

CHALICE

March 2012

50 pence



STALYBRIDGE UNITARIAN CHURCH
And
SUNDAY SCHOOL
(A Free Christian Congregation)

**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 2012

**THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE
IS SPONSORED
in memory of
William (Bill) and Emily
Hallatt**

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

Already the days are starting to lengthen and, although there has been little sign of it yet, it won't be long before we get more and more bright, sunny days that seem to get warmer with each one that passes. This time of year always seems to me to be a very optimistic time. A time of looking forward to the summer which lies ahead. In the natural world it is a time of new beginnings, new growth and it is always a great pleasure to see the first snowdrops as they push their way through the bare earth. The coming weeks will be a time when new life is all around us, a time of growth, a time of development. There are many lessons which we can learn from this, in our churches and our communities and in our own lives and relationships.

I was reading recently about how the religious landscape throughout the world is changing. One writer described this, not in the usual pessimistic way by talking about declining attendances and closures but in a very positive way, concentrating on the possibilities for growth and new development which always come after a time of decline and decay. One of the interesting things she does is describe the present time as a new "post-denominational" age. I found that very interesting as I have often thought that the days of existing denominational structures are numbered. It is within faith communities at local level, that there are signs of new growth, within people's spiritual lives and in their attitude to their faith, not within denominational structures.

New growth. That is the key to the future in whatever context you are thinking of but it is often hard work to get it started. Start it we must though, because the seeds we plant will flourish after we who plant them are all gone. Our founders understood that and planted for the future, and we are now enjoying the fruits of their labour.

Now it is our turn to plant and nurture so that there will be something for those who come after us. If we do not, there is no future. Nurturing this new growth is everyone's task. We can't do it alone, it takes all of us.

New growth can be uncomfortable at times though. New growth changes things and we have to recognise that and welcome it. It is difficult to leave behind even those things that don't work in our lives and our communities, because we are more comfortable with the familiar. We must be open to the possibilities of new growth beginning within us and all around us. To use a modern phrase we need to "think outside the box" and accept first of all that we don't have all the answers. We can, and indeed have to learn from others.

Our faith is the fertile soil in which this new growth begins, and slowly we begin to see the future come into being. Our worship and our fellowship together help to keep us in touch with this process and with God, who is the source of our inspiration, and who sustains us in our task to make our hopes and visions for the future become a present reality.

Every blessing.

Andrew.

FOURTH WEDNESDAY PRAYER GROUP

The next Fourth Wednesday Prayer Group is on Wednesday 28th March at 7pm.

FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

This last month seems to have gone very quickly and I can't believe we are into March already.

The first event in March, which may have happened by the time you read this, is/was the St David's Day Night which I hope was enjoyed by all.

A decision was made at our latest meeting whereby we have decided that, in the future, we will sell tickets for any event involving catering. This is to prevent us buying food for people who don't turn up on the night. This will firstly prevent us wasting food and secondly stops us losing money on the night. It shouldn't really make much difference to you as customers, but should make quite a difference to us doing the catering.

Our next coffee morning will be held on Friday 30th March at church from 10 to 12 noon. It is a good chance to have a chat with people you may not have chance to talk to on a Sunday or join some of our friends who drop in quite regularly for a drink and snack. Everybody is welcome, including children, so please call in and bring your friends and neighbours with you.

Later on in March, on Friday 23rd, we shall be holding a Desert Island Discs evening. You may remember we held several of these a year or so ago and it was very interesting seeing what other people's tastes in music are. Our guests this time will be Jeff Sheehan and myself, Sue Howard. Cheese and wine will be served at a cost of £5 a head. Non alcoholic drinks will obviously also be served (for the drivers amongst you) Once again, we need to know how many are coming, so please put your name on notice on the board.

If you are interested in quizzes, we shall be holding a quiz night on Friday 20th April. There will be a charge of £6 per person when supper will be served. Please try and organise yourselves into teams of approximately 5 people on each team.

If you want to be put into a team, and can't find four other people, please just put your name on the board, and we will put you into a team on the night. This would be a good opportunity for you to bring your friends and neighbours along.

Some of you may remember The Piano Player and Friends who have visited us in the past and have proved to be a very good night. They will entertain us with their singing and food will be served on Friday 4th May, so once again please look out for the notice on the board.

Looking a bit further ahead, we will of course be celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with a dinner on 25th May. I'm sure it will give many of you the opportunity to dress up appropriately for such an important event. The charge for this special night will be £10 when a fitting dinner will be served. Once again, please enter your name on the notice board if you wish to come.

Whilst you have your diaries out, please enter the 23rd June for the Summer Fayre and the 24th November for the Christmas Fair. In recognition of some of our very talented members, we will be holding a Home-made Craft stall at the Summer Fayre. If anyone would like to make anything which you think might be of interest to others and are prepared to donate it to us, we will put it on the stall and hopefully sell it to raise much needed funds.

We do have a few other events planned, but no definite dates yet, but don't worry, we hope to bring you much more in this important year. Whilst we still hope to be able to get a grant of some sort, we are still looking at having our new disabled access entrance done and need every penny we can raise. Please support us.

Our next fund raising meeting will be held on Monday 12th March at 7.15 pm and anyone who feels they can help in any way would be more than welcome, just come along.

Thank you

Sue Howard

WARDEN'S NOTES

There is no doubt in my mind that the real reason for our existence as a congregation is to provide a place of Free Christian Worship both for ourselves and for anyone else who wants to join us. Our Sunday services are the very essence of our ministry.

We do need, however, to meet each other (and hopefully new people) in a social situation and that is what the Fund Raising and Social Affairs Group tries to organise. This group tries very hard to come up with new ideas of organising our church social life and we should all be very grateful for their hard work.

The Fund Raising and Social Affairs Group is not an elected committee and anyone who has any bright ideas to vary and improve our church social life would be more than welcome to attend.

The fact of the matter is that the social events are not as well supported as they deserve to be and I would urge everybody to make every effort to support as many social and fund raising events as possible.

THE MINISTER

Andrew had his operation on Monday 27th February and we all wish a speedy recovery.

Andrew will be taking three weeks sick leave and during this time the services will be conducted by:

Sunday 4 th March	Ken Howard
Sunday 11 th March	Beryl Plant
Sunday 18 th March	Janet Ford (Mothering Sunday Service)

UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The UCA will be holding their Annual General Meeting at Stalybridge on Saturday 17th March. The programme is as follows:

12 Noon	Buffet Lunch (No Charge but donations accepted)
1 pm	Service conducted by Rev Jeff Gould
2 pm	Annual General Meeting
2.30 pm	Presentation by Christian Aid Northwest Director (Linda McClintock -Tiongco) on the partnership scheme in Sierra Leone.
3.30 pm	Tea and biscuits

Please put your name on the list if you require lunch and please come along to support this event.

EAST CHESHIRE UNION OF UNITARIAN AND FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

The ECU Songs of Praise service will be held at Stalybridge Unitarian Church on Sunday 11th March at 2.30 pm. Please make every effort to attend this wonderful hymn singing service. The service will be led by Ken Howard and the organist will be Barry Shaw.

CHURCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will be held on Sunday 13th May immediately the morning service.

Please make a note in your diaries. The nomination sheet will be on the notice board shortly.

DISABLED ACCESS AND TOILETS

I was hoping that we would be able to complete this project before the 150th Anniversary. Unfortunately we have not yet received the necessary funding. We continue to receive donations and i would like to acknowledge a donation of £300 from The Men's Guild. We now have approx £9000 put by but it would be irresponsible for us to start this project before we have more of the cost (£25000) to hand.

DRUG AWARENESS

We hope to have secured the service of a member of the Tameside Drug Awareness team to come to talk to us about drug awareness on Friday 30th March at 7.30 pm.

This talk is aimed at both young people and their parents/grandparents and is a very interesting talk and presentation showing the dangers of drug use. It will help people of all ages to understand this very serious problem. Members of other Unitarian Churches are free to come along.

150th ANNIVERSARY ARRANGEMENTS

A reminder that plans are now well in hand for this important celebration. The programme for the weekend is as follows:

Friday 13th July at 7.30 pm

An organ concert given by Nigel Ogden (BBC Radio2 "The Organist Entertains"). The price for this will be £10 per person, only light refreshments will be served.

Saturday 14th July 7pm for 7.30pm

There will be a dinner dance held at Stamford Golf Club. The menu is as follows:

TO START

Homemade golden vegetable soup
served with warm crusty bread

TO FOLLOW

Chicken supreme and pesto crushed new potatoes
served with slow roasted cherry tomatoes

TO FINISH

Homemade citrus tart
served with fresh coulis

CHEESE AND BISCUITS

A selection of traditional cheeses
accompanied by biscuits and grapes

COFFEE AND MINTS

The dinner will be followed by some very short speeches and toasts and these in turn will be followed by music and dancing.

The price for this will be £27.50 per person. (UYPG members £17.50).

Ken

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Thank you to all who made goodies and also to the people who bought them from our home bake stall last Sunday. We raised the grand total of £56.00.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 7th March at 3 pm when the hostess will be Beryl Bradbury.

POUND A MONTH CLUB

If you would like to join the 'Pound a Month Club', please contact Beryl Bradbury or any Church Committee member.

COFFEE MORNING

Coffee morning will be held on Friday 30th March at Church from 10 am to 12 noon. Everybody is welcome, including children, so please call in and bring your friends and neighbours with you.

FLOWERS FOR MARCH

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|------------------------|--|
| 4 th March | Mrs and Mrs Eric Caton in memory of Mr and Mrs Harold Bullock Senior |
| 11 th March | Mr and Mrs Geoff Spiby in memory of The Schofield Family |
| 18 th March | Mrs Janet Person in memory of Mary Dagnah |
| 25 th March | Mrs Jean Thomas in memory James Scullion |

STEWARDS FOR MARCH

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 4 th March | Wendy Maher |
| 11 th March | Ken Howard |
| 18 th March | Don Andrews |
| 25 th March | Tom Whitehead |

ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION

This will be held at Old Chapel Dukinfield on Saturday 12th May. Copies of the syllabus are now available. Please note the date for receipt of entries is Thursday 12th April.

SPECIAL SERVICES 2012

All services at 11am and conducted by the Minister unless otherwise stated.

February 19 th	Ladies' Sunday. Conducted by Beryl Plant
March 18 th	Mothering Sunday
April 1 st	Palm Sunday
April 5 th	Maundy Thursday Communion at 7pm
April 8 th	Easter Sunday
April 22 nd	Send a Child to Hucklow 50 th Anniversary
May 27 th	Whit Sunday (final details to be announced)
June 3 rd	Thanksgiving Service for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee
July 15 th	150th Anniversary Service at 2.30 pm
August 26 th	350th Anniversary of the Great Ejection
September 30 th	Harvest Thanksgiving
November 11 th	Remembrance Day
December 23 rd	Carol Service at 4 pm
December 25 th	Christmas Day Service at 10.30 am

MUSIC DURING THE SERVICE

4 th March	Panis Angelicus	Cesar Frank
11 th March	Berceuse de Jocelyn	B Godard
18 th March	Allegretto	H Blair
25 th March	Largo	Haydn

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE YEW TREE SINGERS EVENT HELD ON 27th JANUARY



The Yew Tree Singers



Rev. Andrew Parker and Ann Peart, President of the General
Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches