

# Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

*"Here let no one a stranger be"*



Feb 2023 – Apr 2023

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

Facebook: Rivington Unitarian Chapel

## Lay Person in Charge's Letter

A New Year is upon us and we wonder what lies ahead. 2022 was a bit of an annus horribilis; what should have been a year of joy upon joys after the privations of Covid lock-downs was, instead, soon derailed by inexplicable and extreme brutality meted out on Ukraine by Putin. Our economy suffered the knock-on effect of fuel uncertainty and industrial relations are the worst since the nineteen eighties.

2023 must be when our 'great and good' come into their element and put us back on track with meaningful input from a government focussed on the public good rather than its own damage limitation. In the meantime we get on with what makes our Unitarian chapels tick; activities in and for the community such as festivals and food collections and practice of worship and piety which includes regular services and attention to detail with rites of passage.

In the recent start of the year services, it has been hard not to look wistfully at the passage of time, its vastness and that of the universe, and our smallness by comparison. Nick Hughes, a research fellow at Dublin, puts these thoughts into healthy perspective when he says *"We might be distinctly lacking in power from the cosmic perspective, and so, in a sense, insignificant. But having such power and such significance wouldn't make much of a difference anyway. To lament its lack and respond with despair and nihilism is merely a form of narcissism. Most of what matters to us is right here on Earth."*

Is there really room to dwell on our apparent insignificance, when in Nick's words *"... most of what matters to us is right here on Earth."*? A preoccupation for us Unitarians, amongst other churches, is how do all our chapels survive. Well, through the consistently hard work of our congregations, that's how. Lads and lasses who take time out from their busy schedules to get on with the tasks that are always at hand.

All our chapels are special places of piety and worship where we can find a haven from quite an unforgiving world. Our chapels are there for us when we need them and for other 'non-chapellers,' too. Here we can find fellowship, if not from another's simple act of kindness, then from a strength, a bond wrought from common purpose. I would add that we are nowhere near extinct; when we have the appeal of being meaningful, inclusive, diverse, non-judgemental, and unprejudiced towards all of humankind, then we will never fail. When folk walk into our chapels they feel this warmth, they know they are valued and won't be overlooked or in any way marginalised.

As a chapel in 2022 we were kept pretty busy emerging from the insularity forced on us all by Covid. Everyone's talents were greatly valued and indeed relied upon. The Rivington Spring Festival and our September Heritage Open Day/Fair were back, as were our beloved Carol Service, Strawberry Tea, Anniversary Service and Harvest Festival. Then there was our big one, the Pilgrimage to celebrate 'Civil and Religious Liberties the World Over' and the accompanying very popular indoor picnic. We were blessed with a fine August day for a canal adventure as we took to the local waterways, where 'there be dragons'. Chris Martin introduced some wonderful Christmas Cards to accompany his increasingly popular calendar and, never one to be idle, he produced not one but two murder mystery plays. We're going to be very busy if we are going to match this in 2023.

In closing I wish everyone every success and blessing and that 2023 is all you want it to be.

Stay safe and God bless

*Vince*

**Lay Person In Charge**

## 2023 Calendar

Sun 19 Mar	Congregational AGM
Sat 13 May	Rivington Village Festival
Sun 21 May	Anniversary Sermons
Sun 4 Jun	Strawberry Tea
Sat 9 Sept (tbc)	Heritage Open Day and Late Summer Fair
Sun 15 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 17 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

### Chairman's Letter

In November the Chapel once again provided space for some of the stalls at the Christmas Craft Markets organised by the Village Tea Rooms. The Scenic Rivington calendars and Christmas cards were on sale, and the stallholder fees brought in £110 for the Chapel.

You'll see from the notice below that Sunday 19 March is the date of the Congregational AGM. As usual, the posts of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members will be up for election. There are some vacancies on the Committee, so if you are willing to consider joining, or you'd like to know more about what is involved, please get in touch.

This year's General Assembly Annual Meetings will be held on 4-6 April at Staverton Park Hotel near Daventry in Northamptonshire. Registration is now open and, as last year, subsidised tickets are available for first time attenders, younger adults, and those less able

to afford to attend. More details of the venue, pricing and other information can be found at [www.unitarian.org.uk/annualmeetings](http://www.unitarian.org.uk/annualmeetings) If any of you would like to give it a try this year, please let me know. Those of us who have been can confirm that it is well worth it.

A little while ago Paul Lacey sent us a pdf of some research notes he made a few years ago about the 11<sup>th</sup> Baron Willoughby and some of his family. If anyone would like to see these notes please let me know and I'll send you a copy.

**Alison Whitaker**  
**Chairman, Congregational Committee**

### **Notice of AGM**

The Annual General Meeting of the Congregation of Rivington Chapel will be held after the service on

Sunday 19 March 2023

A Nomination Form for the posts of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members will be displayed on the notice board in Chapel.

The closing date for nominations will be Sunday 5 March 2023

The happiness of life is made up of minute fractions - the little, soon forgotten charities of a kiss or a smile, a kind look or heartfelt compliment.

**Samuel Taylor Coleridge**  
(a Unitarian in his early adulthood)

## **Talk, Tea and Teacake**

Chris Martin is continuing his series of talks about the Chapel. These take place on the first Wednesday of each month at 3:00 pm, and will give visitors a chance to learn something about the history of the Chapel before repairing to the Tea Rooms for a cup of tea and a teacake. Tickets cost £5.00 (£3.00 for concessions) and are on sale at the Tea Rooms. The next talk will be on Wednesday 1 February.

## **Virtual Tour**

Amongst those who attended the first of Chris's talks was Daniel Stenson who runs ViewPro360, a company which helps organisations to improve their online presence using 3D Virtual Tours and Drone photography. In conjunction with Chris, he has created a Virtual Tour for the Chapel.

The tour shows a 3D image of the interior of the Chapel, and by clicking on the buttons for the highlighted features you can find information about each one.

You can 'enter' the virtual tour either by following this link <https://rivingtonchapel.org.uk/virtual-tour-of-rivington-chapel/> or using this QR code if you have a reader on your phone or other device.



## **A Thought**

We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are found in the world of our body. If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change...be the change you want to see in the world.

**Mahatma Gandhi**

## **A Winter Blessing**

Taste winter - let it nourish you.  
Drink deep from the icy draught  
the frozen lake holds out;  
it is a medicine for the soul,  
more potent  
than the sugared promises of summer.

Let the broken trees,  
made wise by their losses,  
cradle you in skeletal arms.  
May the open sky be your canopy;  
A vast expanse of possibilities,  
Uncluttered by the mirage of warmer days.  
Let the biting wind gnaw at exposed flesh,  
kneading your inner marrow  
into a leaner shape.

Allow the whiteness of driven snow  
to purify the landscape of your mind -  
washing clean the gaudy colours  
of the rushing world.

Let the clogging mud stick firm to weary feet,  
a reminder to hold fast to the good earth.  
Listen to the stillness of air now emptied of birds  
and reflect upon your inner songs  
which grow in silence.

Look deep beneath the crust of frosty earth,  
where dormant shoots pregnant with promise,

tell of the births yet to come.  
Here the lone shriek of the curlew  
echoing across dark waters;  
throw back your head  
and join its desolate cry  
as it waits  
for certain spring.

**Rev Sheena Gabriel**

From **Worship Words**, the new Unitarian online repository for  
worship resources: <https://tinyurl.com/GAWorshipWords>

**A story** (contributed by Iris Wharton)

There is an old parable about a farmer whose horse runs away. 'Such bad luck!' say his neighbours. 'Maybe,' replies the farmer.

Then the horse returns, bringing two other horses with it. 'Such good luck!' say the neighbours. Again, the farmer replies, 'Maybe.' His son tries to ride one of the untamed horses and breaks his leg. 'Such bad luck!' say the neighbours. 'Maybe,' comes the reply. The son's broken leg means that he avoids having to fight in a war. The neighbours call it good luck - the farmer offers his usual reply. And so on...

The story is one of those cited in a book by philosophy professor Kieran Setiya (Life is Hard: How Philosophy Can Help Us Find Our Way) The farmer's theme of 'It all depends how you look at it' is also echoed by the 1920s thinker Frank Ramsey: 'I don't feel the least humble before the vastness of the heavens. The stars may be large but they cannot think or love.'

**From a review of Kieran Setiya's book by Mark Mason**



## **Publications**

Please contact Chris Martin (01257 483702, email: [chris\\_and\\_june@hotmail.com](mailto:chris_and_june@hotmail.com)) if you would like to buy any of the various Rivington Chapel publications, details of which can be found on the website: [www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk/publications](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk/publications)

## **Donations**

Please remember that if you are not able to attend services in person, you can donate what you would have put in the collection via CAFDonate. Gift Aid can be added if you are a UK taxpayer.

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>

## **A Note from the Editor**

If you need to inform us of any change in your details, or if you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please contact me, either by emailing [newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) or phoning 01942 816569.

Also, please email if you would like to help us reduce the cost of printing and posting the newsletter by opting to have an e-mail version rather than a paper copy. You can read this and past issues online at [www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk).

**Alison**

## Dates for your Diary

### Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

5 February	Graeme Pilbrough - Padiham Chapel
19 February	Karen Eckersley - Chowbent Chapel
5 March	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
19 March	Hannah Stephenson - Southport & Ministry Student
2 April	Tina Gandhi - Walmsley Chapel
16 April	Jean Clements - Denton Chapel
7 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel

### Flower Donors

5 February	Alison Whitaker & Peter Bearon
19 February	Iris Wharton
5 March	Diane Fairclough
19 March	Frank Ascroft
2 April	Linda & John Green
16 April	Olive Fisher
7 May	Mary Horrocks

## Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 5 March      Naming Ceremony - Otis Albert, son of Rachel and  
1:00 pm            Joseph Denver  
                         Conducted by Vince McCully

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If you would like to arrange a ceremony at Rivington  
Chapel, please contact Alison or Vince  
Contact details overleaf

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**Copy date for next issue:    1 Apr 2023**  
**Issue date:                      16 Apr 2023**

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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.

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