

Bury Unitarian Church



Welcome back.....?

Calendar for September 2020

Welcome!

Welcome to the September 2020 edition of the Bury Unitarian Church *Calendar*.

As well as the usual items, you'll find some important information in the centre pages, including details about our planned return to church early in the month, and some details about church collections: many of you have been asking about this during our absence from the building, and Anne Mills has asked me to give it some prominence.

I hope you find the *Calendar* interesting and that it helps you feel connected with our church community while things are still so very strange. Whether you are planning to come to services in person or not, you will continue to get your copy of the *Calendar* delivered either by post or by hand. The fewer bits of paper we deal with at church the safer things will be.

I'm really grateful to everyone who's contributed to this edition – it's lovely to have so much creative work. It's really important that we know what's going on, but it's great to have some more personal input as well: keep it coming! Maybe you'd like to send in a response to a service, or a reply to something which was in a previous *Calendar* or even submit a piece of poetry or some writing (quizzes always seem to go down quite well, too, as do comedy pages!)

As always, I'd like to thank the Camera Club for their work on the cover picture, and to Roger for designing and printing the cover. The *Calendar* is definitely a team effort!

You'll see that the centre pages are in a different colour again: that's because they contain information about our return to worshipping in person, and a list of events. You may like to pull them out to keep separate. Once we start having rotas again, those will be in the middle for ease of access. Let's hope those days come soon!

With love,

Kate (dressed as an editor).

Letter from the Minister:

I am writing this in moderately torrential rain, which hasn't really stopped all day, although yesterday was too warm for a cardigan. The English Summer really is a guessing game! I'm grateful for modern fabrics, and warm dry houses.

I wrote in last month's Minister's Letter that things were changing, and indeed, since then, most of us have faced renewed restrictions on what we can do and who we can see. I know that this was annoying, sad, and frustrating for many of you, when we'd started to enjoy the relaxations. I'm glad that you all know you can express those feelings, and I also know that everyone is being sensible and making careful decisions about what to do.

I think we will have to get used to continuing change over the next months and possibly years. I think things will start to shift back to some sort of normality, but it won't be the normality we're used to. I know I've started to talk about "in the time before" rather than "when things were normal," because some of that "normal" will take a long time to come back, if it ever does.

But it still looks as though we will be able to restart worshipping together in person from next week. Our front cover picture shows the People Praising sculpture and a 'welcome back' message: whoever chooses and is able to return to worshipping in person will be very very welcome, but nothing we are currently doing will change and I am absolutely committed to us remaining one strong fellowship, whether we worship at home or in person.

If you have decided not to come back for a while, I can't reiterate enough that you do not need to apologise for that decision! The virus hasn't gone away and many of us are still vulnerable: so whether your reason for staying at home is your own health or the health of other people, please

know that I absolutely respect it and will continue to provide you with worship materials exactly as I have done over the past nearly-six-months.

You will see elsewhere in the *Calendar* that I am also hoping to be able to offer face-to-face pastoral care from this month, but that neither the law nor good sense will allow that to be in your home. Most of the pastoral care will be done by phone or email as it is now, but I will be able to see you in the worship area at church by appointment. Of course this isn't ideal, but it is still progress!

Things are definitely turning Autumnal now, and I am enjoying that! Ade and I have been making preserves: we only have a tiny garden, but we've found wild blackberries, and although they're not wild we've found a good supply of damsons: on Bury Market!

We've managed a couple of nice days out – one to Keswick, Ambleside, and Castlerigg (before the schools broke up!) and another recently to Hucklow and Tideswell. One of many things I love about living here, even apart from Bury itself being an amazing town, is that it's so easy to get to spectacular places. I still miss East Anglian skies, but the hills are a definite compensation, and I still get that feeling of being-near-home when I see the Peel Tower in the distance.

September is, traditionally, a time for new starts (schools go back, and in Jewish traditions the new year happens this month). I hope that this month brings a sense of renewal, whatever is or isn't changing for you.

With love,



Kate (dressed as a minister!)

Presidential matters:

August has kept me busy, in ways that I could not have expected; September should be quieter---on paper, at least---and arrangements in October are still to be negotiated. I led worship, by Zoom, at Padiham, and at Edinburgh, on August 9th and 16th, respectively, and the services proceeded smoothly, from a technical point of view, and were received with much appreciation by the congregations concerned; it is always very gratifying when positive comments are expressed, and good to know that one's hard work has not been wasted. Padiham had invited members of Cross Street Manchester to join their worship, on August 16th; as I was unable to be present, I recorded a message of greetings and welcome for them, on behalf of the Lancashire Collaborative Ministry, and of the General Assembly. Brighton Unitarians celebrate their Bicentenary, on August 23rd, and I shall again offer greetings and congratulations to them, on behalf of the GA. Jef Jones, Brighton's Lay Leader, has asked me to pass on the greetings of the Brighton congregation to everybody at Bury.

The Presidential Team, which consists of myself, Celia Cartwright, and Sue Woolley, have access to a special email account and are jointly responsible for dealing with messages sent there. My involvement in the event at Brighton arose from such an email, as did a message of condolence to the family of a member at Stockton: Edna Anderson. It has been suggested that the Presidential Team should offer assistance with services, in order to help ministers and worship-leaders who are feeling very overworked, at present. My invitation to Belper, mid-September, has been cancelled, but I have offered to conduct a Zoom service for them, if they wish, and I am booked for a Zoom service at Kendal, at the end of the month.

On Sundays, Roger and I quite often attend the service at Padiham; all their Zoom services have been recorded and can be accessed on You Tube, including mine from August 9th. There will be services from other Unitarian churches to be found on You Tube, as well. Simply select the You Tube icon on your home screen, and, once you reach You Tube, type in an appropriate title (for example, "Padiham Unitarian Church Services"). In fact, You Tube offers a great variety of different types of entertainment: music, drama, comedy, lectures; and it is easy to access, as long as you have a suitable device. I should mention here that, for the Zoom services that I lead, I need

a recording-studio; I have to make sure that the camera-angles are right; a plain background is a necessity; and different levels are needed for the chalice-candle, my service-words, my computer---and a glass of water, of course. I have found cardboard boxes to be very useful, and my recipe-book holder is just right; so far, nothing has overbalanced! I have no plans for a career in the film-industry, however.

I extend my thanks to Kate, once more, for everything she is doing for Bury Unitarian Church. Each week, we are provided with a well-written, well-delivered, service, and one that is relevant to our current circumstances, as well as being interesting and thought-provoking. I can't always manage to read my service at home, at 11.15 on Sundays, but I make every effort to read and think about it, before Sunday is over. I do this in the belief that all our members are doing the same, and I sincerely hope that this is so. Our efforts towards reopening for worship, this month, have been substantial and have required time and thought, too. Kate has done a magnificent job with the documentation she has collected together and circulated, and in the meetings she has chaired. Ade, too, has been busy, not just as our technical supervisor, but also as our Property Manager; there has been a great deal of work to be done, in this capacity. He is being ably assisted by our HARP Team (Howard, Ade, Roger, Peter)! Thank you to all of them.

If all goes according to plan, this month will bring live services to Bury Unitarian Church, again; these will not be what we have been used to, and you may not find them very satisfying, but they will mean that, in a small way, we shall be able to meet together, once more. If anyone had told us, in March, that it would be six months before we were able to come together, we would not have believed them, and this was not naïvety; we simply had no idea what was in store for us. In the hope that I shall see many of you, in person, at some stage during this month, I send you all my love and very best wishes, and Roger joins me in these sentiments.

Anne Mills

Notes from the church building:

The building has been getting its glad-rags on as time comes towards its re-opening, bedecked now in beautiful blue ribbons and brand new signage, with a great new electrical system and weather protection for the roof, it is starting to look like the building is ready for another chance to shine, and as I write this, it very nearly is.

When we re-open the church, we will miss out on one of the glad-rag additions, and that's a bit of a shame. The doors will be held open for health and safety reasons, and as a result you won't get to see the new, assisted door system that we had installed while everyone in the congregation was been keeping themselves safe at home.

The change to assisted - rather than automatic - doors may seem like a very small thing, but it is a big change and it is going to be confusing at first. There will be an easy to understand guide about how to use the assisted doors on the doors themselves in the future, so the way they operate will be less likely to surprise you (and there will always be the same press-to-open button at the side of the doors for anyone who trusts more in what they know).

Despite the new door system, roof work, electrical system, the lovely blue ribbons and new notices though, I think the building knows that it will not welcome us back as a whole congregation at first. It still feels so wonderfully joy-filled to be getting ready to show a little bit of itself off again too. The glad-rags are there for all of us to enjoy though, and I know you'll get to see them, if not on the first reopening, then on the re-opening that will still be happening whenever you attend. Those glad-rags are going nowhere; and when you are ready to come back, the building will still be showing them off, ready for you to have your own re-opening with the church.

Ade Brady.

Recorded Calendars and services

If you (or someone you know) would like to have a recorded version of the *Calendar* or the Sunday services on a memory stick or CD, please speak to Kate, who can very easily make it happen (with the very kind assistance of Ade and his recording thingy).

The services won't normally be available in audio form until a few days after the relevant Sunday, but the Calendar is normally done at around the same time as the printed version.

Camera Club:

Meetings will be held on September 7th and 21st. Ade will continue to explore the use of GIMP, the photo-processing software, and, also, members will share their photographs, with the aim of reviewing and updating the pictures that appear on the church-website. Further details may be obtained from Janet Thatcher. Everyone is welcome to attend these Zoom meetings, or to put forward photographs for the website and each month's calendar cover.

Roger Mills

Audio-visual equipment – special offer:

Roger has purchased a spare camera, and a spare microphone, for the use of church-members; if you regularly use Zoom but feel that your audio and/or visual quality would benefit from improvement, these items could be useful. For further details about borrowing either piece of equipment, please contact him, either by email or phone.

Book Club:

The Book Club met twice in August, on the 5th and the 19th; at the first of these meetings, members brought a short piece to read and discuss---all very enjoyable; the second meeting consisted of an alphabetical book quiz, devised by Kate, which put our brains to work; this was won by Glynis. On September 2nd, we shall be discussing "The Giver of Stars", by Jojo Moyes. Everyone is welcome to join in; we start at 7pm; for about an hour. Copies of the book are available from Tesco and cost £3.50; Amazon has a Kindle version, as well as a paperback copy. September 16th sees a return to the read and discussed piece. If you need further details, please contact Anne.

Ainsworth Services:

Ainsworth Chapel has reopened and will be holding a service on September 6th, at 10.30 a.m. The service-leaders will be Granville and Christine Leather.

On October 4th, at 3p.m; Anne Mills will lead Ainsworth's Harvest celebrations.

Visitors are welcome, at both services; strict safety and hygiene rules will operate. Please contact Shirley Horrocks, if you have queries.

Anne Mills

Church flowers:

The church flowers this month would have been sponsored by the following people:

September 6th: George Scaife, in memory of Alicia and John Scaife.

September 13th: Vera Stephenson, in memory of John and Rhoda Smith and Gordon.

We send our love to George and Vera.

The Calendar:

Even once we start to return to church this month, the *Calendar* will continue to be delivered to your home: this is much less of an infection risk than collecting it from church.

The deadline for the October 2020 *Calendar* is Tuesday 22nd September. (This is slightly earlier in the month than normal, for which I apologise!)

If you are not a church member and would rather stop getting the *Calendar*, please let Kate know: we won't be offended!

The HARP team:

You will know that a lot of work has been going on in the background to make sure that we are ready for a safe return to worship. Most of this work has been done by the HARP team: **Howard, Ade, Roger, and Peter.**

We are really grateful to the HARP team for all their work: they have spent hours considering and acting on what is needed, and I suspect the work will be ongoing.

Kate Brady McKenna

Thanks from Jean Taylor:

Jean has sent a card thanking everyone for their good wishes, cards, and flowers to celebrate her ninetieth birthday last month.

Eunice Smith:

We have received sad news from Rochdale: Donald, Eunice's husband, died on July 21st; his funeral was conducted by Abi. Both Eunice and Donald have had health-issues, over the past two or three years, and Eunice is still not in the best of health; Bury folk may remember Eunice from Women's League gatherings. Anne sent a card and condolences to Eunice and her family, on behalf of Bury Unitarians, and this was greatly appreciated.

Anne Mills

Joan Buckley, wife of Ray Buckley.

Some of you will remember Joan and Ray Buckley, who were married at Bury Unitarian Church in 1989 by John Allerton. Ray was a member of the men's fellowship for some time.

Sadly, Joan died in early August: her funeral was at the East Lancashire Crematorium and was officiated by Rev. Kate Brady McKenna.

We send our condolences to Ray and to the whole family.

Minister's 'church days':

Once we start to open for in-person worship, Kate will also be resuming what used to be called Vestry Days. She will be in church on Fridays between around 10 and around 4. If you would like to have a face-to-face chat with Kate, you would be very welcome, *but please arrange this in advance*. We can't offer the casual drop-ins we used to, and the chats will have to be in the Worship Area, socially distanced, and wearing masks. Of course this isn't ideal, but it is something!

It will probably be a while before both the law and common sense allow for pastoral visits at home, and you are of course welcome to contact Kate by phone, email, text, WhatsApp, Messenger, homing pigeon, or good old-fashioned post at any other time.

If you want to talk to Kate in person and Friday doesn't suit you, please let Kate know – so long as no one else is using the building we can arrange for a chat at other times.

Zoom coffee mornings in October:

Kate will be taking some time off in October, and will not be available to host the coffee mornings on Saturdays 10th and 17th. If you would be willing to act as host on either or both of those days, please let her know (the meeting is already set up, so you would really only need to be there and keep an eye on the waiting room. Behaviour is seldom rowdy and you don't even have to make cakes!

Harvest:

Although we cannot hold our traditional Harvest Festival this year, we will be marking it on Sunday 4th October. Watch this space!

Return to church

As you know, we are planning to return to church on Sunday 6th September at 2pm.

There are a few things to bear in mind:

- We will let you know which weeks you are invited to attend.
- If you can't come on a week you're invited, it would be good if you can let Kate know so that someone else can have your seat!
- If you haven't been invited, please don't assume there will be room for you: you can always call or email Kate on Saturday evening to see if anyone has cancelled.
- We will make sure you can sit with household members, but please sit where you're asked to.
- You *must* wear a face-covering, and you must wear it appropriately: it needs to cover your mouth and nose, and you need to keep it on all the time you are in the building. Whoever is leading worship will also wear a face-covering until they are at the reading desk, where you will be protected from them by a Perspex screen.
- The seats will be laid out for whoever is expected that day. Please sit in the seat you're shown to.
- We can only let you sit with people from your own household.
- We won't be serving drinks after the service, and we won't be able to socialise.

However

- We will be together, worshipping.
- Our church building will be back in use.
- We are still one loving, committed community, even though we will be worshipping in different places.

We know that these rules seem really restrictive, but we need to abide by the law, and we need to make sure that we're all as safe as we can be.

Face-coverings:

If you are in church with anyone else for any reason, please bear in mind that you must wear a face-covering which covers your mouth and nose.

Not doing so places other people at very serious risk and – although far less important – could lead to us having to close the church again.

If you are with people who are not wearing masks and who do not have a health-related reason not to be, please prompt them to do so.

It is really important as we return to meeting in person that we are careful and that we respect other people.

If you forget your mask (or if you would like to have some spares), we will have some available, for a donation to church funds. These have been made from fabric donated by church members.

Timings of services:

Please let Kate know your preferences for the timing of Sunday services over the next few months.

The options are:

1. That the timings remain as they are now: 11.15am on Zoom, 2pm in church.
2. That the timings switch: 11.15am in church, 2pm on Zoom.

Once we know what the preference of the congregation is, we will let you know accordingly. The current timings will remain until at least the end of October.

Please tell Kate directly: she can only make decisions when she knows people's preferences!

Church collections – important information from Anne Mills:

Once we begin live Sunday services again, we shall start to accept collections once more; all such payments will be welcome, as this is a valuable source of revenue, which has been lacking since lockdown began. As it will not be possible to collect during services, this will have to be done by using a special Collections Box in the foyer, so that people can leave their contributions as they arrive or leave church. Anne Mills will be dealing with this task, for the time being, until Margaret Pollard feels able to take over again. All hygiene precautions will be observed; please try not to touch the collections box; just drop your donation in; thank you.

Those wishing to contribute should place their donations in an envelope (which can be the church collection envelope, or any other); cheques are preferred, but, if this is impossible, notes will be accepted; no coins, please! The total amount should be written clearly on the outside of the envelope. All cheques must be made out to Bury Unitarian Church, so that they can be paid into the church-account. Anyone who will not be attending church, just yet, but would like to make payments, may send cheques to Anne, at her home address (rather than to the church).

Please note: those who are registered for Gift Aid should continue to pay as they have done previously. The donations of those who are not registered could have Gift Aid applied on amounts up to £30, so someone who is not registered and is contributing, for example, £60, would be better to submit two cheques of £30 each than one of £60. If you need further information about this, please contact Val Chamberlain.

It may take some time to collect money in, using this method, but we should soon be able to settle into our usual pattern.

Thank you all for your co-operation.

What's on.

Most of the events listed here are, of course, virtual – anyone can join in with our Zoom meetings, whether over the internet or by phone.

Saturdays 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th September, 11am:

Zoom coffee morning (mtg no **839 0159 0623**)

Sundays 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th September, 11am for 11.15 start:

Zoom worship (mtg no **849 7456 6116**)

Sundays 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th September, 2pm:

Service-in-person (please only attend if you have been invited).

Wednesday 2nd September, 7pm:

Zoom Book club (mtg no 885 0522 3984)

We will be discussing *The Bringer of Stars*, by Jojo Moyes.

Saturday 5th September, 12noon:

Church Officers and HARP team meeting

Monday 7th September, 7pm:

Zoom Camera Club (mtg no 832 9647 8073)

Tuesday 8th September, 2pm:

Congregational strategy seminar (Zoom): speak to Kate or Anne for further details.

Wednesday 16th September, 7pm:

Zoom Book Club: Mtg no as above. Topic to be decided.

Monday 21st September, 7pm:

Zoom Camera Club (mtg no 832 9647 8073)

Cole Kershaw:

You will have seen Anne Mills' thoughtful words on the recent death of Cole Kershaw, a young man from Bury who was killed in a shooting incident.

We talked about Cole's terrible death in the service the following week, and the prayer we shared is below:

Our world is sometimes scary, sometimes dark, sometimes sad. Let us acknowledge that.

Let us work towards a world in which violence becomes increasingly rare, and in which young people are empowered to be their best selves.

Let us discourage rumour and gossip, which can only make a dreadful situation even more dreadful.

Let us offer support and love to those most affected by this awful tragedy.

Let us be grateful that we live in a place where we are shocked by news of this sort, where this is far from an everyday occurrence.

Let us be hopeful and optimistic for and about young people: our young people are living in a strange world, just as we all are, and they are navigating confusing and difficult things, just as they always have.

Let us grieve but not despair.

Let us pray but not think praying alone is enough.

In a world sometimes scary, dark, and sad, let us know that there is peace, light and joy still, and that we are charged with creating it.

Amen.

Reflections in the Window:

During lockdown, Kate has been displaying some of our Sunday prayers in the windows of the worship area for passers-by. Apparently at least one member of the public was very interested in them and in Unitarianism, so they will continue to go up. They won't be changed every week, but they will periodically. If you're passing you may like to have a look.

The Clewer Initiative:

In the service on August 9th we talked about modern slavery, and in particular about how we can become more aware of it and work to eradicate it. We heard that far too often, people working in car washes, nail salons, and agriculture are enslaved and working in dreadful conditions.

There are several organisations doing very good work on this issue: if you have internet access it would be worth looking at The Salvation Army, and an organisation called 'The Clewer Initiative'. The Clewer Initiative has a lot of resources, and also offers an app for reporting suspected cases of slavery.

If you are not online and would like more information, Kate is very happy to print something off for you. Just ask.



Congregational Strategy Workshops: from the EC

We are delighted that Prof. John Bates, Chair of New Unity congregation, and Fellow of Strategy and Entrepreneurship at London Business School, is offering some help to Unitarian and Free Christian congregations that will help them develop and work towards their strategic vision.

“With pandemic prompting so many congregations to rethink their ways of operating, and finding their long-term future, there are lots of big questions to ask. This webinar and two workshops led by John Bates will give local leaders the tools to help navigate these questions for the future. When I was Secretary at New Unity, in my first role as a trustee, I learnt so much from John, and he helped me to see how what I had learnt in the business world could be translated with integrity to a church context. I’m so pleased that more people will be able to benefit from his expertise”

Liz Slade, Chief Officer of the GA

There are two opportunities:

1: A webinar on Tuesday 8th September (1hr 20 minutes) Everyone welcome.

What is your church’s strategy for the future? In this webinar led by John Bates, we will learn what a strategy is and how trustees and congregational leaders might apply some of the classic strategy tools to develop a strategy for the long-term success of their church or community. Via Zoom and open to all. Contact Anne or Kate for details of how to register.

2: A series of two workshops for a smaller number of people to take a deeper dive together, developing their strategy and getting feedback from John and the other participants.

This is open to eight congregations – with ideally two people participating from each congregation, who have both attended the webinar on 8th

September. Because this workshop is designed for a small number of participants, please complete this short application form to express your interest. Contact Anne or Kate for details if you are interested)

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Workshop 1 (Wednesday 23rd September, 3-6pm)

An interactive online workshop to develop your strategy, and set congregations up for some 'homework' of data gathering and analysis ahead of Workshop

Workshop 2 (Wednesday 7th October, 3-6pm)

Presentation and feedback session for 8 presentations – 10 minutes to present 10 minutes of questions and feedback.

An invitation from Prof. John Bates:

“Strategy – a pattern of actions over time aimed at building and sustaining superior performance goals in the pursuit of specific objectives to achieve an agreed mission. All organizations whether businesses, charities, churches or congregations have a ‘Strategy’ though for most in the church or charity sector this is usually implicit rather than a clearly articulated plan.

For some the religious ‘mission’ is enough, however in an increasingly secular society this has failed to prevent declining engagement and diminished relevance. As Steve Jobs once said of Apple when it lost its way in the 1990’s ‘We were on a glide path to history’ – is that what we want for our Congregations?

Since the 1950’s the art and science of Strategy as taught at business schools around the world has developed an impressive collection of tools to help organizational leaders think explicitly about their strategy. There is no magic formula or ‘one size fits all’ solution however by using a few of these tools leadership teams can gain a clearer view of their organizations resources and capabilities and local context that can help them develop and communicate a successful strategy for a sustainable community.”

Starting school, by Anne Mills:

What I remember most about my very first day at school was that it didn't happen! Just before the beginning of term, when I was four years and two months old, I fell ill with chickenpox. Despite my protestations that I was perfectly fine, the doctor was called and decreed that I must stay in quarantine for two whole weeks; to add insult to injury, my library-books were taken away from me and sent off to be fumigated! I was desperate to go to school, as my friends were already there, and I wanted to be with them. On my eventual first day, I allowed my mother to escort me to Chesham Primary School (which doubled as Chesham Unitarian Church) and home again, at lunchtime; after that, I refused her services and made my own way backwards and forwards. One of my classmates was taken to and from school until she left the school, by which time she was eleven; I often wondered how she managed at her secondary school!

Bury High School came next; my first year there was the school's (and my) last, although that was nothing to do with me! The school hall was placed between two rows of classrooms, and the rules about crossing the hall were strict: if pupils were moving from the back of the hall to the front, they used the middle aisle that separated two blocks of chairs; if they were going from front to back, they had to use one of the side aisles, depending on which classroom they needed. Woe betide anybody caught breaking this rule; the senior master (Jaw) or mistress (Stodge) were fearsome, and their vocal power was awesome!

When I began my teaching-career, in 1968, at Leigh Girls' Grammar School, I discovered that many of my colleagues were older than I was, and unmarried ---the result of Lancashire County Council's recently-ended policy that women, as soon as they married, could no longer be employed as teachers by them. Consequently, the unmarried teachers became Department Heads, Deputy Heads, and Heads---not that they were necessarily suited to the positions they occupied. Our Head of History hated

everything about teaching: the work, the building, and, especially, the pupils (apart from a few very gifted 'A' level girls). She always dressed in black, from head to toe, and her academic gown swirled about her as she moved; the word "witchlike" came easily to mind! At the beginning of each term, she used to stride into the staffroom, in a great temper, throw her bag on the table with great force, and announce, as she did so, how many days, hours, and minutes were left before the end of term. Clearly, she was happy in her work!

Church Truant, by Pam Oxley:

One Sunday morning, a beautiful autumn day, my grandma was unable to accompany me to church. Being about eight years old at the time, I thought "great, what a fantastic opportunity". Armed with a 2p collection and in my Sunday best, off I set alone. On the way I passed the village sweet shop, where liquorice shoelaces and dolly mixtures become mine.

Now no collection, no church, so back into the wood kicking up fallen leaves and feeling ever more pleased with myself, enjoying my ill-gotten gains.

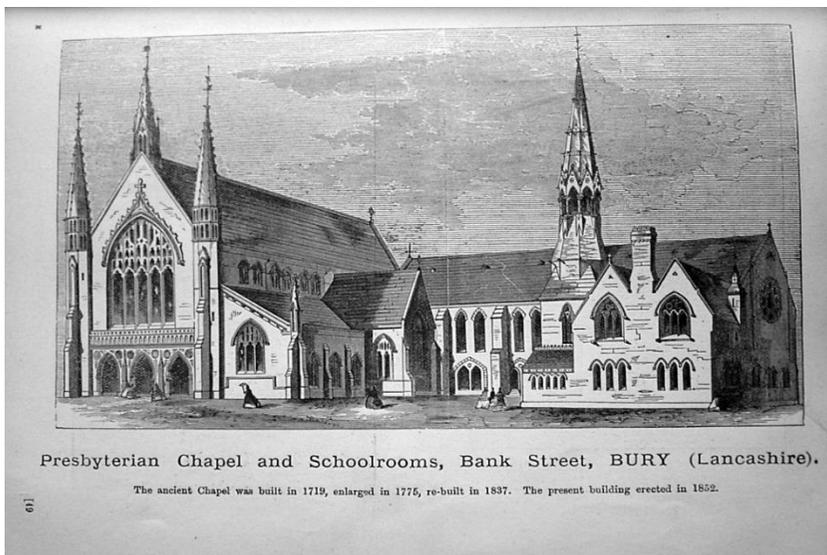
On my return home, guilt written all over my face, to say nothing of now filthy white Sunday socks, I was asked by my suspicious grandma what the sermon had been about.

Consternation – no idea! You can guess the outcome: bed with no dinner and a smacked bottom.

So, small villages being a hotbed of gossip, "My Return to Church" was one of head-hanging humiliation and disgrace.

Thanks to Anne and Pam for responding to my request for articles and stories about starting or returning to school and/or church. If you're inspired by their work, I'd welcome your own stories for the next edition!

By-Gone Times: Bank Street Chapel Day School



The third chapel built in 1852, where Bank Street Day School started.

1866 The Bank Street Day School building was erected to the side of the chapel. Today's church is built on the site of the Day School.

1868 The Day School was founded and continued to function until 1909.

1885 a new lecture-hall was added.

By January 1892 600 pupils attended.

The Inspectors school report stated that: *'The school has a leading place among elementary schools in the town'*.

Lessons were on Tuesday to Thursday, 2.00pm – 5.00pm.

Each lesson lasted for 30 minutes.

Scholar numbers had increased over the previous year by 25%.

The following note was included in the chapel calendar: *'We cordially commend the claims of the school to the consideration of the parents of our Sunday School scholars'*.

January 1893 The Day School became free of charge to all attenders.

December 1893 The School Concert given by the pupils consisted of dances, drills, P.E. and drama. The school maintains its high position among the best elementary schools in the town.

May 1894 Sunday School Sermons. The morning and evening service collections were in aid of the Day School; the abolition of school fees eased the burden on parents.

October 1896 After 7 years, on getting married, Miss Hale resigned, as mistress of the infants' department. Her Successor was Mrs S.E. Kenyon, of Warrington Parish infant school. This was unusual as married women were normally not allowed to continue teaching after marriage.

In 1872 Women teachers who married could be dismissed. In 1919 an Act of Parliament was passed allowing married women to work as teachers. Even in 1959, I remember being frowned upon after marriage by some of the older generation.

October 1897: Headmaster Mr W. Broughton retired and Mr Francis Hindley of Seedley commenced duties.

Betty Kenyon

Kintsugi: a poem by Abi Elliott-McGuffie

Kintsugi you, Kintsugi me.
Vessels of beauty
Surrounded by a world
of fragile perfection.
The pieces of you
The pieces of me
Brought back to unity
So so tenderly.
I hold your precious form
gold floods the breaks,
seals the scars of
imperfection.
And in your holding
I become whole.
Kintsugi you, Kintsugi me.



Kintsugi is the Japanese art of mending a broken vessel with liquid gold, to both strengthen and beautify it. From something broken comes something newly beautiful.

Abi says of this poem *"I'm not entirely sure where it came from except that I saw the gold as liquid gold flowing from one person to another!"*

Hymn-pondering:

As it could be some time before we're able to sing hymns in church again, I've been thinking about how we might use the words of hymns differently, whether in services or outside them. In a recent Uni-Sing! session (ask me for details, if you're interested), we sang hymn 204 in the purple book---a hymn we don't know (yet), but one that we could consider. The tune is quite simple, and both words and music complement each other. The words are by Shelley Jackson Denham.

"When I am frightened, will you reassure me? When I'm uncertain, will you hold my hand? Will you be strong for me, sing to me quietly? Will you share some of your stories with me? If you will show me compassion, then I may learn to care as you do; then I may learn to care.

When I am angry, will you still embrace me? When I am thoughtless, will you understand? Will you believe in me, stand by me willingly? Will you share some of your questions with me? If you will show me acceptance, then I may learn to give as you do; then I may learn to give.

When I am troubled, will you listen to me? When I am lonely, will you be my friend? Will you be there for me, comfort me tenderly? Will you share some of your feelings with me? If you will show me commitment, then I may learn to love as you do; then I may learn to love."

What first strikes me about these words is the number of questions involved; maybe this indicates a general feeling of doubt in the mind of the writer or singer. The words used are very simple, too---quite childlike, in fact. We could imagine a child saying them---to a parent, a teacher, or an older friend of some kind. But the more I think about this, the more I feel sure that what's said could come from any of us, if we feel unsure of ourselves, in certain situations; and they could be addressed to a spiritual leader or guide---possibly to God, if our beliefs lead us in that direction. The arrangement of the words juxtaposes one set of quite negative feelings

(such as frightened, angry, thoughtless, troubled, and lonely) with much more positive ones (for example, reassure, strong, compassion, embrace, believe, listen, friend, comfort, share, and commitment). In the end, the desirable qualities that emerge, to give us all comfort, are care, understanding, giving, sharing, and love. Can you spare five minutes to read the hymn's words again, and really think about them, to see what your reaction is, I wonder. Over to you!

Anne Mills.

The Chalice: a follow-up:

I was interested in your piece [in the August Calendar] about the history of the chalice

As you know Harvey and I travelled extensively in the USA and visited many congregations in all honesty I did not take much notice whether the chalice was a feature but it did in some in one form or another.

The one that stood out was in Florida which we attended regularly, I was curious as to why the flame was off center and was told this was so it would not be seen as a Christian symbol

During one of our visits a lady from Minnesota gave a talk about her church and was very proud of a buffalo skin covering the alter which had displayed on it the symbols of other faiths but said of course we don't display the cross. When I asked her after the service about this, she said we don't want to be seen to be associated with the Boston church

We had attended the Kings church there on 4th July on the recommendation of Jeff Gould and thought it was a wonderful experience

Anne Evitts

Two more Unitarian books:

Details of two more books from our in-house publishers are below: they can be obtained from Unitarian Headquarters, or you may be able to borrow them from the minister or another member of the congregation.

Fragments of Holiness: for daily reflection

Edited by Catherine Robinson

A collection of reflective texts for every day of the year. More than half are insights offered by Unitarians, past and present, famous or unknown. The rest are insights borrowed from world faiths, humanist philosophers, writers, poets, and radical social thinkers. They could form part of a daily practice of personal reflection at the start or end of the day. They could also be used by small groups as a resource for contemplation and discussion. For worship leaders they may be a useful source of themes when planning services, especially as many of the entries commemorate notable dates in Unitarian history. Catherine Robinson is a member of the Oxford Unitarian congregation

Living with Integrity: Unitarian Values and Beliefs in Practice

Edited by Kate Whyman

A range of Unitarians reflect on how their faith and their values influence their daily lives. They write about navigating relationships, ways of engaging with the wider world and response to urgent global issues. The contributors write authentically and honestly from their own life experiences. Each chapter ends with questions to prompt readers to reflect, individually or in a group, on their own experience.

MOVING TRIBUTE TO COLE KERSHAW



In her service, on August 16th, Kate referred to the murder of 18-year-old Cole Kershaw, of Chesham. As Roger and I were walking through Clarence Park, a few days later, we realised that the bandstand was full of people, and music was playing; later, when everybody had left, we went to have a look. There were well over 200 floral tributes, of many different kinds of flowers, as well as memorial items, including a tee-shirt and cap, balloons, photographs, and a book of remembrance.

Our sympathies went out to Cole's family and friends, as we admired such a wonderful display of affection and respect for Cole from his contemporaries.

Anne.

Inside our Church



**Our beautifully - beribboned chairs, allowing us to be together,
but apart!**

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