



Newcastle Unitarians The Calendar



JUNE to JULY 2024

www.newcastleunitarians.org.uk

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**A member Congregation of the General Assembly
of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches**

Articles for the August – September calendar to be submitted by **Sunday 21st July 2024** Thanks to Louise Reeve for her contributions to this calendar.

Front: Angel made by Elizabeth Faiers to help with fundraising for her African project. Images from contributors and unitarian.org.uk

Editor's Foreword

Just a quick note to apologise for the delay in getting these last two calendars out to you.

We who are attempting to keep things going at the church are under a bit of pressure right now and, to be honest, still recovering from the sale and clear-out of our former building. And on that topic, I'm sure you will all agree with me that we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Louise for the complicated, time-consuming, and hard work she did in making it happen. It would not have been possible without her expertise, knowledge and dedication.

For my part, I can only say that health problems (nothing too serious) have made it a little difficult to concentrate on other things for the past few months. And, to add to this tale of woe, I managed to snap a tendon my little finger – that makes typing very difficult – and now, I have vid, the latter preventing me from getting the treatment that would have cleared up the main medical issue. Ah well, such is life and, hopefully, everything will sort itself out in due time.

So, bear with us, we're trying our best and, with a fair wind and a bit of luck, you will get your next Calendar in good time! Best wishes, David.

Chairperson's Hello for June and July 2024

As we're halfway through the year, we've settled into our new homes! At the Annual General Meeting on 28 April, we agreed to continue meeting as we are – second Sundays in the month at Northumbria Spiritual Commons, every other Sunday at Jesmond URC.

We also agreed to pursue the investment of the proceeds of sale of our own building, to march at Northern Pride 2024, and to look into the possibilities of applying for funding for spiritual leadership and outreach. Whilst a permanent full-time minister is not a realistic possibility, we wonder if a more short-term arrangement could be an option for helping us grow our congregation, with the aim of meeting more people's spiritual needs, and hopefully becoming more self-sustaining. We will see! We've also had a Special Congregation Meeting on 2 June 2024, at which members present agreed to adopt the new constitution (the 'church rules') for the future, to allow us to meet online and vote electronically, among some other changes.

Work to renovate our old building by Northumbria University continues; they are currently working

on the roof and windows – see the photograph! It will become a lecture theatre, opening in 2025. More updates as and well.

The UK Unitarian and Free Christian General Assembly (GA) took place over 4-6th April 2024 – I was our fellowship's representative. We

passed resolutions on awareness of the benefits and dangers of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the 'No More Deaths' campaign, and action on the conflict in Gaza.

We have our annual Whitby Trip to look forward to on 7th July 2024, and for the first time we intend to try to livestream this for anyone who cannot attend. Watch this space!



The start of work on our former building

Northern Pride is on 20-21st July 2024, and we have the Northern Unitarian Association AGM on 28th September. We hope to see you all soon!

Louise Reeve, Chairperson, Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Supporting local, national and international charities

We continue to support various charities in the Northeast and internationally. We invite anyone who wishes to do so to donate to charities helping those suffering through the war in Ukraine and Gaza, refugees fleeing war, persecution and natural disasters. Please search online for a charity that speaks to you.

More locally, GAIN is a charity that helps those with autoimmune conditions. Donate online here:

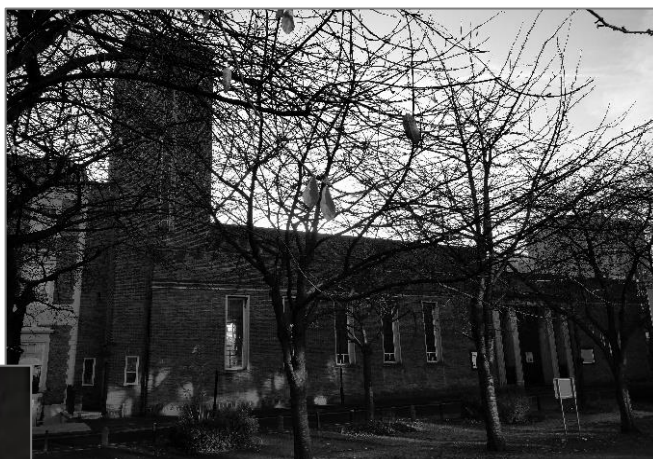
justgiving.com/fundraising/geordie-leather

We continue to support the Joseph Cowen Centre, helping homeless men in the city. They need tea, coffee, sugar, powdered milk, men's socks, underpants and toiletries plus paper, pens, puzzle books and playing cards – you can take them to the Byker centre or drop them at our church, or you can make a financial donation online: localgiving.org/charity/tynehousing/

Services June-July 2024

Date	Location	Leader	Theme
2 June	JURC	Rev. Paul Walker	‘Let’s Go For A Walk’ Committee and Special Meeting
9 June	NSC	Amaradaya	‘Exploring Deeper’
16 June	JURC	Louise Reeve	‘Discover and Discuss: Artificial Intelligence’ IN PERSON ONLY
23 June	JURC	Paul Lindsey Dawson	‘Know Thyself’ IN PERSON ONLY
30 June	JURC	Jesmond URC CHURCH HALL	10.45am Start Time Visiting IN PERSON ONLY

Date	Location	Leader	Theme
7 July	WHITBY	NO SERVICE	WHITBY TRIP
14 July	NSC	Rev. Paul Walker	IN PERSON ONLY
21 July	JURC	Chris Newsam	TBC Committee meeting BACK ONLINE
28 July	JURC	Louise Reeve	Pride Week ONLINE AND IN PERSON



↑ Jesmond URC



← Northumbria Student Central, containing the Large Spiritual Commons room.

Service Highlights June 2024

On June 2nd, Reverend Paul Walker talked about the benefits of walking for both our physical and mental health. He also pointed out that communication is so much easier when walking, possibly because we are not face to face, and it's not so embarrassing when pauses occur.

On June 9th, Amaradaya, a member of the local Buddhist community, explored why faith may be necessary to us, as reason and knowledge can only go so far. Could instinct and intuition be just as important? Is there some sort of resonance between human beings and the universe which gives rise to this yearning for more than mortal experience? The service ended with a period of relaxing meditation.

And a reminder that our services are now at Jesmond United Reform Church and, every second Sunday of the month, at the spiritual Commons in the Northumbria University Library.

Online services can be accessed here:

YouTube: tinyurl.com/NUnitarianYouTube

Facebook:

facebook.com/NewcastleuponTyneUnitarians

Financial Update

The sale of our former premises meant that a lot of capital tied up in that building was released. It also resulted in our monthly overheads being drastically reduced, especially insurance cover.

Apart from subscriptions, donations and collections, we have no other income. What we do receive is not enough to cover our current expenses which mainly consist of premises rental and pulpit supply. Therefore, some time ago, the decision was taken, to invest some of our capital into the M&G Charifund. This has proved successful, and our income is now enough to cover our monthly expenses.

We still have capital to invest, so we are currently in discussions with a recommended financial advisor who is exploring the various options available to us. Those discussions are ongoing, but we hope that a financial strategy will be implemented soon.

The long-term plan is to use some of our funds to grow our fellowship here in Newcastle, and the means of achieving that are being explored with advice being received from some members of the GA, who specialise in that area.

David Venus, Treasurer.

“Meet the Honorary Treasurer”, 15 May 2024

John Bates has been appointed as the General Assembly’s new Honorary Treasurer, as of the April annual meeting. On 15 May 2024, around 25 UK Unitarians got to virtually meet him on a Zoom meeting to hear more about the role of Honorary Treasurer, and John’s perspective on the GA’s financial picture as he takes on the role.



John Bates

From the official invitation, a short biography: “John is a graduate of Harvard Business School, and a retired Adjunct Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship at London Business School, with fifty years’ experience in business and education. He joined Cambridge Unitarians in 1991 and later was a member of Islington Unitarians. John became Chair of New Unity when it was formed in 2015, before stepping

down in 2022. He joined the GA's Executive Committee in 2023."

It was a fascinating meeting; John's comprehensive grasp of our national movement's finances was much appreciated by all, and gave everyone a reassuring sense of our financial future. Those present took the chance to ask questions about the Match Funding initiative, issues of congregational resources, and what to do if you're not sure who owns your building. Perhaps there is an opportunity here for more meetings for those tasked with running a congregation! We look forward to hearing more from John.

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April-May 2024 Management Committee Update

AGM: Our Annual General Meeting happened online and via Zoom on 28 April 2024. As at our committee meetings, we discussed people's feelings about how the move to our two new homes has gone, and agreed to continue with the set-up whereby we meet Northumbria Spiritual Commons on the second Sunday of each month,

and in the Cuthbert Room at Jesmond URC on every other Sunday. We had intended to vote on the adoption of the revised Constitution (Church Rules), but due to issues with email, not everyone had seen this in advance, and we arranged a Special Meeting solely on this topic on 2 June 2024.

New homes: We reviewed how the move to our two new homes has gone during the trial period. We have also recently purchased a portable hearing loop to assist people using hearing aids to hear our services.

Sale of the building: We will seek advice from Geoffrey Cook Advisors on how to best invest the proceeds of sale of our building. We have completed the disposal and rehoming of items from the building, including sending our records to Tyne and Wear Archives, and our historical items to Unitarian College. We are going to hand over our large portrait of Rev. William Turner to Northumbria University, so that it can remain *in situ*.

Revising constitution: We discussed the draft revised constitution to allow for a smaller committee to make decisions, which has been drafted following advice from Connected Voice.

We will ask the membership to vote on this at the church Special Meeting on 2 June 2024*.

Standard items: We discussed the standard items on every meeting: the treasurer's and secretary's reports, pulpit supply for upcoming services, correspondence, and social action, such as the upcoming Northern Pride 2024 events in July 2024. As ever, all church members are welcome to attend committee meetings as observers.

*** Special Meeting, 2 June 2024**

This was held in person and via Zoom, and members present, or having conveyed their voting intention to the Secretary in advance, unanimously voted to approve the adoption of the revised Constitution.

The next committee meetings will be 21st July and 1 September 2024

Faith in our Future II

Saturday, 14 September

10:30-16:00

Cross Street Unitarian Chapel, Manchester

We're taking the show up North! Join an enriching, informative gathering of climate-conscious Unitarians for discussion, workshops, and connection.

£10 suggested donation, £5 concessions
Lunch provided.

More info and to register:
www.tinyurl.com/faithfuturell



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 former building in Ellison Place opened on Sunday 21 January 1940.

Calendar editor: David Venus

Chairperson: Louise Reeve

Email:

info@newcastleunitarians.org.uk

Telephone: 07506 255 731

Facebook:

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