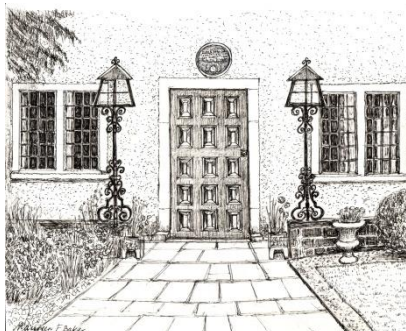


Founded 1662



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 July/August 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
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

Saturday Lunchtime Concerts at the Chapel

July 11th from 11.45am to 12.30pm

Song recital: Jonathan Hall & Piotr Wisniewski

All are welcome to attend, doors open 11.15am

Elder Yard Trustee Meeting



The last Elder Yard trustee meeting was held on Wednesday 13 May 2pm. The minutes of the last meeting were approved with one minor alteration. Under Matters Arising the following were discussed and agreed:

- The frequency of the next trustee meetings was agreed. There will be a short meeting after the service on 12 July to plan for the Heritage Open Days in September.
- There will be a meeting to discuss the future of the chapel (how best to keep the chapel functioning in the longer-term). There are no short-term concerns.
- The next coffee morning will be on Thursday 16 July from 10am to 12pm.
- Proposed visits to Belper or Fulwood chapels and the GA Presidential visit next year to Elder Yard will be discussed at the next trustee meeting.

Finances – Martin talked through what is held in the current account and in reserve investments. This currently combines to just over £87,500 and is a reasonable amount, though we need to generate more regular income.

July service - this is arranged.

Correspondence – there hasn't been any.

Weddings – two are planned.

Baptisms or naming ceremonies – none planned at the moment

Maintenance – the gardener is doing a good job. Pavers still to be sorted. Both boilers have been serviced.

Safeguarding – discussion about whether the safeguarding lead can also be the Safeguarding Trustee. Discussion about whether to become members of charity ThirtyOne:Eight which provides specialist safeguarding support. Discussion about trustees and disclosure and barring service checks. Safeguarding training available for all trustees, organised by Essex Hall.

The next full trustee meeting is in September.

If you wish to request an item for inclusion at the next meeting, please contact Ann on tillypretoria2@btinternet.com

South Yorkshire District Meeting at The Old Unitarian Chapel, Great Hucklow

An uplifting District Service was held at The Old Unitarian Chapel Great Hucklow on Sunday 17 May at 2pm. The chapel was packed full with regular congregation members and visitors from other district chapels, and the service was largely led by Revs. Alex and Jean Bradley, joint 2026 General Assembly Presidents who happen to be husband and wife. Jean in particular has historical connections with the Chapel at Great Hucklow and she recounted her happy associations with it and with the Children's Centre there. It was a wonderful celebration of fellowship enhanced by Chapels taking along banners they hold as symbols of their Unitarian heritage. Congratulations and thank you to the trustees at Great Hucklow for their coordination and very hard work. Also, thank you to Judith for the photograph.



Fellowship Service at Elder Yard with our friends from Mansfield Old Meeting House

We were delighted to welcome our friends at Mansfield Old Meeting House to a joint Fellowship Service on Sunday 14 June at 3pm. We have previously attended similar services at the Old Meeting House, Mansfield and enjoyed a warm welcome, food and interesting activities. This was our opportunity to reciprocate and thankfully the weather on the day was lovely and we were able to have drinks and cakes on the lawn after the service. It was humbling and inspirational to hear some of those attending saying what Unitarianism means to them. Thank you, in particular, to Rev. Maria and Ann Shutt for organising the day, assisted by EY's other trustees. I will include photographs of the event, taken by Philip Mansbridge, in the next newsletter, after I have checked with Maria about permission to do so. She is currently on leave.

Chapel Coffee Mornings

The most recent coffee morning was held on Thursday 7 May and an encouraging number of visitors enjoyed the historical interior and the peaceful grounds whilst also partaking of a range of tasty items. We are gradually trying to be more inclusive in what we offer and aim to provide at least one option of gluten free, nut free, lactose free and diabetic treats. The next coffee morning is on Thursday 16 July from 10am to 12pm and it would be great to see you there.

Heritage Open Days at Elder Yard.

“The World is my country; to do good is my religion”.

A statement made by Emma Miller, formerly Emma Holmes, who was baptised at Elder Yard Chapel and later emigrated to Queensland, Australia. Emma is not that well-known in Chesterfield and in the UK, but in Australia she is often referred to as the mother of their Labour Party. Come and find out more about Emma, and her family who attended Elder Yard Chapel, at our Heritage Open days on Friday 11 September and Saturday 12 from 10am to 4pm. The 2026 theme for the Open days is Everyday Histories. We will be open to the public and everyone is welcome to enjoy the building – the oldest non-conformist chapel in Chesterfield - and the grounds, and to view historical documents and items we have on show. Refreshments will be served. There is wheelchair access to the main entrance of the Chapel, but unfortunately there is a step up/down to the toilets, though grab rails are fitted to help with the step.

Please note, we are not open to Heritage visitors on Sunday 13 September, but anyone is welcome to the Sunday service that day at 3pm.

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.

Chief Executive Newsletter

“In a moving reflection for Pride month, our Chief Officer, Liz Slade, draws a powerful connection between the struggles of our dissenting forebears and the ongoing journey toward LGBTQ+ equality today.”

“Liz celebrates the proud role Unitarians have played in advancing equality, from campaigning for same-sex marriage in religious settings to the vibrant, inclusive congregations of today.”

“Yet she also reflects on the challenges of the present moment, particularly the resurgence of hostility toward trans people and the increasingly polarised tone of public debate. She calls us to remain rooted in our core values: affirming the dignity and worth of every person, creating spaces of genuine welcome and connection, and continuing our social justice work.” Extracts from summary of the letter in the June edition of Uni News, Unitarian UK newsletter.

The erosion of trans rights in the UK

“This month, we draw attention to a powerful and deeply personal article by Rev. Andi Phillips of Sheffield, recently published in Yorkshire Bylines. Writing as both a Unitarian minister and a transgender woman, Andi reflects on the growing challenges facing trans people in the UK, and the profound impact these developments are having on daily life, dignity, and inclusion.” Extract from summary in the June edition of Uni New, Unitarian UK newsletter.

Trustee Training

“This one-day course on Saturday 18 July (10am - 2pm) will help trustees get on with running a healthy, vibrant congregation. The Essential Trustee is a full-day online workshop from the General Assembly that works through the Commission's trustee guidance in plain language, with time built in for questions and proper discussion. We'll cover legal duties, conflicts of interest, financial responsibilities, and what happens if things go wrong.”(The Commission referred to, is the Charity Commission). Extract from the June Uni News, Unitarian UK newsletter.

New Communications Officer

“Jess Ackroyd has joined us this month as our new Communications Officer. With a background in digital marketing, Jess has spent the past four years working in charity communications, creating content that helped raise awareness of the Royal Life Saving Society UK and engage meaningfully with their audiences.” Extract from the June Uni News, Unitarian UK newsletter.

Unitarians of Note

Theophilus Lindsey 1723 to 1808

Theophilus was a clergyman, theologian and respected author of letters, dissertations sermons and prayers who would become the first Unitarian Minister at Essex Street in London. He was born at Middlewich Cheshire where his father was connected with the salt trade. His mother had lived for many years with the countess of Huntingdon. Theophilus Lindsey was educated at Leeds Free School then at St John's College Cambridge where he became a fellow in 1747. Afterwards he took Holy Orders and started his working life at a chapel in Spital Square. It seems that through his career Theophilus appeared to have several useful and influential benefactors, who may well have viewed him as a valued friend.

It wasn't long before he became domestic chaplain to the seventh duke of Somerset and when he died, he stayed to look after his grandson for three years. Through these contacts he was offered a valuable post in Yorkshire, but he resigned to take up a post in Dorset offered to him by Lord Huntingdon. In 1760 he married the step daughter of his friend Archdeacon Francis Blackbourne. In fact, he took up a post at Catterick in Yorkshire so that he could be nearer to the Archdeacon and his latitudinarian associates and friends. This name was applied to Anglican clergy who were more open minded to consider ideas and beliefs that did not necessarily conform to the prevailing doctrine and practices.

He increasingly developed anti-Trinitarian views and inspired by his friend Joseph Priestly and united with his father-in-law and John Jebb, Christopher Wyvill and Edmund Law (Bishop of Carlisle), they submitted a petition to parliament with two hundred and fifty signatures in February 1772, stating that clergymen and university graduates shouldn't have to subscribe to the thirty nine articles and be "restored to their undoubted rights as Protestants of interpreting scripture for themselves." Unfortunately, parliament declined to receive the petition and in 1773 their second attempt didn't fare any better. This prompted Theophilus to resign his parish and in 1774 he started to conduct Unitarian services in a room in Essex Street, Strand, London. So, a church was gradually established there, later followed by offices and to this day our Unitarian General Assembly is based there.

He stayed there till 1793 and his role was taken over by his colleague John Disney. His chief written work is "An Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine and Worship from the Reformation to our own Times" (1783). There is a list of his publications in the British Library's Catalogue and obviously Essex Hall has a lot of information about him and his work. In fact, you can even buy a memoir of him and his works by Thomas Belsham on Amazon, if you feel inclined.

Did you know?

In July

1951: On 11/7/1951 Hardwick Hall was designated grade 1 status. Architect Robert Smythson designed the property that was built from 1590 to 1597. Bess of Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury, was the only woman superseded in wealth by Elizabeth 1. Ownership of the house was transferred to the Treasury in 1956 and then to the National Trust in 1959. The building was approaching ruin and required stabilisation and restoration.

Additionally, did you know that the British Army's 1st Parachute Brigade was formed at Hardwick Hall in 1941. The Airborne Forces Depot and Battle School was located on the grounds of the estate from 1942 to 1946.

In August

2017: On 17 August 2017 Chesterfield Bowling Club hit the national headlines for voting to maintain a male only membership of the club. The news was reported in several national newspapers and on the BBC. As far as I can establish, this ruling is still in place. The walled club is situated at the junction of Beetwell Street and South Street in the town centre and is thought to date back to 1294, possibly being the oldest bowling club in the world.

Community Support in Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire

Community Services that can help you and the community.

Relating to Parkinson's

Parkinson's UK

Providing local friendship and support to those diagnosed, carers and families.

For information contact 01246 561888 or email
colin_rosemary@outlook.com

There is a monthly meeting on the third Friday of each month at St John's Church Centre, Walton from 2pm to 4pm.

National helpline number 0808 800 0303.

Parkinson's Care and Support

www.parkinsonscare.org.uk

Dedicated to enhancing the lives of people affected by Parkinson's through care, wellness, and integrative therapies. Focused on non-drug, holistic Parkinson's support.

The Brain Charity

www.thebraincharity.org.uk

For those diagnosed, their carers and families.

Providing practical help with a new diagnosis, applying for welfare benefits and knowing your rights in the work place.

Events Coming up in Chesterfield and surrounding areas.

In July

Derbyshire Well dressings

The wonderful tradition of well dressing in Derbyshire is in full swing during June, July and August. There are too many to individually list here, so please go to www.welldressing.com to find out all you need to know (dates and places) for some beautiful days out.

In August

Notts Outlaws vs Northamptonshire Steelbacks: Friday, August 7, 2026. A thrilling Vitality Blast T20 outdoor cricket match hosted at Queen's Park Sports Centre.

Peak District Highland Games: Sunday, August 30, 2026. An outdoor strongman and strongwomen strength event held nearby at Matlock Farm Park

Pause for reflection

“Be Kind, for everyone you meet
is fighting a battle you know nothing
about”

By: Wendy Mass, “The Candy Makers”

“Be happy with the little that you have.
There are people with nothing that
still manage to smile. ☺☺

“Peace cannot be kept by force;
it can only be achieved by
understanding.”

By: Albert Einstein

These quotations were kindly 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.

