

HULL UNITARIAN MAGAZINE



March to
April 2015

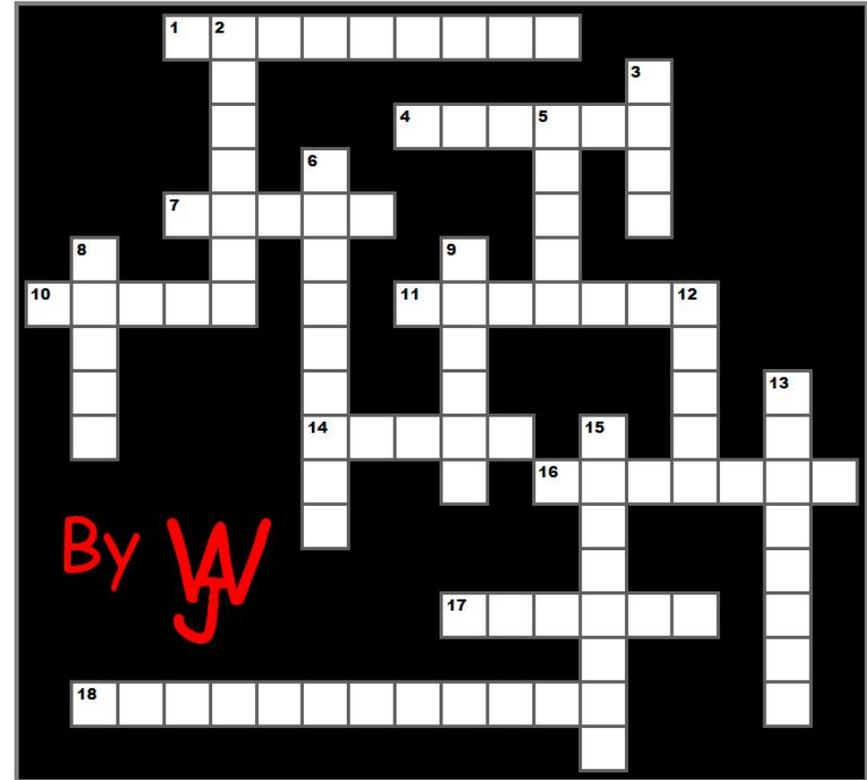
SERVICE 11.00am SUNDAY

Welcome



COFFEE MORNING
10.30 am - 12 Noon
FRIDAY

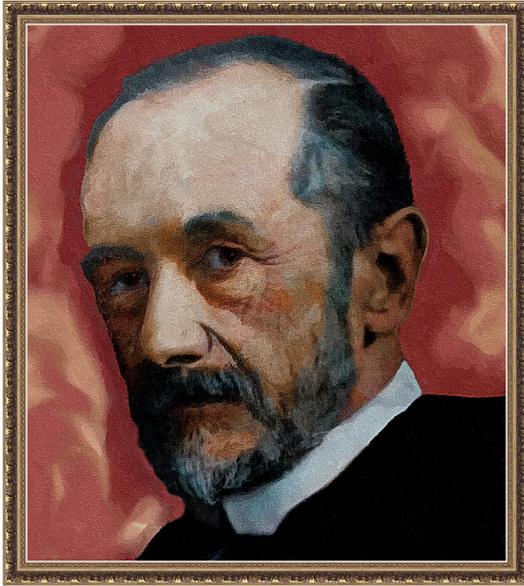
Liberal
Religion
at
HU2 8TA



Across

Down

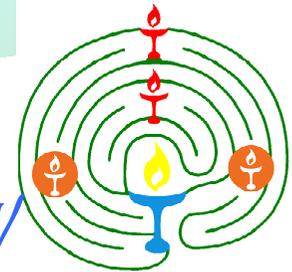
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Godly graced John: the follower e-endless tails Vince. (9) 4. Ha! He was their buddy and teacher. (6) 7. Hull whiskery minister guest in spire 1883. (5) 10. Extended competition for Chester the dog's attention. (5) 11. The a.m. light tune when the flame of truth is kindled. (7) 14. US TV presenter Sings her Faith tune 099. (5) 16. In Birmingham, a verb becomes a noun for new Unitarians. (7) 17. One per minister is 1883. (6) 18. (Said Puritan churchman) Byne: pray, stir. (12) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Sermon living location. (7) 3. Note my words, some Scots used his name to hide their Unitarianism. (4) 5. Reverend alternative CCCCIX, once a singular curry, similarly still get a car... (5) 6. Hardly basket weaving or similar activity on a long German road. (9) 8. In some composed expression it sounds 'safe', but we want adventure even in on first name terms. (5) 9. Welsh like it rhymes, on a Friday morning. (6) 12. General U.S. gift. (5) 13. The shofar in the Dec Jan issue: do you locate it in an eco village of spirituality? (8) 15. Hull towards joined-up estuary, e for i. (8) |
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DIXON, Rev. James M., left the Methodist Church to join the Unitarian Congregation at Sunderland, where he occasionally occupied the pulpit. While a lay preacher here, he was invited to take the pulpit at Dewsbury, whence he was called to Hull, where he ministered for sixteen years, a new chapel being built during the latter years of his labour. Died February 22, 1883, age 60.

The decision was made not to produce a March supplement but a March and April edition and its timing is based on the start of Ralph Catts's ministry and relevant content. This is evident in the preaching rota below and included articles. I design, write or rewrite, unless otherwise stated, and I compile, but the magazine is actively overseen by Ralph Catts and also by Keith Brown. Adrian Worsfold
adrian@pluralist.co.uk

Services next in March and April



PUZZLES



Spot the Difference Changes



Here is the solution to the puzzle in the previous issue.

This issue it is back to the crossword. Hopefully it is a little easier this time.

Ralph Catts	Compassion	8th March	11:00 am
Brinley Price	A New Religion?	15th March	11:00 am
Ralph Catts	Planting a Seed	22nd March	11:00 am
(Pending)	(GA Sunday)	29th March	11:00 am

Ralph Catts	On Easter	5th April	11:00 am
Ralph Catts	On the GA	12th April	11:00 am
Ralph Catts	New Directions	19th April	11:00 am
Ralph Catts	Anzac Day	Sat 25th April	11:00 am
Rev. John Midgley	(To be advised)	Sun 26th April	11:00 am

Pastor's Newsletter, March 2015

return address:
Dr. Ralph Catts
Chamberlain House
HULL HU2 8TA



The Congregation
Hull Unitarians
Chamberlain House
HULL
HU2 8TA

As I commence my term of service to Hull Unitarians I express my gratitude for the opportunity you have provided for me to engage in my vocation as a Unitarian spiritual leader. I will seek to serve with care and consideration for all in our congregation, both members and friends. I undertake

to listen and to endeavour to understand your hopes, aspirations and concerns, and to seek ways to enable all of us to continue in our life journeys. Unitarians are free to identify their beliefs, but also we are each responsible for listening, respecting and learning from each other. We embrace the principles of tolerance, understanding and compassion. By welcoming diversity of beliefs, lifestyle and experiences we can support each other on our life journeys and especially on our exploration of spiritual experiences and religious beliefs.

In your call to Ministry you asked for many things to be addressed and I am committed to responding to the confidence you have placed in me. To take things forward we need to decide collectively where to start. We are few in number and I believe that the best way to renew our Unitarian community is to support some common goals and to achieve these so that, having experienced success, we can then grow stronger in spirit and in numbers. I want the decisions about priorities to be informed by the views of all the members and friends of Hull Unitarians. I propose therefore to contact each one of you to seek an opportunity to meet so that I can listen to your individual and collective hopes and concerns.

I will report back on all the views expressed and I will seek to do so in a manner that allows all voices to be heard, but without my attributing views to individuals, unless you ask to be identified. Of course, some of you will inevitably think you can guess at what some people might say, but I suspect that at least some of the time, you will be mistaken - for

and, excepting Ireland, Cromwell represented toleration and diversity. **So the winners of the Civil War could have fought amongst themselves.** Cromwell dissolved the Long Parliament and thus liberties continued: even Biddle, the early Unitarian, was sent to the Scilly Isles with an income; many Puritans wanted death for Socinians. Lord Protector from 1653, Cromwell detested bishops, disliked the evident intolerance of Presbyterians whilst sympathising with Independents. He



monitored via *The Committee of Triers* and also Lay Commissioners around the land. Even Episcopalians were tolerated if they did not use the *Prayer Book*, but Calvinism was assumed. Approaching 7000 priests were ejected from their livings.

When the bishops were restored in 1660, **it was a matter of swiftly removing Presbyterians:** those who could not assent and consent to the whole of the *Book of Common Prayer* of 1662. Some did stay, and accepted bishops, ceasing to be Presbyterian, but the rest were gone. They might have had a parish mentality, and although the *Thirty-nine articles* contains an element of Calvinism, their Church was an imagined Calvinism.

Protestant Churches fell into variable illegal and semi-legal

existence until the Dutch monarchy replaced the Stuarts. We in Hull descend from two such shadowy Churches, which in 1680 merged into one.

When English Presbyterians and their successors fought again for their rights **they then included the liberties of others, and one reason was the trustees' social position as an emerging capitalist middle class against the whole feudal (Anglican) regime seeking political inclusion.**

It was Independents who demanded that members assent to evangelical doctrines. English Presbyterians drifted through Arminianism under good economic living and theological education (among ministers), and so these trustees and pew-renters took on the liberal Unitarian revolution.

Scottish missionaries led to the founding of the Presbyterian Church of England that did have Presbyteries and went on to form the United Reformed Church, along with most Independents in 1972.

Did the Christianity Timelines Diagram in the last issue miss at least one link line from the Church of England to the English Presbyterians? On a simple basis, yes, because in 1662 some 1700 ministers were ejected from the Church of England. (A later connection between Anglican Arians and the first named Unitarian church in 1774 was implied by nearness: the work of Samuel Clarke and his Arian tilted *Book of Common Prayer* used by ex-Anglican Theophilus Lindsey, who discovered that liberal Anglicans tend to remain and so his church was absorbed by the English Presbyterian stream.) However, it can be argued that a line from the Church of England to Presbyterianism is misleading. Were they ever Anglicans? Anglicanism is defined by its three orders of ministry of bishops, priests and deacons. Even though in a reformed Church of England Presbyterians would have lost presbyteries, they insisted that bishops must go.

The descent into Civil War was the high point of the Presbyterian emergence into power, having bubbled up within the only fully legal Church structure. Parliament appointed the Westminster Assembly of Divines that began its work on 1st July 1643. 119 of the

149 were ministers and all were Presbyterians except for five independents and a few episcopalians. The *Apologetica Narration* said that Scripture alone should be the guide for its action, but the Independents showed influence because it also stated that where any believers were gathered for the sacraments then here was a Church, and such worship should be free of ecclesiastical and



political interference. But it didn't happen like that with the Presbyterian majority in Parliament, seeking Scottish support against the King, accepted in 1646 the *Scottish Solemn League and Covenant* and thus brought Presbyterianism officially into England. In 1647 Parliament tried to insist that every Army officer take the Presbyterian Covenant, and at one point Parliament would have disbanded the Army. Cromwell's Army took upon itself, via its prayer meetings, religious diversity, with a whole range of Protestant groups represented within its ranks. The Army became the Church Militant,

what people say in public, and what they would really like to say, can be different.

The focus of our discussions will be on the way forward for our community. For that reason, while there may be issues from the past, I ask that you focus your mind on the way forward. To that end I ask that you look at the document from last December called: Hull Unitarians - Our Guiding Principles, Vision and Objectives. The document outlines our principles and then summarises the priorities for the congregation. I have reproduced this list below and I will ask for your thoughts and reflections when we talk.

This process of consultation has an added benefit in that it also allows each of you to get to know me a little better, and for me to start to get to know each of you. I am happy to meet with you individually, but also if you prefer to meet two or three together. I invite you to meet with me at the church, or if you prefer I can come to visit you.

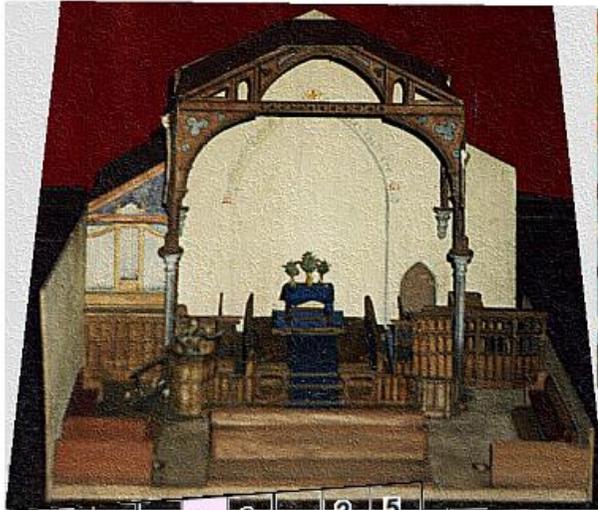
The tasks listed below are complex and demanding. I therefore want you to not only think about what you would like us to attempt in the various areas of activity proposed, but also to identify what you think are the priority areas where you feel my ministry should first be focused?

(A) Improve our worship services; (B) Ensure that our financial path is clearly planned; (C) Strengthen the efficiency of our governance, ensuring that the leadership has a good understanding of the concerns of the congregation; (D) Improve community awareness; (E) Establish a Pastoral Support Plan; (F) Involve our church membership in making a contribution to our community and the world (G) Ensure that all future decisions move us forward in becoming a green community; (H) Transforming Chamberlain House.

To give justice to your ideas, and to have time for us to connect as well, I suggest you plan on one hour for our initial meeting. I am happy to have ideas in writing (in brief please) but I will rely primarily on what I learn in discussion.

Timing is important since I want to prepare a report to the congregation by March 26 at the latest. I will ask you to sign up at church - there will be plenty of times available. If we can keep to this timetable there will be a chance for the congregation to discuss what I have learnt at an open meeting after the service on Sunday April 19.

With blessings, Ralph Catts



Enjoy!

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(Answer: Feb-Mar)

Pastor: Dr. Ralph Catts Tel: 07444540925

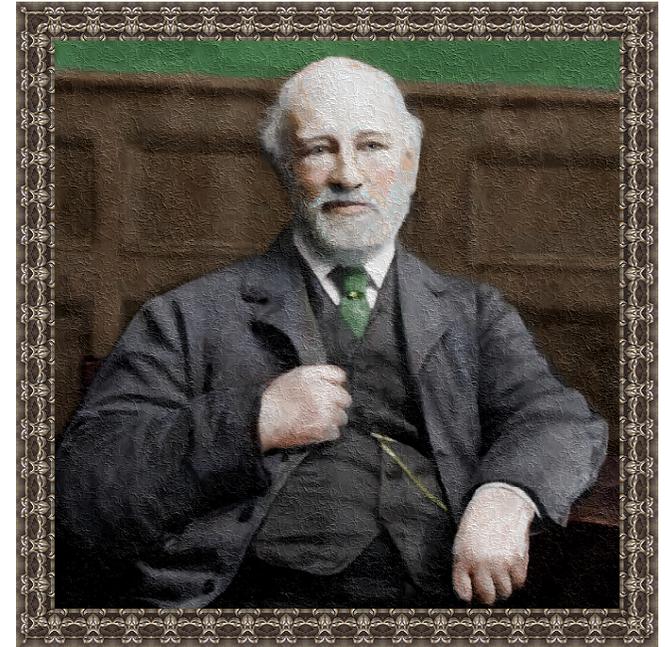
Board of Church Trustees: Barry Cundill, Keith Brown
Mavis Lake, Michael Tracey, John Williams

Website; Secretary: Keith Brown
Treasurer; Reaching Out: Mavis Lake Tel.: (01482) 353752
Music; Magazine Writer and Compiler: Adrian Worsfold
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Who Does What?

Board of Chamberlain Trust trustees: Barry Cundill, Mavis Lake, Michael Tracey, John Williams

About 150 sat down to tea, which was held in the school-room adjoining the church...



He felt that his was a high vocation, and the words that were addressed to him showed how high were the expectations his congregation had formed of what he should aim to accomplish. Although his experience had been a long one, he might well feel trepidation in taking up that ministry, following, as he did, a minister who had left an abiding influence behind him. This would make him modest in the assumption of his duties, but he knew that he would never fail to be sustained by their sympathy. He claimed to be a progressive thinker. As to his belief, he would now say little. He hoped, as time went on, to show that he had a positive faith - a faith which was the underlying strength of whatever work he attempted to do, and for their sakes as well as his own he would look to ripen his convictions and to put new power into his statement of them. More than that he could not promise. What God might yet reveal to him, or what he might discover,

Perris

1883

he could not say. All he could say was that he entered on a ministry which would be continued with the utmost regard to his own conscience. The Rev. gentleman sat down amidst warm applause.

Chester's Piece

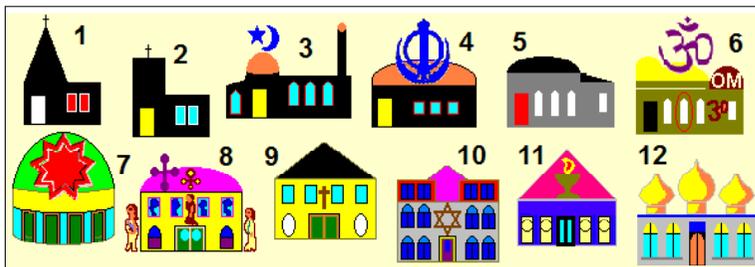
Hi Folks! Just when you think things are settling down nicely, something pops up (or dives down) and bites you on the backside. My closest friends will tell you that I have never, ever ever, suffered the ignominy (not to mention the sheer indignity) of having FLEAS! So yours truly has to acquire them for the first time in mid-winter! What's all that about?



On a more savoury note... Mavis, please point out to my fans that when fed a whole biscuit, crumbs are left behind on the carpet: so less means more or less less crumbs, if you get my drift. So no more whole ones, or less I'll be in trouble some more.

Now I'm getting vibes here that folks might be criticizing my grammar. Just try and get your head round the fact that a corresponding dog is a miracle in its own right. Keep a sense of perspective, please!

I'm not one to make a fuss, as you all know, but I overheard something the other day which was unsettling to say the least. Rumour has it that the church has adopted a cat called Ralph. Whatever, I just hope I can still be the centre of attention on any occasion. That's all for now folks.



Identify the
Faiths or
the
Churches



All members and friends please make a big effort to attend the open meeting on Sunday April 19 after the service. There will be a 'bring and share' lunch from noon to 1 pm and a meeting from 1.15 to 2.45 pm.

Unitarian Discovery Holiday 2015 runs from Monday 13th July (after 14.00) to after lunch on Friday 17th 2015. Please book before 30 April.

Called "Birds of a Feather Flock Together", it is a themed holiday with some educational, intellectual and spiritual content. The cost starts at around £280. Nature, Animals, People: Why do they flock together? For good or ill? It includes two theme speakers, on Tuesday and Thursday, some outdoor and indoor workshops, and social and free time. On Thursday 16th July 2015, Jean Bradley will speak on "Finding Our Feathers". Relaxation Time will include choices: walking, music, poetry and prose appreciation, chatting to friends, exploring Derbyshire. Additional workshops may be slotted in. There may be a chance to do some bird watching when walking. Spiritual needs are catered for throughout: mornings and evenings have reflections; on Thursday there will be a serendipity event to share readings, music, art, talents, (spiritual and secular); there should be some time aside for singing together very informally. The free day is on Wednesday to make own arrangements or join an organised outing with a packed lunch provided. Held at the Nightingale Centre Great Hucklow, Buxton Derbyshire SK17 8RH, all initial enquiries go to Marjorie Walker, 236 Clement Rise, Dedridge, Livingston, EH54 6LR Tel: 01506 493612 or 07718 106732. Unitarian Discovery Information/ Booking Form is on <http://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/discovery/>. There is the option of booking for the Walking Weekend that David Copley is running over the weekend of 17th of 19th July 2015 or simply book extra days: contact the Nightingale Centre to see if there are places available.

The YUU scheme to appoint a District Minister is going ahead. The post will be a full-time one but made up of 50% minister at Bradford Unitarians and 50% YUU District. The project could begin towards the end of 2015, with a suitable candidate.

Selected Words

of the New Minister from
2013 and 2014

The following is written from two UK Unitarian TV videos featuring Ralph Catts. See them online at <https://vimeo.com/64173455> (2013 NUF) and (2014 from FUSE) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TEiG1XusdY>.

Training for Unitarian ministry was the next step in my life course. It brought together a number of my experiences and gave me a new avenue in which to express and share with others. My evolving sense of spirituality has been a major influence in wanting to take this path.

As a young man I walked away from a very evangelical church as a teenager, and for a long time I called myself an 'atheist'. This was the case until I went to a *Findhorn Foundation Experience Week* in Scotland in 1997. The leaders of the experience week groups are called Focalisers and one of them asked me why I was there. And I said, "I am here for a bet." They asked "What sort of bet?" I explained that one of my friends back in Australia had said, 'You haven't got a spiritual bone in your body: I dare you to go to the *Findhorn Foundation* for a week'. The person who was the

Focaliser said, "That person doesn't know you very well." It really stopped me in my tracks.

Since then I have been on a spiritual journey. Back home in Australia the nearest Unitarian churches were in Sydney and Brisbane and they were both more than 300 miles from where I lived in the highlands of New South Wales. I practised meditation by attending local meditation sessions conducted by Buddhists and by Hindus. I was then asked by some in the wider community to lead an inter-faith meditation group.

The next step was to find Unitarianism. That happened on a sabbatical in the States where someone who'd learnt that I meditated asked me if I would be interested in coming to their church. Being a polite guest I agreed. It was the



St. Louis Unitarian Church and the day I first attended they were celebrating the centenary of the birth of Louis Armstrong with reflections on his words and music accompanied by a jazz

insights to a better world. This relates to the Buddhist emphasis on the primacy of the mind. Peace in the world results from peaceful minds, and the mind can be trained for peace just as it can be for competition and war. June Pettitt's ministry in Hull opened up the world of wonder. Wonder, she said, is a religious experience. There is wonder at the world around us, wonder at human achievement, wonder that we are indeed here at all, and wonder at the natural environment that needs protection. We wonder at our own consciousness. Perhaps we should consider less the bomb and the bullet and cherish being human. And there is wonder of the spiritual world and its variety of scriptures with the different revelations for different souls. Wonder is found within Paul to the Galatians in chapters 5 and 6.



Then there are our unlikely teachers. How, for example, can we learn to practice patience with no one to irritate us? The best teachers can handle tough pupils: the awkward, shy, aggressive and disruptive. To teach is to learn, said Westhill College in Birmingham. There is the poet Robbie Burns with his 'as others see us', and Bernard had his own Burns moment when a school report stated: "He sees problems where none exist!"

After this came a guided meditation to consider our teachers, in say: practical matters, encouragement, generating a love of learning, or developing patience and kindness. The benediction referred to all beings becoming happy.



On 8th February 2015 Bernard McHugh in his service asked Who Are Our Teachers? The service began with a chalice lighting read from this magazine. Bernard was asking about who made a lasting

impression in how we view the world and behave to others. We are considering here life experience and absorbed teaching.

The first person he considered was his "Nana", who attended St. Vincent's Roman Catholic church. She did not foist her religion on to others, and only quoted one line of scripture that it is more blessed to give than to receive. She is remembered for her kindness. Bernard quoted the widow's might scripture in Mark 12 and the Kahlil Gibran piece that possessions are a fear of need and that one should truly give of yourself.

After an intercession, the second influence of teaching was between five and sixteen years of age at Sunday School. It outlined the life of Jesus, the saints and the Church, but above all taught that religion is about happiness. Unitarian minister Paul Travis at a candlelit supper once showed and said that he had never changed profession from when he worked the clubs: he was still spreading happiness. Happiness, said Bernard, is not just froth but inhabits at various levels including in the soul. Happiness in all beings would mean no desire to hurt another. Bernard's own father thought that happiness belongs to those who give it to others. This led to a reading from the New English Bible and its use of 'Happy' instead of 'Blessed' for the Beatitudes.

Then there is the Unitarian tradition, that taught freedom, self-realisation, and being true to insights. Religion is personal, evolving and on a voyage of discovery. Unitarian openness is liberating for its

band. I suddenly heard Louis Armstrong's music in a totally different frame. That experience convinced me that this was the sort of church I'd like to join.

Once I came to the UK I was able to attend a Unitarian church on a regular basis and I became a member of *Glasgow Unitarians*.

In the past three years I have changed dramatically in so many ways. You may recall the line in *Jesus Christ Superstar*: 'It's been three years, feels like thirty.' Commuting each week from Stirling in Central Scotland to Manchester for training was a long haul. In my first year I also had a placement with *St Mark's Unitarian Church* in Edinburgh. I believe it is the only Unitarian church that has the name of a disciple but I think it is an excellent name. I've been reading Mark's gospel with the aid of some contextual theological texts. I found solidarity with the way Jesus is portrayed in this Gospel as an opponent of oppression and discrimination. Ched Myers, a Catholic theologian says of this text:

"Mark's Gospel is a story by, about and for those committed to God's work of justice, compassion and liberation in the world. To modern theologians, Mark offers no signs from heaven; to scholars, who refuse to ideologically commit

themselves, he offers no answer; but to those willing to risk the wrath of the Empire, Mark offers a way of discipleship."

For my final year of training I had to move temporarily for a year to Birmingham to undertake my placement. This placement led to a fantastic process of development and change in my ministry. Through the *Birmingham Inter-faith Committee* I had the benefit of being invited to share in the celebration of the birth of the Prophet at one of the local mosques. A trustee at *Unitarian New Meeting* and I attended. It was really quite an insightful experience. Everyone in that community knew that I attended the mosque to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet. I was greeted in the streets: "Hello brother!"

It was really interesting also to see how they feel excluded from British culture, and how much they are taken by the fact that we Unitarians reached out and accepted their invitation. So I think that we as Unitarians, with our notion of respect for all faiths, are in a powerful position to contribute to our society by showing how in practice our commitment to respect for all pathways to the knowledge of God and spirituality can reduce the barriers and the ignorance toward others.

Fay Grant

attended Unitarian services regularly from 2001, and first came here in the mid 1990s. She "drifted in", so to speak, having "come along for other things".

As Fay Spendlow, she and husband Ron attended the Theatre Organ Society that used to meet at the old Cecil cinema. When the bingo took it over, and wanted the organ out, another venue was sought where the organists could come and play. So with the connection of Marjorie Scurrall they came to the Hull Unitarian building. Marjorie invited Fay to the monthly Chalice Luncheons where women gathered to hear a speaker and enjoy the entertainment.



With Ron she was invited to more, and was told she did not have to be a member to attend such as musical evenings or games events. By getting to know Hilda she joined the yoga group. Often, Ron would drive Fay to events and pick her up afterwards.

When Ron died the church conducted his funeral, and consequently Fay decided to support the church some more and wanted to come to the services regularly. From 2001 she looked forward to the social gatherings on Friday coffee mornings and the services on Sunday mornings. Fay continues as a very regular attender.

Fay enjoyed a holiday with Mavis Lake and her sister in Scotland, but ended up breaking her arm and having an operation at Inverness hospital.

She met Stuart Grant at the Theatre Organ Society. Now Stuart comes and brings Fay to services as Ron did. Stuart is also part of the Friday morning gathering. Stuart and Fay married after some care by Fay for Stuart.

Fay thinks God and nature is all one. God is not a person, and not a God that can listen to prayers. Fay had no religion for a long time. She did attend St. Ninians Presbyterian church as a child. She was never looking for a religion, but had she known about the Unitarians earlier she would have come. If other people knew how nice it was they would come too. She had come to some services, but was attending regularly when Ernest Penn retired, when June Pettitt began her ministry, and subsequently since.

Some Music Heard Recently

