

Stalybridge Unitarian Church is a
Free Christian Congregation.

A member of The East Cheshire Union of Unitarian and
Free Christian Churches.

A member of The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free
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THE CHALICE

STALYBRIDGE UNITARIAN CHURCH
MAGAZINE

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THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE IS SPONSORED
BY MRS MARGARET BARR
IN MEMORY OF
REVEREND F. W. BARR

MINISTER'S LETTER



Dear Friends

I am writing this letter before departing on my latest visit to Italy but should be back by the time you read it. This time I will be spending a few days in Rome to plan ahead for a visit with a group of ministers this October and looking a little further ahead to another large congregational group in October 2009. On this visit however I will also be taking some holiday time and visiting Pisa, Cortona and Assisi.

One of the places I am most looking forward to visiting is the Basilica of St Francis in Assisi. The Basilica was built shortly after the death of Saint Francis in 1223 and his tomb is located in the crypt and has been an important pilgrimage site for many centuries. The Basilica is one of Italy's major shrines and a jewel of mediaeval art and architecture. You may remember that a few years ago it was severely damaged in an earthquake so it will be interesting to see the results of the painstaking restoration work.

There are many stories about the life of St Francis but one of the most famous is the occasion when he tamed a wolf that was terrorizing the people of Gubbio. The wolf was so ravenous that it was not only killing and eating animals but people too and the people became afraid to leave the city walls. Francis took pity on the people and the wolf as well and decided to go out and meet the wolf. A brave friar and several peasants accompanied Francis outside the city gate but soon the peasants became terrified and went back.

Francis and his companion began to walk on. Suddenly the wolf, jaws wide open, charged out of the woods at them. Francis made the Sign of the Cross toward the wolf who immediately slowed down and closed its mouth. Then Francis called out to the wolf: "Come to me, Brother Wolf. I wish you no harm." At that moment the wolf lowered its head and lay down at St. Francis' feet, meek as a lamb. St. Francis explained to the wolf that he had been terrorizing the people, killing not only other animals, but humans as well. "Brother Wolf," said Francis, "I want to make peace between you and the people of Gubbio. They will harm you no more and you must no longer harm them. All past wrongs are to be forgiven."

The wolf showed its assent by moving its body and nodding its head. Then to the surprise of the gathering crowd, Francis asked the wolf to make a pledge. As St. Francis extended his hand to receive the pledge, so the wolf extended its front paw and placed it into the saint's hand. Then Francis invited the wolf to follow him into town to make a peace pact with the townspeople. The wolf meekly followed St. Francis.

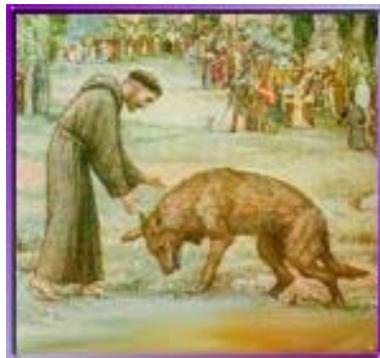
By the time they got to the town square, everyone was there to witness the miracle. Then he offered the townspeople peace, on behalf of the wolf. The townspeople promised in a loud voice to feed the wolf. Then Francis asked the wolf if he would live in peace under those terms. He bowed his head and placed his paw in Francis' hand as a sign of the pact.

From that day on the people kept the pact they had made. The wolf lived for two years among the townspeople, going from door to door for food. It hurt no one and no one hurt it. Even the dogs didn't bark at it. When the wolf finally died of old age, the people of Gubbio were sad. The wolf's peaceful ways had been a living reminder to them of the wonders, patience, virtues and holiness of St. Francis. It had also been a living symbol of the power and providence of the living God.

It's a wonderful story which no doubt partly explains why St Francis became such a popular saint in past centuries, but even in our more sceptical times Francis remains an attractive and very popular figure. He is remembered for his love of nature, his references to "Brother Sun and Sister Moon" and his preaching to animals, and in our ecologically conscious age this holy man from the 13th century is admired as being "ecologically correct" by both Christians and non-Christians alike.

Wishing you every blessing

Andrew



WARDENS NOTES

For the last two weeks it has been difficult to avoid the Beijing Olympics. I don't seem to have watched TV as much as usual (and I certainly did not watch the ridiculously expensive opening ceremony) but the events I watched were both exciting and inspiring. The athletes in all sports give up at least four years of their lives to prepare themselves for this sporting spectacle. The cynic in me tells me that some of them are in it for the wealth that will come their way as winners of certain events, but I also realise that a lot of the athletes simply want to win, and sometimes it is the athletes from more minor sports that seem to get more enjoyment from their success.

Whatever sport or event they take part in they have to be 100% committed to it, it is impossible to win an Olympic medal without a great deal of effort and a great deal of commitment.

Commitment is something that seems to be in short supply these days. Big organisations are not committed to their employees as their staff become numbers rather than people. Politicians are not committed to the well being of the country or the borough. Their first aim is to make sure that they are in a comfortable position themselves, only after that do they start worrying about us.

Commitment is important in all walks of life. The old saying "if a job is worth doing it is worth doing properly" is just as important today as it ever was.

If we want our church to continue to grow then we must all be committed to its future. We have to support it at every opportunity. Faith is not something that we can simply dip our toe into when the fancy takes us; it must be something that we think of and work on all the time.

Whether we are new or old members of the congregation we all owe a lot to Stalybridge Unitarian Church and Sunday School. It provides us with a spiritual home where we can practice our Liberal Christianity in absolute freedom without fear or hindrance. A lot of people suffered and worked hard to give us this religious platform and we must never forget that.

We must ALL be committed to the future of our church. Not only do we owe this to our predecessors but we also owe it to the generations still to come.

Ken Howard



Rome October 2009

I am in the early stages of planning for a group visit to Rome in October 2009. As on previous trips I will act as your tour guide for the week and there will be a programme of visits to places of interest for each day. Accommodation will be in single (limited availability) or twin en suite rooms in a religious guest centre somewhere in Rome. Location will depend upon the number of single rooms needed. It is unlikely that we will be able to stay at Fraterna Domus where we have stayed before.

In order to avoid the early morning outward flight which we have had to endure on previous visits I am investigating the possibility of flying out on a Sunday - the only day the airlines operate an afternoon flight from Manchester to Rome. That would mean that in order to have a full Sunday in Rome we would have to stay eight nights. Just to give a (very) rough indication of cost, the flights are usually about £120 (return) and the eight nights accommodation including evening meals will be about £380 per person in a twin room and £440 per person in a single room. Prices may increase between now and then (they are not fixed on booking the rooms) and are also affected by the exchange rate but this has not caused a problem in the past.

There has been an excellent response after the announcements in church and there are already more people wanting to go that there will be places available. Early in September I will write to everyone who has expressed an interest and ask for a firm commitment. If there are still more people than places first priority will be given to people who did not come on the 2008 trip and if that doesn't do it we will have to draw lots! One thing to bear in mind when committing yourself to come along - this trip will be in early October and the weather will be at least as hot or perhaps even hotter than it was in May.

Andrew

FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL GROUP

I hope you have all had a good summer despite it being autumn weather. Now that we have all had a little break from church activities, we are starting again building up to (dare I mention it already) Christmas. While we are on that subject, the Christmas Bazaar this year will be held on Saturday 8th November starting at 11 am. Please put the date in your diaries to ensure we have a good turn out.

Margaret Hallsworth has a diary on the go in which anyone can write their name on a day (provided it is free) and if that date is drawn out at the bazaar, then you will win a cash prize to help towards your Christmas celebrations. Please get in touch with Margaret if you want to take part and haven't had the chance to do so yet. There is no limit as to how many days you can have!

We have arranged our next few whist drives. First of all, our September one will be held on Friday 5th September starting as usual at 7.30 at church. Please come along, whatever level you play at – you will be more than welcome. We pay £2 for whist and have refreshments and a few prizes for that. Our October whist drive will be held on Friday 3rd October, same time, same place and the November one will actually be held on Friday 31st October, this is so we don't clash with the bazaar.

We hope to be holding a harvest supper on Monday 6th October following the Harvest Service the day before. If you wish to come along please put your name on the notice on the notice board. The cost this year will be £5.00.

Following the success of it last year, we shall be holding a Christmas party this year on Friday 5th December. There will be a notice up for this in the near future, so please look out for that and put your name down if you wish to come. We had a good time last year, so hopefully it is something to look forward to this year.

We are also proposing to hold another Fashion Night within the next few months, but no date has been finalised for that yet and also a Musical Evening, when you can join in with the singers. We will let you know the dates as soon as they are arranged.

Our next meeting will be held on Monday 22nd September, so please feel free to come along if you think you can help out in any way. It starts at 7.15 and all are welcome.

Sue Howard

LADIES CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY (WOMEN'S LEAGUE)

The meeting in September will be held on Wednesday 3rd at 3pm, when the hostess will be Mrs Margaret Hallsworth. All ladies from the church are of course very welcome.



£1 A MONTH CLUB

The winner in June was no. 59, Amanda Pugh and the winner in July was no. 25 Gina Ullman. Congratulations!

If you wish to renew your membership or indeed join for the first time, please contact me on 0161 344 0942, 45 Church St, Dukinfield SK16 4PR. All cheques must be payable to Stalybridge Unitarian Church.

Beryl Bradbury

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Busy people always seem the ones who understand,
Someone else's problems, and find time to lend a hand.
Yes, we all have problems, but life has often shown,
By overcoming other's woes, we overcome our own.

Letter - Favourite Hymns Service

I would like to thank Ken and Norman for this excellent service which was held on Sunday 19th August. My disappointment is the fact so few of our members attended.

The preparation done and the thought given to the service by Ken was obviously time consuming and should be congratulated.

Again, thank you to Ken and Norman

Beryl Bradbury

Letter - Edith Brocklehurst: An Appreciation

With the recent death of Miss Edith Brocklehurst, aged 95, Stalybridge Historical Society, has lost it's oldest member.

Descended from an old Cheshire family, Edith Brocklehurst, had a deep knowledge of Stalybridge history and it's people. She had clear recall of social, religious and cultural aspects of the life of the town in the early years of the last century. This knowledge she brought to the society from it's foundation in 1961. Edith Brocklehurst's family knew personally the Leeches of Gorse Hall, who were maternal grandparents for Beatrix Potter.

Edith Brocklehurst was the one person who kept alive the Potter link with Stalybridge. She conveyed this knowledge to the author, Jonathan Goodman, when he was writing his book on the Gorse Hall Murder.

Mrs E.A. Wood quoted in The Reporter, 19th June 2008

FLOWERS FOR SEPTEMBER



- Sunday 7th Mr & Mrs Geoff Spiby in memory of The Schofield Family
- Sunday 14th Mrs Peggy Hadfield in memory of Mr Jack Hadfield
- Sunday 21st Mr David Dawson in memory of Mr & Mrs Harry Dawson
- Sunday 28th Mr Bill Atkin in memory of Mrs Margaret Atkin

UNITARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP

Normal activities will resume in September after the August break. All young people are welcome to join us. Work is done revolving around the Minister's talk to the children, craft work is normally involved. Special activities take place around Christian festivals. If you need more information please contact Clare Bullock (01613308872), Ruth Mills or Sue Howard.

STEWARDS FOR SEPTEMBER

- Sunday 7th Don Andrews
- Sunday 14th Stuart Hinchcliffe
- Sunday 21st Tom Whitehead
- Sunday 28th Wendy Maher

Decorating

During September the church ante-rooms will be decorated and the kitchen will be re-furbished. It is hoped that disruption will be kept to an absolute minimum but please bear with us as we carry out this work. CHURCH SERVICES WILL NOT BE EFFECTED IN ANY WAY.

Baptisms

- May 18th Eva Lisette Norton, infant daughter of Rebecca Cross and Michael Norton of Astley Street, Stalybridge. The Minister officiating.
- June 8th Will Robert Fletcher, infant son of Amanda and Martin Fletcher of Wellbank, Stalybridge. The Minister officiating.

Naming Ceremonies

- July 26th Harvey Andrew Clarke, infant son of Gill and Andrew Clarke. Service conducted at the Mere Court Hotel, Cheshire. The Minister officiating. Harvey is the great grandson of Mrs Agnes Rhodes.
- August 3rd Eve Heather-Ann Nurney, infant daughter of Gill and Andrew Nurney. Service in church during the morning service, the Minister officiating.

Funerals

- July 25th Pamela Allott aged 69 years of Apethorn Lane, Gee Cross. Service and committal at Dukinfield Crematorium, the Minister officiating.
- July 29th Alfred Lawley aged 88yrs of Crossfield Close Stalybridge. Service and committal at Dukinfield Crematorium, the Minister officiating.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Fri 5 th Sept:	7.30pm	Whist Drive
Wed 10 th Sept:	7.30pm	ECU Delegates Meeting at Flowery Field
Sat 20 th Sept:	2.30pm	Induction of Rev Jane Barraclough as Minister of Cross Street Chapel
Mon 22 nd Sept:	7.15pm 8.00pm	Fund Raising Meeting Church Committee Meeting
Tues 30 th :	7.30pm	NCUSSU AGM at Mossley
Fri 3 rd Oct:	7.30pm	Whist Drive
Sat 4 th Oct:	10.00am	Harvest Festival gifts received at church
Sun 5 th Oct:	11am	Harvest
Mon 6 th Oct:	7.30pm	Harvest Supper
Sun 9 th Nov:	11am	Remembrance Sunday
Sat 8 th Nov:	11am	Bazaar
Sun 23 rd Nov:	11 am	Ladies Service
Fri 5 th Dec:	7.30pm	Christmas Party
Sun 21 st Dec	2.30 pm	Family Carol and Juvenile Membership Service
Sun 21 st Dec	6.30 pm	Candlelit Carol Service

SEPTEMBER

Wed 3rd	3.00pm	Ladies Society monthly tea
Friday 5 th	7.30pm	Whist Drive
Sunday 7 th	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG
Wed 10 th	7.30pm	ECU Delegates Meeting at Flowery Field
Sunday 14 th	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG
Saturday 20 th	2.30pm	Induction of Rev Jane Barraclough as Minister of Cross Street Chapel
Sunday 21 st	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG
Monday 22 nd	7.15pm 8.00pm	Fund Raising Meeting Church Committee Meeting
Sunday 28 th	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG
Tuesday 30 th	7.30pm	NCUSSU AGM at Mossley