

Connections

*The Newsletter of Belper, Derby and Charnwood
Unitarians*



March/April 2009



Welcoming Congregations.



Minister's Musings

Spring-time

Come the end of March and British Summer Time begins, and yet, in reality we have hardly begun to enjoy the spring. Maybe that is consistent with the sense that many have that the seasons of transition, spring and autumn, are not really important in themselves, but only precursors of summer and winter.

In Canada, author Molly Wolf suggest that Canadians experience six seasons, spring, summer, autumn, mud season, winter, and mud season redux. The two mud seasons are “preparatory inter-seasons, times when the landscape cools down for winter or begins, with what feels like infinite slowness, to warm up for the spring.”

Seasons of transitions are important; they hold us in a time of quietness, a time of preparedness and stand against the notion of immediate gratification that the Media, popular culture and retail sector constantly preach.

Seasons of transitions are also important in teaching us to slowdown, to become grounded in the moment, no matter how difficult the moment may be. They teach us the value of patience and understanding of how the world really is.

The two great celebrations of the Christian tradition, Easter and Christmas begin with a season of transition, of preparedness.

Here lies the spiritual lessons of the season; – as the darkness of winter gives way to the anticipation of the spring, which in turn leads to the glories of summer; so too, our darkest days will not last forever, time moves on and despair becomes hope.

We need seasons of transition to heal and to grow, to forgive and to love, to cry and to feel joy. To die and be re-born; that is the lesson of spring-time.

Love and peace

Rev Chris Goacher

CALENDAR

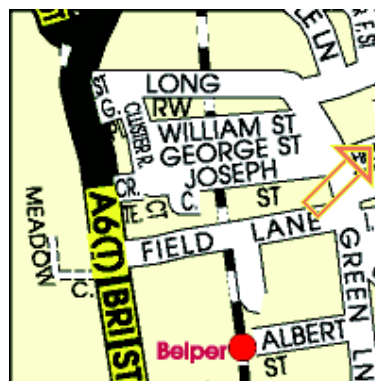
MARCH 2009

Belper Unitarian Chapel.

Sunday 1st **Rev Chris Goacher** 11 am

Family Service

Sunday 15th **Cllr Kevin Stone** 3 pm



Charnwood Fellowship

Tuesday 3rd **Fellowship Meeting** 7.30 pm

Friar Gate Unitarian Chapel, Derby.

Sunday 1st **Mindfulness Sangha** 3pm

A Gathering 6pm

An Alternative way of Being Together

Sunday 8th **Service: Rev Chris Goacher** 3pm

Progressive Christianity Group

“Living The Questions” 5pm

Sunday 15th **Reading Group** 3pm

Mindfulness Sangha 6pm

Sunday 22nd **Service: Rev Chris Goacher** 3pm

Sunday 29th **Derby 5th Sunday** 6pm

A Multi-Faith Service with Guest Jo Hale, (Buddhist)

CALENDAR

APRIL 2009

Belper Unitarian Chapel

Sunday 5th	Rev Chris Goacher Family Service	11am
Sunday 19th	Cllr Kevin Stone	3 pm

Charnwood Unitarian Fellowship

Tuesday 3rd	Fellowship Meeting	7.30 pm
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Friar Gate Unitarian Chapel, Derby

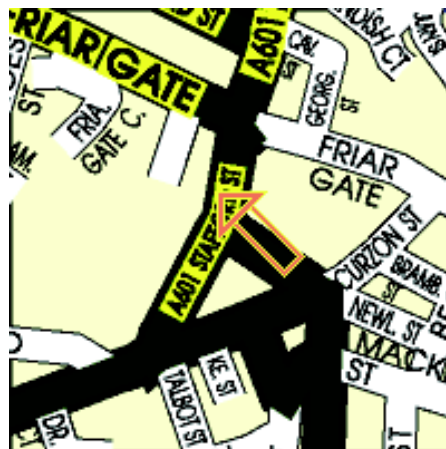
Sunday 5th	Mindfulness Sangha	3pm
	A Gathering An Alternative way of being Together	6pm
Sunday 12th	Service—Rev Chris Goacher	6.30 pm

Derby Unitarian Progressive Christian Group

	“Living The Questions”	3 pm
Sunday 19th	Mindfulness Sangha	6pm
Sunday 26th	Service: Rev Chris Goacher	6.30pm

Where to Find us.

Friar Gate Unitarian Chapel
Stafford Street
Derby DE1 1JG



KEN'S QUIZ
(In memory of Ken Pollard, originator of the Quiz)

The answers to clues (a) and (b) are two words of similar sound but which may be spelt differently, for instance, 'reign' and 'rain'.

- 1 (a) The main point of interest, centre of attraction.
 (b) Anything that points to the solution of a mystery.
- 2 (a) Dame Millicent , womens' rights campaigner.
 (b) A pipe inserted in a barrel to draw off liquid.
- 3 (a) A small bird of the partridge family.
 (b) To flinch, fail in spirit.
- 4 (a) Cunning, dexterity.
 (b) Flimsy, lacking solidity or significance.
- 5 (a) A society of co-operating booksellers.
 (b) A large sea fish of the eel family.
- 6 (a) Safe, whole, uninjured.
 (b) A strait, an inlet of the sea.
- 7 (a) Great, important, chief.
 (b) The high sea (poetic).
- 8 (a) An alarm bell.
 (b) Ptomaine, a poison of organic origin.
- 9 (a) A stout twilled linen or cotton cloth.
 (b) An instrument for boring into hard substances.
- 10 (a) To detect or notice.
 (b) A blemish or stain.

Answers, please, to George Cope, 22 Laburnum Crescent, Derby DE22 2GQ. A small prize is offered to the first correct set of answers opened. Four replies on this occasion. Thank you all! The first correct set of answers came from Mrs. G. Clifford who will shortly be receiving a prize.

Answers to the last Quiz: 1(a) Beaver, (b) Beaver; 2(a) Divine, (b) Divine;
 3(a) Bustle, (b) Bustle; 4(a) Cornet, (b) Cornet; 5(a) Barque, (b) Bark;
 6(a) Rat, (b) Rat; 7(a) Burn, (b) Burn; 8(a) Roll, (b) Roll;
 9(a) Fluke, (b) Fluke; 10(a) Geyser, (b) Geezer.

Bits and Pieces

Belper Appeal

There has been a good response to “The Appeal” for donations to meet the cost having the Seven Wall Memorial Plaques, in the chapel, professionally cleaned. We have received 10 donations totalling £410. The Appeal will remain open till the end of March, so there is still time to send a donation. We have also applied for a grant from the “Herbert Strutt Charity” in respect of the cleaning of the large Strutt Family Wall Memorial Plaque. A final report will appear in the May/June edition of “Connections”.

Two good friends of the Belper Chapel died in the early days of this year. Marjorie Crouch who had given us much support, died on the 2nd January after some months of being much disabled following a stroke. Some of her ashes have been scattered in the chapel grounds. Victor Dyer, who had occasionally played the organ for us, died on the 4th January after more than a year of being disabled from a stroke, and was cremated at Brimington, near Chesterfield, on the 19th January.

At Friar Gate we are beginning to have problems with rising damp that will have to be taken to the Landlord for consideration. The next Committee meeting will be at 6.30pm **Wednesday 4th March.**

Evolution and Religion

2009 is the 200 anniversary of Charles Darwin’s birth, so it is fitting that during Derby’s Festival of Science Professor Geoffrey Cantor will address the question of how the theory of evolution changes the way people of faith think about themselves and their faith.

**The Multi-faith Centre at the University of Derby
March 11th 7pm-9pm**

Easter Reading

“Without Easter, we wouldn't know about Jesus. If his story had ended with his crucifixion, he most likely would have been forgotten - another Jew crucified by the Roman Empire in a bloody century that witnessed thousands of such executions. Perhaps a trace or two about him would have shown up in Josephus or in Jewish rabbinic sources, but that would have been all. Indeed, without Easter, we wouldn't even have "Good Friday," for there would have been no abiding community to remember and give meaning to his death.

So Easter is utterly central. But what was it? What are the Easter stories about? On one level, the answer is obvious: God raised Jesus. Yes. And what does this mean? Is it about the most spectacular miracle there's ever been? Is it about the promise of an afterlife? Is it about God proving that Jesus was indeed his Son?

When we think about Easter, we must consider several foundational questions. What kind of stories are the Easter stories? What kind of language are they told in, and how is that language being used? Are they intended as historical reports and thus to be understood as history remembered (whether correctly or incorrectly)? Or do they use the language of parable and metaphor to express truths that are much more than factual? Or some combination of the two?

Those of us who grew up Christian have a "pre-understanding" of Easter, just as we do of Good Friday and Christmas, that shapes our hearing of these stories. So do most people who aren't Christian but who have heard something about Christianity. Usually formed in childhood, this pre-understanding is the product of combining Easter stories from all the gospels into a composite and then seeing the whole through the filter of Christian preaching and teaching, hymns and liturgy. We bring this pre-understanding of what Easter is about to the gospel stories.”

From—The Last Week – What the Gospels Really teach about Jesus's Final days in Jerusalem. Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan.

Unhealthy Societies (First Published 1996)

First published in the Nov/Dec 2005 newsletter

"Unhealthy Societies (The Affliction of Inequality)" by Richard G. Wilkinson, admirably makes the case that those societies which have the greatest gap between rich and poor are societies which experience the greatest ill-health and higher mortality rates. (But more than that they are also likely to have a higher incidence of crime and suicide).

He contends that redistributing income in favour of the poor is only a partial solution, for it seems human problems are not soluble merely through mechanical application of economic measures, as, in reality, human beings have emotional and psychological (and spiritual) dimensions. Thus he stresses the need for social and community aspects to be catered for.

I found this book quite difficult, but easier going after Chapter 6. (The earlier part abounded with statistics, etc)! One Table, Charting life expectancy in each decade between 1900 and 1991 shows, ironically, a dramatic increase in life expectancy through the years of the two World Wars. At this time unemployment virtually disappeared, and there was a greater sense of community in the fight against the common foe. There was also a narrowing of the gap between incomes and the level of poverty diminished.

Roseto, Pennsylvania, attracted a study because of its phenomenally low death rates. It was found to have a greater community spirit and greater equality of incomes. Likewise, in countries where narrower differences of income pertained (Sweden, Japan, and some Eastern European countries until the 1970's) there were lower mortality rates, better health, and often lower crime rates.

The author looks at the physiological and psychological consequences of economic inequality and the lack of community spirit. Each occasion of stress causes a build-up of certain hormones which dissipate when the source of stress is removed. However, if the level of stress is continuous, this build-up just keeps increasing and will lead to a possible physiological change in the size of some organs, the adrenals and thymus for example. Blood pressure levels are also possibly linked to stresses of our social/economic world.

The author discusses children's heights; apparently, there is a tendency for tall people to do better, especially with regards to promotion. But this finding is more related to height at age 7 than height in adulthood. (people grow at different speeds). A study has shown that slow growth in childhood is often linked to family conflict. The stress induces sleeplessness in the child and this in turn impedes the growth hormone; whereas, a loving environment will encourage it (and also imbue that child with the confidence needed to successfully cope with life's challenges).

Immersed as we are in the pressures of the real world, we rarely get the chance to stand back and get a wider perspective. Thus it is interesting to get a picture of human life from the view of anthropologists. They tell us that for some 2.5 million years our forebears lived in small groups of equals. In the absence of any governing body it was up to individuals to take measures to live together as peaceably as possible. (The New Scientist recently reported that hyenas and other animals that live in groups, are quick to patch-up their quarrels—probably an evolutionary survival device). In contrast to our attitudes, some groups and societies look down on trading as being something shameful. In many early societies the main method of trade was the exchange of gifts. (also talents and skills. Ed)

(I am not saying that we should revert back to stone-age ways of living, but we should be imaginative enough to realise that there may be better ways of managing our affairs. Certainly, the way we are carrying on now has not got much to recommend it).

A recent UN Report says the world social situation has deteriorated over the last decade, with inequality even greater than it was ten years ago. Mr Ocampo who presented the report, said 'globalisation engenders inequality and high unemployment rates.....

The book is about getting away from viewing everything in economic terms; human social needs are important, too.

On 21.5.05, it was reported that research for the GMB Union showed that more than half of incapacity benefit claimants are suffering from mental and behavioural problems.

-George Cope

Seasonal Poetry

Spring Solstice

Once more upon the cross the life-god hangs
 While Mother Earth, with chill autumnal breath,
 Surrenders to the barren sleep of death,
 Feeling no more her summer's fecund pangs,
 Winter's sepulchral tomb gapes wide today,
 Now grieving, let us lay him there, and then—
 True to the mystery—keep watch till when,
 At third moon's dawn, the stone shall roll away.

So... well it is for us that in the faith
 The resurrection's truth depends not on
 Belief in it—else were our souls a wraith
 Indeed, wailing toward oblivion.
 But every spring life rises from its past
 And so death too must change to life at last.

- Leslie Blades

The Easter Miracle

I am amazed to the point of ecstasy
 At the miracle of awareness.
 Life brings me its freshness as an ineffable gift.
 Every moment renews my vision.
 Death is permission granted to other modes of life to exist,
 So that everything may be ceaselessly renewed.
 The ploughshare of sorrow,
 Breaking the heart,
 Opens up new sources of life.
 The land bursts again into bloom.
 The possible and the future are one.
 The possible strives to come into being,
 And can be, if we help.
 Without sacrifice there is no resurrection.
 Nothing grows, flowers and bears fruit,
 Save by giving.
 All that we try to save in our selves wastes and perishes.
 All things ripen for the giving's sake,
 And in the giving are consummated.

- Jacob Trapp

"He is risen" (Matthew 27, 6)

Jesus is risen from the dead.
The centuries have not been able to bury him.

Forsaken by his friends,
sentenced to die with thieves,
his mangled body buried in a borrowed tomb,
he has risen to command
the hearts of millions, and
to haunt our hate-filled world
with the restlessness of undying hopes.
The years bring him increasingly to life.
The imperial forces that tried to destroy him
have long ago destroyed themselves.
Those who passed judgment upon him
are remembered only because of him.
Military might and political tyranny
still stalk the earth;
they too shall perish,
while the majesty of the carpenter-prophet
bearing his cross to the hill
will remain to rebuke the ways of violence.

- Clinton Lee Scott

The importance, for us, of Jesus, lies not in the way Jesus was born,
Nor in the way he died or supposedly rose again from the dead, nor in
any of the miracles he supposedly performed. The importance of Je-
sus, for us, lies preeminently in the way he lived.

And, similarly, I think most of us look to Jesus not as a Savior, not as
the one and only Messiah, not as the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords,
but as an exemplar—as an example of how to live a good and holy
life in a troubled and brutal world.

We look to Jesus not to lead us up to salvation, but back to ourselves.

-Andrew Kennedy

GROUPS AT BELPER UNITARIAN CHAPEL

Both groups are open and warmly welcome newcomers!

For more details contact Andy Phillips on 01773 823160, or email andyphillips@dsl.pipex.com, – or just show up on the night!

Life Support

[2nd Monday of each month]

Mutual support (discussion and sharing) for attempting to live a spiritual life.

(Quite similar to an Engagement Group)

Monday 9 March 2009 8pm-9.30pm

including consideration of: “Acknowledge your limited power to *force* things to be just how you want them to be.”

[No meeting in April as 2nd Monday is Easter Monday]

Exploring Meditation

[4th Monday of each month]

- explore different types of (mainly silent) meditation
- discuss experiences and technique with others

Beginners very welcome.

Emphasis is on finding out for yourself what works. However experienced meditators who wish to share how they do it also very welcome

Monday 23 March 2009 8pm-9.30pm

Monday 27 April 2009 8pm-9.30pm



Drumming Circle at Friar Gate Chapel

Tuesday 3rd March 7 pm for 7.30 start; All welcome, no experience necessary. Please bring own drum, but some will be available to borrow.

Proposed dates for the next East Midlands Mindfulness Sangha '**Days of Mindfulness**' are;

Sunday 15th March Normanton-on-Soar Village Hall

Sunday 26th April Rushcliffe Country Park

Saturday May 16th Normanton-on-Soar Village Hall

Saturday June 27th Rushcliffe Country Park

Details nearer the time.

PCN Britain Day Conference - 'Surrendering all our certainty'

- Date: Saturday 21st March, 2009
- **Time:** 10:30 AM
- **Contact:** PCN Britain
- **Email:** info@pcnbritain.org.uk
- **Keynote:** Jim Mein, Nicola Slee and Ian Lawton
- **Cost:** £12 or £10 for PCN/St. Mark's CRC members

PCN Britain is hosting a one-day conference on March 21 2009 11:00am (register from 10:30am) - 4:30pm at the Priory Rooms, 40 Bull St, Birmingham

The title of this exciting day event comes from a collect for Ascension Day by Janet Morley. The day will explore, in a variety of ways - thought, interaction, creativity - the freedom and the challenge of living without certainty.

Jim Mein is the former Dean on Edinburgh Cathedral and co-ordinates Initial Ministerial Education in that Diocese.

Nicola Slee is a research fellow at the Queens Foundation for ecumenical theological education in Birmingham and is a poet, theologian and liturgist.

Ian Lawton is the minister of Christ Community Church in West Michigan and formerly of St Matthew-in-the-City in Auckland, New Zealand.

Buy tickets online securely with Paypal on our website here: <http://www.pcnbritain.org.uk/index.php/shop/>

or

Download a booking form (under 'Related Download') and then send, together with a cheque made payable to PCN - Britain, to Olivia McLennan, PCN - Britain, 62 Red Post Hill, London SE24 9JQ

Contact Details

Minister.

Revd Chris Goacher B.A.
24 Arlington Drive
Derby DE24 0AU
Tel: 01332 732171
chris.goacher@ntlworld.com

Belper Chapel Directory

Belper Unitarian Chapel, Field Row, off Green Lane, Belper. DE56 1DH
www.belperunitarians.org.uk

Chairman: Councillor David Burton, 4 Wheatley Lane, Two Dales, Matlock. DE4 2FF Tel: 01629 734072

Secretary: Mrs Jackie Woodward, 8 Beaurepaire Cres, Belper. DE5 1HR Tel: 01773 827184

Treasurer: Mr Tony Waldron. 5 Manor Road, Belper. DE56 1NT
Tel: 01773 827060

Organist: Mrs Jean Hemming, 144 Far Laund, Belper. DE56 1FP
Tel: 01773 827869

Charnwood Unitarian Fellowship

Contact; Rev Chris Goacher 01332 732171
www.unitarian.org.uk/emu/Charnwood

Derby Chapel Directory

Friar Gate Unitarian Chapel, Stafford Street, Derby. DE1 1JG
www.derbyunitarians.org.uk

Chairman: Mr George Cope, 22 Laburnum Crescent, Allestree, Derby. DE 22 2GQ. Tel: 01332 553774

Secretary: Mrs Elaine Howes. 73 Spinney Hill. Melbourne. DE73 1LX. Tel: 01332 864727.

Treasurer: Mr Richard McLachlan, 6 Weirfield Rd, Darley Abbey, Derby. DE 22 1DH. Tel: 01332 558629

There are neighbouring Unitarian Congregations in Chesterfield, Mansfield, Nottingham, and Leicester.

Congregations are in membership of The General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches.

As Unitarians we believe:

In the Freedom of Conscience in Matters of Religion;

Therefore we require no statement of faith or acceptance of particular doctrines to be acceptable in our churches/chapels and fellowships.

We believe in a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

In the Inherent Worth and Dignity of all People;

Therefore we welcome all regardless of creed, colour, sex, or sexuality; and in the acceptance of one another the encouragement to spiritual growth

In the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all people, and respect for the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part.

Therefore we support the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

The living tradition from which we draw strength;

- *The words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love.*
- *Wisdom from the world's religions which inspire us in our ethical and spiritual life.*
- *Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbour as ourselves.*
- *Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us of the idolatries of mind and spirit.*
- *Spiritual teachings of the Earth-centred traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.*

(adapted from the Principle and Purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association)