



Newcastle Unitarians The Calendar



August – September 2020

www.newcastleunitarians.org.uk

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**A member Congregation of the General Assembly of
Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8XG**

**Front cover photo credit: Newcastle Civic Centre's iconic
seahorses, by dun_deagh on flickr**



Church News

Chairperson's Hello for August and September 2020

Welcome to a time of transition, as we approach the warmest month of the year, and the month where the year turns and autumn approaches. My thoughts are with everyone and I hope that you and your families and loved ones are well – and if not, I hope you are finding the love and support you need. If Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians can help, you can contact us at:

info@newcastleunitarians.org.uk (we have a new email address, although the old one is being monitored), ring: 07506 255 731, or write to us at: Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE1 8XG. We are keeping an eye on the building and your letter will be collected.

Recently, we suffered the sad loss of a former members and great friend to our congregation, Fiona Tait, who passed away in St. Oswald's hospice on 17th July 2020 and who has been laid to rest in Belsay Woodland

Burial Ground. Her family thank everyone who visited her during her final illness, and who sent gifts, thoughts and prayers. If anyone would like to make a donation to St. Oswald's Hospice, her family have set up a



Left to right: Maurice Large, Louise Reeve, Jamie Scott, Fiona Tait, Rev. Tony McNeile

JustGiving page in her memory here:

<https://tinyurl.com/fionatait>

, or if you prefer, donations by cheque ('St Oswald's Hospice Limited') can be sent to: Fundraising Department, St Oswald's Hospice, Regent Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1EE. We will always remember everything she brought to our congregation.

As lockdown restrictions lift across the UK, the question on everyone's mind is whether we can reopen for communal worship in person. As of the time of writing, we have been waiting for repairs to the roof to be completed

before we can consider doing this. Repairs were on hold during lockdown, but will shortly be complete, and members of the management committee will visit the building to do a risk assessment and plan out how we might safely do this. We will probably be meeting in the Main Hall, as its giant size should enable us to socially distance! With no singing, it will be an unusual experience for us, but we will still have music, and I know everyone will work together to preserve our community and our way of worship.

We'll continue to have services online, including live services via Zoom, video recordings, and letters and posted service materials for people who prefer the printed word. If anyone needs support to go online, the national Unitarian movement has let us know that: "IT company Netserve Ltd. have volunteered their time and provided a dedicated phonenumber for Unitarians who need help to get online from a trusted partner. To access support you can ring: 0203 728 8415 or email them at: theteam@netserve.support".

The national Unitarian movement has continued to provide support to congregations, including online events to

support ministry during this times, and to look at what the rise of the anti-racism movement means for us and what we can do. See further on in this newsletter for some write-ups of these events!

The sale of our building is still proceeding. Our potential buyer, Tyneside Group Limited, have asked for a six-month extension to their option to purchase the building, as they need extra time to review their plans for it given the new need for social distancing indoors. They are optimistic they can make it work, and have carried out the roof repairs at their own cost as a sign of their commitment. We will continue to work with them, including pursuing the possibility of our using the building for worship in the long term once Tyneside Group have finished renovating it.

As ever, I'd like to thank everyone who has worked very hard to keep things going over the past few months, some of the most challenging we will ever face. Many thanks to those who have donated – whether it be gifts of your time, gifts of your skill, gifts of your company or gifts of funds to keep us going. Many thanks to the Northern Unitarian Association for arranging grants to cover our

recent printing and training costs, which has supported us to keep in touch with our members, and provide better-quality online events.

We continue to have our weekly Sunday socials, Monday pub quiz and Tuesday meditation.

We continue to support our charity, Joseph Cowen Centre in Byker. They are able to accept donations of their usual items – tea, coffee, sugar, powdered milk, men’s socks and underpants, and men’s toiletries – by drop-off at the centre in Byker, if you are able to get there under the lockdown rules. (Ring the bell and a member of staff will open the door to enable you to leave the donation on a table in the entrance hallway). They would also appreciate donations of paper, pens, puzzle books and playing cards, to provide some entertainment for the centre’s service users during life in lockdown!

If you are unable to donate items and would like to make a financial donation, you can do so via their Local Giving account online:

<https://localgiving.org/charity/tynehousing/> or

you can make a donation by sending a cheque to their head office at: St Silas Church

Building, Clifford Street, Byker, NE6 1PG.
Please make cheques payable to: Tyne
Housing Association. They have asked:
"please note on the back of the cheque that it
is for the Joseph Cowen Centre, so we can
ensure any donations go direct to them."

Finally, we are here for all our members and
will support everyone as best we can! Please
do let me know what works best for you.

Love and blessings,
Louise Reeve
Chairperson

Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

A tribute to Edna Anderson

It is with great regret that I have to inform you
of the death of Mrs Edna Anderson on 22nd
July 2020, after a long period of illness. Edna
was a lifelong member of Stockton Unitarian
Church, Unitarian Lay Preacher and past
President of the Unitarian Women's League,
and had a long-time involvement with the
North Tees Hospital League of Friends.
Funeral arrangements are not yet available
but are likely to be limited mainly to family
members due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Our deepest sympathies go to Edna's family at this sad time. A full obituary will be included in the next edition of the Stockton Unitarians Church Calendar.

- On behalf of Stockton Unitarians
Hazel Warhurst

Updates:

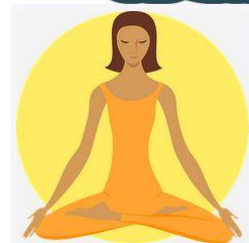
Newcastle Church Online Activities:

We hold three weekly activities over Zoom:

Monday Quiz Night (7pm)

Tuesday Meditation (7pm)

Sunday Social (12.30pm)



Monthly Reading Group:

We run a **virtual reading group** via Zoom once a month. In June we discussed some of the Dalai Lama's writings on religious harmony. In July we discussed the spiritual poetry of yoga teacher Danna Faulds.

The Daily Uplift:

Diana is also sending out short daily emails aimed to uplift you, help you smile and keep us all in contact every day.

Right – a chameleon trying to blend in with a stripy towel – just a sample of the kind of spirit-lifting nonsense you can expect!

If you would like to join the church activities or the reading group or be on the mailing list for the Daily Uplift, email Diana at diana.bebby@newcastleunitarians.org.uk



National Unitarian Fellowship:

People might like to consider joining the National Unitarian Fellowship: "a nationwide Unitarian network, for the exchange of ideas, opinions and news, and a point of contact for all with similar ideas, whether they belong to a church or not". nufonline.org.uk

Letter from Roger Tarbuck

Dear Friends,

We hear so much about the differences between people: groups for this and groups for that, all convinced that theirs is the right way. Us v them; men v women; race v race; Labour v Conservative; Brexiteers v Remainers – you name it, there's bound to be at least one organisation for it, and the same for those against it. The country is split into cross divisions all over the place, so that people, who hated each other a year ago, may now find common ground with new alliances. Here's one example in this powder keg of attitudes and emotions: just think of the strange bedfellows between some Labour and some Conservative people over the Brexit question. What a mixture. But I'd like to add this: I've found that there are two kinds of people – the heavy-handed and the gentle-handed. I won't say light-handed because that sounds too much like light-fingered, and we

don't want that. Most people are oblivious of their own condition, but they are sensitive to the condition of others. I know



Being gentle-handed

about this because I have only recently discovered that, because I'm somewhat awkward, I'm in the heavy-handed camp, after a lifetime convinced that I belonged with our gentler brothers and sisters. The Oracle read: "Know thyself"; well, my "self" has taken his time over it – till last week, actually.

I'm used to having needles stuck into me by all kinds of people. You may have a doctor or nurse with decades of experience who never gets the knack of gentle penetration of one's skin. Yet a young nurse of either sex may do it painlessly. I have a flu jab every autumn, done by experienced nurses. The injections are all done professionally well, but now and

then the jab is exceptionally well done, like a brush with a tiny feather. I once said so to the sister who did it and she said, “Well, we do get a lot of experience.” But experience isn’t enough.

Consider one appointment I had for wax removal. I’ve had over sixty-five years of wax removal, so I know a tad about it; I even did it once for myself when at sea. (A half-can enema on the bulkhead and a kidney bowl, “and get on with it!”) It was remarkably easy. Back to the appointment. The doctor laid me on the couch, secured the top of my body with his broad chest and broader stomach (like lying with a dugong) picked up the nozzle of the micro suction machine and *leaned into* my ear. He started battling away in hard contact with my extremely sensitive canal and the pain was continuous and excruciating. I kept saying, louder and louder, “You’re hurting me!” But he didn’t stop - not so much as: “Oops,” or “I’m sorry.” To him, pain was an acceptable and essential part of the whole

operation. Either that or he'd never known pain or had wax removed by a heavy-handed person. He then gave me a lecture on how important my wellbeing was to him.

Such people think themselves normal. They go through their career causing agony, while believing that the pained cries are a natural part of life, because everybody reacts like that, don't they? Well, all the people they meet in their work do. I'll never forget the straight, grey faces in the waiting room. They knew what was coming.

Because of heavy bookings and an inability to bring forward a date for sudden deafness, I've had trouble getting treatment from the NHS (whose doctors, on the whole, are gentle-handed) so I've been going to a private ear doctor for the extraction of wax every six months for over eight years, and never once has he caused me pain. What's more, he has a little TV screen in front of you, so you can watch everything that he does. Of course, you can shut your eyes if you want.

Just let me tell you quickly about my mother. There was a tiny lump on the inside of her eyelid and she had it taken away by a doctor who caused her agony. So, when she needed another lump removing, she went to a different doctor. She entered his room, sat down, and after her eye had been examined, she said, “Are you going to take it out now, Doctor?” “I’ve done it,” he said quietly. Now **that’s** what I’m talking about - and it transmits to all aspects of human relations.

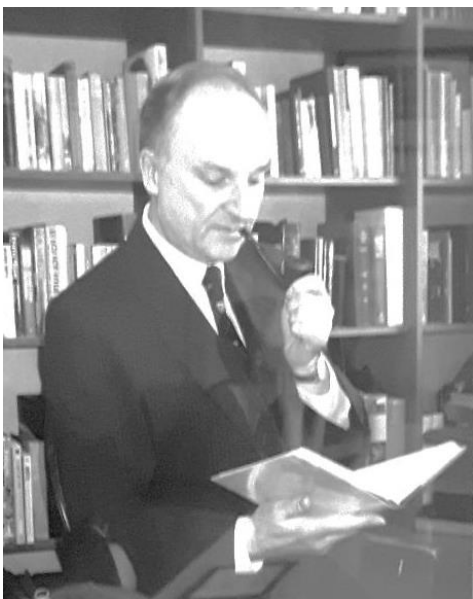


Gentle-handed and caring NHS staff

I’ve found that heavy-handed people are often rude and have little sensitivity to other people’s feelings; they think they are normal and are unaware of their own faults. Now, in the humble moment of my discovery, I ask myself: “Have I been unknowingly rude or

cruel to other people?” And the answer quickly comes back: “Yes, you’re awkward.” I now know that I’m one of “them”.

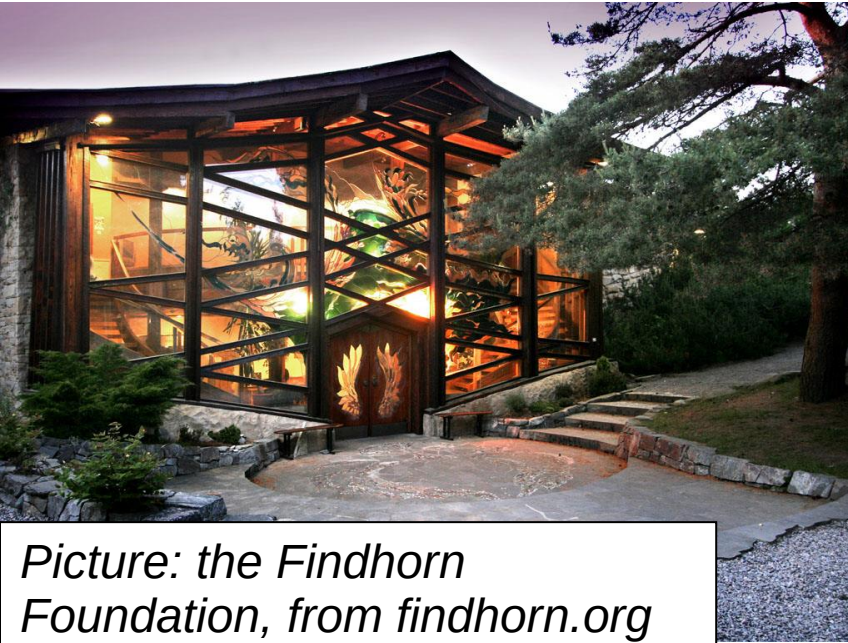
Yours sincerely,
Roger Tarbuck



Rev. Roger Tarbuck was our minister at Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarian Church between September 1977 to 1994. He studied first at Unitarian College Manchester, then at Manchester College Oxford, and was appointed minister at Newcastle upon Tyne from September 1977, where he stayed until retiring in 1994. In 1996, Rev. Tarbuck came back as Pastor at Newcastle and stayed until 2004, when he retired. He is a Spanish speaker and learned to play the guitar, although modestly has never claimed any proficiency at it. His regular letters to the church are always much appreciated!

Events Updates

Findhorn Unitarian Network Meditation



Picture: the Findhorn Foundation, from findhorn.org

Online on 18 August 9.30-10.30am. "This month, Rev. Dr. Ralph Catts helps us get back to basics in our meditation. He will identify ways to increase our

control over our minds and to address the many thoughts that filter through when one tries to sit and be at peace with our own breath. Various strategies will be introduced and we will have the opportunity to apply these as our meditate in silence." To book a place, please email him at:

ralphunitarian@gmail.com

Uni-Sing! A group for online hymn singing: Via Zoom at 3pm on Saturdays. They have a Facebook page, or you can email Louise Rogers to find out more:

louise.rogers256@gmail.com

What Does the Gospel of Mark Have to Say About Pandemics?

An online discussion led by Rev. Bob Janis-Dillon on 1 September at 7-9pm. Email him to book a place at:

bob.unitarian@gmail.com

Unitarian and Free Christian Bible Discussion Group

An online meeting on Facebook set up by Rory Castle-Jones. To find out more, visit them at: <https://tinyurl.com/UFCBible>

Online Services

Many congregations have moved to online services. This site has a list of congregations and how to connect with them online:

<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/online-services>

Heart and Soul Groups

Heart & Soul is a contemplative spiritual gathering (online) in which you can take time to reflect on life in the company of others. Visit the website for more information:

<https://www.heartandsoulcircles.org.uk/>

Recent Service Highlights

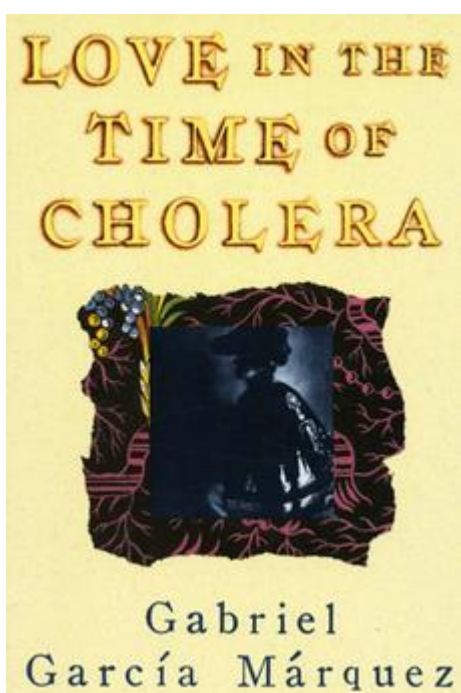
Recorded, available online:

YouTube:

<https://tinyurl.com/NUnitarianYouTube>

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/NewcastleuponTyneUnitarians



7 June – Joan Cook

Joan Cook joined us from St Mark's Edinburgh to present a video service on "Love in a Time of COVID", with reference to Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez.

14 June – Rev. Paul Walker

Rev. Paul Walker joined us from Stockton Unitarians, along with his family, to present a video service about the current pandemic in the light of biblical pandemics.

21 June – Elizabeth Faiers

Elizabeth Faiers joined us from York St Saviourgate Chapel to deliver a video service

on "Independence, Dependence, and Interdependence", as recorded in March 2019

28 June – Chris Carr

Chris Carr joined us from Hull Unitarians to present a video service on the subject of Father's Day and Midsummer.

Picture: MIDSUMMER?

5 July – Margaret Robinson

Margaret Robinson joined us from Stockton Unitarians to deliver a video service entitled "What a Wonderful World."

12 July – Louise van der Hoeven

Louise van der Hoeven is a member of Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians. On the 12th of July, Louise led the congregation by video in our annual animal service.

19 July – GA 'Being Together' Closing Worship

On the 19th of July the congregation watched the video recording of the annual General Assembly "Being Together" closing worship.

26 July – Louise Reeve

Louise Reeve is the chairperson of Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians. Louise hosted our first live Zoom meeting for worship.



It was our annual Flower Communion service, inspired by Norbert Capek and dedicated to the memory of Fiona Tait.

Unitarians Talking about Race Nationally and Locally



LET'S TALK ABOUT RACE

THURSDAY 25 JUNE
7 - 9pm

Recently I attended two online events, “Let’s Talk About Race” hosted by the Unitarian General Assembly and “What role

does faith play in racial justice?” from the Newcastle Council of Faiths.

Let’s Talk about Race

An online event attended by around 150 Unitarians and fellow travellers via Zoom on 25 June 2020, and featuring four speakers:

- **Margaret Perry**, a senior member of the Rosslyn Hill Chapel, spoke about her experiences growing up in Liverpool, and her horror as a young white woman in her first job, aged 17, learning that the shipping company she worked for had traded in slaves in the past. She spoke of how she had never learned about this, and emphasised the importance of knowing all of our history.
- **Garry Stewart**, director of 'Recognise Black Heritage and Culture' spoke about the recent Windrush scandal, where many black British people who had arrived in Britain as children and lived and worked here for decades were accused of being 'illegal immigrants'. Many lost their jobs and rights to use public services, and some were even imprisoned or deported.
- **Rev. Winnie Gordon**, a black British Unitarian minister (and former recipient of the Herbert Barnes Award), who spoke powerfully about her personal experiences of racism and how it can lead to black, Asian and minority ethnic people feeling

they must deny who they are to avoid conflict.

- **Dr Judy Ryde**, author of 'White Privilege Unmasked' spoke on how white people do not always recognise their own racism and prejudice. She emphasised that in a structurally racist society, everyone is affected by racism to some degree, and that white people need to be prepared to examine our views and actions, and become 'antiracist'.

We then went into individual groups to discuss our own views on race and share thoughts on what we'd heard and what we thought we wanted to do next. This was probably the most valuable part of the session, although the speakers were excellent, as it allowed us (a mostly white group) to start some of the consideration Dr Ryde encouraged us to begin. As Liz Slade, Chief Officer of the GA, said in her closing remarks, this event is a beginning, not an end. You can read a full write-up of this event in the 11 July 2020 edition of the *Inquirer*, and a video of the event is online at: <https://tinyurl.com/y8rpogdf>.

Newcastle Council of Faiths: “What role does faith play in racial justice?”

A Zoom conference on 14th July organised by the Newcastle Inter Faith Council.

Unfortunately I wasn't able to attend the entire event, but it was fantastic to see a locally-organised event on tackling racism and looking at the spiritual dimension of this work, and to hear from speakers such as local MP Chi Onwurah, who spoke about her experiences as a black British woman both before and after going into politics. Other speakers included Shumel Rahman (co-chair of Newcastle Unites), Jaswinder Singh (from the North East Sikh Service), and Northumbria Police Superintendent Karl Wilson. Hopefully as Unitarians we will be able to become more involved in our local inter-faith group in future! Find out more by contacting Lesley Hillary at:

l.hillary@newcastle.anglican.org.

- Louise Reeve

History of the Church: JOSEPH COWEN

9 July 1829 – 18 February 1900

For many years now we have been collecting supplies for the Joseph Cowen Centre in Byker. As well as socks and underpants, we have also supplied coffee, tea and other similar foodstuffs. But who exactly was Joseph Cowen?



Joseph Cowen is considered “an outside member of the denomination” according to the records of the Unitarian Historical Society. It is certain that he attended New Bridge Street Church during the ministry of Rev J C Street. He was the son of Sir Joseph Cowen, a firebrick manufacturer and coal owner of Stella Hall Blaydon and London, who was known to have Unitarian affiliations but who had his son baptised as a Methodist. Joseph Senior was MP for Newcastle, having been involved with Newcastle Council for many years.

Joseph Junior inherited his father’s business and also his seat in Parliament. He went to Edinburgh University, where he interested

himself in European revolutionary movements, and would smuggle documents abroad hidden in firebrick consignments going for export. He counted among his friends Mazzini, the Italian politician and supporter of Italian unification, and Garibaldi was among those who visited him in Blaydon. He supported the working classes in general and the miners in particular.

In 1859 Joseph bought the Newcastle Daily Chronicle and Newcastle Weekly Chronicle from Mark Lambert (also a member of CDU) and used the newspapers as vehicles to publicise his ideas, often publishing articles about the grievances of the working classes, especially the miners. He was the founding chairman of the Blaydon Co-operative Society (the first Co-op in the region) and involved in the reform of the Blaydon



Mechanics Institute, and also the foundation of Newcastle public library. Indeed he is said to have been the first person to borrow a book from the library – perhaps not a surprise to

realise it was right next door to the church in New Bridge Street!

Joseph succeeded his father as Liberal MP for Newcastle in 1874 at the same election as Thomas Burt, the miners' leader (who was sometime a worshipper at Choppington church). He made no attempt to modify his local accent. Being short in stature and uncouth in appearance his individuality first shocked and then by its earnestness impressed the House of Commons; and his sturdy independence of party ties, combined with a gift of rough but genuine eloquence (of which his speech on the Royal Title Bill of 1876 was an example), rapidly made him one of the best-known public men in the country. He was re-elected in 1885, but shortly afterwards the man (who had acquired the nickname "the Blaydon Brick") retired from politics and devoted himself to running his Newcastle Daily Chronicle and his private business, exercising a wide influence on public opinion.

There are many memories of Joseph Cowen in Newcastle. Near the Old Assembly Rooms, at the end of Cross House, is a splendid

statue (pictured). There is also the Joseph Cowen Lifelong Learning Centre which continues to run educational courses at Commercial Union House, and the Joseph Cowen Centre in Byker for which we continue to collect in support of their help for homeless men.



Lastly, I discovered that Joseph Cowen was a supporter of Rapper dancing, such that after his death his widow continued to welcome dancers to Stella Hall at Christmas and at the North of England Musical Tournament from 1921 onwards, the Cowen Trophy (pictured) was awarded to winners of the adult traditional sword dance class. The trophy was finally awarded outright to Winlaton White Star in 1925, their third win in a row. The trophy was exhibited at DERT (Dancing England Rapper Tournament) in 1999. I do not know if it has been seen since and it would be interesting to know if it has been seen more recently.

- Maurice Large

June-July Committee Meeting (via Zoom) notes

Sale and Use of the Building: The sale and repairs are ongoing. The option to purchase has been extended due to lockdown delays.

NUA: Brian Robson and Ben MacLeod will continue as our representatives.

Blue Ridge Partnership: The penpal scheme continues – anyone interested in corresponding with anyone at Blue Ridge, ask Diana for details.

Publicity: We continue to update our website and Facebook pages.

Services: We now have a full church Zoom account. We held our first live service on 26 July and aim to continue online with live and recorded services for a while longer – we have decided to

Standard items: We discussed the treasurer's and secretary's reports, pulpit supply, correspondence and the reading group.

Management committee meetings at the church building are still suspended until further notice. Next meeting will be Sunday 6 September at 12.30pm.



Sunday Services



Our online services continue – see our YouTube and Facebook pages. Keep up to date by visiting our website and Facebook, or email or call us:

info@newcastleunitarians.org.uk

07506 255 731

YouTube:

<https://tinyurl.com/NUnitarianYouTube>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/NewcastleuponTyneUnitarians>

Alternatively, you can join another Unitarian congregation online – see this page for a list of choices:

<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/online-services>

August Services:

2 – Water, Water Everywhere

9 – The Joy of the Written Word

16 – Rev. Paul Walker

23 – Tom McCready

30 – Happiness Happens

Pulpit supply: Diana Bebbby

diana.bebby@newcastleunitarians.org.uk

Flower Dedications

Our regular flower display will be suspended while the church is closed.

If you would still like to dedicate some flowers to a loved one in the future, please email

info@newcastleunitarians.org.uk

Many thanks go to Sheila and Joan for the flowers we have enjoyed so far this year.



Articles for the August-September calendar to be submitted no later, please, than **Sunday 19 July 2020**. Thanks to Rev. Roger Tarbuck, Louise Reeve, Maurice Large and Ben MacLeod for their contributions to this calendar.



Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

All are welcome here



We are a free religious faith and affirm the unity of the human family, regardless of race, creed, class, orientation or sex.

We believe that peace, compassion and justice should be the hallmarks of a truly spiritual society, pursued in a spirit of freedom, reason and tolerance.



The Unitarian Community in this city traces its history back to 1662, when Dr. Richard Gilpin and Rev. William Durant started separate Nonconformist meetings after the Act of Uniformity. Under the Rev. Herbert Barnes,

our current building in Ellison Place opened on Sunday 21 January 1940.

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PRIDE