

Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel

Here let no man a stranger be



News sheet 14 3 January 2021

In 2021, we are aiming to open for services on the first and third Sundays of the month, subject to COVID-19 restrictions (but see below for 3rd January)
As we are likely to remain under restrictions for some time, we will continue to produce monthly news sheets for the first part of 2021.

Our services in December

The service on Sunday 6 December was taken by Rev Alex Bradley from Knutsford Chapel.

For our Zoom Christmas Carol service on Sunday 20 December the number of screens reached a total of sixteen. One of these was occupied by Father Christmas who joined us for a while. We were able to sing along at home to eight of the carols in the green hymnbook, plus number 93½, 'The Holly and the Ivy', for which we were accompanied on melodeon by Peter. Readings between the carols included items by Christina Rossetti, Alfred Tennyson, Samuel Longfellow, Nancy Butler, Margaret G Rhodes, Henry Van Dyke, R L Stevenson and A A Milne.

January services

We were intending to have a service in Chapel on Sunday 3 January. However, during December there was a problem with the heating system which means that the storage heaters are not working. The Chapel is therefore extremely cold (4°C mid-morning on Wednesday) and with the prospect of the weather continuing as it is until at least the weekend we have decided that we should not meet there on Sunday. The service will now be on Zoom and will be taken by Vince.

We hope that everything will be working again by Sunday 17 January, when the service will be taken by Hannah Stevenson. As there are five Sundays in the month, we are also intending to have a Zoom meeting on Sunday 31 January. Internet connection permitting, the service in Chapel will also be on Zoom.

The joining details for the Zoom services are: **Meeting ID – 768 122 9647: Password – 322865**
(These details replace the codes we used during the first lockdown). You can also join by clicking on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7681229647?pwd=NkFMTVFWQUFmREtGdmppOFpSaWVBZz09>

Attending services under COVID-19 restrictions

If you are attending a service in Chapel, please remember that we are subject to restrictions on meeting and socialising (as of 31 December, those applicable in Tier 4 areas). We have a range of measures in place to help to keep everyone safe. These include the provision of hand sanitiser, a requirement to wear a face covering and a restricted number of pews in use. The success of these measures in preventing transmission of the virus depends on everyone who comes to Rivington Chapel bring careful to observe them. We ask that you keep to the social distancing requirements, maintaining a distance of 2 metres between you and anyone outside your household or support bubble. The easiest way to do this is to stay in your pew before and during the service. Once the

service has finished, it is important to avoid blocking the aisles, so please stay in your pew until you can leave safely, and then go straight outside. In Tier 4, it is permitted to meet just one other person in a public outdoor space, which means going beyond the Chapel grounds on to the Village Green.

Living Waters Foodbank

At the Carol Service, Lynn Greenwell told us about the work of the Living Waters Food Bank in Chorley (more information on the website: www.lwchurch.uk). We decided that to support them we would have a collection of food items and toiletries during January. This would, of course, have begun on Sunday, but we can start the collection at the next service we are able to hold in the Chapel, and if necessary continue beyond the end of January. There will be a box in the Chapel where you can leave any items you bring.

Global Chalice Lighting

For millennia, the Fire has been in the centre of human communities.

Our ancestors used to gather around it.

Today, we are assembling around this flame to renew our community.

May the flame of our Chalice make this community warmer and stronger.

Words by Štěpán Mairovský from the Prague Unitarian Congregation

A New Year Blessing from Vince

As this New Year awakens and the growing morning light gladdens your soul, may your days start with new strengths for your purpose and end with the satisfaction of deeds done well.

This year may all your thoughts be happy and bring you the best of all outcomes, may all your words be the kindest possible and may all your actions show that should your God call, you are ever ready to be by their side.

This year may all your hellos bring a smile of gladness to those around you and your goodbyes never cloak a sadness and may you be the best 'You' that you can be.

Amen

Although the Chapel is now open for services, not everyone will wish or be able to attend which will still affect our income. If you wish to contribute what you would have put in the collection you can still do so via CAFDonate. There is a 'Donate' button on the front page of our website www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk or you can go directly to <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/12556>

We would be very grateful if you would consider supporting the Chapel in this way if you cannot attend in person, or prefer not to use cash.

Contact details

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Please get in touch if there is anything you need to discuss or would like some help with.

Following Dennis Crompton's death in October, Judith has provided this piece which was written by him following a previous stay in hospital.

NHS December 17th

Occasion: surgery for melanoma: wide excision on scalp; skin-graft; removal of sentinel lymphatic node.

Preparation and the actual procedure of the operation were well up to the high standards of NHS surgery. Post-op nurses were friendly and efficient.

And then, on reaching the recovery ward, I found I had entered that wondrous warm cosy fog of the NHS Communication System (perhaps the only downside of the organisation). First, the need for the toilet: a cheerful nurse said that they had lots of bottles available. After twenty minutes I realised that availability was one thing; delivery was quite another. I rose from my bed and asked for directions. Another cheerful nurse pointed towards a distant location. The journey along the corridor made me aware that I did not have my dressing gown which was in my overnight bag locker in Ward 3. Unfortunately I was now in Ward 4. "Oh, don't worry," said a passing nurse cheerfully, "I'll get it straight away." More time elapsed. Perhaps 'straight away' meant something different in Romanian. I wasn't sure because I was distracted by the arrival of a sombrely-dressed official who sat by my bed, looked closely into my eyes and said, "Now Eddie, can you tell me how many aspirins you take daily and can you remember how long you have been taking them for? You don't mind me calling you Eddie, do you? I replied that if that made him happy then it was OK with me, but as for the aspirins I can hardly recollect ever having taken any. He edged nearer and placing his hand on mine said, "Come, now Eddie, don't play games; you know very well you are Eddie Unsworth and on aspirins, don't you? At this point I began to feel that I could have been Mr Unsworth and that all the cheery nurses and the stranger could have been part of an alternative universe (or at best, figments of my imagination conjured up by the Goddess Amnesia). However, the strange man had risen and, shaking his head sadly, left me alone with my thoughts. But I was not done with unreality. Suddenly there appeared, like the miraculous banquet in *The Tempest*, a heavily laden canteen. I was now being served with a three-course meal detailed, I noted, not for Mr Unsworth but for a man with a Polish name. So clearly my identity crisis was not yet over. However, I was soon reassured when I found that my very own dressing gown had arrived and I was dressed ready for the next cheerful nurse who arrived asking what medication I was on. Feeling by now quite frisky I replied that I wasn't expecting any but if she had a brandy and ginger ale to hand, I would call the day a happy one.

Why ever do people need hallucinatory drugs? Just go along to Ward 4 of Preston NHS and happiness awaits you – eventually.

Dennis Crompton