



The
Monthly
Messenger
for

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Unitarian Church
Clover Street
Rochdale

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APRIL Flowers

BE LIKE A FLOWER

Be like a flower. Its stem stands strong, yet it allows itself to bend with the wind.

It never tries to impress you, nor is it concerned with whether you like it or not. It simply gets on being itself.

And in being itself, you can't help but admire it.

David Hamilton

FLOWER FUND

Over the last twelve months we realise there has been a disruption to the normal calendar for donations to the Flower Fund. We are grateful for the donations we have received which were used for the flowers displayed on the three occasions when we were able to hold a service last year.

From Easter Sunday we are planning to hold services again on a regular basis, hopefully resuming weekly services from mid August. In the meantime, if you would like to contribute to the Flower Fund your donation would be very much appreciated. Until weekly services recommence it won't be possible to designate a particular Sunday but John and Edna would be delighted to receive donations and can allocate the month of your choice.

For the two services in April the flowers have been donated by:

Elaine Whyment

In memory of Mum and Dad

Kathryn, Peter and Tom Harforth

In memory of Margaret and Geoffrey Jackson

100 CLUB WINNERS

MARCH 2021

1st	76	Kate Salt
2nd	91	Elaine Schofield
3rd	35	Peter Illingworth

“Spring has Sprung”, as the saying goes, or at least my garden has! I’ve got shoots and buds springing up all over the place, and not being a diligent green-fingered fellow (if that’s a phrase I am allowed to use in a church publication) I must admit to not knowing what half of it is — exciting times!



But on to the important stuff, this Messenger is packed full of important dates for your diaries, and announcements of special events. So full in fact that we’ve had to include some inserts (don’t lose them!).

See the centrefold for updates in brief and the back page for the resurrected calendar. A very Happy Easter to you all — stay safe, and eat chocolate !

NORISHING THE BODY... Joyce Ashworth

CREAMY SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH SMOKED SALMON & BUTTERED CRUMPETS

Whether you need a solid start to the day or a simple, light lunch, this delicious snack is just the ticket! I think crumpets are a northern thing - they need to be warm with plenty of butter.

(For 2 servings)
4 crumpets
25 g butter
100 g smoked salmon
A few fresh chives
4 eggs
25 ml double cream
salt & freshly ground pepper



Toast crumpets, spread with half the butter - set aside and keep warm.
Tear salmon into strips. Chop chives.
Whisk eggs and cream lightly and season with salt and pepper.
Gently melt remaining butter in a frying pan over medium heat and stir in egg mixture with a spatula. Cook no more than 2 mins, stirring gently until lightly set.
Top eggs with chives and serve with the salmon and warm crumpets.

That's the body taken care of - now for the Spirit:

This simple prescription for effective living comes from the ancient Chinese text - the Tao-Te-Ching:

I have three treasures:
The first is love;
The second is never too much;
The third is never try to be first in the world.

Through love, one has courage;
In moderation, one has strength;
In never trying to the first,
One gives one's talents time to mature.

These were the opening words used at Shirley Connolly's funeral service. The eulogy is on pg 8.

NORISHING THE SOUL!

Diane Bennett

Months ago, under all the noise and crisscross of commerce and traffic and endless buzz in the human hive, as we were all trying to keep up and get ahead, somewhere in the middle of China, in the silent microscopic fabric that no one could see, a miniscule atom shifted under all our noise to link in a dark way with its surrounding atoms—and the coronavirus was born. Now, the silent germ is infecting the world and challenging us to spread our care and goodwill as quickly and freely in order to survive.

This is the hard-to-grasp lesson—at least one of them—that light must move as quickly as dark, that care must move as quickly as disease, that give must move as quickly as take. And nothing less than everything depends on this giving in all directions without hesitation.

No question, it’s hard, yet imperative to feed more than the fear. We must become intimate with uncertainty and water our common roots with care. Equally powerful moments in human history have begun with a similar shift of miniscule efforts. Consider Gandhi’s first steps alone on his march to the sea, Rosa Parks quietly and steadfastly keeping her seat on that bus, Nelson Mandela singing while being beaten on Robben Island where no one could hear, or Clara Barton stitching the wounds of a Civil War soldier into the night long before she was visited with the vision of the Red Cross.

Since the beginning, light has met dark, not in a battle of good and evil, but in the torque of life-force that keeps the Universe going. And so, love must move as quickly as fear. It is no accident that we are being forced to be still, as there has never been anywhere to run, though we have run for centuries.

The times are hard and unexpected. They always are. But the river of being that carries us is always life-giving, if we can reach it. This, as ever, requires diving where we are, not running from what is. We must be brave and must beware, mostly of ourselves. For the mind is like a spider. It will weave many webs. But the heart is like an arrow of light. It will pierce a hole in the dark that life will fill. Along the way, we stumble in the dark. Our fierce and tender honesty and love, the lamp we swing between us.

Many blessings, Mark Nepo



A Re-opening Service for Easter!

We are pleased to announce that the first service of worship back in our building on Clover Street is scheduled to take place on Easter Sunday 4th April.



If the Government's roadmap for easing of lockdown restrictions continues, then we plan to hold services in the building once per month, increasing to once a fortnight from the beginning of May. Hopefully, from the end of August onwards we will be able to hold services at church on a weekly basis once more.

Of course, this is subject to the circumstances and restrictions in place as 2021 unfolds, but there is light at the end of the tunnel!

Future events and dates will be published in the Messenger and our bi-weekly newsletter, so watch this space.

GA Meetings 2021

As noted last issue, Diane Bennett was elected Rochdale delegate for the GA Meetings due to take place online on the 24th March.

You will find enclosed copies of the motions to be debated at this year's GA meetings, as well as indications of how our delegate has been instructed to vote.

Women's League Newsletter

Also enclosed is a copy of a letter from the national Women's League President, our very own Joyce Ashworth, with important news and updates. Chief amongst these is the announcement of the planned AGM and Rally to be held at Great Hucklow 28th and 29th June 2021. So put that in your diaries!

Church Calendar

Finally, on the subject of dates, it is to be hoped that if the lifting of lockdown restrictions continues according to the roadmap issued by the Government, we can start to hold more events and services in church once more. To this end, the editor has started to re-compile the calendar for services and events on the back page of the Messenger.

So keep your eyes peeled each issue for important updates there from now on.

UNI-SING!

Joyce, Anne and I continue to attend Uni-sing! on Saturday afternoons on Zoom where we recently sang a new song written by Lyanne Mitchell, a hymn writer and member of Glasgow Unitarians. Lyanne has written new words which reflect the current times to the Scottish tune 'Will Ye no Come Back Again'. If you click on the link below you will hear David Kent, also a Unitarian song writer, who has arranged and performed Lyanne's words:



Uni-Sing David Kent

Strength and Courage be with you

We are living through dark days
Mourning relative or friend
Life has changed in many ways
When will isolation end?

Strength and courage be with you
Strength and courage be with you
You are loved, you're not alone
Strength and courage be with you

Lonely folk locked down by walls
Zooms can only do so much
On-line chats and video calls
But how we miss a loving touch!

Strength and courage be with you
Strength and courage be with you
You are loved, you're not alone
Strength and courage be with you



"It's not quite as bad as it looks - they're only withholding payment until we publish our expenses."

“ABOUT PEOPLE”

Warm congratulations to **Diane Bennett** on her recent appointment as a Director of the British & Foreign Unitarian Association. Diane may be the first member from our congregation to hold such an office. The organisation was the major Unitarian body in Britain from 1825. It was founded through an amalgamation of 3 older societies - the Unitarian Book Society for Literature (1791), the Unitarian Fund for Mission Work (1806) and the Unitarian Association for Civil Rights (1818/19). In 1928 it became part of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches.

Many congratulations to **Brian and Lillian Crabtree** who recently celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary. Here they are stood on the steps at Blackwater Street on 25th March 1961.



The following eulogy was read by Shirley Connolly's son, Philip, during her remembrance service:

Thank you to the Unitarian church and its members; to her former work colleagues and close friends, Gillian and Joyce and to her other friends gathered here today. How should we remember her?

Shirley got to first base: she had her job, her house, her car, her trips overseas, her piano. She achieved independence.

Shirley got to second base; she was civically minded. She was a dependable officer of the affairs of the church; she featured in local conservation projects; she did voluntary work at the Infirmary; she attended union meetings and was a zealot for the cooperative movement. She formed attachments: to Lancashire, to its countryside and history and above all to Rochdale. Rochdale was never unloved; Shirley loved the town. She achieved interdependence.

Shirley got to third base. She had a family. She had three sons. She still has three sons. She looked after us from 0 to 16 and we organised her dementia care from 70 to 86. It is true to say that it wasn't her aim, but she achieved co-dependency with her sons.

Now Shirley has got to fourth base; she has come

home. She has lived a remarkably unremarkable life. She has been demonstrably undemonstrative. She was memorable even though she couldn't remember much at the end. She will always be in our memories.

As a child I could walk within a radius of 15 minutes from our home in Belfield and visit most of our relatives. There was Shirley's mother Doris, our father's mother Rose Ellen, Doris' half sister Ethel, grandma's niece Betty and her husband Tom, mum's sister Maureen and her husband Bernard. There were even grandma's sisters like Polly. Now they are gone, including Shirley. With her passing, the three of us become the oldest and in some ways only ones left. What we are has changed, but not who we are. I hope like Shirley we will cherish our independence, our interdependence with our community and not hide our co-dependency with each other.

M UDDY BOOTS

Helen Illingworth

As you know, from 29th March the rule of six is back which means we can walk together again – hooray! I am planning a local Good Friday walk and weather permitting we will meet at the car park just below Thrum Hall Methodist Church at 10.30 am. The walk will only be about 4 miles but you might want to bring a snack. Please let me know if you want to join us so I can make sure we stick to the rule of six. Thank you.

B OOK CIRCLE

Helen Illingworth

For our April meeting we are discussing the number one Sunday Times bestseller *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. This is from the back cover:



Between life and death there is a library. When Nora Seed finds herself in the Midnight Library, she has a chance to make things right. Up until now, her life has been full of misery and regret. She feels she has let everyone down, including herself. But things are about to change.

The books in the Midnight Library enable Nora to live as if she had done things differently. With the help of an old friend, she can now undo every one of her regrets as she tries to work out her perfect life. But things aren't always what she imagined they'd be, and soon her choices place the library and herself in extreme danger. Before time runs out, she must answer the ultimate question: what is the best way to live?

FROM THE ARCHIVES

John Illingworth



Messenger Archives

Volume 4 Issue 47 - August 1890

Great changes have occurred since the publication of our last edition. The amalgamation with Blackwater Street has taken place at opportune moment, and the harmony which has been displayed shows that the congregations were ready for the change. It is to be hoped that everything will be done to cement the new relationship. As soon as possible there should be a social gathering of the joint congregation, so that we may become better acquainted. The success of this movement, we believe, rests almost entirely up on the confidence which we place in one another. If all throw themselves heart and soul into the scheme and remember that perfect equality is the true basis of brotherhood, the benefit of this union will continually increase.

We have received a number of letters congratulating the congregation upon what has happened. An extract from that of Reverend CT Poynting of Fallowfield expressed, is the sentiment which nearly all contain. 'I rejoice greatly in the action taken Rochdale. It will have greater influence in deepening religious life, than the individual and separate existence of the 2 churches could have. It stands for more spiritually and is surer proof of real progress than the founding of half-a-dozen new congregations.'

Judging from some remarks in the papers there seems to have been the idea Clover Street was a breakaway from Blackwater Street. The Rochdale Observer has taken special care to correct this notion. For the benefit of our readers, we append the following particulars and shall enlarge upon them on a future occasion.

'Blackwater Street Church is the oldest nonconformist and after the Parish Church the oldest place of worship in Rochdale. The congregation was founded by Reverend Robert Bath vicar of Rochdale who with his curate Reverend Zachary Taylor, was ejected from his living in 1662. He preached chiefly at Deepleech Hill, Castleton, until his death in 1674. Services

were also held in private houses and at Chadwick Hall (off Bury Rd near the present cemetery) but the body had a meeting house in 1672, presumably at Lower Gates. The first Blackwater Street chapel was built in 1717 just a century before Clover Street. It was enlarged in 1752 and rebuilt in 1856, extensions having taken place within the last few years. According to Colonel Fishwick's history of the parish of Rochdale there have been 21 ministers only 2 of these have occupied the office for a longer period than the Reverend Thomas Carter the last minister. These are Reverend Joseph Dawson 41 years from 1698-1739 and the Reverend Thomas Threlkeld 28 years 1778-1806. Blackwater Street Church represents the true English Presbyterian descent. The Presbyterian Church in Manchester Road is an outcome of Scotch Presbyterianism which is orthodox, while the English Presbyterians adopting open trusts for their chapels, in the great majority of instances, have become Unitarians affording a remarkable illustration of the tendency of thought, when unrestricted, to approximate to the Unitarian position.

Clover Street church has a much shorter but hardly less remarkable story again illustrating the manner in which a man or bodies of men if unbiased will become Unitarians. Reverend Joseph Cooke, once an itinerary minister of Union Street Wesleyan circuit, founded this second cause. After being expelled from his denomination for heresy, which was never proved, Providence Chapel, High Street, was built for him in 1806 and another at Newchurch, which he carried on with the assistance of Messer's, John Ashworth, James Wilkinson and James Taylor. Mr Cooke died in 1811 and was buried in Providence Chapel. After his death and the appointment of a new preacher, one of the trustees sought to close the exchange of pulpits between Rochdale and Newchurch. He carried his point with the trustees but not with the congregation, nearly the whole of whom immediately withdrew, in consequence of which it became necessary to close the chapel and it was shortly afterwards sold to the Independents. The homeless congregation waited for a time and then built Clover Street Church, which was opened on August 1st, 1818. The congregation knew nothing of Unitarianism or Unitarians, but reasonable study of the bible led them, altogether unaided, to the Unitarian position, they believing at the time that they were the only people in the world holding such views.



EVENT DATES 2021

Date	EVENT
4 APR	10.30am Easter Service and re-opening
25 APR	10.30am Women's League Service
16 MAY	10.30am Anniversary Service — Anne Mills
30 MAY	10.30am Sunday Worship—Graeme Pilbrough
13 JUN	10.30am Service & Congregational AGM
27 JUN	10.30am Sunday Worship — Robert Forman
11 JUL	2pm Worship followed by Afternoon Tea

PLEASE NOTE:

Unfortunately, special events and worship services at church can only go ahead subject to Covid restrictions in place at that time.

Updates will be posted on our website, Facebook page and in our bi-weekly newsletter.

Reminder —: Donation Envelopes!

A reminder from our Treasurer, John Illingworth, that if any of you have donations at home that you would have given during the offertory or in the collection box at church, could you please contact either John, Helen or myself, using the details below, and we will arrange to safely collect your donation. Many thanks!

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