

# Stockton Unitarians

Annual visit to Flowergate Chapel, Whitby

7th July 2024



**September** brings us: Autumn, Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, Jeans for Genes Week, Epilepsy Action National Doodle Day, Macmillan World's Biggest Coffee Morning, International Literacy Day, International Day of Peace, World Alzheimer's Day, Milad al-Nabi (Prophet's Birthday - Islamic)

**October** brings us: British Summer Time ends, Hallowe'en, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, SANDS Baby Loss Awareness Week, National Braille Week, World Teachers' Day, World Mental Health Day, World Sight Day, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, Navratri (Hindu), Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), Succot (Tabernacles), Jewish.

Church News  
September/October  
2024



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



***September***

*Jessica Eva Dodds*

***October***

*Melody Dixon-Oliver*

*Michael Unwin*

*David Warhurst*

*Jane Jobson*

*Rhys Kulton*

*Josie Squires*



***Congratulations to***

*Paul & Jennie Robinson*

***Celebrating their wedding Anniversary in September***



**Knit 'n' Natter Group** meet on alternative

**Tuesdays from 11.00am to 1.00pm.** Bring along your crafts, knitting, crochet, sewing and enjoy a cup of tea and a chat whilst you work. £1 contribution for the tea/coffee biscuits.

**Dates: 3rd & 17th September, 1st, 15th & 29th October and 12th & 26th November 2024**



**Coffee Mornings every Saturday**

**10.00am to 11.30am**

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



## NORTHERN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION (NUA)



NUA Annual Meetings  
(including AGM)



**Saturday 28th September 2024**

**Speaker:** Vince McCully

Past President (2023-2024) of the General Assembly of  
Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

### News from Barry Thomas

Barry's wife Ruth went into hospital a couple of weeks ago and is likely to be there for sometime. It seems likely that she'll not be able to return home but have to go into a care home. This will be a distressing time for the whole family. Barry is going to keep in touch when things settle down. We send our caring thoughts and love to them all.

**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](mailto:louise.rogers256@gmail.com)

see [facebook.co/groups/ 687366168770017](https://facebook.co/groups/687366168770017)

**Sessions 2024   Saturdays - 7th and 21st September, 5th and 19th October at 3.00pm. Open at 2.30pm**

- Live every moment, make each one really count.
- Fear is only as deep as the mind allows. Japanese proverb
- The more you can bounce back up from disappointment, the sweeter your success will taste.

## **Lammas - Tony McNeile**

It is high summer. The festival to celebrate the first harvest and gathering in the new grain. The first sheaf of corn was hung over the fireplace in the house and would be ploughed back 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 a time to celebrate the harvesting of projects, the seeds of which were sown earlier in the year.

### **Burn Valley Gardens. Hartlepool**



Went for a walk and this is the wild flower bank in the Burn Valley, the park I back on to. It's a blaze of colour with many different species.  
Margaret Whitham



## Sunday services reviews for June, July and August 2024

### **Sunday 30th June 2024 a Service to Celebrate Church Membership was led by Jean Watson**

Jean opened the service with a chalice lighting by Celia Cartwright, the Readings were "A person is a puzzle" and "Our Longing for Community" by John O'Donoghue and two responsive prayers. She told us a story about a man's very old and worn shoes which got him into a lot of trouble and expense.

"We sang Come together in Love", "Let us renew our covenant", "To Worship Rightly", "Here we have gathered" and "Go now in peace".

We welcomed two new visitors together with four other people in the chapel and four people joining us on Zoom.

We stood and read our **Church Affirmation:**

I value the fellowship of this Church and seek to enrich it  
I value my giving to this Church and seek to give  
I value my receiving from this Church and seek to receive  
I value my yearnings within this Church and seek to be satisfied  
I value my faith embodied here and seek to develop it  
I value my worship within this Church and seek to heighten it  
I value my membership of this Church and seek to declare it.

**Sunday 7th July 2024 there was no service at Stockton, as we visit  
Whitby for the afternoon service at Flowergate Chapel** (see Louise Reeve's report and photos)

### **Sunday 14th July 2024 the Flower service was led by the Worship Group**

Opening words: Our symbol of community, One flower for each of us, One vase for all of us. Each of us needs to receive, Each of us needs to give freely, lovingly, and so we grow. For this we gather.





We sang Moods of Summer, Bring flowers to our altar, We can become and A Church is not where altar stands.

We had a Meditation on Things of Beauty - light, winter, flowers, shadows and being with friends.

The readings were What flowers mean to me by Sally H Jones, Flowers by Reme Green, Cottage garden by Patience Strong and Longing for community by John O'Donoghue.



Everyone brought a flower to place in the vase and at the end of the service took home a different flower.

**Sunday 21st July 2024 was led by Rev Margaret Kirk**

**Unfortunately this service had to be cancelled as Margaret K had covid.**

**Sunday 28th July 2024 was led by Rev Paul Walker on the theme of**

**“Anger , its use and abuse.”** We sang: We are a gentle angry people, God weeps, When I am frightened, and For everyone born. We can get angry at injustices, war and cruelty, which urges us to do something about it.

**Sunday 4th August 2024 was a Bring & Share service on the theme of**

**“The Sea”** Members of the congregation brought contributions of poems, readings, music and spoke about holidays by the sea when young.. We sang : There is a place I call my own, A Melody of Love, All These Things Belong to Me, and Spirit of Life.

**Sunday 11th August 2024 No service, as members of the congregation were on holiday.**

**Sunday 18th August 2024 was led by Rev Jeffrey**

**Bowes, Vice-President of the GA** Jeffrey had these Readings: The Supreme Reality in The Thought of God, “If thou knowest the gift of God” John 4:10; and Can Man Change His World? From Living in the Question.



The hymns were Source of Life, Source of All, The Harvest of Truth, and The Best **Things**. His address was on the theme of Acts of Random Kindness and Senseless Beauty. The phrase “practice random kindness and senseless acts of beauty” was written by Ann Herbert in 1982. This message spread widely through car sticker, on walls, on business cards and on stationery, ‘Guerrilla goodness’.

Jeffrey asked “What could any of us do?” something like litter-picking, keeping a churchyard tidy or the village grass verges clear of litter and the grass mown, planting flowers, smiling or greeting strangers you meet on your daily walk. You’ll feel better and so will all the people who see these acts of kindness.

### **Sunday 25th August 2025 was led by Margaret Robinson**

Margaret opened with the music “What gets in the Way” sung by Sharon Little. The Chalice lighting was by Dawn Buckle and the Opening words were by Michael Allured. We sang: Come and find the quiet centre, Leave behind your bags and baggage, What shall we say to them and Spirit of Life. Her readings were from “Soul Deep” “Bear’s Blue Backpack” by Kate Dean, “Religious Baggage”, “Being the Answer to Big Questions” and “The Power of Good” and the Closing words “Greater Equilibrium” all by Michale Allured.

The Guided visualisation was “Travels With My Backpack” and then members of the congregation were asked to think about some questions, which they could write down or draw if they chose, while music was played “I’m a Barbie girl” played on the piano by Josop Castanyer Alonso in the style of six classical composers (Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, Chopin and Ravel). Questions were “What would you like to leave behind, so that you can be free to become your authentic self, what ideas and practices continue to stifle you, what brings you a feeling of peace and well-being?

The service ended with the music “Look to the World” by John Rutter

Our lives consist of connections and interruptions. Each interaction creates a new piece of ourselves. We strive to find the right balance of time spent with loved ones, Time spent on satisfying work, rest and relaxation, and all those necessary task which keep a household going. We don’t always get the balance of tension and release right, but we can commit to taking time to observe our actions and taking small steps towards a greater equilibrium.

## Whitby Trip, 7th July 2024 by Louise Reeve

As ever, in July 2024 we had the annual Whitby Trip! Unitarians from Whitby, Scarborough, Stockton, Newcastle, and across Yorkshire gathered at Whitby Flowergate Chapel for a service led by Claire Lee about 'The Lost Words' - words taken out of the Oxford Children's English Dictionary. We explored the town, finding a small memorial garden, and enjoyed Claire's thought-provoking service. It featured performances from the local community choir, and also was the first-ever service live-streamed from Whitby via Zoom! We made a recording and will share it once the video has been edited.



Hilariously, as Claire reached the part of her service about the importance of humanity acknowledging our place as part of the natural world, we were joined by a large and curious seagull!

We had the following songs sung by Whitby Community Choir led by Rebecca Denniff. Deep Peace, Manna from Mama, The Green Man Waits, After the Gold Rush and Make Your Own Kind of Music.

Clair gave us three Readings from the book 'Lost Words', Conker, Starling, and Wren (sharing the pictures of each of these from the book),





**Congratulations to all our young people who have achieved their A level, GCSE and BTEC exams. Well done everyone.**

**Aaron Robinson** achieved 7 GCSEs and 2 BTECs, gaining a Distinction in both Music and Drama. He is going to The Northern School of Art, Middlesbrough, to study a Level 3 Course in Acting for Stage and Screen.

**Josie Jobson** achieved 8 GCSEs, plus a Distinction in her BTEC Music. She is going to The Northern College of Art to study Photography. Congratulations also to Josie who has gained a distinction in her Associated Board grade four flute exam.

**Elisha Hutton** achieved 8 GCSEs and a Level 2 Distinction in Performing Arts. She is going to Bede Sixth Form College, in Billingham.

**Marcus Slaven** was awarded an A\* in Maths, an A\* in Further Maths and an A in Physics at A Level. He has accepted a place at Glasgow University to study Physics and is looking forward to being a student there.

**Alex Slaven** achieved 8 GCSEs and will join the Sixth Form at Whitley Bay High School to study A Levels in Biology, Psychology and PE.

Very proud parents and grandparents of all the above, we wish them all the very best for the next stage of their lives.





**Elisha in her  
Prom Dress**

**Josie in her  
Prom dress**





Aurora Watson in her costume when taking part in Sister Act. Grandma Jean went to see her and thoroughly enjoyed her performance and the show.

Aaron Robinson playing Bugsy in Bugsy Malone at Ingleby Manor School July 2023.



A new hymn by Peter Sampson

### **Heretic Rabbi One of Us**

At the name of Jesus  
We dissenters bow,  
Heretic Rabbi that he was,  
We're his family now.

Two commandments he taught us,  
Love God and yourselves,  
Freedom, Reason, Tolerance  
Spread the message now.

(Sung to tune of King's Weston

By R Vaughan Williams)

We're all in this together,  
Cannot doubt the path.  
Bright is the horizon, see,  
God's Earth is in our hands.

Light the flame of freedom,  
Pray for peace each day.  
With each other's trust and strength,  
We cannot lose our way.

## **LOOK FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE**

by Paula Cleary

I live in the land of Angles  
Of Saxons  
Of Jutes  
Of Celts  
Of Romans  
Of Normans  
Of Scandinavians  
I live in the land that was  
shaped by thousands of  
generations of  
Fortune hunters  
Treasure seekers  
Wanderers and sailors  
Conquerors and settlers  
Warriors and lovers  
Chancers and traders  
Looking for a better life

In waves and on waves  
They came and they came  
And we are the product of  
them all  
Yet we have the nerve  
and  
the ignorance  
and memory loss  
which makes a few of us  
spew hatred towards  
'People in boats'  
That they are somehow  
different from the people  
Who shaped and made our  
isle  
We. are. ALL. descended.  
from. people. in. boats.



## Northern Pride 2024

Once more the annual celebration of our LGBTQIA+ community - and the acknowledgement that the work for equality is oncoming - rolled around into Newcastle, this time over 20-21 July 2024. Fortunately, this year we were blessed with better weather than in 2023! We began with an inclusive service of prayer at St James URC Church in the city centre, excellently led by Rev. Kai Miller.

Fortified by rainbow cake and coffee, we proceeded over to the Civic Centre for the start of the march. I couldn't find the 'Boring Middle-Aged Straight People for Equality' section of the march, so instead joined in with the 'spiritual and religious' section of Quakers, URC members, MCC members and other members of the Inclusive-Minded Churches Network. We marched from the Civic Centre down Northumberland Street (I was joined by Brian at the start), then along Blakett Bridge and up Percy Street back to the Civic Centre.

Back at the Civic, the brass band played, people settled in for a picnic, and I took the chance to model our new rainbow diversity flag, and my new rainbow shawl, courtesy of a very talented friend. It was fantastic to see so many people gather for equality. Long may it continue!

Louise Reeve



## Thirty Spokes Together

Thirty spokes together make a wheel for a cart.  
It is the empty space in the centre of the wheel which enables it to be used.

Mould clay into a vessel.  
It is the emptiness within that creates the usefulness of the vessel.

Cut out doors and windows in a house.  
It is the empty space inside which creates the usefulness of the house.

Thus what we have may be something substantial,  
But its usefulness lies in its emptiness.

**Lao Tzu**



## The Spirit of Community

We've all experience a sense of wonder and magic when a great choir performs sacred music. Sometimes the sound feels as comfortable as a soft blanket on a cold night. At other times, its power and majesty roll over us like a huge wave, knocking us to our knees. The musical experience touches us deeply in a mysterious way, awakening our emotions.

The effect is even greater when we participate in singing together. Joined in song, our emotions are not merely stirred; they merge and dissolve with the emotions of others, deepening our human connection. Our voices create a net of sound that binds us tightly together. When we gather to sing sacred songs, the song and the act of singing together strengthen our spiritual community by bolstering our sense of fellowship.

The word *spirit* is derived from the Latin *spirare*, 'to breathe.' The act of singing moves our breath, the essence of our spirit, from our deepest core out into the atmosphere. When we sing together in singing meditation, the benefits are reciprocal: The act of singing strengthens the community, and the group's camaraderie enhances the beauty and power of the songs.

Singing in community produces a tangible power that doesn't exist when we sing alone. As an experiment, sing a song alone, then sing with recorded music, then sing the same song in the presence of others who are singing the same song. Notice which of these forms affects you most powerfully.

Singing in community increases the effect music has on us.



Yarm Choral Society and Yarm School singing The Messiah with The Black Dyke Band

## ***CHURCH DIRECTORY***

**Address:** Stockton Unitarian Centre, Vane Street,  
Stockton-on-Tees, **TS18 1RF**

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**Church website:** <http://stocktonunitarians.co.uk>

**Church facebook:** Unitarians in and around Stockton-on-Tees

**Twitter now X:** Stockton Unitarian Centre

**Chairperson and Flower Secretary:** Jean Watson - 01642 658376

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**Worship Committee Co-ordinator:** Margaret Whitham 01429 298641

Treat your mind with the same respect you treat your body.  
Consider unhealthy thoughts the same way you do unhealthy food.  
Set limits and focus on what will nourish you.

Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which  
difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish. John Quincy Adams

**Deadline for the next edition of Church News is the  
Wednesday 23rd October 2024.**

Please send your contributions for the November/December edition  
to the Editor: Margaret

[margaretrobinson81@gmail.com](mailto:margaretrobinson81@gmail.com)

## Sunday Services for 2024

**Zoom link: 6680459646**



Date	Time	Worship Leader
1st September	6.00pm	Diana Bebbby Harvest Festival
8th September	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk
15th September	6.00pm	Rev Victor Ball
22nd September	6.00pm	Rev Paul Walker
29th September	6.00pm	Vince McCully
6th October	6.00pm	Christine Walker
13th October	6.00pm	Rev Victor Ball
20th October	6.00pm	Rev Paul Walker
27th October	6.00pm	Rev Margaret Kirk
3rd November	3.00pm	Hazel & David Warhurst

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

**If you would like to contribute to the flower fund or buy flowers in memory of a loved one and have your name added to the flower list please let Jean Watson know. 01642 658376**

### Flower Rota

1st September	Rev Victor Ball
8th September	Rev Margaret Kirk
15th September	Mrs Powley
22nd September	Mrs Josie Squires
29th September	Paul Walker
6th October	Mrs Smith & Mrs Fish
13th October	Mrs Jean Watson
20th October	Mrs Jane Tomlin
27th October	Gail Moore
3rd November	Hazel & David Warhurst



Please note all services will be held in the church building.

Most services will also be transmitted via **Zoom**, in a hybrid service. Joining information for Zoom will be sent out through email by the Church Secretary

- Zoom: **6680459646**

**[margaretrobinson81@gmail.com](mailto:margaretrobinson81@gmail.com)**