

BANK STREET CHAPEL BOLTON

OCTOBER CALENDAR 2009

Contents

<i>Page 2</i>	<i>Minister's Letter October 2009</i>
<i>Page 3</i>	<i>Womens league</i>
<i>Page 4</i>	<i>Council News</i>
<i>Page 5</i>	<i>Dorothy Greenhalgh</i>
<i>Page 6</i>	<i>For Your Diary</i>
<i>Page 7</i>	<i>Nancy Gerrard 1912-2009</i>
<i>Page 8</i>	<i>Poetry Corner, The Avatar</i>
<i>Page 9</i>	<i>The Girl Guides</i>
<i>Page 9</i>	<i>The Ruiru Development Fund</i>
<i>Page 10</i>	<i>Any old Gold?</i>
<i>Page 10</i>	<i>The garden party</i>
<i>Page 11</i>	<i>Rota for October</i>

Minister's Letter October 2009

"I love to tell the story, to tell the old, old story."

One of the mistakes of liberal religion is to believe that faith can be boiled down to a set of moral or philosophical *principles*. We see this in our sister congregations in the Unitarian Universalist Association in the United States who hold so strongly to their Seven Principles. Now there's nothing wrong with those principles, things like "the inherent worth of all people" and "the encouragement to spiritual growth" are all good and worthy things. But they do not make up a faith.

A faith is made up, not of principles, but of *stories*. Stories define our lives, our beliefs, our ways of thinking. Trying to define ourselves by principles can lead to arguments and misunderstandings. But stories can be told and retold; different interpretations can be placed on them by different people; stories are organic and flexible; they evolve and adapt. Stories bring faith to life.

As Unitarians I think we should spend less time worrying about the principles that unite us and more time retelling our stories. For me the definite story of Unitarianism is that of Michael Servetus, which is why I always tell his story on the Sunday nearest to his martyrdom on 27th October. Michael Servetus was a man of huge intellect in many fields: geography, medicine, theology; and yet it's his spirituality that interests me. At the foundation of his thought was the firm belief in the indwelling spirit – the experience that God pervaded the universe entirely. God was not a distant judge, but a pervasive loving presence. It was this belief that caused his persecution by Catholic and Protestant authorities until he was eventually caught and burnt at the stake in John Calvin's Geneva.

His story of persecution and martyrdom helped define the commitments of Unitarians for years to come: peace between religions, both reason and spirituality, the oneness of God and the inherent worth of all people. His story still has much to teach us.

Blessings

Stephen

Women's League.

Birthdays

Oct 1st Barbara Woodward

Oct 13th Joan Murtagh

Oct 15th Gaye Gerrard

The District Meeting of the Women's League will be held on Saturday 10th October 2009 at 2-00pm at Padiham.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 20th October 2009 at 7-30pm at Bank Street.

If any members have matters they wish to have raised at the AGM please speak to Janet Poole or Veronica Walker.

At the Garden Party, at the home of Dorothy Evans, we were delighted to welcome Megan Kitching who had travelled from her home in Southport to be with us to celebrate her forthcoming 90th birthday. Janet Poole, the Branch President of the Women's League presented Megan with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a gorgeous birthday cake kindly made by Joan Murtagh.

Our thanks to Hettie and Trevor Leigh for bringing Megan to the party, to Joan for making the cake and to the catering crew of Women's League members and all other helpers who ensured the day was so successful.

Council News

Canopy sale – following the success of the canopy sale, the possibility of holding another, possibly during October, was discussed. We will need to appeal for more items for the stall and for tombola.

Offertory – the response to the appeal for everyone to put a little more in the offertory has been good, and the collections have averaged over £100 per week during July and August.

The Organ Fund is progressing steadily, with the total now approaching £5000.

Finance – The income from the car park has been increased by the sale of two more parking spaces, and an increase in the charges.

The Finance Group are considering increases in our charges for room lettings.

We will hold a Membership Service in the New Year, when members will be asked to contribute to the annual GA quota payment. This is not negotiable and has to be paid on a “per member” basis, and has always been paid from Chapel funds. We would if possible like to keep donations towards this on a voluntary basis, but the burden is becoming increasingly heavy.

In the Minister’s Report, Stephen outlined some of his recent activities. He had attended the Graduation Ceremony at Bolton University as part of his work with the University Chaplaincy, and had also recorded some items for the local FM radio station. During the month, he spent a week as a youth leader at Great Hucklow.

He is planning an All Souls service in November, when departed friends and loved ones will be remembered, and their names read out during the service.

Following a suggestion from Veronica, he hopes to organise a friendship service in the Spring, when every member of the congregation will be asked to bring along one or more friends.

Stephen also has plans to try out a completely different type of service to our usual Sunday format. This will held in Chapel, one evening during the week, and will have more informal seating arrangements and special lighting. The emphasis would be on contemplative worship and meditation, rather than the conventional “hymn sandwich”

Wayside Pulpit – it was suggested that we write our own notices for the Wayside Pulpit, and that we ask anyone who has any suggestions to approach Stephen

Building Maintenance – it was reported that the roof over the children’s room had been repaired. The go-ahead was also given for the replacement of the plasterwork and plaster mouldings in this room (NB – this work has since been completed beautifully and at a very reasonable cost)

We will obtain quotes for the replacement of the suspended ceiling in the hall, with the intention of applying for grants towards the cost of this work.

Council also expressed thanks to Ron Mack and Don Gerrard for their work on refurbishing the front doors of the Chapel, and for the new handrails on the steps. This really was a super job.

Dorothy Greenhalgh

It was only in our February issue that we printed Jean Crompton's article celebrating the 99th birthday of Dorothy Greenhalgh. Sadly, Dorothy passed away early in September. The funeral service was conducted by Granville Leather on September 9th at Bank Street Chapel. Jean Crompton has again provided this short appreciation.

With the death of Dorothy at the beginning of September, we have lost the oldest member of our congregation. A one time Trustee, a member of Council and a staunch supporter of the Chapel, she will be remembered with great affection – particularly by the older members of the congregation.

To her family, especially David and Mary who cared for her during her last years, we offer our love and sympathy in their sad loss.

For Your Diary

The **Harvest Festival Service** will be on Sunday, October 4th. Please bring non – perishable goods for us to give to The Salvation Army and to B.R.A.S.S.

The family of the late **Irene Hornby** invites her friends to say farewell to her. A short memorial service, followed by the interment of her ashes at Rivington Chapel and Garden of Remembrance will be held on Friday, 9th October at 2-00 pm.

Helen Garnsey invites you to a **Plant and Picture Sale** in aid of the Ruiru Development Fund. Come and enjoy tea or coffee and home made cakes at her home at 279 Newbrook Road, Atherton, on Saturday, October 3rd from 11 am to 3pm

An **All Souls Service** will be held on 1st November at Chapel. Departed friends and loved ones will be remembered. Give the names of whoever you wish to be mentioned to Stephen.

Nancy Gerrard 1912-2009

Nancy Gerrard was born in Glasgow in 1912, and although she lived the majority of her life here in Bolton, she never lost her distinctive Scottish accent. She was an only child - her father died when she was just 14. She lived with her mother and worked in her uncle James' business as a comptroller operator.

It was on a cruise ship on the Clyde that her life changed. She met a man, Miles Gerrard, and they fell in love. We are told that there is even some film they took of that cruise that still exists.

Miles and Nancy then maintained a long distance relationship for some time, with Miles driving up to Glasgow every weekend. "Their" tune was the lovely "Some Enchanted Evening"

They married in 1937 and Nancy moved down to Bolton, now finding herself a member of a bigger family. For a honeymoon they went skiing in Switzerland, even though it was something Nancy had never tried before. She was adventurous enough to try something new, even though it gave her a few bruises. They had two children, Don and Lorna. During the war Nancy coped alone with the children while Miles was away.

Nancy was a person of quiet and steadfast love. This love was expressed in her devotion to her family: her husband, her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was of a generation that did not fuss, did not over-indulge, but stoically, capably and quietly got on with it.

She was capable, practical and hardworking. She was well read, and knew much poetry by rote. She was an accomplished baker and the cupboard always contained fresh pies, tarts, cakes, or scones. She volunteered for some time in the Save the Children charity shop on Deansgate, sometimes ably assisted by a grandchild.

Although there was a straightforward stoicism to Nancy that was in keeping with her Scottish Presbyterian upbringing, there was also a deep warmth in her. Her life was shaped by her enormous love for Miles. In later years when Miles' health deteriorated she continued to care and to cook for him, despite her own advancing years. They were married for seventy years until Miles died two years ago. We remember her life with gratitude.

Poetry Corner

This poem was sent in by June Grice, who seems to have quite a collection of “poetry to make you think”.

The poet, Kerry Hardie, was born in 1951 in County Down, and now lives with her husband, the writer Sean Hardie, in County Kilkenny.

In Hindu mythology, an Avatar was a deity who came down to earth in incarnate form.

The Avatar

Listen, this is the trinity, he said, tramping the wet road

in the thin well-being of a winter morning:

God the curlew, God the eider,

God the cheese-on-toast.

To his right a huddle of small blue mountains

squatted together discussing the recent storm.

To his left the sea washed.

I thought it was whimsical, what he said,

I condemned it as fey.

Then I saw that he meant it; that, unlike me,

he had no quarrel

with himself, could see his own glory

was young enough for faith still in flesh and in being.

He was not attracted by awe

or a high cold cleanness

but imagined a god as intimate

as the trickles of blood and juice that coursed about inside him

a god he could eat or warm his hand on,

a low god for winter:

belly weighted, with the unmistakeable call

of the bog curlew or the sea-going eider.

The Girl Guides

Across the country, celebrations have been taking place marking the centenary of the Girl Guide movement. The organisation now has 500,000 members, with about 45,000 girls waiting to join.

At Bank Street, many of our congregation will have happy thoughts and memories of the Guide leaders who gave so much that enriched our lives, broadened our horizons and helped forge life4long friendships.

In particular, we think of Nellie Kirkman (Janet Mack's mother) and Elsie Thistlethwaite, who was from the family firm of Thistlethwaite's Tyres, whose business still operates in Bolton. Apart from her Guide duties, Elsie sang in the choir and trained the singers for Sermons Sunday.

The Girl Guides at Bank Street were involved with the Sunday School, but went into Chapel on the first Sunday of each month, carrying our flag – which is still in the back room near the kitchen.

We went to camp on the train, when camping was still relatively primitive, but what good times we had!

Janet Winstanley.

The Ruiru Development Fund

Members of the congregation at Bank Street have been very generous in helping Dr. Clare Garnsey's work in Ruiru, Kenya, where her charity provides schooling for children with no other hope of education – their only way out of poverty – and homes for orphans, many of whom are victims of the Aids epidemic.

Clare has sent her latest newsletter – see the notice board – and asks me to say that last year's Christmas Gift Card campaign was so successful that she will be repeating it this year. You may recall that this is the idea where what you pay for a card goes to provide essentials for the children – and the person to whom you send the card gets a very warm feeling inside indeed!

This year there will be new and wonderful photos of the children, and a whole new range of supplies for you to help buy. After all, as Clare says "who wouldn't want a bag of cement for Christmas?."

I will put a leaflet on the notice board showing the range of cards and gifts, and a little later I will be approaching you to ask if you are able to help.

It is worth remembering that this is one of the very few charities that I know of where absolutely no expenses are taken out – every penny gets to the kids. Clare and Helen have even "persuaded" kind friends to donate the photography and printing costs.

If any readers out there who are not regular attenders at Chapel would like more details, please e-mail me at gordon.walker@ntlworld.com

Do try to help.

Any old Gold?

The price of gold is currently very high, and small items are very saleable. Do you have any old chains, broken jewellery, perhaps half sets of such things as earrings that have sat at the bottom of a drawer for years?

Anything you can spare could raise useful funds for chapel, Talk to Barbara Woodward if you would like to help

The Garden Party

We were blessed with wonderful weather for the Garden Party at the home of Dorothy and Roy. Good fun, good food, and good companionship – and we also raised over £260 for Chapel funds! Our grateful thanks to Dorothy and Roy, and all the other helpers for making it possible.

Rotas for October 2009

Preachers

Oct. 4th The Minister (Harvest Festival)
Oct. 11th The Minister
Oct. 18th “
Oct. 25th “

Welcomers

Oct. 4th Janet and Ron
Oct. 11th Vera and Evelyn
Oct. 18th Stella and Alec
Oct. 25th Adrienne and Brian

Refreshments

Oct. 4th Adrienne and Brian
Oct. 11th Dorothy and Roy
Oct. 18th Barbara and Janet
Oct. 25th June and Sue

Flowers

Oct. 4th Stella Bowman
Oct. 11th Janet Mack
Oct. 18th
Oct. 25th Joanne Bowman