



Chorlton Unitarians Winter 2014 Newsletter

Minister's Musings

Well, it's still not feeling very wintery here and so it comes with some surprise that Christmas is only a month away. I will be joining together with family members to celebrate this year. It is great to spend time together and for my children to get to know their granny, aunties and cousin as adults. We have never lived nearby and for several years were on the other side of the world. For many people if they are asked the true meaning of Christmas the answer would be family.

Families as we know are not always easy, but those who are without a family at Christmas find it especially hard, so maybe we can lay an extra place this Christmas.

Christmas is a time of hope, anticipation and joy. People have long celebrated the Winter Solstice in December, when, although we have more cold weather to come, we have the promise that the days are becoming longer, the sun is returning and we are given the hope and certainty of a spring to come.

May your Christmases be blessed and may you feel the love of family and friends especially at this time.

Nicky Jenkins

I am available for Pastoral matters and Weddings, Baby Namings and Funerals and can be contacted on 0161 224 5289 or by e-mail on revnickyj@icloud.com

Heavens Above!

It's Chorlton Unitarians Festive quiz!

Friday 12th December 7 for 7.30pm



Yule know we have brand new central heating to pay for so please support our fun raiser nerd free quiz (£2 per team member)

We will begin with a bring and share Christmas supper. Wine and soft drinks will be available.

Dream interpretation at the Theosophical Society Manchester

On the 11th October I and Mary Crumpton attended a lecture in central Manchester given by the Theosophical Society (TS). Lectures are open to all, and are often on subjects external to Theosophy proper. The topic was "An Introduction to Dream Interpretation" by Mick Frankel, a charismatic speaker who often comes to lead talks on a variety of issues. Mary told me that before the talk she had been afraid that this was to be on the lines of "if you dream of eating fish, you are going to come into an inheritance" or whatever (I'm making this up, but you know what I mean). In fact the speaker made it clear that you can only begin to interpret dreams when you have carefully noted all the relevant details, from the person you are counselling, or from your own memory if it is your dream, and that personal associations to imagery are vital, so that pre-programmed texts are of little or no use here.

He mentioned the importance of noting down full details at once when you awaken from a dream - many dream workers have found (as I have myself) that after waking from even a vivid dream in the small hours, you may think "oh I'm bound to remember that", then find in the morning that you can't recall anything. So, keep a notebook (and torch) or voice recorder ready to hand, and enter brief but full notes of the main topics. Even then, many have found (as I have) that in the morning the notes are illegible, or you think "I don't remember that!", or even, in some cases, that you only dreamed that you wrote anything down!

Mick pointed out that important dreams are often mentioned in the Bible and other religious texts (Jacob's ladder, and Joseph,

especially regarding Pharaoh's dreams), and that, over the years, many scientists, writers, and artists had obtained inspiration from their dreams, including Robert Louis Stevenson ("Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"), Samuel Taylor Coleridge ("Kubla Khan"), Tartini ("The Devil's Trill"), Friedrich August Kekule (the chemical structure of molecules), and Elias Howe (inventor of the sewing machine).

Mick spoke on the role of elemental symbolism, using the Ancient ideas of Earth, Air, Fire and Water, along with some often-encountered parallels. For instance, a House (built of bricks, so Earth, and a place of residence) may represent your actual house, or your body, or your day to day personality or lifestyle. Different aspects of symbolism must always be considered, so that for example if you dream that your house is on fire, on awakening you might check that you have turned the gas off etc., or failing that see if you have a temperature (a possible fever arising). Only after excluding such fairly literal interpretations should you consider whether your lifestyle is falling apart (or needs to be restructured).

Again, water often symbolises emotion or intuition - think how we describe a person as cold, or gushing, or as needing to "let off steam", and a response to a situation may be said to be frozen, or raging (like a sea storm), or boiling over. Air may reflect the mind, possibly chattering away (an "air head") or an "up in the air" thinker out of touch with everyday things, or someone given to vehement arguments (like a storm that causes damage), and so forth. Fire may reflect illness (as in the house burning), strong emotion (causing water to boil), or, as light and heat, may reflect passion, commitment, idealism, or spirituality. The surrounding elements of

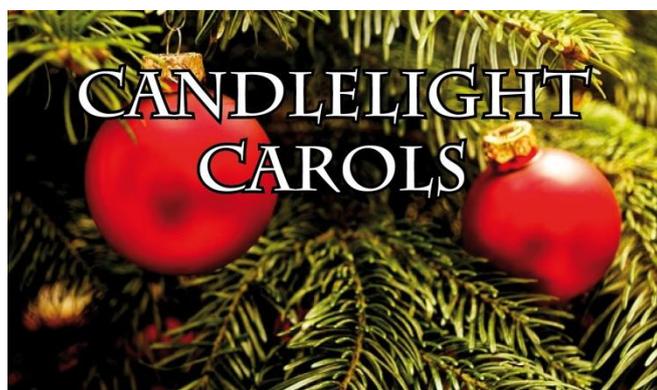
the dream, and their personal associations, always need to be considered.

Several people told their own dreams. Mick encouraged them to recall as many details as possible, and to give associations, but did not analyse the dreams himself, rather we felt that we had been given the tools, and encouragement, to begin the process ourselves. He was not keen on "lucid" dreams, but I and several others felt that these might well be of interest.

Ann Faraday, Patricia Garfield, and Stephen LaBerge are all dream authors in my own collection, and their books may be of interest.

For the TS, search "Theosophy Manchester" for our website (with notes of coming talks), or contact Sarah on 01942 608368.

Mike Rutter.



Chorlton Unitarian Church
Sunday 21st December,
6:00 pm



Penal Affairs Panel

Are you concerned about prisons and prisoners? Would you like to understand more about the issues and campaigns for justice and compassion which Unitarians are involved in?

Then you may be interested in the work of the Penal Affairs Panel (PAP) They work hard to bring Unitarian views to the British legal systems, especially those involving imprisonment or civil detention.

Created in 1992 following the General Assembly's "great concern at the poor conditions and regime at many local prisons" the Panel "investigates the current situation on all matters of penal policy, to keep the denomination informed wherever possible of all developments, and to provide a liberal religious voice in response to issues arising out of current legislation."

Since that time the numbers in UK prisons have doubled. The current figure, according to the statistics published by the Ministry of Justice is 10% more than the number of bed spaces available in UK prisons and the inhuman process of "slopping-out" in the absence of toilet facilities continues in many prisons. Justice legislation has increased exponentially.

Today, the PAP's aim is to encourage interest in the issues and understanding, through information. The Panel usually drafts and publishes two or more "PAP Issues Papers" each year. The online "PAP News" goes out to members of the PAP Network and others.

Members of the Panel speak to Unitarian and other groups on criminal justice matters.

A major effort is made each year by the Panel to bring informed views to the annual General Assembly meetings on a currently important criminal justice issue. The PAP presentation to the 2014 GA meetings was entitled "Imprisoned, Freed, Restored, Forgiven?": A new delivery model for social services from Emmaus".

The second direction of the PAP 's work is commenting on criminal justice issues to the Government, Members of Parliament, national and local press and specialist bodies such as the new Sentencing Council. Members of the Panel represent the Unitarians on the Churches Criminal Justice Forum and contribute to "the views of the Faiths", for example, in opposing the Government's proposals for "Titan" prisons.

The Penal Affairs Panel meets three or four times each year, usually in London but sometimes in Manchester, Sheffield or Birmingham. Recently, the Panel has used telephone "Call Conferences" successfully and most communications are by email.

Over the years, PAP members have included magistrates, solicitors, probation officers, prison teachers, prison visitors, drugs advisory officers and social workers. Today, the members are –

Tony Cann
Bruce Chilton
Bernard Omar and
Tony Rees

Social "responsibility" or "justice" action and service are at the core of Unitarian history. They are also at the core of the present Unitarian Objects and modern Unitarianism in the UK. Many Unitarians and others pursue religious inquiry through such action and service. Their action and their "liberal religious voice" make a big contribution to justice in the UK.

PAP Issues papers are available to read online at
<http://www.unitarian.org.uk/pages/penal-affairs-panel>

Holy Rood House Retreat Centre

In October I spent a few days on a ministerial retreat at Holy Rood House in Thirsk, Yorkshire, also known as the Centre for Health and Pastoral Care.

And indeed it is a very caring place with a comfortable lounge and dining room together with lovely staff and volunteers. The rooms are simple but comfortable and you can choose to have ensuite or shared bathroom. Each room is named after a quality and has a little angel keyfob to match. I was in Charity. There is also a chapel where an optional short service is held every morning. Our group was there with a purpose and made use of the large room on the first floor of the adjacent building, Thorpe House, where the activities are held. This also contains a large library. It is a lovely Arts and Crafts style building which was the home of the real "Mrs Pumphrey" and her spoilt dog "Tricky

Woo" from James Heriot's 'It shouldn't happen to a vet' stories.



The centre provides short term residential and day visits, therapeutic and pastoral care for all kinds of people for all kinds of reasons. Counsellors are available, art and drama therapy, complementary therapies and Spiritual Accompaniment.

There are lovely gardens and just across the road are open fields and riverside walks, all soothing balm to the harried soul. Prices are kept low. Meals are plentiful and home cooked, many using produce from the gardens. Everyone eats around a giant table, giving the opportunity to chat to other residents. Each resident washes up their own dishes afterwards.

We enjoyed it so much we plan to return next year.

The Centre runs a series of courses through the year. Tai chi, trauma training and courses focussing on Women's issues. More information can be found on their website www.holyroodhouse.org.uk

Marriage for same-sex couples - all welcome

Recent changes to government guidelines have meant that same-sex couples who have a Civil Partnership are able to convert them into marriages in a ceremony at a religious venue.

The Government announced the altered guidelines after thousands of people signed a petition calling for couples converting their partnerships to marriage to be allowed a wedding ceremony.

The original guidelines had allowed for only a simple conversion to take place in a register office.

The General Assembly was supportive of the introduction of equal marriage as the legislation went through Parliament and we worked with the Quakers and Liberal and Reform Judaism as well as other faith groups to provide a progressive religious response.

You do not have to be a Unitarian to be married in a Unitarian Church or Chapel. As an outward-looking faith we are generally open to approaches from couples who come seeking a spiritual or religious element for their marriage. This can be the more traditional ceremony or can incorporate rituals, words and music that are more meaningful to the couple. Do get in touch with the Church to explore whether or not a Unitarian service is for you.

Chorlton Unitarian Church is currently applying for Registration for Same- sex marriages .

Anniversary Service

A special collection at the service to celebrate the Chorlton Unitarian Church's birthday raised an impressive £935 ! Many thanks to everyone who donated. It is a reflection of how much you value our community. Special thanks to those Friends of the Church, who although they cannot attend, remember us so generously.

Chorlton Unitarians

Dates for your Diary

DECEMBER

Thursday 4th Church Committee Meeting
Friday 12th Quiz night with bring and share supper fundraiser at the church £2.00 per entry
Sunday 21st at 6.00pm Carol Service
No service on Christmas Day
Sunday 28th Normal Sunday Service starts 10.30am

JANUARY

Sunday 4th Normal Sunday Service
Followed by Community Meeting

What's On Nationally

FUSE Festival of Unitarians in the South-East 20th-22nd February at Worthing
fusefest.org.uk/

Annual Meetings of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches at Birmingham 29th March-1st April 2015

Provincial Assembly AGM : Using social media to raise your church's profile. 16th May 2015

Summer School, Great Hucklow 22nd-29th August 2015



Where to find us

Facebook page: Chorlton Unitarian Church
Website www.chorltonunitarians.org

Chorlton Unitarian Church
Rear of Regency Court Flats
Wilbraham Rd,
Chorlton-cum-Hardy,
M21 9LB

Chorlton Unitarian Church is grateful to the Manchester District Association for the contribution to their part-time paid Ministry