



**BELPER UNITARIAN CHAPEL**

**A Community with living  
and loving spirituality  
that engages both the  
Heart and the Mind  
NEWSLETTER**

**DECEMBER 2024 -**

**JANUARY 2025**

*In the Advent Season -*

May Wisdom and Generosity  
Be ours in this Season of Anticipation  
Passing through its Busy Days  
With Love in our Hearts  
Wonder in our Souls  
And Light in our Minds

*May it be so!*



*From Cliff Reed*

Unitarian Minister

## MESSAGE FROM YOUR STUDENT MINISTER

***The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen - Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.***

***Because a loving silence often has far more power to heal and connect than the most well-intentioned words.***

***– Rachel Naomi Remen.***

This time of year is busy – we have Christmas and New Year all condensed together in the space of two weeks! That can be a lot with gift giving, concerts, and the buzz of the high street. Along with all of that, though – I want to think about what makes this time of year special for us as individuals. I want to call out too for those who don't have people with them during this season, those feeling down, or lonely – for you, know that you will always have someone through community with us to support and love you here at Field Row.

I know Christmas can be complicated for Unitarians, but I hope at least – it is an opportunity for us to get into the spirit of the season whenever we feel we are able to. It is the spirit of being people and connecting with others where we can; just to listen, to share in joy, or just to be. That is what Christmas can mean for us. And as we look on to the new year ahead; this is a chance for us to connect deeper with ourselves – to connect with the memories we want to take with us from one year into the next, to reflect and let go of things that have held us back in the prior year and go forward with a spring in our step (yes even though it will still be winter!).

Friends, know that there will always be warmth when we connect – even just two of us – we are a community. That is why we are thriving; because you all make this a safe and supportive space for everyone where they are valued – that is the warmth and strength of our connected community. Know that within all of us burns a flame that will see us through the dark days until the light is with us again. And of course, please feel free to reach out to me as/when you need or wish to – you will find an ear and a shoulder whenever it is needed as part of my service to you – we can meet for a coffee, a call, text, or video – I am here for you.

Friends, be well, be loving, and be kind – as we enjoy the festive season, and I wish happy holidays to you all.

***Kieren Mardle-Moss***

[Contact details – page 12]

## OUR CHAIRMAN'S OPTIMISTIC WORDS FOR CHRISTMAS

One of my favourite books which periodically I return to is the autobiography by L.P. Jacks entitled, " The Confession of an Octogenarian " Jacks was born in Nottingham and in his formative years influenced by Sam Collinson a member of High Pavement Unitarian Chapel.

Eventually, L.P.Jacks became a Unitarian Minister and after a successful ministry in Birmingham was appointed Principal of Manchester College Oxford. In his autobiography there is a delightful photograph of L.P.Jacks welcoming to the College in 1929 the world famous Poet & Mystic Rabindranath Tagore ! During the joy & delight of Christmas I love these optimistic words proclaimed by Rabindranath Tagore -

" Every Child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of mankind !" Ipswich Unitarians tell us about **ADVENT CANDLES :**

**May the Advent candles  
light your way  
to Christmas.**

**And may the light  
of Christmas  
shine among you  
at the gateway  
of the year.**

Back in October at our Harvest Auction of Produce a remarkable sum of £500 was raised for " Send A Child To Hucklow Fund". This National Unitarian Charity enables many disadvantaged children to have a weeks holiday at The Nightingale Centre Great Hucklow - for a child to have the benefit of a full weeks holiday it costs £380 presently.

Our Chapel Trustees recently met together and held their AGM in the Chapel - We express our sincere thanks to Mrs Joan Blackham who kindly gives her time keeping all the accounts in order.

## WHO ARE THE CHAPEL TRUSTEES ?

This reasonable question was raised at a recent Congregational AGM. The following people are the current " Managing Trustees of Belper Unitarian Chapel " who mainly have legal responsibility to maintain the fabric of our listed 1788 Chapel.

Cllr. David Burton ( Chairman ) Mrs. Joan Blackham (Treasurer) Ruth Beck (Secretary) Mr Matthew St.Lawrence, Mrs Frances St. Lawrence, Mr. Adrian Farmer, Mrs. Judith Pugsley, Mrs Victoria Campbell.

Our Custodian Trustee is East Midland Unitarians who generously support our Chapel with financial grants.

We record our sincere thanks to Mr. Richard McLachlan who has served as a Chapel Trustee since 1991.

Richard has now formally notified the Trustees of his wish to retire.

Looking at the attendance book for the Trustees A.G.M. - Richard has attended some 33 Yearly Meetings !

It was back in the 1990s when our Chapel was numerically struggling that Richard would occasionally bring over to support our then afternoon services of worship members of the Derby Unitarian Chapel. This was kind & generous of Richard who periodically would play the Organ for us when Jean Hemming was away.

We really do appreciate the time and care Richard has given towards the Belper Unitarian Chapel. Richard is a past president of our District Association East Midland Unitarians and has for many years served as Treasurer & Organist to Frairgate Unitarian Chapel, Derby.

All of us at Chapel convey our condolences to Ruth Burton wife of David our Chapel Chairperson who recently lost her brother Stephen Gadsby aged 69 years.

Your kind cards sent to Ruth have been much appreciated!

Please take note that our special " Celebration of Christmas " Carol Service on December 22nd will commence at 6.30 pm. Normally this service is well supported by visitors - Donations of Mince Pies & Cakes will be most welcome.

## ANNUAL MEETING UNITARIANS UK 2025

Time to be together, reconnecting with spiritual friends and making new connections for the journey ahead.

Dates: Saturday 12th to Monday 14th April 2025.

Location: Birmingham Hilton Metropole Hotel

Belper Chapel has the right to send two voting delegates. There are good public transport links to Birmingham for those wishing to go for one of day only. Funding maybe available for first time attendees.

Booking Dates: Final closing date for bookings 14/03/25

Anyone wishing to go contact me - **Helen Brown** -email: [helen.brown9@icloud.com](mailto:helen.brown9@icloud.com)



Our valley in the snow

Joy Dubberley

## WORSHIP SERVICES - December 2024 – January 2025

Sunday 1st December 11.00 am	Kieren Mardle-Moss Student Minister “Honouring World Aids Day”
Sunday 8th December 11.00 am	Cllr David Burton “The Joys and Delights of Christmas”
Sunday 15th December 11.00 am	Kieren Mardle-Moss Student Minister “The Power of our Chalice”
Sunday 22nd December <b>6.30 pm</b>	“A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS” Carol Service led by Keiren Mardle-Moss [The Chapel will be closed from the 23rd December to the 4th January]
Sunday 5th January 11.00 am	Kieren Mardle-Moss Student Minister “New Year Perspectives”
Sunday 12th January 11.00 am	Mary Cole Chapel Member “Awesome”
Sunday 19th January 11.00 am	Kieren Mardle-Moss Student Minister “A Truly Worldwide Religion”
Sunday 26th January 11.00 am	Rowan Beton Chapel Member
Sunday 2nd February 11.00 am	Kieren Mardle-Moss Student Minister

All members and friends of the Chapel are welcome to offer contributions to our newsletter. It could be a 380 word article, a poem or a picture, or something arresting or humorous you have read. Contributions should be in the hands of your editor [contact details on page12] by Sunday 19th January if they are intended for inclusion in the February - March edition.



Jan Barrett

More pictures of Belper, which lies at the heart of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. To view these pictures in colour, obtain a copy of the electronic version of this newsletter from our Chapel Secretary, or browse our website [www.belperunitarians.org/news](http://www.belperunitarians.org/news).



## **SEVEN THINGS TRUMP SAYS HE WILL DO AS PRESIDENT source – BBC.**

### **1) Deport undocumented migrants**

While campaigning, Trump promised the biggest mass deportations of undocumented migrants in US history. He also pledged to complete the building of a wall at the border with Mexico that was started during his first presidency.

### **2) Moves on economy, tax and tariffs**

Exit poll data has suggested the economy was a key issue for voters. Trump has promised to "end inflation" - which rose to high levels under President Joe Biden before falling again. But a president's power to directly influence prices is limited.

### **3) Cut climate regulations**

During his first presidency, Trump rolled back hundreds of environmental protections and made America the first nation to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement. This time, he has again vowed to cut regulations, particularly as a way to help the American car industry. He has constantly attacked electric vehicles, promising to overturn Biden's targets encouraging the switch to cleaner cars.

### **4) End Ukraine war**

Trump has criticised the tens of billions of dollars spent by the US on supporting Ukraine in its war with Russia - and has pledged to end the conflict "within 24 hours" through a negotiated deal. He has not said what he thinks either side should give up. Democrats say the move would embolden President Vladimir Putin.

#### **4a) Staunch Support for Israel.**

Trump wants the US to disentangle itself from foreign conflicts generally. Regarding the war in Gaza - Trump has positioned himself as a staunch supporter of Israel, but has urged the American ally to end its operation. He has also pledged to end the related violence in Lebanon, but gave no detail on how.

### **5) No abortion ban**

Against the wishes of some of his supporters, Trump said during the presidential debate with Kamala Harris that he would not sign into law a national abortion ban.

### **6) Pardon some Jan 6 rioters**

Trump has said he will "free" some of those convicted of offences during the riot in Washington DC on 6 January 2021, when his supporters stormed the Capitol building in an effort to thwart the 2020 election victory of Joe Biden.

### **7) Sack Special Counsel Jack Smith**

Trump has vowed to sack "within two seconds" of taking office the veteran prosecutor leading two criminal investigations against him.



## WHY DO WE REVOLT AGAINST ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES?

As a new member I hope you will forgive me for making a few observations on my experience of worship here.

Firstly to introduce myself and my wife - My name is Bryn Evans, and my wife is Christine. I am 90 and my wife is 87. We have both been methodists for most of our life, and for 40 years I was a methodist local preacher in the north east. My wife is still basically a Methodist, but I myself have for many years been increasingly sceptical largely because I trained at university in the sciences, and have increasingly found this in severe contradiction with orthodox christian doctrines of the trinity and salvation.

In the 50's and 60's this was not too much of a problem, since the Methodist Church was then pretty liberal, but with the decline in congregations, I have found it more difficult and finally (better late than never!!) have joined the Unitarian Church here. The transition has not been without its problems, basically it has been a shift from an environment that was rather too prescriptive - briefly one which wanted to save my soul!!, to one which seems sometimes almost too vague.

Reading up about the origins of Unitarianism I have found myself entirely sympathetic to its origins in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, as a revolt against too literal a reading of the bible, but I find myself somewhat hesitant with the universalist approach as such. It seems to me risky to try to be a church for all people- you could end up with trying to please everyone, and satisfying none. Surely you should never forget your origins in a basically christian dissenting movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

I hope this does not offend anyone, just a comment from a very ancient newbie!!

***B Evans***

Editorial comment: This is a very profound contribution, and I think we should welcome it, acknowledging that Mr Evans has a point. Perhaps one or two other members would like to add their views for inclusion in future newsletters. There are many other reasons why we might disagree with the doctrines of the main protestant churches. In general, I think most of us go along with the assertion which is declared at the start of our services - "You are welcome here, whatever beliefs and opinions you hold." This welcome is extended to everyone, including atheists and humanists, and others who might not regard themselves as "christian".

## **PATIENCE**

A lonely man decided life would be more fun if he had a pet. So he went to the pet store and told the owner that he wanted to buy an unusual pet. After some discussion, he finally bought a centipede, which came in a little white box.

He took the box home, found a good location for it, and decided he would start off by taking his new pet to the bar to have a drink. So he asked the centipede in the box, "Would you like to go to Frank's with me and have a beer?"

But there was no answer from his new pet. This bothered him a bit, but he waited a few minutes and then asked him again. "How about going to the bar and having a drink with me?"

But again, there was no answer from his new friend and pet. He waited a few minutes more, thinking about the situation, and decided to ask him one more time ... this time putting his face up against the centipede's house and shouting, "Hey, in there - Would you like to go to Frank's place and have a drink with me ?"

A little voice came out of the box: "I heard you the first time! I'm putting on my shoes."

***J J & M Stibbe***

## EMERGENCY SERVICES POEM

I have been where you fear to go  
I have seen what you fear to see  
I have done what you fear to do

All these things I have done for you  
I am the one you lean upon  
The one you cast your scorn upon  
The one you bring your troubles to  
All these people I've been for you



The one you ask to stand apart  
The one you feel should have no heart  
The emergency worker with lights of blue  
But I am human just like you

And through the years I've come to see  
I'm not what you ask of me  
So take a ride, come on everyone  
Will you take it? Will anyone?



And when you watch a person die  
And hear a battered baby cry  
Then do you think that you can be  
All those things you ask of me ... ?

*From the Emergency Services News Website*

[www.belperunitarians.org](http://www.belperunitarians.org)

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Belper Unitarians aim to be a loving community of spiritual seekers. We are diverse in our opinions yet united in our common search for truth and our desire to support each other, and sometimes challenge each other, in that search.

We have our roots in those Christian non-conformists who gathered in Belper in the late 1660s following the ejection from the established church as a result of the 1662 Act of Uniformity of belief and worship. The famous industrialist, Jedediah Strutt, had the central section of the present chapel built in 1788 to replace a Meeting House that had been built at the other end of Green Lane in 1721, and which still stands there. Today our present Chapel is a Grade II\* listed building.

We are on the Belper Poetry Trail, displaying on the front chapel railings the poem "To Nature" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

*\*Please contact David Burton to enquire about chapel hire, Christenings, Namings, Weddings/Civil Partnership Ceremonies, or Funeral Services.*