

# Stockton Unitarians



**May brings us:** May Day; Two Bank Holidays; Red Cross Week; Red Crescent Day; Ascension Day; Pentecost; Trinity Sunday; Wesak (Buddha Day); Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i); Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i).

**June brings us:** Father's Day; Longest Day and First Day of Summer; Armed Forces Day; SANDS Awareness Month; World Environment Day; World Refugee Day; Shavuot (Jewish); Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Jr; Eid al-Acha 1st day (Feast of Sacrifice) (Islamic).

## Church News

May/June 2024



*Congratulations and Happy Birthday  
to those Celebrating their Birthday*

*March*

**Margaret Kirk  
Jane Aaronson**

*May*

**Hazel Warhurst**

*June*

**Jeffery Bowes  
Jayne Dixon Oliver  
Paul Walker  
Victor Ball**



**Dear Members and friends**

**IMPORTANT**

Do you wish for Stockton Unitarian Sunday services and other activities to continue? If so, could you contribute a little more and/or if you receive a copy of The Inquirer (pay the cost of £37 per annum) or contribute to the cost of the Church News (Calendar) The cost of all utilities (gas, electricity, water) telephone, broadband, printing and postage have increased over the last year.

Margaret Robinson, Church Secretary

**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: 14th and 28th May, 11th and 25th June 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.



# Stockton Unitarians AGM

## (Annual General Meeting)

All **members** please attend, this is your chance to vote on:

- Annual Accounts
- Church officers
- Committee members
- Changes to the Constitution
- Choose the Church charity for 2024/2025



Put this date in your diaries:

**Sunday 30th June 2024**

following the 6.00pm evening Membership service



**NORTHERN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION (NUA)**

NUA Annual Meetings (including AGM)

**Saturday 28th September 2024**

**Speaker:** Vince McCully

Past President (2023-2024) of the General Assembly of  
Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

**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](mailto:louise.rogers256@gmail.com)

see [facebook.co/groups/ 687366168770017](https://facebook.co/groups/687366168770017)

**Sessions 2024 - Saturdays at 3.00pm - 4th and 18th May, 1st and 15th June., 6th and 20th July**

## Sunday services reviews for February, March and April 2024

### **The 25th of February service was led by Rev Margaret Kirk on the Theme “A Perennial Theme — Living with Meaning”**

Margaret gave us the story of ‘The Auction’. A soldier's life was saved by another soldier, who was shot in the back as he was carrying him. The survivor did not have very much, but could sketch. He drew a likeness of his saviour and gave it to the dead soldier's father, who proudly placed it in pride of place above his mantlepiece, surrounded by many valuable paintings.

When the father died, his estate, including the drawing of his son, paintings and property were put up for auction. At the auction, the auctioneer put up that drawing first and asked for bids. People started moaning and complaining, saying they had come to bid on the valuable paintings. The auctioneer explained that he was instructed to sell the drawing first. Eventually a hand at the back of the room went up and offered £10 for the drawing. He was the poor gardener of the estate, who had known the son all his life.

Eventually, as no further bids were received, the auctioneer said that the auction was over and that everything went to the gardener. He had been instructed that whoever bought the drawing would receive also all the paintings and the estate.

We sang “The harvest of truth”, “Scorn not the slightest word”, “Each seeking faith” and “May the road rise with you”.

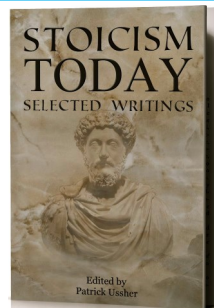
Margaret's other Reading was “Redeeming a Rubbish Dump” by Catherine Robinson (from the Oxford congregation) from “Cherishing the Earth — Nourishing the Spirit” (pages 194-200). A group of volunteers reclaimed a nine acre piece of overgrown land of woodland, meadow, reed beds and wildlife habitats for use by local people to walk in and enjoy nature. This was inspired by the Unitarian principle of “*respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*”

*We had a congregation of eight.*

### **Sunday the 3rd of March service was led by Diana Bebbly on the Theme of ‘Stoicism’**

We sang 'Here we have gathered', 'Blessed Spirit of My Life' 'Let us give thanks and praise' and 'How Wonderful This World'. We had nine in the congregation.

Diana read a poem on Stoicism, gave us the Central Stoic ideas and read the poem 'If'.



"If" is a poem by Rudyard Kipling, written around 1895 and published in 1910. It is a tribute to Leander Starr Jameson and an example of Victorian-era stoicism. The poem is in the form of paternal advice to the poet's son, John, on how to live with moderation, composure, and dignity in the face of life's challenges. The poem suggests that following this advice will make the son a true man.

Stoicism is a school Hellenistic philosophy that flourished in Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. The Stoics believed that the practice of virtue is enough to achieve eudaimonia: a well-lived life. The Stoics identified the path to achieving it with a life spent practicing the four virtues in everyday life: wisdom, courage, temperance or moderation, and justice, and living in accordance with nature. It was founded in the ancient Agora of Athens by Zeno of Citium around 300 BC.

**On the 10th March Rev Victor Ball led the Mothering Sunday service.** We had one person on Zoom and four in the chapel.

We sang "The Beauty of the Earth", "Joy of Living", "Glad that I live am I", "Life's Great Gifts" and 'Guard Us Night and Day'.

Victor gave us the following Readings: 'In Praise of Wisdom' from Proverbs 3: vs13-18; 'Shakti - The Divine Feminine' from the Hindu Scriptures; and 'The Divine Feminine' by Gloria Amendola. We had the Mother's version of the Lord's prayer and a Guided meditation "The Crown of Stars".

Victor spoke about The Divine Feminine, which is a concept that transcends gender boundaries, inviting us to explore the nurturing,

intuitive, and compassionate aspects of our existence.

The Divine Feminine is connected to fertility, birth, and the cyclical nature of life. It is present in the changing seasons of nature, and the cycles of the moon. This creative energy is not just about biological creation, but how we transform ourselves, our families, and our communities. It is the ability to appreciate the beauty of the universe, and the strength to weather its changes.

One of the simplest rituals for connecting with the divine feminine is to spend time in nature.

The Divine Feminine has always existed, although different cultures and spiritual traditions might have different ideas about what femininity means. Here are a few goddesses and figures that show how divine femininity can be powerful, complicated, and ever-changing:

**Venus:** The ancient Roman goddess of passion.

**Pele:** The Hawaiian goddess of volcanoes, who is said to create new life after they erupt.

**Aphrodite:** The ancient Greek goddess of love, desire, beauty, and sexuality.

**Freyja:** The ancient Norse goddess of love, fertility, battle, and death.

**Oshun:** The deity of the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria who is typically associated with water, purity, love, fertility, and sensuality.

**Isis:** The Egyptian goddess associated with healing and protection from this world to the afterlife.

**Guanyin:** The Buddhist goddess (enlightened being) of compassion. She is the female counterpart to Avalokitesvara.

**Durga** (or Devi or Shakti): The Hindu goddess who is the female counterpart to male divinities and is often associated with protection, strength, motherhood, war, and destruction.

**Asase Yaa** (or Aberewa): The great female spirit of the earth in the indigenous religion of the Akan people of the Guinea Coast. She's often associated with fertility, motherhood, and the creation of life.

**Sophia:** A central figure in Gnosticism, who represents divine wisdom and feminine spirit, and is believed to be the female counterpart to Jesus Christ.

## On Sunday 17th March Margaret Robinson led the service on “Celebrating Creation”

Margaret opened with the following words:  
“In the dawn of the day lead us to the garden of life that we might . . . Prune the excess, Root out injustice, Water the wilting, Nourish the withered, Empty the potting shed of poison. And at the eve of the day, rest and wonder at God’s garden..”



Yarm Post box cover celebrating Spring

We had the Bible’s story of Creation, a duologue of the Earth and the Planet Doctor (looking at all the ills the planet is facing).

We sang “Praise God, the World’s Creator”, “The green grass brings the air to life”, “Touch the earth lightly”, “Creator God, your children’s voices rise”, “Our World is one World” and closed with “Evening Breeze”.

The musical interlude was John Rutter’s “Look at the World”, this is the You Tube link if you would like to watch this <https://youtu.be/kxr8QBPq1z0>

Margaret looked at all the ways we could help by making changes to our personal lifestyle. Waste not want not - that’s how many of us were brought up. Let is not throw out, but re-use, re-pair, re-cycle.

We closed with these words from Cliff Reed “Humans are part of the web of life. What we do to the planet, what we do to other species, and what we do to other people, we end up doing to ourselves. As we leave this house with the blessing of the Spirit we have shared. As we go out to walk the green Earth, we remain one body, whether together or apart.”

## Sunday 24th March Rev

**Paul Walker** led the service on the theme of “the circle of life”



Paul looked at birth and death and related this to recent events in his family. Would we like to live for ever? If no one ever died , but we lived for ever, how would you feel. We would get bored and the planet would become overcrowded. We sang “Give thanks for life”, “We laugh, we cry”, “Praise to God, the world’s Creator” and “Winds be still”.

**Sunday 7th April we had a Bring and Share service on the theme of 'Education'**

The service started with the singing of 'I'd like to teach the world to sing' and the opening words "Come into the circle of caring" and the lighting of the chalice with these words "This love that is kindled in the home expands itself over the whole race of man". We sang "Here we have gathered", "Sing in Celebration", "The ink is black, the page is white", "Unfolding life" and "With joy we claim the growing light".

**Education**

For some it is a privilege  
For others it's a right  
The difference between darkness  
And a future that is bright.

Some will think a burden  
Where others see a gift  
The key to moving forward  
And to give your life a lift.

If school is not your calling  
Look beyond its doors  
The world can be a teacher  
Many adventures are in store.

As long as you are learning  
Your education grows  
That will lead to contributions  
As you share the things you know.



## Unitarian Annual Meetings Thursday 4th to Saturday 6th April 2024

### Stockton's delegate, Margaret Robinson, Report

Thank you for the opportunity to vote on behalf of you all.

On **Thursday** the meetings started with Opening Worship (led by 'Unitarians 4 Climate Justice') and the Banner Parade. Then the first of the Business Meetings where the Standing Orders and confirmation of the Steering Committee were adopted. This was followed by a report from the Safeguarding Officer (Gavin Howell), Motion 1 and the Chief Officer's (Liz Slade) Report.

**Motion 1 Artificial Intelligence (AI) from 12 Full members** (this motion was past, with one against and a few abstentions)

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches recognises the rapidly growing significance of automation, algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI) and encourages a balanced response mindful of both substantial benefits and threats. In particular it:

- i. calls upon individual and congregations to study AI, algorithms and their societal impact, encourages Unitarian bodies to host and/or facilitate wider societal and philosophical conversations, and instructs the Executive Committee to urgently launch an AI response Task Group to oversee this process and develop a study framework for it;
- ii. Recognises that injustices, often affecting the already disadvantaged are occurring through automation (AI based or otherwise), and calls upon Unitarians to challenge such injustices wether directly or through support of organisations like the Just Algorithms Action Group.

**The Keynote Speaker** was Roman Krznaric (a social philosopher) on "How can we become good ancestors?" Roman urged us to reconsider our perspective, and, when making decisions, consider what impact we will have on the future, all the way to the seventh generation. What challenges will they face, what world will they live in, and what will they say of us?

On Friday the **Business meeting** had a report on the Unitarian College by Helen Mason (Director), Ministry Stipend Report by Jenny Jacobs, Healthy endings and brighter beginnings (Lizzie Kingston Harrison and Linda Craig) and Motion 2.

Linda Craig from the Decelerator Project spoke about 'Healthy Endings and Brighter Beginnings'. The project aims to "support organisations and individuals to anticipate and design closures, mergers, CEO transitions, programming ends, and all sorts of endings as just part of the everyday life of an organisation and inevitable cycles of change in civic society".

**Motion 2 No More Deaths** from the FOY Society (proposed by David Warhurst and seconded by Tim Baker)

The General Assembly of Unitarian and free Christian Churches:

- a. Affirms its strong support for the NO MORE DEATHS campaign, promoted by the charity Inquest, which urges HM Government to establish a National Oversight mechanism for England and Wales - a new independent public body responsible for collating, analysing and following-up on recommendations arising from inquest, inquiries, official reviews and investigations into state-related deaths.
- b. Instructs the Executive Committee to add the Unitarian General Assembly to the list of supporting bodies for this campaign.
- c. Urges Unitarian churches, districts and individuals in England and Wales to support this worthwhile campaign by writing to local members of Parliament, sharing information about it wherever possible and donating to the Inquest campaign appeal.

Not only deaths in custody, but also deaths of those in mental health facilities or following a missing persons search. After discussions, **the motion was swiftly passed.**

Following a break the next business was the presentation of the 2022/2023 Annual Report by Liz Slade, presentation of the Accounts by Rev Rob Whiteman and Motions 9, 10, 11 and 12. Then GA governance (CIO), and Motions 3 and 7.

**Motion 9** That the report of the General Assembly Executive Committee (accepted) and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and accepted. (accounts not accepted at this stage because the figures were indicative only).

**Motion 10** That Shaw Gibbs be appointed as Auditors (passed)

**Motion 11** That John Bates be appointed **Honorary Treasurer** for the year 2024-2025 (passed by 57 votes for, 6 against and 49 abstentions)

**Motion 12** That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Dr Rob Whiteman for his services as Honorary Treasurer during the year 2023-2024, and to District Associations and local officers for their invaluable services - passed

**Motion 3 Gaza** from Lewisham Unitarians . This motion was postponed, as an amendment had been put forward, and was debated on the Saturday morning

**Motion 7 Honorary membership.** Dorothy Hewerdine was recognised for her contribution to Unitarians in the United Kingdom by naming her as an Honorary Member. This was passed and Dot was presented with a bouquet and she spoke of being a life-long Unitarian.

**Anniversary Service.** The service was led by Rev Rory Castle Jones and The Anniversary Preacher was Rev Ant Howe, "Tell everyone that this is your song: Life calls us on!". Thanksgiving was given for the lives of those ministers and Lay Pastors who had died during the year. A welcome was given to Ministers admitted to the General Assembly Roll, including Rev Arek Malecki. I joined choir rehearsal and sang with the choir in the Anniversary Service. The service closed with these words by Michael A Schuler:

If you are proud of this church, become an advocate.

If you are concerned for its future, share its message.

If its values resonate deep within you, give it a measure of your devotion.

This church cannot survive without your faith, your confidence,  
your enthusiasm.

Its destiny, the larger hope, rests in your hands.

**Saturday** Business meetings had Motions 3, 2, and 8, Report from the Nightingale Centre (Kathryn Breen (Manager) and Mike Tracey, Motions 6, 13. 14, **Presidential Address** by Vince McCully, Motions 16 and 17.

**Motion 3 Gaza** - amended version

"This General Assembly of Unitarians and Free Christian Churches grieves and deplores the recent events in Israel and Gaza, including the actions of Hamas on 07 October 2023 and the subsequent response by the Government of Israel. We call upon the Chief Officer, individual Unitarians and Unitarian congregations to;

a. support generously humanitarian relief efforts in the region through

recognised charities, such as the International Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement and Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)

- b. urge political leaders to pursue an immediate halt to the current conflict; and to seek a lasting resolution to the causes of the conflict based on the principles of justice and the human rights of all those living in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including through the existing and future Resolutions of the United Nations.”

This was passed by 97 votes for, 4 against and 8 abstentions.

A collection was taken for the International Red Cross following this session.

**Motion 4 Unlimited Motions** from Stockton Unitarians, Chorley Unitarians, FOY Society and Northern Unitarian Association (proposed by David Warhurst and seconded by Dot Hewerdine)

That Clause 10 of the Constitution of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches be amended as follows:

**Delete** the following two paragraphs;

“There shall be a maximum of four ordinary motions accepted for debate by the Assembly. There shall be a maximum of one Emergency Motion (except in exceptional circumstances) accepted for debate by the Assembly. In the event that more than four ordinary motions and/or more than one emergency motions are received a vote shall be taken at the beginning of the business meetings to determine which four ordinary and one emergency motions shall be accepted for debate.”

This needed a 2/3rds majority, it was not carried, as there were 43 votes for, 34 against and 28 abstentions.

**Motion 8 Honorary membership.** John and Celia Midgley were recognised for their considerable contribution to Unitarians in the United Kingdom by naming them as Honorary Members.

**Motion 6 Matched-funding.** “The GA Executive Committee, in its capacity as Trustees of the General Assembly, proposed a motion to the General Assembly meetings in 2024: That the Executive Committee and General Assembly staff proactively develop a matched-funding scheme to invest in local leadership.”

This was to be over a seven year period, investing in people, with

collaboration and District involvement. 50% funds from the GA, 40% from Districts and 10% from the congregation. This motion was carried by 82 votes for, 5 against and 11 abstentions.

**Motion 5 Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)** The GA Executive Committee in its capacity as Trustees of the General Assembly, proposes a motion to the General Assembly meetings in 2024:

“That we make preparations for the General Assembly to become a CIO by holding a Constitutional review meeting, to all in the autumn of 2024, this is likely to be held online. Bringing the final proposal to the Annual Meetings in 2025. This was carried.

The President for 2023-2024 Vince McCully gave his final speech after presiding over the Meetings. He then handed over to the President for 2024 to 2025 Geoff Levermore and Jeffery Bowes was appointed Vice-President for 2024 to 2025.

**Workshops** Over the three days there were many workshops to attend with interesting topics, but as there were four choices each time, I was only able to join 7 out of the 21 session. This happens because everything is crammed into one full day and two half days. These are the workshops I attended.

**Social Justice Network's** meeting on “Mental Health in Children and Adolescents - speaker Professor Bernadka Dubicka.

**Unitarian Renewal Group (URG)** on “Embrace the Transformation: Commemorating 50 years of Unitarian Renewal”

**Unitarians for Climate Justice** - a climate-focused People's Assembly on the three themes of Food, Buildings and Investment. We were asked to look at what actions we could take now to protect our planet.

**Music Society (UMS)** - where we sang hymns, chose hymns and researched their composer and lyricist in small groups.

**Worship Workshop** - Rev Erika Hewitt, Minister of Worship Arts for the Unitarian Universalist Association in the United States of America led a session on introducing new and profound ways of worship into our congregations.

**Associate Members' Reception** where the new GA President Geoff Levermore told us how he became a Unitarian.

**Our Social Action Future** - where we looked at the results of the recent Social Action Audit (we were given a paper copy of this). Ann Howell (GA Social Action Officer) asked us how our congregations and the movement as a whole might best combine our efforts to have the most impact.

**The Inquirer** After 19 years of being editor of The Inquirer, Colleen Burns, is moving onto a new job as Media Officer with Survival International, a charity which fights for rights of indigenous people around the world. The Inquirer is also going to move to monthly editions. Margaret Robinson

I received the following letter from Ann Spencer (daughter of Stan Poultney )

Dear Margaret

First of all, I would like to say thank you for sending me the church magazine. I have been mainly housebound for the last 3 years after a bad accident and always enjoy reading it.

I was looking through an old briefcase of my dad's (Stan Poultney) and found these old newspaper clippings about the church. I also came across the photo of a joint outing with Middlesbrough Unitarian church. There is no need to return them and maybe you could use them in a future magazine. Yours truly Ann Spencer



Church outing to Gretna Green.

What year was this and how many people can you name?





Unitarian Church Sunday School pupils this year received their prizes from the mayoress of Stockton, Mrs N E Brown, who is here seen chatting to them before the presentation ceremony.



Stockton Unitarian Church third annual Sunday School party on Tuesday evening.

## MARY THOMPSON FUND EASTER NEWSLETTER 2024

### Drop-ins

Middlesbrough drop-ins are continuing on a monthly basis with up to 60 people at each session who are homeless and destitute. Our friends at The Melting Pot in Stockton, Fiona and Pete, have now retired after 18 years of incredible voluntary commitment to running a drop-in in Stockton and administering our cash support. We wish them both well. Trustees, Kath and Liz are now running the drop-in from Justice First offices.

Thanks to a third year's funding from the Jill and Norman Franklin Trust, and two very generous donations from K Home International, we are maintaining our increased regular payments for our people who are homeless and destitute. We have a benefactor who gives us extra funding to buy fresh fruit and veg each month, and another who has been giving us £500 per month towards our extra ten pounds per week payment. We pay for a hot meal for everyone to take away with them, and buy extra food and toiletries so that everyone can take as much as they can carry. So, despite the huge increase in the cost of food, our supporters have guaranteed that we can continue giving extra support for at least the next 12 months.

As you know, we also make donations to people who are supported and waiting for an asylum decision, and for people who have refugee status and are in hardship. Your generous donations have allowed us to increase the support we give, including school uniform grants and requests for educational and other needs. Via Justice First's outreach advice sessions and a generous donation from DAR (Darlington Assistance for Refugees), we are offering more support to people in Hartlepool and Darlington.

We try wherever possible to acknowledge your kindness whenever we receive donations, but gifts that arrive through CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) are anonymous and although *you* know who you are, unfortunately we don't, and are unable to send a personal thank you. Nevertheless, we want you to know how very much our refugee friends appreciate your generosity.

### Mary Thompson Fund History Walk

A big 'thank you' to those of you who joined our 'History Walk' last Sunday. MTF Trustee, Maureen Hall, led us around the historic landmarks of Saltburn and shared lots of interesting facts and anecdotes with us. Thank you, Maureen. Your knowledge, not to mention your energy, was impressive! Thanks also to the team of bakers who provided such delicious refreshments after the walk. An impressive £136.50 was raised for our funds.



## **Middlesbrough Council Motion**

We are grateful to the elected members of Middlesbrough Council who became the latest of a small but courageous number of Councils willing to put principles before popularity by voting to approve a Motion in support of people seeking asylum, proposed by Labour Members Cllr. Matt Storey and seconded by Cllr Edward Clynych. Both spoke powerfully with conviction and compassion, and many of the other contributors to the debate also gave excellent speeches. These included Cllr. John Kabuye who spoke movingly of his own experiences as an asylum seeker, and how proud he was to now serve as an elected member, giving something back to the community.

The motion outlined Middlesbrough's proud history of welcoming people who are seeking safety and reaffirmed the right of individuals to seek asylum and be treated fairly.

The Council resolved not to co-operate with any Government plans to repurpose facilities to detain people seeking safety, and agreed to sign Refugee Action's 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws Pledge' which has been tirelessly promoted by Jen Laws of Asylum Matters.

### **Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws Pledge**

We believe that people seeking protection from war and persecution should be welcomed and that everyone's claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly. We believe that the UK should offer sanctuary to those who need it. That's why we're taking a stand against the anti-refugee laws.

We pledge to: Defend the right to seek safety from war and persecution in the UK.

Speak out against attempts to criminalize and punish those who make their own way to safety

Challenge the anti-refugee laws which will risk the lives and well-being of people.

Work towards a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion."

**The Motion** was carried to the delight of a group of supporters who were in attendance.

For us, the next step is to urge other local authorities to approve similar motions and adopt the pledge.

Whilst we celebrate small victories, life remains grim for many people across the world. We all share the dismay at events unfolding across Gaza and Ukraine and it would be easy to give up in the belief that there is very little we can do to make life better for the victims of such atrocities.

We would urge you to support initiatives like Fair Trade. Our local supplier, Jenny Medhurst, has a range of goods from Palestine which if purchased will help to ensure that producers can survive. Jenny can be contacted on 01740 630475

### **23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary**

This year marks 23 years since Mary Thompson Fund was established. Thanks to our many supporters, some since the very beginning, we have raised well over £1 million to help our asylum seeking and refugee clients when in hardship. As part of our 23 year celebrations, we are launching a new website (again as our previous attempt wasn't very successful!). This time our website is being set up in-house thanks to our new (*and young*) trustee, Joe Smith.

### **A new home for Mary Thompson Fund**

We mentioned some time ago that Middlesbrough Council gave our sister organisation, Investing in People and Culture, the freehold of the International Centre on Abingdon Road. IPC's renovation plans are now coming to fruition thanks to various grants including the Government's Levelling Up Fund, which was match-funded by the Jill and Norman Franklin Trust. We have been promised plenty of space for our drop-ins where we can have food and toiletries on permanent display, use of professional kitchen facilities, free tea and coffee, space for free haircuts, a shared clothes store and many other activities. We hope to be in by this time next year.

Finally, on behalf of the Trustees, volunteers and clients of Mary Thompson Fund we wish you and your families much happiness over the Easter season, and thank you for spreading that happiness to our clients, who are so grateful for your kindness.

**Mary Thompson Fund c/o Justice First 133 Norton Rd**

**Stockton-on-Tees TS18 2BG**

**Tel: 07419375807**

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

**[www.marythompsonfund.org.uk](http://www.marythompsonfund.org.uk)**

### **Contributions**

Thank you to Ann Spencer and Jane Tomlin for your contributions.

Thank you to Hazel Warhurst for the cover photograph.

I would love to receive contributions from other readers, please send them to me either by email or post. [margaretrobinson81@gmail.com](mailto:margaretrobinson81@gmail.com)

## ***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](mailto: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 8th May 2024 at 10.00am  
at church, to discuss services for the coming year.

**The Church Council** next meet on the Sunday  
**21st July 2024 at 3.30pm** at Church,  
before the evening service

**Deadline for the next edition of Stockton News is the  
25th June 2024.**

Please send your contributions for the July/August edition to  
the Editor: Margaret [margaretrobinson81@gmail.com](mailto:margaretrobinson81@gmail.com)

## Sunday Services for 2024



**Zoom link: 6680459646**

Date	Time	Worship Leader
5th May	6.00pm	Margaret Robinson
12th May	6.00pm	Rev Victor Ball
19th May	6.00pm	Rev Paul Walker
26th May	6.00pm	Dr Barry Thomas
2nd June	6.00pm	Rev Paul Walker
9th June	6.00pm	Rev Victor Ball
16th June	6.00pm	Louise Reeve - Father's Day
23rd June	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk
30th June	6.00pm	Membership service and AGM
7th July	Visit to Whitby for 2.00pm service	<b>No service at Stockton</b>
18th August	6.00pm	Rev Jeffery Bowes GA Vice-President

**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 March 2024

5th May	Mrs Joan Unwin
12th May	Mrs Josie Squires
19th May	Mrs Margaret Whitham
26th May	Rev Victor Ball
2nd June	Mrs Jane Tomlin
9th June	Flower fund
16th June	Margaret Robinson
23rd June	Mrs Powley
30th June	Mrs Jane Jobson



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