

Stockton Unitarians



Hartlepool in
December 2022
(photo Margaret
Whitham)

January brought us
New Year's Day and
Epiphany. **February**
brings St Valentine's
Day, Shrove Tuesday
and Ash Wednesday.

HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR

Church News
January/February
2023



Christmas songs and carols Answers

1 OTFDOC.	On the first day of Christmas
2 ITBMW.	In the bleak midwinter
3 WSGSUTC.	When Santa got stuck up the chimney
4 IDOAWC.	I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
5 OLTOB.	O little town of Bethlehem
6 HTHAS	Hark the Herald Angels sing
7 TVMHABB	The Virgin Mary had a baby boy
8 DDMOH	Ding dong merrily on high
9 OCAYF	Oh come all ye faithful
10 JTTW	Joy to the world
11 AIWFCIMTFT	All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth

Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire, it is the time for home.

"At times like these when the world feels upside down,
Kindness can be the key to turning things around.
You see, kindness has the power to create community, support and hope,
A helping hand says you're not alone when you face that upward slope.
Of course, being kind is always the right thing to do,
But did you know that doing good is also good for you?
You see, a little act of kindness can boost your mental health,
It can lower stress and cheer your mood to think of someone else.
And of course, don't forget to be kind to yourself.
It doesn't have to take a lot, 'cause even the smallest spark
Can be the thing to light the way when someone's world feels dark.
So make that call, share that gift, send some happy thoughts.

Brian Michael Hopkins

September 4th 1939 - December 27th 2022

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Brian, who passed away peacefully on Tuesday 27th December in hospital.

Brian had been hospitalised, after yet another fall, on December 8th when he seriously injured his head. Unfortunately he subsequently acquired aspiration pneumonia from which he didn't recover.

Funeral Service: 1pm Friday 20th January 2023

Stockton Crematorium Maplewood Chapel

Junction Rd, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 9NA

Donations in memory of Brian may be made to Cancer Research UK in lieu of flowers, if people so desire.

Family & Friends Gathering after Funeral

Billingham Golf Club, Sandy Lane, Billingham,
Stockton-on-Tees, TS22 5NA

News of members

After Knit 'n' Natter, on December 19th, I visited Joan and Michael in Greatham, who were pleased to see me. Michael now has a cataract on both eyes and hopes to have them removed shortly.

Joan is doing the driving at the moment. They miss coming to church but until Joan's medication is sorted they don't venture too far from home.

Margaret Whitham

If we had no winter; the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste adversity; prosperity would not be so welcome.

Anne Bradstree

27th November 2022 led by Rev Paul Walker

November is a miserable time of year on top of which it has all the hard work of Christmas and none of the pleasure. Modern society doesn't like us to be miserable. There's a constant pressure to be 'happy', yet everyone is miserable sometimes and some are miserable a lot of the time. Paul suggested that sadness is part of being human. There are times to be sad, when a loved one dies or a relationship breaks down, but there are also times to be happy.

4th December 2022 Tree Dressing and Carol Service led by the Worship Group.

At which we collected shoe boxes for the South Tees Mission to Seafarers, which are distributed to seafarers who come into Teessport during this time of the year, bringing us food and other goods. Most of whom are a long way away from their families.

We had 19 participants, singing carols with stories from the points of view of Joseph, Mary, the shepherds and the Wise Men.



11th December 2022 Human Rights service led by Margaret's Whitham and Robinson - held on Zoom only due to snow in Hartlepool.

We had readings from Martin Luther King, Dawn Buckle, Cliff Reed, Sydney H Knight and from the book "Stand Up for your rights"

In the shadow of World War II, the United Nations set forth the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. This document asserts that all human beings are free, equal, and entitled to dignity, safety, peace, and security regardless of nationality, gender, race, ethnicity, or religion. It prohibits actions that deny these values (such as slavery, torture, or discrimination).

Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts ... and call for the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and

want. All are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of mutuality (Article 1). Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being (Article 16).
United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Advent is a season of waiting, so we need to remind ourselves that millions of people around the world live in unbearable cycles of waiting: waiting for water and food, waiting for shelter and a place to call home, waiting for an end to daily emotional and physical violence, waiting for a taste of justice.

We need to work for and defend these basic human rights, that all people need in order to survive and have some measure of safety, freedom, and dignity. This could be our vision for 2023.

18th December 2022 Sing the Season we were to be led by the Worship Group, where we would have sung both Carols and Christmas songs, interspersed with poems and readings. But, unfortunately due to snow and ice we had to cancel the service.

No services were held on December 25th 2022 or January 1st 2023

8th January 2023 a Bring and Share service on the theme of 'Looking Forward' An enjoyable collection of contributions from Margaret W, Jean and Jane in the Chapel and Margaret R, Margaret K, Lesley and Jane (both from Edinburgh) on Zoom, we also looked at connections.

"We live in troubled times! We haven't yet learnt to live in harmony and peace. We ask that the world leaders be inspired with your wisdom and guidance to make decisions which lead to a more stable world. Let's hope that they make this world, our home, a better place in which to live." P Dickinson

Around the world we should link hands, north, south, east and west to all lands, we should learn to live in love - not fear, let's make this year a brave New Year.

NEW YEAR? OLD AGE

I looked in the mirror and what did I see?

A wrinkled strange face looking at me.

Brown eyes that used to twinkle and shine

Look dull and misty; old as time.

A brow that used to be firm and smooth,

Is pale, and furrowed with many a groove.

A mouth, that once formed a cute little pout,

Is full of gaps where the teeth have dropped out.

Who is this person? I can't be sure:

She resembles someone I've seen before.

My memory serves me some horrible tricks;

Is it me? Dear lord, I feel quite sick.

It can't be me. I feel so young

But try as I might I can't make her go,

This wrinkled person, who's ugly and slow.

"You're as old as you feel" is what they say,

Then please, wrinkled old lady, just go away!

Chinese New Year 2023, year of the Rabbit, January 22 2023 to 9 February 2024

The sign of the Rabbit is a symbol of longevity, peace and prosperity in Chinese culture.

2023 is predicted to be a year of hope! People born in the year of the Rabbit are quiet, gentle and approachable. They are ingenious, being very quick-minded.



NUA AGM

29 October 2022

It was a pleasure to be back at Stockton Unitarian Chapel for the Northern Unitarian Association AGM (it would have been at Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarian Church, but we were



not sure if the building would be available due to the impending sale). Members of the Stockton and Newcastle Unitarian congregations were joined by Helen Mason, Principal of Unitarian College. I (Louise Reeve) chaired the meeting, then we moved on to hear Helen Mason speak about future plans for training for Unitarian ministers and worship leaders. It led to a fascinating discussion on ministry and what it means in a modern Unitarian context. Thanks to all involved in organising it! Louise Reeve

Trans Awareness Training November 2022

Following the passing of the resolution at our General Assembly in April 2022:
FROM THE FOY SOCIETY

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

- a) Affirms with joy that each person's understanding and statement of their own gender identity is a matter of conscience;
- b) Affirms that transgender rights are human rights;
- c) Joins the British Medical Association, the Trades Union Congress and others in civil society in urging the adoption of a self-declaration model for gender recognition by the UK and devolved governments, and
- d) Requests that the Chief Officer lobby for this model in response to UK or devolved government consultations and on any other suitable occasion.

many Unitarians commented that they felt that they would like to be more aware of trans history and related social issues, and a space to discuss questions and learn more. The NUA and The Foy Society provided funding for north east trainer, Ellie Lowther FRSA of Essential Learning Curve Ltd., to provide two online trans awareness sessions on 17th and 19th November 2022, with Louise Reeve at Newcastle Unitarians doing the organising!

40 Unitarians and fellow travellers joined the Thursday evening session, and around 20 joined on the Saturday morning. Over two hours, Ellie (a trans woman and person of faith) led us through the history of trans people in the UK, issues many trans people face, and touched on issues of language and what the correct terminology is. Her down-to-earth and friendly approach helped people ask questions and explore these topics, and contributed to a positive learning environment. If anyone would like to know more, you can contact Ellie Lowther here: <https://essentiallearningcurve.com/>

Shoe boxes for Seafarers

Rev Peter Barrigan, Teesport Chaplain, and I had numerous conversations about meeting up to pass on boxes (he too had had a lot of snow) anyway to cut a long story short he was able to pick them up on Tuesday morning. He'd spent Monday in his Father Christmas costume delivering boxes to a crew who were going to be there for another day, so our boxes meant everyone would receive something. So off he went to don his costume again. He said to let you know how excited they are when opening their boxes, especially when they see warm clothes. As he left he got a phone call to say one of the crew had toothache, so he was trying to get help.



Peter is a Roman Catholic priest who serves everyone. At one time when some of us visited Teesport and went on board a ship they had a Catholic Chaplain, a Church of England Chaplain, a nonconformist Chaplain and another person. Peter has been covering everyone's needs, with the help of volunteers. I was asking him if he heard anything of Colin Worswick, who came to collect gifts from us and took a service for us some years back. Apparently they meet regularly and now he's fully retired he has decided to work with Peter on a voluntary basis, so he's delighted. I asked him to pass on our good wishes.

Margaret Whitham

The Unitarian Peace Fellowship was founded in 1916 in the darkest days of the First World War to witness for peace and against the futility of war. Today they maintain that witness. Their vision includes the ethos and values of the Charter for Compassion. The surest route to peace is through the compassion of human beings for each other and for all living things. They support and encourage Unitarians in their witness for Peace and Compassion locally, nationally, and internationally

'Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world.' (Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 4:1: 22a)

Welcome to Worship Words, a collection of inspiring, beautiful and meaningful resources for worship



<https://worshipwords.unitarian.org.uk>

Unitarians love to orate, debate, cantate, ideate, and annotate. In other words, we love, well... words. Across our movement, we are constantly putting pen to paper and ink to page. If you so much as you whisper your service title to a fellow Unitarian, be prepared to receive a list of recommendations for readings, hymns, prayers, poems, and meditations galore.

As a faith rich in writing, it's important that others can treasure these words too – especially new and prospective worship leaders. [Worship Words](#), the movement's brand-new repository for worship resources, is the perfect place to start.

The website's 'simple view' option ensures accessibility, and all resources are highly readable. Each resource is included with permission. To check if a piece can be edited, users can scroll to the bottom of the entry where one of three licences will be displayed. If the licence states 'Public Domain', the resource is editable and shareable. The 'Worship Words' licence enables users to copy, redistribute, and adapt the resource, but the title and author must be maintained. The 'Worship Words – No adaptations' licence means that the resource can only be shared in its original form.

Contributors are encouraged to share their work.

Louise Reeve

“The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistorical acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.”

George Eliot, Middlemarch.

Dates for your Diary

Knit 'n' Natter Group meet on alternate Tuesdays from 11.00am to 1.00pm. January. Bring along your crafts, knitting, crochet, and enjoy a cup of tea and a chat whilst you work. £1 contribution for the tea/coffee and biscuits. **January 24th, February 7th and 21st, 7th and 21st March 2023.**



Coffee Mornings every Saturday 10.00am to 11.30am

Come and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits and good conversation with a friendly and welcoming group.

**Church Council next meet on Saturday 14th January 2023
at 11.30am at church**

**Worship Group next meeting Wednesday 11th January
2023 at 10.30am at church**

Uni-sing! A Zoom hymn singing group, on alternate **Saturday** afternoons at **3.00pm**, with break out groups for a chat in the middle. for more information email Louise Rogers louise.rogers256@gmail.com see facebook.co/groups/ 687366168770017
Sessions: 21st January, 4th and 18th February, 4th and 18th March 2023

'Whoever saves one life saves all of mankind.' (The Qur'an)

Next Engagement Group Wednesday at 10.30am on Zoom
TBA January 2023

Sunday Services for 2023



Date	Time	Worship Leader
15th January	3.00pm	Rev Paul Walker
22nd January	3.00pm	Margaret Robinson
29th January	3.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk
5th February	3.00pm	
12th February	3.00pm	
19th February	3.00pm	
26th February	3.00pm	

Offers to lead worship would be appreciated, please contact Margaret Whitham

Flowers for 2023

15th January	Mrs Josie Squires
22nd January	Jimmy Lees
29th January	Mrs Smith
5th February	Mrs Jean Watson
12th February	Margaret Whitham
19th February	Mrs Josie Squires
26th February	Mrs Powley
5th March	Flower Fund
12th March	Margaret Kirk
19th March	Hazel & David Warhurst
26th March	Mrs Jose Squires



Please note all services will be held in the church building. Most services will also be transmitted via Zoom, in a hybrid service. Joining instructions for Zoom will be sent out through email by the Church Secretary - Zoom: **6680459646**

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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Worship Committee Co-ordinator: Margaret Whitham 01429 298641

Congratulations and Happy Birthday to those Celebrating their Birthdays in

January

Susan Scrafton

Margaret Robinson

Neill Warhurst

Joan Unwin

Margaret Whitham

Aaron Robinson

Arthur Whitham

William Dixon-Oliver

February

Pat Wilkinson



Deadline for the next edition of Stockton Church News is Sunday 26th March 2023. Please send your contributions for the April/May edition to the Editor Margaret Robinson
margaretrobinson81@gmail.com