



BELPER UNITARIAN CHAPEL

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

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

2024

Dear God -

There is so much brokenness in this world.

Please be with each family that is suffering.

I pray you keep families united, loving and seeking you.

I pray for reconciliation. I pray for each individual whose family has been torn apart by divorce, abuse, abandonment, drugs, alcohol, death, and any other circumstance. I pray that they are able to find hope in you. I pray for the families that are on the verge of being torn apart; I pray that you heal them.

I pray for those who don't have a family. Let them find a loving, kind, and supportive family. Allow them to find a family within the kingdom of God. Provide them with comfort only you can supply.



Amen.

MESSAGE FROM YOUR STUDENT MINISTER

“Trust is fluid, like a river. It flows based on how consistently it’s fed. It takes daily input to keep trust at a healthy level. Most often, it takes a number of years of trust-building work to reach the point where full and unwavering trust is in place. When this happens, it’s the result of investing in consistent accountability practices and heart-sharing through many transparent conversations.”

– Joann Condie & Jeremy Keeton.

Hello again, everyone! Where has this year gone? How are we in autumn already? By the time you read this; it will be October (if not later!) – but please, as you read this – just be present, pause, relax and read on.

As I touched on in a recent service, trust is a flow, a journey – one that we are on together. As part of that trust, you will see that I have included an email address and phone number at the bottom of this article. These are your ways of contacting me whenever you need or wish to, as I am here to serve you in trust and fellowship. Moving forward I am sure these will be included on the back of the newsletter.

So, friends, as we now find ourselves approaching the harvest, and thanksgiving just beyond that - it conjures up feelings for us, of being truly thankful for the abundance of gifts from the earth that are provided to us, a time of rich colours in the trees, of a time for sharing with others and yes for exotic coffee flavours in our coffee shops! Truly, the changing of the seasons marks a time of transition, of letting go of what no longer serves us and embracing the abundance all around us...no truer is that than during the harvest and thanksgiving season, we are in now.

Let's also be thankful for the connections we share. These connections are the foundation of our community, and they have the power to enrich and rejuvenate us. May they continue to prosper and grow, strengthening our bond and nourishing our spirits.

Kieren Mardle-Moss

Belper Student Minister

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NB. Keiren's invitation to study Meditations of the Month is to be found on page 7 of this newsletter.

NEWS UPDATES

Our District Association of Unitarian Congregations within the East Midlands will be holding its AGM. this year at Belper Unitarian Chapel on Saturday 12th October at 2.30pm. All members of our congregation are welcome to attend and support the current officers of East Midlands Unitarians.

Our own Chapel continues to receive immense financial support from EMU. for which we are extremely grateful. We do need people to welcome fellow Unitarians who will be travelling a considerable distance to attend this meeting at Belper and help serving the tea immediately after the AGM..

Harvest Thanksgiving. Your support is needed for this Service which will be held on Sunday 13th October at 11am. This shorter service will be conducted by our Student Minister Kieren Mardle-Moss followed by our traditional auction of donated gifts. As usual we will have an extended central table of produce - Flowers, Vegetables, Fruits, Jams, Cakes and other contributions are much appreciated !

We record our sincere thanks to Mr. Paul Newsham for generously providing the Chapel with an up to date First Aid Kit found in the Kitchen.

Jenny Ball It is with much sadness we record the death of Jenny Ball who died on 27th August 2024. Jenny was an " Official Friend of Belper Unitarian Chapel " who occasionally attended services and enjoyed supporting social events particularly, our shared Readings & Poetry Evenings with the shared supper. We will miss Jenny's thoughtful contributions and kind, gentle, nature which enhanced our fellowship at Chapel.

Rev Derek Smith Back in late August a birthday card with flowers was sent to Rev Derek , when he celebrated his 96th Birthday.
Derek Smith was Minister of Belper Unitarian Chapel with The Old. Meeting House Mansfield from 1975 until his retirement in 1993. Derek was also the National President of The General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches Christian Churches 1987 – 1988.
All of us at the Field Row Chapel Belper convey our kind greetings to you Derek !

THE REVEREND REES LEWIS LLOYD (MINISTER 1845- 1885)
A well loved Man and Communitarian.

You may well be familiar with the beautiful- if rather sad stone tablet on the wall in our Chapel. It's dedicated to Rebecca, the wife of the Reverend Rees Lewis Lloyd and their young daughter who died four months before. You may be forgiven for thinking that this absolute tragedy would have destroyed the life of this young man- he was only 30 at the time. Yet this young man was part of the bedrock upon which our Unitarian Congregation is built. He was invited to be minister at Belper in 1845.

In his early years, the Chapel was still the property of the Strutt family in Belper. However, the only Strutts still attending the Chapel were John and Elizabeth Strutt- two of Jedediah's grandchildren. During his time as minister, Lewis Lloyd had been another steady hand on the tiller, and had helped to build the Congregation in size and confidence. So when John Strutt died in 1858, Lewis Lloyd set up an unofficial trust- a group of people from the Congregation to take over the running of the Chapel. A committee was formed in 1859 with Robert Midworth (Remember him?) taking over as treasurer. Rees Lewis Lloyd cemented the spiritual life of the Congregation. His sermons were so well regarded and attended that he was able to hold a morning and evening service each Sunday. He was also able to do this because he had stopped sharing the service at Ripley and Lea chapels. He would have known Florence Nightingale who was indeed a devout member of the Congregation at Lea.

He was a staunch supporter of the right of children to be educated. To this extent, he set up a Sunday School committee. We know that the Sunday School was very well attended , teaching children literacy and numeracy skills. We know that the Belper born Reverend Thomas Jackson reflected that it was at the Sunday School that he first learnt to read and write. Lewis Lloyd was an active campaigner for local education. He was a founder member of the Belper Board of Education, and he was appointed chair in 1882. He ran parties for the reading of Charles Dickens's works and his descendants still possess a letter from Dickens to him written in 1852.

Lewis Lloyd was very active in the community. He was a founder member of the local savings bank the Penny Bank. It had it's meetings in St.John's Chapel for quite a few years. He was instrumental in the Savings Bank moving to a more permanent building in the "Penny Bank" in Bridge Street. The Penny Bank eventually transformed into part of the Trustee Savings Bank- TSB- before it closed and was sold off. He also helped to found "The Belper Philosophical and Natural History Society". He was also instrumental in setting up one of the first adult education

institutions in the country-” The Working Man’s Franchise Association- part of the aim of which was to study and campaign for Universal Suffrage, the right of all to have a vote. He was very active in local politics, for many years, he was the chairman of the local Liberal Association. This well loved and well respected man died of Typhoid Pneumonia in 1885. His testament and legacy live on within the spirit of our Congregation.

Rowan Beton

EAST MIDLAND UNITARIAN FAMILY DAY AT GREAT MEETING, LEICESTER . Saturday 17th August 2024

Twelve members and friends from Belper Chapel made the journey to Leicester for the Family Day where the welcome was as warm and sunny as the day!

Their Minister. Rev. Arek Malecki. led us in a service which centred around pictures and the striking messages they can portray.

We then had refreshments in the garden room followed by an interesting illustrated talk given in the Chapel on the mysteries of the roof. We learnt all about the important architectural discoveries that were made during the it’s recent restoration and repair.

After eating our packed lunches it was time to choose from a range of activities: there was a guided historical tour of Leicester, a tour of the Great Meeting Chapel, arts, crafts, garden activities and Body flow:body balance which was my particular choice. I can report that this and all the other activities were excellent!!

The day was rounded off by a splendid buffet tea - a chance to re-fuel before the journey home.

Many thanks to Arek and all those at Leicester who had worked so hard to make it such an enjoyable and informative day.

It is good to have Family Day well and truly back on the EMU calendar of events.

Here’s looking forward to the next one.....

Frances St Lawrence

WORSHIP SERVICES - October – November 2024

Sunday 6th October 11.00 am	Rob Tuck and Simon Gibson A celebration of Animals
Sunday 13th October 11.00 am 11.30 approx	Kieren Mardle-Moss Student Minister Harvest Festival Sale
Sunday 20th October 11.00 am	Kieren Mardle-Moss Student Minister
Sunday 27 th October 11.00 am 11.40 approx	Cllr David Burton Short devotional Service Chapel AGM to follow with shared lunch.
Sunday 3rd November 11.00 am	Kieren Mardle-Moss Student Minister
Sunday 10th November 11.00 am	Cllr David Burton Remembrance Sunday “When comes the promised time”
Sunday 17th November 11.00 am	Kieren Mardle-Moss Student Minister
Sunday 24th November 11.00 am	Jan Barrett “Unpicking Prayer”

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 [contact details on page12] by Sunday 10th November if they are intended for inclusion in the December-January edition.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE MONTH

Part of the service and commitment to you means exploring what worship looks like for us all. From all of the Sunday services I have experienced in our movement, I can honestly say the gatherings at Belper are some of the most enriching spiritual fellowship, worship, and reflection that I have witnessed.

I would very much like to offer a contemplative, meditative space there to nourish us all in a way that compliments, enhances, and dovetails nicely with our Sunday services,

In the short term, I am excited to establish a monthly mid-week contemplation group on the first Thursday evening of a month, at 7 pm (-ish) (starting in November – the 7th) for about an hour. I invite you to let me know if this is something that interests you by signing up in the chapel or contacting me using the details below – whichever method is most convenient for you!

Our initial programme will delve into our personal quests for self-discovery and what we seek within ourselves and each other. We will create a safe space for exploring our inner selves. For the first few weeks this will be through ‘A Hidden Wholeness’ by Parker J. Palmer. Palmer is a well-respected author, educator, and activist known for his work in spirituality, education, and social change. In this book, He explores the concept of living a life that is true to one’s inner self, despite the external pressures and fragmentation of modern life. I hope the book will be a guide and an invitation to create a space that honours the soul and fosters personal and collective wholeness. Much like the space we intend to create, I envisage this will be a space for all of us to explore at our own pace, within a circle of trust where we support each other.

There will be a signup sheet in chapel, or you can email/text/message me to let me know you will be coming.

Keiren Mardle-Moss
Student Minister

THE MIDDLE EAST AND UKRAINE - WHERE NEXT?

As an elderly spectator who can remember all the violence of the second world war, I read with despair about the disputes in the Middle East around the State of Israel and its neighbours in Iran, Egypt, Jordan,, Gaza, Lebanon and Yemen. They are all, of course, entitled to defend themselves against aggression, but in my opinion it is too easy to allow defence to build up into revenge. If, at any point, one country commits an act of violence against another, is that other country entitled to revenge? Can they go on responding to every outrage with another outrage?

A feature of recent wars has been the development of new fearsome inventions like drones, and now innocent looking electrical gadgets that contain a hidden explosive charge which can deprive the user of an eye, or a hand. It reminds me of the development of poison gas and tanks in the first world war, which did not solve the problem of armies bogged down in trenches, but did leave thousands of ex-service men disabled for life. Very often, recent wars such as those in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Korea have not resulted in victory or liberation - uneasy compromises have been reached, and innocent populations left in poverty and deprivation.

I know it's just and old, cynical observer saying that wars are a profoundly unsatisfactory way of solving international disputes, but is it not time that politicians accept this? The Unitarian movement has preached tolerance and listening to other people's grievances for 200 or more years. We have not had much success! Why are both the candidates for President of the United States so concerned about the votes of Jewish people who live there? Why is the US still supplying armaments to Israel whilst at the same time pressing for a ceasefire and non-escalation of the middle eastern conflict?

Well, tensions are building up. Small wars are turning into wider, larger, more damaging wars. Surely it is time to call a halt to this madness.

Ted

MUSIC AND SILENCE EVENING

Belper Unitarian chapel will be hosting our third evening of Taize music led by David Beddow and friends from St Clements church Horsley on

Thursday 24 th October 7 pm to 9 pm

The evening will consist of simple, easy to learn songs and contemplative chants from the Taize community tradition, interspersed with periods of silence.

There will be an interval with refreshments.

(The evening is free but contributions to chapel funds are very welcome)

All are Welcome .

A PRAYER FOR ALL CREATION -

LET us see one another through eyes enlightened by understanding and compassion.
Release us from judgment so we can receive the stories of our sisters and brothers with respect and attention.

Open our hearts to the cries of a suffering world and the healing Melodie's of peace and justice for all creation.

Empower us to be instruments of justice and equality everywhere.

Amen

WORDS FOR REFLECTION - FENCES

Let us never put fences round our faith -

Let us never call down fire on those who differ from us -

Let our religion, in its breath, be the common bond of all union.

And whatever differences may be among us in smaller matters,
let us unite in love with all people of goodwill .

(Based on a sermon by Rev. Samuel Bury, Ipswich, October 1700.)

TRUSTEES OF STAND UNITARIAN CHAPEL FINANCIAL REPORT at 30th September 2022

In the present climate it is very difficult to provide anything other than an end of year snapshot of the Trustees' finances. The combined effects of the international fuel crisis, largely caused by the war in Ukraine, the west's support of that war, and the frequent changes in government personnel and consequent strategy make any real attempt to forecast the immediate future futile, not to say meaningless. Looking at the various elements that make up our finances we can see that the overall trend is negative. The FTSE index started the year at 7086 and finished at 6894, a fall of 2.74%. Since all monetary matters ultimately reflect the FTSE, it is no surprise to note that the value of our investments has also dropped, in this case from £342,486 to £317,715, a drop of 7.23%.

This shows up in our investment income which is now less than £6,500 compared with over £10,000 ten years ago. Inevitably the support given by the Trustees to the General Council for its day to day running of Chapel has increased, now to the sum of £26,000 in the last financial year. From this it can be seen that the Trustees face an annual short fall of about £20,000 which, in the long run is unsustainable. Our bank balances confirm this trend showing a fall of 25.4%. In addition, Chapel's membership is in decline and we are faced with several expensive maintenance projects which are necessary to protect the fabric of the buildings themselves.

The spire is allowing water to enter the Memorial Hall and the committee room is a disaster area. It is for these reasons that the Trustees were forced to the conclusion that we could no longer afford a minister and, with great reluctance, decided to make the post redundant.

Brian Meller (Hon. Treasurer)

Editorial Note: Readers of this newsletter may wonder why we should be concerned about the financial state of a Chapel in Greater Manchester. I have reproduced this report because it shows very clearly how dependent chapels can be on the financial support of their Trustees; in our case it demonstrates that – since the East Midlands Unitarians have substantial reserves and income – we can afford to appoint a new student minister, but other chapels are not so fortunate. As David Burton says on page 3, “Our own Chapel continues to receive immense financial support from EMU, for which we are extremely grateful.”



Behold that tree, in Autumn's dim decay,
Stripped by the frequent, chill, and eddy wind;
Where yet some yellow, lonely leaves we find
Lingering and trembling on the naked spray,
Twenty, perchance, for millions whirled away
Emblem, also! too just, of humankind!
Vain man expects longevity, designed
For few indeed; and their protracted day
What is it worth that Wisdom does not scorn?
The blasts of sickness, care, and grief appal,
That laid the friends in dust, whose natal morn
Rose near their own; and solemn is the call;
Yet, like those weak deserted leaves forlorn,
Shivering they cling to life, and fear to fall!

Anna Seward

Helen Brown – My selection was a Derbyshire poet from the romantic period.

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.*