

**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**

SEPTEMBER 2010

**THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE IS
SPONSORED BY
Joan Norton
in memory of
Eda Kilroy**

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

Starting on September 22nd (the fourth Wednesday in September) we will begin meetings of a new worship/prayer group at 7.30pm – The Fourth Wednesday Group. It will be very different in style to our Sunday service consisting only of quiet music, prayer and silence. There will be an opportunity at every meeting for those present (if they wish) to name people or concerns for the group to pray for that evening and in the month ahead but nobody will be *required* to say anything, all our prayers, whether spoken or held within our hearts will be equally important. Please join us for this opportunity of being together for peaceful, meditative prayer. I hope that it will provide a time away from the noisy, busy world which surrounds us and from our own often hectic lives and that it will be a source of strength and support for us in the days which follow. Everyone is welcome and if you have family or friends who do not attend church but who you think would value this quiet time together do invite them along. Future meetings will be on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

Thinking about Sunday services, the order of our service is now quite different from that which I inherited when I began my ministry here in 1994 and it is even more different from the sung, liturgical orders of service our older members can remember. It retains the basic and essential elements of prayer, praise, thanksgiving and the reading of the Word of God without which it would no longer be a service and we would no longer be a church. Yet things can never stand still. Our Sunday service is constantly evolving and changing. One recent addition to the service has been the Musical Offering which our organist, Barry contributes each week. This is not intended to be the same as the Music for Meditation piece which Norman would contribute each week at that point in the service but rather it is an opportunity for us to listen to music which can inspire and enthuse us and remind us of the creative gifts which God has given, not only to composers and musicians but to each and every one of us. In the coming months Barry will play a wide variety of pieces in differing musical styles, some familiar and some completely new to most of us. All will assist us to glorify and praise God in our worship.

I had discussed with Norman last year the possibility of moving the meditational music to a later place in the service as a number of people had asked for a time to gather their thoughts after the sermon. We never got around to making the change at that time but a few weeks ago Barry began playing a short piece of quiet meditational music at the conclusion of the sermon which I hope will provide that precious few moments for reflection and meditation.

There will be one other change to our service sometime later this year. After a number of years (yes, really!) of discussion and consultation with members of the congregation and the committee the balance of opinion now seems to be that the time has come to change the way we end our service each Sunday. Many people have commented that they find singing "God be in my head" an unsatisfactory way to end our worship week after week. I still need to give more thought to what (if anything) will replace it so it will be a few more weeks yet before this change is made.

Every blessing,

Andrew

HARVEST FESTIVAL

The Harvest Festival service will be held at 11 am on Sunday 3rd October. We have decided to move away from our traditional donations of produce this year. Instead of the usual donations of produce and flowers we would like to ask the congregation to donate an equivalent amount of money which will be collected and given to the charity "MEDEQUIP4KIDS". This is a North west based charity that supplies specialist medical care and equipment for sick children in the area. The committee feels that this is a very worthwhile cause which deserves the support of the congregation. We will still retain a small traditional harvest display but we would ask that the congregation supports this initiative. Please hand your donations in a suitably marked envelope to any committee member.

FUND RAISING

Here we are again trying to come to terms with another wet summer! I had high hopes in May when we had a few weeks of warm sunshine, but sadly it wasn't to last. We are continuing however with our fund raising events at church.

We all seemed to enjoy our evening drive out which although it was a bit damp it was a pleasant drive over to Holmfirth where a fish and chip supper was enjoyed by all. It was nice to see some old friends there – Eric Caton and his family who joined us from their home in Yorkshire.

So, firstly, our next Whist Drive will be held on Friday 3rd September starting, as usual, at 7.30 pm at church. Please come along and join us for an enjoyable evening out when you may even win a prize! The cost is £2 which includes a raffle and refreshments. Everyone is welcome; you don't have to be an expert!! The one following that will be held on Friday, October 1st.

We are still hoping to arrange a trip to Gorton Monastery on Sunday 5th September. It seems like everyone wants to just do the tour after a light lunch at church. Please ensure your name is on the list on the notice board as soon as possible, so we know how many to cater for.

Following that, we will be holding an evening entitled "Rome 2010 The Movie" when an extended film will be shown of Andrew's latest Rome trip and this will be held on 17th September. Italian snacks will be served over the evening, but please enter your name on the notice board or let Andrew or me know if you wish to come so we can cater accurately. The cost of the evening will be £5 and it will start at 7.30 as usual.

We hope to hold a Craft Evening at church on 15th October when a few talented people will be demonstrating their skills, so guests can wander around and watch whichever skill you are interested in. Further details will be given at a later date.

Following that we shall be holding a 'Friday Night is Music Night' when we shall be having 'Show Tunes' and this will be held on Friday 12th November. Everyone is welcome and anyone who has a favourite show tune or a song from a musical is asked to bring it along and we can all hear the most popular ones. Refreshments will be served with probably a glass of wine or two if wished. If you have a song you would like to bring along, it would be better if it was on CD but please let Ken or Sue have it a little while before hand so we can form some kind of programme. If you have a favourite song and don't have it on a CD, let me know and we will do our best to find it. If this night proves successful, we hope to have other nights with perhaps jazz or classical - whatever people want. There will be a notice going up on the board for this, so please enter your name if you wish to come along.

Just to give you a bit of advance notice, the Christmas Fair this year will be held on Saturday 27th November – so please put the date in your diary to ensure we have a good turnout.

We are still holding coffee mornings on the last Friday of every month starting at 10pm until 12 noon. Please come along for a chat and a cup of tea or coffee and a piece of cake.

Our next fund raising meeting will be held on Monday 20th September 2010 at 7.15 pm which is just before the main church committee meeting. Please feel free to join us if you feel you could help in any way. We always need help with new fund raising ideas and it might be YOU who can provide them.

Sue Howard

BAPTISM

25th July Benjamin Elliot Price, son of Ian and Jennifer Price. It was a delight to welcome Ben formally to the Church and to our congregation, but he is of course no stranger to us, being with us most Sunday mornings. We hope that as he grows up he will benefit from his association with the Young People's Group and with the congregation.

WARDEN'S NOTES

I first conducted a service in church when I was about 13 years old. I remember being very nervous. Even now I still feel nervous but it is something I really enjoy doing. I am fortunate enough to conduct services in a variety of Unitarian churches in the North west and it is always interesting to visit other churches and meet new people.

In recent years there have been various attempts to change the ethos of the Unitarian denomination away from the traditional Free Christian position. Some people seem to believe that the Unitarian movement should simply be there as a fall back denomination to catch people who have become disillusioned with their own church. The movement has also, at times, tried to promote itself as a non-Christian denomination and move towards the Universalist tradition. Some people would have us believe that free Christianity is old-fashioned and of little value in today's society.

I am happy to tell you that this is certainly not the case. The Unitarian Free Christian tradition is alive and well and, dare I say it, kicking. I have been honoured to preach at a number of churches over the summer that are just like us, Free Christians allowed to face their doubts, allowed to look at their faith with their eyes and ears open.

I genuinely believe, contrary to some opinions, that Free Christians now make up the majority of people involved with Unitarian congregations.

Christianity may be old but it is not old fashioned. Our worship has changed, we now embrace more modern thoughts and writings but the underlying principles of Free Christianity remain unchanged. That is how it should be.

Ken Howard

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The meeting September will be held on the 2nd Wednesday(for this month only) due to various commitments. We will meet at 3pm as usual and the hostess for this month is me.

Margaret Hallsworth

90TH BIRTHDAY

Mrs Gladys Drury celebrates her 90th birthday on 2nd September. Gladys will celebrate her birthday with a drop in party at church on Saturday 28th August from 2pm to 4.30pm. Everyone is invited to help Gladys and her family celebrate reaching this important milestone.

CHURCH GARDENS AND GROUNDS

I hope you have all noticed all the clearing and tidying work that has and is still being done on the church grounds. Derek Clayton (assisted by Bill Atkin) has worked tirelessly over the summer. On behalf of the congregation I would like to thank Derek and Bill for all their hard work.

MEMORIAL TREE

As some of you may have noticed, we now have a Memorial Tree at the back of church. If anyone would like someone remembered, please get in touch with Clare Bullock or Sue Howard and we will arrange for the children to make your tag to hang on the tree. You can choose your shape – we have a flower, a bird, a butterfly, a heart, a star and a leaf up to now, so you need to decide what shape you want and what colour and also we need a brief message to be written and it can then be hung on the tree. There is no cost involved; it is just a project the UYPG have undertaken. The more we have on, the better it will look, so please get in touch!

BUILDING SURVEY

We would like to place on record our thanks to The East Cheshire Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches who have organised and paid for a complete building survey. Your committee will act accordingly once the full report has been received. - Ken

FAVOURITE HYMNS SERVICE

We will be holding a Favourite Hymns Service on Sunday 10th October. Please let me have your choice as soon as possible. The ten most popular choices will be sung. - Ken

Calendar September 2010

Fri 3rd	7.30pm	Whist Drive
Sun 5th	11am	Morning Service & UYPG Trip to Gorston Monestery (After Service TBC)
Wed 8th	3pm	Women's Congregational Society Monthly Tea
Sun 12th	11am	Morning Service & UYPG
Fir 17th	7.30pm	"Rome 2010—The Movie"
Sun 19th	11am	Morning Service & UYPG
Mon 20th	7.15pm 8pm	Fund Raising & Social Committee Meeting Church Committee Meeting
Wed 22nd	7.30pm	The Fourth Wednesday Group (NEW worship/prayer group meeting)
Fri 24th	10-12	Coffee Morning
Sun 26th	11am	Morning Service & UYPG

MUSIC DURING THE SERVICE

5th	Canzonetta Del salvator Rosa	F Liszt
12th	I don't know how to love him	A Webber
19th	Caro mio Ben	Giordani
26th	Swing low Sweet Chariot	(Spiritual)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 3rd October Harvest Festival

Sunday 10th October Favourite Hymns Service

Friday 15th October Craft Evening

Friday 12th November "Friday Night is Music Night"

Saturday 27th November Christmas Fair

STEWARDS FOR SEPTEMBER

Sunday 5th Ken Howard

Sunday 12th Tom Whitehead

Sunday 19th Stuart Hinchliffe

Sunday 26th Bill Atkin

FLOWERS FOR SEPTEMBER

5th Mr & Mrs Geoff Spiby in memory of The Schofield Family

12th Mrs Janet Pearson in memory of Mary Dagnah

19th Mr David Dawson in memory of Mr & Mrs Harry Dawson

26th Mr Bill Atkin in memory of Mrs Margaret Atkin