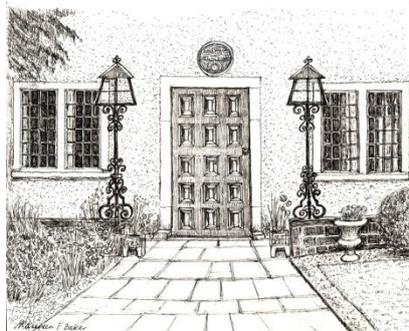


Founded 1662



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](http://www.chesterfield-unitarians.org.uk)  
General email: [info@chesterfield-unitarians.org.uk](mailto: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 March/April 2026*

---

### Welcome to our Newsletter

#### Details of Services and Leaders for 2026

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

Date	Leader	Date	Leader
March 8th	Rev. Marie Pap	April 12th	Rev. Marie Pap
May 10th	Rev. Marie Pap	June 14th	Rev. Marie Pap
July 12th	Kath & Peter Faulkner	August 9th	Rev. Marie Pap
September 13th	Rev. Marie Pap	October 11th	Rev. Marie Pap
November 8th	Rev. Marie Pap	December 13th	Rev. Marie Pap

#### Lunchtime concerts

The popular Chapel Saturday lunchtime concerts return on Saturday March 14<sup>th</sup> with a concert of sacred choral music performed by MusicWork Vocal Ensemble. On April 18<sup>th</sup> Cantiamo will perform.

Doors open at 11.15am and the concerts run 11.45am – 12.30pm Free admission with a retiring collection.

## **Easter concerts in Derbyshire**

Saturday March 14 7.30pm

Baslow Choir perform in Eyam Church

Music by Puccini, Vaughan Williams & Karl Jenkins

Tickets £12

Website: <https://baslowchoir.co.uk>



Saturday March 28 7.30pm

Holymoorside Choir perform in St. John's Church, Newbold

Vivaldi 'Gloria' with orchestra plus popular sacred music and spirituals

Tickets £12

See poster for more details

## **Elder Yard Trustee Meeting**

This summary is more detailed than those in recent newsletters. This is because there was a lot to discuss and new trustees were at the meeting.

The last Elder Yard trustee meeting was held on Wednesday 11 February.

The following agenda items were discussed:

-The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

-Matters Arising

-Building maintenance and Repairs/Health and Safety

Andrew is looking into what work is required regarding the peeling paint above the stained-glass window closest to the organ, and also into having the heavy metal gates at the rear of the chapel adjusted to make them easier to open and close.

-Safeguarding – Sarah explained that the final drafts of the revised safeguarding documents will be labelled ready for use in an accessible location. If there any safeguarding incidents relevant docs will be completed and will be saved in a locked drawer/cabinet or safe.

-Finance

Martin talked through a thorough breakdown of the calendar year 2025 to 2026 accounts.

With grants from Unity Trust, income from savings in the running costs of the new efficient boilers installed in the last two years, and good returns on investments the finances are quite positive. Alan will conduct an internal audit as a matter of good procedure.

-Mail, and approaches through the website

There were two emails that needed responding to. One was Govt issued and was about security and safety at the chapel. Perhaps this is as a result of some well publicised violent incidents at places of worship? The other was from the Charity Commission and we agreed that Ann would complete the questionnaire sent out to a random sample of charitable organisations.

-Wedding Bookings

Two are weddings booked for July and October this year.

-Appointment of new trustees

Janet and Philip were welcomed as new trustees to the chapel and we hope they enjoy their new roles.

- Any Other Business

\*There was a discussion about frequency of trustee meetings. It was agreed that there would be three full trustee meetings during the year. The next two will be on Weds 15/7 and 4/11. However, shorter, more task specific meetings will be held in between these dates, with the first one after the May Sunday service.

\*Warm Spaces Funding. There was a discussion about the possibility of applying for this later in the year through Chesterfield Borough Council. This would enable the chapel to open once per week to provide a warm environment with refreshments for anyone to pass time and have company. Janet and Sarah will look into this in more detail.

\*June Fellowship Service. We will invite the congregation members from Mansfield to our June service.

\* Proposed visits to other chapels in the district. It was agreed that we will visit Mansfield on Sunday 26/4 and visit Belper Chapel in the summer.

\*Coffee Mornings at Elder Yard will start again on Thursday 2 April.

\*Workshop about the futures of local chapels, the three horizons model and possible innovation funding to progress developments at Chapels. Sarah attended this recently at Upper Chapel and she explained the day as best she could to fellow trustees. She thought it was excellently run and was a really good opportunity to share ideas, realize what our Chapel is good at and listen to the experiences and ideas of other chapels in the South Yorkshire District. Most of the chapels face similar concerns like small, aging congregations, old beautiful chapels that require costly maintenance, reliance on the voluntary hours of a few hard-working individuals – capacity and skills. However, there was a lot of motivation and optimism amongst those at the workshop.

- Date of next full trustee meeting on Weds 15/7 at 2 pm.

If you wish to request an item for inclusion at the next meeting, please contact Ann on [tillypretoria2@btinternet.com](mailto:tillypretoria2@btinternet.com)

### **Trustee Membership Update and recognition of dedicated service to Elder Yard.**

Most of you will know that Elaine Buttery and Judy Hague have been devoted trustees at the Chapel for many years, but health problems in recent years have meant that they have not been able to attend trustee meetings regularly as they would wish to. Their contribution to the work of the Chapel must not be underestimated. Had they not been trustees and attended services and events regularly, Elder Yard may not have been able to continue as it has. The Chapel has a small congregation and it relies upon individuals like Elaine and Judy to sustain it. Elaine's husband, George, was a lifelong Chapel member and his stewardship at the Chapel proved vital. Judy's husband Graham attended Elder Yard regularly with Judy and his support of her and the Chapel is so appreciated. Thank you, Elaine and Judy, for all your hard work, dedication and wonderful welcoming smiles.

In light of this situation, the remaining trustees recently made a decision to invite Janet and Philip Mansbridge to become new trustees at the Chapel. They have regularly attended Elder Yard services since they moved to Chesterfield a few years ago, and they have enabled the coffee mornings and the Heritage Weekends to function and always get stuck-in at the Chapel Spring cleans and when extra jobs need doing. We are delighted that they both agreed to come on board and their ideas, energy and commitment are very much welcomed.

**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. These snippets are a small selection of the current content.

### Annual General Meetings

This year the meetings will be held in Derbyshire at the Hayes Conference Centre near Alfreton.

Registration opens at 11am on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March, with the Opening Ceremony at 2pm. Finish on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March with lunch at 1pm. You need to book for attendance at the Weekend and time is running out to do this.

### Could our communities link with local radio more effectively? An untapped resource?

40,000 listeners of Bolton FM each week hear Rev Tina Gandhi give her local version of Radio 4’s Thought for the Day. It is a weekday reflection spot where she shares Unitarian wisdom with audiences who may never have set foot in a chapel. Could we utilise local radio for the benefit of the community and EY chapel?

### Concern about the Trump Administration

At the 2025 Unitarian UK General Meetings the following Resolution was agreed:

“This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

i) recognises, with concern, the increasingly authoritarian stance taken by the Trump administration in the USA and particularly notes the administrations:

a) brazen disregard for the truth

b) demonisation of diversity and of vulnerable minorities

c) disempowerment of women

d) increasingly belligerent rhetoric towards other sovereign nations

ii) stands in solidarity with the Unitarian Universalist Association of America and with all Americans who uphold the truth and the marginalised

iii) recognises, with sadness, the need for greater caution regarding US influence over UK public life and policy.”

In response to this many UK Unitarian chapels and individuals wrote to their local MPs to raise their concerns, and many reached out to Unitarian Universalist Churches in the USA to offer support.

Latest information from churches in the USA shows that their congregations have expressed their concern to relevant authorities and some travelled to Minnesota to show their solidarity with the local communities, and to protest at what has been happening in that area.

## UK Unitarians of Note

### John Biddle

**14 January 1615 to 22 September 1662**

Sometimes referred to as “The father of Unitarianism” in this country, John Biddle was born in Gloucestershire in 1615 and was educated at a local grammar school before going to study at Oxford University.

After university he took up a teaching post at the Free School in Gloucester. His somewhat controversial theological views of the time landed him in trouble pretty quickly. His non-conformist views must have been some of the earliest expressed in the UK and came before the English Act of Uniformity in 1662. The Act resulted in the Great Ejections where many Church of England ministers who could not agree with the Act were forced out of their jobs. Biddle didn't accept the concept of the holy trinity and wrote about this in his 1644 manuscript, snappily entitled “Twelve Arguments Drawn of Scripture, Wherein the Commonly Received Opinion Touching the Deity of the Holy Spirit is Clearly and Fully Refuted”. A “friend” handed a copy of the document to local magistrates who were very concerned. In 1645 he was summoned to attend a Parliamentary Inquiry and he was sentenced to prison until in 1647 when he was released on bail. However, in the same year the manuscript was published and so he was summoned again to another Parliamentary Inquiry. He was returned to prison and this manuscript, along with two others he had written were destroyed. Biddle's view about the three units of the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – was that the Father was the most important.

The Westminster Assembly had been convened to reform the Church of England and in 1648 it was this Assembly that pressured Parliament to make Biddle's view point heresy, and punishable by the death penalty. Thankfully, influential friends of Biddle's arranged for him to live in Staffordshire under surveillance until 1652 when he was imprisoned again. However, along came Oliver Cromwell and under his protection the Biddellians or Unitarians began to meet regularly for worship.

After publications in 1653 and 1654 Biddle was summoned to Parliament and imprisoned again and was tried for heresy. Cromwell stepped in again, and in 1655 sent him to the Scilly Isles to try to prevent his execution. He stayed there till 1658 when friends obtained his release and he got a teaching post in a countryside location. However, Biddle clearly still felt compelled to share his views and when he returned to London in 1662 to preach, he was arrested and fined £100 (a huge amount of money at the time). Unfortunately, Biddle could not pay the fine and was sent to prison where he sadly died. Clearly a man of conviction and resilience and a huge influence in the development of non-conformist religion in this country, particularly Unitarianism. (Main source of information from Britannica.com)



John Biddle

## **Did you know?**

### ***In March***

**1857:** Derbyshire Constabulary was formed with the strength of 156 men. At this time there were eight divisions: Ashbourne, Bakewell, Belper, Chesterfield, Derby, Glossop, Melbourne and Matlock. All beats were worked by foot, only the Superintendents were provided transportation in the form of a pony and trap. Communication between headquarters and the divisions would have been delivered by telegram or letter. (From The History of Derbyshire Constabulary)

### ***In April***

**1984:** The new modern hospital at Calow opened to patients on 29 April 1984 at a cost of £29 million. It was officially opened by the Queen in 1985 and was extended to include a maternity and gynaecology unit in 1989.

**Community Support in Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire** Community Services that can help you and the community.

**The following information about maximizing home energy relates to North East Derbyshire**

*Warmer Derby & Derbyshire* offer free advice on energy saving, contact them on 0800 6771332, and find out more on Rural Action Derbyshire website.

*Derbyshire Healthy Homes Programme* offers help to people with long-term health conditions help with cold homes, contact them on 01629 536919 and find out more on the Derbyshire County Council Making Homes Healthier webpage

To suggest a Community Service for inclusion contact:

[sarah.sheila18@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.sheila18@gmail.com)

**Events Coming up in Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire**

### ***In March***

***Inaugural "Chesterfield Glow Up" light show*** (March 27-28) at the Market Hall, featuring projection mapping, a night market, and a 35m observation wheel.

### ***In March and April***

#### ***Creative Revolution Events Chesterfield 2026***

A series of pop-up initiatives designed to showcase local talent including Kakou, Chesterfield College, Barrow Hill Community Trust, and Community Growth CIC.

- 14 March Chesterfield College 11 am till 2pm.
- 8<sup>th</sup> April Barrow Hill 11 am to 2 pm.

Go to <https://visitpeakdistrict.com/events/creative-revolution-chesterfield-events-2026> for more information about what is planned and venues.

## Reflection and Inspirational Thoughts

“While fascism is always right wing, it does not have a particular governing program. Fascism is, instead, a series of tactics for gaining and holding power. The three essential fascist tactics are :(1) Demonization of domestic enemies (2) preposterous lies; and (3) contempt for democratic institutions.” *Public leadership institute of America.*

“Fascism rarely arrives with a coup; it grows and hollows out society from within.

Fascism thrives on the claim that the nation is in decline and that only unity, discipline and decisive leadership can restore greatness. Individual rights become obstacles to destiny. Propaganda supplants debate. Loyalty is patriotism; dissent becomes treason. Militarism is normalised. Culture, schools and the media are bent to a single story. Capitalism survives, but is subordinated to the state and contingent on political loyalty. Disregard for law at home is mirrored abroad, as treaties are tested, neighbours intimidated and force celebrated as proof of national vitality. At its core fascism is also personal rule. Power accumulates around a leader presented as indispensable. Institutions are hollowed until obedience replaces accountability.” *European Policy Centre “To the Point” 11 Feb 2026.*

Please note, the quotations above have not been selected to endorse or challenge any particular point on the political spectrum. Fascism however is extreme and can be carved out of what was once a democratic and accountable political system/country.

Any contributions for the newsletter may be sent by email to: [sarah.sheila18@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.chesterfield-unitarians.org.uk)

General email: [info@chesterfield-unitarians.org.uk](mailto: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.

the **unitarians** and  
**free christians**

