



The Monthly Messenger for

April
2020

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April Flowers

Where have all the Flowers gone?

Sadly, due to the present situation, the
weekly Church Flower list is being omitted
from the Messenger until further notice

May I take this opportunity to thank all
those who have kindly donated to the Flow-
er Fund and hope you will continue to do so
in the future when we are once again able
to enhance our worship with the beauty of
our flowers and messages of remembrance.

Edna
Flower Fund Secretary

100 CLUB WINNERS

MARCH 2020

1st	28	Helen Illingworth
2nd	83	Eunice Smith
3rd	17	Kate Salt

Congratulations

Prizes- 1st £30 - 2nd £15 - 3rd £5



Church Charity 2018-2020

Visit www.sightsavers.org to donate and for more
information

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Well who could have predicted this only a few short, weeks ago? Certainly not me!



I very much hope that you, your families and friends are all safe and well-supplied during these uncertain times.

Be sure that your church community is here to support you. Whether you need groceries delivering, letters posting, or just someone to talk to, your church is here for you.

We don't know how long this is all going to last, so it is really important to keep in touch with family, friends and neighbours to help each other get through this. To this end, church council will be posting regular updates on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/RochdaleUnitarians; Website: www.rochdaleunitarians.org.uk and via a newsletter that will be posted out to those of you who wish to receive it. Fear not, this will not replace The Monthly Messenger, which will continue on its normal schedule. Whilst the church building is closed, the newsletter will be a place to post a mix of practical advice, spiritual guidance (and hopefully some humour too!). If you would like to submit any material, you can email us at admin@rochdaleunitarian.org, or contact us via any of the methods already listed. Hopefully, by the time this goes to press, members of Church Council will have been in touch with the church regulars by phone, with weekly calls to follow. So till next month, stay safe and stay in-touch!

SPRING-CLEANING?



...er... the good news is the youth-group have made a great start by pressure-washing the west window...

THE TIME WE SPRING-CLEANED THE WORLD

For those with children who may find it hard to explain what is going on, this makes a lovely bedtime story . . .

The world it got so busy,
There were people all around.
They left their germs behind them;
In the air and on the ground.

These germs grew bigger and stronger.
They wanted to come and stay.
They didn't want to hurt anyone -
They just really wanted to play.

Sometimes they tried to hold your hand,
Or tickled your throat or your nose.
They could make you cough and sneeze
And make your face as red as a rose.

And so these germs took over.
They started to make people ill,
And with every cough we coughed
More and more germs would spill.

All the queens and kings had a meeting.
"It's time to clean the world up!" they said.
And so they had to close lots of fun stuff,
Just so these germs couldn't spread.

We couldn't go to cinemas
Or restaurants for our tea.
There was no football or parties,
The world got as quiet as can be.

The kids stopped going to school,
The mums and dads went to work less.
Then a great, big, giant scrubbing brush
Cleaned the sky and the sea and the mess!

Dads started teaching the sums,
Big brothers played with us more,
Mums were in charge of homework
And we read and played jigsaws galore!

The whole world was washing their hands
And building super toilet roll forts!
Outside was quiet and peaceful,
Now home was the place for all sports.

So we played in the world that was home
And our days filled up with fun and love,
And the germs they grew smaller and smaller
And the sun watched from up above.

Then one morning the sun woke up early,
She smiled and stretched her beams wide.
The world had been fully spring cleaned,
It was time to go back outside!

We opened our doors oh so slowly
And breathed in the clean and fresh air.
We promised thar forever and always
Of this beautiful world we'd take care!

REFLECTIONS CENTRE-FOLD



What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Centre down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

—Lynn Ungar



Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.

But:

They say that in Wuhan, after so many years of
noise
you can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet,
The sky is no longer thick with fumes,
but blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
is offering free meals and delivery to the
housebound.

Today, a young woman I know is busy spreading
fliers with her number through the neighbourhood,
so that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and
Temples
are preparing to welcome and shelter the homeless,
the sick, the weary.

All over the world, people are slowing down and
reflecting.
All over the world, people are looking at their
neighbours in a new way.
All over the world, people are waking up to a new
reality:
To how big we really are;
To how little control we really have;
To what really matters.
To Love.

So we pray and we remember that:
Yes there is fear,
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation,
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying,
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness,
But there does not have to be disease of the soul.

— Brother Richard

“ABOUT PEOPLE”

Irene Nuttall has spent another period in hospital and afterwards in Tudor Court. We trust that she will soon be fully recovered.

Both **Elaine & Fred Schofield** have been feeling far from well recently. They are much-missed by us all, and we trust they will make a good recovery soon.

Words of Wisdom for Times of Trouble:

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.” – Helen Keller

For I am the Lord your God
who takes hold of your right hand
and says to you, Do not fear;
I will help you. — Isaiah 41:13 (NIV)

"As surely as we belong to the universe, we belong together. We join here to transcend the isolated self, to reconnect, to know ourselves to be at home, here on earth, under the stars, linked with each other." — Margaret Keip



We're 'joining' in a very different way but can at least maintain these online links — Diane Bennett ☺

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME...



*Helen went to church three weeks running,
so she was co-opted to the P.C.C.*

M UDDY BOOTS

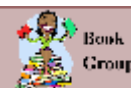


Walking
Group



It's unlikely that the walk on Good Friday to the Shibden Valley will take place. I was hoping that we would be able to look round Shibden Hall after the walk. The recent television series Gentleman Jack told the story of Ann Lister and was filmed at Shibden Hall, The Listers' home. I have fond memories of Junior Church visits to Shibden Park where the children and adults had a great time.

B BOOK CIRCLE



Book
Group

Sadly we won't be meeting in April to discuss The Garden of Burning Sand by Corbin Addison. I hope that all members will have read it as I think it's the best book we've read in a while.

I don't think I'm going to run out of books to read over the next few months but in case you are do you know about Borrow Box? This is an App which you can download from Rochdale Library. You need your library user name and password to register. You can then borrow books by downloading them for free to your Tablet, Phone or Computer. There is a time limit of three weeks just like at the Library and you can reserve and renew books. As well as e-books you can borrow audio books which we used to call talking books. For more information, visit: www.rochdale.gov.uk/library-services/pages/search-and-read-ebooks.aspx



MESSAGE FROM THE GA PRESIDENT 16 MARCH 2020

Hello Everyone

What a week! And this is only the beginning. First, I want to applaud all those congregations, ministers, lay-leaders, church officers, who have grasped the nettle and decided what is best for them and/or their congregations. And thanks to those who have decided to help those less fortunate in this difficult time, your kindness is beautiful, you are truly living up to that goal of being part of the Compassionate Community.



In the midst of a pandemic, our lives are thrown out of their usual routines, and we are living in the insecure throes of a pandemic. You may be fearful. Waiting for your turn to get COVID19. Hoping you will be part of the 20% that is destined not to get it. Hoping if you do get it you will not pass it to someone who will not survive the illness. Hoping that you are strong enough to throw the virus off, worrying that you will not. Worrying about your relatives and friends. Worrying about other people not taking the precautions you are. Worrying about the people who are far too blasé about it and might endanger you or others.

We cannot be blasé, this virus is nasty. It's not a walk in the park for anyone – only children, it seems, have an easy-ish time. So take precautions, wash hands well and often. Don't touch things lots of other people are touching: petrol pumps, shopping trolleys, door handles in shops or restaurants. Don't cough or sneeze into the air, use a tissue (and then throw it in a bin), use the crook of your arm, then wash the garment as soon as you can. Don't spend time in crowded places, leave a good distance between yourself and others – not easy in a city, but try. Be kind to each other. Watch out for your neighbours, give more to the food banks, self-isolate if you have even the slightest inkling you might have the virus, stay away from others until you are well.

In this difficult time, we must be kind to each other. Don't panic buy just because you can, you are depriving someone who cannot, let's share. The saddest, the worst, the most dreadful thing we can be to each other is unkind. I have just read a report about an NHS worker who was physically and verbally abused on her way to work – why? – she looks Asian!!! She then carried on to work, to work with too few staff, with too few beds, on the front line to get this virus. Let us be aware of others and if we witness unkindness, then let us stand up and speak up for them. The woman who was abused was very

upset and yet was able to write:

We must learn from the humanitarian lessons taught by the COVID19 pandemic. This is the time to look after each other and be kind to one another, in this time of global crisis; kindness is the most effective response.

Though we will not be together at the General Assembly Meetings next month the work will not cease, we will get through this and continue to build our blessed communities.

With love and beautiful blessings

Celia Cartwright

Posted on Facebook by Rev Kate Brady McKenna, in response to the announcement of a lockdown, 23 Mar 2020.

Well, my friends, now we know.

We have never been here before.

This is huge and unprecedented news, and I think I'm safe to say we're all reeling. And it's going to take a while to fully sink in, because we have never, any of us, been here before.

And if you're sad or scared or anxious or confused, or any of a million different things, it's okay. We have never been here before.



It's okay - it's important - to feel those things, and it's important to say so. It's okay to revert to wry humour, as well, but it's certainly okay to say "I'm scared, I'm sad, I'm confused".

We have never been here before.

And I'm not just suggesting that if *you* are sad and scared and anxious or confused it's okay to say so. I'm sad and scared and anxious and confused. And it's okay to say that.

I'm sad and scared and anxious and confused.

And I also know that for most of us, this will pass. But right now we've never been here before and we're sad and scared and anxious.

We've never been here before.

And it's okay.

Now please contact three people, and tell them you love them.

Video Message from GA Chief Officer, Liz Slade:

<https://www.facebook.com/UnitariansUK/videos/637894473711256/>

EVENT DATES 2020

PLEASE NOTE:

Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions on movement in place, services and events at church have been cancelled/postponed until further notice.

Below are important calendar dates from June onwards. We hope that by this time, we will have a clearer indication of the situation and will be able to plan a revised calendar.

In the meantime, updates will be posted on our website, Facebook page and in our bi-weekly newsletter

Date	EVENT
20 Jun	Summer Lunch
22 Aug	Women's League Project Lunch
27 Sep	Harvest Service
03 Oct	Film Night
10 Oct	Autumn Lunch
08 Nov	Remembrance Service (at 2 pm)
21 Nov	Film Night
05 Dec	Christmas Lunch
06 Dec	2020 Toy & Gift Service
13 Dec	Carol Service
25 Dec	Christmas Morning Service (at 11 am)

Messenger by Email?

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