



THE YORK UNITARIAN

St. Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel, York, YO1 8NQ

January 2020

FROM THE MINISTER

2020 Vision

Maybe you thought, like me, that 2020 vision means you can see perfectly but it turns out this isn't the case. If you have 20/20 vision, you can see clearly at 20 feet what should normally be seen at that distance. So, in other words, your vision is normal. No promises of sudden clarity of vision in this new decade then! But we might have the benefit of hindsight perhaps. We can look back at what has transpired and say "I didn't see that coming" or, maybe, "The signs were all there I just didn't add them up".

Often we have worked out a way of living which gets us through but doesn't allow us to be our best selves. We can become blinkered. Other people watch us doing whatever it is we do but we don't see it until perhaps something comes crashing down on us.

Some people like to be in control – they feel safer that way. They like to look into the future. They think they are far-seeing. They like to plan

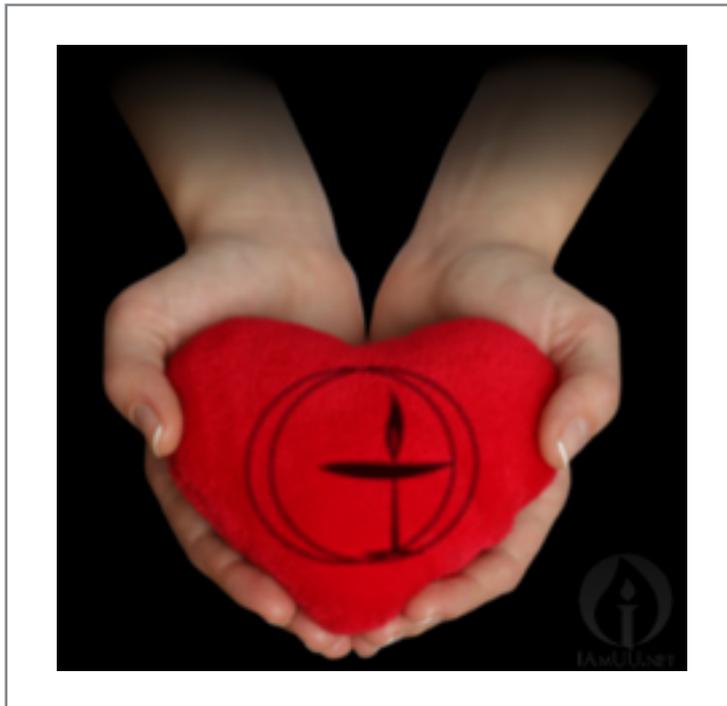
for things. And by sheer effort of will they can sometimes make them happen. But, the longer you live, the more you realise that you can't see into the future and that change and unexpected things happen randomly and unforeseen to us all.

Sometimes we travel through our lives as if viewing it from a moving car. A bit of a blur. We really need to slow down and look at things. Not just to gain information, but to realise where we are. Studies have shown that green bathing, being in a green place, benefits our physical and mental health greatly. We get to

know a place, we begin to sense our place in the great scheme of things and we become calmer.

Without vision the people perish. Do you have a vision for 2020? It might just be normal vision but we can visualize how we might like to be as well as using our 2020 normal vision to look back.

This will be my last front page as I am retiring as Minister to St Saviourgate Unitarians on 12th January when there will be a bit of a do. Do come. It has been a privilege and an honour to minister to you. *Nicky Jenkins*



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

Sunday 5 January
Rev. Nicky Jenkins
Music by David Hammond

Sunday 12 January
Rev. Nicky Jenkins
Music by Helen Drewery
Sparklers children's programme
Bring & Share Lunch

Sunday 19 January
Elizabeth Faiers
Home
Music by David Hammond

Sunday 26 January
Claire Lee
Being Known
Music by David Hammond

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM NICKY

Dear friends,

I wanted to write and say my goodbyes and thanks to you all for being such a lively and supportive congregation. I am retiring now because of my health. I am 66 so I think that is a reasonable age to retire and my husband has retired this year too. I want to spend some time with him. I have had a problem with my memory for some time which has been diagnosed as Mild Cognitive Impairment. This makes it very difficult for me to organise myself, remember to visit people and plan ahead. I am also losing some of my vocabulary and preparing services is stressful as I can't remember where I read certain things. I can forget who people are and that's not a good look in Ministry!

Sometimes when things are going well, I think that I should not be retiring but in my heart of hearts I know that I cannot be a Minister in the way I would want to be and in the way you deserve to be ministered to. I am confident however that you are a very enquiring and competent congregation and that you will be able to bring your own insights and talents to the pulpit and possibly organising groups or engagement groups in the interim period before a new minister is appointed. You also have a pastoral care team of kind and concerned members whom you can contact for support through any issues that arise. Look after and out for each other.

I shall be keeping involved nationally in Unitarianism. I am on the academic committee of the new Unitarian College and next year I will be attending the Festival of Unitarians in the South East in February. Thank you for being such a great congregation and allowing me to travel through these turbulent times with you. Change is good.

Nicky Jenkins

OTHER EVENTS IN JANUARY

- Monday 6 January 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore rehearsal* (Chapel)
- Thursday 9 January 10.30a.m. for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)
- Sunday 12 January p.m. *Retirement party for Rev. Nicky Jenkins*(Chapel)
- Monday 13 January 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore rehearsal* (Chapel)
- Thursday 16 January 10.30a.m. for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)
- Sunday 19 January 12.30p.m. *Chapel Committee* (Upper Room)
- Monday 20 January 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore rehearsal* (Chapel)
- Wednesday 22 January 7.30p.m. *Chapel Poetry Group* (Simon & Marta Hardy's)
- Thursday 23 January 10.30a.m. for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)
- Saturday 25 January *York Residents' Festival* (Chapel)
- Sunday 26 January *York Residents' Festival* (Chapel)
- Monday 27 January 7.30p.m. *Soon Amore rehearsal* (Chapel)
- Thursday 30 January 10.30a.m. for 11.00a.m. *Meditation Group* (Upper Room)

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.

THE CHAPEL SECRETARY

Margaret Hill is retiring at the forthcoming annual meeting of the congregation in the spring. Margaret here outlines the tasks for which the secretary is responsible.

The Chapel Secretary is responsible for:

1. Circulating notice of meetings and agendas for Committee Meetings and Annual or Special Meetings and where necessary giving appropriate notice).
2. Checking that a Quorum is present at all meetings.
3. Preparing the Annual Report, including writing the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting and a report of the activities of the Committee during the preceding year.
4. Circulating notice of changes to the Constitution at the appropriate times prior to Annual or Special Meetings
5. Writing the minutes of all Committee meetings and circulating to committee members, keeping a file of signed copies of the minutes
6. Following up actions agreed at a previous meeting by including on the next agenda.

The Secretary also:

7. Receives correspondence, and brings this to the attention of the Committee, or displays documents on the Notice boards as appropriate.
8. Writes a report on Chapel activities for the Annual Report of the Yorkshire Unitarian Union.
9. Maintains the Preaching plan and invites worship leaders to fill Sundays when the Minister is not present. *Already passed to another committee member.*
10. Maintains current information on the indoor notice boards and on the Chapel Website. *Would continue with DUWIT website as it is too complicated to hand over, until someone designs a new website.*
11. Gives the notices for the coming week in the Sunday service – get details from the newsletter and any other information available.
12. Puts information on the Chapel Facebook page.

ABOUT PEOPLE

- Elizabeth Faiers and Nicky Jenkins, as trustees of Colton's almshouses trust, attended a consultation about the redevelopment of the army barracks site adjacent to the cottages.
- Special thanks to Adie Wilson and Nick Morrice for buying and setting up the Chapel Christmas tree.

YORK RESIDENTS' WEEKEND Friday 25 and Saturday 26 January 'Then and Now'

The Chapel will again be open to the public for *York Residents' Weekend*. This year it will be on Saturday 25 January from 10.00a.m to 4.00p.m. and Sunday 26 January from 12.30p.m to 4.00p.m.

This time we will mount a 'Then and Now' past and present exhibition about the Chapel':

- *then* with a street wall - *now* with a railing
- *then* without trees *now* with trees
- *then* with an organ - *now* without
- *then* with 'men' ministers - *now* with 'women'

Members of the congregation are invited to help serve teas and coffees and to converse with visitors not just about the Chapel 'then' but also about 'now'. There will be a sign-up sheet on the vestry notice board for volunteers available to act as chapel guides, converse with our visitors and serve tea, coffee and biscuits.

MY SIGHT YORK



During the service on 1st December our minister, Nicky Jenkins, presented a cheque for £1200 to Caroline Robertson of MySightYork, which has been our fundraising charity during 2019.

Our fundraising efforts included a concert in the spring by the U3A choir £200, a sponsored walk in the autumn £770, MySightYork's pink elephant collecting boxes £160, miscellaneous sales and Smartie tubes £70.

A very good effort by all concerned, many thanks to everyone who contributed.

2020 UNITARIAN GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

Tuesday 7th - Thursday 9th April at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole Hotel.

The Chapel can send 2 voting delegates with financial assistance from the Chapel. Speak to the Chapel secretary if you are interested

Others may attend at their own expense:

- Unitarians who would like to attend the Annual Meetings for the first time in April 2020, and have been members of York Unitarians for less than 6 years are encouraged to apply for a bursary, covering up to 90% of the cost. Apply to the secretary for details, applications must be submitted to the General Assembly by 17 January.

- Young Adult Grant - The Unitarian Annual Meetings are for people of all ages. To help younger Unitarians attend, there is a grant available for those aged 18-39, covering up to 90% of your costs. Once registration opens in January 2020, you can book your place at the Annual Meetings. As part of the registration process, you will be asked your age and can apply for a grant to cover 90% of the cost of attendance. *Margaret Hill, Chapel Secretary*

WHO WAS 'BLACK PETE'?

Who was Black Pete?' several people were asking after the Christmas Tree dressing service on Sunday 8th December. We had sung a carol about Santa Claus which traces his mythology from St. Nicholas, the bishop of Myra who restored three pickled boys to life; and who then traveled to Spain and the Netherlands where on St. Nicholas Day (6 December), assisted by 'Black Pete', he distributes presents to the children:

To Netherlands St. Nicholas went;
and with him went Black Pete;
to all the children they were sent
with presents for the Feast.

St. Nicholas then travelled on to north America where he melded into Santa Claus and, every year, returns to Europe in time to deliver the children's Christmas presents.

Tradition suggests that 'Black Pete' was a Moor a member of the nomadic North African people which invaded Spain during the 8th century AD. Recently, however - it should be noted and recognised - there has been growing discomfort among Dutch people that emphasising Black Pete's colour - with non-black people blacking their faces - amounts to unacceptable racial stereotyping and discrimination.

A GATHERING PRAYER written and used by Claire Wilton for the Christmas Tree dressing service on Sunday 8 December



We gather here because it is dark
and we want to see light.

We gather here because it is cold
and we crave the warmth of company
and the chance to talk and think and sing
about things that matter to us.

We gather here because it is busy out
there:
noisy and crowded and overflowing with
places peddling gadgets and ornaments
and luxuries that we do not need.

We gather here because there is
deliberate discord in other places: on the
radio and television, in community halls
and meeting rooms, and we seek unity.

We gather here because there is conflict
amongst humans around the world and
we want to avow, "This should not be;
this does not have to be".

In the dark of mid-winter, when the days
are so short and even daytime skies are
often grey and gloomy, it is a human
impulse to gather in sacred places seeking
warmth and light and wisdom and good
company.

This Christmas season, we gather here in
hope, looking for a miracle and the
chance to experience for ourselves the
wonder of a draughty stable and a chorus
of song on a hill-top far away and a star
shining brightly in a winter sky.

EMBRACING YOUR SHADOW

A sermon by Revd. Nicky Jenkins
on Sunday 18 October 2019

URSULA LE GUIN

I have recently been introduced to the books of Ursula Le Guin, a writer of science fiction, who creates worlds and people who hold radically different outlooks and ways of organising society to our own. In doing so she challenges the reader to question the absoluteness of their truths and to envisage “another way” as equally valid. Ursula Le Guin seems to have a certain spirituality in her writings although it is not made explicit.

Influenced by a copy of the Lao Tzu’s *Tao te Ching* which she read as a young adult, she uses the idea of a yin-centred Utopia as a jumping off point. Much of our western ideas of Utopia, a perfect world, are very much yang focussed. What would a yin utopia be like? Le Guin describes the yin utopia as one which would be

dark, wet,
obscure, weak,
yielding, passive,
participatory,
contracting and cold (Le Guin, 1989, *A non-Euclidean view of California as a cold place to be*)

YIN YANG

Now this doesn’t sound immediately attractive to most of us but, as we know, the essence of the yin-yang symbol is its balance. Both the darkness and the light swirl into each other keeping things alive. If we reject the darkness our life becomes unbalanced. We try to shift that which we do not approve of or don’t like to outside ourselves and on to others. In *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), the young wizard Ged, in his boat on the Open Sea, finds that ultimately he has to stop, go backwards, move inwards to face the shadowy, unpleasant part of himself in order to recover a sense of peace.

To pay more attention to the yin, perhaps we need to start an internal discussion with ourselves. That still quiet space within is only listened to when it doesn’t challenge cultural and societal aims. We still live in a society dominated by growth, moving forward, dynamism. We have downgraded art and music and literature in our schools favouring science, mathematics and technology.

The yin yang symbol brings together dark and light in a perpetual motion balance. Both are needed.

Carl Jung saw that we all have a dark or shadow side which we try our damndest to deny. We are

ashamed of what we label our negative traits. We present to the world a version of ourselves which we feel is acceptable. But we live in fear of the truth being exposed, as though our flaws, our meanness, our aggression and our selfishness would rule us out of the humanity bracket. Jung wrote:

Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual’s

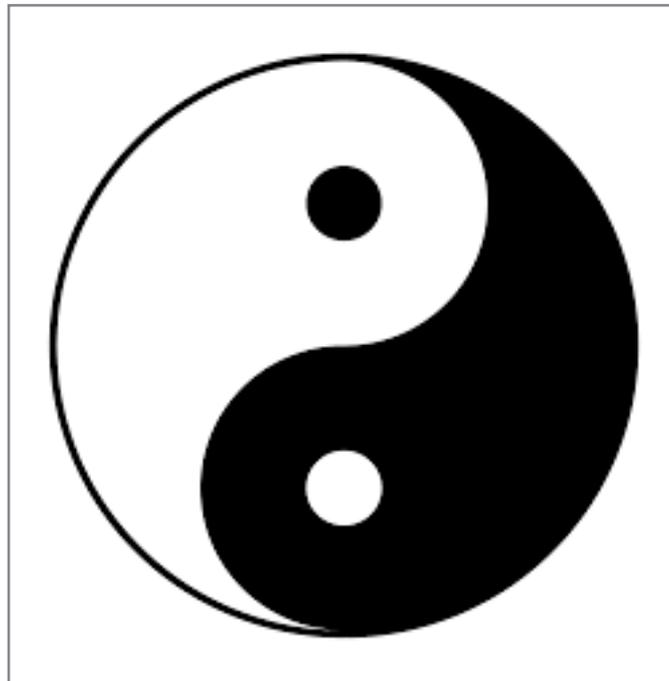
conscious life, the blacker and denser it is.

You know those people who press your buttons? We don’t like them because they bring bits of our shadow into the open for others to see:

how ratty we can become,
how intolerant we really are,
how lacking in compassion.

LOVING OUR OWN DARK SIDE

And the worst thing of all! We often attribute to them the dark parts of our own personalities. Suspecting ourselves of being “lazy” we place this unwanted characteristic onto our child. Worried about our untidiness we chastise our offspring at the slightest sign. Brought up in a



house where voices are never raised, we find our child rebellious and bad-tempered, the cause of all the fights. Frightened of our depression we go out of our way to be the life and soul. Until one day we can't keep it up any longer. The mask cracks and our shadow is on view.

We then become ashamed and defensive and fight back to restore the image we want to project. We become victims of our dark side when we need to control, exert power, or show supremacy, out of our own fear of our inadequacies.

We can tame this system somewhat, however, by learning to love that dark side. We need to embrace it as part of ourselves. Another Jung quote:

One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light but by making the darkness conscious.

So where do all these negative emotions we don't want to associate with ourselves come from? Anger and vulnerability are true feelings which you never got to express and got stored up in your shadow side. What happens around us reflects our internal and unacknowledged turmoil. But there's a second part to Jung's quote

One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light but by making the darkness conscious.

The latter procedure, however, is disagreeable and therefore not popular.

That ego will try to sabotage all efforts to expose it as not being the real you, but it can be done. When you get all riled up about something, make a note. At the heart of it, what was that all about?

Do you always have to fight back? Are you a selfish person if you just don't want to do something? Are you really an idiot? Will you never amount to anything? Are you incapable of making the right decision?

You (your ego) might think so but fundamentally you are a human being and the darkness is a part of all of us. Once we listen to the hurt that creates these thoughts and reactions we can be kinder to ourselves and notice when our fear and anger are making us react badly. We all have a smattering of these darkneses, but it doesn't mean we are fundamentally bad. We ate of the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil and we will never know perfection.

GETTING NAKED WITH GOD

Rachel Mann, in her book *Dazzling Darkness* explores her story of gender dysphoria and chronic illness. She is an Anglican vicar in Manchester and Minor Canon at Manchester Cathedral. She refers to

getting naked with God

who after all knows us and loves us unconditionally. Jung's process of individuation she sees as a healing and creative journey- a place of hope.

This creativity is, a reflection of an essential truth of the Christian faith that it is out of our woundedness and brokenness themselves that new life, 'shalom' and creation come.

But she adds:

this is no shalom in stasis but the shalom in journey and transformation.

We don't have to embrace our shadow side all at once, but once we make a start it becomes easier. One tip is to start complimenting those characteristics you hate about yourself when you see them in others! I think I will start with my nose.

WORSHIP MATERIALS ANTHOLOGY

The British Unitarian publishing house (The Lindsey Press) plans to produce a new book of original prayers, meditations, affirmations, covenants, chalice lightings, calls to worship and the like. The contact person for this endeavour is Bradford Unitarian, David Dawson [dcdawson3@hotmail.com].

In a recent *Inquirer* article David kindly refers to items in church newsletters specifically mentioning *The York Unitarian* and quotes 'Inquiring Words' by Alan Pennington. So if you have original worship material you would like to share (as several of you have!) please do send it in for consideration.

NICKY'S RETIREMENT LUNCH



Our minister Nicky Jenkins will take her final service at St Saviourgate UC on Sunday 12th January, 2020. This will be followed by a lunch and short musical entertainment in the chapel.

Soft drinks, wine and nibbles will precede the meal, giving time to set up tables etc....help welcome.

The planning group (plus a few others) will provide a choice of hot meals, including a dish for vegetarians, which will be served by helpers. There will be self-service accompaniments such as crusty bread, roast vegetables, red cabbage and salads.

We hope that all puddings and cakes will be provided by volunteers from the congregation! Please let Margaret or Barbara know details of a pudding or cake you would like to bring so we have a variety on offer.

Guests have been invited from outside York and there is no obligation to bring food. But we do need to know final numbers so please let us know **by 8th December at the latest** if you are coming on the day. Thank you.

Barbara Barnes

UNI-NEWS: THE LATEST

UPCOMING EVENTS

- *Festival of Unitarians in the South East (FUSE)* (Worthing) 21-23 February 2020
- *The Art of Creating Spiritually Healthy Communities: A training retreat from the Unitarian movement* (Birmingham) 24-27 February 2020. [see page 8]
- *General Assembly Annual Meetings (Birmingham) 7-9 April 2020*. Find out more on the Annual Meetings 2020 website. Anniversary preacher will be the Revd. Bridget Spain of Dublin Unitarians. Bursaries for first time attendees and those under 40. More information for first timers [here](#).
- *Groups Weekend (The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow) - 20-22 November 2020* National Unitarian Fellowship, Findhorn Unitarian Network, Unitarian Earth Spirit Network, Unitarian Renewal Group, Unitarian Psychological Society, Unitarian Peace Fellowship..

CHIEF OFFICER

Liz Slade's Blog "Between the general election and Christmas, in this dark point of the year, it's a time of reflection. My social echo chamber is full of pain and dismal outrage at the election result" [Read more](#)

Liz was interviewed for the Ministry of Change podcast. She spoke about Unitarianism, spirituality, community and collective wellbeing. You can listen in full (or read the transcript if you prefer) on their [website](#). Enjoy!

LATEST FROM GA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

28th November at Essex Hall, London.

1. It was agreed to convene a team of volunteers with a mix of expertise and vision which could be drawn on by congregations that are seeking help. The Chapel Mark model of reviewing congregations' governance was piloted successfully by chapels across Wales. This will next be trialed in the Sheffield District.
2. There was discussion of how the General Assembly might support congregations, district associations and other groups to manage their investments, including policies around investment. This exploration will be continued.
3. The Executive Committee agreed to a behavioural covenant, available on the GA website, which – you are welcome to use and adapt for local committees or other groups
4. Sue Woolley, District Minister for the Midland Union has been nominated as Vice President for 2020-21.



CREATING SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

“How do we create communities that are spiritually healthy? What does spiritual health look like and how can it be developed in today’s secular culture? What is the unique role that Unitarianism can play in creating communities of human flourishing?” The Unitarian General Assembly is offering a 3 day training retreat 24-27 February 2020 at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham

WHAT WE ARE OFFERING

Learning and practicing [the art of hosting](#) and harvesting conversations that matter. Exploring and practicing tools and techniques that focus attention and encourage participation in ways that give everyone the opportunity to offer their contribution. Learning a practice of being in connection - with ourselves and others.

WHY WE ARE DOING THIS NOW

The lack of participation in religion has led to a loss of connection and a longing for meaning that’s missing from a stressful, individualistic way of life. As a national faith organisation with a non-dogmatic ethos, we recognise our responsibility in creating spaces that offer the opportunity of meaning and belonging for all.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Largely funded by the Unitarian General Assembly we’re inviting differing levels of financial contribution based on your ability to contribute in order to support some of our accommodation and venue costs. If you’d like to join please fill in this [application form](#) where you will also find more details about costs. We have a limited number of places and the selection criteria will be based on ensuring we have the most diverse group possible.

WHAT THEN IS SANCTUARY?

The sanctuary is often something very small. Not a grandiose gesture, but a small gesture toward alleviating human suffering and preventing humiliation. The sanctuary is a human being. Sanctuary is a dream. And that is why you are here and that is why I am here. We are here because of one another. We are in truth each other’s shelter.”

Elie Wiesel

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS



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

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

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Forget about making poverty history:
climate change will make poverty permanent.
Christian Aid