
We join together as many and diverse expressions
of one loving mystery of the earth and the renewal of life. Amen

3rd December 2023 Tree Dressing and Carol service

Cancelled because of snow and ice. Rescheduled for 17th December.

10th December 2023 “Human Rights” Bring and Share service

There were only five of us there for the Human Rights Service and they included Victor and Simon. Margaret W had chosen the hymns including 225 Child of Hiroshima , 223 One faith One hope Undying and 229 One World This and each one of us contributed. Margaret W read from a ‘Hello World’ book written entirely by young people in which a wise 13 year old wrote that she knew the world could not be perfect but there needed to be more tolerance. Without that she could only feel trepidation and concern for her own children.

Jean read of the Young black people’s march in Alabama when 5000 youngsters marched peacefully in support of their rights. Many parents did not want them to take part and the police were known to be unsympathetic. But they set off determinedly towards the lines of police. It was like a miracle when the lines divided and allowed the march to go through to the chosen venue, peacefully making their protest.

Simon spoke about having visited Hiroshima and made us all think again about the total denial of all human rights in bombing and the indiscriminate damage.

We all think we know what Human Rights are but nowhere will you find five neat bullet points which cover everything. There are so many attempts to define them and trying to legislate for all of them is a never ending task.

In the words of the Prayer written by Rev. Cliff Reed ‘we celebrate those who continue to define and establish human rights..... and that we cannot claim for ourselves the rights that we deny to others’

It was a thought provoking and worthwhile service.

Jane Tomlin

Dear World was published in 1978 in association with Oxfam. Teachers and education authorities from every country in the world were invited to participate in the creation of Dear World. The final book is the work of children from over 50 countries. The children were asked to tell adults how they would put the world right.

Every word in the book, and all the drawings, are by the children.

The wise words underneath were written by Cheryl Harris, 13, from Barbados.

I wonder, if she's still alive today, what she makes of the present world we live in.

A world for my children

I ponder sometimes and try to see
Far into the future, what I want to behold
When my children are young. When I am old
How different or indifferent will that era be?

Who can expect everybody to love everyone?
I don't expect it. But what I do expect
Is respect, deep, sincere and true respect.
The proper defence that no man is below or above.

And yet, I don't want a perfect world for my children.
I want a world which they themselves will be able to effect
And shape it to the needs which they themselves select.
With one for all, and all for one prospective end.

I want my children to grow up in a world
Where all at least try to love their neighbour as themselves
Where honesty and peace are not shoved upon the shelves
To grow dusty, disfigured and old.

For every human holds a part of the world in his hands
He helps to deride his own era's future.
He paints but a minute part of the picture
But one blot! And you can't tell sea from land.

17th December 2023 The Tree Dressing and Carol service

was led by the Worship Group.

We opened with the words of John Pickering

"When a child is born"

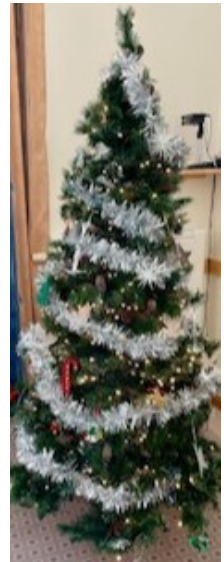
Every child that is born is a child of hope.
Even in the shadows of shattered dreams
Each new life offers the promise of a new tomorrow.
Hope for ourselves, and for the world.

In each new soul our past and future are connected
And a billion new possibilities are born.
Our children are part of us - yet more than us:
They belong to themselves.
The birth of a child is the embodiment of wonder,
And mystery, and hope for us all.
For even a child born in obscurity
Can change the world!

We sang "All are Welcome Here", "Walk in the Light", "Shalom Havayreem",
"Joy to the World" "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Silent Night".

Members of the congregation helped to dress the tree by
putting on baubles and placing Shoeboxes for The South
Tees Mission to Seafarers under the tree. We read
together, as a Meditation, "A Tree of Hope"

A
Christmas
Tree is a Tree
Of hope. A child is
A Tree of Hope. A child
Will grow as a Tree will grow,
Sweet and straight and skyward, if
The climate will have it so. With light
To beckon and love to nourish, a Tree will
Flourish, a child will flourish. If roots may
Feed on the nurture of love, if the light of hope
Draws from above, a child will grow as a Tree
Will grow:
Skyward.



Readings were "May each of us" by Robert Edward Green, "Old Buddhist"
from Celebrating Christmas.

The main part of the service was the lighting of eight candles with readings
on the themes of joy in our lives; the light of truth, wisdom and
understanding; the power of moral action; the nobility of courage; the dream
of freedom; the strength of faith; the vision of hope; and the ultimate value
of love.

We closed with these words

It is good that we set aside a time to remember and a time to celebrate. But
what matters most is that we go forward from this time in our lives in the

light of what we have learned.

The service was followed by the sharing of mince pies, chocolates, tea, mulled wine and happy conversations.

Sunday 7th January 2024 we had a bring and Share service “Looking Forward” . The opening words were taken from The ceremony for the close of the International Year of peace, held in York Minster on December 31st 1986 “There is but one human family; let us live together in peace.”

We sang Come together in love, So Simple is the Human heart, The World needs Love, and let there be peace on Earth. There were five people in the congregation

We had contributions from Margaret Whitham (A Future Not Our Own and a prayer travelling on), Jean Watson (a prayer and a poem for the New Year from the Women's league letter)

A poem for the New Year by Iris Hesseldon

Don't be afraid of the year ahead,
Don't be afraid to begin,
Just open your mind and open your heart,
Let love and hope enter in.
Don't be afraid to let go.
Saying 'Goodbye' to the past.
Seek for a rainbow and search for a star
And keep a few dreams, held and fast.
Don't be afraid to be glad, tears are not only for sorrow,
Welcome the future and step through the year -
Look for the sunshine tomorrow.

Prayer

Divine Spirit of Life and Love, be present with us
at this special time and for evermore.
in this troubled world of wars, disasters, hatred
and extreme poverty may we extend kindness,
compassion and generosity to those who are
less fortunate than ourselves.
And may the peace and goodwill of the Season
prevail throughout the year. Amen

Paul Walker (parents influences on their children) and Jane Tomlin (thoughts on Hope, John Baptist's hope for the coming of the Messiah and the hope of the three Wise Men) Jane also read a poem by Pam Rhodes "Twas the month after Christmas from Tidings of Comfort and Joy.

We closed with the **All Faiths Prayer for Peace.**

Lead me from death to Life from Falsehood to Truth
Lead me from Despair to Hope from Fear to Trust
Lead me from hate to Love from War to peace
Let peace fill our heart, our World, our Universe.
Peace Peace Peace

The Ten Commandments for Reducing Stress

Thou shalt not be perfect, nor even try to be
Thou shalt not try to be all things to all people
Thou shalt leave things done that ought to be done
Thou shalt not spread thyself too thin
Thou shalt learn to say "No"
Thou shalt schedule time for thyself,
and thy supportive network
Thou shalt switch off, and do nothing, regularly
Thou shalt be boring, untidy, inelegant
and unattractive at times
Thou shalt not even feel guilty
Especially thou shalt not be thine own worst enemy,
by being thine best friend

{Source – Hilary Langford – <http://www.thejoyproject.co/>}

Quoted by Ed Fordham in the service in The Old Chapel, Hucklow, during the recent Winter Walking Weekend attended by Hazel and David Warhurst

"How many church members does it take to change a light bulb?" "Whaddya mean change??? That light bulb was given in memory of my Grandmother! My father installed it with his bare hands! He donated his time and the use of his ladder to do it, too! My family's been members of this church for four generations! And if you think you're gonna come here and make a bunch of changes all of a sudden, you've got another think coming!"

Answers to the CHRISTMAS ANAGRAMS

- | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Tinsel | 6. Presents | 11. Ornaments | 16. Festival |
| 2. Greetings | 7. Stocking | 12. Wreath | 17. Rudolph |
| 3. Pantomime | 8. Pudding | 13. Cranberry | 18. December |
| 4. Mistletoe | 9. Decorations | 14. Sleigh | 19. Advent |
| 5. Nativity | 10. Goodwill | 15. Celebration | 20. Reindeer |

10 little church members come to worship all the time:

1 fell out and then there were 9.

9 little members stayed up late;

1 overslept and then there were 8.

8 church members on the way to heaven;

1 took the low road and now there are 7.

7 church members all chirping like chicks;

1 didn't like the music and now there are 6.

6 church members seemed very much alive

but 1 got 'travelitis' and now this left 5.

5 church members pulling for heaven's shore;

1 got disgruntled, and this left 4.

4 church members, busy as can be;

But 1 got his feelings hurt and now there are 3.

3 church members and the story's almost done,

For 2 of them got weary and this left 1.

Now everybody knows that 1 can't do much,

but one brought a friend last month and then there were 2.

2 church members each brought one more.

Now don't you see, two and two equals 4.

4 church members worked early and late.

Each brought one and now there are 8.

Have you got the message, pointed and true?

Come on folks, we've got a job to do.

In this little jingle, there is a lesson true.

You belong to one of the two -

Either the building or the wrecking crew.

Found in *The Community News: The Community Church of New York: Unitarian Universalist* 26 January 1986.

Uni-sing! A Zoom hymn singing group, 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 2024 - Saturdays at 3.00pm - 6th January “Twelfth Night”; 20th January “Spirit, Spiritual, Spirituality”; February 3rd; February 17th “Wisdom” and March 2nd.

Mince pies

These, like Christmas puddings, were originally baked with meat. Typical ingredients were pheasant, hare, pigeon, rabbit, mushrooms, eggs and seasoning. The traditional shape was oblong, to represent the crib, and was surmounted by a pastry figure of Jesus.

Oliver Cromwell prohibited these pies as pagan

frivolities, but when Christmas festivities returned (with the restoration of Charles II) there were no longer pastry figures and the shape became round.

Folklore states that the daily eating of a mince pie from Christmas day until Twelfth Night would guarantee a prosperous year. The famous pie eaten by Jack Horner in the nursery rhyme was a gift from a somewhat nervous Abbot of Glastonbury to his monarch. Deeply worried by the threat of confiscation of his lands, the Abbot entrusted the pie to Jack Horner, his squire. During the journey the young man discovered some title deeds beneath the pastry, obviously intended to sway the king’s resolve. Horner appropriated the deeds and later took possession of the property.

from The Magic Apple Tree by Susan Hall



Silence is a great healer. Let yourself block out the noise of the world from time to time and listen to your inner voice – it will tell you what you need

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.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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

Church Telephone: 01642 671115

New website: <http://stocktonunitarians.co.uk>

facebook: Unitarians in and around Stockton-on-Tees

Twitter now X: Stockton Unitarian Centre

Chairperson and Flower Secretary: Jean Watson - 01642 658376

Margaret Robinson - Secretary and Church News Editor
telephone: 01642 782219 mobile 07799896452

email: margaretrobinson81@gmail.com

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

Worship Committee Co-ordinator: Margaret Whitham 01429 298641

The Worship group meet on Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 10.00am at church, to discuss services for the coming year.

The Church Council meet on both the Saturday 13th January 2024 at 11.30am to discuss the Church Constitution and on Saturday 3rd February 2024 at 11.30am to discuss general church business.

**Deadline for the next edition of Stockton News is
Tuesday 27th February 2024.**

Please send your contributions for the March/April edition to the Editor: Margaret margaretrobinson81@gmail.com

Sunday Services for 2024



Zoom link: 6680459646

Date	Time	Worship Leader
7th January	3.00pm	Bring & Share service "Looking Forward"
14th January	3.00pm	Margaret Robinson "Being Connected"
21st January	3.00pm	Rev Paul Walker
28th January	3.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk
4th February	3.00pm	tba
11th February	3.00pm	tba
18th February	3.00pm	tba
25th February	3.00pm	tba
3rd March		tba

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

If you would like to contribute to the flower fund or buy flowers in memory of a loved one and have your name added to the flower list please let Jean Watson know. 01642 658376

Flowers for January, February and March 2024

7th January	Mrs Pam Price
14th January	Mrs Josie Squires
21st January	Jimmy Lees
28th January	Mrs Smith & Mrs Fish
4th February	Mrs Jean Watson
11th February	Mrs Margaret Whitham
18th February	Mrs Josie Squires
25th February	Mrs Powley
3rd March	Rev Margaret Kirk
10th March	Flower Fund
17th March	Mrs Josie Squires
24th March	Hazel & David Warhurst



Please note all services will be held in the church building.

Most services will also be transmitted via **Zoom**, in a hybrid service. Joining information for Zoom will be sent out through email by the Church Secretary

- Zoom: **6680459646**

margaretrobinson81@gmail.com