

THE WAKEFIELD UNITARIAN

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

February 2012

May we learn that it is love that makes us whole -
Love in all its guises: the love of lovers, the love of
families, the love of friends. Love reaching out to
strangers, to enemies, to wasted faces on our
television screens.

Great mystery, you give love; you are love.
Make us to be your caress, your kiss, your loving
touch to those you love.

From a Valentine's Day prayer by Cliff Reed.

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.**



Services in February

First service of the month is at 10.30, all other services at 3pm

February 5th: Chris Pilkington

February 12th: Revd. Bill Darlison

February 19th: Revd. Bill Darlison

February 26th: Revd. Bill Darlison

Welcoming Rota

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.

February 5th: Pat Howard

February 12th: Nancy Denison

February 19th: Ralph Denby

February 26th: John Goodchild

Flowers

Flowers are provided by Nancy Denison. If you can offer to provide, arrange, or pay for the flowers in any week please do let her know!

The Westgate Forum

An informal discussion group which meets monthly in the Chapel Vestry to discuss a topic chosen by the group. The next meeting will be on February 7th at **10.30am**, and will be on 'Facing the Cuts'. Everyone is most welcome!

Could you be the Chapel delegate for the 2012 General Assembly Meetings?

This year's General Assembly meetings take place 3rd-6th April at Keele University. The meetings are a chance to meet Unitarians from around the country and find out about the key issues for the movement. As the Chapel delegate you will also vote on motions and other business that arises. The chapel provides a grant towards the cost of attending and might subsidise travel. If you are interested in attending please contact the Chapel secretary, Kate Taylor, as soon as possible and by February 10th at the latest.

More information about the meetings can be found on the GA website: www.unitarian.org.uk

Could you help brighten up the Chapel website?

Chris Pilkington, our webmaster, has requested more photographs of Chapel events and people. Our website is an important place where people find out about us, and photographs will help them get a feel for our friendly little community. Photographs that you think might be of use should be forwarded to Chris Pilkington: chris.pilkington@phonecoop.coop

The Chapel website can be found at:
www.ukunitarians.org.uk/wakefield

The 'Quota' payments

Our esteemed Treasurer, Bill Humphreys, does a marvellous job keeping our finances in order. However, he has just had to write a big cheque (not his favourite task)! We pay a sum to the GA on an annual basis – and this year the amount is £29 per head for all members. It would be appreciated if those who feel able to donate this, in addition to their customary offertory, could forward the amount to Bill. The sum assists the GA in their work of supporting congregations around the country.

HELPERS WANTED!

The Wakefield Countryside Service has asked the West Yorkshire Geology Trust to run a GEODAY of activities for adults and children on Sunday August 5th 2012, at Angler's Country Park. This has been popular in the past. The Trust has lots of activities, displays and samples prepared, but they need volunteers to be present and talk to the visitors when they arrive with their children and rock/mineral/fossil samples. Could YOU plan your holidays so that you could come along and help? Contact Pat Howard at Chapel for more information.

Green City Bats... news from Pat Howard:

You may remember that we were contacted by Diana Hagues of the Bat Conservation Trust last year. Some of us are interested and perhaps know where there are bat colonies. After some thought I decided not to send the details of possible sites on to the organisation because it may lead to unwanted nocturnal visitors. However I do recommend the Bat Walks arranged by the council each summer. Our young people would be very interested.

Wakefield Interfaith Group

The next meeting of Wakefield Interfaith Group will be on Monday February 27th at 6pm in Treacy Hall.

There will be a film "The Pastor and the Imam", showing how two adversaries examine their faiths and become friends.

We are invited to bring some food to share, with tea and coffee provided, when there is time at the end to socialise ... an important part of any meeting.

The restoration of our historic organ

Kate Taylor

Book this date in your diary: Wednesday 25 April 2012. That is when Jonathan Bielby, formerly for many years the organist and choirmaster at Wakefield Cathedral, will give a recital to celebrate the restoration of our historic organ. It will be a gala event!

It was almost twenty years ago, on 16 May 1993, that Jonathan played our organ to mark the beginning of our project to secure its restoration. He shared that event with soprano Juliet Booth, a descendant of the man who first built our organ, and who was then appearing with Opera North.

It has taken quite some time, then, to raise the money so that we could commission the work. And it has taken fifteen months for the work to be done. It took several weeks to dismantle it and many more months to rebuild it. But, as our organ adviser Paul Hale observed after his visit in January, 'Many places would never have accomplished it!'

The restoration has been carried out to an immensely high standard by the Huddersfield firm of David Wood. Giving a talk at the chapel in November to the Wakefield and District Organists' Association, David said that, as his team dismantled it, they had never before seen so very dirty an organ. He attributed it to the soot from the steam engines passing close by through Westgate Station. He also described how crude some of the woodwork was – that of a joiner rather than an organ builder. He thought that this confirmed that the organ is the one by Francis Booth that we know was installed in 1847. However signatures on the sound boards reflect work done, no doubt to enlarge it, in 1873-4. Further work was done in 1893.

Money has come from the Chapel Trustees who set aside £1,000 or £2,000 a year to build up the core fund, the Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust which gave a grant of £10,000, and the Pilgrim Trust which provided £22,000. Smaller sums came from the Yorkshire Unitarian Union (£850) and Wakefield MD Council Community Chest (£500).

To pay the final bill, the Trustees have had to find a further £1,000. Advisers to the Pilgrim Trust made clear that they wanted the original paint scheme of the front organ pipes to be replicated. This meant our engaging a paint conservator to identify how the mouths of the pipes had been outlined in red and gold and it meant Woods engaging a craftsman to do the work. No doubt the Trust was right: the pipes look great. But the work lay outside the original budget. And, whilst the work has been done under contract for a fixed sum, so challenging was the task, and so fragile much of the organ, that the real cost must be far above the contract price. Then it has no longer been possible to reclaim the VAT on work on historic organs and this has been paid at 17% for the first invoices and 20% for the later ones.

The organ sounds magnificent ! It will take some weeks to settle in during which time David Wood will himself return from time to time to 'tweak' it. Hence the opening recital has been scheduled for April to give time for everything to be pretty perfect. Meanwhile Paul Dawson will play on a regular basis for a number of services and we hope that Anthony Dawson will continue to play for some others.

After that we hope that recitals at the Chapel will become a part of Wakefield's cultural scene.

January saw a service led by Anthony Dawson with his brother Paul playing the newly reinstated organ. (*You can learn a good deal more about the Booth family of organ builders and our organ in particular from Paul Dawson's book: Booths of Wakefield: Organ Builders to the World 1796-1893*)



A little bit of a laugh...

A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.

'Mum, look what I found,' the boy called out.

'What have you got there, dear?'

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, 'I think it's Adam's underwear!' *(from Bill and Dinky!)*

The Homeless

Helping the homeless is difficult work, as some of us know all too well. Social Care Direct will advise a homeless person at any time , 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The phone number is: 0845 8 503 503. The homeless person must make the phone call him or herself. If the person is assessed to be 'vulnerable' Social Services will try to find accommodation, if the person is not considered to be 'vulnerable' St. George's Crypt in Leeds is the only shelter open at night. Members of the congregation have been working on ways to provide the right information. Let the Editor know if you would like to be involved.

The Engagement Group

An 'Engagement Group' consisting of Unitarians and non-Unitarians, is organised by Mel and Steve. The group meets regularly, choosing a different location and theme for each meeting, but actively engaging with one another following engagement group principles (see website: <http://www.unitarianengagementgroups.org.uk/>).

We explore and discuss spiritual themes, and the beliefs and attitudes which shape our lives. Newcomers are welcome, and should contact Steve (boudicca7@talktalk.net) or Mel (melpx@hotmail.com), either at Chapel or by email.

The Unitarian path is a liberal religious movement rooted in the Jewish and Christian traditions but open to insights from world faiths, reason and science, and with a spectrum extending from liberal Christianity through to religious humanism. (From The Unitarian Path by Andrew Hill.)

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