

# Rivington Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

*"Here let no one a stranger be"*



Feb - Apr 2025

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

Facebook: Rivington Unitarian Chapel

## 2025 Calendar

Sat 10 May	Rivington Spring Festival
Sun 18 May	Anniversary Sermons
Sun 01 Jun	Strawberry Tea
Sat 13 Sep	Heritage Open Day
Sat 27 Sep	Rivington Triennial Pilgrimage
Sun 19 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 21 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

Here's to a New Year full of promise and happiness. . . as soon as the snow and frost are gone. Our first service in 2025, on 5 January, had to be cancelled because of the above.

It's a good job the snow held off in December, what with so many events being held in Chapel, from a visit by Matt Smith, a celebrity TV Vet, the Parish Council Carol service and Christmas Quiz to, of course, our own Carol Service. Always a special occasion, it was extra special this year as we all played out a 'Christmas Play' originally performed by our Sunday School children in 1886, one memorable line being *'Christmas comes but once a year. We'll have no sad faces here'*. This was possible because of our links with Horwich Heritage Centre who lent us some of their resources (the

1886 Sunday School register), wherein the play was found. Santa Claus also managed to fit us into his busy schedule on the day and he certainly wowed the youngsters, and we had plenty of goodies to share with the children at Derian House.

Of course, every season has its pros and cons and while it can be comforting to huddle down and let the weather do its worst outside, there's still stuff to be done, places to be and people to see. So, roll on Spring and Summer, Festivals and Strawberry Teas and in the Autumn it is our Pilgrimage of course. The speaker, who will propose the toast to Civil and Religious Liberties, will be our next GA (General Assembly) President, Rev Jeffrey Bowes.

I'll wrap up now and wrap up too against the snow outside. Stay safe and keep warm and well and all the best for 2025!

Stay safe and God bless

*Vince*

**Lay Person In Charge**

### **Notice of AGM**

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

Sunday 16 March 2025

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 2 March 2025

## **Chairman's Letter**

The Congregational AGM (see the notice above) will be held on Sunday 16 March, and we'll be holding elections for Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and general Committee Members. If you'd be interested in joining the Committee, please let us know.

The 2025 General Assembly Annual Meetings will be held at Birmingham Hilton Metropole Hotel near the NEC. They will run from Saturday 12 April to Monday 14 April. The reason for holding the meetings at the weekend is to make it easier for people who are working during the week to attend. I'm intending to go and am happy to be the Chapel's delegate if the Congregation agrees. However, it would be great if some other Rivington members were able to go. There's a special reduced rate (£150, which is less than half the standard rate) for anyone attending for the first time. This covers 2 nights' accommodation and all meals. More information can be found at [www.unitarians.org.uk/annualmeetings](http://www.unitarians.org.uk/annualmeetings) and registration has just opened.

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.

Since September I've been attending the monthly online Administrator's Network meetings hosted by Lizzie Kingston Harrison, the GA Congregational Connections lead and Jenni Duffell, Church Administrator at Shrewsbury. It's been interesting to find out about some of the issues facing other Unitarian Chapels, how they are similar to or (particularly in the case of churches in urban centres) different from our experiences at Rivington. There's always a useful exchange of in-

formation, and I've been made aware of matters that we need to look into, such as making sure we keep to the rules regarding copyright and some of the implications of holding events in the Chapel.

Horwich Heritage Centre have recently been given various books and documents by the family of Martin Brownlow and they have passed on those that are relevant to the Chapel. There are several books from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century that were once in the Sunday School Library, plus the library register showing who borrowed books between 1865 and 1961. Among the documents are several pew rent records and copies of bills for work done at the Chapel. I'm in the process of making a full list before we make a decision about where they should be kept.

**Alison Whitaker**

### **Trustees Matters**

As stated in my previous Newsletter report, our new secretary, Mr John Winstanley has been in post and serviced the September Trustees' meeting as well as reviewing the General and Fire Risk Assessments, tasks which are always undertaken by early December of each year. During his appointment, John was enthusiastic about using the Chapel as a venue for a number of events which would publicise the Chapel as well as provide income from any profits made. The first of these was a highly successful book signing by the author and actor from the Yorkshire Vet TV series, Matt Smith. The event on 12 December attracted over 50 paying attenders, the majority of whom purchased a signed copy of his book entitled *My Life as a Yorkshire Vet*. We hope that this may pave the way for other events during 2025.

Regarding our investments, our Investment Treasurer, Chris Haighton, has now overseen the transfer of all these funds to a new investment platform which the Trustees and their financial advisor consider more appropriate to a charity such as the Chapel.

The work on the Columbarium wall extension at the north side of the Garden of Remembrance is now complete, almost within our projected budget of £16,000. The details of how niches are to be allocated, at what costs and for what periods of time are currently being discussed with the aim of finalising the conditions in time for the AGM and Trustees' meeting in March.

One last action for the year was the successful felling of the beech tree on 17<sup>th</sup> December. This was the tree that shed a large branch in July 2023 with a second branch falling in August of the same year. Apart from a smashed horizontal gravestone, no major damage was done, but our tree doctor, Andy Wing, considered the tree to be a danger. This enabled us to receive a grant from The Manchester District Association for half the costs, for which the Trustees are extremely grateful.

We have been advised to consider bringing forward our next Quinquennial Review into 2025 as doing so will mean that this can be organised by the MDA and full costs borne by them and the Hibbert Trust.

**Richard Horrocks**  
**Chairman of the Trustees**

## **A lovely start to the festive season**

It was mid-December when we went to decorate the Chapel window before heading over to the Tea Room for our Christmas lunch. The room was beautifully decorated, the food was excellent and the staff all had smiles on their faces. It was someone's birthday and while the cake was brought to their table, we all sang 'Happy Birthday' which created a warm and inviting atmosphere. This became even warmer, while we sat next to a roaring fire, which was absolutely bliss on a cold wintery day! A big thank you to Jayne, Jade and all the staff for a lovely start to Christmas.

**Iris and Olive**

## **Blessings for Imbolc**

The Gaelic festival marks the beginning of spring, traditionally observed at the beginning of February, halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox.

Both blessings have been published on the Worship Words website.

### **Imbolc Blessing**

May the ashes of all our fires replenish  
May the snowdrops inspire our presence  
May the soils sense the poetry that we all are  
May fire hold and heal our community  
May we walk our path with the knowledge of light  
May we open willing and forever unafraid.

**Rev Mark Hutchinson**

## **Brigid's Well, blessing for Imbolc**

May you drink deeply from the well of courage

May the waters of life hold you

And carry you gently to the sea

And may you never thirst for Love

Blessed Be

**Rev Laura Dobson**

## **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 5 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](http://www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk/publications)

Chris would like to thank everyone who bought one of the 2025 'Scenic Rivington' calendars or some Christmas cards. The cards are sold out, but there are just a few calendars left in Chapel if you still need one.

## **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

02 Feb	Graeme Pilbrough - Padiham Chapel
16 Feb	Paul Hubbard - Padiham Chapel
02 Mar	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
16 Mar	Jean Clements - Denton Chapel
06 Apr	Rev Laura Dobson - Chorlton Chapel
20 Apr	Cathy Brennan - Park Lane Chapel
04 May	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel

### Flower Donors

02 Feb	Alison Whitaker
16 Feb	Iris Wharton
02 Mar	Diane Fairclough
16 Mar	Frank Ascroft
06 Apr	Linda and John Green
20 Apr	Olive Fisher
04 May	Sarah, Rose and Ros Williams

## Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 2 Feb      Congregational Committee Meeting  
After service

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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 2025**  
**Issue date:                      20 Apr 2025**

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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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