



THE YORK UNITARIAN

St. Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel, York, YO1 8NQ

September 2020

FROM THE EDITOR

Maybe you remember the old fable about the hare and the tortoise:

A Hare was making fun of the Tortoise one day for being so slow.

"Do you ever get anywhere?" he asked with a mocking laugh.

"Yes," replied the Tortoise, "and I get there sooner than you think. I'll run you a race and prove it."

The Hare was much amused at the idea of running a race with the Tortoise, but for the fun of the thing he agreed. So the Fox, who had consented to act as judge, marked the distance and started the runners off.

The Hare was soon far out of sight, and to make the Tortoise feel very deeply how ridiculous it was for him to try a race with a Hare, he lay down beside the course to take a nap until the Tortoise should catch up.

The Tortoise meanwhile kept going slowly but steadily, and, after a time, passed the place where the Hare was sleeping. But the Hare

slept on very peacefully; and when at last he did wake up, the Tortoise was near the goal. The Hare now ran his swiftest, but he could not overtake the Tortoise in time.

Moral: The race is not always to the swift.

This well known fable tells us something about our current Chapel debate concerning 'zoomed' acts of worship.

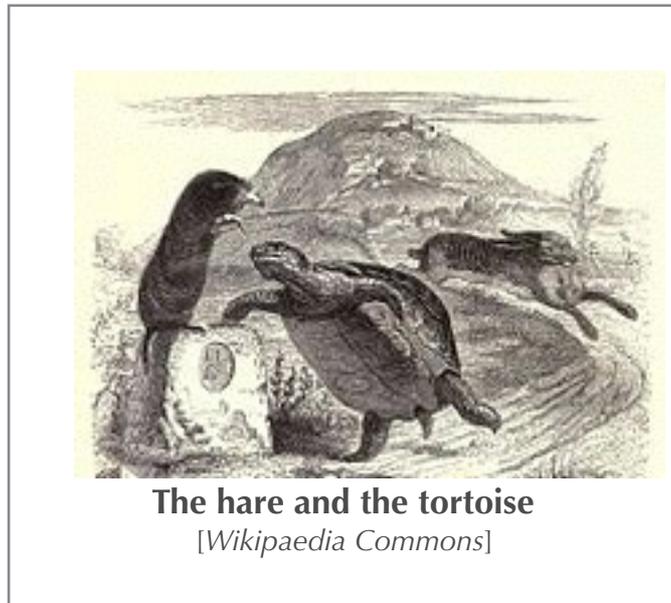
Over the recent weeks and months of 'lockdown' we have experienced the novelty and convenience of acts of worship 'zoomed' directly into our homes. We have also enjoyed the 'zoomed' fellowship of several friends from further-a-field, even as far away as Australia. As a result there is genuine enthusiasm around about finding suitable ways for continuing to offer worship and other activities through this medium.

On the other hand, there is also great enthusiasm about once again being able to enjoy the chapel's ambience, for meeting once again face to face (and socially distanced of course!) with friends, visitors, 'live' musicians and service leaders; and, when we are again allowed to do so, to enjoy communal singing.

Also, it maybe worth mentioning that while these are neither/nor (i.e. neither zoom nor chapel) alternatives;

in the fable of the hare and tortoise, both creatures actually make it to the finishing line. However, it is the slower 'make haste slowly' tortoise who actually gets there first.

Andrew M. Hill



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

Sunday 6 September: Chapel
Elizabeth Faiers
Why do we wear masks?
Music by David Hammond

Sunday 13 September: Zoom from Chapel
Dee Boyle:
*Finding a balance: balance
within ourselves and our community*
Music by Helen Drewery

Sunday 20 September: Chapel
Andrew Hill
*Cleanliness is next to godliness: Thomas
Southwood Smith, Charles Wellbeloved
and pandemics*
Music by David Hammond

Sunday 27 September: Zoom
Claire Wilton
A change of scene
an inter-generational service
Music by Myrna Michell

ST CRUX HALL SALE 2021

Our Chapel 2021 fund raising sale at St. Crux Hall (top of St. Saviourgate) is booked for Saturday 21 August 2021. Put it in your 2021 diaries now!

FROM THE CHAPEL COMMITTEE

- The Chapel Committee met - by zoom - for an extra meeting on Thursday evening 27 August.
- Members of the Ministry Sub-Committee were present to report on the progress being made in the Chapel's search for a new minister.
- There was a further discussion relating to zooming Sunday services. For the time being two Sunday services each month will be zoomed. On other Sundays services will be held at the Chapel. Enquiries are in progress regarding the most effective ways of zooming services from the Chapel.
- Special thanks were recorded to *Claire Lee* and *Marta* and *Simon Hardy* as retiring members of the pastoral care group.

PASTORAL CARE AT CHAPEL

The Pastoral Care team at chapel have recently had some changes due to three people stepping down. Claire Lee has been the team leader for several years and has done a sterling job at the helm for which we are most grateful. Due to the current situation in the pandemic she will not be in the chapel for quite a while and made the decision to step down from her role. Marta and Simon Hardy also decided it was time for them to step down from the team and our thanks go to them too for all their help over the years that they have been part of the team.

The new Pastoral Care Team is now Jen Atkinson, Barbara Barnes, Dee Boyle, Janet Eldred, Sue Elliot, Peter Exley, Joan Sinanan & Richard Thompson.

Over the coming months the team will be assessing the best way to support members of the congregation and the friends in groups who meet in chapel each week. We will also be formulating new guidelines to work with in the future and updating the 'help' sheets that are kept in chapel with regard to people and establishments within York where people can obtain further advice and support should it be needed. We wish to be as supportive and caring as possible to anyone who needs it while maintaining respect, confidentiality and due consideration for people's private lives.

If anyone would like to talk to any member of the team privately please do contact them and they will be happy to chat. Also, if anyone has any suggestions about the sort of support they would like from the team or how they feel the team could be helpful to members of the congregation please do let us know so that we can include these thoughts within the discussions over the coming months. We want to be able to help, support and care for each other, especially in these difficult and unprecedented times that we find ourselves in. You will find our contact details in the membership directory and all members of the team will be happy to hear from you.

Dee Boyle for Chapel Pastoral Care Team

**The moral test of government is
how it treats the children,
the elderly, the needy, the sick and
the handicapped.**

*Hubert H. Humphrey
former US vice-president*

FROM THE AGM OF YORK UNITARIANS CIO

- The first AGM of York Unitarians CIO (registered charity 1181531) as successor to St. Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel (an excepted charity) was held after service on Sunday 16 August 2020. The chair person and the secretary signed a minute of agreement merging the two charities.
- 17 members were present with David Zucker in the chair. 6 members observed via 'zoom'. Apologies were received from Sue Catts.
- No matters were arising from the minutes of the 2019 AGM nor from the Special General Meeting of 18 August 2019; nor were there questions arising from the 2019 annual report.
- There was a question from Dee Boyle about a donation associated with a wedding.
- Elizabeth Faiers proposed and Barbara Barnes seconded the adoption of the 2019 annual report.
- The chairperson signed the Declaration that the members of York Unitarians CIO approved the trustees' annual report.
- The treasurer (Nick Morrice) reported that income to date during 2020 has been £21,323 with income (including gift aid reclamations) from recitals and concerts being considerably lower than estimated as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.
- Expenditure was high at £20,601 since there had been recent planned expenditure repointing the boundary walls, painting the chapel railings and levelling the front path from gate to front door. This completed required work following the last quinquennial inspection. Alan Pennington complimented the excellent work of Peter Exley.
- Elizabeth Faiers reported that during 2019 income of £16,000 from the Chapel Charity (the Chapel's permanent endowment) had been transferred to the Chapel. She also confirmed that all the Chapel Charity investments had now been transferred to York Unitarians CIO accounts.
- Proposed by John Brogden and seconded by Jen Atkinson: David Zucker and Nick Morrice were re-elected as chairperson and treasurer. Jenny Jacobs was elected as secretary. Committee members elected were Barbara Barnes, De Boyle, Richard Brown, Elizabeth Faiers, Andrew Hill, Margaret Hill and Joan Sinanan. Thanks were expressed to Simon

Hardy and Laura Cox who were retiring from the committee. A presentation was made to Margaret Hill who was retiring secretary as chapel secretary after 12 years.

- York representatives to the Yorkshire Unitarian Union will be Jen Atkinson, Jenny Jacobs, Adrienne Wilson and David Zucker.

- The meeting concluded with a vigorous discussion regarding the pros and cons of 'zooming' our services of worship and other activities: an experience new to us as a result of the current coronavirus pandemic.

- * Should zoomed services be continued now - within required conditions (no singing!) - we can return to the chapel?

- * Could we hold some services at the chapel and some, as we have been doing on 'zoom'?

- * Maybe we can do both at the same time! - chapel services zoomed for the sick and housebound and those far away? Australia?

- * And how often - twice a month or once? from home or from chapel?

- * Didn't smaller groups - e.g. the meditation group - also have had positive zoom experiences.

- * Also, how does our search for a new minister fit in here?

- Opinion is divided - right down the middle it seems since the chairperson had to use a casting vote! But the meeting did agree to explore further and appointed a small sub-committee (David Zucker, Nick Morrice, Claire Wilton and Dee Boyle). We needed the best equipment and it needed funds. Report back to a general meeting will be within three months.

UNITARIANS

have said for centuries
that there is room in our religion
for all seekers.

Skeptics and poets and scientists
are welcome here,
as are nonconformists
and shy and uncertain folk.

We believe that restlessness and doubts
are a sign of grace,
that the love of truth is the holiest of gifts.

Barbara Merritt

A SLIGHT CHANGE OF PLAN

a sermon by Stephanie Bisby
on Sunday 16 August 2020

Alongside this address, you may find it helpful to read Luke 8 verses 22-25 and Victoria Safford's meditation, Map of the Journey in Progress, on the UUA Worship Web Site: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/map-journey-progress>

FLIGHT PLAN

"Ladies and Gentlemen, there has been a slight change of plan."

When you've just started a flight and the Captain comes over the tannoy to make that announcement, it's a fair guess that things are about to get bumpy. This happened to me some years ago, flying out of Cardiff on a Friday evening on what should have been a short, easy, direct flight to Cork. Instead I watched on the map as the plane made a short circuit and came back, bumpily, to where it started. The Captain explained as we returned that there had been a mechanical failure, nothing to be concerned about, but we would be returning to Cardiff and changing planes.

We disembarked and milled around for a while in the arrivals hall. The tannoy announced that a plane was coming for us from Manchester. The plane arrived. The tannoy explained that we had lost our slot with air traffic control and were awaiting a new one, then that at the next available slot, the pilot and crew would be over their permitted hours, and the airline would be arranging us a hotel for the night. Instead of arriving in Ireland that evening, I sat behind a triple-glazed window watching other strangely silent planes taking off to who-knew-where.

The next morning my flight left, not much more than 12 hours behind schedule. It didn't make too much difference to me, but I know at least one passenger didn't bother to embark the next morning because he'd already missed the wedding reception he'd been flying over to attend.

A slight change of plan for me, a bigger one for him.

LIVING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

For me, this year has felt like that flight. We had our take off, and then a bumpy ride ending up not quite where I expected to be. In March I should have been heading out to the final service of my student placement with Bradford Unitarians; instead we were heading into lockdown. In April the [Unitarian] General Assembly's annual meetings were cancelled, our final residential was postponed to September, and Steve was at home with me instead of on his planned trip to Ireland for a friend's 50th birthday.

I could go on with a litany of slight changes of plan: classes taken online instead of in person, delayed deadlines, cancelled trips to the seaside and postponed parties, but I know you get the picture. You probably have a list of your own. The pandemic has affected so many people in so many ways, many of them much more dramatic than mine. I know many of us are thinking particularly at the moment of those who should have been sitting GCSEs and A-Levels this year, especially those whose plans have been affected by not achieving the grades they expected.

Many of us probably know someone fighting their way through clearing, or the appeals process. Many of us also probably know someone who can say, with the benefit of some years' hindsight, that an unexpected change of plan turned out the best thing that ever happened to them. Perhaps some of us have even had that experience ourselves. But knowing that is strangely little comfort when we find ourselves back in that place of uncertainty and chaos, rocked by life's storms.

As Victoria Safford put it in the lovely meditation which Jenny read for us:

"Here's a time, and here's another, when I laid down my fear and walked right on into it, right up to my neck into that roiling water."

Doing that takes some courage, and not a little faith.

WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

In our Unitarian Bible Discussion Group last weekend, we talked about the story told in the gospel of Luke, where Jesus calms the storm. It's easy for the discussion to get hung up on miracles: did Jesus calm the storm or didn't he?

Many doubt the truth of the stories about him, and some even doubt whether he existed as a historical figure. Personally I'm pretty sure he existed, and I like to think he didn't calm the storm, though perhaps it looked that way to the others in the boat. It's just that because he was the only one who wasn't huddled down, trying to keep the rain out of his eyes, he was also the only one who saw the break in the clouds, the bright spell blowing in across the lake.

Some people imagine that when Jesus asked the disciples, "Where is your faith?" he was angrily rebuking them, and think the words came with a slip of the halo, a bad hair day, Jesus running out of patience. I like to imagine that it might have been more of a friendly teasing:

"Come on, guys, you know how to do this stuff, otherwise what are we all about?"

When he talks about faith, I don't think he's necessarily talking about the faith that you can say to the storms, "go away" and they will. It's more the faith that no matter what storms come, you'll weather them somehow. There may be a slight change of plan along the way – there may be many – but one way or another, we'll get there.

ALL SHALL BE WELL

The story is told of a Zen master who is given a very precious crystal bowl. People come from far and wide to hear his teaching and see the precious bowl. One day a guest knocks the bowl off the shelf and it shatters into tiny pieces.

"Right," says the master, "let's begin."

And he grabs a broom and starts sweeping.

The Zen master in the story isn't relaxed because he can stop the bowl from breaking. He's relaxed because he knows the bowl will break, sooner or later, and that's OK – every morning, before he starts teaching, he reminds himself that the bowl is already broken. The storms will come:

- an illness,
- a death,
- a pandemic,
- a war.

It's all already broken. But the wonderful and mysterious truth is that at some level it's also all already healed. And it's one of those truths that we have to keep telling ourselves over and over again, because it's so easy to forget, a truth that finds its own expression in each generation.

In the words of Jesus:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14:27)

In the words of 14th century mystic Julian of Norwich,

"All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."

In the words of Sunny Kapoor in the Best Exotic Marigold hotel:

"Everything will be all right in the end and if it's not all right, it's not the end."

I thought that was going to be the end, but it turns out I have one more thing to say: this is not an excuse to stop acting to right injustice when we can, in the education system, the economic system or the justice system. Giving up because 'God will put it right' is just another way of acting in fear instead of faith.

All shall be well, not by magic, but when, with our hearts, and our minds, and our hands, we act in faith to make it so.

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Stephanie Bisby's theme talk at this year's 'virtual' Summer School may be found on You Tube as follows:

**'Speaking the Truth in Love' with
Stephanie Bisby, 25th August ...
www.youtube.com › watch**

**We are here
because of one another.
We are in truth
each other's shelter.**

Elie Wiesel

UNI-SING!



Hymn-singing has not ceased!

Around 30 people are meeting on Zoom to sing and learn hymns, each Saturday afternoon at 3pm.

We may be looking to a different future, but some of us have been reaching for that future by not only enjoying our favourites, but also learning at least one hymn or song from scratch, to take into their congregation's repertoire.

We are hosted by Louise Rogers, and music is selected and played by Myrna Michell and now also by Lesley Hartley of the Edinburgh congregation. We welcome hymn suggestions from participants, sent to Myrna by Wednesday morning.

An opening reading is followed by 5 hymns including something to learn. Then it's Break-out groups for 10 minutes, and another run of hymns. A rota of readers is being created.

We have been meeting now for 12 sessions. Hymns using music written by our late musical champion, David Dawson, were offered in the first couple of weeks. Though we had sound problems in week one, by week two we had found the way to de-compress zoom sound, and that made all the difference. Piano usually sounds very good, and we have included guitarists on two occasions, as well.

A private Facebook page 'UNI-SING!' contains weekly information, and hymn/song words are available on Dropbox. This information appears on Thursday of each week. Additionally, Louise emails an updated weekly Newsletter, with recurring zoom link, and current details.

To get started, please email Louise Rogers on louise.rogers256@gmail.com

Myrna's email address is:

ringofvoices@gmail.com

See you soon!

I AM A UNITARIAN



Joseph Priestley in City Square, Leeds

I am a Unitarian.
Joe Priestley is my name.
I am a strict one-Godder
who from West Riding came.
I preached the Word at Nantwich,
in Leeds and Birmingham;
but now I live in exile,
American, I am.

For wanting human freedom
they burned my chapel down.
They said I was seditious
and drove me from the town.
Briefly I fled to London.
At Hackney I was heard,
and now in Pennsylvania
I'm still preaching the Word.

In science and other subjects
great interest I've displayed.
Oxygen I discovered,
first soda water made.
In history I'm a doctor.
In electricity
I've published all my findings.
I've taught academy.

Now all you who come after
both sides th' Atlantic sea,
remember what I've taught you,
that God is one not three;
that Jesus was God's prophet
a person like yourself,
and even human sinners
God takest to himself.

*Andrew M. Hill (February 1983) for 250th
anniversary of Joseph Priestley's birth*

FROM UNI-NEWS AUGUST 2020

LIGHT IN THE LOCKDOWN

The Gospel of Mark, possibly the oldest extant gospel, can yield surprising and unexpected insights when considered apart from the other Gospels. Rev. Bob Janis-Dillon - a Unitarian minister who composed his own heterodox translation and commentary on Mark - will lead an evening's exploration into this text, and its possible meaning for today. The event is free but pre-registration is required - [please email to sign up](#). Tuesday, 1st of September, 7-9pm.

FROM THE GA EXECUTIVE

1- agreed to a proposal to explore how to hold the 2021 Annual Meetings safely in the light of the coronavirus pandemic, including separating business meetings from community gatherings, and exploring what might be done online versus in person

2- agreed the Chief Officer Liz Slade should go ahead with plans to work with the Ministry Strategy Group to establish a year-long inquiry into the role of leadership in spiritual communities.

3 - The EC was given an overview of continuing work by the Chief Officer and Essex Hall staff (all of whom are working remotely), Appreciation was expressed for GA support given to the June online gathering 'Let's Talk about Race', led by Rev Winnie Gordon and Rev Kate Dean, which attracted 175 people.

5 - It was agreed to go ahead with an offer of help from an organisational consultant from the Tavistock Centre to understand the group dynamics present in our movement, available to us at no cost (although we're invited to donate to a charity of our choice). Key objectives here include: Helping the Chief Officer and Executive understand factors that impede our denomination's engagement with the changing nature of society, and identifying actions that could bring about sustainable change.

NEED HELP USING ZOOM?

Stephanie Bisby (Ministry Student at Unitarian College) has created these useful guides, which you can also find on our [website](#):

[Beginners Guide to Zoom for Church](#),
[Making your first Zoom meeting](#), and
[Hosting in Zoom](#).

UNITARIAN BLOGS

['Letting go and saying goodbye'](#) by Rev Ant Howe
['Lughnasadh / Lammas and Letting Go'](#) by Laura Dobson (Chorlton Unitarians)

['I'm really tired of negativity'](#) by Stephen Lingwood (Cardiff Unitarians/Undodiaid Caerdydd)

['Odyssey: Returning Home and Journeying On'](#) by Rev Danny Crosby (Altrincham & Urmston Unitarians)

['Crime Fiction & The Christian: Part One'](#) by Francis Elliot-Wright (Doncaster Unitarians)

['Learning from Experience'](#) by Rev Sue Woolley (Midland Unitarians)

['God the Intimate - Abba, Father - rich and contemplative provisos'](#) by Lucy Harris (Ringwood Unitarians)

['The Lestrygonians, Cyclopes and Angry Poseidon are real'](#) by Rev Andrew Brown (Cambridge Unitarians)

['If we hate haters for hating...'](#) by Rev Rob Macpherson (Unitarian Church of South Australia)

['The Landscape before the Veil'](#) by Rev Phil Waldron (Merseyside Unitarian Partnership)

['Not Conformed'](#) by Rev Bob Pounder (Oldham Unitarians)

LINDSEY PRESS OPEN MEETING

The Lindsey Press panel would like to invite you to an open meeting to discuss the future direction and publications of the Lindsey Press, as we explore possibilities beyond traditional publications and reaching out to new audiences, beyond our movement. We would like to bring people with skills and experience in writing and publishing together with people with new, innovative and bold ideas. Everyone is very welcome. We will be holding our open meeting at 4pm on Tuesday 22 September via Zoom and you can join using the details below: Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83009285366?pwd=RjBFbm1VS0pkSTFYaVJEdFZLYlZ3dz09> Meeting ID: 830 0928 5366. Passcode: 855979. To join by telephone: +442039017895

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Heart & Soul circles - various times and dates](#)

[Bible Discussion Group - online every Saturday, 3-4pm](#)

[Meditation Sessions \(Findhorn Unitarian Network\) - 15 and 18 August](#)

[Congregational Strategy Webinar and Workshops - 8 September 4pm, 23 September 3-6pm, 7 October 3-6pm](#)

**A PRAYER
FOR THE LEAST OF THESE . . .**

*The least of these
who are members of my family –
[Matthew 25:40]
the rare breed plant threatened by invasive
species*

*The least of these
who are members of my family -
the worms which till the soil and the bees
which pollinate*

*The least of these
who are members of my family -
the red squirrels confined to a few native
woodlands*

*The least of these
who are members of my family -
the cod and herring of native waters fished
beyond renewal levels*

*The least of these
who are members of my family -
the tigers, the elephants and
the rhinoceroses hunted for alleged
medicinal purposes*

*The least of these
who are members of my family -
the young women unknowingly enticed
into the sex trade*

*The least of these
who are members of my family -
the lonely, the homeless, the sick, the
deserving poor who are victims of
officials' bureaucracy*

*The least of these
who are members of my family -
the refugees fleeing oppressive regimes and
internecine war in the countries
of their birth*

As is written in an ancient scripture:
When an alien resides with you in your land,
you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who
resides with you shall be to you as the citizen
among you; you shall love the alien as yourself.
[Leviticus 19:33-34]

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

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☎ 01423 548793
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Treasurer: Nick Morrice
☎ 01904 765424
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Chapel Committee Members:,
Barbara Barnes, Dee Boyle, Richard
Brown, Elizabeth Faiers, Andrew Hill,
Margaret Hill, Joan Sinanan, and the
Officers

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

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WANT WHAT YOU HAVE, DO WHAT YOU CAN, BE WHO YOU ARE