

Rivington

Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel



Founded 1662

Built 1703

'Here let no one a stranger be'



Nov 2026 - Jan 2027

www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk
Facebook: Rivington Unitarian Chapel

2026 - 2027 Calendar

2026

Sat 21 Nov	Christmas Craft Fair
Sat 28 Nov	Christmas Craft Fair
Wed 16 Dec	Parish Council Carols
Sun 20 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

2027

Sat 8 May	Rivington Spring Festival
Sun 17 May	Anniversary Sermons and Chapel Meal
Sun 6 June	Strawberry Tea
Date tba	Heritage Open Day
Sun 17 Oct	Harvest Festival
Sun 19 Dec	Christmas Carol Service

Lay Person in Charge's Letter

We have had quite a busy summer and early autumn and fellowship has abounded. First there was our Heritage Open Day and Autumn Fair in September; this is always a popular event with locals and visitors to Rivington alike. It is a great delight to see the genuine interest in visitors' eyes as we recount highlights of our Chapel's 323 year history. Thank you to all who were able to support; it's just not possible without you.

It is the saddest thing when one of us dies and we mourn the loss of our friend John Green. A longtime member of our congregation, John is now, and always will be, sorely missed by us all and our hearts and prayers go out to his wife Linda and John's family and friends. We held a moving and heartfelt service of remembrance for John in a completely full Chapel on 15 September.

We 'Made a Noise for Peace' on Sunday 20 September, giving our support to 'International Day of Peace'. Starting with readings, prayers and 'Song of Peace' (hymn 226 in the green book) in Chapel, we moved to our Garden of Remembrance where Chairman Alison Whitaker was the first to chime our Peace Bell and give a reading (words attributed to Lau Tzu, a Chinese philosopher), followed by the Mayor of Horwich, Cllr Kevin McKeon, members of Chapel and Ann Howell (representing the Unitarian General Assembly). Also present was County Councillor Kim Snape and Borough Councillors June Molineaux and Peter Wilson. Afterwards we all enjoyed tea and biscuits and a good chat.

During the week commencing 21 September we lit up the front of Chapel with pink fairy lights. We were happy to do this in response to a request for landmarks to be so lit by Natalie Wood. This was in support of 'Organ Donation Week', of which Natalie is a local organiser.

Next on our list of activities is the 'Harvest Festival' on 18 October, at which our very own Tanya Smalley will lead worship (and play the organ, no less). The produce we collect on the day is then distributed to homeless charities in Chorley and

Manchester, notably, Help the Homeless and Coffee4Craig respectively. Throughout the year I am also able to get fresh produce down to Coffee4Craig who cook meals for the street people of Manchester, helped by Sheila, my wife, who volunteers at 'Fair Share', a food charity in Adlington who sometimes have excess that they can share.

This year's activities will conclude with our Carol service on Sunday 20 December and the theme is, "The Holly and the Ivy, God's Evergreen Love". This carol was a great favourite of Chapel stalwart Joan Holding and even though it is not in our hymn book we have inserted our own page and numbered it 93½. If you can only come to one of our events, and you like to sing, come to this one. We should really call it a 'carol fest'.

Another Christmas activity Chapel is involved in is the Rivington Parish Council Carol service that we host. A festive affair, there is a brass band, mulled cider, mince pies, carols a-many and even a Christmas quiz. This will be held in Chapel at 6:30pm on Wednesday 16th December.

On the horizon there are exciting things afoot for Chapel and we must congratulate Paul Fairclough, the Chairman of Trustees. Paul has been working tirelessly in the Chapel's interests for years and the latest projects are the installation of an internal WC and remodelling of the vestry. Other news is that we will be having wifi installed in Chapel. This is due to a major investment by the MDA (Manchester District Association) in the infrastructure of all thirteen of its Chapels.

Both developments will have far reaching benefits for Chapel life and our interaction with the community. The wifi will be an enhancement of our security measures as well as increasing our outreach by allowing live-streaming of services through Zoom. Making the vestry more user friendly will mean it being a heatable and accessible space for community activities, with possibilities such as a book club, chess club, art club, metaphysical club and a meditation area, amongst other things. Add to this the parking available at the front (above the green), especially when the Tea Rooms close at 4pm every day. So, exciting times ahead I think you'll agree.

Stay safe and God bless

Vince

Lay Person in Charge

Chairman's Letter

You might notice that this edition of the newsletter looks a bit different. This is because it has been produced using a different publishing package from the one used previously. Microsoft has 'retired' its Publisher programme, so, on the recommendation of Natasha Stanley, the MDA Administrator, I've given CANVA a try. CANVA is a web-based package, which has meant getting used to quite a different way of working. I'm still learning what it can do, so there might be a few hiccups while I get used to it.

Opening for Heritage Open Day on a Sunday made little difference to the number of visitors, but over £100 was raised from the sale of preserves and produce. A couple of people who came were very interested in perusing the documents

from Martin Brownlow's collection to look for mentions of particular names which feature in their family history.

On Sunday 15 November, we'll be having a Congregational service with contributions from or suggested by the members. As it coincides with the annual 'Safeguarding Sunday' we are going to use this year's theme, which is 'Love Protects'. So, if you have any ideas for items (readings, music, hymns etc) to include that would fit this theme, please let me know.

The Chapel was full on 15 September for the funeral of John Green, who had died unexpectedly the previous month. John's roots were, through his father's family, Unitarian, and he went to Chowbent School. He was a member here for over thirty years and we will all miss him, not least for his excellent washing-up skills.

Alison Whitaker
Chairman, Congregational Committee

Trust Matters

As autumn draws near and winter is not far away, all the cleaning of paths and graves has come to a stop until next spring. It's time to turn back on the Chapel storage radiators. These will run for the next six months, supported by dehumidifiers when needed, keeping an interior temperature of 8°C or above. This helps to maintain the fabric of the building. On service days, under-seat pew heaters are also used to provide comfortable surroundings. All this power usage is an expensive item, but the good news is that, following discussions with our energy supplier, the Chapel

has been able to reduce its V.A.T. charge down from 20% to 5% - a welcome saving!

The Vestry Development: the plans are prepared and are now awaiting Listed Building Consent (LBC). Once we have this, we can obtain quotes from builders and explore possible grants/funding sources. Until then we need to wait, but I will keep you informed as things develop.

Paul Fairclough
Chairman of Trustees

Some Seasonal Thoughts

No more Poppy Petals Needed

Peace means not-war

Peace means no violence

Peace means we will have learned not to fight over disagreements

Peace means humanity will have finally grown up

Peace means kindness without limits

Peace means there will be enough plough shares to go round

Peace means equity between all people

Peace means trust and respect

Peace means heroes without guns

Peace means no more corruption

Peace means we will have embraced honesty

Peace means no more poppy petals needed

Peace means no war heroes to be mourned

Peace means no war widows, widowers and orphans

Peace means no more poppy petals needed.

Rev Celia Cartwright

A Samhain Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Elements

Spirit of Life, we praise and thank you for the element of Air:
Great Wind, who blew our ancestors here from over the sea,
bring us your inspiration, that we may know our breath
is the same air breathed by our ancestors.

We praise and thank you for the element of Fire:
Great Sun, who has sustained all life on Earth since it began,
bring us your cleansing warmth,
that we may heal the wounds of the past.

We praise and thank you for the element of Water:
Great Ocean, who nurtured the first life on Earth
and nourishes us all still,
bring us your flowing love,
that we may show compassion to each other and to all
beings.

We praise and thank you for the element of Earth:
Great Cradle, Shelter and Tomb,
who births us all, nourishes us and receives us again,
keep us grounded and help us to respect and care for you,
as we become ancestors for those who will follow us.

Amen and Blessed Be

Rev Laura Dobson

Published on the Unitarian Worship Words website

John Green 1948-2026

On 31st March 1996 I walked into Chapel on my dad's arm, accompanied by bridesmaids Alison, my Cousin Lesley and God-daughter Hannah with Page Boy Richard. Waiting for me was John, the love of my life. The ceremony was joyous with music provided by friends and floral decorations provided by Alison. A very personal wedding and a day that we always looked back on with great happiness.



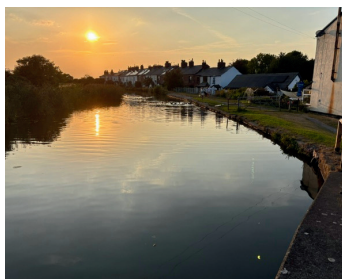
We had a great life, making music with friends at home and further afield. We travelled to many places in our various campervans and motorhomes, especially after we both retired and had time to make longer, more adventurous trips. We moved several times and John used his skills to transform each house into a comfortable home.

On 31st March 2026 we celebrated our 30th Wedding Anniversary by moving into what we thought was to be our Forever Home. The first four and a half months seemed an endless stream of workmen with a new driveway, wardrobes, shed and boarding out the loft. But we did manage to squeeze in very enjoyable trips to Upton, Chester and Warwick Folk Festivals as well as the Christening of my Grand-Goddaughter Maeve.



On Wednesday 12th August we had a lovely walk across the fields at the end of our road to watch the eclipse armed with paper and a colander. We walked along the canal and watched the sun set with a drink outside the Farmer's Arms.

On the way back we chatted with a cat, several ducks and some canal boat people. We both agreed that it had been a wonderful evening and we should do it again.



On Friday 14th we emptied the last few things out of the storage unit, handed the keys back and felt a sense of having finally completed a huge task. Our new life could begin properly at last. Sadly, that wasn't to be. We went to bed happy that night, anticipating a lie in, a cooked breakfast and some time in the garden. John never saw the next day, but I take comfort in the fact that he lived a good life right to the end.

His funeral was, just like our wedding, done with love by his friends from the music to the flowers and Judith, who married us 30 years ago, taking the service. The Chapel was packed. "The only measure of your words and your deeds is the love you leave behind when you're done". He left a lot of love and they all came to show it.

I am beginning to feel increasingly that, somewhere along the way, fate led us to this bungalow. Not, as we thought, for us, but for me. I have lovely neighbours who have all rallied round. Everything I need can be found on my doorstep. John would be content to know I am settled here and safe.



John was never happier than when he was making people laugh or feel good about themselves. So always remember him as he would want you to - with a smile.

Linda Green

The solitary bee

Nesting in the cracks of my old brick wall
The notes of a song thrush loud, intense
From a nearby tree
The passing hare, slowly creeping
In the field beyond, ears flat to avoid detection

I sit amongst them
Part of this rich diversity
Fragile and necessary
Side by side with the natural world
In all it's splendour

Sam Tassera

*Published on the Unitarian Worship Words website and
included in the October edition of Uni-News*

Email addresses

Please use these email addresses to contact the officers of the Chapel Trustees and for other specific reasons.

trustchair@rivingtonchapel.org.uk to contact the Chairman

trustsec2@rivingtonchapel.org.uk to contact the Secretary

trusttreasurer@rivingtonchapel.org.uk to contact the Treasurer

remembrance@rivingtonchapel.org.uk for enquiries about the Garden of Remembrance

estates@rivingtonchapel.org.uk for matters relating to the buildings and the grounds

Virtual Tour

If you are unable 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 QR codes in the Chapel and at various points in the grounds.

Publications

Please contact Chris Martin (01257 435860, email: publications2@rivingtonchapel.org.uk) 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

The 2027 'Scenic Rivington' calendar is now on sale, price £7.50. They are available in the Chapel, the Tea Room and other local outlets. There are also some packs of Christmas cards featuring wintry scenes in the area.

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>

If you would prefer to donate by bank transfer or set up a standing order directly to the Chapel's bank account, please ask for the account details.

Sunday services at 2:15 pm

01 Nov	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
15 Nov	Safeguarding Sunday Members of the Congregation
06 Dec	Jean Clements
20 Dec	Christmas Carol Service
03 Jan	Vince McCully - Rivington Chapel
17 Jan	Tanya Smalley - Rivington Chapel
07 Feb	Geoff Levermore - Norcliffe Chapel

Flower Donors

01 Nov	Jacqui and Tim Kershaw
15 Nov	Judith Crompton
06 Dec	Carol Worsley
20 Dec	Christmas Decorations
03 Jan	Christmas Decorations
17 Jan	Mary Horrocks
07 Feb	Alson Whitaker

Other Dates and Ceremonies

Sun 15 Nov Congregational Committee Meeting
After service

Sat 17 Jan Naming Ceremony
12:00 Scout Annie Leonora Britton and
 Olive Taylor Ivy Britton
 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 Jan 2027

Issue date: 17 Jan 2027

send to: newsletter@rivingtonchapel.org.uk

Please send your contributions electronically if possible to the email address above. For those without access to the internet I am happy to receive handwritten copy.

Please also use this address if you need to inform us of any change in your details, or you no longer wish to receive the newsletter.

You can read this and past issues online at
www.rivingtonchapel.org.uk

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Position vacant

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