



CHALICE -

April 2009

30p

STALYBRIDGE UNITARIAN CHURCH MAGAZINE

FORESTER DRIVE, STALYBRIDGE

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DIARY APRIL 2009

- Wednesday 1st 3 pm Ladies Congregational Society monthly tea
- Saturday 4th 12.15pm Manchester District Women's League Spring Meeting
- Thursday 2nd 7 – 8 pm Stalybridge Arts and Crafts entries received at church
- Friday 3rd 7 pm Other Churches Arts and Crafts entries received at church
- Sunday 5th 11 am Morning Service and UYPG
- Sunday 5th 2 pm Palm Sunday Service at St Paul's Church Sermon preached by Rev Andrew Parker
- Wednesday 8th 7.30 pm ECU Delegates Meeting at Old Chapel
- Friday 10th 9.30 am Good Friday sponsored walk
- Sunday 12th 11 am Easter Sunday Worship and UYPG
- Friday 17th 7.30 pm Desert Island Discs and potato pie supper
- Sunday 19th 11 am Morning Service and UYPG
- Wednesday 22nd 7.30 pm Worship Committee. Your chance to learn the basics of conducting worship. Everyone welcome.
- Sunday 26th 11am Morning service and UYPG
- Monday 27th 7.15 pm Fund Raising and Social Group meeting
- Monday 27th 8 pm Church Committee meeting

MAY

- Friday 1st 7.30 pm Whist Drive
- Saturday 2nd 2.30 pm East Cheshire Union AGM at Old Chapel Dukinfield
- Sunday 3rd 11 am Morning Service and UYPG
- Sunday 3rd 12 noon Stalybridge Unitarian Church AGM after morning service

DIRECTORY

MINISTER: Rev. Andrew Parker Tel: 0161 643 1824 Mobile: 07779 518307	260 Wood Street Langley, Middleton M24 5GL
WARDEN: Ken Howard Tel: 0161 330 1295 ken75howard1@aol.com Mobile: 07703 495140	75 Hutton Avenue Ashton-u-Lyne OL6 6QZ
CHURCH SECRETARY: Beryl Plant Tel: 0161 338 3463	28 Oxford Street Stalybridge SK15 2NX
TREASURER: Mrs Margaret Andrews Tel: 01457 762312	252 Mottram Road Stalybridge SK15 2SU
UYPG CONTACT: Clare Bullock Tel: 0161 303 8872	11 Cedar Grove Dukinfield SK16 5EL
FUND RAISING & SOCIAL GROUP CHAIRMAN: Ken Howard Tel: 0161 330 1295	75 Hutton Avenue Ashton-u-Lyne OL6 6QZ
FLOWER SECRETARY: Mrs Margaret Hallsworth Tel: 0161 330 7072	81 Arundel Street Ashton-u-Lyne OL6 6RH
CHALICE EDITOR Rachel Plant contactrachel@btinternet.com Tel: 07764184022	28 Oxford Street Stalybridge SK15 2NX
ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER Norman Bradbury Tel: 0161 344 0942	45 Church Street Dukinfield SK16 4PR

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 Christian Churches.

A member of The North Cheshire Unitarian Sunday
School Union

A member of The Unitarian Christian Association

**THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE IS
SPONSORED BY
MRS JEAN THOMAS for their triplet
Grandchildren ALICE, CONSTANCE
& JACK SOMORFIELD**

FLOWERS FOR APRIL

5th April	Mrs K. Turner & Mrs S. Howarth in memory of Mr & Mrs George Roberts
12th April	Mr. & Mrs Alan Swift in memory of Mr Edward Robinson & Mr. Frank Swift
19th April	Mrs Liz Griffin in memory of Mr Frank Rhodes & Mr Michael Rhodes
26th April	Mrs K. Bradbury in memory of Mr Norman W. & Mr Noel Bradbury

STEWARDS FOR APRIL

Sunday	5th	Don Andrews
Sunday	12th	Tom Whitehead
Sunday	19th	Stuart Hinchcliffe
Sunday	26th	Wendy Maher

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

I am writing this letter on the first day of Spring but unfortunately, the weather today is not very encouraging. Recently though there have been signs that the weather has started to improve with one or two bright, sunny days that have actually been reasonably warm! By the time you read this the clocks will have changed and we should all be starting to notice a real difference.

As we move into April we will begin the most important week of the Christian year. Holy Week is the week leading up to Easter, and is the week during which Christians particularly remember the last week in the life of Jesus. Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, the day on which we remember Jesus entering Jerusalem in triumph to the cheers of the crowd.

The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, they took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" John 12:12-13

Later in that same week many of the people in that cheering crowd would be among those shouting that Jesus should be executed. Palm Sunday is a day which can help us to think about the strength of our own commitment to our faith. Are we any different from that Jerusalem crowd? Palm Sunday is a day on which we should think about the times that we have been unfaithful to our ideals and our hopes. Despite the centuries which divide us, we are no different from that Jerusalem crowd.

In many churches during Palm Sunday services, large palm branches are carried in processions. We will distribute small crosses made of palm leaf, both to remember the palm leaves which the people of Jerusalem waved when Jesus arrived, and to remember the cross on which he died. Some people like to display the crosses in their homes during the year as a symbol of their faith and as a reminder that we can all fall short of the ideal. This year we have the added opportunity to commemorate Palm Sunday with the other churches of Stalybridge at a united service at St Paul's.

Holy Week continues right through to Holy Saturday (or Easter Eve) and some church traditions have daily services during the week. However, it is more usually Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday that are the times of special observance. On Maundy Thursday there will be a service of Holy Communion held at Bury Unitarian Church at 6.30pm. On Good Friday there will be a meditational service at Dob Lane Chapel, Failsworth at 10am and then a devotional service at Ainsworth Presbyterian Chapel at 3pm. If you would like directions to any of these places just let me know. Their congregations would be delighted to see you.

Wishing you every blessing for Holy Week and Easter, Andrew.

WARDEN'S NOTES

Sometimes our faith is tested. We wonder why terrible things happen to good people. We wonder what kind of God would want to inflict terrible harm on people who have done no harm to anybody. Very often comments like "you'll get over it" or "God works in mysterious ways" do more harm than good and when people are sad or perplexed we have to choose our words carefully.

I feel that life was never meant to be easy. In a way awful things are put before us to strengthen us rather than weaken us. If we survive bad times then it is assumed that the good times will be even better, and that is indeed what many people hope and pray for.

As Christians or members of any faith group we are safe in the knowledge that we have friendly loving people around us who will help us through difficulties. The extended family and bonds of friendship perhaps born long ago are a source of strength at these times. We hope these feelings of togetherness can be felt by the people who are mourning the sad loss of a loved one at this time.

These days' traditional family values are very often attacked by outside agencies who simply don't seem to understand how people really work. The latest idea is to pay grandparents (by way of benefits) who look after grandchildren while their parents are at work. Call me old fashioned but I do not want paying to look after my grandchildren, something I consider to be a privilege and a source of great enjoyment. Of course it is easy for people who come up with these suggestions to spend other people's money; it is one of the easiest things in the world to do. But this is another attack on the family and another intrusion into our private lives.

Family is important whether it be our own family or the family of the church. Without family and friends we are very poor people indeed.

PALM SUNDAY

There will be a united service for Palm Sunday (April 5th), held at St Paul's on Huddersfield Road at 3.30pm. The service will be conducted by the Rector of St Paul's the Rev Richard Lawry and there will be contributions from all the town churches. The preacher will be the Rev Andrew Parker. Those who wish to do so may meet slightly earlier, at 2.45pm at the Congregational Church on Baker Street, off Acres Lane from where we will walk across to St Paul's for the main service. Would those who wish to walk please bring along their palm crosses from the morning service or any palm leaves or other large bits of green foliage to wave as we walk. At the end of the service a representative from each church will be invited place a large piece of greenery into one vase at the front of church as a symbol of unity.

FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL GROUP

We are, I think, all starting to feel a bit more sociable with our little spell of spring-like weather last weekend, so let's hope you are all going to be coming out and about to join us in our forthcoming social events which we hope will raise much-needed funds for our church.

By the time you read this, we will probably have had our latest Whist Drive which is/was to be held on Friday 27th March – this was in fact April's Whist Drive, but due to the busy month coming up, we thought we'd have it early rather than miss out all together. Our next Whist Drive will be held on Friday 1st May starting at 7.30pm at church, where for £2 you can have an enjoyable night out, may win a prize and also have some nice refreshments. Please come along if you feel like a change, you don't have to be an expert. Harvest supper which is being held on the Monday after the Harvest Service, which is Monday

As mentioned last month, we are trying something new when we shall be holding a Desert Island Discs night. Two of our well known members, that is Reverend Andrew Parker and Church Secretary Beryl Plant will be asked to name the music they would like to have with them if they were marooned on a desert island together with a book and a luxury item. Please come along and listen to their choices and why they made those choices. A potato pie supper will be served and the cost for the evening will be £4. This will be held on Friday 17th April starting at 7.30 pm. Please put your name on the notice board if you wish to come along just so we know how many to expect for catering purposes. We hope to do a few more evenings with different guests if this night proves popular.

At our last meeting, it was also decided that we should hold a few different cultural evenings. We have had a few Italian nights, and now we are going to try a Greek Night. Greek food will be served (and it sounds delicious from what I've heard) and we will learn a bit about Greece and perhaps hear some of its music etc, so please come along. You will get a full meal and the cost for the evening is £7 per person. Please enter your name on the notice in church, so we know how many to cook for. If it is successful, we hope to hold other country nights, so if you've any particular favourites or want to be reminded of past holidays, please let a committee member know or come along to our next meeting and we'll do our best to accommodate you.

Bill will be organising our Good Friday sponsored walk again this year, so we hope the weather is kind. If you are not able to walk, perhaps you would be good enough to sponsor someone who will be walking. Look out for forms/notices in church.

As always at this time of the year, we start to think about our Summer Fayre which this year will be held on Saturday 13th June starting at 2 pm. The stalls will be much the same as they were last year, with Homebake, Gifts, Plants, Books, Tombola, Raffle, Naming the Doll and other children's games as well, of course, as the lovely cream teas. Please put the date in your diary and start thinking about what you can contribute to help make it a success.

Our next fund raising meeting will be held on Monday 27th April starting at 7.15 pm just before the main church committee meeting.. Anyone is welcome, so if you have any ideas or think you could provide some much needed support, please come along.

UNITARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP

All young people, whether they attend regularly or are just visiting, are more than welcome to join us at our UYPG meetings which take place during morning service (after the 2nd hymn) every Sunday. If you have any queries, please contact Clare Bullock on 0161 303 8872.

We are working on our Arts and Crafts programme at the moment as well as trying to help out with requirements for our fund raising events. Anyone who wishes to join us will be more than welcome so please come along..

WORSHIP GROUP

The Church Committee would like to encourage members of the congregation to help lead worship on the Sundays when the Minister is away. This could be as an individual, taking a complete service or as a group taking a service together. Doing this would save the church a considerable amount of money in these difficult financial times. A visiting preacher costs a minimum of £40 and with travelling expenses added that figure can almost double. Sharing the task between members would not only make financial sense but would enable members to get together to talk about our worship and give you the opportunity to make contributions to services of readings, prayers or hymns which are special for you.

Please do not be put off by the thought of having to write a sermon. Services do not always have to have one! Resource materials will be provided and a Worship Group which will initially be led by the Minister will plan services together. The first meeting of the Group will be on Wednesday April 22nd at 7.30pm at church.

Please come along, even if you are only interested in choosing a reading or a hymn! All contributions will be welcome. At the first few meetings Andrew will be there to give advice and guidance until we reach a stage where members feel confident enough to continue by themselves.



£1 A MONTH CLUB

The winner of the February draw was Barbara Birnie, no. 48. Congratulations!

£1 MONTH CLUB

The final draw for the year 2008/2009 will be held after the morning service on Sunday 29th March.

The amount raised for church funds this year was £348, a reduction of £26.50 against last year.

Anyone wishing to renew their membership or join for the first time, should please contact me as soon as possible.

We most definitely need to increase the amount raised by this and other efforts over the next few years, because of the drastic reduction in our investment income which has occurred as a direct result of the banking shambles.

Cheques should be made payable to: Stalybridge Unitarian Church. Cash is equally acceptable

I look forward to hearing from you. After all £1 per month is less than 25p per week, 23.1p to be exact and even less than that in a leap year.

Beryl

ROME OCTOBER 2009

There will be a meeting for all those going on the October 2009 trip to Rome after the morning service on Sunday April 19th. If you are unable to be there please let Andrew know and he will make sure you get all the necessary information.

Stalybridge Unitarian Church Annual General Meeting

This will be held at church immediately following morning service on Sunday 3rd May 2009. A nomination sheet will be available on the notice board. Please make every effort to attend this important meeting.

ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION

This annual event seems to have sneaked up on us very quickly this year. Here are the important dates for you:

Stalybridge entries received at church Thursday 2nd April 7 – 8 pm

All other church entries received at church Friday 3rd April 7 pm onwards

The exhibition itself will be held at Old Chapel Dukinfield on Saturday 9th May starting at 2 pm.

Women's League

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 1st April at 3pm and will be followed by tea when the hostess will be Mrs Julie Mather.

Manchester District Spring Meeting

On Saturday April 4th the Stalybridge branch will host the Manchester District Women's League Spring Meeting, when the service at 11.30 will be conducted by the Rev. Andrew Parker. This will be followed by a business meeting at 12.15 followed by lunch.

Obituary

We are sad to report the death of Ellis Jones who passed away on Saturday 21st March aged 9 months. We would like to pass on our condolences to the whole family at this very sad and difficult time.

Mr & Mrs Whitehead and Anne wish to express their thanks for all the letters of sympathy and kind donations to the church on the death of Mrs Alice Carr

Thought for the Month

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

The courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

April 1 st	Women's League Annual General Meeting
April 4 th	Manchester District Women's League Spring Meeting
April 5 th	Palm Sunday
April 10 th	Good Friday
April 11 th	Easter Eve
April 12 th	Easter Sunday
May 2 nd	ECU AGM at Hyde Chapel
May 8 th	Greek Night
May 9 th	Arts & Crafts Exhibition at Old Chapel Dukinfield
May 31 st	Whit Sunday
June 13 th	Summer Fair
July 5 th	Church Anniversary service
September 20 th	NCUSSU AGM at Flowery Field
September 27 th	Harvest Service
October 3 rd -11 th	Trip to Rome
October 10 th	ECU Autumn Meeting at Stalybridge
November 8 th	Remembrance Sunday
November 15 th	Ladies Service
December 20 th	Carol Service