

**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 corporate member of The Unitarian Christian Association**

# **THE CHALICE**

**STALYBRIDGE UNITARIAN CHURCH  
MAGAZINE**

**MARCH 2008**

**THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE  
IS SPONSORED BY  
Pat Billingsley in memory of  
the Stokes family**

## MINISTER'S LETTER



Dear Friends

Lent has traditionally been a time of repentance, prayer and self-denial. It is very different from Christmas when the question is usually "What did you get?" During Lent, the question has traditionally been "What did you give up?"

The practice of Lent has never had a high priority among Unitarians. When it comes to occasions in the church year, I'm sure that we much prefer the abundance of Christmas, to know what we got or what we're going to get. We're not so comfortable with Lent; the thought of being asked to give up what we've got for our own good or for the good of others. Life however is not all about getting - it is also about giving and letting go, sacrificing and sharing, changing and growing, beginning again.

Although we might not choose to give something up for Lent there is value in setting aside special seasons for celebration and times for reflection. In an ideal world we would probably need no reminder to do this but the chances are that if we don't consciously set time aside then we won't do it at all. After all, a general invitation to "Call in anytime" is not nearly as likely to produce a visit as a specific invitation, "Why don't you come to see me next Wednesday afternoon?"

We all need time in our lives for self-reflection, meditation, reassessment. Let us take the opportunity that Lent brings to do just that and to recognise the value of having some sort of spiritual practice in our lives. This is something that we all do, often without even realising it. We listen to music, we take time to think, we go out into the garden or on the allotment, we count our blessings. Spiritual practices come in many guises.

So let each of us keep the sort of Lent we need to keep, whether we give something up, or whether we take something on, or neither. Let us use Lent as a time to pause and a time to think.

Wishing you every blessing.

Andrew.

## **UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Synod together with the Annual general meeting will take place at Norcliffe Chapel Styal on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March. The opening service starts at 2.30 pm and all are welcome.

## **ANDREW'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY**

Our thanks go to Rev David Ayton for travelling all the way from Bournemouth to preach on this special day. Everyone seemed to enjoy the meal at San Rocco.

It has been suggested that we go out for lunch more regularly. If anybody would like to organise a "Dining Club" could they please contact the warden.

## **JOINT SERVICE AT DOB LANE**

You may remember that Andrew's other congregation from Dob Lane Visited us for a joint service last year. We are to repay the complement and visit Dob Lane Chapel on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March. The service will start at 10.30. We will all meet at church at 9.45 and be transported in cars.

Please note that church will be closed that day.

## WARDEN'S NOTES

What is a church? A simple question maybe but not a simple answer.

Is it our faith, the Minister, the committee, the worship, the building, the congregation, the fund raising, the social events, our histories and traditions, our future, our connections with other churches both within our denomination and elsewhere, or a host of many other things?

The answer is of course that it is all of these things put together that make us what we are, it is our ability to knit everything into one cohesive unit which makes this congregation what it is. It is our desire to see this church move into the future that drives us on. We know that we currently have the task of maintaining and growing a Unitarian Free Christian Congregation in Stalybridge, it is not an easy task but it is one that we must perform to the best of our ability.

Of course continuity is very important. We know what to expect when we attend worship, we know we will be attending a Free Christian service and all that that entails. We know we will not be getting some wishy-washy view on religion with a one size fits all mentality rather like a cheap supermarket T-shirt.

We are aware that our style of worship will not suit everybody (I don't think such a place exists), but I am confident that we are providing a form of Unitarian Free Christian worship which suits the vast majority of our congregation (and a lot more people who simply don't realise it yet). We must always be open about what we are about; we do not want to confuse prospective new worshippers.

I genuinely feel that we are doing the right things. Recently our congregations have been almost up to the forty mark including six or seven children. Many churches would be glad to get half that number.

We must not rest on our achievements, there is still work to be done, we always need new worshippers, we need to maintain and in fact increase our commitment to the church. We need to get more people involved in the organisation of the church, we always need to introduce new ideas and initiatives and we must certainly remember that the future of the church is in our hands. Nobody else is going to do it for us.

If we go forward as a team we can achieve greater things.

Ken Howard.

## ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION

This will be held at Flowery Field on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May. The date for entries is 3<sup>rd</sup> April. Please take a copy of the syllabus from the table in the porch and get working! Let's see if we can win it this year!

## FASHION SHOW

We are holding a fashion event on Friday 28th March, we hope you will come along and see the latest high street fashions being modeled. Entrance will be £1 which will include a drink and some party nibbles. There will also be a raffle. So if you want to know what the latest fashion trends are for spring and have an enjoyable evening put this date in your diary.

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The tongue can be a blessing  
Or, the tongue can be a curse  
Say, friend, How are you using yours?  
For better or for worse?

## FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL GROUP



I hope those of you who came along enjoyed watching 'Sleeping Beauty' at Old Chapel on 14<sup>th</sup> February. I watched it a few times (whilst doing other things) and enjoyed it each time. I think congratulations should go to all the cast and crew, but especially to our own Tilly and Ken who both played fairly major roles in the production!

Our Whist Drive this month will be held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March starting as usual at 7.30 pm at church. Please come along and join us when for £2 you get to play whist, enjoy delicious refreshments and have the chance of winning not only a whist prize but also a raffle prize! You don't have to be experts to play – everyone is welcome.

We will be holding an organ recital on **Wednesday** 12<sup>th</sup> March at church starting at 7.30 pm. Our organist Norman will be playing together with Philip, a friend of ours. Entrance is £4 which will entitle you to a good evening's entertainment and light refreshments. Unfortunately, we could not get both of these busy men together on a Friday, so thought, instead of missing out altogether, we would try it on a Wednesday. It promises to be a good night, so please don't miss out but come along and bring your friends with you.

We shall also be holding a Fashion Night on Friday March 28<sup>th</sup>. This will be a one off experience and further details will be found elsewhere in this magazine. I believe there will be something for everyone with the chance to undergo some retail therapy.

Our next meeting will be held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March at 7.15 pm when we would very much welcome anyone who feels they could contribute anything to our group. Even if it is only ideas for fund raising or social events, we desperately need some new ideas, so please come along and join us.

Sue Howard



## **£1 A MONTH CLUB**

Anyone wishing to renew their membership or join for the first time, please contact me on 0161 344 0942, 45 Church St, Dukinfield SK16 4PR.

Beryl Bradbury



## **LADIES CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY (WOMEN'S LEAGUE)**

The meeting will take place on Wednesday 5th March at 3.00pm when the hostesses will be Mrs Eileen, & Miss Clare Bullock. A warm welcome is extended to all ladies from the church, please see any of the members if you need any information.

## **DIARY DRAW**

The diary is now doing the rounds, and I shall try to have it with me on most occasions. Please ask me if you want to try your luck. The cost is £1 for each date chosen.

Margaret Hallsworth

## **UNITARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP**

Leaders for March:

2<sup>nd</sup> March: Sue Howard

9<sup>th</sup> March: Clare Bullock

23<sup>rd</sup> March: Sue Howard

30<sup>th</sup> March: Clare Bullock

All young people, whether they visit regularly or are just visiting, are more than welcome to join us at our UYPG meetings which take place during morning service (after the 2<sup>nd</sup> hymn) every Sunday when we usually make or prepare something either connected with that day's service or for a forthcoming church social event. If you have any queries, please contact Clare Bullock on 0161 303 8872.

## **STEWARDS FOR MARCH**

2<sup>nd</sup> March: Ken Howard

9<sup>th</sup> March: Bill Atkin

23<sup>rd</sup> March: Stuart Hinchcliffe

30<sup>th</sup> March: Don Andrews



## **CHURCH FLOWERS FOR MARCH**

2nd: Mrs Janet Pearson..... In celebration of the birth of her grandson, Archie.

9th: Mrs and Mrs Eric Caton in memory of Mr & Mrs Harold Bullock Senior

23rd: Mr & Mrs Geoff Spiby in memory of The Schofield Family

30th: Mr & Mrs Norman Bradbury

Apologies to Mr & Mrs Derek Worthington whose flowers on the 17th of February were in memory of Mr & Mrs Albert Worthington.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY QUIZ 2008

Here's a chance to exercise your Quiz master talents. The G.A. Have sent us a limited number of Quiz sheets in order to raise money. If you want to give it a try please see Margaret Andrews. The sheets are available for just £1. All proceeds will be matched by the Bowland Trust which means that for every £1 we raise the G.A. will receive £2!

## EDITOR'S NOTE

I just wanted to say a big thank you to all who have re-subscribed to the Chalice this year. Printing the Chalice the past few months has definitely been a learning curve. Truthfully, my monthly fight with the computer to print without eating the paper has led to some teeth grinding moments.

The actual printing of the Chalice has brought me the chance to speak to people who received the Chalice in different parts of the country and it's nice to think our news travels far.

Strangely enough, the most enjoyable aspect so far is all the post I received over Christmas. You may think that Chalice subscription forms are nothing to look forward to but for the first time I have received **actual letters** in the post and not just bills. It's nice to know that there are real people out there and not just different computers sending me out generic mail.

If you would like to contribute articles or news to the Chalice it would be lovely to hear from you. I enjoy the contact from our readers and am sure the rest of the congregation would too!

Rachel Plant

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sun 2nd Mar:	11am	Mothering Sunday
Wed 12th Mar:	7:30pm	Organ Recital
Sun 16th Mar:	10:30am 3 pm	Visit to Dob Lane, Church Closed United Palm Sunday, St Paul's Church
Sat 22nd Mar:	7:30pm	Easter Vigil at Stalybridge
Fri 28th Mar:	7:30pm	Fashion Night
Fri 9th May:	2:30pm	ECU Songs of Praise, Hyde Chapel
Sat 10th May:	TBC	Arts and Crafts
Sun 11th May:	2:30pm	Whit Sunday
Sat 21st Jun:	TBC	Summer Fayre
Sun 6th Jul:	11am	Anniversary Sunday
Sun 5th Oct:	11am	Harvest
Sun 19th Oct:	11 am	Ladies Sunday
Sun 9th Nov:	11am	Remembrance Sunday
Sat 8th Nov:	TBC	Bazaar

# MARCH

Sat	1st	2.00pm	6 <sup>th</sup> UCA Synod and AGM at Norcliffe Chapel Stalybridge
Sun	2 <sup>nd</sup>	11.00am	Mothering Sunday service and UYPG
Wed	5 <sup>th</sup>	3.00pm	Ladies Congregational Society Tea
Thurs	6 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	ECU delegates meeting at New Chapel Denton
Fri	7 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Whist Drive
Sun	9 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am 2.30pm	Morning service and UYPG ECU Songs of Praise service at Hyde Chapel
Mon	10 <sup>th</sup>	7.15pm 8.00pm	Fund raising and Social group meeting Church Committee Meeting
Wed	12 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Organ Recital
Sun	16 <sup>th</sup>	9.45am 3.00pm	Meet to be driven to Joint Service at Dob Lane CHURCH CLOSED Stalybridge Churches Palm Sunday Service at St Paul's
Thurs	20 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	UCA organised Maundy Thursday Communion at Bank Street Church Bury
Fri	21 <sup>st</sup>	9.30am TBC	Good Friday Sponsored Walk UCA organised Good Friday Service at Knutsford
Sat	22 <sup>nd</sup>	7.30pm	Easter Vigil Service at Stalybridge with the Roundelay singers and musicians
Sun	23 <sup>rd</sup>	11.00am	Easter Sunday Service and UYPG
Tue	25 <sup>th</sup>		Start of GA Annual Meetings
Fri	28 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Fashion Night at church
Sun	30 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG (including a Christening)