

Dunham Road Unitarian Chapel Altrincham



Founded 1814 Built 1872

Charity Number 230482

Sunday Worship at 11.30 a.m.

Minister: Rev Danny Crosby

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Calendar for March 2021

Minister's Message

During the recent 'Impeachment' of former US president Donald Trump, the lead prosecutor Jamie Raskin, referenced Thomas Paine several times, particularly his pamphlet "Common Sense". His closing remarks hit me in both the head and the heart, they stirred my soul. I was already aware of the personal tragedy that he and his family had recently struggled with. On the 5th of January he had buried his son



Thomas who had sadly taken his own life following a struggle with deep depression. He had persuaded several members of his family to attend the capitol building, to be together on January 6th, the day of the attack that led to Trump's impeachment. Raskin seems to be a man of deep integrity with a sense of duty and purpose. Quite remarkable really in this day and age, to stand up and do your duty, even though you and your loved ones were suffering the deepest kind of grief. Raskin though clearly has a sense of a higher purpose than just himself. Of course, his grief was not only for the loss of his son but also for what had happened to his country.

Throughout the trial Raskin invoked Thomas Paine, in honour of whom his son Tommy had been named. Paine authored the pamphlet "Common Sense", in which he famously advocated for American Independence in 1776. Raskin stated "Senators, America we need to exercise our common sense about what happened". He continued, "Let's not get caught up in a lot of outlandish lawyers' theories here. Exercise your common sense about what just took place in our country." Later he paraphrased Paine again, from another pamphlet called *The Crisis*. "Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered, but we have this consolation: The more difficult the struggle, the more glorious in the end will be our victory." During the trial he said "I'm not going to lose my son at the end of 2020 and lose my country and my republic in 2021. It's not going to happen." He closed the prosecution case by updating some of Paine's language, to be more gender inclusive stating "These are the times that try men and women's souls". Raskin appealed to common sense throughout his addresses, urging the one hundred senators who were the jury to use theirs: "Common Sense is also the sense we all have in common as a community... Exercise your common sense about what just took place in our country" when deciding whether to impeach former President Donald Trump.

'Common Sense' seems vital right now. There has been an urgent appeal to it these last twelve months as we have struggled to live through this pandemic. In an age when trust in 'experts' has eroded people have struggled to know who they should trust. Sadly, we are living in the age of the 'ultracrepidarian'.

I was very grateful last week that both myself and Sue were able to get our first dose of the Astra Zeneca vaccine, due to our work. I hope that we will all be in this position soon and that we can begin to return to live the lives we would like, to return to a full common community.

The season of Lent has just begun. People often give things up for Lent. I personally though prefer to think of what I can give towards the common good. It makes sense to me, rather than to give things up. I suspect that we have all had to give up enough this last year. So, let us instead focus on what we can give to the common good, seems like common sense to me. To quote Representative Raskin once again “Common Sense is also the sense we all have in common as a community”.

So how do we find the common sense which seems so un-common at times; how do we trust that sense that we all have in common? Maybe Jamie Raskin can be the example. He stayed true to his moral compass, he followed the greater common good, despite living with intense personal grief. He is certainly an example to me in this time when such people are portrayed as folk who should not be trusted. We have lived through a difficult year, there is light at the end of the tunnel. There is fresh hope. there is ‘Respair’, if we remain sensible, if we live with common sense, a sense that we all have in common, a sense that considers the common good, the good of all. It is up to us; it is up to all of us.

Love and respect,
Rev Danny

Events in March 2021

Sunday Services are still taking place in Chapel for those who wish to attend but can also be accessed on Zoom for those who prefer to stay at home.

Please note that all activities can be accessed via Zoom ID 84190828195 No password required. They can also be listened to via telephone by dialling telephone number 01314601196 or 02030512874. All you have to do is call the number and when prompted simply type in the Zoom ID 84190828195

Monday 1st March at 7pm “Colours of Grief Our Shared Experience of Love and Loss”

Wednesday 3rd March at 11am “Coffee and Conversation”

Wednesday 3rd March at 7pm “Living the Questions”, “Morality and Ethics: How do we live an Ethical and Moral Life?” co-hosted by Adie Tindal

Thursday 4th March at 7pm “Consolation, Sorrow and Joy: Together in Poetry and Verse” poetry night

Friday 5th March “Quiz” at 4pm

Sunday 7th March at 11.30 am Sunday Service Live in Chapel and on Zoom

Wednesday 10th March at 11am “Coffee and Conversation”

Wednesday 10th March at 7.30 pm Chapel Committee Meeting on Zoom

Thursday 11th March at 7pm “Consolation, Sorrow and Joy: Together in Poetry and Verse” poetry night

Friday 12th March “Quiz” at 4pm

Sunday 14th March at 11.30 am Sunday Service Live in Chapel and on Zoom
“Mothering Sunday/Mothers’ Day”

Monday 15th March at 7pm “Colours of Grief: Our Shared Experience of Love and Loss”

Wednesday 17th March at 11am “Coffee and Conversation”

Thursday 18th March at 7pm “Consolation, Sorrow and Joy: Together in Poetry and Verse” poetry night

Friday 19th March “Quiz” at 4pm

Sunday 21st March at 11.30 am Sunday Service Live in Chapel and on Zoom

Wednesday 24th March at 11am “Coffee and Conversation”

Thursday 25th March at 7pm “Consolation, Sorrow and Joy: Together in Poetry and Verse” poetry night

Friday 26th March “Quiz” at 4pm

Sunday 28th March at 11.30 am Sunday Service led by Tom Grimshaw of Chorlton Unitarians Live in Chapel and on Zoom

(N.B. Carolyn Jones is hosting this Zoom service. Meeting ID: 926 9675 8975. <https://zoom.us/j/92696758975>.)

Monday 29th March at 7 pm “Colours of Grief: Our Shared Experience of Love and Loss”

Wednesday, 31st March at 11 am “Coffee and Conversation”

Stewards for Services in March

7 th March	Frank Draine
14 th March	Nigel Johnson
21 st March	Aled Jones
28 th March	Frank Draine

*Happy First Wedding Anniversary
on 21st March to Danny and Sue
With love from all of us.*

**We are all looking
forward to celebrating with you when we can.**

And a special thank you to both of you for that lovely Valentine's Day service on Sunday, 14th February.

Happy Birthday in March

David Copley	1 st
Emma Draine	5 th
Barbara Thackray	5 th
Helen Copley	7 th
Susan Crosby	13 th
Agnes Tansinda	13 th
Lizzie Roper	16 th
Kim Shepherd	29 th

News of Members and Friends

We were sorry to learn some weeks ago that Edna Taylor had broken her wrist. We understand that she hopes to be back in chapel very soon.

Carolyn Jones was recently featured in the slot *Scientist Spotlight* by Vector Laboratories (an American company whose re-agents she has used in her research at Manchester University for many years). The article gives a detailed summary of Carolyn's life in scientific research and can be read by pasting vectorlabs.com/carolyn-jones into Google. Do take a look.



Committee News

We are pleased to announce that Nigel Johnson has now joined the Chapel Committee.

And that the refurbishment of the Chapel House has been completed. The property has now been advertised for rental through a local Estate Agent.



THE MINISTER'S REST DAY IS FRIDAY

Please remember that Rev Danny Crosby has a day off every week and that day is Friday. Members of the congregation are asked to respect this; everyone is entitled to a period of rest away from the daily chores of a job. So unless it is absolutely necessary, the congregation is asked not to contact him on his day off.

“Chapel membership..... what’s in it for me?”

A message from our new Membership Secretary, Helen Copley

Hello everyone, I hope you’re all doing okay.

For anyone who doesn’t know me or hasn’t seen me before, I’ve been attending Chapel Services here on Sundays now for about twenty years and have been a member for most of that time. When the pandemic struck it wasn’t until September that my appearances at services resumed on Zoom and when I was so uplifted by the throng of old and new faces waiting to welcome me back.

Our congregations are autonomous, democratic organisations, led by their members. Each elects its own leadership and its culture and ethos is unique, while we belong to a larger Unitarian family. Our congregation is lucky to have its own full-time minister and to be able to share some of the costs with our sister congregation in Urmston. We are also part of the Manchester District Association which can at times help us out financially.

Besides paying for our minister we are responsible for the upkeep of our buildings. We are helped in this by being able to rent out some of our property but, of course, our rental from lettings of the church halls has suffered during the pandemic.

When I became a member I decided to make regular donations to chapel funds and am fortunate enough to have been able to carry on doing this throughout the past eleven months. I understand from our Treasurer, Frank Drainey, that some of our members have increased their donations because of the pandemic. It’s a matter of personal choice and financial ability.

Donating regularly as a member allows the chapel to look after our many costs and responsibilities and you can do this by using what’s known as our green envelope scheme, or on a more casual basis by using our yellow envelopes for one off donations. There is also the option of donating directly through your bank or building society. Of one thing you can be assured: **ALL ARE WELCOME HERE.**

Our congregation is affiliated to the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (GA) and members are expected to pay a quota payment each year to this organisation which organises our national annual assembly meetings where we debate on the wider concerns of our movement such as climate change, social justice, transgender issues, BAME inequalities, and privacy reform. Through such debate our delegates can direct the ensuing work of the GA’s executive committee.

This is just a flavour of our ultimate goals and ambitions and there's far more information about this at www.unitarian.org.uk .

If the idea of membership appeals to you, please feel free to talk to me, to Rev Danny Crosby, or anyone else on the chapel committee. Our details are set out on the back page.

Thank you for reading.

Helen Copley

EC ELECTIONS

Elections for the GA Executive Committee are now taking place. Ballot papers were recently distributed to members by Aled Jones. Please return your ballot papers in the envelope provided. It must be received by Polaris by noon on the 23 March.

Offered by Angela Fowler from Helen Keller's "The Story of my Life"

Angela reflected: I think Helen Keller shows the pleasure of feeling in her hands the things she finds in the garden, her sense of touch made more sensitive to compensate for her Blindness.

“Sometimes I rose at dawn and stole into the garden while the heavy dew lay on the grass and flowers. Few know what joy it is to feel the roses pressing softly into the hand, or the beautiful motion of the lilies as they sway in the morning breeze. Sometimes I caught an insect in the flower I was plucking, and I felt the faint noise of a pair of wings rubbed together in a sudden terror, as the little creature became aware of a pressure from without.

Another favourite haunt of mine was the orchard, where the fruit ripened early in July. The large, downy peaches would reach themselves into my hand, and as the joyous breezes flew about the trees the apples tumbled at my feet. Oh, the delight with which I gathered up the fruit in my pinafore, pressed my face against the smooth cheeks of the apples, still warm from the sun, and skipped back to the house.”

And contributions from Danny Crosby:

“A Seed Knows How to Wait” excerpt from “Lab Girl” by Hope Jahren

Hope Jahren is a geochemist and geobiologist at the University of Oslo in Norway.

A seed knows how to wait. Most seeds wait for several years before starting to grow; a cherry seed can wait for a hundred years with no problem. What exactly each seed is waiting for is known only to that seed. Some unique trigger-combination of temperature-moisture-light and many other things is required to convince a seed to jump off the deep end and take its chance — to take its one and only chance to grow.

A seed is alive while it waits. Every acorn on the ground is just as alive as the three-hundred year-old oak tree that towers over it. Neither the seed nor the old oak is growing, they are both just waiting. Their waiting differs, however, in that the seed is waiting to flourish while the tree is only waiting to die. When you go into a forest you probably tend to look up at the plants that have grown so much taller than you ever could. You probably don't look down, where just beneath your single footprint sits between one hundred and one thousand seeds, each one alive and waiting... When you are in the forest, for every tree that you see, there are no less than three million more trees waiting in the soil, fervently wishing to be.

When the embryo within a seed starts to grow, it basically just stretches out of its doubled-over waiting posture, elongating into official ownership of the form that it assumed years ago. The hard coat that surrounds a peach pit, a sesame or mustard seed, or a walnut's shell mostly exists to prevent this expansion. In the laboratory, we simply scratch the hard coat and add a little water and it's enough to make almost any seed grow. I must have cracked thousands of seeds over the years, and yet the next day's green never fails to amaze me. Something so hard can be so easy if you just have a little help. In the right place, under the right conditions, you can finally stretch out into what you're supposed to be.

Each beginning is the end of a waiting. We are each given exactly one chance to be. Each of us is both impossible and inevitable. Every replete tree was first a seed that waited.

“A Seedbed for the Growing To Come” by Parker J. Palmer

Millions of people suffer or have suffered from depression and I'm one of them. In the past 30 years, I've made three deep dives into the darkness.

As I've worked to integrate those experiences into my sense of who I am, I've found it important to write and speak on the topic. "Going public" this way is not only therapeutic for me. It also gives me a chance to stand in solidarity with others who suffer, to let them (and those who care for them) know they're not alone.

My writing on the subject includes chapter IV in *Let Your Life Speak* and the poem below. The poem came to me during a time of deep depression when I was out in the country walking past a recently harrowed field.

Writing the poem was a healing experience. It helped me understand something I'm glad I know: the hard times we all go through plow up our inner ground and turn it over, giving us chance after chance to "plant a greening season" in and through our lives.

"Harrowing" by *Parker J. Palmer*

The plow has savaged this sweet field
Misshapen clods of earth kicked up
Rocks and twisted roots exposed to view
Last year's growth demolished by the blade.
I have plowed my life this way
Turned over a whole history
Looking for the roots of what went wrong
Until my face is ravaged, furrowed, scarred.
Enough. The job is done.
Whatever's been uprooted, let it be
Seedbed for the growing that's to come.
I plowed to unearth last year's reasons—

The farmer plows to plant a greening season.

"When we dream dreams, O God, that the wilderness shall blossom as the rose
be with us in our dreaming: and then put our hands to the plough."

A Powell Davies

Calendar for April 2021

Material for the April issue of the Chapel Calendar should reach the Editor by Friday, 19th March, so that it can be distributed by Sunday, 28th March

Altrincham Interfaith Group

At this time of year the Interfaith Group usually holds its annual Shared Meal for about 150 people from our various faith groups at Altrincham Boys' Grammar School. Of course this is not possible this year so you are invited to join this event to mark International Women's Day and to remember victims of the holocaust and other genocides on Zoom between 7 and 8 pm on Tuesday, March 2nd.



There will be a few short talks followed by an opportunity to paint a stone in remembrance of the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered in the Holocaust and all other victims of Nazi persecution. You can also choose to dedicate your stone to those murdered in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

People could also choose to paint a stone to mark International Women's Day which is on March 8th. Just bring along a flat, smooth stone about 2 inches in size and some felt-tip pens, paints or nail varnish and you are ready to go! This is suitable for all the family to join in.

Please contact Carolyn Jones for the Zoom link

Officers of the Congregation

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