

**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**

MAY 2008

**THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE
HAS AN ANONYMOUS
SPONSOR**

MINISTER'S LETTER



Dear Friends

This time of year is a time of growth and new life, of change and development. It is no accident that it is also the Easter Season of resurrection, transition and tremendous challenges. We begin the month of May this year on Ascension Day, a day not universally observed in our churches! It is nevertheless an important day in the Christian calendar which is inextricably linked with Easter and Whitsun (or Pentecost) and which still has something important to say to us all today. Ascension Day is the day on which the disciples had to come to terms with the fact that the risen Jesus was not going to be with them forever in exactly the same way.

Taking leave, sending off a loved one, saying good bye is hard. But it is an unavoidable reality of life and more than that, it seems to be necessary for a person's growth and maturing. For example, children have to be sent off for their first day of school, or to college - a step of growth towards independence and maturity. It makes parents sad, yet also proud of them.

As we journey from one stage of life to another - from birth to infancy, to adolescence, to adulthood, to mature adulthood and old age - the common link between each of the stages seems to be a difficult transition. Change is hard. Each of these times of change challenges us to grow in our faith. It takes a tremendous amount of faith and trust in a child to be able to send him or her off on that first school day. It takes faith on the part of the child too.

Following Easter, Jesus prepared his disciples for their next step of spiritual growth and maturity. By the time Ascension Day came, he had sufficient faith in his disciples that they would do well, with the help of his Spirit, but there was yet one more stage on their path to spiritual maturity - an understanding of their reliance on each other's strength. Again and again we find this theme in Jesus' last days on earth. He instructed them to love one another, to rely on each other, to help, encourage, and empower each other. That's how the disciples survived; that's why Christianity is still here today.

Whatever changes, transitions, crises or conflicts we may face, let us remember that they are necessary towards achieving the next step. Let us focus on the opportunities for growth that lie ahead of us. Let us also remember that the fellowship we share together is a source of encouragement and strength to make it through any challenge and transition.

Wishing you every blessing.

Andrew.

PULPIT SUPPLIES

While Andrew is in Rome the following people will be taking our services:

Sunday 25th May Ken Howard

Sunday 1st June Csaba Todor (Csaba is a Romanian student at Unitarian College Manchester and we look forward to welcoming him and his family to church).

WARDENS NOTES

I'm sure that we are all proud of our progress at Stalybridge. We have managed to grow the congregation slowly but surely. We have maintained our Unitarian Free Christian heritage but at the same time we have continued to keep a forward thinking attitude.

What we must remember is that we cannot sit back and expect people to come to us; firstly we have to spread the word. We have to let people know what we are about and above all we must not confuse new worshippers. Our services are simple but uplifting with a message for everyone who is lucky enough to be with us. Andrew's "I AM THE WAY" sermon on 20th April dealt with a controversial issue in such a reverential yet thought provoking way that I felt privileged to be there. I admit that this was one of the best sermons I have ever heard and it deserved to be heard by an even bigger congregation.

Our future is in our own hands and we are well positioned to go forward in a positive frame of mind. Sadly running a church is never easy, even though we have an excellent minister and a disciplined and well organised committee we have to remain diligent. Finances are always a worry, our building is in excellent condition but we have to realise that it is now almost 150 years old. There are always problems of one sort or another but if we continue to work together these can be overcome.

As Warden one of my duties is to ensure that everyone feels involved. I don't like the idea of a group of officers and a committee ruling the roost over the rest of the congregation, we must continue to take decisions which benefit the whole fellowship. The committee must never be seen as a clique or a ruling body. It must be a body that unites the congregation.

With this in mind our Annual General Meeting on Sunday 18th May (immediately after morning service) is an important occasion. I would urge people who have never served on the committee before to come forward and give it a try. I won't pretend that the work is easy but I can promise you that it can be very satisfying. If anyone would like to know a bit more before committing themselves I will be more than happy to explain things.

We are a happy and forward thinking congregation, we know what we have to do and we know that we must do it ourselves. Together we can make this great church of ours even greater.

Ken Howard.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*If you want to be happy
Then start right away
Doing a kindness for someone each day
Scatter some sunshine, forget about self
And put all your worries away on the shelf*

FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL GROUP



Well, we had a wonderful time at the Fashion Night at the end of March with the church being packed to the rafters with people. Pom Pom Fashions did us proud and by inviting so many people to come in, the church did very well as they were given all proceeds from both the raffle and the entrance money. Very many thanks must go to Stephanie and her colleagues for being so generous and we really hope to see them again at our church in the not too distant future. If you missed it, then look out for when they come again and do your best to be there – you won't regret it.

Our Whist Drive this month will be held on Friday 2nd May 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! Everyone is welcome and we do have a laugh – I think we spend more time trying to work out which table and which seat we should be moving to than we do actually playing. Please come and join us! A quick thank you to those of you who don't actually come to play whist, but provide the prizes – it is much appreciated.

By the time you read this, we will have had our Italian Night so let's hope it all went well, a good night was had by all and it put our happy band of travellers into the Italian frame of mind! I will report on it more fully in the next Chalice.

Margaret Hallsworth is circulating a diary in which you have to put your name on your chosen date for £1. Once the diary is full, a date will be drawn out of a hat and the lucky winner will receive £100. Please contact Margaret if you would like to take part.

I have a chocolate quiz in circulation and the closing date is Sunday 11th May, which is Whit Sunday. If you still haven't got one and would like one, please get in touch with me. The winner will be announced in the next Chalice.

Don't forget our Summer Fayre will be held on 21st June starting at 2 pm. We are looking for usual contributions to the Home Bake stall, Margaret's tombola stall, raffle, so please bear it in mind – we want a really good turn out this year! I'm hoping summer will have arrived by then, when you can all enjoy a cream tea in the warm sunshine!

Anyone with any ideas for fund raising, then please get in touch with a committee member or come along to our next fund raising meeting, the date of which will be announced soon.

Sue Howard

LADIES CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY (WOMEN'S LEAGUE)

Women's League The May meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th at 3.00pm, when the hostess will be Mrs Margaret Andrews



£1 A MONTH CLUB

Anyone wishing to renew their membership or indeed join for the first time, please contact me on 0161 344 0942, 45 Church St, Dukinfield SK16 4PR. All cheques must be payable to Stalybridge Unitarian Church. Last month's winner was Rachel Plant.

Beryl Bradbury

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. Our next few months will be taken up with preparing entries for the Arts & Crafts Exhibition, so we will all be kept busy.

The minister usually sets us a task after this to tie in with his services and sermons over the coming months, so the children do play a useful and full part in all our services and the more children we have the more interesting it becomes, so if you are a young person and would like to join us, then please come along - you would be more than welcome

STEWARDS FOR MAY

4 th May:	Don Andrews
11 th May:	Stuart Hinchcliffe
18 th May:	Tom Whitehead
25 th May:	Wendy Maher



FLOWERS FOR MAY

4th May:	TABLE	Mr & Mrs P. Billingsly in memory of Mr & Mrs Tom Stokes
	FONT	Mrs Marjorie Sands in memory of Joan and Dorothy
11th May:	FONT	Mrs Marjorie Sands & Mr & Mrs A. Curd in memory of Mr & Mrs H. Barker
18th May:	TABLE	VACANT
	FONT	Mrs Marjorie Sands & in memory of Mr & Mrs R. Fothergill & Nigel
25th May:	TABLE	VACANT
	FONT	Mrs Marjorie Sands & in memory of Mr Neville Sands

WHIT SUNDAY STALYBRIDGE PROCESSION OF WITNESS

Meet at church at 1.30 on Sunday 11th May 2008 for this important day in the life of our church. This year we will be second in the procession and next year we will be leading. There will be no morning service on this day

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The church will be used for the Local council elections on Thursday 1st May.

EAST CHESHIRE UNION

The ECU Annual General Meeting will take place at Dukinfield Old Chapel on Saturday 3rd May starting at 2.30 pm.

DUKINFIELD OLD CHAPEL

We would like to congratulate Christine Cheetham on her election as Chapel Warden at the recent AGM.

ARTS & CRAFTS EXHIBITION

This will be held at Flowery Field on Saturday 10th May starting at 2.30 pm. Please come along and support our entrants.

ROME TRIP

Twenty two of our members and friends will be going on the trip to Rome from 24th to 31st May. We wish them all “bon voyage” and we look forward to hearing all about it when they return.

MOSSLEY ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

In his position as NCUSSU President Andrew will be conducting the anniversary service at Mossley on Sunday 4th May. The minister of Mossley (Rev Pat Shaw) will be conducting our service on that day.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thurs 1st May:	All Day	Church used for Local Council Elections
Fri 2nd May:	7.30 pm	Whist Drive
Sat 10th May:	2.30 pm	Arts and Crafts Exhibition (Flowery Field)
Sun 11th May:	2:30 pm	Whit Sunday
Sun 18th May:	12.30 pm	AGM
Sat 24th May:		Rome trip leaves
Fri 25 th May:	7.30 m	Whist Drive
Sat 31st May:		Rome trip returns
Sun 1st Jun:	11 am	Service conducted by Csaba Todor
Sat 21st Jun:	2 pm	Summer Fayre
Sun 6th Jul:	11 am	Anniversary Sunday
Sun 5th Oct:	11 am	Harvest
Sun 19th Oct:	11 am	Ladies Sunday
Sun 9th Nov:	11 am	Remembrance Sunday
Sat 8th Nov:	TBC	Bazaar

MAY

Fri 2nd	7.30pm	Whist Dive
Sun 4th	11am	Morning Service and UYPG conducted by Rev Pat Shaw
Wed 7th	3pm	Ladies Society monthly tea
Sat 10th	2.30pm	Arts and Crafts Exhibition (Flowery Field)
Sun 11th	1.30pm	Meet at Church for Whit Sunday Procession. (NO MORNING SERVICE)
Sun 18th	11am 12pm	Morning Service and UYPG Annual General Meeting of the congregation
Sun 25th	11am	Morning Service and UYPG conducted by Ken Howard