



# THE YORK UNITARIAN

*St Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel, York, YO1 8NQ*

**February 2022**

## **A Message from the President of the Yorkshire Unitarian Union**

Well Happy New year to everyone. We were glad to see the back of 2020 and now many of us feel the same about 2021. But things are slowly happening. I notice when I walk to the bus stop in the morning on my way to work that it's light not dark and when I leave the sun is still setting. There is some hope in the air. We have boosters and masks and despite contrary reports in some press, I find most people are being pretty sensible.

I sympathise with anyone that has had Covid. Not long before Christmas I had a brief stay in hospital with serious breathing problems. Fortunately it was a combination of asthma and a chest infection (the former is being investigated so I get the right treatment). But it's quite frightening for everyone involved, patient, family, loved ones. Or maybe worse for those who have nobody. It would be easy to stay in, not engaged, become detached. But fear itself can become stifling; we need to get the balance right or it becomes larger than the problem itself, nigh on an uncontrollable Leviathan.

I see a lot of this in our District. Thinking about the past and how things were, suggesting there is no future or even the eventual death of Unitarianism. To this I would say 'complete rubbish!' I see plenty going on. We have a number of younger people on the YUU executive. We have new and trainee ministers either in or associated with Yorkshire. Our places of worship and their communities are doing amazing things. Blended worship, big cleans, renewing their spaces, assuring pastoral care is given to those on their own. So in order to grow and thrive we may need to change some of the things we do and how we do them. We have to be careful but also bold.

I aim to visit ministers, people in leadership and places of worship over the next 12 months and find out what role the YUU can play, how we can help and how we can all learn from each other. With Covid we had to listen, make changes, plan, and then stride forward and likewise I feel our churches, our district and the whole UK movement need to do the same. May you all be blessed in the days and weeks ahead and I thank every single one of you for what you do, even if that's just being yourself.

***Chris Carr, President of the Yorkshire Unitarian Union***

### *From the Minister*

Lately it seems every week brings a new ethical dilemma, most of them variants on the same theme. How much of a risk should we take in order to honour our commitments – to leading worship, opening to the public, or offering refreshments – and when is it better to step back and err on the side of caution, postponing or cancelling events, or replacing face-to-face activities with technological alternatives?

The safe option, of course, is not without its costs. Cancelling events, or postponing them, sometimes repeatedly, leaves us and those we care about more isolated than we'd like. Technology can fill some of the gaps, but even those of us who love playing with tech as much as I do are aware that it doesn't always work as smoothly as we'd like, and while it opens up many opportunities for those whose chances of face-to-face contact are limited, it also limits our possibilities when it comes to the quick, unexpected, impromptu chats which are the lifeblood of any church social event. The thorniest dilemmas are always those that involve a choice, not between right and wrong, but between two competing rights; two deeply held values that unavoidably conflict with each other. As a church and a

congregation, we exist to provide a safe space for people to explore their highest values, but when one of our highest values – human connection – conflicts with that safety, we're faced with a challenging balancing act.

Brené Brown defines connection as 'the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.' Obviously we don't have to meet in person to feel connection. Most of us have probably had the experience of feeling closer to someone who's physically distant – a pen pal in another country, or a family member who's moved abroad but whom we chat to regularly on the phone – than to someone nearby. But, equally obviously, it's easier to feel seen and heard, and by extension, valued, when we do meet face to face. The essence of a dilemma is that there are no easy answers and, in a sense, no right answers, because when two answers are both equally right, they're also equally wrong. Sometimes all we can do is let go of the need to 'get it right' and simply do whatever we can in the moment to find and offer sustenance and strength, and let go of judgment, not only of other people, but of ourselves.



## A MONTH OF SUNDAYS at 11am

### Sunday 6 February

Reverend Stephanie Bisby

*We are Gathered*

Music by David Hammond

### Sunday 13 February

David Zucker

*Love*

Music by Laura Jones

### Sunday 20 February

Reverend Stephanie Bisby

*Laugh and the World Laughs With You*

Music by David Hammond

### Sunday 27 February

Elizabeth Faiers

*Why am I Here?*

Music by Nick Morrice

Adie Wilson wishes to thank the Pastoral team and other members for their cards and condolences on the occasion of the sudden death of her beautiful older sister Judith on 15 December.

Judith visited the chapel in August 2015, when as a fellow pianist she particularly enjoyed chatting to David Hammond, and also met Myrna Michell, visiting from New Zealand.

Judith and Scott did several house exchanges in England, the last being August 2015 in Driffield. Here they are enjoying a day out in the Dales.



## Thank You for the Music

Thank you to Helen Drewery, who has provided music for our services for many years, including transitioning to doing so online when the pandemic struck. She writes:

'It was a really lovely surprise when I opened a card of thanks from you all containing a wonderful gift thanking me for playing for so many years.

How time does fly since first coming to the chapel some 18 or so years ago; to play firstly for a wedding and then soon after for regular monthly services.

I have always enjoyed my sessions at the chapel and remember with great fondness the fundraising concert for Nepal for which I wrote music to fit slides. The lunchtime recitals I gave were another highlight and I hope to be invited again at some time in the future to give another.

I also fondly remember Nick Morrice's brilliant play set in York entitled 'The Magic Chalice' for which I composed the incidental music to fit the action. It gave me the inspiration to keep having a go at writing music and hopefully this year I might just manage to start thinking of seeing some of my compositions in print.

There are so many great memories for me and the lovely setting, welcoming company and the super piano have meant so much.'



## DIARY DATES

**Thursdays** at 11 am: Meditation.

Details from Dee Boyle

**Wednesday 23 February**, 7pm: Poetry group - Winter Sports. Details from Dee

**Sunday 27 February**: Committee meeting

**Sunday 27 March**: AGM

**Thursday 31 March**, 2-4pm: A Good Read

**Saturday 9 April**: Big Sing

**Saturday 18 June**: York Pride (at which we have a stall)

**Thursday 30 June**, 2-4pm: A Good Read

**Saturday 2-Sunday 3 July**: 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations

**Thursday 29 September**, 2-4pm: A Good Read

## Let's Share our Good Reads!

What do you think about choosing a book, article or blog post you have read that gripped you and that you would like to share with a small group in chapel?

I'd like to set up a group to do just that. I'm envisioning a combination of Sunday after-sermon coffee and a good read or Desert Island Discs moment (what book would you choose?) It will be an opportunity to invite friends /others into the chapel. It won't be a book club, because we won't all have read the same book, nor will it be restricted to spiritual literature.

I will be writing more about this in next month's newsletter, but this is just to whet your appetite! Provisional dates above.

*Meike Dux-Harrap*

## Chapel in the Media

An informative article about our 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary, illustrated with a photo of members outside Chapel, appeared in *The Press* on 9 January.

(<https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/19832599.unitarian-church-st-saviourgate-york-mark-350th-anniversary/>) Thanks go to Andrew Hill and Joan Sinanan for the parts they played in this.

We will be marking this celebration in Chapel over the weekend of 2 & 3 July.

## About our Library

The chapel has 2 bookshelves containing books and booklets which can be borrowed by chapel members and regular visitors/premises users.

The books on the lobby shelves are all either Unitarian publications or about Unitarianism and have a yellow dot.

When borrowing a book or booklet, please complete the details in the coloured loans notebook on the hook nearby and, if your name is not on our membership list, please fill in your name legibly and contact details. It is helpful if you also enter the return date when you bring the book back.

Most chapel library books are on the shelves in the upper room, and there are also box files with past copies of periodicals e.g. Faith and Freedom on the low shelves under the inner glass window. Books have different coloured dots according to the (rough) classifications which are displayed on the wide window shelf where a black A4 ringbinder is a catalogue of all chapel library books. Please complete the A4 Loans book there for borrowers of books from these shelves.

You may have noticed lots of books in shelves by the side door in the main body of the church. These are books collected for our annual fundraising sale at St Crux but are available to anyone at any time for a donation.

*Barbara Barnes*



## Notes from the Committee Meeting of 23 January

- Apologies from Stephanie Bisby and Joan Sinanan.
- The committee agreed to go ahead with the quote for website development from Devus Design, and to ask Stephanie to be liaison for adding events to the website. Richard Brown will approach the Yorkshire Unitarian Union for a contribution towards costs.
- The COVID situation remains a standing agenda item and we continue to ask people to wear masks while moving around chapel, though after 27 January they can be removed once seated. The right-hand side continues to be reserved for social distancing.
- Hiring charges are to be reviewed, with the aim of simplifying them and making them more uniform. An increase may be required due to rising energy costs.
- The committee continues to consider how best to make use of the space available in chapel. Approval was given for purchasing a printer for the upstairs meeting room, and four stacking armchairs. Accessibility of meeting spaces remains an issue, with proposals including glazing the rear courtyard to turn it into a room, or removing side pews and partitioning space inside the chapel to give a downstairs meeting space.
- The weekend of 2 and 3 July has been selected for the focus of the 350-year celebration. Suggested activities include crafts, choir, cream teas, music and poetry. Volunteers are needed to assist with the working group. Events will be advertised in the local press.
- The committee agreed to take a stall at York Pride on 18 June, so help will be needed on the day. Agreement was also reached to install a bench in rainbow colours outside the chapel.
- The St Crux fundraising event will also go ahead, but limited to the café and sales of books and ‘as new’ items. No second-hand/bric-a-brac.
- Two representatives are needed to attend the Annual Meetings in Birmingham in April. Richard Brown will attend on behalf of the committee; a further representative from the congregation is needed.
- Finances remain healthy despite significant expenditure. The chapel has raised £1073 for Nepal (with the rice and dahl lunch still outstanding). Total for York Boats still to be tallied.
- A second Big Sing event will be held on 9 April for the 2022 charities. St Nicks is the local charity for the year. The second charity will be to support refugees.
- Meike Dux-Harrap is starting a quarterly ‘good read’ discussion event. (See article on page 4 of this newsletter.)
- A social event will be held every two months. Dee Boyle agreed to organise the first one.
- An induction service will be arranged for Stephanie Bisby, possibly in conjunction with Bradford. Andrew Hill and Stephanie to liaise.
- Andrew Hill will be standing down from the committee at the AGM.
- David Zucker will bring in candles. Peter will be asked if he has parking vouchers and can get more. Volunteers are needed for the flower rota (as well as the tea and coffee, and greeting, rotas).
- The next committee meeting will be on 27 February. Dee Boyle will provide opening words.
- The AGM will be on 27 March. Please consider standing for committee if you think you could support the work of the Chapel.



## A Prayer for our 350<sup>th</sup> Year

As we move through this new year,  
 full of hopes and dreams,  
 weaving the threads  
 of our many activities  
 into the rich tapestry  
 of our community,  
 may we remember the lessons  
 of our past,  
 may we use our present wisely  
 and with love,  
 and may we make our future  
 worthy of the best  
 of our ancestors,  
 the blessed dead  
 whose thoughts  
 and dreams  
 and actions  
 shaped the reality  
 we inhabit today.

Amen

*Stephanie Bisby*

## A Note from the new Typesetter

Please bear with me over my first few issues of the newsletter as I get to grips with this new job and try to find a format that suits most or, ideally, all readers and, ultimately, fits in with the new website and the national Unitarian design recommendations. Andrew is a hard act to follow!

*Anneliese Emmans Dean*

## USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

York Unitarians,  
 St Saviourgate Chapel,  
 St Saviourgate, York YO1 8NQ  
[www.york.unitarians.org.uk](http://www.york.unitarians.org.uk)

*Minister:* The Revd Stephanie Bisby  
 07930 390686  
 reverendstephaniebisby@gmail.com

*Chairperson:* David Zucker  
 davidgzucker@gmail.com

*Secretary:* Jenny Jacobs  
 01423 548793  
 yorkunitarians@gmail.com

*Treasurer:* Richard Brown  
 01904 705382  
 richardcabrown@btinternet.com

*Chapel Committee Members:*  
 Barbara Barnes, Dee Boyle,  
 Elizabeth Faiers, Andrew Hill,  
 Joan Sinanan,  
 and the Officers

*Colton's Hospital Trustees:*  
 Elizabeth Faiers (Treasurer),  
 Stephanie Bisby, Dee Boyle, Trevor  
 Gant, Marta Hardy, Simon Hardy,  
 Nicky Jenkins (Chair), Joan Sinanan,  
 Richard Thompson, Leslie Wilkinson  
 (Registered charity: 221281)

*The York Unitarian Editor:*  
 Revd Stephanie Bisby  
 07930 390686  
 reverendstephaniebisby@gmail.com

If you would like to make a one-off donation to York Unitarians CIO by BACS, the details are:

York Unitarians CIO  
 Sort Code: 40-52-40  
 Account number: 00032702

A Monthly Standing Order is particularly welcome. Please also consider Gift Aid if you are a taxpayer. More information from the Treasurer  
 Richard Brown

