



# THE YORK UNITARIAN

St. Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel, York, YO1 8NQ

February 2019

## FROM THE MINISTER

Well, I chose "Clearing out" as February's theme because I thought Pancake Day would be in February. Pancake Day is all that remains in England of Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday, the day before Lent starts so that all the eggs and butter get used up and don't sit around tempting you. I think this comes from some Old Testament and Jewish hygiene practices. Sweep every crumb from your cupboards. Maybe after Shrove Tuesday everything starts to go off, all the food you have stored over the winter is running out. There is a natural pause in the cycle of farming, the lean time when the stored food is gone and the new crops are not yet available.

Many of us felt a strong desire for a clear out after Christmas. The problem for many of us in the affluent west is that we never really have a lean time. We can satisfy our cravings for luxury and sweet fatty food at any time. We can satisfy our desire for anything really. We crowd our lives, we crowd our homes, we crowd our minds.

Nature has been overridden but our wiring is still on the old system. So we are faced with an internal struggle to control ourselves, to

continually make choices which go against our survival mechanisms.

Understanding that we have enough, might help us defeat the gnawing sense of potential scarcity. That is why a practice of gratitude; simply remembering five things for which you are grateful every night, can help us to feel calm and allow us to let go some of the clutter in our lives. Clearing out allows us to see more clearly, It allows us to be lighter on our feet and it helps to redistribute some of our wealth.

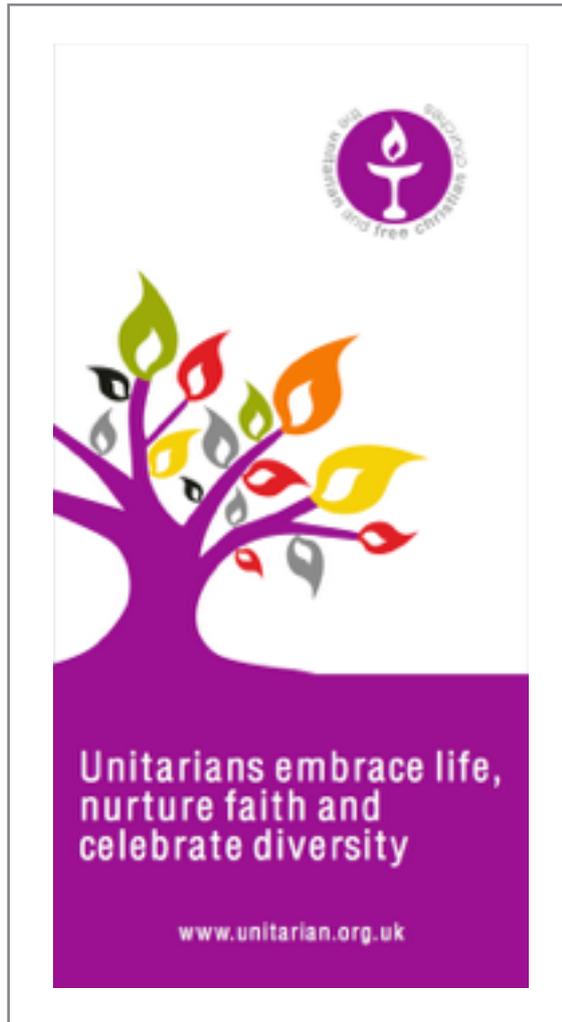
A spacious mind has room for new thoughts, new ideas or even the expansion of old ones. I find our weekly Thursday morning meditation sessions also allow for a fresh air to blow gently through the mind.

I always find it feels so much better if our physical clearing out can make someone else's life richer, so take things to the charity shop, Amnesty bookshop on Goodramgate takes book donations or maybe you can save things for our next St Crux fundraiser.

It may feel a bit daunting but you can take it slowly. Clear out one day at a time.

Oh, by the way, Pancake Day is March 5<sup>th</sup> this year!

*Nicky Jenkins*



**A MONTH OF SUNDAYS  
at 11.00a.m.**

Sunday 3 February  
Revd. Nicky Jenkins  
*Having a good clear out:  
the spiritual benefits*  
Music by Nick Morrice

Sunday 10 February  
Revd. Nicky Jenkins  
*Youth Sunday:  
Unitarians promoting equality*  
Music by Helen Drewery  
Sparklers children's programme

Sunday 17 February  
Andrew Hill  
*Sling & stones, Heresy  
and the Unitarian Music Society*  
Music by Laura Jones  
12.15p.m. Chapel Committee

Sunday 24 February  
Claire Wilton  
*Bright Lights Intergenerational Worship:  
Blowing out the candle*  
Music by David Hammond

**OTHER EVENTS IN FEBRUARY**

- Monday 4 February 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore rehearsal* (Chapel)
- Tuesday 5 February 7.30p.m. *York Interfaith Association: Faiths and ageing* (Hudson Room, Council Offices)
- Thursday 7 February 10.30 for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)
- Friday 8 February 11.00a.m. *Death & Dying Discussion 1 'Why we need to talk about dying and death'* (Upper Room)
- Sunday 10 February 12.15p.m. *After service discussion about locking Chapel gates* (Chapel)
- Sunday 10 February 4.00p.m. *Soon Amore winter concert 'North'* (Chapel) £8/4
- Monday 11 February 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore rehearsal* (Chapel)

- Thursday 14 February 10.30 for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)
- Saturday 16 February 7.30p.m. *YREN (York Racial Equality Network Banish Winter Blues Concert* (Chapel) £6/£4
- Sunday 17 February 12.15p.m. *Chapel Committee* (Upper Room)
- Monday 18 February 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore rehearsal* (Chapel)
- Thursday 21 February 10.30 for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)
- Sunday 24 February 12.30p.m. *Death and dying discussion 2 'How to die well: spiritually & practically'* (Upper Room)
- Monday 25 February 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore rehearsal*(Chapel)
- Thursday 28 February 10.30 for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)

**ABOUT PEOPLE**

- Our special thoughts are with *Jen Atkinson* and her family while Tony is so seriously ill in hospital.
- Our best wishes also go to *Richard Thompson* who requires surgery in hospital for an aneurism

**THE COLLECTION PLATE**

And then there are the churches. Since the time of separation of church and state they have been classified as voluntary associations: they depend in principle upon voluntary membership and voluntary contributions.

The collection plate in the Sunday Service is sometimes objected to for aesthetic reasons, but it is an earnest, a symbol, of the voluntary character of the association, and it should be interpreted in this fashion.

It is a way of saying to the community, "This is our voluntary, independent enterprise, and under God's mercy we who believe in it will support it. We do not for its support appeal to the coercive power of the state."--

**James Luther Adams,**  
*On Being Human Religiously, (1976,)*

## FROM THE CHAPEL COMMITTEE

- The Chapel Committee met on Sunday 20 January with apologies from Barbara Barnes, Claire Lee, David Zucker and the minister.
- Peter Exley was present to share in our continuing assessment about whether or not we should be locking the Chapel yard gates. Presently they are being locked. It was decided to widen this conversation to gather more views at post-service refreshment time on Sunday 10 February.
- After a 5 month wait the Charity Commission has accepted the registration of the Chapel as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (*York Unitarians CIO 1181531*). The sub-committee of Sue Catts, Nick Morrice and Margaret and Andrew Hill has been reconvened to prepare for the transfer of the present two charities: *St. Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel* (an excepted charity under the Unitarian General Assembly) and the *Chapel Charity* (a presently registered charity) into the new CIO.
- *My Sight York* (formerly *York Blind and Partially Sighted*) or 2019 chosen Chapel charity has provided two pink elephant collecting boxes for loose change.
- The treasurer, Simon Hardy, has almost completed the 2018 accounts. It was agreed to raise the cleaner's pay and bonuses.
- Our delegates to the forthcoming Unitarian General Assembly meetings in Birmingham (16-18 April) will be Elizabeth Faiers and Jenny Jacobs. Laura Cox will be attending with the support of a GA first time attendee's bursary. Also attending will be the minister, Dee Boyle, Margaret and Andrew Hill.
- The Chapel AGM will be on Sunday 24 March.
- The Chapel has been reserved as a polling station for local elections of Thursday 2 May and possibly for 'a snap general election'!
- Our Christmas season collection for *the Send a Child to Hucklow [SACH] Fund* had raised a magnificent £516.
- Chapel membership during 2018 has risen from 40 to 42.
- Our 2019 St. Crux Hall (top of St. Saviourgate) fund raising day is Saturday 11 May - good quality items will be needed for sale.
- *The Yorkshire Unitarian Union (YUU)* meets at York on Saturday 9 March 10.30a.m. to 4.00p.m. The Chapel will provide coffee and a sandwich lunch. Unitarian General Assembly President Joan Cook will be present and will stay overnight to lead our Chapel service on Sunday 10 March.
- Date of next committee meeting is Sunday 17 February.

## DEATH AND DYING DISCUSSIONS

Janet Eldred writes:

This four-part series begins this month with our first two discussions:

- Fri. 8 Feb., 11.00am-12.15pm: "Why we need to talk about dying and death"
- Sun. 24 Feb., 12.30-1.45pm: "How to die well, spiritually and practically"

Both take place at the chapel; feel free to bring your lunch and/or make a hot drink.

We approach these discussions as equals, with our own experiences, ideas, questions, beliefs and concerns. By speaking openly and listening carefully and non-judgementally, we hope to break down some of our internal resistance to talking about these important subjects.

Our series coincides with Dying Matters 2019 theme, "Are We Ready?" (<https://bit.ly/2CwD3Pj>) and will lead up to this year's Dying Matters Awareness Week (May 13-19).

Questions to Janet Eldred at [jbe100@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jbe100@yahoo.co.uk) or 07951 600907.

[125 words]

## ST. CRUX FUNDRAISING DAY 2019



Our 2019 fundraising day for Chapel funds at St. Crux Hall (Stonebow end of Whip-Ma-Whap-Ma Gate) will be:  
**Saturday 11th May**

We need crafts, new gifts (perhaps those unwanted ones from Christmas), jams and cakes, good quality bric-a-brac and pre-loved books as well as supplies for the cafe serving teas, coffee, cakes, and lunches.

**Please start working towards this now!**

## UNITARIAN MEDITATION FELLOWSHIP ANNUAL RETREAT

The Unitarian Meditation Fellowship's annual retreat in Salisbury will be Tuesday to Thursday 7 - 9 May this year. It will be led by Richard Bober in the wonderfully peaceful Sarum College next to the Cathedral. Total cost - £185.00 including accommodation, all meals and all activities (deposit £85). Deadline for bookings is 10th Feb. More information from Alf Withington: [alfwithington@gmail.com](mailto:alfwithington@gmail.com)

## ONWARDS AND UPWARDS



*The Editor writes:*

The previous column notice about The Unitarian Meditation Fellowship's Salisbury retreat reminded me of this 1849 incident in the life of 'Onwards and upwards for ever and ever' American Unitarian, James Freeman Clarke:

The spire of Salisbury Cathedral is a little more than four hundred feet high. With some friends, Mr. Clarke ascended as far as the interior staircase goes, to what is called the weather – door, about thirty feet from the extreme top of the spire. The others were then satisfied with what they had done; but he went out and climbed the remaining part of the spire, by iron handles fixed in the walls, these having been arranged for the convenience of workmen who have to attend to the vane, and of hardy visitors. When he arrived at the highest of these, he found a bar above him, running round the spire, which he could reach with his hands. By this he lifted himself to the level of the ball, and, as most versions of this anecdote say, stood on top of the ball, with such support as the lightning rod could give him, surveying the scene. He then returned to the supporting rod, and dropped himself, expecting to find the friendly bolt by which he had ascended. But it was not there, and he reflected too late, that he had not observed on which side of the spire it was. Then and there he had, so to speak, to work around the spire hanging by his hands; and having unfortunately chosen the least favourable direction, he nearly completed its circuit before he found under his foot the bolt which was to be the first step of his retreat.

James Freeman Clark (1810-1888) was the originator of this once widespread 5 points summary of Unitarian faith now regarded as somewhat over optimistic about humankind:

The Fatherhood of God  
The Brotherhood of Man  
The Leadership of Jesus  
Salvation by Character  
The Progress of Mankind onwards  
and upwards forever.

### MY SIGHT YORK live well with sight loss

[formerly York Blind and Partially Sighted Society]  
is our Chapel chosen charity for 2019



Fundraising has already started with our two pink elephants which will be out every Sunday to collect your loose change.

My Sight York's aim is to support people in York to live well with sight loss. Its experienced [staff](#) and friendly [volunteers](#) are always happy to help. You will find information about the organisation and the services it provides on its website.

Later in the year there will be a concert and a sponsored walk. Meanwhile special collecting boxes are available at the Chapel.

## BEGINNINGS

The sermon by Nicky Jenkins  
on Sunday 6 January 2019

### NEW YEAR

It's a new year and many people are hoping that it will be a better year than the last. But, as we know, this is just an arbitrary moment in time. We could choose to have new year at any time.

For a long time the big occasion in the calendar of the year was New Year rather than Christmas. It is believed that the Romans set it as the first of January as this month was dedicated to the two headed Roman God Janus, whose old face looked back and young face looked forward.

At one time New Year was moved to Easter as this was felt to be a more appropriate time of the Christian Year for a celebration of new life.

But we can choose when our personal New Year is. For families with schoolchildren it's maybe September. Or perhaps it's your wedding anniversary or when you got the all clear from an illness.

### A METAPHYSICAL CONCEPT

Beginning is quite a metaphysical concept: something, somewhere is always beginning. A life, a cell, a star, an island.

But we are mostly creatures of routine and comfort. Our internal systems like things to be predictable and safe. Our brains work on a system of shortcuts and assumptions based on what we have learned. It helps when we have to make quick decisions about running away from sabre toothed tigers!

That's why many of us find beginning something challenging. We don't have a frame of reference. It feels unsafe. But when you examine this it is rather a strange outlook. All of

us have been little children. We have had to constantly start things which were new to us. Everything is new. Everything is a beginning at some time! And yet little children just do it. Because they haven't learnt to be afraid.

### NEWNESS

The Bible is full of references to newness.

- A new life,
- a new creation,
- a new you.

We are exhorted to renew ourselves in the spirit by turning from what does not serve us to a new way of being following the path of life; the path of life

- which is unpredictable,
- which we are not in control of and
- which scares us.

But:

- what energy you will save from giving up your attempts to make things in your

image, in the way you think they should be!

- what a relief not to have to stress about being a certain way or achieving certain things!
- what a joy to stop judging yourself and others and just be!

It's not a cop out! It's who you were meant to be.

John, in his eponymous gospel, has Jesus saying

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly"

Sometimes we think that making the new beginning is all we need to do.

"I just need to buy that diet recipe book in order to lose weight. I will be a new me."



*The Roman god Janus looking both ways*

But as we all know:

- it takes our participation,
- it takes our engagement with the process,
- it takes work and
- it might take struggle

(especially with the Devil of our amigdalas [i.e. tonsils]) to become because that is what we are doing when we begin, we are starting to become.

#### STARTING ANEW

And, life being what it is, we learn and grow once we are in that flow. And we will keep on having to begin.

Being the weak and foolish creatures or wonderful flowerings of life that we are, we will always be starting anew. *The Litany of Atonement* by Rev. Robert Eller-Isaacs says:

“We forgive ourselves and each other and begin again in love”. (#637 in *Singing the Living Tradition*).

His original version reads:

“I forgive myself, I forgive you, We begin again in love.”

To begin we need trust, trust that everything will be OK. “All shall be well” in the words of Julian of Norwich. We need trust in ourselves, that we can cope. And we need support. We need to know we have some guidance for when the river flow gets turbulent.

- A little eddy where we can bob out of the main current.
- An island we can haul ourselves out onto.

This is where some form of spiritual practice is steadying - prayer, meditation, reading or making can be the things which allow you to begin again.

What do we need most?

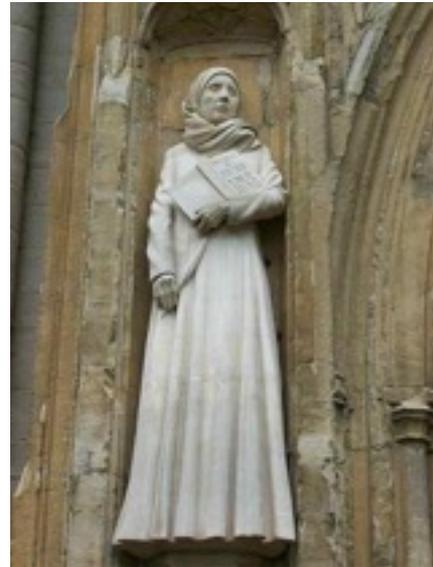
- We need love.
- We need the love and support of the community around us.
- We need to give love and support as well as receive it.
- We need reinforcement that our beginning is do-able.

Choose life. Begin again this new year!

### JULIAN OF NORWICH

d. c1416

[west front Norwich Cathedral]



**All shall be well  
and all shall be well  
and all manner of things shall be well**

#### YORKSHIRE UNITARIAN UNION

Saturday 9 March 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at York. The GA President, Joan Cook, will be present and lead a workshop on volunteering.

10.30a.m. Coffee and biscuits

11.00a.m. General meeting

12.30p.m. Lunch break

1.30p.m. General meeting continues

4.00p.m. Programme ends

The programme is not yet available but there will be a short service as well as the general meetings. York Unitarian Jen Atkinson is the YUU President and will preside at the meetings.

York Members are asked to provide cakes for the lunch. Sandwiches will be bought in from Marks and Spencer's

Members of the congregation are welcome to attend, for all or part of the day. More information will be available in the March *York Unitarian*.

Sunday 10 March 11.00a.m.

The General Assembly President, Joan Cook, will take our service at 11 a.m. This will be followed by a bring and share congregational lunch.

## STONEBOW BUS DIVERSIONS

18 February to late March

Stonebow (our closest bus stops) will be closed to all traffic during road reconstruction works. All Stonebow buses will be diverted:

- **6, 11, 12, 13 and 14** will divert via James St, Lawrence St, Paragon St, Fishergate and Clifford Street. Stops at Stonebow, Peasholme Green and Layerthorpe will not be served. The nearest alternative stop will be Clifford Street.

- **8 (Grimston Bar P&R)** will divert via Lawrence St, Walmgate and St Denys' Rd, terminating at Piccadilly PD (outside former Banana Warehouse). Piccadilly PB will not be served.

- **9 (Monks Cross P&R)** will divert via James St, Lawrence St, Paragon St, Fishergate and Clifford Street. Stops at Stonebow and Peasholme Green will not be served. The nearest alternative stop to Stonebow will be at Clifford Street.

- **21** will terminate at Piccadilly. Stops at Stonebow, Peasholme Green and Foss Islands Morrisons will not be served. Nearest alternative stop to Stonebow will be at Piccadilly PE.

- **25** towards Derwenthorpe will divert via Coppergate, Clifford St, Tower St, Paragon St and Foss Islands Rd. Stonebow will not be served.

- **25** towards Fulford will divert via Layerthorpe, Foss Islands Rd, James St, Lawrence St, Walmgate and St Denys' Rd, stopping on the opposite side of Piccadilly (stop PE). Stonebow will not be served and buses in both directions will stop on the same (outbound) side at Foss Islands Morrisons.

- **181** will terminate at Piccadilly PE. Stops at Stonebow, Rougier St and Station Ave will not be served.

- **Coastliner (840, 843)** will divert via Foss Islands Rd, Paragon St, Fishergate and Clifford St. Stops at Stonebow and Peasholme Green will not be served. The nearest alternative stops to Stonebow will be at Clifford Street.

- **CitySightseeing** will divert via Foss Islands Rd and Navigation Rd. Stops at Stonebow and Peasholme Green will not be served.

- **Cityzap** will follow the daytime route for the duration of service, with all buses terminating at Clifford St. Stonebow will not be served.

**Services not shown in the list above will run to their normal routes, however please expect delays to all services and allow additional time for your journeys.**

## A PRAYER

*by Elizabeth Faiers written for the service she led in the Chapel on Sunday 20 January 2019*

Let us pray:

I ask you to think of somebody who has been special in your Life.

This person might be

- a relative,
- a parent or grandparent,
- a friend or neighbour.

You could even choose somebody

- who you have not met but
- you have seen on TV.

Think now about why you have chosen this person. Is it

- because they have a wonderful smile that makes everybody feel welcome and loved;
- or have they surmounted some difficulty or illness;
- or have they created something special;
- or have they just been there when needed.

Whatever the reason hold that thought in your heart for a moment.

Remember that person in your heart with a smile of your own and say thank you to them.

Of course most of us will have had different Special People in different stages of our life. Remember them all now with a smile of gratitude.

Now think about what you have done that may have made you special in somebodies eyes.

- Are you a good friend?
- a caring neighbour?
- a welcoming presence here at church?
- or are you special in some other way?

May we all continue to be Special People  
and Live Well!

Amen

## RECYCLING BOX



St.Nicks Environment Centre includes St. Saviourgate on its city centre collection route on Tuesdays. For Chapel items we have a special St. Nicks re-cycling box just inside the Chapel yard gates. Here are St. Nick's guidelines:

**METAL:** food & drink cans, empty aerosols, clean aluminium foil. Please rinse these out and flatten (if possible)

**GLASS:** all glass bottles and jars. Please rinse out, especially food jars.

**PAPER:** newspapers, magazines, catalogues, junk mail, windowless envelopes (please tear them out), phone directories and scrap paper. Please remove all plastic wrapping and do not include wrapping paper.

**PLASTIC BOTTLES:** milk, fizzy drinks, water, shampoo, detergent etc. Please remove tops, rinse out and flatten.

**CARDBOARD:** all clean card (not coated in plastic or contaminated with food) such as cereal boxes, egg boxes, packing boxes. Please flatten all boxes. Cardboard sheets larger than 80 x 150cm (2'6" x 5') will only be collected if they are flattened and secured with tape or string.

**FOOD & BEVERAGE CARTONS:** Please ensure they are washed and squashed. If not squashed they will NOT be collected.

**GARDEN WASTE:** grass clippings, dry leaves etc. Please leave in a bag next to the box.

**EXTRA ITEMS** – such as Tassimo T Discs, pens, and the lids from cleaning products. However, please see the St. Nicks website for extra details. These may change so please keep an eye out for our leaflets or check the page every few months.

**OTHER INFORMATION:** talk with David Hammond (chapel musician) during after-service refreshments on a Sunday morning.

## USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS



York Unitarians,  
St. Saviourgate Chapel,  
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*Treasurer:* Simon Hardy  
☎ 01904 423604  
<[hardy67@btinternet.com](mailto:hardy67@btinternet.com)>

*Chapel Committee Members:*,  
Barbara Barnes, Dee Boyle, Sue Catts,  
Elizabeth Faiers, Andrew Hill, Jenny  
Jacobs, Claire Lee, David Zucker and the  
Officers

*St. Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel Charity*  
(registered charity: 230167) Trustees:  
Elizabeth Faiers (Treasurer), Simon  
Hardy, Jen Atkinson, Andrew Hill (Chair),  
Sue Catts and Claire Wilton.

*Colton's Hospital Trustees*  
Elizabeth Faiers (Treasurer), Dee Boyle,  
Trevor Gant, Marta Hardy, Simon Hardy,  
Nicky Jenkins (Chair), Carol Lawson,  
Richard Thompson, Geoffrey Williams,  
(registered charity: 221281)

*York Unitarian editor:*  
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<[amckhill@gmail.com](mailto:amckhill@gmail.com)>

"Whether we and our politicians know it or not  
Nature is party to all our deals and decisions,  
and she has more votes, a longer memory,  
and a sterner sense of justice than we do."

*Wendell Berry (poet)*