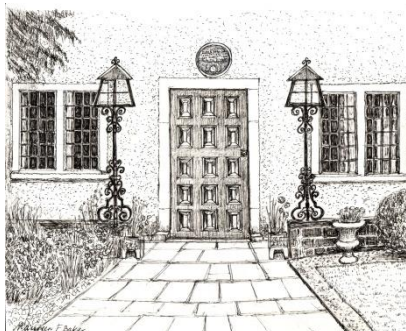


Founded 1662



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 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
September 13th	Rev. Marie Pap	October 11th	Rev. Marie Pap
November 8th	Rev. Marie Pap	December 13th	Rev. Marie Pap

URGENT IMPORTANT NEWS – CANCELLATION OF THE HERITAGE OPEN DAYS AND SEPTEMBER COFFEE MORNING AT ELDER YARD

The trustees are very sad and frustrated to inform you that the Coffee Morning on Thursday 10 September and then the two Heritage Open Days on Friday 11th and Saturday 12th September are cancelled. This is because of an act of vandalism and theft at the Chapel a few weeks ago, which means an area of the chapel is not safe to use. It has therefore been decided that use of the building has to be restricted until the damage is repaired. We have obtained quotes for

the remedial work and the insurance should hopefully cover the cost of it, but these arrangements will take time to be completed.

As we usually have many visitors at the Heritage Open days, we have submitted information about the cancelation to the Derbyshire Times and this will hopefully feature in their September 11th edition, so that potential visitors are not disappointed on either day. A notice will be put on the gate too.

Information about a Christmas Coffee Morning will be sent out as soon as possible. Who would want to miss a mince pie or cinnamon concoction? Not me!

**** The monthly service on Sunday 13th September will go ahead.**

In Remembrance

Elaine Buttery

1937 – 2026



Elaine was known and loved by all of us at Elder Yard. She had a long and fascinating life and side by side with her beloved husband George, deserves a place in Elder Yard's history. During a very difficult time in the 1980's (when the chapel was in serious danger of folding) they came along and kept it going. Elaine was at various times, and sometimes all at once: Chapel Secretary, Chapel Treasurer, main flower lady, sole cleaner and leading caterer! She was also a member of my family and a key member of Elder Yard until her death in May of this year. We gave her a lovely funeral and she now rests with George in the church yard – at rest and reunited in God's garden.

Sincere thanks for all your cards, messages and good wishes.

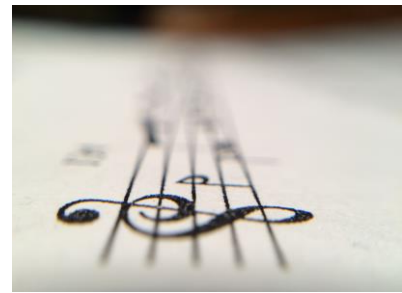
Andrew

Saturday Lunchtime Concerts at the Chapel

September 19th - Vocal music: Cantiamo
(change of performers)

October 10th – Choral music: Minerva

Concerts run 11.45am to 12.30pm, doors open at 11.15am. Free entry (donations) - all are welcome.



Elder Yard Trustee Update

The last trustee meeting was on 13 May 2026 and this was reported on in the July/August newsletter.

Since then, on 7 July 2026 the trustees held a review and planning meeting, “The Way Forward”. This was a positive, constructive move to consider what we might do or not do to increase awareness of unitarianism, increase the congregation size and utilize the building to the benefit of local people, without wearing our small team out in the process.

Discussion topics included:

- the size of our congregation and who might we be more likely to attract?
- what is Unitariansim and how to describe it
- communication with local people, local organisations and the wider world
- we touched upon accessibility to the building
- could we use the chapel in a way that might link in with other events occurring in the town centre eg. special markets and bank holiday events?
- how do we get feedback/suggestions from non-congregation members about what they think?
- the content and format of the services.

Immediate actions arising from the meeting included:

- an additional board to be put in place near to the pavement which includes a statement about Unitarianism (the wording was decided at the meeting)
- include an invitation to chapel monthly services and a definition of what Unitariansim is, for issue at that Heritage Open days in September. Try to get thoughts and ideas from those attending the open days.
- send basic flyer information to some local organisations (we are not evangelical but we need to raise awareness)
- consider using social media (we already have a website)

If you wish to give any feedback about what works and doesn't work at the chapel, and what might be useful to consider for the future, please contact Ann

Shutt at tillypretoria2@btinternet.com The next trustee meeting is on 21 September, so you have time to also let Ann know about any item you would like adding to that agenda.

Unitarian Family Day 22 August at The Old Meeting House Mansfield

Again, Andrew and Ann had been invited to give a short concert at The Old Meeting House as part of their district "Unitarian Family Day". It was a beautiful day and everyone looked like they were having fun at all the different activities. Both Andrew and Ann were given a very warm welcome from those who were there on the day including people from Belper and as far afield as Lincolnshire to name but a few.

Their program started at 2.30pm and it was a varied concert, Andrew played pieces by Dubois, Karl Jenkins and J.S. Bach while Ann sang pieces by Handel, Paul Bateman and various songs from the shows. Andrew then provided a Singing Session: 3-part canon by Antonio Salieri (with words adapted by Alan Shutt), especially for those who wanted to stay and have a sing, they all had a great time trying to learn and sing their own part, in fact it was hilarious!

Maria, as usual, was running around with her other helpers making sure that everything went smoothly for the tea which they had provided and, rest assured, it did. A good time was had by all.

South Yorkshire District Association Annual Meeting

Elder Yard Chapel is a member of a group of other Unitarian chapels referred to as the South Yorkshire District Association (SDA). The other members include Upper Chapel, Fulwood, Underbank (all three in Sheffield), Doncaster, Great Hucklow and Chesterfield (Elder Yard). The most recent AGM was held in June at Underbank Chapel. As would be expected at an AGM, finance was discussed and key responsibilities agreed.

There were congregational reports, safeguarding discussion, gradual development of a district strategy and discussion of General Assembly (national) matters. The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

Elder Yard is working closely with the other chapels on Safeguarding and we are members of the new South Yorkshire District Safeguarding Network (including all the chapels previously stated). It seems that this is the first safeguarding network set up amongst Unitarian churches and chapels in the country.

Life's lessons – kindly submitted by Janet Mansbridge

For me, one of the attractions of the Unitarian faith is the recognition that people of other faiths & cultures can make valuable contributions to our own spiritual journeys. Such contributions are often subtle & hardly noticeable but I can recall three distinct occasions in my life when people of different faiths have stopped me in my tracks & made me think deeply about my own assumptions & behaviours.

The first was a Catholic nun. In 1978, as a somewhat serious 20-year-old student, I undertook my 2nd teaching practice in a Roman Catholic primary school which was partly staffed by an Irish order of nuns based in the adjacent convent. I was in awe of these women who had embraced a life of austerity and self-discipline, but I also felt sorry for them. In those days a proper lunch was served to the children & staff at 12 noon which, of course, began with the saying of Grace. On the first Friday, I sat down at the teachers' table opposite a young nun who was probably not much older than me. She screwed up her face, "Friday," she said in a soft Irish brogue, "It'll be fish again and I do hate fish!" Coming from a non-conformist background I was scandalised! Was a nun even allowed to hate fish? Surely, she would eat whatever she was given & be grateful for it! Suddenly, I caught the twinkle in her eye & saw her humanity. Realising that it was me that needed to lighten up, I smiled back.

A few years down the line I came across the beautiful account of a travel writer's encounter with a Buddhist monk. Having shared a simple meal together, the two men each finished with a small tangerine. The writer recalled how the monk had gently upbraided him for eating his tangerine too quickly. "Look at you," he said, "Raising the next segment to your mouth before you have finished the last! Slow down and savour the sweetness." These words of wisdom were spoken long before 'mindfulness' become a buzz word.

More recently, at a wedding reception, I was seated next to a Jewish lady who had recently lost her husband. In between courses & speeches we got chatting. This lady told me that she had been a traditional housewife & had been happy to keep the home clean & tidy. When her husband had retired, she felt irritated that he was often in the way & annoyed that she had to clean around him. She then sighed deeply & looked me straight in the eye. "Now," she said, "I'd give anything for him to be there, in the way."

So, there we are: -

The Roman Catholic nun who showed me that it was OK to be human;

The Buddhist monk who led me to savour the moment;

The Jewish widow who reminded me to appreciate what I have while I have it.

Life's lessons sometimes come from unexpected sources.

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.

Innovation Fund Passes Half-Million-Pound Milestone

In just its first year, the Unitarian Innovation Fund has pledged more than £500,000 to congregations and groups across England, Scotland, and Wales, supporting everything from new worshipping communities and arts projects to community partnerships and inclusion initiatives. The fund was created to help Unitarian communities turn ideas into action. The grants awarded so far are helping congregations experiment, grow, and connect in new ways.

Safeguarding Sunday 2026 – Love Protects

“Churches across the UK are being invited to take part in Safeguarding Sunday on **15 November**, an annual awareness campaign led by safeguarding charity Thirtyone:eight. The theme for 2026 is "Love Protects".

Recommended Listen

“If you're interested in hearing about the changing place of religion in modern Britain, it might be worth listening to Church Going with Giles Fraser, “a BBC Radio 4 series. The programme explores the decline in church attendance, asking what has been lost, what is changing, and what the future might hold for religious communities.... it's a thought-provoking listen that raises questions relevant to Unitarians.” It can be listened to through BBC I sounds

Did you know?

In the July/August newsletter we included information about Hardwick Hall receiving Grade 1 status on 11/7/1951. I also mentioned how the British Army's 1st Parachute Brigade was formed at Hardwick Hall in 1941 and the Airborne Forces Depot and Battle School was located in the grounds of the estate from 1942 to 1946. In recent weeks a photograph of the camp popped up on the internet and so now we have an idea what it looked like.



In September

1665: Eyam tailor George Vicars took delivery of a package of cloth from London. On September 7 he became the first villager to die from the plague. The villagers remarkably agreed to isolate to prevent the spread of the disease.

In October

1756: On 21 October the Snetzler organ opened at St Mary and Alls Saints Church (Crooked Spire) at a cost of £500. Quite a hefty sum for the time. Sadly, it was seriously damaged in the fire of 1961.

Events Coming up in Chesterfield and surrounding areas.

In September

Candelight: The Best of Hans Zimmer on Saturday 26 September at the Crooked Spire at 18.30p. Please book in advance for this special event through feverup.com

Matlock Bath Illuminations

Featuring a spectacular parade of illuminated and decorated boats along the River Derwent. Runs every Saturday and Sunday from 19 September to 1 November, plus Friday 30 October.

In October

'From North Korea Into Iraq'

Michael Palin at The Winding Wheel in Chesterfield on 15 October at 7.30 pm His first-hand humorous accounts of his travels. Book tickets in advance through 01246 345222 or via <https://chesterfieldtheatres.co.uk>

Candelight: Ed Shearan Meets Cold Play on Saturday 24 October at The Crooked Spire at 20.30. Please book in advance for this spectacular event through feverup.com

A Reminder of our lovely Partnership Service with Mansfield Unitarian friends, held in June.



Kindly submitted by Philip Mansbridge

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.

the **unitarians** and
free christians

