

**BELPER UNITARIAN
CHAPEL**

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

**NEWSLETTER
JUNE – JULY 2024**

IN AN UNQUIET WORLD

God of our hearts,
Whose Oneness makes us one,
in an unquiet world, let us be quiet.

In an unpeaceful world, let us be peace;
in an unkind world, let us be kind;
in an unjust world, let us be just;
in an unloving world, let us be love.

Make of our speaking the things you want us to say;
make of our deeds the things you want us to do;
make of us what the world needs us to be.

So may our lives be a blessing to all,
and our spirits the channels of your Spirit.

May it be so, Amen

Rev. Cliff Reed - (Retired Unitarian Minister)



NEWS UPDATES

Congratulations to David Burton, our Chapel Chairman, who has just concluded his Civic Year as Chairman of Derbyshire Dales District Council.

During David's special year his Civic Charity Appeal has been for " Send A Child To Hucklow " raising around £6,800 towards providing numerous disadvantaged Children a holiday at the Unitarian Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow.

David was elected last May as Liberal Democrat Ward Member for Darley Dale & also serves the District Council as Chairman of Planning.

Back in April a Musical Concert organised by Harry was held in our Chapel to support David's Civic Charity. The Concert was well supported bringing much delight to those attending. From this event some £820 was raised - A big Thankyou to all those who made the evening so happy & successful !

Our Congregational Visit to Stannington Unitarian Chapel, Sheffield, will take place on Sunday, 9th June. The Mini Bus will leave Field Row at 9.20 am.

Please take a packed Lunch with you for after the service - Drinks will be provided by our friends at the Stannington Chapel.

The next Quarterly Meeting of our District Association East Midland Unitarians will be held at Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel, East Bond Street, Leicester, on Saturday 1st June at 2.30pm.

While Belper Chapel is represented by two Official Voting Representatives anyone who is a Member of Belper Unitarian Chapel is welcome to attend and speak at this District Meeting.

The Annual Joint District Service for all our constituent Unitarian Congregations in the East Midlands will take place at Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel Hinckley on Sunday 16th June at 3pm followed by a buffet tea.

David Burton can offer 3 people a lift - Other offers to take people from Belper by car will be much appreciated !

Our Chairman David Burton has received a delightful email from a Roman Catholic Nun who attended back in May a morning service -

This was the first Unitarian Service the Nun had ever attended and she was personally enriched and inspired by the spirituality of that service !

SHOULD UNITARIANS JOIN “CHURCHES TOGETHER” IN BELPER?

I recently enjoyed a mug of tea with a colleague of many years and we were discussing Churches Together in Belper. This person informed me that they were on the main committee ... which I did not know ...

I asked why the Unitarian Church in Belper in Belper Churches Together in Belper was not included and they informed me that they did not believe in the Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost or Spirit – true!

Also, most Unitarians think that Jesus was a man - a respected teacher and philosopher, but not a God

Therefore, all the churches in Belper like the Spiritualists and others are also excluded ... Hmmm

This got me thinking ... When in a future Belper we may have a Jewish Synagogue, a Sikh Gurdwara Temple and a Muslim Mosque would they also be excluded?

This person also informed me that the Unitarians have promoted LGBTQ+ prominently – (more as equal) - true!

I know that the majority of churches in the Belper Churches Together do and also include LGBTQ+ within their congregations perhaps not so prominently for fear of upsetting others ...

Will it come to pass when all Faiths/ Religions/ Creed will come together under one roof in Belper and share the Peace and bring our own philosophy and ethos to the table? We will all learn so much of each other and grow ...
We will truly be Churches Together in Belper when we are ...

Diverse in our Unity and United in our Diversity ...

Paul Newsham

WORSHIP SERVICES - June – July 2024

Sunday 2nd June 11.00 am	Mr Kieran Mardle-Moss Unitarian Ministry Student
Sunday 9th June	No Service at Chapel. Congregational visit to Stannington Unitarian Chapel, Sheffield
Mini-bus leaves Field Row at 9.20am.	
Sunday 16th June (11.00am)	Mary Cole
3.00 pm	Annual Joint District Service – E.Midlands Unitarians At Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel, Hinckley followed by tea.
Sunday 23rd June 11.00 am	Rev Maria Pap Minister of the Old Meeting House, Mansfield
Sunday 30 th June 11.00 am	Judith Pugsley Books in my life
Sunday 7th July 11.00 am	Ruth Beck and friends - “Why Bother”? Finding meaning and purpose in a broken world.
Sunday 14th July 11.00 am	Mr Kieran Mardle-Moss Unitarian Ministry Student
Sunday 21st July 11.00 am	Mr Kevin Stone
Sunday 28th July 11.00 am	Christina Smith Former Chapel Member Unitarian Ministry Student

All members and friends of the Chapel are welcome to offer contributions to our newsletter. It could be a 380 word article, or a poem, or something arresting or humorous you have read. Contributions should be in the hands of your editor P[contact details on page12] by Sunday 14th July if they are intended for inclusion in the August – September edition.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE NHS/DERBY CATHEDRAL SERVICE - May 2024

A Service of Stories, Hymns and Thanksgiving on her life

Florence's legendary life was marked by monumental achievements and extraordinary events. In a society bound by convention, Florence changed history.

During the Service the audience were taken on a journey from her childhood Derbyshire home near Lea, surrounded by family, to finding her profession as a nurse, to becoming the first woman in history to receive an order of Merit from King Edward.



"The first possibility of rural cleanliness lies in water supply."

Florence Nightingale

A fine plaque is on the wall previously placed within the Cathedral, and an excellent programme was produced for taking home afterwards ... thank you to all involved.

Did you know that her father was a Liberal MP, which may surprise you, and I was therefore further surprised that no mention was given to Florence and her close family that they were all staunch Unitarians. Free thinkers with an open mind.

No mention was said about this major fact during the Service or in the printed booklet ... I mentioned this to a clergyman in my isle and they were nonplussed to say the least ... Surely this was worth a mention - researchers/planners?

Paul Newsham

Other Unitarians below may also surprise you ... *as many more do... If researched?*

Elizabeth Gaskell (1810 -1865); Dr. Joseph Priestley (1733-1804); Sylvia Plath (1932 - 1963); Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795); Louisa May Alcott (1832 - 1888); Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834); Austen Chamberlain (1863-1937); Neville Chamberlain (1869-1940).

WHY BOOK GROUPS?

What is the purpose of a book group? To spread literacy? Get more people reading? Explore and promote good authors?

These arguments are thrown out automatically, writ large on posters, exalted by libraries – and -please pause for the drum roll – they all miss the point entirely.

Reading is a skill we hopefully pick up at school. It is pretty handy. For some it is a tool and for others a tool and a pleasure. If it is your pleasure, it can be well worth sharing the experiences. They are called book reviews, whether short or long, learned or direct. How we use them is the thing.

The ones written in mutual admiration by other authors or media to encourage advertising can be discounted pretty easily as mutual self-interest. No use at all. Reviews should be independent, come from real people and genuinely felt. Most people I meet agree but happy days to those that don't, they are still a guide.

The best book groups, in my opinion, allow the members to pick the books in turn. 'What if they don't pick the sort of books I usually read' I hear you cry. That's the point, they don't have to, although from time to time they may. They should be books members find interesting, thought provoking and stimulating as well as comics with no pictures, to comfortably pass the time. An image of Jack Reacher and Lee Child comes to mind. Even graphic novels with pictures are fine. Even actual comics.

The group will take time to mature, with up to maybe eight or ten members, so everyone can have their say. It will take time to feel comfortable with the group of members and the surroundings.

Find someone to record, circulate and record scores for each book. Devise your own system. Ours may not suit yours. Several are out there, but use one that suits your group best.

At the start everyone tries to be guarded. What will others think of me saying this or that about their book choice? Some books will be great, some crash and burn. You are exploring, so cope with the bumps in the road. Everyone picks the odd lemon. Be understanding and sugar the lemonade they make. It may be your poor choice next time. You will be reading books you would never pick for yourself. The impact of the ideas, scenarios and characters may be outside your comfort zone. It will trigger different, often contradictory views, even within yourself. Weirdly challenging, even exciting.

The best books are the surprises, good or bad. They stimulate the little grey cells, especially the ones that haven't done much for a while. There are marmite books that some love and others detest. The impact they make can be fascinating as you share the reasons for your differing views. Now the big finish. You learn can speak your mind in a safe environment with people you get on with. You learn how to listen and understand ideas that may conflict with your own. You may think with more flexibility, seeing thoughts and ideas from new perspectives in new contexts. You can completely reject the new ideas or some of your old ones, and all in an accepting circle. A literary campfire atmosphere in a coffee shop, pub or each other's homes - you choose. You are all in the same boat on a broad ocean. See where it takes you.

Fred Barrett

PS - if you can't find one, knit one with people you know.

PPS - meetings shouldn't be all just about the book

MINISTRY IS ALL THAT WE DO

Ministry is all that we do – Together

Ministry is that quality of being in community that affirms human dignity - beckons forth hidden possibilities, invites us into deeper, more constant, reverent, relationships, and carries forward our heritage of hope and liberation.

Ministry is what we do together as we celebrate triumphs of our human spirit,

Miracles of birth and life,

Wonders of devotion and sacrifice.

Ministry is what we do together - with one another -

In terror and torment - in grief, in misery and pain,
enabling us in the presence of death to say yes to life.

We who minister speak and live the best we know with full knowledge
that it is never quite enough -

And yet are reassured by lostness found,
fragments reunited, wounds healed, and joy shared.

Ministry is what we all do – together.

Gordon B. McKeeman

STUDENT MINISTER

David and a small group of us; Frances, Ruth and Rowan met at the chapel on Saturday 19th May with Reverend Ant Howe, senior tutor of the Unitarian College.

The meeting to discuss the possibility of a student placement with Belper Unitarian chapel, was very positive.

We are hopeful that a student Minister will be able to start a placement with us at the end of September, and Kieren Moss the student in mind has already visited and is due to conduct a service at the end of May.

The placement would be for 20 hours a week and involve conducting two services per month, plus outreach work and a negotiated extra activity such as initiating regular group meditation meetings or similar. The student Minister would also attend our bi monthly planning meetings.

The placement would be largely funded by the District.

Ruth Beck

COMPENSATION FOR CONTAMINATED BLOOD INFECTION

A very full and convincing report was published on Monday, when both the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition acknowledged state responsibility for the scandal, and promised that compensation amounting in all to around ten billion pounds would be paid to the victims. Of course, no sum of money, however generous, can make up or replace the losses suffered by these people.

Very few if any commentators have suggested that the Government's decision to call a General Election on 4th July, issued within 48 hours of the contaminated blood announcement, is in any way connected. It seems to have been assumed that it was pure coincidence. Nevertheless, I am sure that Jeremy Hunt will have been wondering how he is going to find this £10 billion, and whether it would have affected his desire to offer tax cuts in the period up to the election. Now, I think he will be wondering if he has been let off the hook. Likewise, Rachel Reeves, contemplating the possibility that she might be Chancellor from early July, will be wondering whether the need to find the £10 billion will affect her desire to reform the NHS, or improve social services to elderly patients stranded in hospitals for treatment they could receive at home.

These are, sadly, only two deserving groups of many victims competing for government help, which needs to be made available from scarce resources. There are still millions of people suffering from poverty, compelled to use food banks in a country which is supposed to be one of the richer ones in the world. There are homeless people still living with their parents at 30 years of age, some even sleeping on the streets. There are asylum seekers, waiting for years, not allowed to work, whilst Home Office officials get round to examining their applications to remain. Simultaneously, thousands more asylum seekers arrive (or perish) in small inflatable boats crossing the Channel. There are young people, who have no skills or training, and no academic qualifications - about half of those leaving school - who have nothing to do and no facilities for recreation, and we wonder why they wander about concealing knives.

The country is undoubtedly in a serious situation. Small wonder that the Prime Minister has decided to give up the task of putting things right. As he speaks to us, in the rain, we reflect that, as we fall victims to climate change, the rain will get worse and the floods will creep up and catch us unaware. We are supposed to reduce emissions by 68% by 2030, and to reach "net zero" by 2050; would anyone like to bet that these targets will be met?

JEWISH PEOPLE CONDEMN THE GAZAN SLAUGHTER

Ordinary British Citizens sometimes fail to recognize how Jewish residents in the UK feel about the slaughter of innocent civilians in Gaza. Few of them will have seen the following statement issued two months ago, by prominent members of the reformed and liberal denominations:

"As British Jews, we call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. For the sake of Palestinians, Israel and the hostages, the UK government must act to end the bloodshed in Gaza, write members of Liberal Jews for Justice in Israel/Palestine

As an organisation whose members are drawn from many synagogues throughout Britain, we are delighted that, last week, 39 rabbis from two major Jewish denominations (Liberal and Reform) demanded an end to the bloodshed in Gaza. We hope that all UK political leaders will at last begin to realize that there are large numbers of British Jews who are deeply unhappy with Israel's vastly disproportionate onslaught against Gaza.

The UK rabbis are quite right to highlight the dreadful toll of "tens of thousands" of Palestinian deaths, and the plight of many more who have suffered life-changing injuries and trauma. They are right to draw the world's attention to those Gazans who still "lie buried under the rubble of destruction". And they quite rightly warn that any Israeli ground offensive against Rafah "will have a devastating impact on vulnerable and traumatized civilians".

This follows a statement from the senior rabbi of another UK Jewish denomination, Masorti, who warned two weeks ago of the "unimaginable suffering" that would be caused by an attack on Rafah. It is "impossible to remain silent", he said.

What's more, nearly 3,000 British Jews (including the CEOs of both Liberal and Reform Judaism – and 60 UK rabbis) have now signed a statement of principles stating that "Israel must take care to protect innocent civilians"; that it can "never be acceptable ... to deny civilians their basic human needs"; and that the laws of war "place clear limits on what harm can be done to civilians".

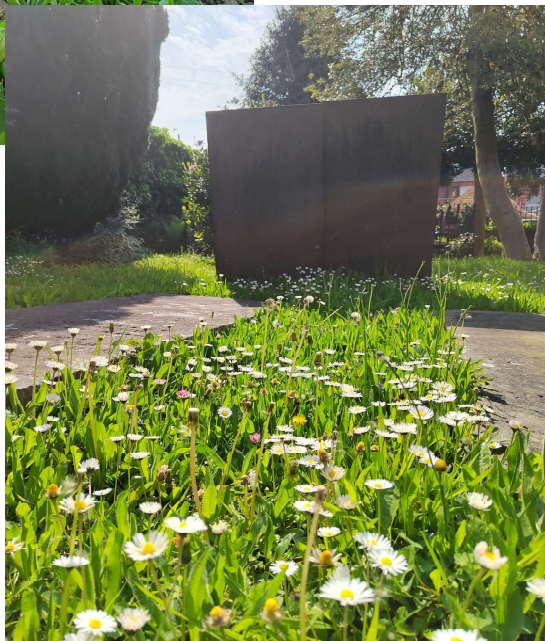
For justice's sake, for the Palestinians' sake, for Israel's sake, for the hostages' sake, and for humanity's sake, the UK government must now call for an immediate ceasefire.

Continued death and destruction will only create further suffering, further hatred and further wars. We call on all UK Jews, and especially those in Liberal Jewish congregations, to join us in calling for an immediate ceasefire and the resumption of realistic humanitarian aid."

Grahame Gross, Claire Jackson, Susie Jacobs, David Keys, Barrie Levine, Maurice Naftalin and Caroline Salinger, Liberal Jews for Justice in Israel/Palestine.

SPRING FLOWERS IN THE CHAPEL GRAVEYARD

To see in full colour, open www.belperunitarians.org, or see the electronic version..



Beautiful Photos by Jan Barrett.

www.belperunitarians.org

Chairman and Safeguarding Officer

Cllr David Burton, Ivy Cottage, 4 Wheatley Lane, Two Dales, Matlock DE42FF
davidburton57@icloud.com **Tel: 01629 734072**

Secretary **Ruth Beck** mail@ruthiebeck.uk **Tel: 07790 656350**

Treasurer

Frances St Lawrence

fmstlawrence@gmail.com **Tel: 01773 824548 or 07410 699931**

Asst. Treasurer **Matt St Lawrence** **contact details as above**

Communications/Publicity **Jan Barrett**

jan_barrett@hotmail.com **Tel: 01773 827831**

Organist

John Hodson

johnteachpiano@yahoo.com **Tel: 07846 020153**

Trustees' Secretary

Ruth Beck mail@ruthiebeck.uk **Tel: 07790 656350**

Trustees' Treasurer

Joan Blackham joblackham58@gmail.com **Tel: 01629 733841**

Newsletter Editor

Ted Roadhouse tedroadhouse2@gmail.com **Tel: 07835 727987**

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.*