



Stalybridge Unitarian Church is a
Free Christian Congregation.



A member of The East Cheshire Union of Unitarian and
Free Christian Churches.

A member of The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free
Christian Churches.

A member of The North Cheshire Unitarian Sunday
School Union

A member of The Unitarian Christian Association

THE CHALICE

STALYBRIDGE UNITARIAN CHURCH
MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2008/JANUARY 2009

THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE IS
SPONSORED BY
Mr & Mrs IAN BRADBURY
in memory of
Frank Green



MINISTER'S LETTER



Dear Friends

During my holiday weekend in November I took the opportunity to travel to London for a couple of events to commemorate the bicentenary of the death of Theophilus Lindsey. It wasn't the best weekend to travel to London, there were engineering works on the Manchester to Euston railway line which meant that the return journey would have been five hours long with two changes. When I realised this I checked the cost of flights, just out of interest, and found that they were cheaper than the train! So I had the pleasure of a very civilized flight with a Belgian airline into London City airport – only to then find that the Docklands Light Railway was closed for engineering works and so were several underground lines. This inevitably caused me some delays but with a bit of careful map reading I got to my destinations on time.

I was there for an event on the Saturday arranged by the congregation of Essex Church, Kensington which they described as a “pilgrimage” to the grave of Theophilus Lindsey. Then on the Sunday, the Unitarian Christian Association had arranged a lecture about Lindsey which was held at Essex Church. Lindsey was an Anglican clergyman who was Vicar of Catterick from 1763 to 1773. He was well respected in the Church of England and generally thought of as being destined for higher things but he became increasingly uncomfortable with the doctrine of the Trinity to the point where his conscience required him to leave the Church of England and open his own chapel in Essex Street, London, in April 1774. Technically it was still illegal (until 1813) to express Unitarian views and so his chapel was known simply as Essex Street Chapel. Nevertheless, this was a turning point. It was the first chapel to be founded as a Unitarian congregation and to be openly Unitarian in its worship.

The congregations which form our General Assembly today do not all have a common origin. The oldest congregations were in the main either Presbyterian (like Dob Lane) or General Baptist in origin and their founders would have been horrified at the thought that they might one day be Unitarian! This is why our older congregations do not have the word Unitarian in their titles, like Dob Lane Chapel, Cross Street Chapel, Old Chapel etc. The move to Unitarian beliefs was a long process of evolution in these congregations. Congregations founded in the nineteenth century (like Stalybridge) were, like Lindsey's chapel, founded as Unitarian congregations and so are more likely to have the word in their titles.

The services in Essex Street Chapel were based on Anglican services and Lindsey produced a revised version of the Book of Common Prayer with references to the Trinity removed. Lindsey always hoped that his departure from the Church of England would only be a temporary thing and that one day, he and his chapel would be welcomed into a reformed Church of England with a reformed Prayer Book. Similarly, the Presbyterians had always been reluctant dissenters who hoped that one day they would be welcomed back into a broad, national Church. They did not use a prayer book but this was not because they objected to liturgical worship. Their objection was only to the content of the Anglican book.

Once Lindsey had shown the way forward, others followed. Lindsey's example of liturgical Unitarian worship was to have a great influence throughout the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century when many congregations adopted revisions of Lindsey's liturgy or new liturgies written by prominent figures of the day such as James Martineau. The last flowering of this tradition was Orders of Worship (1932) which remained in use in many congregations well into the 1970s when about a quarter of our congregations were still using it regularly. Older members will remember with affection the use of Orders of Worship here at Stalybridge with its familiar prayers, sung responses, psalms and canticles. I can remember chanting the psalms and canticles at Hyde Chapel until about 1974. Sadly, this great tradition within our churches has now been almost completely lost within a generation.

Lindsey's dream of returning to the Anglican fold was never to be realised and instead he became a very important figure in the history of our churches. His resignation from Catterick and the founding of Essex Street Chapel helped to crystallize the changes that had been happening in many congregations throughout the eighteenth century and his ministry contributed another strand to the rich tapestry which was beginning to come together to form a distinctive group of Unitarian Christian churches and chapels which would eventually form our modern day General Assembly.

Thinking of the General Assembly, I must also say what a pleasure it was to welcome the current President of the General Assembly, Mrs Joyce Ashworth to take our Ladies' Service on November 23rd. Joyce is a member of our Rochdale church where I undertook a Student Pastorate during the vacations of my final year of training. I will always be grateful for the help and guidance Joyce gave me at that time. Thanks also to the ladies for inviting Joyce and for all they did to make her visit run smoothly.

Wishing you every blessing, Andrew

WARDENS NOTES

On behalf of the Minister, the Officers and Committee of Stalybridge Unitarian Church I would like to wish all members and friends of this wonderful congregation a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Our Carol Services this year will be held on Sunday 21st December. This is traditionally a chance for members who live away from Stalybridge to attend one or both of these services. We look forward to seeing them once more and catching up with all their news.

The world and UK news is full of doom and gloom but Christmas gives us a chance to be cheerful as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is an important time of the year for congregations like ours and I urge as many of you as possible to attend these services.

At this time of the year it is important that we do not forget that there are people of all faiths all over the world who are much worse off than we can even imagine. Wars and famine continue to blight the world and that means it is vital that we reinforce the message of Jesus.

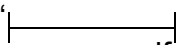
Merry Christmas to you all.

Ken

JUVENILE MEMBERSHIP

Parents who would like their children to be Juvenile members of church should contact Clare Bullock (0161 303 8872). She will require the full name of the child plus £1 membership. The membership certificates will be distributed during the Juvenile Membership service - Sunday 21st December, 2.30pm

PARKING

Please be aware that the continuous white line outside church "  " is a no parking zone. The traffic wardens will put a ticket on your car if you are parked here.

Funeral

17th November. Alice Dawson aged 87 years. Service in church followed by committal at Dukinfield Crematorium, the Minister officiating.

Christmas Memorial Service

Once again we will be holding a Christmas Memorial Service in church, this year on Thursday 11th December at 7.30 pm. All the families that the Minister has conducted funerals for during the year will be invited and as in previous years we expect that quite a number of them will wish to attend. You are also invited and if you wish a departed loved one to be remembered in the service please write the person's name on one of the forms which are available on the table in the vestibule and hand it to the Minister or the Warden by Sunday 7th December



Thought for the Month

I think of Christmas long ago
The snow, the tree, the holly,
Departed friends we used to know.
Of days carefree and jolly
And yet my hearts from sadness free
I hear the bells sweet ringing,
And clearer comes to me
The message that they are bringing

Sometime ago, when we were supposed to be on a summer evening drive out, it had to be cancelled due to awful weather and instead Andrew gave us a talk on Queen Victoria's funeral. Unfortunately the only people who saw/heard it were those due to go on the drive and it was enjoyed so much by them, Andrew has agreed to repeat it and this will be held on 27th February when a light supper will be provided. Once again, we ask you to put your name on the list so as to give us some ideas of numbers.

A list will also be going up for people to put their names down if they wish to go and see 'Humpty Dumpty' which is the pantomime being held at Old Chapel next February (starring a couple of our own congregation). This will be held on Friday 20th February 2009, so please put your name down if you wish to be included in our 'party'

Our next fund raising meeting will be held on Monday 19th January starting at 7.15 pm just before the main church committee meeting.. Anyone is welcome, so if you have any ideas or think you could provide some much needed support, please come along.

Finally, may I take this opportunity of thanking anyone who has supported our fund raising efforts this year and we look forward to some more successful events next year. Have a happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year!

Sue Howard

LADIES CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY (WOMEN'S LEAGUE)

The December meeting will be held on Wednesday 3rd at 3pm, which will be a faith tea. The Ladies' group will not meet in January. All ladies from the church are of course very welcome.

Margaret Hallsworth

FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL GROUP

Hasn't this year just flown by - here we are again heading towards Christmas and then 2009. Firstly, thanks to everyone who helped at the Bazaar either by helping, donating or by being there spending. It appears there were more people there this year than there were last year and everyone's efforts are much appreciated. We made a total of £1404 this year which is a few hundred more than 2007. This was made up as follows: Door: £52.50; Lucky Dip: £18.00; Plants: £30.00; Books: £39.00; Children's games: £48.50; Homebake: £166.80; Gifts: £122.90; Raffle: £168.00; Tombola: £97.50; Bottle tombola: £80.00; Café: £131.10; Date in Diary: £133.00; Sunshine bags: £4.61 and donations of £335.00. Well done everybody!

Our next event will be the Family Christmas Party when we hope to have a visit from Father Christmas. This will be held on Friday 5th December starting at 7.30pm. We realise this may be a little late for some of the younger children and we will bear it in mind if we hold another party next year. Meanwhile, please come along and enjoy your night out with some food and drink and fun and games. You can re-live your childhood for a couple of hours if you are one of our older friends. Please ensure you put your name on the list if you are coming, or give me a ring. We need to know for catering purposes.

Following the visit of some of our members and friends to Rome, we will be holding an Italian Night on 23rd January 2009 when, as well as having an Italian type meal, we will have the opportunity of seeing some of the photographs that were taken as well as a 'report' on how it all went and what they got up to from Andrew. Please put your name on the list in church if you would like to attend.

Our next Whist Drive, the Christmas one, will be held on Friday 12th December starting, as usual, at 7.30 pm at church. All are welcome, so come along and bring your friends for a fun night out with a Christmas flavour!

UNITARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP

All young people, whether they attend regularly or are just visiting, are more than welcome to join us at our UYPG meetings which take place during morning service (after the 2nd hymn) every Sunday. If you have any queries, please contact Clare Bullock on 0161 303 8872.

The children are being kept very busy at the moment. We have been preparing for the bazaar with the children's games and, believe it or not, getting prepared for Christmas. So, children, please come along as we need all the help we can get.

Minister's Holidays 2009

Rev Andrew Parker will be taking his holiday allocation in 2009 as follows:

March 29th
May 10th
August 2nd
August 9th
October 4th and 11th (Rome Trip)
November 22nd

The Warden will arrange pulpit supplies for these dates, however, if any member of the congregation would like to take the service on one of these days please contact Ken as soon as possible.



£1 A MONTH CLUB

October's winner was Mrs Beryl Plant. Congratulations!
If you wish to renew your membership or indeed join for the first time, please contact me on 0161 344 0942, 45 Church St, Dukinfield SK16 4PR. All cheques must be payable to Stalybridge Unitarian Church.

Beryl Bradbury



FLOWERS FOR DECEMBER

- Sunday 7th Mr & Mrs Tom Whitehead in memory of Mr & Mrs Tom Whitehead Senior
- Sunday 14th Susan & David Roberts in memory of Mr & Mrs Frank Roberts
- Sunday 21st Janet D. Pearson
- Sunday 28th Mr & Mrs Norman Bradbury

FLOWERS FOR JANUARY

- Sunday 4th Vacant
- Sunday 11th Mr & Mrs Eric Caton in memory of Mr & Mrs Elson Caton
- Sunday 18th The Men's Guild
- Sunday 25th Mr & Mrs Stuart Hinchcliffe

STEWARDS FOR DECEMBER STEWARDS FOR JANUARY

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Sunday 7th | Stuart Hinchcliffe | Sunday 4th | Bill Atkin |
| Sunday 14th | Tom Whitehead | Sunday 11th | Don Andrews |
| Sunday 21st | Wendy Maher | Sunday 18th | Stuart Hinchcliffe |
| Sunday 28th | Ken Howard | Sunday 25th | Tom Whitehead |

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Important Dates 2009

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|--------------------------|--|
| January 25 th | Conversion of St Paul - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, service to be held at St Peter's |
| March 6 th | Women's World day of Prayer, service to be held at Stalybridge Unitarian Church |
| March 8 th | ECU Songs of Praise to be held at New Chapel Denton |
| March 22 nd | Mothering Sunday |
| March 28 th | UCA AGM at Padiham |
| April 5 th | Palm Sunday |
| April 10 th | Good Friday |
| April 11 th | Easter Eve |
| April 12 th | Easter Sunday |
| May 2 nd | ECU AGM at Hyde Chapel |
| May 9 th | Arts & Crafts Exhibition at Old Chapel Dukinfield |
| May 31 st | Whit Sunday |
| July 5 th | Church Anniversary service |

September 20th NCUSSU AGM at Flowery Field

September 27th Harvest Service

October 3rd-11th Trip to Rome

October 10th ECU Autumn Meeting at Stalybridge

November 8th Remembrance Sunday

November 15th Ladies Service

December 20th Carol Service

Calendar January 2009

Sunday 4th 11.00am Morning Service and UYPG

Wed 7th 7.30 pm ECU Delegates meeting at Stalybridge

Sunday 11th 11.00am Morning Service and UYPG

Sunday 18th 11.00am Morning Service and UYPG

Monday 19th 7.15pm Fund Raising meeting
8.00pm Church Committee meeting

Friday 23rd 7.30pm Italian Night

Sunday 25th 11.00am Morning Service and UYPG

Calendar December 2008

Wed	3rd	3.00pm	Ladies Society monthly tea
Friday	5 th	7.30pm	Family Christmas Party
Sunday	7 th	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG (2 nd Sunday in Advent)
Wed	10 th		Ladies Congregational Society Christmas Lunch at Great Hucklow
Thursday	11 th	7.30pm	Memorial Service
Friday	12 th	7.30pm	Christmas Whist Drive
Sunday	14 th	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG (3 rd Sunday in Advent)
Friday	19 th	7.30pm	NCUSSU Carol Service at Old Chapel Dukinfield
Sunday	21 st	2.30pm 6.30pm	Family Carol Service /4 th Sunday in Advent (Juvenile Membership) Candlelit Carol Service
Thursday	25 th	11.00am	Christmas Day service
Sunday	28 th	11.00am	Morning Service and UYPG