

# CHORLEY UNITARIAN CHAPEL

Park Street, Chorley PR7 1ER

FOUNDED 1725

## Newsletter and Calendar of Events



## December 2020



THIS FAITH COMMUNITY RECOGNISES THE WORTH  
AND DIGNITY OF ALL PEOPLE AND THEIR FREEDOM  
TO BELIEVE AS THEIR CONSCIENCES DICTATE.

LET NO ONE BE A STRANGER HERE.

[www.ukunitarians.org.uk/chorley](http://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/chorley)

# From the Chair

a Christmas Greeting from John Hewerdine and his wife Dot.

Dear Members and Friends, we decided to revive our dormant newsletter as Christmas draws closer, even though we will not meet face-to-face in 2020 to sing carols as we usually do over the most significant Christian festival of the year.

Two important roles have changed at Chorley Unitarian Chapel, since our last newsletter. Our cleaner, Thelma, has worked for us on a regular basis for many years. After her husband retired, and then went through a period of poor health, Thelma continued to clean for us until the Covid pandemic arrived. She has now decided not to return to her cleaning job but Lorraine, the neighbour I mentioned, living with her family in the Old Manse, has agreed to take on the work.

Lorraine has also agreed to do some of our gardening. This is much appreciated as Ken Ratcliffe, who has cared for our Chapel garden for many years, and must be ready for a break, has been shielding during the pandemic. Lorraine will now tend the garden with Ken giving a hand when he feels like it. Our thanks go to Ken for all the work he has done for us over many, many years. This is primarily with respect to the garden, but also many odd jobs, like keeping the hedge by the schoolroom entrance attractive and doing lots of other maintenance. Thanks Ken!

Often we are hearing about the effects on mental health which inevitably will be one of the lingering effects of the pandemic. It is something that we cannot, as individuals, measure but occasionally things like recent vandalism on our hall-window make us wonder what long-term symptoms might be affecting individuals within our society. My own experience is that the majority of us are rallying to help each other, at a time when most people in the Chorley area are highly appreciative of their neighbour's support within our local community.

Dot and I have made several new friends recently when personal needs have been anticipated, even when we have felt that, in our case, it might not be necessary. T h i s is even more surprising when incidents like our broken window come along to trouble us. Such incidents remind us of the frailties of human nature.

Many of you reading this will know that I had a cycling accident recently. It's not been a great time for any of us to be taking up hospital beds, but I found myself occupying one unexpectedly. My recent time in hospital was quite revealing. In particular, I was delighted by the patience and consideration of the staff on all three wards I experienced whilst at the Preston hospital.

When I later revisited the location where I had blacked out and fallen from my bicycle I met the assistant manager of the Co-op store opposite. I had great difficulty not flinging my arms around the lady to thank her. I was so grateful for the way she had cared for me until the air-ambulance had arrived. I am now doing well but rather frustrated that I have to wait for further tests before I get clearance to drive, or even ride my bicycle again.

I have been keeping up our connections with Chorley Churches Networking and the Food Bank (thanks to a number of dedicated volunteers) has continued to function throughout the pandemic and has provided food for all those in need. Thanks also go to the Chorley supermarkets who have continued with valued contributions which, together with contributions from the public, have made such a difference during this time of extreme difficulty for all of us. The main feedback from this is, if you (or anyone you know) wants to donate any food products for the Christmas food-handout, please get it to the food store (in the car-park of the Living Waters Church, close to the main Asda in Chorley) as soon as possible. They get very busy close to Christmas.

Another of my chapel duties has been to maintain contact with local inter-faith groups. This has involved contact online with three different organisations, the Focolare Dialogue Group, The Digital Talking Society and the Lancashire Collaborative Ministry.

These meetings have all involved using the Zoom computer app. Several of our members have joined LCM on-line Sunday Services and we have also discovered just how many congregations (both in the UK and America) are holding services and other gatherings. available for anyone to join. It has been a steep learning curve for everyone and I know we are grateful to the folk who organise such facilities and keep us in touch.

Last Sunday, Dot and I were not able to join the LCM for its weekly service because the National Unitarian Women's Group had an on-line service which Dot wished to attend. On-line meetings, like this, often clash with other on-line gatherings. Although they are usually recorded, Dot and I prefer to participate when they are going out live, especially if there is a discussion (often with coffee).

For those of our members who do not have the facility to join in using the internet, services and newsletters are posted (by snail-mail). For Christmas. The Lancashire Collaborative ministry is planning a special service which we hope will be attend by as many of you as possible. This is almost certainly only one of many such events and will take place on Saturday 19th December. We will let you have details of how to access anything else, as times and dates are clarified. For members who don't have the computer knowledge (or the required equipment) we are trying to get family members or friends to help with this. Another way of joining in would be to get a helper to show you You how to find Unitarian Services and other gatherings on Google.

Many congregations are now recording services and meditations. Outsiders are always welcome. Many of them can be viewed on You Tube, soon after they have taken place. Most recently produced television sets can be connected to the internet and will allow you to view this type of on-line material without a computer. Picture and sound quality are also usually far better accessed in this way.

Just to bring a smile to your face before I conclude, a word about our personal family Christmas. Dot and I usually make our own Christmas card. Since we became parents, and now grandparents, we have often included a family group photograph on the front.

Over the summer holidays we have used a family holiday together as a photo-opportunity to take the group photograph. This year of course, it didn't happen so we have asked the various strands of our family to send pictures of themselves. I will have the job of using computer photo-manipulation to paste everyone into the same picture. It might not look very convincing but should be good fun to do.

**Have a Good Christmas and feel free to ring  
any member of The Chorley Unitarians!**

*John*



One of John's pictures from last year.

It won't be the same this coming Christmas as there are four households in this picture



## **FRIENDSHIP**

Friends give hope when life is low,  
Friends are a place where we can go.  
Friends are precious, honest and true,  
I feel so lucky that my FRIEND is YOU.  
Hoping we can all meet up again soon.



## **CHRISTMAS FULFILMENT**      **by Joanna Fuchs**

This Christmas may you have fulfilment of seeing around you the people you love the most.

May you have satisfaction of creating special memories they will remember with pleasure forever.

This Christmas may you feel peaceful and contented, knowing what Christmas means and celebrating it your way.

Let's hope this can happen this year.

Never stop believing in HOPE.

Miracles happen every day.

## **SOMEHOW NOT ONLY FOR CHRISTMAS** **by John Greenleaf Whittier**

Somehow not only for Christmas  
But all the long year through,  
The joy that you give to others  
Is the joy that comes back to you.  
And the more you spend in blessing  
The poor and lonely and sad  
The more of your hearts possessing  
Returns to make you glad.



*Sylvia Merrick*

# HISTORY CORNER

## CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

In the late 1800s Chorley Unitarian Chapel held a Christmas party every year. It was always on Christmas Day except when Christmas Day was on a Sunday. Then the party took place on Boxing Day. Tickets were sold for 6d each and lots of people from the local area attended. Mrs Gillibrand always organised the food. After the party food had been eaten, there was the presentation of prizes to the Sunday School scholars. This was followed by a musical concert and the evening ended with the singing of a hymn.

Every New Year's Eve in the 1940s and 1950s a social evening was held in the School Hall. There would be a hot-pot supper and dancing. This would be followed by a Watch Night Service in the Chapel. Most of the congregation attended with their families and friends.

How times have changed.

## CHAPEL STEPS

Two history information boards have been placed, one at the top and one at the bottom of the steps that lead up from Water Street to Park Street. Chorley Council organised the boards. I am delighted, because they will draw people's attention to the history of the area.

The historical facts on the board at the top of the steps include details about the Chapel and mention Sir Henry Tate, Beatrix Potter and also Charles Lightoller. He was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer on the Titanic and used to live at the corner of Park Street and Park Road. The board at the bottom of the steps explains about their history and also mentions a little about the history of Park Road.

Doreen Jolly





# **We Unitarians Welcome You**

Currently, we meet on-line with open minds in a spirit of freedom, reason and tolerance. We do not all hold the same beliefs and each person's opinions and beliefs are respected. Each will find her or his own spiritual path as we are encouraged to develop our own faith. Members of our Chapel are from different religious backgrounds, proud to meet as a Unitarian Community.

## **Why not hire Our Hall**

*Ater the present lock-down, groups wishing to meet in Central Chorley will be pleased to hear that our premises are available for your use. The hall is a good size and is currently being used by other religious groups as well as for yoga, mindfulness and pre-school activities. Other groups will be welcome. There is free on-street parking in Park Street, by the hall.*

*The premises can be booked by the hour in daytime or evenings and in addition to our good sized hall there is an attractive kitchen and modern handicapped-friendly toilet facilities.*

*Our attractive Chapel is also available and can be utilised by Choir Groups or for Gatherings of an academic nature where the setting is ideal for presentations or other ceremonies.*

*Please ask for further details:*

***John (Chair of Congregation)***

***01257 269502***