

**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**

NOVEMBER 2006

**THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE IS KINDLY
SPONSORED BY
A MEMBER OF THE
CONGREGATION WHO WOULD
LIKE TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS**

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

All the months of planning finally came to fruition when nineteen of us, from Stalybridge and Dob Lane together with friends from Dukinfield, Hyde and Middleton gathered at Manchester Airport very early in the morning for our flight to Rome. Everything went to plan and we arrived at the convent where we were to stay exactly on time. The weather which greeted us was hot and sunny and that was to remain the same for the whole week except for one very short interruption which I will return to later.

During our week in Rome we saw many interesting, beautiful and wonderful things as we traced the history of the Christian Church from the time of Saint Peter and Saint Paul right up to the present day. We began by visiting the Forum and the Colosseum of ancient Rome and the Mamertine Prison which gave us a picture of the world into which Peter and Paul came. We visited catacombs on the outskirts of Rome and some of us walked along the Appian Way in the footsteps of both Peter and Paul. We then visited excavations which took us to street level at the time of the Emperor Nero, and to the house of Clement where some of the first Christian services were held. We also visited sites connected with the Emperor Constantine, who in the year AD 313 issued an edict granting freedom of worship to Christians and soon after founded a shrine over Saint Peter's tomb which is today where St Peter's Basilica stands. We also saw the relics which Constantine's mother, the Empress Helena brought to Rome from the Holy Land.

On our visit to the fortified convent of Santi Quattro Coronati (four crowned saints) we were granted a very rare privilege. The convent is dedicated to four Christian Roman soldiers who were martyred during the reign of the Emperor Diocletian (284-305) for refusing to sacrifice to the pagan god Asclepius. The original church of the Santi Quattro Coronati was built shortly after their deaths by Pope Melchiades (311-314). It was restored and enlarged in the ninth century before being burned to the ground when the Normans sacked the area in 1084.

It was rebuilt in the early twelfth-century and also has a delightful early thirteenth century cloister. The nuns who live here are an enclosed order and most of them are never seen by visitors. One nun admits visitors to the cloister on request and as we were about to leave she asked where we were from and then asked if we would like to visit the crypt and see the tombs of the four martyrs. I have visited here many times before and have never been granted this privilege! She unlocked a great metal door and took us down a flight of steps and there, directly beneath the High Altar were the marble sarcophagi of the four saints. The nun who accompanied us was clearly moved even though she must have visited the crypt many times before. She asked us to pray with her and so we all joined together in saying the Lord's Prayer. At that moment we ceased to be tourists and became pilgrims. It was a very humbling experience to remember the circumstances of the soldiers' deaths and to see the unshakable faith of those who preserve their memory today.

On the Sunday afternoon we attended Vespers at St Peter's Basilica and took time to wander around this awe-inspiring building. We went down into the crypt and saw not only the tombs of the Popes but also the tomb of the exiled Stuarts; James Edward, "the Old Pretender"; Charles Edward, "the Young Pretender" (Bonnie Prince Charlie) and his brother Henry, the last of the direct Stuart line.

Our journey through two thousand years of Church history was brought right up to date on the Wednesday morning when we attended the Pope's General Audience in St Peter's Square. It was during the audience that we had the only shower of rain that week and it was a stunning sight to witness a hundred thousand umbrellas of every imaginable colour being raised at the same moment. The whole square became a patchwork of multicoloured waterproof material.

We were made very welcome by the Sisters at Fraterna Domus and we enjoyed every moment of our stay with them. On our final evening we were allowed to use the convent chapel for a short service to give thanks for the fellowship we had enjoyed during the week. This is the prayer with which we ended our memorable and inspiring week:

“God of all, who walks with us all the days of our lives, even when we do not know it, we bring to you our thanks for all the blessings which your love has brought to our lives. We thank you for our homes and the communities in which we live, for our families and friends and for all those both known and unknown to us whose lives and work help support our lives.

We thank you for the various church and chapel communities to which we belong and for the fellowship they provide for us, the opportunities for doing your work and for advancing the boundaries of your kingdom through them.

We thank you for this week of fellowship we have enjoyed together and for the many wonderful and beautiful things we have seen. We thank you for the artists, sculptors and builders of many generations who have left behind them such a treasure store of marvels, not only for our pleasure but for us to use as a window through which we may catch glimpses of you and your glory. We pray that our time here may inspire us in the days ahead and that the many examples we have come across of ordinary people, just like us, who were prepared to suffer and even die for their faith may help us to stand firm and defend our faith against those who would seek to belittle or destroy it.

Lastly, we thank you for our own lives, especially for that spirit of enquiry and interest within us which spurs us on to learn more about you and about your creation.

We make these prayers in the spirit of Jesus. Amen.

Wishing you every blessing.
Andrew.

On behalf of the congregation and all the people who visited Rome I would like to thank Andrew for the tremendous amount of work he put into ensuring the success of the trip. This was quite an undertaking and I am pleased that the holiday went well for all concerned. Andrew has told me that he has already received requests for a repeat performance next year!!

Ken Howard



A group photograph of our pilgrims during their recent visit to Rome

UNITARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP

Leaders for November

5th Nov: Sue Howard
12th Nov: Clare Bullock
19th Nov: Ruth Mills
26th Nov: Sue Howard
3rd Dec: Clare Bullock



All young people, whether regular attenders or visitors, 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.

FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL GROUP

At our latest meeting, much of our discussions were about the forthcoming Bazaar to be held on 4th November starting at 11 am. Please make an enormous effort to come and support us. We seem to have had an unlucky, and consequently an expensive year—what with dry rot, burglaries as well as completing the decorating etc. Any help you can give will be much appreciated. If you can manage to provide gifts/bottles/home-made produce that would be great, but if not, you and your purse would be most welcome. Refreshments will be served as usual with what I believe a 'special' coming out of the kitchen this year. We look forward to seeing you ALL there. If you live too far away, why not ask someone who lives locally to do some buying on your behalf—raffle tickets are good and we will always keep your prize for you until it can be delivered/picked up for you.

Our next Whist Drive will be held on 17th November at church starting at 7.30 pm. Following that we shall be having a Christmas Special Whist Drive to be held on Friday 1st December. We shall be charging a little extra for this one (£3.00) but the refreshments will be bigger and better with a definite Christmas taste to them. This will start as usual at 7.30 pm so we welcome you all to come along and join us.

Just looking forward a little, we are intending holding a British Isles Dinner on Friday 26th January 2007. Please look out on the notice board for the list and enter the date in your diary.

Finally, we shall be holding our next Fund Raising meeting on Monday 20th November at 8 pm at church. We really need anyone to come along who thinks they could help in any way, even if it is only ideas that you can provide for fund raising or entertainment, we need you.

Sue Howard

LADIES CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY (WOMEN'S LEAGUE)

The Ladies Monthly Tea will be held on Wednesday 1st November at 3 pm when the hostess will be Mrs Olwyn Murphy. All ladies are welcome.

The Ladies Service will be on Sunday 29th October when the service will be conducted by Rev Jean McNeile.

Once again we will be visiting Great Hucklow for our **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH**. This will take place on Wednesday 6th December. Please put your names and those of your friends on the notice board in the porch. If it is more convenient please ring me on 0161 3307072. I shall need a deposit of £5 per person as soon as possible

Margaret Hallsworth

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Andrew will conduct our usual Advent Services. Our main carol service will be held on Christmas Eve.

24th Dec 2.30 pm Juvenile Membership Family
 Carol Service

24th Dec 6.30 pm Candlelit Carol Service.

25th Dec 11.00 am Christmas Day Service

Parents who would like their children to be Juvenile Members of Church should contact Clare Bullock (0161 3038872). She will require the full name of the child plus £1 membership. The membership certificates will be distributed during the Juvenile Membership Service. During this service UYPG book awards will also be handed out.

SPECIAL SERVICES AND EVENTS 2006

Sat Nov 4th	11 am	Bazaar
Sun Nov 12th	11 am	Remembrance Day Service
Wed Dec 6th		Ladies Society Christmas Lunch at Great Hucklow
Sun Dec 24th	2.30 pm	Juvenile Membership Family Carol Service
Sun Dec 24th	6.30 pm	Candlelit Carol service
Mon Dec 25th	11 am	Christmas Day service

£1 A MONTH CLUB

We are now into the second six-month period of this year and we still have a few people who have not renewed from last year. It is never too late and if you wish to rejoin or become a member for the first time, then please contact me. I am at church most Sundays, but if you do not see me there I can be contacted on 0161 344 0942 or at 45 Church Street, Dukinfield, SK16 4PR. Last month's winner was Mrs Joan Bradbury.

Beryl Bradbury

STALYBRIDGE UNITARIAN CHURCH
Forester Drive, Stalybridge



ANNUAL BAZAAR

Saturday November 4th 2006



Official opening
at 11 am
By Rev Andrew Parker



All the usual stalls and
attractions including
refreshments will be
available so come along and
bring your friends

Entrance 50p at the door

WEB SITE

We are pleased to inform you that Colin and Philip Horsfield have already done a lot of work to update our website. The Minister is working together with Colin and Philip to ensure that all the content is correct. This work is still ongoing but if you have access to the internet please check it out at;

www.stalybridgeunitarians.org.uk

BUILDING NEWS

After successfully solving the dry rot problem I regret to inform the congregation that we have suffered another financial setback. The church cellar was broken into a few weeks ago and a quantity of copper pipe supplying water, gas and the central heating system was stolen. This has now been repaired at an approximate cost of £1500. Hopefully this expense will be covered by our insurers. However it is likely that we will need to provide extra security at the back of church. We will probably need to install roller shutter doors or collapsible gates. The cost of this is likely to be £1500 to £2000.

If you feel you can help please send your donations to the treasurer (address at front). Please make cheques payable to Stalybridge Unitarian Church.

Our own members and friends continue to be generous and we thank them all for their donations. We are also grateful to The East Cheshire Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for their grant of £500 towards the cost of the dry rot repairs.

Ken Howard

CHURCH FLOWERS FOR NOVEMBER

- 5th Vacant day (Flowers will be provided by the Flower Secretary)
- 12th Mr Jack Greenwood in memory of Mrs Florence Greenwood and Mr & Mrs Frank Greenwood
- 19th Mr Brian Oliver in memory of Mr Frank Oliver
- 26th Mr & Mrs George Horbury

There are a few vacancies on the flower calendar. If you are interested in donating flowers please contact Margaret Hallsworth.

STEWARDS FOR NOVEMBER

- 5th Tom Whitehead
- 12th: Bill Atkin
- 19th: Don Andrews
- 26th: Ken Howard
- 3rd Dec Stuart Hinchliffe

If anyone would like to become a steward please contact the warden.

NOVEMBER

Wed 1st 3.00 pm Ladies Society Monthly tea hosted by
Olwyn Murphy

Sat 4th 11.00 am Bazaar

Sun 5th 11.00 am Morning Service and UYPG.

Sun 12th 11.00 am Morning Service and UYPG.
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE

Wed 15th 7.30 pm ECU Council Meeting at Mossley

Fri 17th 7.30 pm Whist Drive

Sun 19th 11.00 am Morning Service and UYPG .
Service conducted by Myrna Michell

Mon 20th 8.00 pm Fund Raising and Social Group meeting

Wed 22nd 8.00 pm Church Committee Meeting

Sun 26th 11.00 am Morning Service and UYPG.
Service conducted by Ken Howard

Fri 1st December 7.30 pm Christmas Whist Drive