

THE WAKEFIELD UNITARIAN

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

May 2012

O power of springtime forgive us our speediness
and our racing before your eternal grace
that we do not see the myriad
miracle world we share.

Open our eyes with your warmth
and our hearts with your beauty
slow our minds with awe and wonder.

From 'A Springtime Pryaer' by George A. Tyger

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.**



Sunday Services in May

6 May : The first service of the month is intergenerational worship at 10.30am and will be taken by Kate Taylor.

The rest of the services for the month will be at 3pm:

13th May: Anthony Dawson

20th May: Rev Bill Darlison

27th May: Jim Stearn

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.

6th May: Pat Howard

13th May: Nancy Denison

20th May: Ralph Denby

27th May: 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!



A Report from David Arthur

I am very grateful for the financial sponsorship which enabled me to attend this year's Annual Meetings as the delegate for Westgate Chapel. Feeling ecologically righteous, Kate, Bill (Darlison) and I travelled together in one car. A mixed blessing, as we soon discovered that the distances between living accommodation and meeting rooms was quite a walk (there was a shuttle-bus, but not always when you wanted it). It was a good thing that we came in Kate's car, so that she had the use of it on campus; I did a lot of walking, and got lost twice (once in the snow)!

We had arrived early so as not to miss the John Relly Beard lecture, with the big attraction of Peter Owen-Jones, who was exactly as he appears on television, and just as entertaining, while making a serious point or two along the way. His message of toleration and universalism would, if taken logically, lead him to become a Unitarian, but sadly I don't expect him to!

The usual business meetings went well, and Ann Peart in the President's most difficult job as chairman of debate, managed to steer fairly well between Scylla and Charybdis. There were some hairy moments when the Steering Committee's wisdom had to be invoked – and even they didn't always get it right!

You will want to know what happened to the motions. Motion 4 about compulsory national service was lost, even after a wrecking amendment changing "compulsory" to "non-compulsory" had distorted it beyond recognition. Motion 6 about proxy voting was passed, but only by 68 to 61 with 16 abstentions – hardly a ringing endorsement; when the constitutional amendment is put next year, I doubt whether it will gain the necessary two-thirds majority. Motion 1 about assisted suicide was referred back for further consultation and re-drafting. Motion 5 about compulsory voting at elections was put back until the last day and then lost

(I think). All the others were passed, especially Motion 2 about same-sex marriage which was passed by 130 votes to 4; well done Maud Robinson.

What of the other events? The Anniversary Service went well, with good singing from the choir (I would say that, wouldn't I!) and a hard-hitting tub-thump of a sermon by Celia Cartwright. There was an interesting session on how to catch fraudulent treasurers – sad that we have to have such precautions, but apparently there have been some awful examples. Rather better was a presentation of the Newton Socially Responsible Investment Fund for Charities, which is to be recommended. Rev Tony McNeile gave a well-researched and interesting talk at the meeting of the Unitarian Earth Spirit Network, showing how we had slowly overcome our fear of the word Pagan. The Unitarian Association for Lay Ministry – which must be the fastest-growing fringe group in the denomination, with 60+ members and growing – had a good meeting too. One meeting which disappointed me, however, was the Visibility Strategy Group, which was badly organised, did not deliver what it promised, and the billed speaker was not even there! Many of the meetings which I didn't attend may well have been splendid. But that's the problem when there are four meetings all at the same time; you have to choose one, and then it's not really possible to dash to another one if your first choice turns out to be a dud.

The meetings ended, as always, with the pomp and circumstance, which included the election of our own Bill Darlison as Vice-President. He said not a single word this time; but his turn will come! Next year we are at Nottingham, a modern campus where we shan't have so far to walk.

The Installation of Rev Bill Darlison

Our very own Bill was installed as the Vice-President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches at this year's meetings in Keele. The photograph below was taken by Giles Croucher and shows current President, Lis Dyson-Jones with Bill. We look forward to seeing how much 'shaking up' Bill is responsible for when his term of office as President begins next April!



Inter Weekend: A Report by Lauren Prideaux

Last month (March) we, Zoe and I, went to Inter Weekend. Inter Weekend is a Unitarian youth programme. You may have known that myself, Zoe and Saskia went to a different youth programme called Junior Weekend but we are now eleven which means that we can move up a group to Inter Weekend. Inter Weekend is for eleven to thirteen year olds. At Inter Weekend there is a lot more of a Unitarian aspect to it which makes it a bit more special. At Junior Weekend we mainly do art but at Inter Weekend we do a variety of activities like making music, dancing, Samba drumming and every evening an epilogue which is a short time of worship. At Inter weekend there are really nice leaders who are: Claire Maddocks , Lorna Hill, James Barry, Al Warhurst, Louise Shatliff and Abi Dadson. During Inter weekend you get to meet Unitarian young people from all over the country. Another great aspect of Inter Weekend is that you don't have your parents with you! Inter weekend is run at Great Hucklow at the same time as the Seniors who have an age range of about thirteen to seventeen. The most enjoyable part of the Weekend for me was going on a hunt around Sheffield. Zoe and I really enjoyed Inter Weekend and Saskia is really looking forward to joining us next time.

Information about the Unitarian Youth Programme can be found online at:

<http://www.unitarian.org.uk/info/youth.shtml>

Spread the word among Unitarian family and friends!

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 8th May at **10.30am**, and will discuss 'What are the most important things in Life'?. Everyone is most welcome!

A very busy April...

Chapel was a-buzz with talks, organ recitals and other events in April thanks to the hard work of Chapel members. I hope we will have reports of some of these activities in our June issue – please do put pen to paper and forward reports, articles, snippets or anything else you think might be of interest. As a rule only one article of two page length will be included in the newsletter, so do think about length!

Mel Prideaux

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. The group has been dormant for a while, so if you are interested please do get in touch. Newcomers are welcome, and should contact Steve (boudicca7@talktalk.net) or Mel (melpx@hotmail.com), either at Chapel or by email.

Groan along with Bill Humphreys...

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied, 'They couldn't get a baby-sitter.'

Two boys were walking home from Sunday school after hearing a strong preaching on the devil. One said to the other, 'What do you think about all this Satan stuff?' The other boy replied, 'Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just your Dad.'

Three boys are in the playground bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, 'My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, they give him £50.'
The second boy says, 'That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on piece of paper, he calls it a song, they give him £100.'
The third boy says, 'I can beat both of you. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon, and it takes eight people to collect all the money!'

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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