

# Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

*"Here let no man a stranger be"*



Feb - Apr 2014

[www.ukunitarians.org.uk/rivington](http://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/rivington)

[www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk)

## **Chairman's Letter**

So now we are in the first months of 2014 and if it is anything like 2013 we are going to have to take a deep breath. 2013 was a busy year for us, when we had our usual events such as the Spring Festival, Strawberry Tea, Late Summer Fair and Carol Service. In addition we also had the wonderful celebration of the suffragette cause and the larger than life Emily Davison. Many thanks to Iris Wharton, by whose energy we were all inspired; indeed, it was a great team effort.

In the summer of 2013 we were approached by an external charitable agency, in the guise of Velma from the Chorley Lions, with a view to holding a joint charity venture. Their good causes include young carers and women's refuges. Between us we were able to persuade a collection of local musicians to play and sing for us, all free of charge, in the cause of charity. We hosted a musical night with mulled wine and mince pies here in Chapel on 29<sup>th</sup> November and raised £410.00 which was split evenly between us and the Lions. If anyone would like to join the Lions in their fund raising activities I will gladly give you Velma's details.

In fact 2013 was a productive year for the Chapel all around, because not only were we able to be involved in so many different and novel activities, for instance opening up earlier on Summer Sundays following Peter and Alison's suggestion that this could improve our profile within the local community, but also we raised very useful sums for Chapel funds. I mentioned the musical evening above, but we also had a West Gallery singing day in August involving members of three local choirs. This was attended by Joan and myself. Peter

and Alison were again on hand, and with Joan's help worked hard on refreshments and raised nearly £100.

The Carol Service on 15<sup>th</sup> December was also a huge success - no surprise there - as everyone who can gets involved. The Chapel was a credit to us all. We had many of our usual visitors and some new faces too, who also got involved (taking the collection and washing up) which was unexpected and very heartening. One new face, with a very tough act to follow (thanks Dean), was Santa Claus. And what a wonderful job he did; he certainly swept the little ones along, and the not so little ones too I might add. We were all enchanted (thanks Craig). The Carol Service is so important to our small community in that it gives everyone a chance to take a little time out, enjoy some carols, see people who can't be with us so often and catch up with each other on a joyous and merry occasion; all too few of those I'm afraid. Joan Thursby kindly crafted chocolate boxes for our young visitors and those that were left over were again taken to the youngsters in Derian House, who received them with grateful thanks. Oh, and the collection achieved £229.00 - many, many, thanks.

So, 2014 has begun and with a bang. Our first service on 5<sup>th</sup> January celebrated the Epiphany and we were treated to a wonderful experience as The Bennett Singers sang three numbers for us during the service: "Lo, the Eastern Sages Rise" performed as a round, "Siya Hamba", a Zulu song and "The Lord is My Shepherd" to the setting used in "The Vicar of Dibley". It was a joy to listen to and we showed this by hearty applause. The Bennett Singers, led by Jan Turner, are a local community choir who practise in Rivington Parish Hall. We are indebted to Lesley Roberts, one of their number, who helped us to

make the link with the choir. The service was followed by refreshing tea, biscuits and fruit cake.

2014 began with a bang in a different way, because part of the ceiling upstairs in the vestry has given way. Whatever the reason it's a good job we are here to see to it. No doubt its repair will run smoothly along with our plans to freshen up and revive the vestry's use.

Coming up we have The Rivington Spring Festival on the first weekend in May (2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>) during which we are open for visitors on the Saturday (3<sup>rd</sup>) with craft and produce stalls for them to enjoy in our historic Chapel. It's a fun day and any help you can give in time or crafts or produce is appreciated; a little effort goes a long way. We are also hoping to combine with the festival in a new way (on the Friday night) by way of a murder mystery play written by Chris and June Martin. Chris and June have kindly agreed to let us use their play without taking a fee, so now . . . will we be discovering new and hidden acting talent? Do we have any willing actors?

And on that bombshell I wish you every blessing for a serene 2014

*Vince*

Chairman

Lay Person in Charge

## **Dates for Your Diary in 2014**

Sun 6 <sup>th</sup> April	Congregational AGM
Sat 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Rivington Spring Festival and Open Day
Sun 18 <sup>th</sup> May	Anniversary Sermons Service to be led by Rev Danny Crosby, Dunham Road & Urmston Chapels
Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> June	Strawberry Tea Service to be led by Dr Irvine Delamore
Sat 13 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Late Summer Fair and Heritage Open Day
Sun 21 <sup>st</sup> Dec	Carol Service

## **From the Committee**

The committee meeting held on November 17 was mainly concerned with the organisation of the Carol Service.

The next meeting will be on February 16, when we will be considering items for discussion at the Congregational AGM. Please note the date of the AGM, which is later than in previous years, to allow more time for the Chapel Accounts to be finalised and audited.

There is still space on the flower donor rota for the first Sunday in March. If anyone would like to provide flowers for Sunday 2 March, please contact Joan Thursby (contact details on the back page).

## **Charter for Compassion**

At a recent service, the visiting speaker, Aled Jones from Dunham Road Chapel, led us in a responsive litany that he had based on the Charter for Compassion. It is reproduced here with his kind permission.

**Leader:** Compassion is at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions.

**Congregation:** It asks us to treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves.

**Leader:** Compassion commends us to work hard to alleviate the suffering of others.

**Congregation:** Compassion requires us to dethrone ourselves from the centre of the world.

**Leader:** In both public and private life we are to refrain from giving pain to others.

**Congregation:** To act or speak violently and to incite hatred is not part of our humanity.

**Leader:** We call on all to restore compassion to the centre of religion and morality.

**Congregation:** To believe in the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that leads to violence or hatred is wrong.

**Leader:** To make compassion a clear and strong force in our divided world.

**Congregation:** Compassion can break down boundaries.

**Leader:** Because of our individual personal interdependence, compassion is essential for a peaceful humanity.

**Congregation:** Compassion is the way to enlightenment, to the creation of a just economy and peace in the global community.

The Charter for Compassion is a document that transcends religious, ideological, and national differences and is supported by leading thinkers from many traditions. The original document can be seen online at <http://charterforcompassion.org/the-charter/#charter-for-compassion>

### **Trustees Matters**

As Vince has said in the chairman's letter, part of the ceiling in the upper vestry has recently fallen down. We will be obtaining quotes for repairing this and dealing with other outstanding problems as soon as possible so that the matter can be discussed at the next trustees meeting.

### **Treasurer still required**

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, Chris Houghton has done sterling work in his role of treasurer for the Trustees since 2001. However, due to family and work commitments he would prefer to relinquish the role at the AGM of the trustees in March. If anyone is interested please contact me by email or on 01942 816569. Alternatively, if you wish to know details of what the role entails please contact Chris directly (his contact details are on the back page).

**Peter Bearon**

**Chairman of the Trustees**

[trustchair@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:trustchair@rivingtonchapel.org.uk)

## **A Glimpse of Byzantium**

Leyland, the small Lancashire town, has its surprises. Of course it has a market, a transport museum, an old police station turned coffee house, but suddenly we find a flourishing Greek Orthodox (Byzantine) Church. This was a discovery made recently by a group studying Modern Greek.

In 2007, an old Methodist church was transformed into an Orthodox Church with a congregation of about one hundred. Its interior is quite unlike any other, glowing with eastern colour. According to its priest, Father Christodoulos Fyles, and his Greek wife, there has been a growing community since the Liturgy was first served in Preston. Now in Leyland, the Church has a congregation of about 100 worshippers. The services take the form of a bi-lingual dialogue which is mostly in English and which includes modern harmonies with its ancient melodies. Their wonderful icons or pictures of saints and apostles are symbolic expressions of divinised humanity, not naturalistic representations: the hair, clothes, body positions and background being fixed according to a traditional formula. Their function is not to be objects of worship but rather to be windows into a transcendent reality. That is why the eyes are always a striking feature and why these were always struck out by invading Ottomans.

Historically, the Orthodox Church is probably the earliest church, going back to the Roman Emperors Justinian and Constantine. It shared its saints with the Roman Catholic Church until 1054 when there was the dispute over Papal authority.

On the face of it, the Orthodox Church with its ancient rituals and



elaborate liturgy has little in common with Protestantism. Yet it finds that Protestants readily relate to Orthodoxy's emphasis on a personal faith through the Scriptures and also on the belief that a Christian Life is a spiritual pilgrimage.

They claim that there are 300,000 British people who are Orthodox Christians (rather more than are Unitarian!) and that there are altogether 250 million adherents in the world. This is not a religion that lives in the shadows!

**Dennis Crompton**

### **A Note from the Editor**

Don't forget that if you would like to help us reduce the cost of printing and posting the newsletter, you can opt to have an e-mail version rather than a paper copy. You can, of course, read this and past issues online at [www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk). If you are happy to do so, please contact me on [newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk), so that the mailing list can be amended. Chris and Lynne Haighton, who distribute the newsletters, would also be grateful to be kept informed if there are any other amendments that need to be made to the list. Their contact details can be found on the back page of the newsletter.

**Alison**

## Dates for your Diary

### Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

2 February	Clare Grace - Gateacre Chapel
16 February	Larry Bode - Dean Row Chapel
2 March	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
16 March	Peter Sampson - Lancaster
6 April	Chrissie Wilkie - Dean Row Chapel
20 April	Rev Nicky Jenkins - Chorlton Chapel
4 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel

### Flower Donors

2 February	Alison Whitaker and Peter Bearon
16 February	Iris Wharton
2 March	
16 March	Joan Thursby
6 April	Olive Mayor
20 April	Olive Fisher
4 May	Jacqueline Dagnall

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If you would like to arrange a ceremony at Rivington  
Chapel, please contact the Chapel Secretary.

Joan Thursby tel: (01204) 520264

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## Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sat 15 February 12:00 pm	Wedding of Marie Clare Laughlin and Antony Glyn Stubbs
Sun 16 February After service	Congregational Committee Meeting
Wed 19 March 7:30 pm	AGM of Chapel Trustees
Sun 6 April After service	Congregational AGM
Sat 19 April 2:00 pm	Wedding of Sandra Jane Wrennall and Stephen Gordon Jackson

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Please send your contributions electronically if possible to the email address above. For those without access to the internet I am still happy to receive handwritten copy,

## ***Your Committee***

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