

April and May 2023

Services 10:45am Sunday mornings

ALL ARE WELCOME

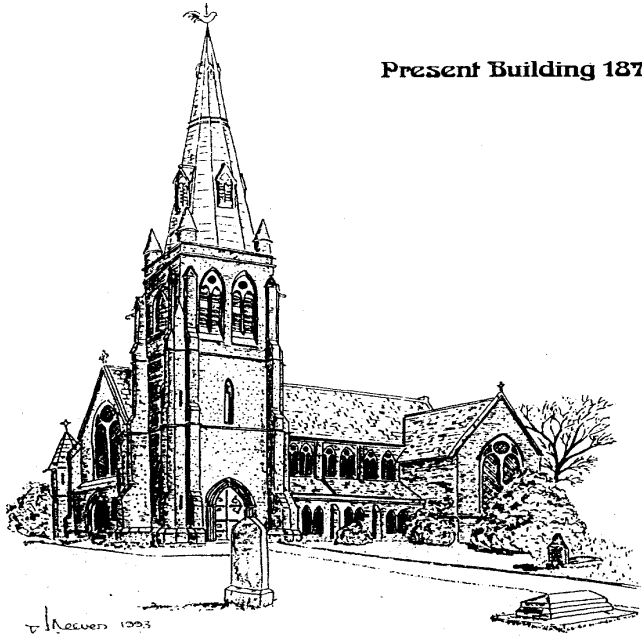
MONTON CHURCH

Unitarian

Monton Green, Eccles

Origin 1662

Present Building 1875



WITHIN THE CIRCLE OF LOVE

Unitarians are a religious denomination that believe in a united world community, justice, peace and compassion.

Monton Unitarian Church

Monton Green, Monton, Eccles, M30 9NX
Charity Reg 1199569

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear friends

At our AGM last Sunday, we marked the closing of the original two charities that established the Church and the School (which then became the Memorial Hall). It sounds like it was a sad event, but like that, but actually it was a celebration, because it is thanks to all the work done by those members and friends of Monton Church and Monton Memorial Hall over the years, that we are in the position we are today. We have now combined both those charities into Monton Unitarian Church CIO, with a governance and structure ready to take on the rest of the 21st century.

It was quite humbling, and challenging, reflecting on all the amazing things that those two charities had achieved over the years, and knowing that we are now in charge of this brand new community, even though it stands in the same place as, and looks awfully similar in many ways, to that original gathering. It is now up to us to decide what direction this community will take, and the discussions that took place around that can be found (in summary at least!) a little further on in this newsletter.

But it's also exciting. And we don't want to keep that excitement to ourselves. Our church, our community, is nothing at all if it is not serving the people around it – is not living its faith if it does not work to support those who need help, to comfort those who are hurting, to celebrate those who have something to celebrate. And we know that many of you share those values with us.



And that's actually all you need to share to be a part of our community at Monton Unitarian Church. There is no test of faith or creed, no insistence that you must believe A, B or C, or X, Y and Z. Your faith is your own: all we ask is that you come with an open mind, an open heart and open hands, ready to explore, to share, to discover, and to be part of the magical mystery that means that no matter who we are when we gather, we are changed, a little or a lot, by that gathering.

If you want to know more about membership, or just about the church and the movement in general, please do look us up on line. Our own website is www.montonunitarianchurch.co.uk, or our national body, The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, can be found at www.unitarian.org.uk. And if you fancy a chat about it all – or anything else, for that matter – do give me a call. I only work 20 hours a week at the moment, so it might take me a little while to get back to you but I'd love to hear from you!

I, like most of us in our congregation, am still working out what my faith is, and what it asks of me – and will keep on questioning and exploring till the day I die. But there's a couple of things that I believe completely - one is that, as MP Jo Cox said, "While we celebrate our diversity, what surprises me time and time again ... is that we are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us." The other thing is that we are stronger together than we are apart (Walter Payton), or, to unashamedly misquote Aristotle, "the whole is greater than the sum

of its parts". By ourselves we are amazing and can achieve many things – but together, we both are, and can do, so much more.

I'd love you to come and join us – to help each of us do more, serve more, give more, create more – even enjoy more! The world is better for you being in it, and so is our community!

Sending you all many blessings, Rev Anna

MONTON'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Over the last two years we have been working to update our governance, of both the church and the hall, to make it fit for purpose, modern and more appropriate for the community as it is now. This involved merging the two charities of Monton Church (Unitarian) and Monton Memorial Hall into one legal entity, Monton Unitarian Church – and it was finally completed on 31st December 2022.

So our AGM this March was in fact the final closing meeting of Monton Church (Unitarian) and Monton Memorial Hall, and a celebration of all that both of those charities have achieved and provided for the community of Monton over many years.

But it was also the first meeting of the brand new Monton Unitarian Church CIO. So here is a bit of an introduction to our structure, our committee and some of our aspirations that came out of that meeting.

Our committee is as follows:

Officers

Chairperson – Wendy Donald

Treasurer – Rennie McFarlane

Secretary – Pam Ward-Speers

Publicity Officer – Dave Ward-Speers

General committee members

Irene Hitchcock

Colin Morse

Lynne Stopani

Gloria Taylor

In coming newsletters I hope to have articles from each of your committee members introducing themselves so that you can get to know them a little better – and yes, I'm going to insist on mug-shots as well, committee members, so be warned and start writing!

It should also be noted that according to our constitution we are allowed up to 12 committee members (including the officers) – so if anyone else is interested in getting involved in this way, please do let Pam or Wendy know.

There was also a lot of other conversation that took place about ideas, hopes, dreams, challenges that are facing us – some of these will be reported on in more detail in subsequent newsletters, but here’s a bit of a summary for you!

Marketing / visibility – a bright banner for outside church, letting people know who and what we are, a clear demonstration of our commitment and welcome to LGBTQ+ people, improved leaflets and much improved social media. If you would like to be a part of this team, please do speak to Wendy, Pam or Rev Anna.



Better visuals inside the church – Children’s Corner panels creating a collage about the church and history, particularly with reference to the cotton industry, updating the rainbow flags, and a new church banner celebrating the chalice and particular Monton themes. Also look at funding for a proper catering station within the children’s corner.

Social activism / giving back to the community – we would continue our year-round support of The Mustard Tree, but also have a separate charity each year that we would fundraise for through the 12 months, and culminate in the Christmas Tree Festival which would also donate to that cause. In addition, we would seek fundraising for the Sound Baths to allow us to offer them free to particular target groups who would otherwise not be able to enjoy them, e.g. via The Mustard Tree, Salford Loaves and Fishes, etc., and plan a Health and Wellbeing Festival for summer 2024.

Spiritual growth / discussion – an interest was expressed in learning more about the Unitarian journey, both historically and for individuals, and exploring our individual faiths and spirituality. This could be done both through programmed courses (Building Your Own Theology, or Spirituality in Everyday Life), but also through freer-structured discussion groups.

150 years Anniversary – the church building turns 150 in 2025, and we



would love to have a really special celebration of this. If you would like to be involved in planning this and bringing it into being, whatever it might look like, please do speak to Wendy, Pam or Rev Anna.

Boddan Lodge – the revisioning of Boddan Lodge is a very big task that we know is going to take several years. Needing a combination of blue-sky thinking and a heavy dose of realism and practicalities! Again, if you would like to be involved in the Boddan Lodge Working Party please do speak to Rev Anna.

In all of these things, there's quite a lot of time and energy and work that will need to be invested, but it was lovely in the meeting to hear a renewed sense of enthusiasm, and feel a ripple of energy through the meeting – our church is going through exciting times at the moment!

FILM CLUB



Sun 2nd Apr 6pm – The Green Mile

Sat 8th Apr 2pm – Holiday special - Encanto

Sun 7th May 6pm – Life of Pi

Sat 3rd Jun 2pm – Holiday Special – Bee Movie

Sun 4th Jun 6pm – Dogma

Holiday specials are aimed particularly at children during the school holidays – but adults will enjoy these movies too! Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Suggested donation of £5.00 entry (£2.00 children)

Refreshments available

UPCOMING DATES TO PUT IN YOUR DIARY

Easter Service and Communion	Sun 9 th Apr 10.45am
Eccles Community Choir Concert	Sat 20 th May 7.30pm
Flower Communion Service	Sun 4 th Jun 10.45am

MONTON UNITARIAN CHURCH OPEN MIC NIGHTS 2023



21st April
19th May

Music – poetry – drama skits – art displays

Whatever your talent, whether you are a professional or a first timer,
come and share your creativity with us –

or just enjoy supporting others!

Suggested donation of £2.50 entry (children free)

Refreshments available
7.30pm in Monton Unitarian Church

FOLLOW OUR SOCIALS AND SPREAD THE WORD!

Help us spread the word of what's going on, by sharing our Facebook posts, Instagram posts and don't forget the best form of advertising ever – word of mouth!

MEMBERSHIP / SUPPORT OF MONTON UNITARIAN CHURCH

According to our constitution, any person aged 18 years and upwards and who is in sympathy with the purpose and principles of this Church, may be enrolled as a Church Member. It also states that no rule or regulation shall at any time be made whereby the acceptance of any Creed, Article of Religion or Confession of Faith shall be established as a condition of membership. This is because we believe that each person has both the right and the responsibility to discern their faith for themselves, to maintain an open mind and open heart, and continue exploring your beliefs and values, and sharing your discoveries with others.

Unitarians have always combined reason and science with spirituality and faith, with a strong commitment to using our power to create a more just and fair society. We are committed to approaching all of the world's religions and belief systems with an attitude of tolerance, open-mindedness and respect. We are grounded in our current reality, and this drives our evolution, while our radical spirituality calls us to take a stand on the big questions and challenges facing our world. If you are in agreement with the ethos of this Church and would like to become a member to support its aims and be involved in its activities, please contact Rev Anna for a membership form.

We do, of course, also need financial support, as well as practical, "people-energy" support. It costs well over £1000 per week to maintain our church and pay all the relevant bills, and enable us to provide the sacred space for baptisms, weddings and funerals, the care and support for people going through difficult times (and exciting times!), and all the other work that we do in the community – and for this we need your support. If you would like to contribute financially as a member, you can join our envelope gift scheme. Alternatively, you can make either one-off or regular payments via BACS or Standing Order direct to our bank account:

Monton Unitarian Church
Sort code 01 05 75
Account no. 45951756

We are so grateful for any help that you might be able to give.

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<u>MAGAZINE EDITOR</u>	Debbie Hulme	0161 707 1921
<u>WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS</u>	All enquiries	07769 038 773

MAGAZINE

If anyone would like to contribute any articles for the magazine, please send them to the editor by the second weekend of the month by post or by email. Please contact me by phone for email address. Thank you. Debbie.

MONTON UNITARIAN CHURCH is open to all who wish to worship with an open mind, in a spirit of freedom, reason and tolerance. No doctrinal tests are imposed on anyone. Rather, each person is encouraged to develop their own faith. Our Congregation is affiliated to the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.