

THE WAKEFIELD UNITARIAN

The Newsletter of Westgate Chapel, Wakefield
www.ukunitarians.org.uk/wakefield/

April 2014



This is the truth that passes
all understanding,
this is the joy to all forever
free:
life springs from death and
shatters every fetter,
and winter turns to spring
eternally.

*Robert Terry Weston
(172 Sing Your Faith)*

Gathering for Worship in April

Sunday 6 th April	10.30am	Stephen Carlile
Sunday 13 th April	3pm	Jim Stearn (Palm Sunday)
Sunday 20 th April	3pm	David Arthur (Easter Day)
Sunday 27 th April	3pm	Brinley Price
Tuesday 29 th April	7pm	Kate Taylor

Sunday Welcoming Rota

Sunday Welcomers do an important job in making everyone feel welcome at our services. As always, if you are unable to act as welcomer on the day indicated, you are asked to arrange an exchange.

Sunday 6th April: Bill Humphreys

Sunday 13th April: Pat Howard

Sunday 20th April: Chris Pilkington

Sunday 27th April: Liz Kitson

You who have an eye for miracles regard the bud now appearing on the bare branch of the fragile young tree.

It's a mere dot, a nothing.

But already it's a flower, already a fruit, already its own death and resurrection.

Diego Valeri (625 Singing the Living Tradition)

Chapel News and Notices

Does anyone have a use for empty coconut shells? Jan Millington has many to dispose of.

The Martineau Society

The Martineau Society, which aims to foster the collection, preservation, study and publication of material relating to the Martineau family, is seeking new members. The annual subscription rate for individuals is £20. Contact Gaby Weiner, 27 East Street, Lewes. BN7 2LJ. www.martineausociety.co.uk

Discussion of GA Motions

There will be a meeting after the morning service on 6th April to discuss the motions for this year's General Assembly meetings (see below for the list of motions).

The Westgate Forum

Tuesday 1st April 10.30am. The meeting will focus on anger and jealousy – are they always bad? How do we respond to our own feelings and those of others?

Ministry

There are proposals that we should join with Bradford Unitarians in appointing a minister and that he or she should be part of a YUU-wide consortium of ministers (and worship leaders), with other ministers from Mill Hill and, possibly, Scarborough/Hull. As far as Westgate Chapel is concerned, this is at present 'kicked into touch'. We would need some £18,000 a year. The Trustees can guarantee no more than £5,000 a year and it seems very doubtful indeed that the congregation could find the rest. We deferred an application to the GA 20:20 fund because the proposals were not sufficiently advanced to be able to make a good case for funding. It remains to be seen whether the YUU can provide any funds and whether we might find money from elsewhere. It has to be said, however, that a good many members of the Chapel Committee are not in favour of having a minister at all.

The Per Capita Payment

This year our per capita payment to the General Assembly is £32. We are always immensely grateful to those members who are willing and able to reimburse the chapel funds for this sum. Please give the money, if you can, to our Treasurer, Bill Humphreys.

A Final Junior Weekend

I was sad, and excited, but looking forward to seeing Calvin and Dylan for the last time at Junior Weekend. There are many other friends I have met too, including the leaders. I started my name badge as soon as I got there. Because we get there early I have a chance to pick the bed I want and sort my case. We played different games to get to know each other this time, then supper and bed. Within an hour we were asleep. The weather was good, so we had lots of playing out time, in between doing crafts. I got picked to do a reading in church. The theme was festivals, and I learned to play the drums. After church I had to go to the trough and get dunked again because it was my last time. Junior weekend has been really good and I will miss going, but I'm looking forward to going to inters. Thank you very much to church for supporting me in going to Juniors, it's been really good.

Joshua Carlile



A Dad's View:

It's been an odd journey, and I still remember Mel saying she'd take Josh when he was old enough....she never did, and I've loved every minute, though every weekend break needs a holiday after it! I've met with some lovely people, and it's been a good place for networking. Josh isn't the only one with an extended understanding of our church. I'd be happy to pay tribute to the staff who work tirelessly at the centre, they have been brilliant for Josh...and me.

Stephen Carlile

How can our liturgy be varied and why should we look for change?

A Report of the March meeting of the Westgate Forum from Kate Taylor

The topic provided a (perhaps surprisingly) rich discussion. It seemed that 'liturgy' meant for some a fully set out Order of Service such as is to be found in printed books from the past, with psalms, chants, litanies and formal responses. That is very different from today's typical hymn sandwich, where, if there is a litany at all, it is a one-off provided by the day's worship leader on a specially printed sheet and where everything else is a matter of the worship leader's choice, too. But who could cope today with the stresses in a set psalm or the 'melody' of a sung response? An advantage of having a set liturgy was said to be that it could be used at home for private devotions. A disadvantage is that such services are probably best when led by a choir. We don't have one.

But we would welcome a good voice or two. We had all much enjoyed the solo provided by Anthony's partner, Andy, when Anthony last took a service. (We forgot that we had also had a solo from Jim Stearn a little while ago). The single chorister in our congregation might be persuaded to do the occasional solo. Jim Timiney, we recollected, sometimes enlivens a service with his guitar. And it is always lovely when Lauren plays her flute.

We liked change for several reasons: it adds to the interest of a service, it can be fun, it is welcome if it provides something uplifting, it is good if it involves more active participation.

In terms of this last, we welcomed the inclusion of a reading by a member of the congregation rather than hearing a single worship leader's voice all the time. We remembered Stephen and Joshua doing a piece together from *The Importance of Being Ernest*. There is something to be said, too, for the occasions when people are invited to light a candle and say something brief about the meaning the gesture has. But we regretted the lack of audibility. Should we have more movement in services? We do not

have the episode now common in Anglican churches of walking around to shake others' hands and uttering, 'Peace be with you'. Nor do we clap and wave our arms to the music of a hymn. But neither of those activities is quite our way. We noted that Wakefield Cathedral has a labyrinth which demands a form of walking meditation. But then on Shrove Tuesday people also walked the Stations of the Cross in the Cathedral. We rather liked the occasions when something is brought round to us, whether a pebble, a potato crisp, or a carefully woven paper cross. Stephen Carlile, we remarked, is good at finding ways to involve us in his services.

We talked about the variety provided by new hymns and the problem of being confronted with both new words and a new tune. It was not that we did not like having innovation – rather it was our inadequacy. We need to hear new tunes played through once or twice before we can even hope to sing them. Otherwise we have the organist doing a solo. Might it be a good idea to try the tune through in those minutes before the service actually starts?

Should we have a discussion sometimes in a service? It would mean everyone sitting together at the front of the Chapel

We turned to prayers (not to prayer!). Some did not like prayers of petition. Prayers of thanks were all right. Extempore prayers were entirely and firmly out. Some of us remembered those lengthy, ill phrased, ungrammatical extempore prayers rendered by Methodist lay men in broad Yorkshire accents.

Could we vary the music for the Lord's Prayer? It seemed that the copy of one that we used to use has become lost. Help!

Motions for the 2014 General Assembly

There will be a meeting after the morning service on 6th April to discuss the motions going before the General Assembly in April. Bill Humphreys is our delegate to this year's meeting. The non-procedural motions to be discussed are listed below.

- 1.** That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches elects the Rev. Dr. Vernon Marshall as Vice President of the General Assembly for the year 2014-15.
- 2.** That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches calls upon the BBC Religion and Ethics advisers to broaden the BBC Radio 4 Thought for the Day by including secular speakers.
- 4.** The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its support for the campaign being undertaken by our Unitarian co-religionists, the Hungarian Unitarian Church, along with other church groups and environmental protection groups, against extensive mining operations in the Roşia Montană area of Transylvania, Romania. We are appalled at (i) the possible uprooting of the residents of this community from their homes, livelihoods, places of worship and their burial grounds and (ii) the known risk of major environmental damage from the use of cyanide in the mining operations. We call upon the Romanian government to discontinue permanently all consideration and negotiations regarding this mining development by the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation in this area.
- 5.** That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches asks the Executive Committee to make their recommendation for GA Vice-President on the basis of appropriateness for the post, and without reference to the present convention of alternating lay person and minister. We would hope that the Executive Committee would still be mindful of the need for some balance, over time, between lay persons, ministers and other variables such as gender and geography.
- 6.** This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, reaffirming our commitment to the Charter for Compassion and its message of empathy and universal compassion and our respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part: acclaims the vital work of the British Red Cross in helping save the lives of millions of people in Syria and the Philippines and commends fellow Unitarians and all people of goodwill who have contributed to the Clara Barton Disasters Emergency Appeal in response to recent appeals issued on behalf of the General Assembly; and, should the General Assembly, through the Executive Committee, decide to issue further appeals in response to major international disasters, encourages Unitarians everywhere to support them generously and wholeheartedly.

The Chapel Pastoral Care Team

Members of the Chapel's pastoral team are willing to provide a confidential ear and to visit people at home. Contact Kate Taylor (kate@airtime.co.uk).

The Engagement Group

The group chooses a location and theme for each meeting, engaging with one another following engagement group principles. The group has been dormant for a while, so if you are interested please get in touch. Contact Steve (boudicca7@talktalk.net) or Mel at Chapel.

Safeguarding

Our Safeguarding Policy is now available in the Chapel Vestry, and the summary statement and poster on display on the entrance noticeboard. If you have any concerns about the safety of our children and vulnerable adults please contact the safeguarding office (Mel Prideaux) immediately. All contact information and procedures are in the policy document.

Fire Evacuation Procedure

A chapel fire procedure is available on the noticeboard. Fire Officer is Paul Dawson, who can be contacted at Chapel with any queries or concerns.

Officers of the Chapel Committee:

Chairman: John Goodchild, 12 Shakespeare Avenue, Normanton, WF6 1EA

Hon Secretary and Pulpit Supply: Kate Taylor, 19 Pinder's Grove, Wakefield, WF1 4AH, 01924 372748 kate@airtime.co.uk

Hon Treasurer: Bill Humphreys, 4 Gloucester Grove, Lupset WF2 8NG

Newsletter Editor and Safeguarding Officer: Mel Prideaux, 3 Pinfold Lane, Sandal, WF2 7LN, 01924 781020 melanieprideaux@virginmedia.com

Westgate Chapel was opened in 1752. Its congregation was established in 1662 and became Unitarian in view in the eighteenth century. It has taken a leading part in the economic, social, educational, political - and spiritual - development of Wakefield and its vicinity.