

Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

"Here let no one a stranger be"



Feb - Apr 2024

www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Facebook: Rivington Unitarian Chapel

2024 Calendar

Sun 17 Mar	Congregational AGM
Sat 11 May	Rivington Village Festival
Sun 19 May	Anniversary Sermons
Sun 2 June	Strawberry Tea
Date tbc	Heritage Open Day and Late Summer Fair
Sun 20 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 15 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

Lay Person in Charge's Letter

I think we have all had a pretty busy last quarter to 2023 and as usual a 'full-on' Yuletide season. Let's hope 2024 is memorable for all the right reasons; it could hardly be more harrowing for some.

In Chapel we have, thankfully, got on with our usual activities and seen some new faces grace our pulpit. With a little luck there will be more to see in the coming year.

Yes, we're always keen to share our much-loved place of simple beauty with others and so I'd like to make a special mention of Chris Martin and Geoff Newey's "Chapel Open Hours" that take place on the first Wednesday of each month. These have attracted a lot of attention with upwards of thirty people visiting in January alone. Well done guys; you are making a big difference and some of these visitors have been coming to services too.

We had thirty-six visitors for the Rivington Parish Carol Sing in Decem-

ber (there are only 106 people on the parish register!). Was it the carols, or the brass band, or the mulled wine and mince pies? Maybe even a happy combination of all of them.

Being President of the GA (General Assembly) makes for busy times and inevitably some trips further afield. Since September, I have been to Brighton, Bradford, Leicester, Hinckley, York, Sheffield (twice), Leeds, London (twice), Chorley, Park Lane (thrice), Chowbent (led the carol service), Rochdale, Dean Row, Cross Street, Monton and Denton, plus Rivington (six times, including leading the carol service) and three Zoom meetings. A total of 29 occasions to wear the President's medal. I hope it doesn't wear out.

Amongst these, my visits to Hinckley and Chorley were for district meetings and so around 18 additional congregations were effectively reached. Sadly, at Dean Row, I attended the funeral, with Alison and Peter, of our dear friend Rev Penny Johnson. I am told they have never seen the Chapel so full and the gallery was creaking a bit - so fitting for such an outstanding figure in our faith. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ken. At Cross Street I was there for the Anthems for Advent service which was a bravura display of the Chapel's many talents and a true Yuletide adventure, as was the Christmas Fair (complete with real reindeer) at Monton Church. At Leicester I attended the induction of Arek Malecki as minister, and how joyous was this occasion. Again I met folk from many more congregations and witnessed a deeply moving inter-faith service where Arek received blessings from the City's mayor and from at least six other faiths. One each of my visits to London and Sheffield and the one to Leeds were to attend GA Executive meetings. These are a fascinating insight into the behind-the-scenes workings of our faith and, though high powered, they still have a very human and thoughtful dynamic.

My other trip to London was different altogether as I attended the National Memorial Service at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. This was another very moving occasion and during the two-minute silence you could hear a leaf fall. It was as if time stood still and King Charles cut a most solitary figure standing alone before the Cenotaph. The solemnity of the occasion was unmistakable and the deep recognition of the sacrifice and fortitude of this nation, in its time of greatest danger, was truly humbling. As you would expect I got some excellent photos which I have posted on Facebook (*these are on the Rivington Chapel Worship Zoom Gathering page - ed*). Highlights are the kindly wave from Princess Anne at Horse Guards Parade and another of a handsome chap at number 10 Downing Street. I urge you to attend this remembrance service as an onlooker if you can, you won't be disappointed.

Here's wishing everyone every possible blessing and a happy, healthy and successful 2024.

Stay safe and God bless

Vince

Lay Person In Charge

Chairman's Letter

We said goodbye to one of our regular organists, Hannah Carolan, in November. Hannah has moved to Chester for work, and we wish her every success in the future.

The Congregational AGM (see the notice below) will be held on Sunday 17 March, and we'll be holding elections for Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and general Committee Members. Apart from the officers, there are currently three Committee Members, and our constitution

allows for another four. If you'd be interested in joining the Committee, please let us know.

The 2024 General Assembly Annual Meetings will be returning to Staverton Park, near Daventry in Northamptonshire. They will run from Thursday 4 April to Saturday 6 April. I'm intending to go this time, and of course Vince will be there, chairing the meetings in his capacity as GA President. It would be great if some other Rivington members were able to go. There's a special reduced rate (£135, half the standard rate) for anyone attending for the first time. This covers 2 nights' accommodation and all meals. More information, including how to register, can be found at: www.unitarians.org.uk/annualmeetings

The flower rota has been updated, so please check it on the notice board in Chapel. If for any reason you are unable to provide the flowers when it's your turn, please let me know as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Congratulations to Marge Bradshaw who currently has an exhibition of her photographs at Bolton Museum. The exhibition is called 'Why We Ring' and celebrates Westhoughton Tower Bellringers. It runs until Sunday 24 March. One of the photographs has also been shortlisted for the British Journal of Photography Portrait of Britain award.

Alison Whitaker
Chairman, Congregational Committee

From Voltaire (18th Century French Philosopher and writer)

'I don't know where I'm going, but I am on my way.'

Notice of AGM

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

Sunday 17 March 2024

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 3 March 2024

Changes to The Inquirer magazine

(from a letter sent to subscribers on behalf of the Board of Directors)

Following the pandemic, the number of copies of The Inquirer taken
by congregations has fallen significantly, and this has led to a substan-
tial fall in our income, For the past two or three years, we have made
up the gap in income through grants and donations, as well as by us-
ing some of our reserves.

In addition to financial challenges, the media world has changed sig-
nificantly as has the way in which we consume news, including Unitar-
ian news. There is now a range of alternatives online in which people
can find out what is happening in and across the denomination and
discover the work of current Unitarian thinkers.

Our current print-only fortnightly magazine is not financially sustaina-
ble over the long term. But, we still firmly believe there is a place both
now and in the future for The Inquirer as a place where people can
connect to Unitarianism, that provides content that informs and in-
spires, promotes our shared Unitarian values and ethos, and main-

tains our living heritage.

As a Board we have decided to make important changes now so that The Inquirer will still be here in the future.

- As soon as possible, we will be launching a digital option for individual subscribers at a significant discount from print subscriptions.
- We will move away from fortnightly to monthly publication during 2024 with a substantially bigger edition of The Inquirer each month.
- We anticipate that this move will take place after the General Assembly Annual Meetings in April 2024.
- We will freeze the 2024 print subscription price at 2023 levels for both congregational bundles and individual subscribers.

Over its long history, The Inquirer has always relied on donations from individuals, congregations, districts and Unitarian trusts. We are extremely grateful to every one of these that continues to help fund the magazine. If you value The Inquirer as much as we do, we encourage you to consider making a further donation so that we can continue to connect Unitarians for many years to come.

From Rev Nancy Jay Crumbine, UU Minister

We are blessed with life-giving darkness these days and the slant of mid-winter light. May these winter days bring us not only the light of our precious traditions but the darkness of our sweet planet's turning under her faithful stars, the quiet of our own sweet turning inwardly and in peace.

From Rev Danny Crosby

No one can take away the suffering that is a part of life, but we do not have to fall into utter despair. We cannot do everything, but we can do something; it is our task, our duty, our purpose, our meaning to do so. The key is to find out what is in our power and what is not. To do what we can for the good of others and ourselves, for the good of all.

Rivington Open Hour

Chris Martin hosts an open hour in the Chapel on the first Wednesday of each month between 2:00 and 3:00 pm, when he gives visitors a free guided tour of the Chapel and talks about its history. The Chapel will next be open on Wednesday 7 February .

Virtual Tour

If you are not able to visit the Chapel in person, you can look at the 3D virtual tour created by Daniel Stenson from ViewPro360 in conjunction with Chris.

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.

There are now some QR codes in the Chapel and also at various points in the grounds.

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

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 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 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.

Alison

Dates for your Diary

Sunday Services at 2:15 PM

- 04 February Rev Danny Crosby - Altrincham and Urmston Chapels
- 18 February Janet Poole - Chowbent Chapel
- 03 March Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
- 17 March Larry Bode - Dean Row Chapel
- 07 April Graeme Pilbrough - Padiham Chapel
- 21 April Jean Clements - Denton Chapel
- 05 May Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel

Flower Donors

- 04 February Alison Whitaker and Peter Bearon
- 18 February Iris Wharton
- 03 March Diane Fairclough
- 17 March Frank Ascroft
- 07 April Linda and John Green
- 21 April Olive Fisher
- 05 May Sarah, Ros and Rose Williams

Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 25 Feb Naming Ceremony of Pippa Trafford-Baron
1:00 pm Celebrant: Vince McCully

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

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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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