



The
Monthly
Messenger
for

April
2025

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Unitarian Church
Clover Street
Rochdale

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April Flowers

PASTORAL TEAM
Interfaith Minister Rev Abi Elliott-McGuffie,
Joyce Ashworth, Dorothy Jones & Helen Illingworth

CHURCH COUNCIL
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Treasurer – John Illingworth
Church Admin Assistant – Paul Hubbard
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Edna Wood, Helen Wilkinson, Anne Dawson

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Margaret Shore & John Illingworth

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Should you know of someone for whom Church flowers would be a source of comfort and solace please have a word with Helen or Joyce

6th	Rev Abi Elliott-McGuffie In Memory of her Father
13th	Katherine Schofield In Memory of Mum and Dad
20th	Dorothy Jones In Memory of her Family
27th	Anne and Ian Dawson In Memory of Family and Friends
Flowers lovingly arranged by Margaret Shore (6th), Joyce Ashworth (13th), Anne Dawson (20th), Dorothy Jones (27th)	



100 CLUB WINNERS

MAR 2025 (drawn by)		
1st	49	Diane Bennett
2nd	6	Adele Henson
3rd	13	Graeme Pilbrough

Congratulations
Prizes- 1st £30 - 2nd £15 - 3rd £5



Welcome to April's edition of the Monthly Messenger Newsletter.

Our major event this month is Stacksteads Brass Band performing for us at church (details below — don't miss out!).

Also of note this month is the special Congregational Meeting on Sunday 6th April to discuss the GA Motions, following a special service in partnership with church general council about ideas for our next Church Charity. This will be followed by a light soup lunch.

We also have a special report by Ann Mills to update us on the latest news from our NELUM district, and Graeme Pilbrough has kindly given permission for a special article *The Divine Railway* to be reproduced for your considered reflections on pages 10 -11. That's all till May! — Ed

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



Dear friends,

What a difference a few weeks can make, doesn't it feel a lot more like spring now!

As I write, we've just experienced the first few days of spring warmth, and everywhere there are signs of its appreciation.

From the steady hum of lawns being mown and the streams of soapy water passing by, as people wash and clean their cars. There seems to be a fair amount of renovating going on around us too, with skips steadily being filled with old bathroom suites and odd bits of building materials. A slight upturn in this season is enough to stir our enthusiasm for getting things in order, to ready ourselves, so that we're able to make the most of the seasons ahead.

Although the blackbirds have been out and about for some time, it's the sudden appearance of bees that have captured my attention. As soon as the first blossoms appeared, on garden plants and blackthorn hedges, there they were. If I remember rightly the poet Mary Oliver referred to them as 'small flying planets', always on the way somewhere. We're not so different from the nature that surrounds us, are we? Like bees, we may be busy this month (I know there's enough going on in our church, don't forget to check the dates for events), but may there also be enough time for idling and watching ... birds or bees, or anything else that brings you joy, and savouring the moment.

And so, I leave you with this delightful poem by Emily Dickinson.

Like trains of cars on tracks of plush
I hear the level bee:

A jar across the flowers goes,
Their velvet masonry

Withstands until the sweet assault
Their chivalry consumes,
While he, victorious, tilts away
To vanquish other blooms.

His feet are shod with gauze,
His helmet is of gold;
His breast, a single onyx
With chrysopease, inlaid.

His labour is a chant,
His idleness a tune;
Oh, for a bee's experience
Of clovers and of noon!

With my love Abi xx



MUSIC NIGHT



Friday Music Night – Friday 4th April

Please come and support our Friday Music Night on 4 April at 7.30 pm. Everyone enjoyed their concert last year so we're hoping for a good audience. Don't forget to invite your friends and relations. Tickets are available in Church and you can book on line with Ticket Tailor.

FRIDAY NIGHT MUSIC Clover Street Unitarians

Back by popular demand



**STACKSTEADS
BRASS BAND**

Friday 04 April @ 7.30pm



£10 inc. refreshments

Scan QR code for tickets
or Tel 01706 649015
(limited tickets on the door)
Clover Street, Rochdale, OL12 6TP
www.rochdaleunitarians.org.uk

APRIL NEWS AND EVENTS

Margaret Shore (6th), Joyce Ashworth (13th), Anne Dawson (20th), Dorothy Jones (27th)

Thur	03	17.00	Monthly Tea — Hostess: Joyce Ashworth
		18.30	WL meeting (please see below for details)
Fri	04	19.30	Friday Music Night with Stacksteads Brass Band
Sun	06	10.30	S unday Service by Rev Abi, followed by Congregational Meeting and Lunch (see opposite)
Sat	12	GA Annual Meetings 2025	
Mon	14		
Mon	14	19.30	Book Circle at 5 Bagnall Close
Sun	20	10.30	E aster Sunday Service led by Graeme Pilbrough
Sun	27	10.30	S unday Service led by Rev Abi
Mon	29	19.30	G eneral Council via Zoom

WOMEN'S LEAGUE 3RD APRIL 2025

Tea 5.00 pm

Women's League Meeting 6.30 pm

Speaker: Mrs Rosamund Armbrister

'Standing With Giants' and 'The Longest Yarn'



ABOUT PEOPLE



Warm congratulations to **Abi** and **Geoff** on the recent birth of their second grandchild in Estonia. We wish them a very happy visit soon.

TIME TO SELECT A DIFFERENT CHURCH CHARITY !!

For the past two years we have been pleased to support a local Charity, Springhill Hospice, with our money-raising efforts.

It's now time to consider the Charity we wish to support over the coming two year period. Should it be another local one or a district or national Charity this time?

Abi, on behalf of General Council, will present some options for consideration prior to the GA Motions meeting on 6 April. If you would like to suggest a particular Charity, please let any Council member know, preferably with some written detail regarding the work undertaken by that Charity, well before the date of the Meeting.



Congregational Meeting and Lunch on Sunday 6 April

Following a short service there will be a Congregational Meeting to discuss:

- The GA Motions
- Suggestions for the next Church Charity

This will be followed by a **Soup and Apple Pie Lunch**. Please put your name on the list on the notice board if you are staying for lunch.

PLEASE!
NOTE

Clipart on this page from: <https://clipart-library.com>

WARDEN/COFFEE ROTA FOR 2025

Helen Illingworth & Margaret Salt	05 Jan	09 Feb	16 Mar	20 Apr	25 May	29 Jun	03 Aug	07 Sep	12 Oct	16 Nov	21 Dec
Dorothy Jones & Margaret Shore	12 Jan	16 Feb	23 Mar	27 Apr	01 Jun	06 Jul	10 Aug	14 Sep	19 Oct	23 Nov	25 Dec
Margaret Salt & Joyce Ashworth	19 Jan	23 Feb	30 Mar	04 May	08 Jun	13 Jul	17 Aug	21 Sep	26 Oct	30 Nov	28 Dec
John & Helen Illingworth	26 Jan	02 Mar	06 Apr	11 May	15 Jun	20 Jul	24 Aug	28 Sep	02 Nov	07 Dec	
Margaret Shore & Dorothy Jones	02 Feb	09 Mar	13 Apr	18 May	22 Jun	27 Jul	31 Aug	05 Oct	09 Nov	14 Dec	

Important - should you be unable to attend please arrange for a stand-in, it is difficult for one person to cover both functions.

BOOK CIRCLE



Book Circle - Monday 14th April



At our April meeting members will be discussing *Under the Whispering Door* by T J Klune. I don't think we've ever read a book like it. It's described as a cosy phantasy. When a reaper comes to collect Wallace from his own funeral, Wallace begins to suspect he might be dead. But even in death he's not ready to abandon the life he barely lived, so when Wallace is given one week to cross over, he sets about living a lifetime in seven days. There are two spare copies if anyone fancies it.

— Helen Illingworth



NELUM UPDATE

by Anne Mills

Our NELUM AGM will take place, on Saturday, May 17th, 2025, at 2pm; at our Blackpool church; the postcode is FY4 1EB (Lytham Road).

The meeting will be followed by an Afternoon Tea, supplied by the Blackpool congregation; thanks to them for offering their hospitality. *If you wish to stay for tea, please let me have your names, by May 10th, at the latest.* I also need to know about any necessary dietary requirements, so that everybody can be catered for.

At the AGM, we need to elect our Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary; so far, I haven't received any nominations. I will need these by May 10th, too. We're not using forms, this year; all you need to do is to write the name of the person, and the post, and give his/her permission, plus the name of the proposer and seconder. Please consider standing, or nominating. We'll also be asking for volunteers for next year's Finance Group.

I've received an email, from John Campbell, of our Kendal Chapel; their schoolroom ceiling collapsed, in November, 2022, and, owing to difficulties with their local authority, and their Grade II listing, it hasn't been possible to begin repairs, until now. Kendal are working with great enthusiasm, and determination, on those repairs; a new budget is being compiled, and serious fund-raising has already begun. Kendal's Minister, Mandy Reynolds, has written an excellent article about the situation, which has been printed in the March issue of "The Inquirer"; it's well worth reading, if you have a copy; if not, try to borrow one, or I may be able to help.

Congratulations to Chowbent Unitarians, and their ministry-student, Tina Gandhi, for their success

with their Warm Space project. Coffee-mornings take place, every Tuesday, between 10.30 and 12 noon, when those present can enjoy food and drink; various activities; information-sessions; and excellent company and Unitarian hospitality. Numbers have been increasing steadily, since sessions started at the beginning of this year, and some of the regulars have shown an interest in going to church, too. If you're not too far away from the Atherton area, and are available, on Tuesday mornings, why not pay the chapel a visit. It's all free!

Best wishes,

Anne



Chorley Unitarian Chapel Park street, Chorley, PR7 1ER



1725 – 2025

You are invited to join us on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th June 2025, when we celebrate our 300th Anniversary. On Saturday 7th the chapel will be open 1pm to 4pm, when our chapel historian, Doreen Jolly, will share the chapel's history and also tell you about Sir Henry Tate. There will be historical photos to enjoy too.

On Sunday 8th our Anniversary Service will be at 2pm and conducted by Jean Longworth.

If you are able to join us for our Sunday service, can you please let us have numbers for catering by 30th April 2025. Please email sylviamerrick@yahoo.com

Hope to see you then!

THE DIVINE RAILWAY

The origins of the railway are lost in the mists of time, myths and legends are the only hints at its origin and age. We know that it is a worldwide network. The major lines are the Christian Line, the Buddhist Network, the Muslim Connection, all with many branch and feeder lines. There are the very ancient lines of the Aborigines, and the natives of New Guinea, or the Amazon.

All these lines have many stations. People start their life journey at a station which may be far from the terminus, or near, whichever may be appropriate to the circumstances of their birth. Some take the slow train and move only a few stations along, others take a faster train and try to get as far as possible, others go too fast, and derail themselves. Some break their journey and are afraid to go on, some find the station buffet too comfortable, and decide not to go on, and others even try to go back the way they came. Some people switch from the slow train to fast, others even switch from one line to another which suits them better.

Some passengers hog the Buffet Car, monopolising the space, and storing up huge quantities of sandwiches and drinks and so depriving their fellow passengers. They do this despite a clear warning that they can take nothing with them when they leave the train. The Company maintains a large staff on each train to assist and advise passengers. Unfortunately, most passengers fail to recognise or even see them.

The most important elements in the system are the passengers. The system exists to help the individual passengers travel as far as they are able and make the journey as comfortable as possible. Various passenger associations have been set up over the centuries to help passengers on their journey. On the Christian line, these are known as churches.

The Christian line is an offshoot from the older Jewish line and both these have relaid part of their track over the Ancient Egyptian and Persian lines. Soon after the Christian line was inaugurated, there emerged two Passenger Associations whose descendants are known as the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox Churches. Now there are many different passenger associations, all claiming to have more contact with the Board of Management, to get advance notice of their timetable changes, or more comfortable carriages for their members.

Most of the Associations have longstanding rules, formulated during the early days of the Christian Line. Although these rules were necessary in the early days, some of them have become unrealistic, or irrelevant, as conditions and the state of the passengers' consciousness have developed. Many

travellers have become disenchanted with the squabbling between the different associations, and taken responsibility for their own travel plans, either alone or in informal groups.

Now that you know you are a passenger, take responsibility for your journey. Decide the correct speed for YOU to travel at. Join a church if it will help you but do not give them control of your journey. The responsibility will always be yours. Look out of the carriage window and enjoy the changing



scenery of the journey and when the train enters a dark tunnel, as it will from time to time, remember it must eventually emerge back into the daylight. If illness or adversity slow you down or force you to break your journey, accept it, rest and recuperate. Perhaps you need to try a different direction, or maybe you were going too fast.

From time to time you will run into the buffers of a dead end. Do not regret or resent this, retrace your steps and rejoin the main line. The experience you gain from these journeys will always prove useful and essential later on. To find the right line, it is very often necessary to first take several wrong ones.

Enjoy the company of your fellow passengers whilst they are with you. No-one can predict when their journey may end. They may have to change carriages, or get off at a station. Do not look back with regret at the stations, or the passengers you have left behind. Appreciate and acknowledge your present companions. Bless you and have a safe journey. — by Keith Rothwell (submitted by Graeme Pilbrough)

The best moments in reading
are when you come across
something — a thought,
a feeling, a way of looking
at things — that you'd thought
special, particular to you.
And here it is, set down by
someone else, a person you've
never met, maybe even someone
long dead. And it's as if a
hand has come out,
and taken yours.

- The History Bus

EVENT DATES 2025

Date	EVENT
08 Feb	Film Club 7pm, Admission includes pie & pea supper and an ice cream interval
08 Mar	Spring Lunch 11:45am
04 Apr	Friday Music Night 7:30pm back by popular demand - Stacksteads Brass Band
10 May	Film Club 7pm, Admission includes pie & pea supper and an ice cream interval
07 Jun	Summer Lunch 11:45am
20 Sep	Autumn Lunch 11:45
10 Oct	Friday Music Night 7:30pm with the award winning Rossendale Male Voice Choir
15 Nov	Film Club 7pm, Admission includes pie & pea supper and an ice cream interval
06 Dec	Christmas Lunch 11:45am

Clover Street Unitarian Fellowship Safeguarding

Safeguarding Team

1. Mrs. Helen Illingworth (co-ordinator)
2. Rev. Abi Elliott-McGuffie



Clover Street Unitarian Fellowship (also known as Rochdale Unitarian Church) recognises its responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, online, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and children. Our church believes in the upholding and support of the rights and personal dignity of every adult and child, and will work to ensure that our policies and procedures reflect this, including in any such appointment and selection of persons who work on the Church's behalf. Clover Street Unitarian Fellowship is committed to ensure that every adult and child feels valued, safe and happy and will work to make sure that all feel empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm. We will report any abuse we discover or suspect.

Interested in learning more?



<http://www.rochdaleunitarians.org.uk>

<http://www.unitarian.org.uk/>



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