

Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel

Here let no man a stranger be



News sheet 2 19 April 2020

Rivington Chapel is temporarily closed due to Government COVID-19 restrictions.

During the closure we want to keep in touch with as many of you as possible.

Here is the second of the news sheets that we are producing to coincide with our usual service dates.

Our on-line services

We've had two successful services so far using Zoom. There have been about 20 people participating each time, mainly Chapel members, but also some 'visitors', including Laura Dobson from Chornton Unitarians, Ian Bradbury from Norcliffe Chapel, Styal and Val Chamberlain from Bury who took a service for us back in January. The prize for the people who live furthest away (so far) goes to Vince's brother's partner Linda and her Mum who were in Kent. We also welcomed Hannah Stephenson from Southport, who is going to lead the service on 19 April.

The services have mainly followed our usual format, but with fewer hymns. Some people have lit their own chalice and candles of sharing. On Easter Sunday Alison and Peter led the hymns and contributed a reading (see below). At the end of each service the meeting has stayed open for a while so that everyone could have a chat.

We are intending to continue our services on a weekly basis, with the meeting being open from 2:00 pm to give you time to log in. If you wish to take part or suggest something that we could include, please let us know. Vince would also like to hear about anyone you know who has been particularly affected by the current crisis, so that they can be remembered in prayers.

A reminder that if you want to access the service you will need to have a Zoom account on your computer, tablet or mobile phone. This is free to set up at www.zoom.us. There is information about using Zoom in News sheet 1, and the Meeting ID and password are the same.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/692966413>

Meeting ID: 692 966 413

Password: 080216

Details will also be put on the Chapel website www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk and Facebook page (Rivington Unitarian Chapel)

Tanya Smalley, one of our organists, would to thank the Chapel for the financial support we have been able to give her while the Chapel is closed. The money has come from a grant we have received from the MDA.

Our Easter Reading (*An extract from a 2001 Easter sermon by the Reverend Michael McGee, a Unitarian Universalist Minister from Arlington, Virginia. It is adapted from a story by Jim Wallace.*)

A group of friends of various religious denominations were seated in fellowship discussing the true meaning of Easter one Sunday when the Baptist said: "I believe we place too much emphasis on chocolate bunnies, coloured rabbits and Easter eggs instead of the spiritual aspects, which is the

real meaning of Easter. That's what I believe," said the Baptist. "Me too," said the Methodist. "Me too," said the Lutheran. "Me too," said the Catholic. "Me too," said the Nazarene. –And the Unitarian Universalist was silent.

"I believe the real meaning of Easter is that Christ died on the Cross for our sins," said the Methodist. "Me too," said the Nazarene. "Me too," said the Lutheran. "Me too," said the Baptist. "Me too," said the Lutheran. –And the Unitarian Universalist was silent.

"I believe the real meaning of Easter is the triumph of Jesus over the Grave," said the Lutheran. "Me too," said the Catholic. "Me too," said the Nazarene. "Me too," said the Baptist. "Me too," said the Methodist. –And the Unitarian Universalist was silent.

"I believe the real meaning of Easter is not only what each of you have said, but also that all people who believe in the sacrifice and Resurrection of Jesus are cleansed of original sin through baptism and are restored to the favour of God and many share in His eternal Life," said the Catholic. "Me too," said the Nazarene. "Me too," said the Baptist. "Me too," said the Methodist. "Me too," said the Lutheran. –And the Unitarian Universalist was silent.

"I believe the real meaning of Easter, in addition to what has already been said, symbolizes that the bodies of all people will be resurrected and joined to their souls to share their final fate," said the Nazarene. "Me too," said the Baptist. "Me too," said the Methodist. "Me too," said the Lutheran. "Me too," said the Catholic. –And the Unitarian Universalist was silent.

The group then turned to their Unitarian Universalist friend, whom they all recognized as a little strange, and said, "Your silence is a mystery to us. Just what do you believe as a Unitarian Universalist is the real meaning of Easter?"

The Unitarian Universalist ... said: "I believe the real meaning of Easter is the appreciation of life's renewing cycles and, that for all things there is a season. I believe the real meaning of Easter is the acknowledgment, with its accompanying sadness, of a very human Jesus who was forced to die on the Cross because of his liberal religious views and beliefs. But most important of all, I believe the real meaning of Easter is the Celebration of Thanksgiving for the presence of the sacred in each and every living person and thing; for the presence of the sacred in the birds that sing; for the presence of the sacred in the flowers which sway and the grasses which rustle in the gentle breezes of spring. This is what I believe is the real meaning of Easter," said the Unitarian Universalist.

"Me too," sang the birds. "Me too," waved the flowers. "Me too," rustled the grasses. "Me too," sighed the wind. — And all the rest were silent.

As we will not be receiving income from collections while the Chapel is closed, we have set up a separate donation page on CAFDonate so that anyone who wishes to do so can contribute what they would have put in the collection. There is a 'Donate' button on the front page of our website www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk or you can search directly on <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/12556>

We would be very grateful if you would consider supporting the Chapel in this way. Many thanks to those who have already done so.

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