



The
Monthly
Messenger
for

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Unitarian Church
Clover Street
Rochdale

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FEBRUARY
Flowers
Violet
February
BIRTH FLOWER
Virtue
Modesty
Humility

With Valentine's Day celebrated on the 14th, you could be forgiven for assuming that February's birth flower is the rose. While it might seem like an obvious choice, the birth flower for February is in fact the violet. These vividly-coloured flowers have been around for centuries, with the ancient Greeks first cultivating them for use in herbal remedies and to sweeten wine. The flower has distinctive heart-shaped petals which is perhaps why they were once used in love potions.

Violets are said to represent faithfulness, virtue and modesty, which explains where the expression 'shrinking violet' comes from. Because of this, those born in February are said to possess the qualities of humility and honesty.

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Editor's Letter

Hello Dear Reader, and welcome to February's edition of The Messenger.



We have a very special issue prepared for you this month! Joyce Ashworth shares her recipes and a timely 'thought for the day'. John Illingworth announces an exciting new partnership with the local Link4Life organisation. Helen Illingworth brings us updates from the Book Circle as well as highlights from the recent American Presidential Election. Whilst Diane Bennett has sent in pictures from Touchstone's archives in Rochdale of the old Black Water Street chapel and Clover Street School House.

Many thanks to our amazing contributors! See you next month — Ed

JOYCE'S KITCHEN

WINTER COMFORT RECIPE
(serves 4, suitable for vegetarians,
vegans and every diet between)



400g sweet potato
1 large diced onion
1 tbsp curry powder (adjust to taste)
2 crushed garlic cloves
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp cumin
0.5 tsp garam masala
0.5 pt vegetable stock
4 bay leaves
2 tins chopped tomatoes
400g frozen/fresh spinach
400g chickpeas

Dice sweet potato and place in roasting tray. Oil, season and rest for 15-20 mins.

Fry onions and garlic till soft. Add all spices and cook for 3 mins.

Add stock, tomatoes, bay leaves and simmer for 12 mins.

Add chickpeas and spinach and bring up to temperature, reduce to a consistency you like.

Add sweet potatoes and garnish with fresh chopped coriander.

ENJOY !



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



I arose this morning to yet more snow, as I'm sure you did also. So it was a lazy get-up for me, a long soak in a hot, bubbly bath and late breakfast. I felt disinclined to get down to doing things! So maybe the most I will do today is write my contribution for our next Messenger, and perhaps the most you will do on the day you receive the Messenger is to read it. And perhaps you'll read it curled up warm in bed on the sofa and, rather like me today, perhaps your mind will then wander to all the things you haven't accomplished in the time since being awake. And maybe you will start to feel guilty!

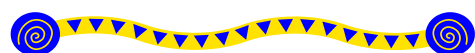
It's good sometimes to remember that not all days are or should be "doing" days. It's important for some days to be "being" days, even duvet days and bad hair days. It's good to remember that that is OK - more than OK. No heart is at ease when it carries the burden of resentment for things done/not done. Life is difficult enough at present. So gently let it go... Tomorrow is another moment in time, but first be at peace in this one.

I have taken and adapted the heart of this message from a timely email I received from Edinburgh Unitarians. I hope it has a good effect on you as it did for me. *Joyce*

Last night at midnight I stepped outside and stared into the darkness.

Last night at midnight I watched the snow fall and it trickled down my face.

Last night at midnight I allowed myself to stop and listen.



CLOVER STREET CENTRE FOLD

Announcing our new partnership with Link4Life!

By John Illingworth

Link4Life have their head office in the new Riverside building, they are a charity working in the Rochdale Borough community and their overall ambition is to inspire people to live more active, creative and healthy lifestyles.



Now with the current restrictions on movement and socialising, all link4life venues are closed but despite this, they are still striving to help us all keep active, creative, and healthy.

Regular exercise and being creative being is essential for keeping us as healthy as possible and boosting our mood and so Link4Life have created *At Home* <https://link4life.smart-exercise.com/> which comprises of a range of activities for children, adults and older adults.

Go to the web site and you will find *Stay Active* <https://link4life.smart-exercise.com/stay-active-at-home/>; *Stay Creative* <https://link4life.smart-exercise.com/stay-creative-at-home/>; *Stay Healthy* <https://link4life.smart-exercise.com/stay-healthy-at-home/>

On the websites alongside their own activities there are also links to some of the great resources available from other organisations to give a range of online workouts, fitness classes, recipes and nutrition, indoor activities, art projects, water safety, virtual tours, online viewing of the boroughs' artworks collection at Touchstones Rochdale, national theatre broadcasts and mindfulness sessions. There are also gentle home exercises for older adults and for those managing health conditions such as back pain.

More are being added each week to help us stay active, creative and healthy so keep checking the link.

To give you a flavour the 'Stay Active' page is divided into 3 groups, Adults, Children & Young People and Older Adults. The older adult page links to 18 different sessions among which you will find. Functional Training & Gentle Exercise, Long Term Conditions Exercises, Equipment Free Workouts There is also a section of NHS devised sessions, Chair Based Pilates, Pilates with Back Pain, Pilates with Knee Problems, Pilates with Arthritis, Pilates with Scoliosis and Pilates with Osteoporosis

On the Stay Creative page which is divided into Adults and Children & Young People, the adult section links to 24 sessions among which you will find Crafting Projects, National Theatre Live at Home, Touchstones Artwork Collections, Virtual Tour of Rochdale Arts, Knitting and Crochet Projects, the Rijksmuseum from home and many more.

The Stay Healthy page has 14 different sections, from Healthy Recipes, Mindfulness at Home, Eating Well Affordably, Super 6 Walks Tracker, Prehab4Cancer Programme and Every Mind Matters (NHS).

Do visit the Link4Life website and have a look around <https://link4life.org/> I guarantee you will not be disappointed.

Following on from Link4Life's successful application for funding from 'GreaterSport' partnership which is to be used to help reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 and the

widening of the inequalities in physical activity and sport. We are one of a number of partner organisations helping to facilitate this endeavour.

Our church, with its central location and multipurpose main hall is ideally suited to assist and we are incredibly pleased to be able to help the local community in this way.

However, in the current climate with lock-down measures strictly in place nothing has yet physically started within our building. So rather than stand still L4L is actively developing online groups and activities. We have agreed to help promote these sessions. You can also stay up to date with what we are doing by 'Liking' the L4L Facebook page, **Activ8teME**. Please email direct to Sarah Shard for further information Email - Sarah.Shard@link4life.org **07976 498629**

Sarah gives us an overview of these activities:

Walking Focus Group

Due to current government restrictions our walking programme is postponed for the time-being. We are able to deliver our walking programme thanks to funding from GMVCO. It is important that we can deliver a programme with input from individuals from the community. I would like to set up a focus group session via Zoom. It will just be approximately 30 minutes and it would be good to hear your views. It would be really helpful if we can get some people to join us, so please let me know if you would like to join and I can send some suggested dates out. I would like to hear from anybody who would like to get involved in volunteering, this might be an interest to become a Walk Leader or help with being a back walker, future clean-up projects etc.

Zumba Basic Taster Sessions

Before covid-19, there were 50+ weekly activ8tème sessions. Zumba Basic has been extremely popular so I am setting a few taster sessions up via Zoom for people new to Zumba or people who used to come to our classes but who have not done it before, to prepare for when classes restart. If you are interested, please let me know and I can send you further details.

Sing-along

I am organising a sing-along zoom session, it is just a bit of entertainment so you can either watch or join in. We have two lovely volunteers who have kindly agreed to do this for us. If interested, please let me know and I will send you the date and link.

Tea and Chat

I deliver a fortnightly 'Tea and Chat' session via Zoom on Friday mornings. They've been going well and we have a bit of a natter. If you would like to join us, I can send you the Zoom link.

Quiz Night

We have been doing a regular Quiz night. If you would like to join us, just let me know and I can send you the link for the next one.

Healthy Eating

Due to the success of our Healthy Eating taster sessions before Christmas, we are continuing these. If you would like more information, just let me know.

Ideas

Should anyone have ideas on what other activities we could provide during this time, please let me know.

“ABOUT PEOPLE”

We're pleased to know that **Sylvia Palmer** is progressing well and has now had her heavy plaster removed and replaced by one much lighter in weight. Keep up the good work Sylvia, hopefully you are now feeling much more comfortable.

Madge Rimmer is now settled in Half Acre House. She has been made very welcome and has a pleasant room overlooking the garden. Flowers have been sent to her from Church as at present we are unable to visit.

This is your page to share news of every kind, so please keep us informed.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Eagle-eyed Diane Bennett has spotted an interesting blog post on the Rochdale Touchstones' Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/TouchstonesRochdale/posts/10158220027982498>

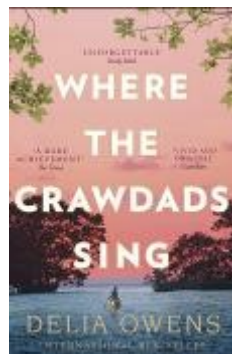
The linked page gives a brief history from Touchstone's archives of the Blackwater Street Chapel, as well as of Unitarianism in Rochdale.

Do the photos below stir any memories for you? Can you give us more information or precise dates? We'd love to hear from you!

BOOK CIRCLE



I reported last month that we were reading *A Song for Summer* by Eva Ibbotson. This was the story of a young woman, daughter and niece of three suffragette sisters who left London in the late 1930's to become a housekeeper at a progressive school in Austria. The book brought plenty of material for discussion and we thoroughly enjoyed it and would recommend it as a good read.



For February we are reading *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens. "For years, rumours of the "Marsh Girl" haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet fishing village. Kya Clark is barefoot and wild; unfit for polite society. So in late 1969, when the popular Chase Andrews is found dead, locals immediately suspect her. But Kya is not what they say. A born naturalist with just one day of school, she takes life's lessons from the land, learning the real ways of the world from the dishonest signals of fireflies. But while she has the skills to live in solitude forever, the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved".

Where the Crawdads Sing is a 2018 novel by Delia Owens. It topped The New York Times Fiction Best Sellers of 2019 for 20 non-consecutive weeks so have high hopes that we will all enjoy it and have a good discussion on Zoom on 8th February.



Above: decorative jug depicting the old Blackwater Street Chapel



The old Unitarian school house on the site of the present Clover Street church.



© H. Milne Collection

THE HILL WE CLIMB by Amanda Gorman



Helen Illingworth remarks “The highlight of the United States Presidential Inauguration Ceremony for me was the recitation of The Hill We Climb by the wonderful 22 year old, the first ever National Youth Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman”:

When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished
We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one
And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors,
characters and
conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our future
first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
And no one shall make them afraid

If we're to live up to our own time
Then victory won't lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we've made
That is the promise to glade
The hill we climb
If only we dare
It's because being American is more than a pride we
inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying
democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded
But while democracy can be periodically delayed
it can never be permanently defeated
In this truth
in this faith we trust
For while we have our eyes on the future
history has its eyes on us
This is the era of just redemption
We feared at its inception
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves
So while we once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?
Now we assert
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?
We will not march back to what was
but move to what shall be
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free
We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation
Our blunders become their burdens
But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy
and change our children's birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west,
we will rise from the windswept northeast
where our forefathers first realized revolution
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the
midwestern states,
we will rise from the sunbaked south
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful
When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free
it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it.



PLEASE NOTE:

Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions, special events and worship services at church are postponed.

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!

Helen & John Illingworth Tel: 01706 649015

Email: helen@illingworth.org.uk

Email: john@illingworth.org.uk

Paul Hubbard Tel 07884 123 169

Email: rochdaleunitarian@outlook.com

Church Answerphone - 01706 648461

Ethos for Rochdale Unitarian Church:

- ◆ “We aim to be a faith community which supports individuals in taking ownership of and responsibility for personal beliefs and actions.
- ◆ We offer a supporting environment in which to embrace life and its challenging questions.”

Messenger by Email?

Reduce your carbon footprint and get your copy in colour by subscribing to our email service, its free - rochdaleunitarian@outlook.com



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