

Contact Addresses

For Rites of Passage contact the District Minister

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Group Management Committee Officers

Chairman: Mrs. J. Eldershaw 38 Hemingway, Fairfield, Evesham, WR11 2HH 01386 48643
Vice Chair: Mr. P. Wright 5 Blackberry Way, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 2AH 01386 443123
Treasurer: Mrs. J. Buckland Banchory, Pearcroft Road, Stonehouse, Glos. GL10 2JY 01453 825733
Secretary: Mr. G. Lowthian 109d Tewkesbury Road, Longford, Glos. GL2 9BN 01452 730227

Congregational Committee Officers

Cheltenham Bayshill Unitarian Church - Services held 1st and 3rd Sundays at 3pm. Founded 1832

Treasurer: Mrs. J. Buckland Banchory, Pearcroft Road, Stonehouse, Glos. GL10 2JY 01453 825733
Acting Secretary: Mrs. J. Buckland Banchory, Pearcroft Road, Stonehouse, Glos. GL10 2JY 01453 825733
Hall Lettings: Mrs. J. Buckland Banchory, Pearcroft Road, Stonehouse, Glos. GL10 2JY 01453 825733

Evesham Oat Street Chapel, Oat Street - Services held every Sunday at 11am. Founded 1696
 Web-site: <http://welcome.to/OatSt.Chapel>

Chair: Mrs. S. Slocombe 54 Laburnum Drive, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 1XW 01386 48261
Vice Chair Mr T. Smith Nursery Cottage, Guthries Burgage, Back Ends, Chipping Campden, Glos. GL55 6AU 01386 841212

Secretary: Mr J Green 1 Holloway Drive Pershore Worcs. WR10 1JK 01386 553948
Treasurer: Mrs. D. Wright 5 Blackberry Way, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 2AH 01386 443123
Lettings Secretary: Mrs. D. Wright 5 Blackberry Way, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 2AH 01386 443123
Organist: Mr. David Barnett 7 Hylton Road, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 2QB 01386 47510

Gloucester Friends Meeting House, Greyfriars - Services held 2nd & 4th Sundays at 3pm. Founded 1662
Email: unitarians@smallestspace.com **Web:** www.smallestspace.com/unitarians

Chair: Vacant
Vice-Chair: Mr. W. Hawkins 6 Sorrel Close, Robinswood, Gloucester, GL4 9UU 01452 536038
Treasurer: Mr. G Lowthian 109d Tewkesbury Road, Longford, Glos, GL2 9BN 01452 730227
Secretary: Vacant

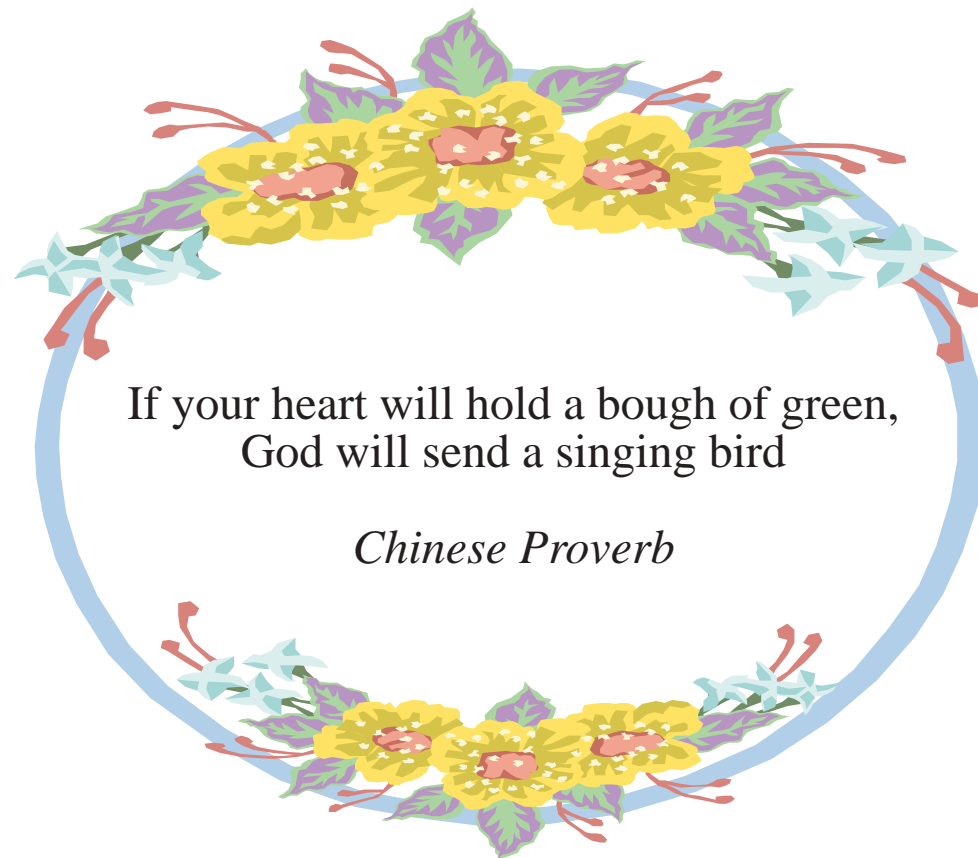
The Cotswold Group Newsletter & Calendar is published monthly.
 Subscriptions: £7.50 per year payable to the Treasurer of your nearest Cotswold Group Congregation. Friends must please pay this subscription to continue receiving the newsletter. Members are encouraged to cover the cost of receiving the newsletter in their annual membership subscription or donations to their church.



Cotswold Group of Unitarian & Free Christian Congregations

Unitarians explore the meaning of life and encourage freedom of thought, giving respect to all religions and philosophies

Newsletter & Calendar May 2003



The Sky's the Limit . . . or is it?

A story:-

Surprised and fascinated by the first grasshopper he had ever seen, the boy decided he wanted to catch one to show to his family and friends. He went home to find something suitable, and the next afternoon he returned carrying a glass jar with a glass lid.

You can imagine how carefully and patiently he had to stalk his prey, waiting still and breathless until a grasshopper sprang into the air close enough for him catch it in the jar – then fastening the lid down tight as soon as ever he could.

He carried it home and placed it on the dresser for all to see, and marvelled at the energy with which the grasshopper leapt repeatedly towards where it thought the open sky should be. Of course every time it simply crashed into the glass lid, and tumbled back to the bottom of the jar, but it was still trying time and again when the boy went up to bed.

In morning it was clear that the grasshopper was losing energy and determination, and through the day its efforts to jump clear of the jar became less and less frequent. The next day dawned with the boy feeling guilty at having made a prisoner of this thrilling creature, and he decided to set it free. He went straight downstairs, took the jar outside, unscrewed the lid – and waited.

Sadly, by now the grasshopper was so accustomed to the existence of the glass lid that it had quite forgotten about the open air above. It no longer knew how to jump high into the free air, because of the limitations which had been imposed upon it, and contented itself with going round and round in circles on the bottom of the jar . . . occasionally looking through the glass to wonder, idly, what was out there.

People risked their friendships and their family relationships, their reputation and their profession, their liberty and their very lives for the freedom to take their own leaps of faith within this liberal tradition – are we still free as the grasshopper, or do we settle too easily for the limitation that comes with needing somehow to agree what we think and believe?

Rev Michael Dadson – Midland Union District Minister

Quiet Thoughts

God is with us
This is our confidence
Our joy ... our peace

If we could count the stars,
Still we could not begin
To count the ways
Our heavenly Father loves us.

Help us, O God,
To receive each new day with joy - a gift from thee

In quietness and in confidence
Shall be your strength
Isaiah 30:15

Keep your face to the sunshine
and you cannot see the shadow
Hellen Keller

Submitted by Sylvia Slocombe

Newsletter Submissions

Please let Doreen Wright have any items for inclusion, poems, prayers, amusing anecdotes etc. by the **third** weekend of each month.

This is your newsletter, and we would like everyone to have a voice. We welcome contributions which invite discussion without causing offence. The Group Committee will act as arbiter should uncertainty arise.

Please type or clearly write your submissions, or send them by e-mail to: peter@blackberry.me.uk

An old Masonic verse written by A. Lewis 1838

*And I said to the man at the Gate of Life,
Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown.
And he replied, Go thee out into the darkness and put your hand in the hand of God.
This shall be to thee better than light and safer then a known way."*

In this quotation lies the philosophy of our faith and belief in Him, who created our Universe. One in which the great principles of brotherly love, truth and universal peace will ever prevail.

Tom Pim

Spell Checker

Submitted by Julian Wright

Eye halve a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marques four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word
And weight four it two say
Weather eye am wrong oar write
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two long
And eye can put the error rite
Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it
I am shore your pleased two no
Its letter perfect awl the weigh
My chequer tolled me sew.

Sauce unknown

Services for May

May 4th	11.00am 3.00pm	Evesham Cheltenham	<i>Both services to be conducted by Margaret Phelan</i>
May 9th	6.30pm	Evesham	<i>"Friday Light"</i>
May 11th	11.00am 3.00pm	Evesham Gloucester	<i>Both services to be conducted by Rev Michael Dadson District Minister</i>
May 16th	6.30pm	Evesham	<i>"Friday Light"</i>
May 18th	11.00am 3.00pm	Evesham Cheltenham	<i>Both services to be conducted by Peter Wright Immediate Past President</i>
May 23rd	6.30pm	Evesham	<i>"Friday Light"</i>
May 25th	11.00am 3.00pm	Evesham Gloucester	<i>Both services to be member led</i>
May 30th	6.30pm	Evesham	<i>"Friday Light"</i>

Bayshill News and Events

Services

Sunday May 4th	3.00pm	Margaret Phelan
Sunday May 18th	3.00pm	Peter Wright
Sunday June 1st	3.00pm	Anne Braithwaite

Anne will be joining the Cotswold Group as Part-time Minister from July to September and this will be an opportunity for us to meet Anne and introduce ourselves.

Sunday June 15th 3.00pm Don Phillips
We were delighted to welcome Linda Phillips in March and we are pleased that her husband Don, who is a 2nd year Ministry Student at Oxford, has offered to take services for us.

InQuirer Group

There will not be a meeting of the InQuirer Group during May and we shall consider our choice of subject in June.

Bayshillians Social Evening

Tuesday May 20th 7.00pm.

We shall arrange what and where on Sunday May 18th.

A highlight of recent weeks was the Chalice dedication in memory of Peggy and Tony Brewer and it was wonderful to watch our circle enlarge as more and more people arrived. Not enough hymn books is a good sign! There was much laughter at our musical quiz evening hosted by Colin and Geoff and many thanks to Colin for all his hard work preparing the quiz.

At our InQuirer Group meeting Michael gave us a good insight into his first few months as District Minister. If all the churches find his "services" (in every sense of the word) as valuable as we do, the Midland Union will have gained great benefit from the appointment.

This year we feel much more involved with the G.A. Annual meetings as Isabel Pebody is acting as our delegate and we look forward to her report. Thanks to Michael Pownall we now have our own Website. At last we are really reaching out to people.

I am convinced that this newsletter is an important way of keeping in touch, especially with people who are no longer able to join us. I should like to appeal to readers to use the newsletter to share their news, hopes and ideas, and laughter, an absolute life saver.

Greetings to you all from Bayshill

Having decided that we would like to employ Anne Braithwaite for 3 months, it was not the time to leave the Group without a treasurer. As no-one came forward at the AGM I have agreed to continue until someone will have come forward to allow me to have a break and be able to be more efficient at Bayshill.

Jenny Buckland

The Song of Life

The Song of Life is the breath of all creation, humanity, nature and the universe. Within humanity it stems from their dreams that evolve into visions that are expressed as music and art, with the song resounding in the words of poetry and literature, bounded by humanities joy of living.

The Song of Life blooms within the vibrance of youth, the maturity of middle years and the calm of old age, for they can, if the will is there, blend into a distinctive harmony. It also stems from the total sum of human activity within the light of good and the darkness of evil - the good a song of Hope, the evil a cry of despair. In between a theme of longing and prayer that forms the melody of humanity.

Within nature the song can be heard from the sounds of wind and the rain - at time soft and gentle, then again thunderous and aggressive. Fire and water are both essential elements within the song, their melodies ranging from warming and lifegiving to burning and destructive.

The song of the birds with the cries of the animals add a richness of tone to the melody of nature but even they, at times, can be responsible for discord between themselves and humanity, for although it expresses hope within the melody it can also indicate a high degree of fear and anguish.

Mother earth provides the manuscript upon which the beauty of the song can be transcribed but she at time rebels and thereby distorts the calm beauty of the song by adding her own signature in the form the violence of earthquakes and the searing heat of volcanoes.

Within the universe the movement of the planets within the galaxies provide a melodic counterpoint to the Song of Life, but due to a different concept of time within this planetary system against the universal time of creation it does not seem to be a vision manifest to humanity in general.

All these facets of creation enhance the Song of Life and by their magnitude evolve the whole into the symphony of creation, Within this symphony the purpose of lifes song is now clear - the good within life to encourage the growth of the human spirit, the evil to strengthen humanities resolve on lifes journey, The harmony and discord provide the essence to humanities purpose within creation - Let this be so.

Peter Cartwright.

Easter Parade

The Easter Parade held at Oat Street Chapel Evesham on April 14th was a most enjoyable event with 36 members and friends attending. We were pleased to see in that number, five children, who had great fun hunting the eggs. A big thank you to everyone who entered in the competitions of Easter Bonnet and Decorated Egg. Not an easy task for the judges. As all the food for the buffet (and the prizes) was kindly donated it means that the Chapel benefited to quite a degree. Many thanks to those who made donations, and those who did all the work.

Doreen Wright

Quiet Moments

This poem was given to me by Lillian Bullock a dedicated SRN at Evesham Community Hospital and a treasured friend. Lillian lost a 3 year old grandchild and also sadly has lost her faith. We talk and I am hoping she may, in time, renew this faith.

Sylvia Slocombe

*When I'm feeling lonely with no where else to go
I take a walk round the churchyard for it's the quietest place I know
I look at the names of loved one's the old and the young one's as well
And even the names of soldiers who fought in the wars and fell
There are husbands, wives, mums, dads, sons and daughters too
I think to myself what is life all about for I've lost loved one's too
So many hearts have been broken and many a tear has been shed
And as I go on walking all sorts come into my head
But as I turn and walk away and leave it all behind
The quietness of the churchyard has left me peace of mind*

By Lillian Bullock

Gloucester Unitarians

Services

Sunday May 11th	3.00pm	Michael Dadson
Sunday May 25th	3.00pm	Congregation members
Sunday June 8th	3.00pm	Mark Alstrom
Sunday June 22nd	3.00pm	David Wright

We are having to set up the Gloucester Website again and are grateful that Michael Pownall has offered to do this. We are very sorry Megan Cowland is not able to come to our meetings at present and send John and Megan our best wishes.

Jenny Buckland

Notices

May 6th 2003 Oat Street Chapel Evesham
"Asparagus Luncheon"
Coffee and tea 11.30am
Annual Service in Chapel 12noon
Lunch 1.00pm
Admission by ticket only.

Gospel Workshop

The 2nd Vale of Evesham Gospel Workshop will take place at Evesham Methodist Church, Friday 30th May - Sunday 1st June, with a concert on the Sunday evening. This is another opportunity to work with Lillian Boutte, New Orleans' official music ambassador and international jazz, blues and gospel singer. If you enjoy singing - you will enjoy this remarkable experience - and learn some authentic Gospel Songs along the way!

*Three day workshop - £45 (students - £30)
Contact Sue Hughes for details (01386 41318)*

A Report on Bayshill Church's Chalice Dedication

By Michael Pownall

A newcomer to Unitarianism I found myself on Sunday April 6th at a service held at Bayshill Church to dedicate a new chalice in memory of Peggy and Tony Brewer. I never met Peggy and Tony but I believe it was thanks to their efforts and determination that I was able to find an active Unitarian church in Cheltenham.

The President of the Midland Union, Tom Marriott and his predecessor Peter Wright, both attended the service accompanied by their wives.

During the service Sandra Mason, the Brewer's daughter, was invited by Rev. Michael Dadson to light the chalice candle for the first time. She also lit a number of tea lights, one for each member of the congregation.

Others present that day were members of the Evesham, Gloucester and Bristol congregations.

Having attended Bayshill several times I was eager to meet other Unitarians from local congregations and in particular I wanted to meet Rev. Michael Dadson the District Minister.

Although I am new to the church I am involved in setting up a website for Bayshill Church. I dashed around after the service taking digital photographs. Those of you with internet access will be able to view these at www.bayshillunitarian.org.uk.

Afterwards I spoke at length to many of the people present and as a result I am more interested in Unitarianism and I want make sure the general public gets to know more about it too.

Diversity - Not Division

By next month, our Evesham Friday Light Services will have been ongoing for a year. During this time we have benefited from spiritual activities that have been meaningful and significant as we have gather in a circle in the serene atmosphere of our chapel.

In Unitarian tradition, not all of the meetings have held the same resonance in equal measure for each individual but whatever the topic or activity, there are always aspects to discuss and reflect upon as well as further exploration.

In recent services we have considered topics such as -

'Trust' - which was illustrated by being presented to us in polythene bags;

'Water' - described by traditional poetry, haiku, music and the strength of its impact;

'Comedy' - how it helps us understand the 'human condition'.

'The Five Lessons of Life' by Bill Adams - actively participating in exercises taught in this book

'Moral & Ethical Teaching' - of al-Ghazali the 11th century Muslim prophet who had a stong influence on the rebirth of western civilisation and continues to be relevant to present day problems.

Throughout the months all members have been concerned, as are the Engagement Group, that we should maintain close contact with all other church members and this we have done in our differing ways as well as attending Sunday services throughout the year. I feel that both services are compatible and could well be intermixed sometimes. What do you think?

Anne Wheeler