

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

THE CHALICE

STALYBRIDGE UNITARIAN CHURCH MAGAZINE

March 2011

**THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE IS
SPONSORED
by Alan & Sue Swift
In memory of
Frank Swift & Edward Robinson**

MINISTER'S LETTER

Recent events have reminded me of a letter I received from a man in the south of England when I was Membership Secretary of the Unitarian Christian Association. He wanted to know what "statements of faith and other beliefs" we have in our churches. He seemed to think that what we believe was of some importance to him even though he was not a member of one of our congregations. I think that he was disappointed with my reply because all I could tell him was that we do not have any statements of faith or any beliefs which are compulsory. Many people who belong to a tradition which does impose statements of belief on its members struggle to understand our open and tolerant approach. From our point of view, I have always found the obsession which some people have with what other people believe to be rather odd and I have never been able to understand that!

At the last ecumenical service I attended we were invited to say a creed. Everyone stood to do this and I stood with them - as a mark of respect for their beliefs - but I could never have joined them in saying it. This is not because I wanted to deny what they believe, our faith is not a negative faith which denies people the right to believe, it is a very positive faith which encourages people to explore their own beliefs and arrive at their own conclusions.

Even if I had believed every word of that creed I would still have been unable to recite it because creeds and statements of belief impose limits on freedom of thought. They introduce a man made boundary which the faithful are not supposed to cross. God is boundless and free - and so should be the human mind. That is why we do not recite creeds in our services or impose any beliefs on either minister or members. Each one of you has the privilege and the responsibility of exploring your own faith. Nobody has the right to tell you what you should believe or should not believe, you have the absolute right to decide that for yourself.

Every blessing,

Andrew.

FUNERAL

MRS MAGARET BARR

25th February Mrs Margaret Barr aged 86 years. The service was held at Dukinfield Cemetery Chapel followed by interment in the cemetery grounds. The Minister officiated.

Margaret was born into a Methodist family but from her teens attended Hyde Chapel where she eventually became Chapel Secretary, an office which she fulfilled with great efficiency. Margaret began attending Stalybridge with her husband the Rev Fred Barr when he was conducting occasional services here during his retirement and then after his death she began to attend each week until she found it too difficult to make the journey from Gee Cross alone. Margaret passed away peacefully at Tameside Hospital on 15th February.

MR GEORGE HORBURY

We are sorry to have to report the death of Mr George Horbury. This took place on Monday 21st February 2011. George was a former Sunday School Director and an extremely active member of the church and Sunday School.

We send our condolences to his wife Mary and all the family. The funeral will take place in the Isle of man on Wednesday 2nd March.

WEDDINGS, FUNERALS & CHRISTENINGS IN CHURCH

When we hold weddings, funerals or afternoon christenings at church it would be helpful to have a member of the congregation present.

The Minister is usually involved with final preparations for the service and with greeting the participants and so is often unable to deal with practical things like handing out hymn books or arranging extra chairs if needed at the last minute. If you would be willing to come to church when we have these services please have a word with either Andrew or Ken and hopefully we can get a few volunteers so that the task doesn't become too onerous for one person.

FUND RAISING & SOCIAL AFFAIRS

I had hoped that we would be well over our winter weather by now, but it seems not quite with a few frosty mornings still creeping up on us – anyway, we are starting again with a few events which we hope you will come to and enjoy as well as helping us raise much-needed funds.

Our first event in March is the St David's Day Dinner which will be held on Friday 4th March. I expect it might have happened by the time you read this, but let's hope you all enjoyed it and went home full and happy. I'll report on how we did next month. This event is being held instead of the Whist Drive which will not take place in March. The next Whist Drive will be held on Friday 1st April starting as usual at 7.30 pm. All are welcome, so please come along to church for a game or two and let any of your friends know who might be interested. It is usually held on the first Friday of the month unless there is something else arranged (as in March)

We shall also be holding a Royal Wedding Reception Night on Friday 29th April which is the day of Prince William and Kate Middleton's wedding. A buffet will be held and we would like you to arrive dressed as if you were coming to a wedding. A prize will be given for the best hat! The cost for the evening will be £6.00, so please enter your name on the list on the board or give me a ring (0161 3301295) so we know how many to cater for.

A bit of advance notice – the summer Fair will be held on Saturday 18th June, so please put the date in your diaries and start to think about how you could support us on this special day. All usual donations would be much appreciated, but further details will be given next month as to what actual stalls we will be holding.

A quick reminder about the coffee morning held on the last Friday of the month, which will be 25th February and 25th March. It is from 10.00 to 12.00 and all are welcome. It does give people an opportunity to meet others and have a drink and something to eat. Sometimes it is a bit of a rush after church service on a Sunday to talk to everyone you want to, so a Friday morning is a bit more relaxed with more time. Please come and join us.

Our next fund raising meeting will be held on Monday 14th March at 7.15 pm to which everyone is invited. If you feel you could help with fund raising in any way, either with ideas or in a more practical way, please come along and join us – you will be more than welcome!

Sue Howard

STEWARDS FOR MARCH

6th	Tom Whitehead
13th	Stuart Hinchcliffe
20th	Bill Atkin
27th	Wendy Maher

FLOWERS FOR MARCH

6h	Mr & Mrs Eric Caton in memory of Mr & Mrs Harold Bullock
13th	Mr & Mrs Geoff Spiby in memory of The Schofield Family
20th	Mrs Janet Pearson in memory of Mary Dagnah
27th	Mr & Mrs G. Thomas in memory of Mr James Scullion

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Ken sends his apologies but is unable to contribute to the newsletter this week as he is busy with the pantomime. I hope everything has gone well and those of you who attended enjoyed the show.

I just wanted to thank everyone who has submitted their subscriptions and apologise if your cheque has not yet been cashed as I have yet to hand it over to the Treasurer.

Also thank you to all the well wishers who have sent their regards while I am studying to become a teacher. As you may know it's lots of hard work and challenging, but also rewarding. I did comment to one of the other teacher's "I can't wait until this course is over then I can have my life back." The teacher laughed and said "that's not going to happen, you just about start to relax in the summer holidays when it starts all over again." At least I'll never complain of being bored ever again!

MUSIC DURING THE SERVICE

February

6th	Praludium Pedaliter	Jan Pieter Sweelinck
13th	Climb every mountain (Sound of music)	R Rogers
20th	Trumpet Tune	Henry Purcell
27th	The Harmonious Blacksmith	G F Handel

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Three of our ladies attended the AGM at Bury Unitarian Church on Saturday 12th February. We travelled with the ladies from Old Chapel in their mini bus, and the weather was lovely. The proceedings commenced with a lunch and bring and buy stall, followed by a service conducted by the National President who had travelled from her home in Wales to be with us. This was followed by the business meeting after which we returned home. A very pleasant day out.

The meeting of our ladies will be on Wednesday 2nd March at 3 pm when the Hostess will be Mrs Olwyn Murphy. If any other ladies would like to join us they will be very welcome (but please either let Olwyn or myself know beforehand if possible for catering purposes).

The Ladies Service will be held on Sunday 20th of March and we shall be having a home made cake stall after the service in aid of this years Women's League project.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY PRAYER GROUP

The next meeting will be in church on Wednesday 23rd March at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome to join us for a time of prayer and reflection.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Our financial year ends on 31st March 2011 so members who are not in the envelope scheme, and have not yet renewed their membership, may still do so by sending a minimum subscription of £5 per person to the Treasurer (address at the front of Chalice).

Calendar March 2011

Friday 4 th	2.15pm	Women's World Day of Prayer Service at the Congregational Church, Baker St. Stalybridge
	7.30pm	St David's Day Dinner party
Saturday 5 th	1.30pm	UCA AGM at Knutsford
Sunday 6 th	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG
Monday 7 th	7.15pm	Women's Institute
Wed 9 th	3.00pm	Ladies Congregational Society Monthly Tea
Sunday 13 th	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG
Sunday 13 th	2.30pm	ECU Songs of Praise Service at Old Chapel Dukinfield
Monday 14 th	7.15pm	Fund Raising Meeting
Monday 14 th	8.00pm	Church Committee meeting
Sunday 20 th	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG
Wed 23 rd	7.00pm	4 th Wednesday Prayer Group
Friday 25 th	10am – 12 noon	Coffee Morning
Sunday 27 th		British Summer time begins Clocks go forward one hour
Sunday 27 th	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG