



The
Monthly
Messenger
for

December
2023

A Journal of the
Unitarian Church
Clover Street
Rochdale

Volume 138

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PASTORAL TEAM

Interfaith Minister Rev Abi Elliott-McGuffie

Joyce Ashworth, Dorothy Jones, Helen Illingworth & Margaret Salt

CHURCH COUNCIL

Chairperson – Diane Bennett

Treasurer – John Illingworth

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Joyce Ashworth, Helen Illingworth, Dorothy Jones, John & Edna Wood

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Margaret Shore & John Illingworth

PULPIT AND LETTINGS

Paul Hubbard

FLOWER FUND SECRETARIES

Edna & John Wood
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DECEMBER



Flowers

Sunday 3rd December 2023
George Scaife
In Celebration of Di's Birthday
Sunday 10th December 2023
Vacant
Sunday 17th December 2023
Sheila Goodwin
To Memory of Tom & Jessie Reid
Sunday 24th December 2023
Vacant
Sunday 31st December 2023
Edna & John Wood
In Celebration of their first meeting in 1957
Flowers lovingly arranged by Margaret Shore



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



100 CLUB WINNERS

NOV 2023

1st	40	Ruben Illingworth
2nd	90	Corinna Whyment
3rd	55	Helen Wilkinson

Congratulations

Prizes- 1st £30 - 2nd £15 - 3rd £5



Welcome to the December issue of the Messenger.



Inside this festive issue we have another seasonal four-page spread of all the important dates for your diaries. So don't forget — we wouldn't want you to miss out!

I will take this opportunity to wish you a Happy Christmas and all the best for 2024! —Ed



"For the next part of our carol-service, Nigel, the verger's nephew will play his interpretation of Silent Night..."

There are still numbers left in the 100 Club pot! So why not claim them? You can request additional numbers by marking them on your returned slips. Numbers will be given out on a first come, first served, basis. The unclaimed numbers are: 9, 13, 34, 39, 52, 56, 58, 59, 61, 64, 68, 70, 74, 78, 83, 87, 89, 91, 92, 93, 96 and 97. Numbers released during the year will be posted in Church and in The Messenger newsletter.

If you would like a chance to win £30, £15, or £5 each month, complete and return your renewal slips, and don't forget your payment of £12 per number. This can be by cash or cheque (payable to "Rochdale Unitarian Church"). The Jan and Feb draw will be on Sunday 4th Feb.

If you wish also to continue your subscription to The Messenger or The Inquirer next year, please cut out, fill-in and return the renewal slips from the previous edition to: Paul Hubbard, Unitarian Church, Clover Street, Rochdale, OL12 6TP.

If you need replacement slips, or any further info, email: rochdaleunitarian@outlook.com or phone 01706 648461. Many thanks — Ed.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



Dear friends

This month is possibly one of the busiest of the year, with much to prepare for. Homes to decorate and our church too, presents to be bought and wrapped and the feasting to be planned for. In amongst which, I'm sure they'll be Christmas lunches, family gatherings and other festive celebrations too. I hope you enjoy them all and that the joy of the season fills your homes.

I hope you also find space to allow the simplicity of Christmas to settle in your hearts, that whatever has been stirring in you might be brought to birth in the coming year. May the joy, peace and gratitude of the season be with you and those you love.

With my love Abi xx

Thank you to all of you who are collecting Christmas food items for the Food Bank in December. Where possible, further donations need to be handed over by the end of November/early December so the gift bags can be packed and ready to hand out. Below are some key food bank facts, shared by co-ordinator Iain Wight:

- There is an increase in demand for our Emergency Food Parcels of at least 25%. Even in previous months, where energy costs have not been as high, the number of clients using the service has remained high at around 400 per month.
- This requires a supply of food of around 6000 kgs, most of which is still mercifully donated by the general public of Rochdale. But the food bank is still spending around £1000 per week 'topping up' our stock to ensure that people get the best on offer.
- Since April, over 600 clients have attended the foodbank for the very first time (around 25% of the total). This is suggestive of individuals and families living so close to the 'bread line', they sometimes tip over the edge. As we enter the winter, this will likely get worse as energy costs begin to bite, and demand may well rise to the levels of last winter – 500 a month, which can only be met by an extra supply of 1500 kgs.

On behalf of Staff, Volunteers, and Trustees of Rochdale Foodbank, I thank Rochdale Unitarian Church for all its help and support.

DECEMBER NEWS AND EVENTS



Flower Month Margaret Shore

DECEMBER

Sat	02	11.45	Christmas Lunch
Sun	03	10.30	T oy&Gift Service conducted by Rev Abi Elliott-McGuffie. Toys collected during the service will be donated to the local charity 'Giving Back' —pg 9
Thur	07	17.00	Christmas Tea — hostess: Helen Wilkinson
		18.30	Women's League Meeting followed by a film
Sun	10	10.30	S unday Service conducted by Jean Longworth. After Service those who have booked for the Congregational Christmas meal will make their way to Park Farm, Walmsley, Bury
Mon	11	19.30	Book Circle at 5 Bagnall Close
Sun	17	18.00	C arol Service conducted by Rev Abi Elliott-McGuffie. (The retiring collection from this Service will go to The Red Cross for use where greatest need is at present)
Sun	24	10.30	A shortened format Sunday Service conducted by Rev Abi Elliott-McGuffie
Mon	25	11.00	C hristmas Day Service conducted by Rev Abi Elliott-McGuffie (Please note time)
Sun	31	10.30	S unday Service conducted by Graeme Pilbrough



ABOUT PEOPLE

It is with sadness that we record the death of **Shirley Smith** on 3 November following an inoperable break to her femur. She and her husband Norman, were active members of the Blackwater Street Church and later the new Clover Street Church. They were the initiators of the 100 Club which continues to raise money for church funds. To Craig, Christine and the extended family we offer our sympathy and support.

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

50 YEARS AT CLOVER STREET — JULY 2024 — CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

We are celebrating a very special birthday next year... an amazing 50 YEARS since the new building was opened in 1974!

Church Council are organising a series of special services & events to mark the occasion and we need your help. A working party is being set up early 2024 to help prepare. If you are able to lend a hand, please contact Helen I.

The donations from this year's Christmas Card Scheme will be donated to Springhill Hospice, our Church Charity. The post box will be placed at the back of Church from 3rd December. Please put your donation in the envelope provided.

WARDEN/COFFEE ROTA FOR 2023

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

CHURCH LUNCH

clover street UNITARIANS

Make a date for your diaries

Christmas Lunch

Saturday December 2nd



Our very popular
Festive Lunch
comprising starter, main, choice of
dessert, mince pie, tea and coffee
all for £12pp

These lunches are extremely good value and
as there are only 50 places available, they will
be in high demand. Please get your tickets
early to avoid disappointment

See a Church member for more information

XMAS MEAL

Congregational Christmas Lunch – 10th December

A booking has been made for 24 people at Park Farm, Ramsbottom following the service on 10th December. Please let Helen have the balance for your meal by Sunday 3rd December. Payment can be made by cash, cheque (made out to Rochdale Unitarian Church) or BACS (see John for details). Small portions are £22.50 less £5 deposit and regular portions are £28.50 less £5 deposit. We are to be in our seats for 12.30 pm so need to be setting off from Church by 12 noon at the latest.



TOY & GIFT SERVICE

Toy and Gift Service – Sunday 3rd December

We are looking forward to our Toy and Gift Service led by Abi this year. Toys collected during the service will be donated to the local charity 'Giving Back' which is run by Council Staff in support of families who would otherwise struggle to provide gifts for their children at Christmas. Please don't wrap your gifts which should be new and don't forget the teenagers. The monetary collection from the service will be donated to the Moorland Children's Home.



XMAS SERVICES

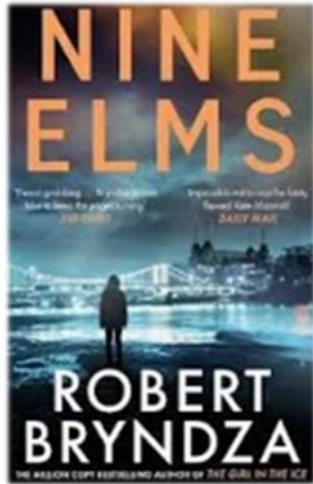
Carol Service – Sunday 17th December at 6.00 pm

Abi will be leading our Carol Service this year and would like to hear from anyone who would like to make contributions of poems, stories and readings. Come and join us in singing your favourite carols and enjoy hot drinks, fruit cake, and mince pies served after the service. A retiring collection will be donated to the Red Cross.





Following our tradition, we look forward to our Christmas Italian 'takeaway' at 7 pm on 11th December at 5 Bagnall Close. We will try to make time to discuss our current book *Nine Elms* by Robert Bryndza which is the first in a brand new series featuring a former police detective who solved a career-defining case only to have it drastically alter her life. An elderly couple enlist Kate's help in finding their daughter who disappeared many years ago. This sets off a string of events that will eventually bring Kate's past life and present life in a course that is destined to collide with disastrous effect for herself and those she holds dear.



On Remembrance Sunday we were represented by our President, Vince McCully, at the Cenotaph in London. "I am privileged, as President, to visit many of our congregations and I always look out for the roll of honour proudly displayed by my hosts in their Chapels and churches. I wonder at the emotions of the folk that erected them; the loss, the grief and the regret for the fallen; the relief, the gratitude and the joy for those that returned."

Spread a 'Little' Joy at Christmas



Based on Rev John Gill's (1970's) wonderful model of the Chapel, Ainsworth has entered a small display entitled 'Peace on Earth' in the Ainsworth Methodist Church's 'Christmas Tree Festival'.

WHAT DO I WISH YOU?

by Charlotte Gray

**The family reunited,
All squabbles set aside,
Food in the larder,
Knocks at the door,
Friendly faces,
Parcels piling up,
Cards from everyone you love,
Nothing forgotten,
Nothing singed,
Laughter, a little silliness,
Hugs, kisses,
Happy memories.**

**I wish with all my heart that
your Christmas will be all that it
was meant to be –
a little warmth in the depth of
winter a light in the dark.**

REGULAR BOOKINGS

Day	EVENT
Mon	■ 09.30-2.30pm Early Years — Blue Room
	■ 09.30-2.30pm Maths & English Green Room
	■ 12.30-2.30pm Prima Dance—Main Hall
Tues	■ 1.00-3.00pm Prima Dance—Main Hall
	■ 1.00-3.00pm Norden Cards— Blue Room
	■ 4.30-6.00pm Carers' Choir—Blue Room
	■ 7.00-9.00pm Central Bridge—Blue Room
	■ 7.30-9.30pm Philatelic Group—Green Room
Wed	■ 7.30-9.30pm Photographic—Blue Room
	■ 11.00am 12.00pm Move & Munch-Main Hall
Thur	■ 11.00am 12.00pm YT Zumba—Main Hall
	■ 08.00pm Badminton — Main Hall
Sun	■ 10.30am 12.00pm Sunday Worship in Hall
For full booking details please contact rochdaleunitarian@outlook.com or leave a message on 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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