



Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel

Founded 1662

Built 1703

"Here let no one a stranger be"



May - July 2024

www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Facebook: Rivington Unitarian Chapel

2024 Calendar

Sat 11 May	Rivington Village Festival
Sun 19 May	Anniversary Sermons and Meal
Wed 29 May	Traditional Music Session
Sun 2 June	Strawberry Tea
Sun 16 June	Flower Service
Sat 7 Sept	Heritage Open Day and Late Summer Fair
Sun 20 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 15 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

Not able to be with us in person? Why not join us on Zoom?

Meeting ID: 768 122 9647 Pass code: 322865

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7681129647>

Lay Person in Charge's Letter

(from Vince's Presidential Address to the GA Annual Meetings)

Being elected as GA President last year is the greatest honour that I have ever received; thank you. Although there have been so many Presidents before me and you'd think it was a well trod path, you'd be wrong. Just as every GA, every service we attend and every congregation is different, so too is each presidency. For we do like to be different, don't we, and we seem to revel in it; we thrive and exult in our diversity.

This year has been absolutely amazing, and I've been so fortunate to visit many different congregations and to meet so many people. Although there are so many different facets to our faith and the way we practise it, one resounding similarity has been the openness, the kind-

ness and the hospitality that I have received. It has so gladdened my heart and encouraged me to go on. You know, it takes quite a lot to stop me from my duties, something like a heart procedure perhaps or a trip to the ICU for instance, but that's by the by.

As well as thanking all the congregations that I have visited, I would also like to thank Liz Slade, Andrew Mason, Audrey Longhurst, Jo James, Simon Bland and all the Executive for the help and support they have given me this year; it's just not possible to do this job without their timely help. The Executive work so hard and largely unseen and unthanked on your behalf. I have been to their meetings and seen them in action, so I take this opportunity to applaud all their hard work.

This year I completed the residential part of the Advanced Worship Leader's course. It is intense and really concentrates both your mind and your spirit. I'm still learning so much, even after twenty-four years of leading worship. Myself and others on this and other courses owe a huge debt of gratitude to Helen Mason, Ant Howe, Winnie Gordon and other staff of Unitarian College, whose sustained and wholly selfless commitment is exemplary, inspiring and a huge boon to our faith. I can't recommend the worship studies courses highly enough, whatever your level of experience.

I have to thank my home Chapel of Rivington and Alison Whitaker, their Chairman, for putting up with my absences. I'm happy that they have managed so well this year without me being there. Thanks too to Park Lane and Chowbent Chapels where my duties have impacted on their pulpit supply rotas.

Also, a big thank you to Natasha Stanley, Manchester District's Administrator, who has always been on hand to help when called on

and specifically for helping to get monies into the Resilience fund and most recently getting our DBS and safeguarding procedures up to snuff.

One of the highlights of my year was representing our faith at the Cenotaph in Whitehall for the National Memorial Celebration. It's an odd word to use, celebration, but when you're there you understand. There are thousands of men, women and some children too who parade. But there's no jingoism here, their presence signifies the deep gratitude we have for the sacrifices others have made and indeed are making for our common good. In common with other Presidents I will never forget the profound silence at the Cenotaph - indeed you could hear a leaf fall.

I got to chat with most of the other twenty-one faith representatives while I was there and saw that there was free and open dialogue between all who were present. The first to approach me was the Humanitarian representative; other representatives I spoke with were the Spiritualist head, the Zoroastrian, The Salvationist, one of the Jewish heads (the other was in deep conversation with the Muslim representative), the Baptist and the head of the Church of Scotland.

Towards the end of my Presidency, I was thinking about how I could possibly describe it in a mere eight minutes; it would take you way longer than that to look at even a few of the pictures I've taken and put on Facebook.

Then I thought, if I was asked by the mythical visitor from Mars to describe our faith, I would say that we're very much like an art gallery, with all of our autonomous congregations being individual works of art, with some sharing a wall or maybe not quite a wall but a floor perhaps, with congregations being like a painting, a mural, or

a sculpture. But for all our differences we are one building which is Tolerance, we have one roof which is Freedom and a firm foundation which is Reason: the words emblazoned on my badge. I'd better stop here before I get lost in the analogy - you know the sort of thing, artists and janitors.

Another overwhelming message that I found wherever I went, and also in our recent publications, is our desire, our need to share what our faith gives us. By this I mean the freedom of thought that we have, this tolerance we have for another's point of view and being assured ourselves of genuine acceptance of our own individuality, of our own and therefore of other people's faith journeys. Yes, wherever I went I found this deep-seated urge to share what we have, and to do what it takes to make our places of worship tick.

If only for this reason alone then I feel great optimism for the future prosperity of our faith, a faith that clearly is a faith for all.

Stay safe and God bless

Vince

Lay Person In Charge

Chairman's Letter

Saturday 11 May is the Rivington Spring Festival. The Chapel will be open, and there will be live musical performances during the afternoon.

Our Anniversary Meal will be at 4:00 pm on Sunday 19 June at the Bay Horse in Heath Charnock. Roast meals will be available, or you will be able to choose from the main menu. Please sign the sheet on the notice board as soon as possible if you want to come, and indicate if you would like a roast meal. These will need to be ordered in advance and we will find out what the options are the week beforehand.

We now have a leaflet holder attached to the railings near the door to the vestry, which we will use for information about the various services the Chapel can provide and for advertising events.

Another new feature in Chapel is some amplification, which will make it easier for everyone to hear our worship leaders. Thanks to the Trustees, particularly Paul Fairclough, for organising this.

The service on Sunday 16 June will be a flower service. Everyone is asked to contribute a flower, and will be able to take away one that someone else has brought.

AGM report

The officers and committee were re-elected unopposed: Chairman - Alison Whitaker, Treasurer - Frank Ascroft, Committee members - Diane Fairclough, Paul Fairclough and Geoff Newey. Jacqui Kershaw continues in the role of Publicity Officer.

Vince was re-elected as Lay Person in Charge. He was unable to be at the AGM as he was on a Presidential visit to Golders Green Unitarians, but he had indicated his willingness to continue in the role.

Members were concerned about the high cost of electricity. The Committee will be looking into this in conjunction with the Trustees who will be contributing to the cost in the future.

The draft minutes have been circulated by email and there is a copy on the notice board in Chapel together with the statement of accounts. They will also be available on the Chapel website (www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk).

Alison Whitaker
Chairman, Congregational Committee

Oak Apple Day

Traditional Music Session



Wednesday 29 May

1:00 - 4:00 pm

Rivington Unitarian Chapel
Donations towards the upkeep of the
Chapel

Foundation in Lay Worship Studies

Unitarian College has sent out information which it has asked us to pass on to our Congregations about the Foundation Level Course to be run in September 2024.

The Foundation Step runs as an eight two-hour session Zoom course, with a mix of live teaching, videos, discussions and practical tasks. Topics covered are exploring your own theology of worship, developing elements of a great service, creating sermons and addresses, finding relevant prayers, meditations and readings, searching for hymns,

music and copyright, storytelling (including leading worship for children), practising voice and communication techniques and reviewing practicalities.

It is an ideal first step for anyone wanting to explore their Unitarian leadership and gain worship leading skills. Following the eight teaching sessions, students will lead a short online worship service before going on to deliver two locally assessed services.

The cost of the Foundation Step is £100 in order to make it as accessible as possible. Participants are encouraged to approach congregations and districts to help with funding. If your congregation is affiliated to the North-West Provincial Assembly, a £50 subsidy is available.

For further information please email admin@unitarian-college.org.uk or look on the Unitarian College website.

Report or the GA Annual Meetings 2024

A new venue for me; Staverton Park near Daventry in Northamptonshire. Less convenient for public transport, but a shuttle bus from Northampton station made sure I was there in time for the Opening Worship at 2:00 pm. This was led by Rev Laura Dobson and some members of the recently formed group 'Unitarians for Climate Justice' (U4CJ), who distributed bookmarks containing wildflower seeds. If they germinate successfully, perhaps we might find a corner of the Chapel grounds to plant them.

The first Plenary session began with a welcome from Vince, who as the President of the General Assembly was in the chair for the business meetings. The motion on Artificial Intelligence was passed with only one vote against and a few abstentions, so the EC is now 'instructed to launch an AI Response Task Group'; there was a call

from the EC for people who had voted in favour of this motion to volunteer. Also in this session Liz Slade gave the Chief Officer's report, reviewing her five years in the role and talking about how our congregations can best adapt in the future.

It is always difficult to choose which workshop sessions to attend, and there's often the feeling that you might have missed something really important or inspiring. The rest of my afternoon was spent listening to Derek McCauley talk about the work of the Hibbert and John Gregson Trusts (from which Rivington Chapel has received grants), followed by a meeting of the Unitarian Renewal Group which was celebrating its 50th anniversary with a look back to how it began and a discussion about the future. Over the three days I went to sessions about the future of the Inquirer magazine, about safeguarding and about 'Thriving Congregations' at which we heard some details of the Toolkit that is being put together to support Congregational development.

There was also a Collaborative Session which proved a brilliant way to meet people for one-to-one conversations, each lasting five minutes, speed dating style. I chatted with people from Mill Hill in Leeds, Richmond and Putney and Rosslyn Park in London, The Unitarian Music Association and the National Unitarian Fellowship. When they spotted 'Rivington' on my name badge, their first question was either 'Where's that?' or 'Isn't that Vince's Church?'

Since the meetings went from four days to three, the Keynote Speech and the John Rely Beard Lecture have been combined. This year's talk was easily the most interesting that I have heard on my visits to the GA meetings. It was given by Roman Krznaric and was on the subject of how we can become good ancestors, employing

more long-term thinking to make sure we leave a worthwhile legacy for future generations. The speaker was introduced by Helen Mason, Director Unitarian College, who revealed that John Rely Beard, a 19th century Unitarian Minister who worked with William Gaskell, was her three-times great-grandfather.

On Friday morning there were two Plenary sessions. During the first there were reports from Unitarian College and the Ministry Stipend Review and a short talk about the Decelerator Project, which aims to help organisations facing closure to do so in as positive way as possible. The main business was to debate the motion in support of the 'No More Deaths' Campaign which calls for an independent body to investigate state-related deaths. This was passed with a large majority.

The second session proved somewhat controversial. Motions to approve the annual report and accounts that are usually a formality became a matter for debate and revealed a difference of opinion between members of the EC over aspects of the finances. Eventually there was a proposal from the floor to move to next business without voting, which was carried by the necessary two-thirds majority. The steering committee certainly had to work hard to make sure correct procedure was followed.

An amended motion on the situation in Gaza and Israel was put forward, which was adopted, (again this had to have a two-thirds majority) but because the session was overrunning, voting was adjourned until the following day. The amended motion was passed almost unanimously, though there was quite a strong feeling from some delegates that it might have been watered down too much.

The Anniversary Service was led by Rev Rory Castle-Jones and the

preacher was Rev Ant Howe, whose address was very uplifting and inspiring. The text of his address appears in the latest edition of The Inquirer (13 April). There's a copy in Chapel, or you can download a pdf copy at [Samples Downloads – The Inquirer](#)

On Saturday morning, the final Ordinary Motion was debated. The proposers wanted to restore the option of having more than four ordinary motions and one emergency motion at the GA meetings. As this would have required a change to the constitution of the GA, a two-thirds majority was needed. The voting was too close to obtain this, so the motion was not carried.

The session also dealt with two motions from the Executive Committee. The motion on making preparations for the GA to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation was presented in an amended form, which will allow for a longer period to consider the implications before a final proposal is brought to the Annual Meetings in 2025. This was carried unanimously. The motion on developing a matched funding scheme to invest in local leadership was also passed by a large majority.

The closing session dealt with the remaining business. Vince gave his Presidential Address and then handed over the Presidency to Geoff Levermore, who in turn appointed Rev Jeffrey Bowes as Vice President and proposed a motion of thanks to Vince. Earlier, Honorary Membership of the GA had been conferred on Dot Hewerdine and Revs John and Celia Midgley for their long service to Unitarianism.

With that the Annual Meetings were over for another year. A very full three days, but lots of good company, a chance to meet both new and familiar people, and the food was excellent too!

Alison

Scenic Rivington Calendar 2025

Chris Martin would like to invite you to contribute photographs which celebrate the natural beauty of the Rivington area for possible inclusion in next year's calendar. You can submit photos at any time of year, but the cut-off point for the following year's calendar is August 1st. Thirteen images (one for each month and a cover photo) will be selected and all whose photos are chosen will be notified before we go to print. Please send your photos (landscape format only) to chris_and_june@hotmail.com

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 1 May.

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

05 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
19 May	Anniversary Sermons Professor Geoff Levermore - Norcliffe Chapel
02 June	Rev Lynne Readett - Chowbent Chapel Strawberry Tea
16 June	Janet Poole - Chowbent Chapel Flower Service
07 July	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
21 July	Christina Smith - Ministry Student
4 Aug	tba

Flower Donors

05 May	Sarah, Ros and Rose Williams
19 May	Jacqueline Dagnall
02 June	Judith Crompton
16 June	Jacqui & Tim Kershaw
07 July	Frank Ascroft
21 July	Jacqui & Tim Kershaw
4 Aug	Elsie Kent

Other Dates and Ceremonies

- Sat 1 June Wedding: Cathryn Dutton and Stephen Fairclough
 Celebrant: Vince McCully
- Sat 8 June Wedding Blessing: Chris and Grace Unsworth
 Celebrant: Vince McCully
- Sat 29 June Wedding Blessing: Ian and Joanne Rigby
 Celebrant: Vince McCully

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

Copy date for next issue: 1 Jul 2024

Issue date: 21 Jul 2024

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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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