



# **THE WAKEFIELD UNITARIAN**

**The Newsletter of Westgate Chapel, Wakefield**

**Telephone 01924-373307**

**website: [www.ukunitarians.org.uk/wakefield/](http://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/wakefield/)**

**Westgate Chapel was opened in 1752.**

**Its congregation was established in 1662 and became**

**Unitarian in view in the eighteenth century.**

**It has taken a leading part in the economic, social,  
educational, political - and spiritual - development  
of Wakefield and its vicinity.**

## **AUGUST 2010**

## **Thought for the month**

At the moment when the members of a religious gathering said, ‘The Holy Spirit is among us’, when they claimed the highest authority and considered the results of their own meditation as more profound than the divine beginning that exists in everyone (that is, the intellect and the conscience) – at that moment a great lie was born. It still traduces the bodies and souls of many people, has destroyed millions of human beings and continues its terrible work.

Leo Tolstoy

## **Services in August, at 10.30am on 1 August, and at 3pm on all other days**

1 August	Stephen Carlile
8 August	Joyce Ashworth
15 August	The Reverend June Pettitt
22 August	Judy Hague
29 August	The Reverend Gillian Peel

## **Rota of Welcomers**

1 August	Ralph Denby
8 August	Nancy Denison
15 August	Pat Howard
22 August	John Goodchild
29 August	Ralph Denby

As always, if you are unable to act as welcomer on the day indicated, you are asked to arrange an exchange.

## **The Westgate Forum, Tuesday 3 August at 10.30am in the Vestry**

The Westgate Forum will meet on 3 August when the topic for discussion will be ‘Care’. For the elderly? For those with disabilities? For one’s home? Our group is small but splendidly focused. Do come.

## **The service on 8 August**

Our visiting preacher on 8 August is Mrs Joyce Ashworth, past president of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. Joyce leads the Congregational Assessment Process on behalf of the Denominational Support Commission. Members will know that your Committee has applied for an Assessment at Westgate Chapel and Joyce will be arranging for a pair of Assessors to come to us one weekend early next year.

## **Looking ahead**

Chapel Committee decided at its July meeting that we should celebrate the harvest festival on 3 October and the Chapel Anniversary on 7 November. The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be after the service on 21 November.

## **More problems caused by the Merchant Gate development**

During his quinquennial inspection, the Trustees' architect, Steve Parry, noticed that the roof of the tunnel under Back Lane had been breached. Further exploration showed that this had occurred during the laying of the new water main. Workmen from Norwest Holst have effected an excellent repair, but we have to wonder why the water company – which must have known of the breach – kept quiet about it!

Whilst work was being done on the trees, a number of flagstones forming the pathway at the side of the drive, were broken. Clegg Construction has undertaken to replace the broken flags with similar, good, ones.

## **How far is freedom a good thing? – The July Forum**

Freedom, we said, might be either a good or a bad thing, depending on how the individual exercises it. Absolute freedom might be very desirable but it cannot actually be practised. We talked about the constraints of the law and of social convention, even simply of good taste, and of the chance matter of where people are born. We talked about the restrictions on individual freedom imposed by a love for others and, in some cases, the necessity to care for others at whatever cost to our own freedom. We talked about the petty restrictions imposed, perhaps unnecessarily, on our freedom, in terms for example of health and safety issues.

We then turned to slavery and to the evils of gang-masters who bring foreigners into the country – whether to pick cockles or as sex slaves – and who permit no freedom whatever. We noted how the love of commercial gain impacts on the freedom of others.

But then, we said, everyone's freedom is curtailed by money – either the need to earn it or the limitations of what we can achieve within our resources.

Each of us taking part in the discussion was enjoying retirement. But did we feel free? We greatly enjoyed the freedom from the routine of employment but we were still pretty busy.

And then we talked about religious freedom and the glory of Unitarianism which allows us, uniquely, freedom of belief and disbelief. But this led to some contrasts between our own worship, and the rituals of more orthodox churches. It was said that they have a spiritual beauty which we do not possess.

Since the matter is so much in the news we turned to the freedom which the present Government plans to allow to schools. This we tended to think was a bad thing. What if bodies such as the British National Party decide to establish schools? We already have modern 'academies' set up by those who promote Creationism.

But we welcomed our freedom to take part in both political and religious debate

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The Unitarian path is a liberal religious movement rooted in the Jewish and Christian traditions but open to insights from world faiths, reason and science, and with a spectrum extending from liberal Christianity through to religious humanism. (Prologue to The Unitarian Path by Andrew Hill.)

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