

# Stockton Unitarians



Church News  
May/June 2025



Seek that which gives you lasting happiness,  
Rather than momentary pleasure,  
Believe in and look for the good nature in people. . . You will find it.

Learn from your mistakes, but don't be afraid to make them.  
Live each moment by your beliefs,  
but be prepared for your beliefs to change.

**May brings us:** Early May Bank Holiday (5th); **World Laughter Day** (3rd) is a positive manifestation for World Peace and it builds up a global consciousness of friendship through laughter; **V-E Day** (8th); World Red Cross Day (8th); Mental Health Awareness week (12th-18th); FA Cup Final (17th); National Numeracy Day (18th); Spring Bank Holiday (26th); 50th Anniversary of the Dibble Bridge coach crash (27th); Ascension Day (29th).

**June brings us:** Shavuot (Jewish) (1st); Volunteers' Week (1st-7th); World Environment Day (5th); Pentecost (8th); Fathers Day (15th); Trinity Sunday (15th); World Refugee Day (20th); Summer Solstice (20th); Armed Forces Day (28th).

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



*Hazel Warhurst*

*June*

*Jeffrey Bowes*

*Jayne Dixon Oliver*

*Paul Walker*

*Victor Ball*



## Whitby Gazette 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 - View From the Pews

Some of us may have been to see the latest Bridget Jones film *Mad About the Boy* – the third in a series of romantic comedy films which began in 2001 and now, in 2025, at a time when Bridget is in her fifties, widowed with two children, it feels as though it may be the final one.

I was reminded of the writer's debt to Jane Austen, when in a flashback, Bridget recreates a memory of herself newly-wed with her husband playfully referring to each other as Mr and Mrs Darcy. Of course – *Pride and Prejudice* was the inspiration for that name! And this is the 250<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Jane Austen's birth.

Recently, Helen Fielding, the author of the novel *Bridget Jones*, remarked that the voice of Jane Austen is "so strong and funny and perceptive" that writers continue to steal from her. I'm sure that's true and is probably the best reason of all for reading her books. But, I think there's something more enduring about her writing that it's easy to overlook. The main characters she engages with have values that raise them up, for all their imperfections, and leave the mean-minded, class ridden and absurd ones to her comic brilliance.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennett and Fitzwilliam Darcy have to deal with struggles within themselves about their perception of each other: Elizabeth, having been slighted by Darcy early in the novel, continues to use every opportunity to build up a picture of him as arrogant and aloof and with some justification. Darcy, in terms of wealth and status, is much her superior but nonetheless attracted to her good looks, wit and intelligence. He struggles with her family connections, especially her mother's ignorance and the lack of good manners and restraint displayed by her younger sisters.

In one of her diaries Jane Austen writes: "It's very unfair to judge anybody's conduct without an intimate knowledge of their situation" and another entry says "Self-knowledge is the first step to maturity".

### **View From The Pews** (continued)

Both those statements apply to Elizabeth and Darcy. It takes each of them two thirds of the novel to recognise how judgemental they have been. Those values underpin all her major characters' journeys in search of love.

Jane Austen was a devout Christian who wrote prayers that were published long after her novels. Here is one of them:

"Incline us, O God,  
To think humbly of ourselves,  
to be saved only in the examination of our own conduct,  
to consider our fellow creatures with kindness,  
and to judge of all they say and do with charity  
which we would desire from them ourselves.

Margaret Kirk

## **Stockton Unitarians AGM**



The 2025 Annual General  
Meeting of Stockton  
Unitarian Church will be  
held on



**Sunday 29th June 2025**

following the evening service.

Please send reports to Church Secretary  
as soon as possible.

## Service for March and April 2025

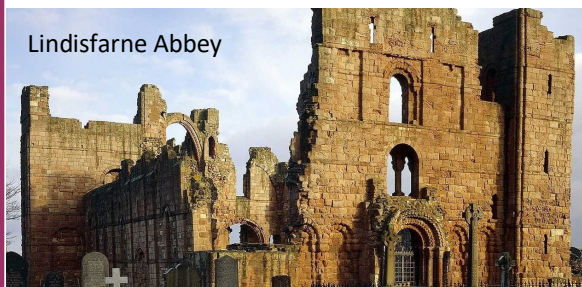
**On Sunday March 2nd Christine Walker led our worship on the theme of St Cuthbert**

We sang "Praise to the great and Famous",  
"Let us sing of earth's progression",,  
"Brother, sister, let me serve you" and "For All The Saints" We had 7 in the congregation

Cuthbert was born circa 634 (about ten years after the conversion of King Edwin of Northumbria to Christianity in 627) and died on 20th March 687 on the islet of Inner Farne

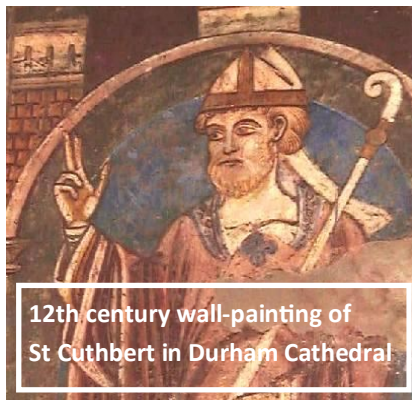
He was born in Dunbar, then in Northumbria, and now in East Lothian, Scotland. The politics of the kingdom were very violent, and there were episodes of pagan rule while spreading an understanding of Christianity through the kingdom was a task that lasted throughout Cuthbert's lifetime.

He decided to become a monk after seeing a vision on the night in 651 that Aida, the founder of Lindisfarne (Holy Island) died. He was made guest-master of the new monastery at Ripon, soon after 655, but had to return to Melrose when Wilfrid was given the monastery instead. About 662 he was made prior at Melrose, and around 665 went as prior to Lindisfarne. In 684 he was made bishop of Lindisfarne, but by late 686 he resigned and returned to his hermitage as he felt he was about to die.



Lindisfarne Abbey

His style of life was austere, and when he could, he lived the life of a hermit, though still receiving many visitors. He is one of the most venerated English saints, who evangelized Northumbria and was posthumously hailed as a wonder-worker. He is the patron saint of Durham Cathedral and is buried there. one of the North East's most beloved saints.



12th century wall-painting of St Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral

**On Sunday March 9th Anne Mills led our worship on the theme of “The Good Samaritan”**

Anne opened the service with the reading from Luke’s Gospel (Chapter 10, verses 25-37) of the Good Samaritan.

Anne’s readings were “What goes around comes around”, The story of “The Lion and the Mouse”, adapted from Aesop; and “Stone Soup”, a Grimm’s fairy-tale, and “Unitarian Worship”.



Anne read the words of a hymn “Unitarian Worship” (to go with the tune of Highland Cathedral) she had written for a hymn writing competition, which she won. But can be sung to alternative tunes.

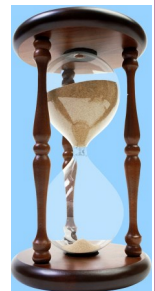
The musical interlude was “Highland Cathedral” played by Andre Rieu (a Dutch conductor) & His Johann Strauss orchestra with a Scottish pipe band (a woman on the bagpipes) playing a piece of music written by two Germans (Ullrich Roever and Michael Korb) in order to evoke Scotland for a German Highland games in 1982.

We sang “Ours is a town for Everyone”, “Justice for persons”, “Here I am, all alone” and “Our world is one world”. We had eight people in the congregation (including Ann’s husband Roger) and three people joined us on Zoom.

In her sermon, Anne gave us a number of examples of present day Good Samaritans. One man was on his way to give a talk and had a large amount of papers in his boot, but the boot had sprung open and the papers had blown out. On his return journey he found his papers in neat piles at the roadside for him to retrieve.

**On Sunday March 16th Rev Paul Walker led our worship on the theme of “Time”**

The Chalice lighting words were: “The time for action is now. It’s never too late to do something.” Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900-1944). Paul had readings from Ecclesiastes Chapter 3: “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a





time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.“

Time is the continuous progression of existence that occurs in an apparently irreversible succession from the past, through the present and into the future. It is a component quantity of various measurements used to sequence events, to compare the duration of events (or the intervals between them).

Paul spoke about various ways of looking and speaking about time, thinking about stars and planets we see in the sky.

We sang “We are travellers on a journey”, “Ground, it’s time for your rebirth”, “The Eternal Now” and “O God our help in ages past” There was a congregation of 8 in-person and 4 people joined us on Zoom. Paul played the theme music from “Dr Who” . In the fictional universe of the Doctor Who television show the Doctor can travel through time using a “dimensionally transcendental” machine, the TARDIS, and make changes to the past as and when he likes.

On Sunday 30th March the service was led by the Worship Group. The Chalice lighting was by Claudene Olivia and the prayer was by Kathleen Rolenze, and we had the Mother’s version of the Lords’s prayer. We had the following readings: “My Many Mothers” by Vanessa Rush Southern,

“Honouring the Bouquet of Our Mothers” by Judy Welles. We sang Give thanks for life, Lady of the seasons laughter, Thanks be for these, Sleep my child and From you I receive. We had six people in the chapel and two people on Zoom. We had a few contributions from the congregation including the following Mothering Sunday reading by Cliff Reed:



Well Mum, It's many, many years since you left us for paradise.  
If such a state of blissful being really exists, there is no one more deserving  
to have entered it than you  
The world has changed, the family has changed,  
since that sad April day when we lost you.  
I remember your face, I have photos to remind us; I remember your words,  
but I can't quite recall your voice - once so familiar, so every-day,  
but unheard for so, so long. The memory must be there, but I can't reach it,  
can't unlock it from its oubliette.  
But I remember your love, I remember your gentleness;  
I remember your chips, your cakes, your Sunday lunches  
and your Christmas dinners.  
I remember how fiercely you defended us if we were threatened.  
I remember, too, times when we hurt you with our thoughtlessness  
and ingratitude - but it was never because we ceased to love you,  
We never did, we never have.  
And love is all we can send you now, so many Mothering Sundays since you left.  
  
At the close of the service everyone was given a small bunch of daffodils.

**On Sunday 6th April** we sang: Earth is a gift, The sun at high noon, Give thanks and  
All creatures of our God . We had two visitors, plus seven members of the congregation. As Barry Thomas was unable to take the service as planned we sang the hymns he had chosen and Margaret Kirk chose a couple of appropriate readings and prayer.

**On Sunday 20th April 2025 the Worship  
Group led the Easter service**

"[God] has written the promise of the resurrection not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime." —Martin Luther





On this Sunday when Christians celebrate easter, may we open our hearts and minds to all of the “spring-inspired” truths our human kind have found and that we, and our world, so desperately need to hear. These were our opening words. We had readings about: ‘How Easter got its name’; ‘Easter Eggs’, ‘The Easter Donkey’; ‘Winter’; ‘Jesus’ and ‘The Story of Our Lives’. We sang: ‘Spring has now unwrapped the flowers’, ‘There hides within the lily’, ‘Thou whose love has given us birth’, ‘Creative love, our thanks we give’ and ‘With joy we claim the growing light.’ Our closing words by Samuel McChord Crothers were;

As we leave this hour together Let the horizon of our minds  
Include all people The great family here on earth with us;  
Those who have gone before And left us the heritage  
Of their money and their works; By what we do  
And those whose lives will be shaped By what we do or leave undone.

### **Patricia Margaret Wilkinson**

We are sorry to say that Mum died on 21st April 2025. We had been told she had a short time left, and it went beyond most of our expectations that she lasted as long as she did - characteristically tough of her. She died very peacefully, with Janet by her side, and we had all got to say our goodbyes to her many times over.

Mum specifically requested not to have a funeral, but we plan to arrange a celebration of her life shortly. I shall be in touch with more details of this shortly.

Colin Wilkinson

Stockton Unitarians send their loving thoughts and prayers to all the family at this difficult time. We particularly remember Pat and her hard work with the Children’s Saturday Morning Group and her regular support for Pete’s Pantry.



## Congratulations Harry Warhurst

Hazel and David are pleased to share the news that their 14 year old grandson, Harry, has just signed a two year contract to train with Bristol Rovers U15/U16s. He was offered a trial in February, training three times a week with matches on Sundays and the contract is as a result of the hard work he has put in during those 8 weeks. Harry has been playing football with local team, Keynsham Town, since the age of 7. Dad Keith wanted to support the local club so he began training as a Coach. Keith has given up many weekends to encourage the local youngsters to get involved in the game. He builds the teams working on the principle that every child who comes to the sessions deserves a chance to play in a match – not just those who seem to show the most talent. We are proud of them both.



### Stockton Unitarians Coffee Mornings

**Saturday from 10.00am till 11.30am**

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



**Stockton Unitarians Church Council next  
meet on Sunday 18th May 2025 at  
3.30pm, Agenda items to Secretary  
please. Remember to bring a snack**



## Unitarian Transformers

Exploring Spiritual Connections

A programme of spiritual and education that builds community and supports and encourages new and existing Unitarian fellowships. The education programme follows the Unitarian ethos that we are all free to explore our own beliefs and views on life. The values of respect, tolerance and compassion towards others are reflected in the activities offered. The three main offerings are:

**Early years:** video stories, together with a lesson plan for use in home or school setting. **Transformers:** a youth programme for 5-10 year olds,.

**Transforming Lives:** A cross-curricular schools programme for years 3-6 about making a difference in a small, or big, way.

**Ministry** They assist small or new groups to develop a Unitarian spiritual way online that supports in person and online gatherings.

### Connections gatherings with Unitarian Transformers — online

Each Wednesday at 7.00pm Connections gatherings: a place for those outside Unitarianism to experience it from a particular direction, such as Hinduism, Unitarianism, Spiritual not Religious and Eco-Spiritual.

**1st Wednesday 7pm** Hindu Connections

**2nd Wednesday 7pm** Unitarian Connections

**3rd Wednesday 7pm** Spiritual not religious Connections

**4th Wednesday 7pm** Eco-Spirituality Connections.

[unitariantransformers.org.uk](http://unitariantransformers.org.uk)

**Facebook:** @unitariantransformers

**YouTube:** @unitariantransformers7359

**Instagram:** @unitariantransformers

**Contact:** [infor@unitariantransformers.org.uk](mailto:infor@unitariantransformers.org.uk)

Supported by the Wood Green Trust & Manchester District

## Deadline for the next edition of Church News is the Wednesday 25th June 2025

Please send your contributions for the July/August 2025  
edition to the Editor: Margaret Robinson

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

## Congratulations

### **Captain Dannielle Davies, Royal Engineers, on your MBE**

A proud moment for the Whitham family. Danni received her MBE on 20th April 2025 from Princess Anne at Windsor Castle.

Danni's work has directly led to practical improvements for female Junior Soldiers and service women, and cultural changes across the Army.

While working as an Operations Officer at the Army Foundation College (Harrogate) (AFC (H)) Captain Davies seized the initiative to identify opportunities to enhance the experience of service women at AFC (H).

On learning of her award Captain Davies said she was 'shocked, thankful and proud'.

"I am incredibly grateful for all the support that was given to me at the Army Foundation College," she said.

"That collaboration from the chain of command and respective experts in each field magnified the impact of our work.!

Captain Davies citation said "Her Hygiene in the Field Standard Operating Instruction helped improve professional outcomes for service women during field training and was rapidly shared across the Army and Defence.!

She also led a specialist approach to injury prevention, providing additional training on specific functional movement to the young female trainees helping them avoid injury.

Captain Davies said: "The most enjoyable part was the opportunity the College presents to young people, you see a distinct change in the Junior Soldiers' bearing and confidence by the end of their training. The pride you see in the Junior Soldiers at their Graduation Parade is so rewarding."



## Paul Dean Adshead Harvey, 1930-2025

Paul Dean Adshead Harvey died peacefully after a short illness on 11 April 2025 at the age of 94 at Bowburn Care Home, County Durham.

Paul Harvey was born 07 May 1930 in London, living in Kennington until the age of 10. In 1940, to escape the war, he was shipped across the Atlantic and lived with relatives for three formative years in Newfoundland. Returning to the UK in 1943, Paul was educated at Warwick School until 1948. Rejected for National Service, Paul worked on a farm in Warwickshire in 1949, and on a citrus plantation near Marrakech in 1950. At St John's College, Oxford, Paul read Modern History (1950-53), and then worked as Assistant Archivist in the Warwick County Record Office (1954-56). In 1957, Paul was employed as the Assistant Keeper in the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum, where he worked until 1966, and where he met his future wife and fellow academic, Yvonne Crossman, whom he married in 1968. While employed at the British Museum, Paul also studied for his D.Phil at St John's College, Oxford, researching English medieval agrarian history; he attained his doctorate in 1963.

Academically, Paul developed, in his own words "three strands of interest- in archive preservation, in medieval social and economic history, and in the history of maps". In 1966, Paul and Yvonne moved to Southampton, where Paul worked as Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in medieval social and economic history at the University of Southampton. In 1978, Paul took up a chair as Professor of Medieval History at the University of Durham, working there until retiring as Professor Emeritus in 1985. Paul's retirement was only a technicality: he continued to publish, attend many conferences, and teach part-time, developing a great interest in the history of sigillography, and continuing research in medieval cartography. From among his over 100 publications, Paul was especially proud of his works: *Manorial records of Cuxham, Oxfordshire, circa 1200-1359* (1976); *The history of topographical maps: symbols, pictures and surveys* (1980); *Mappa mundi: the Hereford world map* (1996); and *Medieval maps of the Holy Land* (2012). In 2003, Paul became a Fellow of the British Academy, adding to his memberships and fellowships of numerous other institutions.

Paul and Yvonne had no children, and Yvonne passed away in 2014. Paul continued to be academically active until 2020 and lived independently in Durham until 2024. Following his wishes there will not be a funeral, but memorial gatherings to celebrate Paul's life are being planned in Durham and London in the coming months.

Stockton Unitarians enjoyed services led by Paul over many years.



# The importance of the Stockton & Darlington Railway

Why commemorate its 200th anniversary in 2025

**Wednesday 14 May**

**Stockton Reference Library, 10.30am - 12pm**

In this talk Caroline Hardie will outline what is so important about the Stockton & Darlington Railway and why has the country (and the world) commemorated it every fifty years since it opened in 1825. And, looking to the future, Caroline will ask what happens after 2025?



**Free, booking essential**

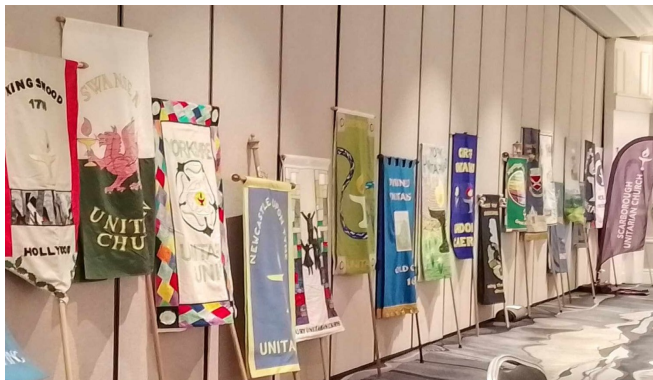
Book at your nearest library or scan to visit  
[www.stockton.gov.uk/libraries-sdr200](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/libraries-sdr200)



Stockton-on-Tees  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



2025 GA Annual Meetings—some of the Church and District Banners  
These were paraded both during the Opening and Closing Ceremonies



Your emotions are like an onion; there are lots of tiny layers and only when you have peeled each one away can you get to what is going on inside.



### **I have taken the time**

I have taken the time to work, because this is the means to success.  
I have taken the time to think and meditate,  
because this is the source of wisdom.  
I have taken the time to love and be loved,  
because this is the way of the Gods.  
I have taken the time to play, because this is the secret of youth.  
I have taken the time to read, because this is the foundation of knowledge.  
I have taken the time to dream,  
because this connects my life to the magical realm.  
I have taken the time to make friends, because this is the road to happiness.  
I have taken the time to look around me with curiosity of a child,  
because in this lies eternal youth.  
I have taken the time to laugh, because this is the music of the soul. Anon

**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: Saturdays 3.00pm (open 2.30pm)**

**3rd and 17th May, 7th and 21st June, 5th and 19th July 2025**

### ***CHURCH DIRECTORY***

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

**Church website:** <http://stocktonunitarians.co.uk>

**Church 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 07799 896452

**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

# Sunday Services for May and June 2025

**Zoom link: 6680459646**



Date	Time	Worship Leader
4th May	6.00pm	NO service
11th May	6.00pm	Rev Victor Ball
18th May	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk
25th May	6.00pm	Bring and Share service "Time"
1st June	6.00pm	Hazel and David Warhurst
8th June	6.00pm	Rev Victor Ball
15th June	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk
22nd June	6.00pm	tba
29th June	6.00pm	Rev Paul Walker
6th July	6.00pm	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**

## Flower Rota for May and June 2025

11th May	Josie Squires
18th May	Margaret Whitham
25th May	Victor Ball
1st June	Jane Tomlin
8th June	Flower fund
15th June	Margaret Robinson
22nd June	Mrs Powley
29th June	Jane Jobson
6th July	Flower fund



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)**