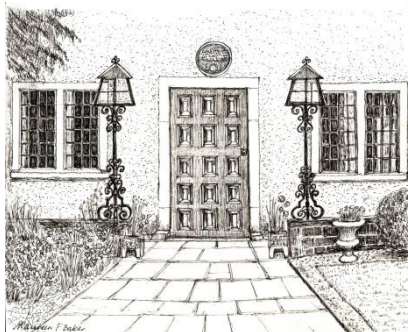


Founded 1662



Building 1694

Elder Yard Unitarian Chapel Chesterfield

Elder Yard Unitarian Chapel, Elder Way, Chesterfield S40 1UR
Tel: 01246 554506 Website: www.chesterfield-unitarians.org.uk
General email: info@chesterfield-unitarians.org.uk
Registered charity No.220091

In the light of truth and the warmth of love, we gather to seek, to sustain, to share.

Newsletter September/October 2025

Welcome to our Newsletter

Details of services and leaders for 2025

Services are held on the second Sunday of each month and start at 3pm. All are welcome.

14 Sept	Rev Maria Pap	9 Nov	Rev Maria Pap
12 Oct	Rev. Maria Pap	14 Dec	Rev Maria Pap

Flower Communion Service

The Chapel will hold its first Flower Communion Service this September and hopefully this will not be the last time. Where did this beautiful idea come from?

The Flower communion service was created by Norbert Capek (1870-1942), who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. He introduced this special service to that church on June 4, 1923. For some time he had felt the need for some symbolic ritual that would bind people more closely together. The format had to be one that would not alienate any who had forsaken other religious traditions.

The traditional Christian communion service with bread and wine was unacceptable to the members of his congregation because of their strong reaction against the Catholic faith. So, he turned to the native beauty of their countryside for elements of a communion which would be genuine to them and the Flower Communion service was the result. It was such a success that it spread to many Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist congregation around the

world. People were asked to bring a flower of their choice, either from their own gardens. or from the field or roadside. When they arrived at church a large vase stood waiting in the vestibule, each person was asked to place their own flower in the vase. This signified that it was by their own free will they joined with the others. The vase that contained all the flowers was a symbol of the united church fellowship and was placed at the front at the beginning of the service. After the service, as people left the church, they went to the vase and each took a flower from the vase other than the one that they had brought. The significance of the flower communion is that as no two flowers are alike, so no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. Together the different flowers form a beautiful bouquet. Our common bouquet would not be the same without the unique addition of each individual flower, and thus it is with the community at Elder Yard, it would not be the same without each and every one of us. Thus, this service is a statement of our community. By exchanging flowers, we show our willingness to walk together in our Search for truth, disregarding all that might divide us. Each person takes home a flower brought by someone else - thus symbolizing our shared celebration in community.

So, bring a flower on the 14th of September and let us celebrate together!

Maria



Lunchtime concerts in the Chapel

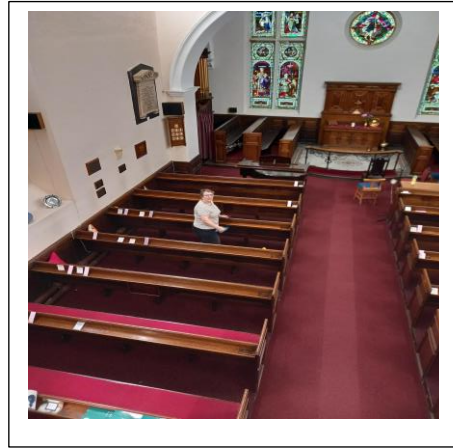
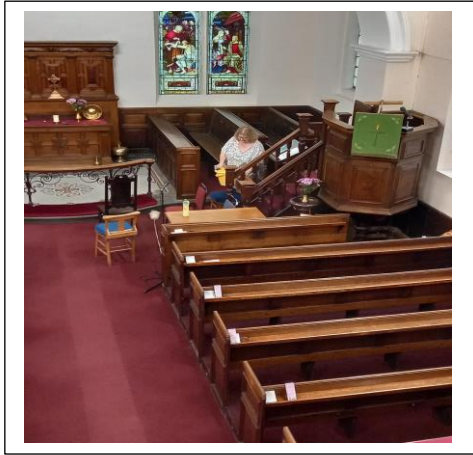
The popular Chapel Saturday lunchtime concerts resume on September 20th when there will be a classical song recital, including piano solos performed by Shelley Walsh and Jonathan Bickley. The concert runs from 11.45 to 12.30 and admission is free with a retiring collection.

Grounds Maintenance and Building Upkeep

Over the summer Andrew has removed ivy from the wall next to the bakery as well as trimming the tree growing in the back wall and removing ivy there too! The planters are looking particularly good right now although the grass has suffered badly from the dry conditions. Inside, the grab rail has been securely re-fitted just outside the entrance to the disabled loo and the other handles inspected after an unfortunate incident...say no more. Thanks to the cleaning team who did sterling work on August 16th.

Chapel Summer Clean

On Saturday 16th August a small merry band of us met at the Chapel to flick off the dust, tidy and thoroughly vacuum both upstairs and downstairs. We tried to reach the less accessible areas that can easily be missed. It didn't take too long to make the Chapel look a little shinier and even more welcoming. Here are a couple of photos taken stealthily by Andrew from the balcony.



National Heritage Open Days

We will be opening on Friday 11th and Saturday 12th September as part of this year's festival. Some new promotional materials have arrived and the opening times are 10am to 4pm with light refreshments served all day. More offers of baking help or money gratefully accepted! The theme this year is architecture so plenty to see at Elder Yard. We complete the weekend with the 3pm service on Sunday afternoon. Spread the word about our open days and come along yourself with family, friends and neighbours.

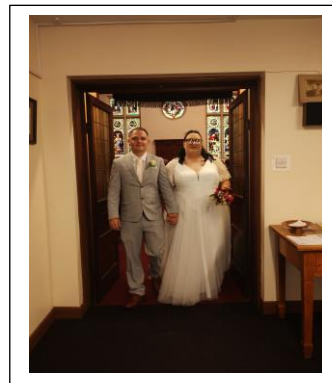
P.S. we are hoping for a special birthday guest at the service too. Elaine hopes to come (her birthday is the day before).

An Elder Yard Wedding

It was a delightful occasion when we welcomed the suited and booted family and friends of Jenna Brown and Ryan Walker on Saturday 24th May 2025 to witness their beautiful and emotional wedding ceremony. Ann was there to organize the arrangements on the day and be the reassuring face that they knew from the Chapel. Rev. Maria Pap performed the marriage ceremony which was heartfelt and personal to Jenna and Ryan.

Thankfully the weather remained fine until after the end of the ceremony when photos were taken in the Chapel grounds.

Information about holding weddings at Elder Yard Chapel can be found on our website.



Elder Yard Trustee Meeting

The last trustee meeting was held on Sunday 13th July 2025.

The main Issues discussed included:

- Review of the last minutes, which were approved.
- Safeguarding – Sarah has training booked in September
- Maintenance update – work undertaken and work planned.
- Financial Review – discussed recent expenditure. The two boilers, installed in the last two years, are proving more cost effective to heat the chapel than the very old previous boilers. There was a general discussion about possibility of future funding applications. No serious concerns at the moment re finances.
- Coffee morning update – attendance is unpredictable.
- Booked weddings and enquiries.
- National Heritage weekend arrangements at the chapel – a rota for making sure the event is “staffed”. Plan to set up the chapel in advance on Thursday 11 Sept PM.
- Discussed the possibility of a future Sunday service visit to the chapel at Belper.
- Chapel Spring Clean – agreed as 16 August AM.
- Date and time of next meeting agreed.

If you have anything you wish to raise with the trustees for possible discussion at the next meeting, please let Ann Shutt know by emailing tillypretoria2@btinternet.com



Coffee Mornings

The latest coffee mornings were held on Thursday 24th July and Thursday 21st August. The August one was less well attended, but it provided a welcome opportunity for those of us there to chat, catch-up and eat the cakes!

At the coffee mornings we promoted the National Heritage Open Days scheme for people to pop in and have a look around the old quaint building (the Chapel) that they have often walked past on their way to work or to shop in Chesterfield. We will serve refreshments on both of the Heritage Open Days.

The last coffee morning of the year will be on 11th December at 10 am with a Christmas focus to it. It would be lovely to see you there.

Any donations of baked or bought goods would be very welcome. Please contact Sarah on sarah.sheila18@gmail.com if you wish to donate or have any questions.

General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches – National News & Views. The General Assembly explains “Our congregations are autonomous democratic organisations, led by the members. Each elects its own leadership annually and decide their own vision and plans. The culture and ethos of each congregation is unique, while belonging to our larger family.” The national website address is <https://unitarian.org.uk> and the information in their regular electronic newsletter.

At the moment the website does not seem to be as up to date as it used to be and I am unclear about the reason for this.

Uni-Sing – the first and third Saturdays of each month at 3 pm.

Enjoy the chance to sing along with others through this online link. Singing, and that sense of community is socially, emotionally and spiritually beneficial. There is also a Uni-Sing newsletter. To request the link email louise.rogers256@gmail.com

Workshops and Sessions – “packed to the brim with inspirational, challenging, and nourishing activities”.

The national website (see the link above) has workshops and sessions for a range of subjects that might be of interest, for example Social Action, Unitarians 4 Climate Justice, Women's League, LGBT + Unitarian Voices etc.

Online Shop – unitarian related items.

There is an online shop on the national website that sells bags, badges etc, but also sells books related to Unitarianism which are published by Lindsey Press, the Unitarian community-run publishing imprint.

Unitarians of note

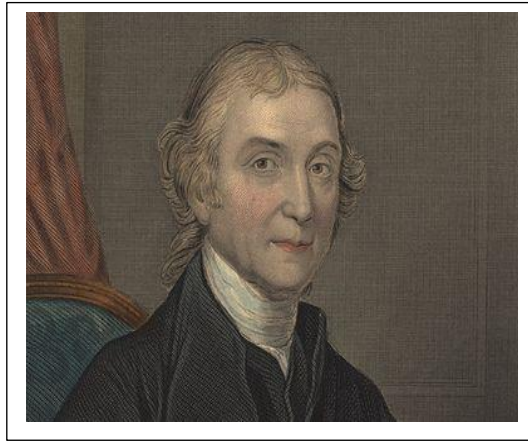
Dr Joseph Priestly 1733-1804

Dr Priestly was born near Leeds and became minister at Birmingham Lower Meeting House (where New Street Station is today), from 1780-1791. He was extremely clever and had a vast range of interests and skills. He discovered the element Oxygen, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and awarded its Gold Medal. He was awarded a Doctorate in Law and spoke ten languages. Purely out of keen interest he undertook scientific experiments as a spare time activity (did he have any spare time?). Linked to this interest he was a keen member of the Lunar Society, a monthly gathering of distinguished men who met to discuss their scientific observations and experiments. Other members included Matthew Boulton, James Watt and Josiah Wedgwood.

Priestley also studied the scriptures and offended the Church of England when he concluded that Jesus was not the Son of God but a human being who had led an exemplary life. He believed passionately in freedom of enquiry, the authority of conscience rather than dogma and the critical use of reason in religion. In spite of concern at these views expressed by some individuals and organisations, his methodology was widely admired and copied. Priestly was a strong believer in civil and religious liberty and spoke out about the need for social reform and greater justice for the common man.

Dr Priestly “was a great friend of Benjamin Franklin, the American Ambassador to the Court of France. All of this aroused the ire of the Government as well as the Church of England and on the second anniversary of the French Revolution, a mob was incited to attack and burn both the Lower Meeting House and Priestley's home and laboratory. Priestley fled to London

and shortly afterwards to America where he founded the first American Unitarian Church in Philadelphia”. Source: Midland Unitarian Association



Did you know?

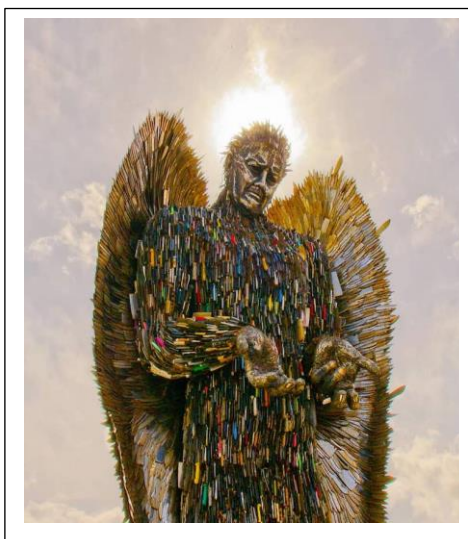
In September

1911, 11 September the new Chesterfield Girls High School opened.

1911, Chesterfield bought its first motor fire engine. The Merryweather motor engine was the first in Derbyshire.

In October

2021, October The Knife Angel was on display in Rykneld Square, near the Crooked Spire church, throughout October. Derbyshire Police wanted to host the Angel again as there had been an increase in knife crime in the county.



Community Support in Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire Community

Services that can help.

Chesterfield Fibromyalgia Support Group

Providing support for people of all ages who have fibromyalgia or support others with it. Services include support group meetings and social events.

- Telephone 01246 211335. Email chesterfieldfibro.group@gmail.com.
- Website <http://chesterfieldfibro.wordpress.com/>

To suggest a Community Service for inclusion contact: sarah.sheila18@gmail.com

Events Coming up in Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire

In September

Thursday 25 September – World record chair-based exercise attempt

Chesterfield FC Community Trust at the SMH Group Stadium (Chesterfield FC football stadium on Whittington Moor).

Led by experienced instructors in a safe and enjoyable way. Low impact exercise designed so that anyone can join in.

Become part of history and book via the CFC booking page. £5 for adults and £2 for children.

In October

Saturday and Sunday 25th and 26th of October Renishaw Hall Annual Halloween Trail.

Woodland Trail, spooky puzzles, tasty treats and “Beware... the Swords of Mercia are also “Hiding” around the corner too!”

Renishaw Park Near Eckington S21 3WB

Website is renishaw-hall.co.uk

Phone 01246 432310



A lovely reminder of the Derbyshire summer tradition of well dressing.

Photo submitted by Andrew Marples

Reflection and Inspirational Thoughts

*"Good Morning,
I hope you wake up with a smile on your face,
A heart full of love and a morning full of inspiration,
With a prayer that God will bless you always.
Keep Safe"*

Submitted by Ann Shutt

Any contributions for the newsletter may be sent by email to: sarah.sheila18@gmail.com

Continued thanks to our chapel officers:

Chairman: Alan Shutt Secretary: Ann Shutt Treasurer: Martin Barrett

Organist and Building Manager: Andrew Marples

Please see any of the above if you need help, have news or require information about the Chapel.

Contact Numbers

Andrew Marples: 01246 211655

Ann & Alan Shutt: 01246 554506

Martin Barrett: 01246 567674

Website: www.chesterfield-unitarians.org.uk

General email: info@chesterfield-unitarians.org.uk

Holy and beautiful is the custom which brings us together in the presence of the most high; to face our ideals; to remember our loved ones; to give thanks; to confess and forgive; to be enlightened and to be strengthened.

