

I am Janet Poole, a born and bred Unitarian, Lancashire Lass (although the authorities try to insist that I live in Greater Manchester!)

My late parents Lance and Marjorie Taylor, were married at Bank Street Chapel, Bolton, in 1946 and 3 years later when I arrived it was natural that they took me to chapel with them.

So my life of commitment to Bank Street Chapel and Unitarianism began, but not only was I brought up as a child to be a Unitarian, as an adult I CHOOSE to be a Unitarian.

With my two younger sisters, Sheila and Barbara, I attended Sunday School where we were 'Little Singers', Girl Guides and in U.Y.P.L. We also took part in all the fun and competitive activities of the Bolton and District Unitarian Religious and Education Youth Council.

We spent many happy times at Great Hucklow and well remember our early visits staying at the old Children's Home up in the field, with its uncomfortable iron bunk beds and freezing cold water we had to wash in!

The Nightingale Centre seemed like a palace when we first stayed there in the 1980's, when we went with Mum and Dad to the then Family Holiday Conferences, where they were Host and Hostess!

Mum enrolled me and my sisters as members of the Women's League in 1975, but after a couple of years, busy with work and family ties, the WL meetings in the afternoons were not convenient and I was unable to continue my membership. Other young ladies of the congregation were in the same position, but wanting to keep in touch we formed a group who met in the evening and called ourselves 'Mothers and Others'.

Then in 2000, with their members ageing and numbers depleting, the W.L. offered to change their meeting time and work with us, invited us to join them, and the rest as they say is history.

Our Bank Street branch celebrated our 95th Anniversary in September 2015.

After finishing secondary school, I went on to study for my N.N.E.B certificate, and was thrilled when I was appointed as a nursery nurse at Thomasson Memorial School for the Deaf, where I spent 4 very happy years.

I am delighted that the Central Committee has chosen 'The National Deaf Children's Society' as the National Project for my year of office and I urge you all, please, to raise as much as possible (and a bit more!) for such a very worthy cause.

My husband Bill and I have 3 beautiful daughters Kay, Sarah and Nicola and are very proud of the confident, successful young ladies they have become. We also have 2 strapping sons-in-law who are a welcome addition to our family.

Since retiring 6 years ago I now enjoy spending time with Bill. We like to go walking, play bowls, visit the theatre and cinema and have been lucky enough to have had several lovely cruises.

I am very involved in chapel life and have the privilege of being chapel President as well as President of our W.L. branch.

For almost 40 years (next year) I have been a volunteer with 'Contact the Elderly'. First hosting a tea party once a year for our elderly housebound guests and then as a driver, once a month, on a Sunday afternoon.

But, I do like to be busy! Although I really couldn't do all I do without my very supportive family.

Now, I proudly become National President of the W.L. following the lovely Joy who has been a credit to our League during her Presidential year.

Looking back at the list of Past Presidents, I know that I will be walking in some very big footprints. But I promise to do my utmost to live up to the privilege of representing our beloved Women's League as your President.

I am really looking forward to meeting many of you, and visiting your beautiful places of worship, so please invite me to your branches and districts.

In friendship and with love

Janet