



# THE YORK UNITARIAN

St. Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel, York, YO1 8NQ

April 2019

## FROM THE MINISTER

Easter this year falls in April. The 21<sup>st</sup> to be precise. It's a busy month in the Unitarian movement with our Annual Meetings falling just before Easter. Easter itself can be a difficult day for Unitarians who don't identify as Christian or who take a more Progressive Christian approach. And although there are many issues with the traditional interpretation of the Gospel stories, there is still much to be gained when it is seen as a story illustrating truths about the human condition and our relationship to God.

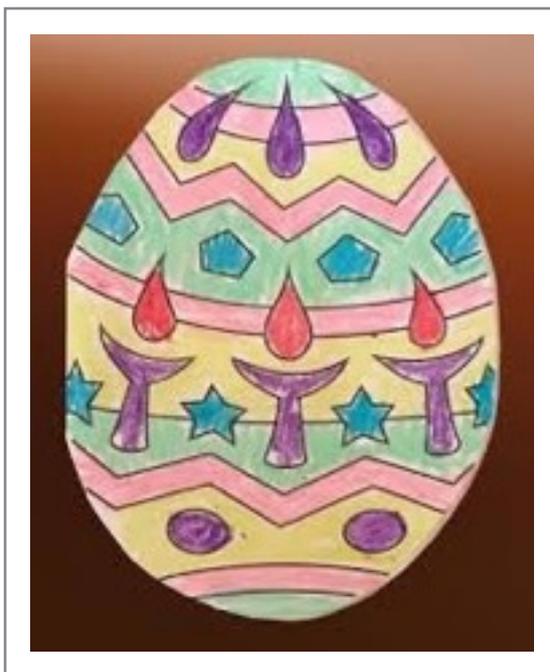
Many of us have a lingering sense of guilt and if not of guilt, then, perhaps, a feeling of not having done enough. Some of this guilt may be religious, based on the story of the one who died for our sins. As a young evangelical I followed the instructions to confess my sins and be cleansed from all unrighteousness. Unfortunately it was the guilt that stuck with me and not the sense of forgiveness or cleansing! Perhaps it is simply a part of the human condition. Even those who were raised without such religious teachings can labour under the heavy weight of a sense of not being a good person. Of not having done all they could.

Humility is a proper standpoint. We are all human after all. None of us is perfect. How can a Unitarian make sense of the ideas of original sin, redemption, salvation and atonement? You

will notice that, on the whole, our Easter hymns lack the features found in some other classic hymns, where the blood of the lamb has washed us clean. But we still need to feel, remind ourselves of, our wholeness and goodness, of our right to connect to the Divine, however we may interpret that.

If we cannot forgive the rotten spots in our own characters and accept ourselves as

imperfect, then it is easy for us to stigmatise the wrong doer as different from 'normal'. We call them 'evil' as though it has nothing to do with us. We still need to examine our consciences and challenge our own prejudices and resentments. We cannot luxuriate in a religion which saw mankind moving onwards and upwards forever: a modernist, enlightenment stance which denies original sin.



Indeed we have always worked hard to improve on the ills of society, to eliminate practices which are abhorrent and demean the prisoner, the poor, the societal outcast. We can often find it in our hearts to forgive others but withhold it from ourselves. Forgiveness doesn't mean we say it's OK. It means "We understand". We know there were pressures, circumstances, hurts and harms. We all have our flaws and weaknesses. April's theme is retribution and redemption. More on the 14<sup>th</sup>! *Nicky Jenkins*

## A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

at 11.00a.m.

Sunday 7 April

Jenny Jacobs

*Original sin*

Music by Laura Jones

Sparklers Children's programme

Sunday 14 April

Revd. Nicky Jenkins

*Retribution and redemption :  
what can Unitarians make of it?*

Music by Helen Drewery

Sunday 21 April Easter Day

Nick Morrice

*Crucifixion and resurrection*

Music by David Hammond

Sunday 28 April

Revd. Nicky Jenkins

*Inspiration from our annual meetings*

Music by David Hammond

- Saturday 13 April 7.30 p.m. *De Costa Academy Spring concert* (Chapel)
- Sunday 14 April 6.00p.m. *Angelika Strang pupils' concert* (Chapel)
- Thursday 18 April 10.30 for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)
- Thursday 18 April 7.30p.m. *Felix Kirby piano Mozart, Ravel & Grainger* (Chapel)
- Thursday 25 April 10.30 for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)
- Friday 26 April 12.30p.m. *Last Friday: Hamish Brown (tenor) & Alisdair Jamieson (piano)* (Chapel)
- Saturday 27 April 12 noon *Child naming for Amy & Eddie Shannon's second child Teddy* (Chapel)
- Monday 29 April 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore choir rehearsal* (Chapel)

## OTHER EVENTS IN APRIL

- Monday 1 April 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore choir rehearsal* (Chapel)
- Tuesday 2 April 7.30p.m. *York Interfaith Association: Canon Chris Collingwood: How other faiths enrich our prayer* (Hudson Room, York Council Offices)
- Wednesday 3 April 2.30 p.m. *U3A Choir, fundraising concert for MySightYork, the Chapel's local charity for 2019.* (Chapel)
- Thursday 4 April 10.30 for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)
- Friday 5 April 11.00a.m. *Death & dying discussion 4 Advance directives* (Upper Room)
- Saturday 6 April 1.00p.m. *Late Music: Christopher O'Gorman (tenor) with Kate Ledger - (piano)* (Chapel)
- Saturday 6 April 7.30p.m. *Late Music: Robert Rice (baritone) with Elizabeth Mucha (piano)* (Chapel)
- Monday 8 April 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore choir rehearsal* (Chapel)
- Thursday 11 April 10.30 for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)
- Thursday 11 April 7.30p.m. *York Opera: choruses, ensembles and solos.* £8 & £12
- Friday 12 April 12.30p.m. *Occasional Friday: Igor Petricevic (tenor) & Joshua Urben (piano)* (Chapel)



York U3A Choir Present

*A Concert to  
WELCOME SPRING  
and  
CELEBRATE EASTER*

with the U3A choir and U3A Guitar Group

Wednesday 3rd April 2019  
2:30 pm  
York Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate  
YO1 8NQ

FREE ENTRANCE  
Interval refreshments



RETIRING COLLECTION  
for  
MySIGHT YORK

MEET WITH  
ELIZABETH SLADE  
UNITARIAN GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
CHIEF OFFICER ELECT

Priestley Hall, Mill Hill Chapel Leeds  
Tuesday 2 April  
between 1.00p.m and 3.30p.m.  
Tea, coffee and snacks available

Mill Hill Chapel is across the street  
from Leeds railway station.  
York-Leeds Zap buses are every half hour -  
then walk from Leeds bus station

## FROM THE CHAPEL AGM

### Sunday 24 March

- The Chapel's annual general meeting was held after service on Sunday 24 March 2019. 21 members plus 2 friends were present. Opening words were spoken by Andrew Hill in place of Nick Morrice who had 'lost his voice'. Since Nick was standing down as chairperson Andrew then successfully proposed the election of Nick's nominated successor David Zucker, as chairperson. David then 'chaired' the rest of the meeting.
- The minutes of the 2018 AGM and the 2018 annual report - apart from the accounts which have not yet been examined - were adopted as correct records. A special general meeting will be called to adopt the accounts. The Chapel Charity [a separate charity] report and accounts were included for information.
- The secretary reported the approval by the Charity Commission - after 5 months of waiting- of *York Unitarians CIO [Charitable Incorporated Organisation]*. A sub-committee of Andrew Hill, Sue Catts, Nick Morrice and Margaret Hill was engaged with the process of transferring the Chapel and the Chapel Charity into the new CIO. Claire Lee expressed the meetings thanks to this group. It was mentioned that the Chapel Charity's capital fund will continue inviolate.
- Margaret Hill was re-elected as secretary for a final year; Nick Morrice as the new treasurer in place of Simon Hardy who was retiring after 20 years; and Barbara Barnes, Dee Boyle, Laura Cox, Elizabeth Faiers, Simon Hardy, Andrew Hill, Jenny Jacobs and Joan Sinanan as committee members. Claire Lee and Sue Catts are retiring from the committee and were thanked for their committee service.
- It was reported that the Unitarian General Assembly recommended a 3.5% increase for ministers' stipends and £50 as the fee for an occasional supply.
- Adie Wilson drew attention to two York Unitarians who are members of Unitarian General Assembly panels: Claire Wilton as a member of the Youth Panel and Jenny Jacobs of the Penal Affairs Panel.
- Our usual representatives to Yorkshire Unitarian Union (YUU) meetings have been Adie Wilson and Sue Catts. York Unitarian Jen Atkinson is currently YUU president and will continue attending after her year in office. Elizabeth Faiers is the YUU treasurer and Jenny Jacobs agreed to attend. Others were also encouraged to attend YUU meetings.

- There was an extended discussion about a 'verbose' motion concerning knife crime which the Foy Society has submitted for the forthcoming Unitarian General Assembly meetings in Birmingham.
- It was mentioned that no motion regarding climate change had been submitted.
- Also mentioned was the proposal to elect, as an honorary Unitarian General Assembly member, Martin West (former Assembly treasurer and also past treasurer of the Ministers' Pension Fund, of *The Inquirer* magazine, and of several other Unitarian bodies as an honorary member of the Assembly.
- The Findhorn Unitarian Network has applied to be an affiliated society of the General Assembly.
- Nicky Jenkins mentioned a proposed worship studies course being planned by the Hull and Scarborough congregations.

### THE LIVING PLANET

Sing we of the living planet  
seen by astronauts from space.  
Sun and moonlight playing o'er it  
brought life to this barren place.  
Very many plants and creatures  
dwell upon its teeming earth;  
each for mutual sharing chosen,  
each one having precious worth.

We are stewards of this planet  
all our lives part of its whole.  
All our deeds and all our caring  
help refresh the planet's soul.  
For this planet we must labour,  
for its sake bear pain and grief;  
in it find the end of living,  
and the anchor of belief.

May this planet which we care for  
oft with bleeding hands and tears,  
oft in error, oft in anguish  
be sustained through many years.  
May this planet shine transfigured  
in the swirling realm of space.  
May it pass into the splendour  
as a green and friendly place.

words: Andrew M. Hill (September 1989)  
based on Felix Adler's hymn *Sing we of  
the golden city* [Hymns for Living 212]

## LIGHT PASSES THROUGH ONE WINDOW



Light passes through one window  
spans the still interior  
(wood song, fly husk, mote prayer)  
catches the corner of a leaf  
etched clear in red glass, shining outside.

By John Wedgwood Clarke from  
"In Between" (2014) used by permission  
and written sitting on the Chapel Yard  
bench with midday sunlight streaming  
through the Chapel windows.

The photograph was taken by Margaret Hill  
on a late February 2019 Sunday morning  
with the sunlight streaming into  
the Chapel from opposite direction.

## UNITARIAN GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2019 Birmingham Tuesday 16 April until Thursday 18 April

Our Chapel voting delegates this year will be Jenny Jacobs and Elizabeth Faiers. Also attending will be our minister Nicky Jenkins, Dee Boyle, Andrew and Margaret Hill together with Laura Cox under the first-time attender scheme.

As well as plenary business sessions various Unitarian societies and groups hold annual meetings including The Unitarian Peace Fellowship, The Findhorn Network, Earth Spirit, the Penal and Social affairs Panel, the Unitarian Historical and Psychical Societies, The Lindsey Press (launching new book about Unitarian women), Youth Department, Inquirer reception, Women's group and the Ministers' Pension Fund annual meeting.

There are worship opportunities before breakfast, at the opening of plenary sessions, at peace vespers and in the Anniversary service; and special receptions for newcomers and associate members

## PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON CHRISTCHURCH ATTACKS

The events at the Al-Noor and Linwood Mosques this morning have shocked us all. Our hearts go out to the communities of the Al-Noor and Linwood mosques. We mourn those who were killed and hold them in our hearts. We hold the lives of those who were injured, and all those grieving and traumatised by these events, in our prayers. When men, women, and children are attacked while at prayer all people of faith feel attacked. We share their shock, their feelings of horror. Attacks such as these are becoming more frequent, but we cannot allow that to affect our response. If we start to see these attacks as events which happen on a regular basis and cease to be appalled at their wicked destruction of lives, of communities and their sense of security, we destroy our own humanity.

Joan M.M. Cook  
President, General Assembly  
of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches

## ADRIENNE WILSON'S APRIL 2019 WATER CHALLENGE

It is alarming to note that one in ten of the population may have CKD (chronic kidney disease). Symptoms often go undetected, but will show up in a blood test. That's how my son Dale, 47, was diagnosed with PKD (polycystic kidney disease), a genetic form of CKD. He is being closely monitored but may one day require dialysis or a kidney transplant. There are



30,000 transplanted kidney patients in the UK needing ongoing support. I joined the NKF (National Kidney Foundation) and was attracted by their 30 day water challenge. So for the April 2019 I will drink only water, while keeping up my normal food intake of course. Because I was one of the first 84 people to register, I've received a case of bottled water- but assure you I will be drinking mainly tap water! If you would like to donate to this worthwhile charity, I will have a sponsorship form with me at chapel. You can donate online at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/adiewilson>

## YES – BELOW ZERO

*Dee Boyle reports:* The YES – Below Zero (YBO) project has now ended having been running since 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018 until 16<sup>th</sup> March 2019. The project offered overnight accommodation for homeless people, including an evening meal and breakfast (and a packed lunch on occasions if needed). There were 52 regular volunteers covering a variety of duties on the rota on either a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis depending on whatever they could offer. YBO had over 500 Bed Nights (one person – one bed – one night) filled during the four and a half months it was running and this enabled 23 individuals to be safe and warm over the winter period. Of those 23 people 11 of them have now got jobs and all 23 of them have now got temporary or permanent places to stay.

The City of York Council and The Salvation Army have been so impressed by the success of YBO and what it has offered plus the manner in which it was received and appreciated by the users that they hope to keep part of it on over the summer months, albeit without volunteers. Thanks were given to all those who helped with the YBO project from the volunteers who gave their time to cover the rota duties, to those who cooked meals and sent them in to the flat and to those who donated bedding, towels and all the other essential items at the start of the project to make everything such a success.

It is hoped that YBO will run again next winter and so they will be recruiting more volunteers over the summer months to give them training and also to allow time for DBS check to be done. If anyone wants to help or know more about what is needed please speak to Dee at Chapel or contact Charles Walters on [charles@christthelight.org.uk](mailto:charles@christthelight.org.uk)

## ABOUT PEOPLE

- *Ruth* attended Juniors Weekend and *Alice* Inters Weekend at the Unitarian 'Nightingale Centre' at Great Hucklow in Derbyshire. Both events were organised by the Unitarian Youth Department.
- *Barbara Barnes* participated in The Findhorn Unitarian Network's recent Transformation Game weekend also at Great Hucklow.
- *Andrew Hill* has 2 articles about Catharine Cappe (memorialised in the Chapel) soon to be published: 'Catharine Cappe and Hannah Lindsey' in Ann Peart's *Unitarian Women* (2019) and 'Catharine Cappe as spinster, wife and widow' in *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society* 2019

## ST CRUX FUNDRAISING DAY



Saturday 11th May 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
We need items to sell – crafts, unused gifts, or items bought by mistake and not used, good quality books, plants, jams and cakes, and good quality bric-a-brac. Please start collecting these at home now, and bring things into the Chapel from 29th April. We will also need donations of cakes and other food items for the cafe on the day; also as many volunteers as we possibly can get. There is a sign-up sheet on the notice board for you to sign up as soon as you can. Please keep the date free. St. Crux Hall is at the corner of the Shambles and Stonebow.

## DEATH AND DYING DISCUSSION

*Janet Eldred writes:* Our final discussion of the series is on Friday, 5 April, 11.00am-12.15pm: "Advance directives: when you can no longer state your wishes". This topic is of particular interest, so even if you haven't been before please feel free to join us. The session will take place in the Upper Room of the chapel. Questions to Janet Eldred at [jbe100@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jbe100@yahoo.co.uk) or 07951 600907.

**There is no work in the world,  
except perhaps  
the slaughtering of other people,  
that a woman cannot do  
as efficiently as a man,  
if she is given  
the same training and opportunity.**

**Gertrude von Petzold (1876-1952)  
(Unitarian minister)**

## MUSIC: THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

The Chapel sermon by Unitarian General Assembly President, Joan Cook on Sunday 10 March 2019

This morning I should like to look at an aspect of our worship, which is often taken for granted, that is Music.

March sees the anniversaries of the births of some of the greats in the world of music; Bach, Chopin, Strauss, Mussorgsky, Bartok, Glenn Miller, Ry Cooder, Paul McCartney, Diana Ross, James Taylor, Justin Bieber, and Lady Gaga! This month also sees the anniversaries of the premieres of Benjamin Britten's Violin Concerto (1940) Shostakovich's symphony no 7, (1942), Tippett's 'A Child of Our Time' (1944), and the musical 'Ruthless', which opened in London last year.

With so much music in our everyday lives, one question to ask ourselves, is what part does music play in our services? And apart from being a convenient way of signalling the beginning and ending of services, what is its function, and would it make any difference if we didn't bother having any? Well, interesting questions there, and you are probably wondering why on earth the least musical person present, has taken it upon herself to try and answer them!

Well, I am the first to admit that I have no musical gifts, but what I do have is an appreciation of the role music plays in our lives.

I don't believe it is necessary to be able to identify a specific chord, have in-depth knowledge as to how it is structured, its originator, or history, to understand its meaning. Everyone knows when the music is telling you the baddie is about to get his come-uppance, the shark is about to attack, or the lovers are reconciled and heading off into the sunset!

### THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC

Generally music is seen as 'a good thing', something which, along with other forms and expressions of art, can enrich our lives, as well as acknowledging the power music has over us all. It has been described:

- by Pablo Casals as *the divine way to tell beautiful, poetic things to the heart*;
  - by Jean Paul Friedrich Richter as *the moonlight in the gloomy night of life.*;
  - by Kahlil Gibran as *the language of the spirit.*;
- and by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow as *the universal language of mankind.*"

Support for music also comes from a most unlikely source, John Calvin, who said:

*Music is very useful for awakening the minds of men and moving their hearts*

Human beings are innately receptive to music and rhythms. From an early age children enjoy music, dancing or movement. I fully support the provision of music education in schools. It supports learning in many ways, not just as an academic subject in its own right. It is no coincidence that children exposed to music learn better and quicker.

Music is something that can be appreciated by, and created by, everyone, regardless of age, physical or mental ability. Music can also be used as an aid to speech therapy and, in care settings, as an aid to physical and cognitive therapies.

But there are other benefits that come with the physicality of singing, singing boosts the immune system, tones the muscles, improves the posture and lowers the blood pressure, encourages deeper breathing, thereby improving lung function, those who are part of a singing group, find their heart and respiratory rates become synchronised with those of others in the group. Some sources state that regular singing can even help you live for longer!

### SINGING FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

Singing also brings benefit to the brain which is why 'Singing for Dementia' groups have enjoyed popularity in recent years. As well as providing a safe, social activity, for those suffering from cognitive impairment, singing stimulates memory, lifts mood, and encourages a feeling of well-being. It enables people to take part in structured social activities, without having to depend on another's assistance. Regular group singing has been shown to help reduce loneliness, anxiety and depression, especially in older people. Singing also releases chemicals in the brain which, alongside medical treatment, help alleviate pain. There are now groups for people suffering from lupus, cancer, arthritis, and other forms of chronic pain.

People who have mobility difficulties are able to enjoy music; those who have visual impairments can still sing; and those with hearing difficulties can still 'feel' the music.

One of our most talented musicians today is Evelyn Glennie, herself profoundly deaf, who describes music as:

*about communication ... it isn't just something that maybe physically sounds good, or orally sounds interesting; it's something far, far deeper than that.*

### WHY HAVE MUSIC IN SERVICES?

But why do we have music in our services? We have music in our services to facilitate our singing, personal reflection, as a way of creating the required ambiance for a service; whether it is to be a service of celebration, of commemoration; expressing joy, or sadness. Martin Luther wrote:

*My heart, which is so full to overflowing, has often been solaced and refreshed by music when sick and weary.*

Hymns, and singing have been used through time as a way of teaching aspects of faith, especially where literacy was not as widespread as now. They tell others about our faith, and the message we wish to spread.

We are fortunate that our Unitarian hymns tend not to be too difficult to sing, and their content unlikely to be objectionable. But we also have music in our services to simply enjoy, and to celebrate the art form for its own sake.

Creating music, and bringing music into the lives of others is a wonderful gift to be able to give and receive. We are fortunate in those who provide our music, often taking the trouble to find out what the theme of the service will be, and choosing musical offerings to suit. Also our more gifted singers, encourage the efforts of us less gifted! But even the most gifted singers benefit from a good accompanist!

As Unitarians we are fortunate in that we are free to experience the wide range of music that exists. We are not restricted to solely 'religious' pieces, but can enjoy music from a wide variety of sources, just as we vary in our theology, outlook and personal experience.

#### THE MUSIC WHICH WE MAKE TOGETHER

It is only to be expected that music which speaks to one person may not speak to another, and I have frequently been surprised when leading worship, as to the depth of feeling and memory that a simple piece of music can bring forth. I know several people who have said that it is the music and hymns which attracts them to our services. The music we make together can be a gift to others, as well as to ourselves.

The music with which we introduce periods of silent reflection enables us to engage more fully in the silence. Studies have demonstrated a significant increase in the depth and quality of meditation when those meditating having previously listened to a piece of music.

The music with which we begin and end our services, is not just a convenient way of signalling the beginning and end of worship, they are parts of our services in their own right, they set the tone of our service. The prelude is an opportunity for us to centre ourselves, to gradually shed the shell with which we protect ourselves from the outside world, to enable us to engage more fully in the act of worship.

As we listen to the postlude, it provides us with an opportunity to collect our thoughts, perhaps reflecting on what we have heard, the hymns we have sung; drawing together the main themes, the experience of being part of a worshipping community, and how that may guide us, help us, through the week ahead.

#### WORSHIP WITHOUT MUSIC

But would it really make a difference if we didn't have any music? Well, yes, I feel it would make a difference not having music in our services. When I have taken house services, or services for small groups; perhaps a wedding, a funeral or memorial service or a baby blessing, I find that, without music, something is absent.

One of the difficulties is group singing, with small numbers, and without a musician. Recorded music can help, but what I found worked best was 'chanting', or short reflective pieces, which enabled everyone to join in without feeling self-conscious, contributing to and creating something new, something spiritual. And obviously, without musical accompaniment, singing can be very difficult, to do, and perhaps more so to listen to. The opportunity for personal reflection, as we have seen can be lessened, or even lost; and the chance to create a feeling of being part of a group,, is missed as is the opportunity to consolidate the connections and relationships within our communities.

#### THE ADVANTAGES OF MUSIC

In a service which is predominantly delivered via the spoken word, which most are, music offers an alternative way to experience a theme, and perhaps for those who have been unable to connect with the words spoken, an opportunity to facilitate their personal experience of worship. Those with learning or cognitive difficulties can find it difficult to access some of our services, but music is something that overcomes such hurdles.

Music is a language which crosses nations' boundaries. When I have visited Unitarian congregations abroad, I have managed to feel part of the service, be it in Hungarian, French, Welsh or Tamil. For example, when we visited the Unitarians in Chennai [with which Joan's home congregation in Edinburgh is partnered], we didn't understand a word of the service, but we felt part of it, because of the music, joining in with the singing of a repetitive chorus.

In our society of individualism, coming together to sing can create and reinforce bonds of friendship, of identity and of belonging. Being part of a congregation, a Church, a community of being.

#### THE LAST WORD

But perhaps the last word should go to Albus Dumbledore:

*'Ah, music,' he said, wiping his eyes.  
'A magic beyond all we do here!'*

(J.K. Rowling in *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone*)

## SOME FOLK: a poem by Joan Sinanan

Some folk scabble to settle old scores  
Others see words as opening doors  
To thinking and talking, writing, and linking  
Themselves, to the world.

That's true.  
And I can be random  
And laterally go  
Down in the past, in the present,  
And know, that  
One word sparks a journey  
To parts known and unknown,  
A meander on the path of.....what?  
An adventure, a memory, a catalogue?

Let's have time to consider the word  
And what it will mean when heard!  
In peace and in anger  
In music and speech  
In serious thought.....and absurd!



The finished banner will be  
32" wide x 54" long (81cm x 137cm),  
so scale down your design

## USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS



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Barbara Barnes, Dee Boyle, Laura Cox,  
Elizabeth Faiers, Simon Hardy, Andrew  
Hill, Jenny Jacobs, Joan Sinanan, and  
the Officers

*St. Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel Charity*  
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**This is a Unitarian Church. Our religion is a spiritual journey and each of us is an explorer.  
Reason is our map and conscience is our compass.**