

**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 corporate member of The Unitarian Christian Association

THE CHALICE

**STALYBRIDGE UNITARIAN CHURCH
MAGAZINE**

DECEMBER 2006

JANUARY 2007

**THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE IS
KINDLY SPONSORED BY
MRS & MRS IAN BRADBURY IN
MEMORY OF MR FRANK GREEN**

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

I am just back from a couple of days away in Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain. It is somewhere that I have wanted to visit for a long time but this was my first opportunity. It is a fascinating place with a picturesque historic centre and a spectacular cathedral, which seems rather out of place in this remote part of Spain. The clue to the importance of this place is in the name - Santiago means Saint James. In the crypt beneath the high altar of the cathedral is a silver casket, which has been venerated for centuries because it is believed to contain the remains of one of the Apostles. The Saint James whose shrine is at Santiago de Compostela is James the brother of John, the fishermen called by Jesus from mending their nets beside the Sea of Galilee.

James and John were close to Jesus throughout his ministry. They were present at the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1 v 29), and at the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mark 5 v 37; Luke 8 v 51). They are described in private conversation with Jesus on the Mount of Olives (Mark 13 v 3). They were also present, with Peter at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17 v 1-13; Mark 9 v 2-8; Luke 9 v 28-36), and again, the same three disciples are called apart from the others in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26 v 37; Mark 14 v 33). James was one of the people closest to Jesus and he was eventually martyred at the hands of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12, 1-2) about AD 41-44 in Jerusalem. How then did his remains come to rest in the crypt of a cathedral in Spain?

Legend has it that James had spent a number of years preaching in Spain before returning to Jerusalem, and martyrdom. After his death his followers returned his body to Spain where his tomb then lay forgotten for 800 years until the tomb was rediscovered and the relics were authenticated as those of St James by the local bishop.

Relics of the saints were believed to possess great power, and those of the Apostles were especially venerated: Peter and Paul were known to be buried in Rome, and John at Ephesus, so at the time of the discovery of the tomb, James was the most senior Apostle whose relics remained undiscovered. Pilgrims began to visit the shrine and as word spread the numbers increased and increased. A chapel that had been built on the site had to be replaced by a cathedral to accommodate the flow of pilgrims. In the 12th and 13th centuries Santiago de Compostela reached its greatest importance and came to rank with Rome and Jerusalem as one of the great destinations of medieval pilgrimage.

Since the 12th century, the pilgrimage has greatly declined in importance but it has never been entirely forgotten, and it is currently seeing a remarkable resurgence. As the airport courtesy bus carried me the few miles to my hotel we passed dozens of back packers, mainly young people, on the last stretch of their walk to the shrine of Saint James. Some will have started from one of the traditional assembly points in France: Paris, Vézelay, le Puy-en-Velay, or Arles, and then followed one of the old routes to the Pyrenees and then across northern Spain. Those with less time either start from a point on the route nearer to Santiago or make the pilgrimage in stages, as holidays allow, picking up each year where they stopped the year before.

In centuries gone by most pilgrims would have walked all the way but today it is considered acceptable to have walked or ridden on horseback the last 100 km to Santiago, or cycled the last 200 km, and to have declared a spiritual or religious motivation in order to qualify for the *Compostela*, the traditional Latin certificate of pilgrimage. Sadly, the half mile or so that I walked from the hotel to the cathedral was not enough!

I do not know whether the bones contained within that silver casket are the bones of Saint James or not, and I am not sure that it really matters. Over the centuries millions of pilgrims have made the journey to the shrine believing that the bones are his and that in itself makes it a holy place. Santiago de Compostela is recognised today as a world heritage site, and quite rightly so, it is a very special and a very holy place.

Wishing you every blessing.

Andrew

Merry

 *Christmas*

WARDEN'S NOTES

The resilience of our church and its congregation never ceases to amaze me. We have had a strange year. A beautiful job was made of the decoration but just as we were all patting ourselves on the back along came the dry rot problem. This was successfully treated and then we had the break-in and the damage to the heating/water/gas supplies. While we were all feeling sorry for ourselves the Bazaar went ahead as usual and we had the best Bazaar for quite some time. A roller coaster year if ever there was one.

Throughout it all we have remained a united congregation. Still building, still remaining true to our faith and definitely looking forward to the future.

There has been a Unitarian Free Christian presence in Stalybridge since 1862, it is now less than six years until our 150th anniversary. This has not happened by accident, this is due to the tenacity of our forefathers and the hard work put in by everybody who has been associated with this congregation over the past 144 years.

These days many people feel that Christianity is old fashioned. Christianity is frowned upon by the secular world but sadly, also, by people within our own denomination. We must not allow this to distract us. Christianity is old but not old fashioned. The very fact that it has lasted over 2000 years is testament to that. The fact that after all this time people still answer the call of Jesus is something quite special and proves that Christianity is a living and growing religion. This can not and must not be thrown away and abandoned on a whim.

We are the people charged with ensuring that Unitarian Free Christianity remains an integral part of life in Stalybridge. We have a duty to hand down our Christian beliefs to the next generation just as it was handed down to us. We must do all in our power to ensure this.

As we look forward to celebrating Christmas we also look forward to seeing friends and family members that perhaps we haven't seen for some time.

We must spare a thought for people who will be unable to join us for the special Christmas services. Some people are ill at home or in hospital. For some people the difficulty of long travel causes problems. We know they will be thinking of us as we sing Hob Hill and Chime On, it is important to assure them that we will be thinking of them also.

Sue and myself would like to wish all members and friends of this wonderful church a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Ken Howard

CONDOLENCES

We are sorry to have to report the death of our good friend Arthur Cooper, husband of Edith. The funeral took place at Dukinfield Crematorium on Monday 20th November. The service was conducted by the Rev Penny Johnson, Arthur's cousin.

We would also like to pass on our condolences to Don Andrews on the loss of his elder brother, Norman. The funeral took place in North Wales.

NAMING CEREMONY



November 5th. Oliver Edward Newns-Davenport, born 27th January 2006. Son of Vikki and Colin and brother of Alicia. We would like to wish Oliver a long and healthy life and we hope to see him at church again soon.

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT
STALYBRIDGE UNITARIAN CHURCH**

Wed 6th Dec 7.30 pm Christmas
Memorial Service

Fri 15th Dec 7.30 pm NCUSSU Carol
Service at New Chapel Denton

Thu 21st Dec 7.30 pm Stalybridge
Churches Carol Service at St Paul's

Sun 24th Dec 2.30 pm Juvenile
Membership and Family Carol Service

Sun 24th Dec 6.30 pm Candlelit Carol
Service

Mon 25th Dec 11.00 am Short Christmas
Day Service

LADIES CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY (WOMEN'S LEAGUE)

Our December monthly tea will be held on Wednesday 13th December at the usual time. This will take the form of a faith tea.

Our January tea will be held on Wednesday 3rd January. The hostess will be Margaret Hallsworth. All ladies will be made most welcome.

The ladies will be having a mini home-bake stall following the service on Sunday 21st January 2007.

The Annual Christmas Lunch will be held at The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow, on Wednesday 6th December. The coach will be picking up at Old Chapel, Dukinfield at 11 am and at Stalybridge Unitarian Church at 11.15 am. Please let me know where you will be boarding the coach. Let us hope the weather is as kind as it was last year.

Margaret Hallsworth

CAROL SINGING

As tradition dictates this will be held immediately after morning service on Sunday 17th December. In a new departure from the norm, we propose to have more of a carol singing session rather than just a practice. After this, we will then serve a light lunch to people who wish to stay. It will be soup and bread roll and something sweet.

It isn't actually a practice but we hope it will help make us all sound superb for our Christmas Eve carol services.

SPECIAL SERVICES AND EVENTS 2006

Wed Dec 6th		Ladies Society Christmas Lunch at Great Hucklow
Wed Dec 6th	7.30 pm	Christmas Memorial Service
Sun Dec 24th	2.30 pm	Juvenile Membership Family Carol Service
Sun Dec 24th	6.30 pm	Candlelit Carol Service
Mon Dec 25th	11 am	Christmas Day Service

£1 A MONTH CLUB

We continue to hold our monthly draws, but our numbers are slightly down at the moment. If anyone has not recently renewed their membership or wishes to join for the first time, please contact me. I am at church most Sundays, but if you do not see me there I can be contacted on 0161 344 0942 or at 45 Church Street, Dukinfield, SK16 4PR. In case anybody does not know what it is all about, I will explain. Each member pays one pound in every month. Quite simply, everyone who has paid goes into the hat and a name is drawn out. That person then wins half of the money in the pot with the other half going to church funds. Last month's draw was won by Peter Goacher.

Beryl Bradbury

FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL GROUP

Many thanks to everyone who played any part at the Bazaar this year. We were all very pleased with the results and made considerably more than we did last year. Please all give yourselves a round of applause and THANK YOU to everyone.

We shall be holding our Christmas Whist Drive on 1st December. We start at 7.30 and it is held at church. The cost is £3.00 which covers the prizes, raffle and special Christmas refreshments. (including a drop of sherry!) Please come along for an evening of enjoyment.

Our January Whist Drive will be held on 5th January 2007, starting as usual at 7.30 pm and the cost will be as normal being £2.00.

As I mentioned last month, we shall be holding a British Isles Dinner on Friday 26th January starting at 7.30 pm. It will consist of five courses from different areas of the British Isles and the cost will be £8. We need to know how many of you are interested, so please look out for the notice on the board and enter your name as soon as possible. If you can't get to church within the next few weeks, please give me a ring and I will put your name up. It should be a good night!

Our next fund raising meeting will take place on Monday 15th January starting at 7.15 pm at church. We need a few new ideas coming in for 2007, so please come along if you think you can help in any way.

I hope you have a lovely Christmas and a happy New Year!

Sue Howard

UNITARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP

Leaders for December

Dec 3rd	Clare Bullock
Dec 10th	Sue Howard
Dec 17th	Ruth Mills
Dec 24th	NO UYPG JUVENILE MEMBERSHIP & FAMILY CAROL SERVICE
Dec 31st	NO UYPG as 5TH SUNDAY

January Leaders:

Jan 7th	Clare Bullock
Jan 14th	Sue Howard
Jan 21st	Ruth Mills
Jan 28th	Clare Bullock

All young people, whether regular attenders or visitors, are more than welcome to join us at our UYPG meetings which take place during morning service (after the 2nd hymn) every Sunday, apart from the 5th Sunday. If you have any queries, please contact Clare Bullock on 0161 303 8872.

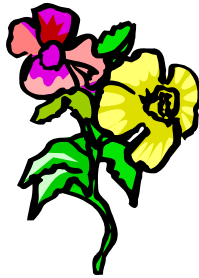
STEWARDS

Dec 3rd	Stuart Hinchliffe
Dec 10th	Tom Whitehead
Dec 17th	Bill Atkin
Dec 24th 2.30 pm	Don Andrews
Dec 24th 6.30 pm	Ken Howard
Dec 25th 11.00 am	
Dec 31st	Stuart Hinchliffe
Jan 7th	Tom Whitehead
Jan 14th	Bill Atkin
Jan 21st	Don Andrews
Jan 28th	Ken Howard



CHURCH FLOWERS FOR DECEMBER

3rd Dec	Mr & Mrs T Whitehead in memory of Mr & Mrs T Whitehead Senior
10th Dec	Susan & David Roberts in memory of Frank & Helen Roberts
17th Dec	Mrs Marion Morton & Family in memory of Mr George Morton
24th Dec	Women's League in memory of Past Members
31st Dec	Mr & Mrs Norman Bradbury



CHURCH FLOWERS FOR JANUARY

7th Jan	Mrs Mary Dagnah
14th Jan	Mr & Mrs Eric Caton in memory of Mr & Mrs Elson Caton
21st Jan	The Men's Guild
28th Jan	Stuart & Anne Hinchliffe

CHALICE PRODUCTION

In the centre pages you will find the details for renewal of your subscription to Chalice for 2007. We would request that everybody fills these in as quickly as possible and pays the necessary funds so that we do not have to spend too much time chasing people for money.

You will note that we have been able to hold the price of Chalice at 30p per issue, this is largely due to the generosity of our monthly sponsors who help tremendously to pay for part of the production costs. We regret that we have been forced to increase the postal deliveries by 50p per year. This is due solely to the increase in postage rates. We managed to absorb the cost the last time postage went up, but need to act now that it has gone up again. We hope you all understand. It is still preferable if people use the postal delivery method, this is much easier for the production staff.

The church committee is grateful to the editor for the last 10+ years producing the Chalice. The time has come now however when Sue feels that maybe someone else would like to become involved. Both Sue and the church committee feel that maybe one of the newer members of the congregation would like to consider taking on this job. It would give him or her an opportunity to get to know the workings of the church more intimately. The position is not restricted to new members and is of course open to anyone who would like to have a go.

If someone would like to try please speak to Sue. Perhaps someone would consider doing a bit of job sharing! The only requirement is that you have access to a PC, preferably with email facility. The church already owns a printer. If you are at all interested, please come forward and ask as many questions as you like.

Ken

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Andrew will conduct our usual Advent Services. Our main carol services will be held on Christmas Eve.

24th Dec 2.30 pm Juvenile Membership Family
 Carol Service

24th Dec 6.30 pm Candlelit Carol Service.

25th Dec 11.00 am Christmas Day Service

Parents who would like their children to be Juvenile Members of Church should contact Clare Bullock (0161 3038872). She will require the full name of the child plus £1 membership. The membership certificates will be distributed during the Juvenile Membership Service. During this service UYPG book awards will also be handed out.

DRY ROT APPEAL

I am delighted to say that we have now collected a total of £1680 (target £3000). Many thanks to all of you who have donated. I feel I must make special mention of the £500 grant from The East Cheshire Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, and the £250 grant received from Bury Unitarian Church. These are two generous donations for which we are very grateful.

We are now just over halfway towards our target which we must make every effort to reach. We would be grateful if those of you who have not already donated could please consider doing so.

Ken

REGIONAL UNITARIAN ORGANISATIONS

The North Cheshire Unitarian Sunday School Union will be holding their annual Carol Service at New Chapel, Denton on Friday 15th December at 7.30 pm.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL SERVICE

This will be held on Wednesday 6th December and will start at 7.30 pm. The service will be conducted by the minister. If anyone would like the name(s) of departed loved ones read out during the service please contact the Minister or complete one of the forms available on the table in the porch.

STALYBRIDGE CHURCHES JOINT CAROL SERVICE

This will be held at St Paul's Church on Thursday 21st December starting at 7.30 pm. Everyone is invited and we hope that we can get a good turn up. The clergy of Stalybridge are trying hard to bring the churches closer together and we must support these special services as much as possible.



FROM THE SECRETARY

Twelve months have flown by and on the 12th December 2006, members of the Men's Guild will coax our Christmas tree into a vertical position, 'argue' over the distribution of baubles and offer a prayer to ensure the successful illumination of the finished arrangement.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that for many years now, our tree has been donated by Martin Arnold and on behalf of the congregation, I would like to thank him for his continuing generosity.

Sue & myself wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a great new year.

Alan Swift

DIARY DECEMBER 2006

- Fri 1st 7.30 pm Christmas Whist Drive
(turkey sandwiches, mince pies & sherry!!)
- Sun 3rd 11.00 am Morning Service and UYPG
- Wed 6th 11.00 am Christmas lunch at Great Hucklow
- Wed 6th 7.30 pm Christmas Memorial service
at Church
- Sun 10th 11.00 am Morning Service and UYPG
- Tue 12th 7.00 pm Christmas tree erected and
decorated by Men's Guild
- Wed 13th 3.00 pm Ladies Society Monthly Tea
(Faith tea)
- Fri 15th 7.30 pm NCUSSU Carol Service at
New Chapel Denton
- Sun 17th 11.00 pm Morning Service and UYPG followed
by carol singing and a light lunch.
- Thu 21st 7.30 pm Stalybridge Churches joint Carol
Service at St Paul's.
- Sun 24th 2.30 pm Family Carol and Juvenile Member-
ship Service
- Sun 24th 6.30 pm Candlelit Carol service
- Mon 25th 11.00 am Short Christmas Day Service
- Sun 31st 11.00 am Morning Service



DIARY FOR JANUARY 2007

- Wed 3rd 3.00 pm Ladies Society Monthly Tea
hosted by Margaret Hallsworth
- Fri 5th 7.30 pm Whist Drive
- Sun 7th 11 am Morning Service and UYPG
- Sun 14th 11.00 am Morning Service and UYPG
- Mon 15th 7.15 pm Fund Raising and Social Group
meeting
- Mon 15th 8.00 pm Church Committee Meeting
- Wed 17th 7.30 pm ECU Delegates meeting at
Stalybridge
- Sun 21st 11.00 am Morning Service and UYPG
- Fri 26th 7.30 pm New Year British Isles Dinner Party
- Sun 28th 11.00 am Morning Service and UYPG

OLD CHAPEL PANTOMIME
“CINDERELLA”
10th Feb to 17th Feb 2007
Tickets available after Christmas.