

# Ribington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel

*Here let no man a stranger be "*



News sheet 18     2 May 2021

Although some COVID-19 restrictions are being relaxed, it was agreed at the AGM that the Chapel will remain closed for services until Sunday 6 June at the earliest. We will continue to hold Zoom services on the first and third Sundays of the month until the Chapel reopens.

Until more normal arrangements are in place, we will continue to produce monthly news sheets.

## **Our services in April**

Rev Alex Bradley from Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford took the service on Sunday 4 April. This was Easter Sunday, and the theme was Awakening to New Life. On Sunday 18 May it was the turn of Hannah Stevenson from Southport Unitarians, who talked about the importance of Questioning. We heard about Clyde Tombaugh, the American astronomer (and active Unitarian Universalist) who discovered Pluto in 1930. There were also excerpts from the Book of Questions by Pablo Neruda.

## **May Services**

In May, the services will be taken by Vince McCully (Sunday 2 May) and Larry Bode from Dean Row Chapel (Sunday 16 May). This will be our Anniversary Service, the 318<sup>th</sup> if my calculations are correct. As last year, a Congregational meal is still on hold, but it was suggested at the AGM that we could have an online afternoon tea following the service. We will also raise our customary toast to the Chapel and to 'civil and religious liberty the world over' so please have a suitable beverage ready. Of course, you can still do this even if you are unable to join us on Zoom. There'll also be a collaborative Zoom service on Sunday 30 May - ideas for a theme are welcome.

The joining details for the Zoom services are: **Meeting ID – 768 122 9647: Password – 322865** You can also join by clicking on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7681229647?pwd=NkFMTVFWQUFmREtGdmppOFpSaWVhZz09>

## **Publicity Officer**

I'm pleased to report that Jacqui Kershaw has agreed to be our new Publicity Officer. We hope it's not too long before we have something to publicise!

## **GA Meetings**

The business elements of this year's General Assembly Meetings were condensed into one day and held on Zoom. There were well over 200 people participating, 110-plus of whom were registered as voting delegates. The voting process was automated using a separate website. Mostly everything went smoothly, though there were inevitably a few technical hitches from time to time.

More motions had been submitted for consideration than could be debated, so part of the first of the morning sessions was taken up in deciding which would be accepted. The four chosen covered a wide range of subjects: whether there should be divestment of GA funds from companies involved in fossil fuel production; how the Unitarian Youth Movement should be developed post-pandemic;

whether a formal 'Code of Ethics' is needed to provide a mechanism for dealing with grievances or disciplinary matters; whether the GA should give formal support to the interfaith Red Cross Memorial Peace Appeal.

There were also the usual administrative motions such as the acceptance of the annual report and accounts and the appointment of auditors. Retiring ministers, including Rev Brenda Catherall from Chow Bent Chapel, were thanked and ministers new to the roll were welcomed. Rev Celia Cartwright was at last able to relinquish the role of President, having served two years instead of the usual one due to the cancellation of the 2020 GA meetings. Anne Mills from Bury Chapel is the new President, and Rev Sue Wooley, District Minister of the Midland Unitarian Association, is Vice-President.

As a consequence of the proceedings being restricted to one day, other events which usually take place, such as lectures, workshops, training sessions and Affiliated Society meetings, were not able to be included. However, there was a Worship Service on the Friday evening on the theme of 'Recovery and Renewal: Inclusive worship for our beloved Unitarian community', which included time for reflection and remembrance of those who have died over the past year.

On Saturday evening, the event was rounded off by an online social gathering hosted by Unitarian College.

### **Bus service to Rivington**

On Sundays and Bank Holidays, some of the Diamond Bus 575 buses which run between Bolton Interchange and Old Lords Estate in Horwich are providing a half-hourly service to Rivington Village. Details of the timetable can be found on the Transport for Greater Manchester website at <https://tfgm.com/public-transport/bus/routes/575-bolton> Now we just need a bus from the Chorley direction.

### **Questions – from the Book of Questions by Pablo Neruda**

Where is the centre of the sea? Why do waves never go there?

Why do trees conceal the splendour of their roots?

Do tears not yet spilled wait in small lakes? Or are they invisible rivers that run towards sadness?

Have they counted the gold in the cornfields?

Does smoke talk with the clouds?

How many churches are there in heaven?

While the Chapel is closed, if you wish to contribute what you would have put in the collection you can still do so via CAFDonate. You can either follow the Donations link on our website [www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk) or 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.