

BURY UNITARIAN CHURCH

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2019 AND JANUARY 2020

CHURCH SERVICES

1 st December	2.00pm	300 years Centenary service followed by afternoon tea.
8 December	4.00pm	Carols by Candlelight accompanied by The Bury Youth Brass Band, with Barrie Brailsford, organ.
15 December	11.15am	Christingle Service
22 December	11.15am	Approaching Christmas service followed by an inclusive communion.
25 December	11.15am	Christmas Morning Worship. Join us for a light breakfast from 10.30am and sherry and mince pies afterwards.
29 December	11.15am	Service led by Abi Elliot-MacGuffie
5 January	11.15am	The Minister
12 January	11.15am	The Minister
19 January	11.15am	Celebrating Our Year – (including Junior Prize-giving) Led by the Minister
26 January	11.15am	The Minister – followed by Communion

CHURCH STEWARDS

1 December	Barbara Bamford & Allan Hodgert
8 December	Susan Holt & Roger Mills
15 December	Betty & Neville Kenyon
22 December	Marian Price & Di Scaife
29 December	Beryl Bowden & Janet Thatcher
5 January	Sue McMullen & Ashleigh-Jade Jones
12 January	Jean Brookhouse & Susan Mitchell
19 January	Lois Williams & George Scaife
26 January	Barbara Bamford & Allan Hodgert

CHURCH FLOWERS

1 December	Church Flowers
5 January	Susan McMullen – In memory of Connie & Derek Fitzgerald
12 January	Margaret Pollard – In memory of Margaret & Jack Pollard
19 January	Anne & Roger Mills – In memory of our mothers
26 January	Church Flowers

I am now collecting money towards church flowers in 2020. If you would like to make a donation, please speak to Janet Thatcher.

SATURDAY MORNING COFFEE ROTA

- 7 December Brenda Ainsworth & Susan Holt**
- 14 December Pam Gilbert & Di Scaife**
- 21 December Margaret Fitzpatrick & Norah Hickton**
- 28 December Betty Kenyon & Kate Brady McKenna**
- 4 January Jean Maden & Margaret INTERNATIONAL**
- 11 January June Clarke & Sue McMullen**
- 18 January Brenda Ainsworth & Susan Holt**
- 25 January Pam Gilbert & Di Scaife**

SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE ROTA

1st and 8th – coffee will be made on an ad hoc basis.

- 15 December Margaret Fitzpatrick(M), Lois Williams, Di Scaife**
- 22 December Marian Price(M), Susan Mitchell**
- 29 December Marian Price(M), Brenda Ainsworth, George Scaife**
- 5 January Jean Maden(M), Beryl Bowden, Damion Langford**
- 12 January Norah Hickton(M), Barbara Bamford, Peter Whewell**
- 19 January Margaret Fitzpatrick(M), Lois Williams, Di Scaife**
- 26 January Marian Price & Susan Mitchell**

INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY

International Men's Day, held on 19th November, has been celebrated since 1992 with the aim of raising awareness of positive male role models and issues related to the mental, emotional and physical health of men and boys. George Scaife led a moving service of worship on 17th November inviting us to think about men who were inspirational, not only for their many outstanding achievements, but also for the way they had faced mental and emotional challenges, which in turn led to positive outcomes for others.

The story of the Good Samaritan, reminded us of the qualities of selflessness and compassion, particularly to those beyond our own sphere of life, and of Jesus' message to 'Go and do likewise'. Barrie gave us a beautiful rendition of the Simon and Garfunkel classic, 'Bridge Over Troubled Waters' on our piano, which was followed by an opportunity to savour and reflect on the lyrics in the reading by Neville Kenyon.

Given the challenge of identifying his personal choice of three nominees for shining examples of male role models, George set out his criteria – there would be no politicians and they should be alive today, although he acknowledged the greatness of people like Ghandi and Nelson Mandella.

His nominees were drawn from different spheres of life and some generally better known than others. His first choice was a person who had been born into very favourable circumstances but who had lost his mother at an early age, had to undertake his mourning and indeed much of the rest of his life, under the glare of publicity and media interest. He served in the Army for ten years, rising to the rank of Captain and undertaking two tours of duty in Afghanistan. He continues to work in support of servicemen and women as they adapt after life-altering injury. One of his most significant post-service achievements has been his role in organising the Invictus Games, a sporting event which does much to reignite a sense of positive self-worth and purpose to wounded servicemen and women. The young man? - His Royal Highness, Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex.

George's second nominee also had a forces' background. Royal Marine, Mark Ormerod lost both legs and an arm after he stepped on an explosive device in Helmand province on Christmas Eve in 2007. One can only imagine the devastation and despair this young, fit man must have felt as he started to rebuild a life very different from the future he had imagined. His determination to rebuild his life led him to take on new roles and ways of supporting others. Currently Mark works as a motivational speaker, writer and as a coach to disabled people wishing to compete in elite sport. In addition, he is heavily involved in charitable work and is an ambassador for the Royal Marines Association. George and Di were delighted to witness his receipt of an honorary degree in recognition of his contributions from the University of Plymouth when attending the award ceremony of their granddaughter. Mark has recently published a book called 'Man Down'.

In 1944 as an eight year old child Tony Foulds watched as an American bomber, flew overhead, with the pilot, as he thought, giving a friendly wave. Seconds later he witnessed the crash which resulted in the death of 10 US airmen. Reflecting on the experience as he grew up he suspected that the pilot was trying to make an emergency landing and swerved to avoid him and his friends. Fast forward many years and the BBC presenter Dan Walker found Tony lovingly tending the small memorial garden as he had done ever since it had been erected on the site of the crash in the 1970s. His dearest wish, but one which he had little means of realising, was to arrange a way of marking the 75th anniversary of their death. With Dan Walker's help, a campaign was started which culminated in a magnificent US and British military flypast witnessed by hundreds of supporters moved by Tony's quiet dedication over decades.

Unlike other award ceremonies there was no need to choose a 'winner'. All the three were shining examples of humility, bravery, resilience and determination to overcome personal challenges whilst making a positive contribution to others.

Thank you George for leading us in a most moving service and marking International Men's Day in such a fitting way.

Val Chamberlain

COMMITTEE MEETINGS DURING DECEMBER AND JANUARY

Monday 9th December 7pm Trustees

Wednesday 11th December 7pm Church Council

Monday 6th January 7pm Social & Fund-raising

Thursday 9th January 10am Bury Fairtrade Forum

Thursday 15th January 7pm Worship

CALENDAR ITEMS FOR THE FEBRUARY EDITION SHOULD BE WITH THE EDITOR BY SUNDAY 19th JANUARY, PLEASE.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

There will not be a meeting in December.

The Christmas Meal will be on Thursday, 16th January at 7pm at Automatic. Anyone wishing to attend, please speak to Sue McMullen.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE – ADVANCE NOTICE

MANCHESTER DISTRICT A.G.M. – SATURDAY 1st February – Lunch at 12 midday, followed by a service led by Anne Mills and a meeting. All the ladies of the congregation are welcome. See notice on board nearer the time.

SMARTIE TUBES

Could Brenda Ainsworth please have the Smartie Tubes by 15th December. Thank you.

300TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE, ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1ST, AT 2PM

Arrangements are well in hand for this very special event. Thanks to Susan Holt for buying and planting up two new tubs outside the front door, in readiness for our celebratory day. After the service, a light afternoon tea will be served, and some short clips of this year's DVD footage will be shown. David Lloyd has worked extremely hard towards producing our 300th Anniversary Film, and we do thank him for all his efforts; copies of the film will be available in the New Year. Heritage-material will be on display in various parts of the building. After refreshments have been served, several of our members will speak about important periods in our church-history and development. We are expecting over 100 guests, so space will be at a premium, both in the worship-area and upstairs, and any help available will be appreciated. If you have not already booked your place, please speak to Susan Holt. We have many guests attending this event; please make them welcome, in true Bury fashion. We hope that a good time will be had by all!

LUNCH CIRCLE –There will not be a meeting in December. In January, we shall meet on the 21st, at 12.30 p.m. Please keep an eye on the notice-board and listen for pulpit-announcements for further details.

BOOK CLUB - The Book Club will not meet in December. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 29th January at 7pm. The next book should be available from Sat. 30th Nov. It is *The Miniaturist* by Jessie Burton.

QUITA BROOKS - Quita left our area on November 3rd, exchanging a Lancashire landscape for a Scottish one. For the time being, she will be staying with her niece, until her house-purchase is completed. Anne Mills has her temporary address; please ask her if you would like it. We wish Quita all the very best in Scotland, and will remember her with affection.

TRADCRAFT

The stall will be open on December 15th, and on January 5th and 19th. Many thanks to everyone who has purchased Traidcraft during 2019, as well as to Jean, who has helped to run the stall; her efforts are appreciated.

Profits from Traidcraft provide supplies for the tea, coffee, sugar, and hot chocolate used on the premises, for all events, and this is an important part of our commitment as a Fair Trade church. We have good stocks of all the above items, which are kept in the store at the back of the worship-area. It would be appreciated if members did not buy additional supplies, as this leads to over-stocking; if re-stocking is required, please speak to Marian Price, Anne Mills or Jean Brookhouse; thank you.

CAMERA CLUB

The November meeting was spent in removing and storing the 2019 Exhibition photographs, and also in discussing the pictures to be submitted for consideration for the front cover of this calendar. The December meeting will take place on the 2nd, (a week earlier than usual, please note!) and we shall meet on January 13, 2020. Forward-planning, in terms of trips out, projects, and next year's exhibition, will be considered then. New members are always welcome; meetings begin at 7 p.m.

Many thanks to the members of the Camera Club for the Calendar Cover photographs.

EVENTS AT PADIHAM.....

Padiham will be holding its Christmas Market, on Saturday, December 7th, between 10.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. Admission costs £1.00. On Sunday, December 15th, at 4 p.m; a Carol Service is to be held; and, on Friday, December 20th, at 7.30 p.m; Adaptive Brass will give a concert of Christmas music; tickets cost £5.00 and can be obtained from Barry Brown.....

.....AND AT RAWTENSTALL

The church will be hosting a Lunch and Think Big and Give Christmas Party, on behalf of the Rossendale Shiva Trust, on Saturday, December 14th, between 1.00 p.m. and 4 p.m. This event is free, but donations will be welcomed, in aid of support for local homeless people; please register interest on the website. On Sunday, January 5th, a special "Jerusalem" Service will be held, at 3 p.m. Joyce Wicks, a Blackburn-based artist, has created a "Jerusalem" triptych, which will be unveiled then; afternoon tea will be served, after the service, and there will be an opportunity to speak to Joyce. For further details, see the notice on the board.

THANKS..... to Kate for three excellent Remembrance Services, this year. On Remembrance Sunday, we held our traditional service; Anne Mills, in her rôle as G.A. Vice-President, laid the wreath on our war memorial, and later contributed to the service with a reading of "In Flanders Fields", to which she added her personal commentary. Kate read the Roll of Honour, as poignant as ever, whilst the congregation were invited to choose poppies in memory of former members from Bank Street, Chesham, and Heywood, and lay them on the communion table, where our Book of Remembrance was displayed. After this service, a small group of us travelled to Holebottom, where, during a short act of worship, we again laid poppies on the war-graves of Arthur Ashworth and Harold Greenhalgh, both Bury Grammar School pupils and members of Bank Street; both died during the First World War. On Remembrance Day itself, we again

observed a two-minute silence; Kate read an account from The Manchester Guardian of the first Armistice Service, at the Cenotaph, in London; she also read "The Young Dead Soldiers", by Archibald McLeish, who served in France in 1918, and selected several pieces of music by George Butterworth, who was killed in August 1916, on The Somme. At all three services, we remembered those who had sacrificed their lives in order that we might live in freedom and peace---a very fitting tribute.

VICE-PRESIDENTIAL DUTIES

On October 13th, Rev. Celia Cartwright, the G.A. President, conducted our Harvest Service, and we were pleased to welcome Celia and her friend and mentor, Claire Griffel, to Bury. I acted as host for the morning, by looking after Celia, by reading the notices, and by entertaining her and Claire to lunch afterwards. Celia offered the greetings of the General Assembly to the congregation, and I was pleased to note that her words were much in tune with mine; we write our own speeches for services and events and make them as appropriate to the occasion, and the congregation, as we can. A two-week holiday in Lanzarote followed for me, and I was glad of the opportunity to rest and relax. On Remembrance Sunday, I laid the wreath at Bury; it was an honour to have been invited to do so; later, I watched a recording of Celia at the Cenotaph in London, and thought how beautifully she represented our denomination. On November 17th, I shall conduct the afternoon service at our Flowergate, Whitby, Chapel; I am looking forward to seeing the church and to learning more about its history. On December 1st and 8th, I shall be at Bury, to attend our 300th Anniversary Service and our Candlelight Carol Service, respectively--- dates which have been in my diary for months, as I was determined not to miss either of them. In the first 13 weeks of 2020, I already have 11 engagements booked; the last of these takes place on the day that British Summertime begins, and comes just before the Annual Meetings, in April--- what a short winter this will have seemed, especially when I factor in my usual duties at Bury!

G.A. DELEGATES

We are entitled to send two delegates to the Annual Meetings, which will be held in Birmingham, again, in 2020; the Meetings take place between April 7th and 9th. If you are interested in representing Bury Unitarians, please speak to Anne Mills or Betty Kenyon, ideally before December 11th, the date of the next Council Meeting. Bookings must be made before the end of February.

DECEMBER SERVICES

The main services on 1st and 8th December are in the afternoon, but if you are unable to make those services, there will be an opportunity for quiet prayer and reflection on both mornings at 11.15am. The morning reflection on 8th December will be a chance to mark and note the sadness which can come with this time of year. Everyone is very welcome, but please do not feel you should be at both services on either day!

Communions:

There will be communion services after the main service on Sunday 22nd December and Sunday 26th January. Everyone is welcome to these communions, in which nothing magical happens except for the magic that the participants bring.

Contemplative worship:

Kate has decided not to continue with the Contemplative Worship sessions which have been running for the last few months: it hasn't proved

possible to find a time which suits many people, and enthusiasm has waned. We will try to think of another form of alternative worship which suits people better. There are no hurt feelings about this decision: it is always worth trying new ways of entering into the sacred, but it's also important to be willing to let those ideas go.

Christingle service and workshop, 14th and 15th December.

Following its popularity last year, we will be holding another Christingle Service, on 15th December. Last year Ade and Kate made all the Christingles, and whilst it was very enjoyable, it would be nice to share the job. You are invited to a Christingle-making session on Saturday 14th December, after the coffee morning. All equipment will be provided, and the job is an easy and enjoyable one. The kettle will be on, there will be festive snacks, and we may even play some carols in the background.

Lunch after services

For a trial period, Kate will be having lunch in The Art Picture House on the second Sunday of every month, and you are very welcome to join her. There will be no booking in advance, no signing up on lists, and no actual organisation – just join her if you would like to (and everyone can order and pay individually). You're welcome to stay for a coffee, a drink, a full meal, or anything in between. The first 'Second Sunday lunch' will be on January 9th, leaving church around 1245, and they'll continue for at least the first half of the year, with a break in April because the second Sunday in April is Easter.

Choir

I'm not sure if we always fully appreciate, as a congregation, how very lucky we are to have a choir. When I mention it to colleagues, I'm generally met with envy, and quite right too! We really benefit from having strong and talented singers, who not only provide us with the occasional treat of a 'piece' (and we're hearing them in both the Anniversary Service and the Carol Service), but who help us find our way through tricky and unfamiliar hymns. Music is a really important part of worship, and the benefits the choir bring to us are huge. So a huge thank you to Anne, Beryl, Janet, Margaret, Marian, Molly, Peter, and Susan.

Foodbank

Odd though it sounds, I'm encouraging people to hold off on Foodbank and other donations during December. Last year, when we were involved with the Homeless Project, it became really clear that services like these are overwhelmed with gifts and donations in the run-up to Christmas. This is a brilliant problem to have, and I am so touched that people are so generous. But it's also true that by February or March, the shelves in Foodbanks are empty again. So I am asking people to hold on to their donations during December, and then in February we will have a "pretend it's Christmas" month, and I will be asking for December levels of generosity!

Children's Christmas treat

This year we are changing the children's treat. During the last service before Christmas (Sunday 22nd) they will be watching a Christmas film in

the lounge, and we will be providing them with snacks and drinks. There will also be a small gift for each of them.

We all (whether we have ever had children in the Junior Church or not) owe June a huge vote of thanks for all the many years she has arranged the cinema trip for our young people, and also for her suggestion for this changed treat.

Jean Taylor

As many of you know, Jean is currently unwell, and doesn't leave her home often. She also struggles greatly with her eyesight, which means she will struggle to read the Christmas cards I know people will send her. In view of this, Ade has kindly agreed to make recordings of people's Christmas messages to her, so that we can send them to her in time for Christmas. Ade will be around after the service on December 15th, and I'm sure you can find him at other times, and I would be personally very grateful if you would record a short seasonal message so that Jean knows she's in our thoughts and our prayers.

Minister's message

Dear all,

They do say that the older you get, the quicker Christmas comes around, and certainly, this year I'd agree!

So firstly, I wish you all the Christmas that you want and need. That will be different for each of us: many of us will be celebrating with friends and family, whilst some of us will be more keenly aware of loss and sadness. Many of us, of course

(perhaps even most of us) will know a mixture of the two. It's very important that we are able to acknowledge all the different things this time of year brings to mind: happy and less happy memories, wistfulness and nostalgia, happiness and love for those we miss.

I hope that our church is a place where everyone knows that any and all of those feelings are valid and valued, and that here is a place where there is no need for pretence or masks.

I also hope, of course, that it is a place which enables us to be in touch with joy and celebration, and that as a church community we are fed spiritually in this season as in all other seasons.

Twice this month I have had particular reason to be proud of this community. We have an occasional visitor who is often in need of food and warm clothing, and on her last visit people acted quickly and compassionately to provide what they could. Several people brought in warm clothes and shoes, someone else dashed to a charity shop, and several people made sure I knew that she was there so that I could find what was needed. But at least as importantly, people made her welcome. Nobody treated her as a 'stranger' – she was a visitor, and a welcome and valued one. I am confident that she will know that when she wants to return, we want to see her.

I also heard from someone who is a friend of the church that his mother in law (who has visited us a few times and is now very unwell) had been talking about a wave of prayer and positive thoughts sweeping over her, and had realised it came from our church. Although we only met this lady a few times, it is wonderful to know that people feel the strength of our love.

Like any community, "all human life is here" in our church, and this year we have known joy and sadness, the warmth of new friends and grief over losses. We have seen weddings, and baptisms, and funerals, and we have celebrated and grieved. Individuals amongst us have had good news, and bad news, and many have, I hope, known that church is place where there is space for all of those emotions and many, many more.

And next year will be, I hope, the same. It would be nice to imagine a year with no grief, no pain, and no bad or worrying news, but we can't pretend life will be like that: what we can know, though, is that we can hold all of those things, and support each other in finding ease and comfort.

As we move from 2019 into 2020, I know that we will continue to be the loving and beloved community we are, and that we will grow and learn with, and from, each other.

I wish you a very happy Christmas, and a peaceful new year.

With love, Kate

CONNIE DIGGLE – Is retiring from her work organizing shoebox collections at Christmas for vulnerable people. She has been doing this for 29 years originally as a member of the Stand congregation.

