

Stockton Unitarians



Flowers in Jean Watson's garden

September brings: Harvest; NUJ weekend; Childhood Cancer Awareness Month; Epilepsy Action; National Doodle Day; Jeans for Genes Week; Macmillan World's Biggest Coffee Morning; International Literacy Day; International Day of Peace; World Alzheimer's Day; Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year); Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement); Succot (Tabernacles) 1st day.

October brings: UWG Conference; British Summer Time ends; Hallowe'en; Breast Cancer Awareness Month; National Poetry Day; SANDS Baby Loss Awareness Week; National Braille Week; World Teachers' Day; World Mental Health Day; World Sight Day; International Day for Eradication of Poverty; Hindu Navratri 1st day; Baha; Baha'i Birth of Bab and Birth of Baha'u'llah.

Church News
September/October
2023



*Congratulations and Happy Birthday to those
Celebrating their Birthday in*

September

Jessica Eva Dodds

October

Melody Dixon-Oliver

Michael Unwin

Jennie Robinson

David Warhurst

Jane Jobson

Rhys Hutton

Josie Squires



*Congratulations to those couples Celebrating
their Wedding Anniversary in September*

Paul and Jennie Robinson



Dates for your Diary

Knit 'n' Natter Group meet on alternative Tuesdays from 11.00am to 1.00pm. Bring along your crafts, knitting, crochet and enjoy a cup of tea and a chat whilst you work.

£1 contribution for the tea/coffee biscuits. **Dates:**
**5th and 19th September, 3rd, 17th and 31st October,
14th November 2023.**

**Coffee Mornings every Saturday
10.00am to 11.30am**

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



Nature in all its glory seen on my morning walk in the Burn Valley Hartlepool. Dryad's Saddle part of *Cenoporus squamosus*, which is a species of fungus. Part of a long wild flower bed containing amongst other things lacy phacelia , heliotrope, and poppies.

A very busy bumble bee gathering nectar from the lacy phacelia.

“Delicate beings, lace wing and sparrow
In field and forest, clover and yarrow:
life greeting life with the light brightly glowing,
none are too small to be God’s vision growing.”

Words of Norbert Capek

Margaret Whitham



Sunday Services

2nd July led by Christine Walker

theme “**Friendship**”. Christine told us that as a child, because her father was in the armed forces, she moved around a lot. When in Hong Kong she met a friend, who she has just been reunited with. She also made another friend when travelling to a leprosy mission who she has kept in touch with.



Christine read from Pooh bear “Together” by AA Milne, a poem by Maya Angelo and a passage from the Bible about friendship. We sang “We Can Become”, “True Simplicity”, “we laugh, we cry” and “The human touch”. We listened to “You’ve got a friend” by Carole King, the chorus says: “You just call out my name, And you know wherever I am, I’ll come running, To see you again, Winter, spring, summer or fall, All you have to do is call, And I’ll be there You’ve got a friend.” Which sums up what a true friend is, someone who accepts you as you are.

9th July Flower service led by the Worship Group

The service opened with words from Cliff Reed “A vase of Flowers” while the congregation placed the flower they had brought in a vase. We sang these hymns: Moods of Summer; bring Flowers to Our Altar; We can become; and All the Colours. We had a Meditation on “Things of Beauty” and a range for readings: “The Glory of the Garden” by Rudyard Kipling; “How did it happen” by Patience Strong; “Flower Communion” by Lynn Ungar; “Flowers” by Cliff Reed and “People are much like flowers”. The service ended with a Benediction



May the blessing of the flowers be upon you.
May their beauty beckon to you each morning
And their loveliness lure you each day,
And their tenderness caress you each night.
May their delicate petals make you gentle.
May their stems make you sturdy
And their reaching make you care.

People took home a different flower than the one they brought.

16th July Annual visit to Whitby Flowergate Unitarian Chapel for a 2pm Flower service led by Clair Lee. One hundred years ago on June 4th 1923 the Flower Communion was initiated in Prague by Norbert Capek, the founder of the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia.



In the congregation were people from Stockton, Newcastle, Whitby, Scarborough and York congregations. We all placed a flower in the vases provided and at the end collected a different flower from these vases.

23rd July led by Dr Barry Thomas

on the theme of Joy. He spoke about Ludwig van Beethoven's 9th Symphony "Ode to Joy" which he finished writing in August 1823. Beethoven adapted the words of German poet, playwright and historian Friedrich Schiller who wrote the poem "Ode to Joy" in 1785 in the final movement of the ninth. Schiller's meanings in "Ode to Joy" are simple: Joy is needed for life and motivation, it is heavenly in origin and is available to mankind through a loving God. The tune of Ode to Joy was adopted as the "Anthem of Europe" by the "Council of Europe" in 1972 and subsequently by the European Union. Over the years it has remained a protest anthem in many countries and a celebration of music. Barry told us of many examples of small moments of Joy in both his and others lives.



13th August There was no service on this Sunday at Stockton

20th August led b y Rev Jeffery Bowes

Jeffery opened the service with these words:

“We rejoice this day in the unquenchable light that lighteth every soul that comes into the world. In the light we see our need and our dependence upon one another, we see the darkness in which so much of our lives is lived out. We seek your presence here, our God, not alone for joy today, but to illumine the ways of all our doing, until every heart is brought out of darkness and into your marvellous light. “

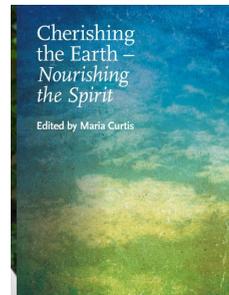


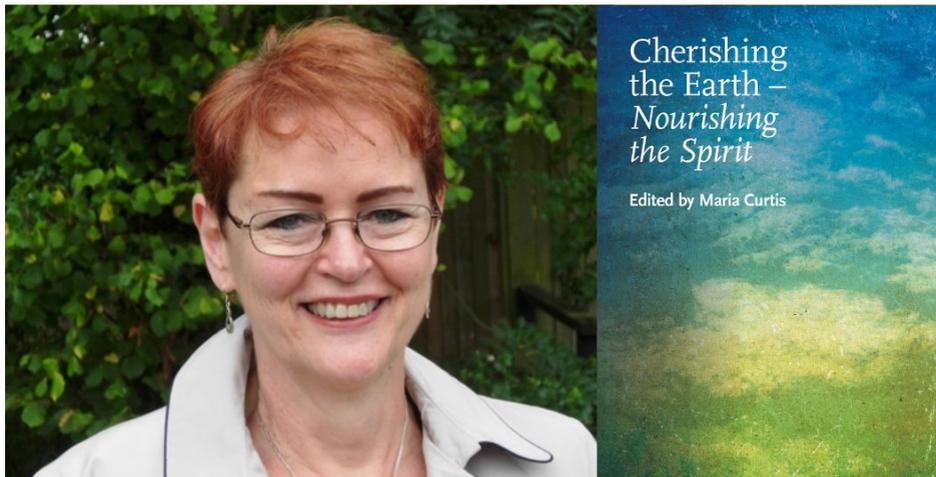
Jefferey spoke of Friendship and friends in his address, thinking of old and new friends, ones we see often and keep in regular contact with and others who we reacquaint with after many years. He gave us readings “Come as you are’ and ‘Of bearing with the defects of others’ by Thomas Akempis. We sang the hymns: ‘When the heart, with joy is o’erflowing’, ‘A church is a living fellowship’, ‘O help the prophet to be bold’ and ‘Now let us sing in loving celebration’.

The service closed with the Benediction: “Let us treasure every moment, know the value of each good deed, and discover greatness in small things.”

Engagement Group

The next on-line Engagement Group meet on **Wednesday 27th September 2023 at 10.30am**. Where we will be exploring **Cherishing the Earth - Nurturing the Spirit**. The Zoom link will be sent prior to that date.





LOOKING FOR WAYS TO TALK ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS IN YOUR CONGREGATION?

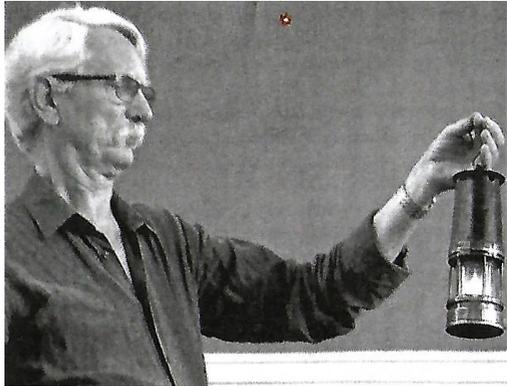
This fantastic new book presents a range of Unitarian responses to the global environmental crisis, expertly edited by Maria Curtis, and is designed to be used by small groups for discussion and working through big issues together in meaningful ways. To help our congregations have these important conversations, we are offering a **discounted price of £8** when you buy eight or more copies of '*Cherishing The Earth: Nourishing The Spirit*'. This offer is only available when you order directly from Unitarian HQ at Essex Hall, by ringing +44 (020) 7240 2384. Alternatively, you can buy the book at full price from all major online book retailers.

Uni-sing! A Zoom hymn singing group, 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](https://facebook.co/groups/687366168770017)
Sessions: Saturday 2nd September at 3.00pm; Monday 18th September at 7.00pm, Saturdays at 3.00pm 7th and 21st October, 4th November.

Deadline for the next edition of Stockton News is Tuesday 24th October 2023. Please send your contributions for the November/December edition to the Editor Margaret Robinson margaretrobinson81@gmail.com

The Choppington Miner's Lamp!

"Choppington Chapel (1868-1970) was one of several former Unitarian congregations in the North East, and was known as the 'Chapel of the Miner's Lamp'. Choppington was a mining village, and their custom of hanging a lit miner's lamp in the chapel when services were taking place, predates the adoption of the chalice as the Unitarian symbol.



Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians inherited the miner's lamp when Choppington Chapel closed in 1975. We still have it, and it will still light!"

A couple of historical notes:

- Choppington Chapel was also the home of two of the most notable members of the Newcastle upon Tyne congregation. Rev. Lilian Preston was the only female minister in our history, though we have since had many female worship leaders and lay leaders. She was minister at Choppington Chapel between 1932-1935. Mary Indiana McIntyre, known to all as 'Mollie', was a much-loved member of Choppington Chapel and then of Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians. She died in 2008 with no family to leave her estate to, so she left it all to the church. She had always led a very frugal life, so we were astonished to receive a very sizeable sum! Without Mollie's generosity, we would probably have had to close.
- Lighting a lamp to signify a meeting in progress appears not to have been uncommon in the north-east; in the old days, Newcastle City Council used to have a lit tar barrel outside the Town Hall whenever the council was in session. (These days we use gas lamps)

Unfortunately, I don't at present have a good photograph of the lamp, but I attach an image of our former Chairperson, Maurice Large, with the lamp.

The history of the flaming chalice can be found online here: <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/the-flaming-chalice/>

Louise Reeve

Newcastle Mini Green Festival, 10 June 2023

The old Newcastle Green Festival was a much-appreciated part of Newcastle's social scene. UK Festival Guides commented:

“The Green Festival began in 1995 as an offshoot from Newcastle University's Green Society and has evolved over the years into the event we know today. The first 'Green Fair' had a music stage, held direct action workshops and hosted stalls and craft workshops. Within a year, the range had expanded to include three stages, a bar and many more green activities for all the family.”

Unfortunately, the last Green Festival was held in 2016, financial difficulties making it impossible to run in 2017, and many of us thought it was, sadly, gone for good.

However, all was not lost! In 2023, the Newcastle Climate Action Network and Star and Shadow Cinema decided to revive a miniature version of the Green Festival at City Stadium in Ouseburn. A smaller version with stalls and film on show, Newcastle Unitarians decided to join in, alongside many other Newcastle organisations including Extinction Rebellion Tyneside, Global Justice Now, Medact, and many more.

Since we are a spiritual organisation, not a climate campaigning organisation, we wondered what we could offer, and decided to offer a Prayer Tree (below), where people could write and tie on a prayer, concern, or hope for the Earth.



Two of us staffed the stall all day, and we got lucky with the weather! It was glorious sunshine. The festival had many visitors, we talked to lots of people and got the word out, and the cinema's cafe sold out of vegan flapjack. We will be back!

Louise Reeve

The Worship group meet on **Wednesday 6th September 2023** at 10.15am to arrange services for the Harvest and Christmas.

The Church Council meet on **Saturday 9th September 2023** at **11.30am** to discuss and agree on all the matters relating to the smooth running of the church. We are looking at having a new web site (we watched a demo on 22nd August) and a new external notice board.

Litany for Healing the Earth

We join with the earth and with each other
To bring new life to the land
To restore the waters
To refresh the air

We join with the earth and with each other
To renew the forests
To care for the plants
To protect the creatures

We join with the earth and with each other
To celebrate the seas
To rejoice in the sunlight
To sing the song of the stars

We join with the earth and with each other
To recreate the human community
To promote justice and peace
To remember our children

We join with the earth and with each other

We join together as many and diverse expressions of one loving mystery:
For the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life. Amen

from the UN Environmental Sabbath Programme for Earth Prayers

Edited by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon

Used in the service on August 6th 2023 by Rev M Kirk

Lammas or Lughnasadh 1st August

High summer. The festival to celebrate the first harvest and gathering the new grain. The first sheaf of corn was hung over the fireplace in the house and would be ploughed into the ground in the spring. The last sheaf cut would be kept for making the corn dollies. Early country dwellers believed the first loaf baked would have magical properties. The Festival of Lugh, the sun king and god of light coincides with Lammas. The period between 1st August and 31st October is said to bring the gift of maturity. It is a time of physical harvest and spiritual garnering. It is the time for celebrating the harvest of projects, the seeds of which were sown earlier in the year.

DISTRICTS

Thank you to those members of District Associations who joined our first District zoom call on 26 June. In order to build connections and strengthen relationships between districts and with the GA, Liz Slade and Lizzie Kingston-Harrison hosted a call to which representatives of all districts were invited. We shared some of the good things that District Associations are currently doing in their areas, heard about the districts' direction and purpose, and some of the things that would help them achieve their goals. These will be regular checkpoints through the year. Please speak to your District Secretary (NUA Hazel Warhurst) to find out more.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Address: Stockton Unitarian Church, Wellington Street,
Stockton-on-Tees, **TS18 1RF**

Telephone: 01642 671115 **email:** mail@stocktonunitarians.org.uk

website: www.stocktonunitarians.org.uk

facebook: Unitarians in and around Stockton-on-Tees

Twitter: Stockton Unitarian Centre

Chairperson and Flower Secretary: Jean Watson - 01642 658376

Margaret Robinson - Secretary and Church News Editor
telephone: 01642 782219 email: margaretrobinson81@gmail.com

3 Castle Dyke Wynd, Minerva Mews, Yarm, TS15 9DE

Worship Committee Co-ordinator: Margaret Whitham 01429 298641

Stockton Unitarians Committee is looking at having both a new noticeboard outside of the Centre and a new web site. We are trying to find the right words for both. Below are some words from our current web site:

What do we believe? That everyone has the right to seek the truth and meaning for themselves, and that the best setting for this is a community that welcomes you for what you are—beliefs, doubts, questions and all. We see faith as something personal, developing and changing as we mature and acquire knowledge and experience. The Unitarian Church provides a supportive religious environment, but does not preach any dogma, nor does it attempt to exercise any institutional authority over anyone's life.

Within our church (Stockton Unitarians) there is a wide diversity of belief. Unitarianism in Great Britain grew from Christianity, but today there are Humanists, Pagans, Buddhists, Quakers and others worshipping in Unitarian Churches. Unitarians have complete freedom to develop their own individual philosophical pathways through life.

Why we are called Unitarians? Our forebears were protestant Dissenters who emphasized the oneness of God, and 'divine unity' as opposed to Trinitarian beliefs. As a result we were described as 'Unitarians', initially as a term of abuse. Today we affirm the essential unity of humankind and of creation. We do not claim the right to define God for others, not do we expect anyone to accept uncritically anything they hear. We recognize that God is experienced and defined in many ways. For some people the very word 'God' is unhelpful.

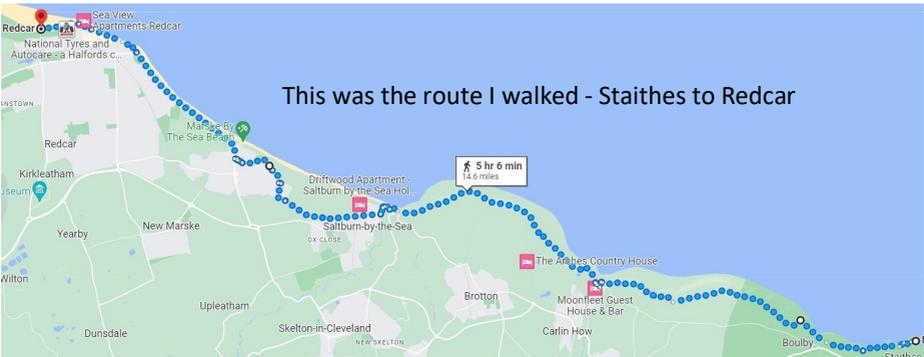
How do we find unity? We find unity in shared values: mutual respect and goodwill in personal relations; the use of reason and honest doubt in the search for truth; constructive tolerance and openness towards the sincerely held beliefs of others; reverence for the earth and the whole natural system of which we are part; peace; compassion; justice and democracy in human affairs.

Where do we find inspiration? On our religious journey we may be inspired by our heritage in the Judaeo-Christian tradition (pre-eminently the life and teachings of Jesus); traditions of critical philosophical thoughts; the example and spiritual insights of others; sacred writings from all faith traditions; the creative work of writers, artists and scientists; and our own experience of life.

Aaron Robinson's History trip to World War France and Belgium Battlefields .

On 6th June I did a 24 hour sponsored silence, which was really had to keep quite.

On Sunday 20th August, I went on a walk from Staithes to Redcar, which was 15 miles , both on the cliffs and on the beach. It was pretty difficult, but was worth it in the end. My legs got pretty tired by the end, but I did enjoy the walk in the countryside. Thank you to all those people who sponsored me.



Editor: Please send me news of your family or grandchildren, any event you are taking part in, hobbies, interesting articles , poems, photographs to include in the next Church News , due out at the end of October 2023.

NEW PODCAST: PEOPLE SO BOLD

Launching on 1 September: 'People So Bold', a new weekly podcast from Ann Howell, our Social Action Officer, featuring Unitarians, friends, and allies who are building beloved community in all sorts of ways. Each week promises bite-sized content of 15 to 20 minutes designed to inspire and motivate us to make meaningful connections, live out our values, and create the change we want to see.



September's guests will include: Rev. Stephanie Bisby, minister at York Unitarians; Tony Cann, founder of the Bowland Trust; Tam Fowles of "Mad Woman Talking"; and Rev. Julio Torres, minister at Lewisham Unity and advocate for Citizens UK. [The podcast will be available on Spotify.](#)

HARRIS MANCHESTER COLLEGE

16 Oct 2023, 7.30pm, Online

Join Rev. Dr Claire MacDonald, Ministry Tutor and Chaplain, for a Zoom meeting to discuss Harris Manchester College Oxford's Unitarian future.

Zoom Link. Meeting ID 862 6232 6583.



SATURDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 09:00

First Aid for Mental Health (Level 2)

Scarborough Unitarian Church

Learn about mental health and how to identify, understand and help someone who may be experiencing a mental health issues.

Find all the info you need here:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1031294261146104?ref=newsfeed>



Cleveland Philharmonic Choir

invite you to

COME AND SING

Carl Orff's

CARMINA BURANA

Saturday 30th September

10am – 3.00pm, with a performance for friends and family at 3.30pm
at Eggescliffe School, TS16 0LA

Tickets: £12, £5 students/under 18's
(To include light refreshments and hire of music.
Please bring your own lunch)

Visit our website for details of joining us for this event, and to hear the kind of exciting music we will be singing together, including the fantastic chorus "O Fortuna!"

www.clevelandphilharmonicchoir.com/concerts



Three performances Margaret Robinson will be singing in Carl Orff's Carmina Burana 30th September, at Eggescliffe School; Brahms Requiem 12th October at Stockton Parish Church and Handel's Messiah on 16th December at St Mary Magdelene Church (Parish), Yarm



Stockton Parish Church



George Frideric Handel

Sunday Services for 2023



Date	Time	Worship Leader
3rd September	10.30am	Rev Margaret Kirk - Active Hope
10th September	6.00pm	Rev Victor Ball
17th September	6.00pm	Rev Paul Walker
24th September	6.00pm	Harvest Festival - Worship Group
1st October	10.30am	Hazel and David Warhurst
8th October	6.00pm	NUA Ann Howell - GA Social Affairs Officer
15th October	6.00pm	Rev Victor Ball
22nd October	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk
29th October	6.00pm	Dr Barry Thomas
5th November	3.00pm	Hazel and David Warhurst
12th November	3.00pm	Rev Victor Ball
19th November	3.00pm	Rev Paul Walker
26th November	3.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk

Offers to lead worship would be appreciated, please contact Margaret Whitham 01429 298641

Flowers for September 2023

3rd September	Rev Victor Ball
10th September	Rev Margaret Kirk
17th September	Mrs Powley
24th September	Mrs Josie Squires
1st October	Rev Paul Walker
8th October	Mrs Smith & Mrs Fish
15th October	Mrs Jean Watson
22nd October	Mrs Jane Tomlin
29th October	Gail Moore



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**