

Manchester College Oxford Chapel Society



The Newsletter of the Oxford Unitarian Congregation

SPRING 2024



Services April - July 2024

APRIL SERVICE THEME: *The Gift of Interdependence*

SUNDAY 7th APRIL: Sheila Bond, Chapel Society member
SUNDAY 14th APRIL: Revd Feargus O'Connor & Bert Clough
SUNDAY 21st APRIL: Adam Slate, Ministry Intern, Rosslyn Hill Chapel
SUNDAY 28th APRIL: Revd Dr Claire MacDonald, HMC Chaplain

MAY SERVICE THEME: *The Gift of Pluralism*

SUNDAY 5th May: Revd Sue Sinnamon, Chair, Chapel Society
SUNDAY 12th MAY: Nick Dewey, Chapel Society member
SUNDAY 19th MAY: Megan Manson, Secular Society
SUNDAY 26th MAY: Gavin Lloyd, Chapel Society member

JUNE SERVICE THEME: *The Gift of Renewal*

SUNDAY 2nd JUNE: Prof Jacqueline Woodman, Chapel Society member
SUNDAY 9th JUNE: Alan Ruston, Watford Unitarians
SUNDAY 16th JUNE: Mary Jones, John Pounds Chapel, Portsmouth
SUNDAY 23rd JUNE: Revd Jenny Miller, Interfaith Minister
SUNDAY 30th JUNE: Kay Wardle, Chapel Society member

JULY 2024 (THEME-FREE)

SUNDAY 7th JULY: Val Worthington, John Pounds Chapel, Portsmouth
SUNDAY 14th JULY: Prof Geoff Levermore, General Assembly President
SUNDAY 21st JULY: Kieren Mardle Moss, Coventry Unitarians
SUNDAY 28th JULY: Revd Sarah Tinker, Kensington Unitarians

AFTER-SERVICE DISCUSSION GROUP (12:15-13:05)

APRIL: Facilitator – Sheila Bond (Date TBC)
MAY: Facilitator – Revd Sue Sinnamon (Date TBC)
JUNE: Facilitator – Jacqueline Woodman (30th June – online via Zoom)

Weekly updates available on Facebook: www.facebook.com/OxfordUnitarians
Service listings and recordings of previous services available via links to '[Sunday Services](#)', and '[Past services](#)' on the Oxford Unitarians website.
There is also a '[Newsletter](#)' link to our quarterly newsletters.

www.OxfordUnitarians.org

A service is held each Sunday at 11 am in the chapel of Harris Manchester College, Mansfield Road, OX1 3TD. Visitors always welcome! Services are also live-streamed on Zoom



Sue Sinnamon
Chair



Christopher
Whitehouse
Treasurer



Ruth Baer
Secretary



Kay Wardle



Charles Roberts



Jacky Woodman
Worship Group
Chair

Published by:
Manchester College Oxford Chapel
Society Committee
Email: contact@OxfordUnitarians.org
Reg. charity 298701

Trustees' Report - Sue Sinnamon

At this month's meeting we continued the work we began in January. The Ministerial Search investigation continues with the creation of a survey for the congregation. We want to know what you would like a part-time minister to do for the Chapel Society. The survey will be both paper and online, and we would like as many responses as possible. Our Treasurer continues to work on the cost of this position.

We decided on four Special Collections this year.

April 14th: *The Red Cross Gaza Israel Interfaith Peace Appeal*. Revd Feargus O'Connor will be leading the service on this day, along with Bert Clough, and will speak briefly about this appeal.

Summer: *Providence Charity*, the charitable arm of the Hungarian Unitarian Church, which has been providing assistance to those impacted by the war in the Ukraine.

Autumn: *Asylum Welcome*

Christmas: *Send a Child to Hucklow*.

The Social Justice team has been engaged in activities related to the Chapel Society's recent joining of Citizens UK. The team has surveyed Chapel Society members about issues of interest and respondents indicated that their highest priorities include:

1. Climate Justice
2. Mental Health
3. Refugees and a Fair Pathway to Citizenship
4. Housing and Homelessness

Chapel Society members who would like to get involved in working on any of these issues are invited to email Holly Templer at hollytempler@hotmail.com, or speak to Holly, Catherine Robinson, Steve Hodges or Izzy Walter in Chapel.

As we agreed last month, draft minutes will go out to members and friends as soon as they are available.

Sue Sinnamon

Chair of the Chapel Society

From the Treasurer - Christopher Whitehouse

If you are not already a Member or Friend of the Chapel Society, have you thought about becoming one? Those who attend our services are under no obligation to make financial contributions, whether they participate in person or online, but many choose to do so. **Membership** costs £80 per annum, £35 of which is passed on to the General Assembly (GA), to which we are affiliated, as a "quota payment" in support of the work of the national Unitarian movement. Numerous Members give more than £80 – something for which we are extremely grateful. **Friend membership** costs £15 per annum, though again the amount may be higher, at the donor's discretion. We also offer **Student Membership** at the reduced rate of £5 per annum.

Members may serve on the Chapel Society committee, are entitled to vote at AGMs and EGMs and in elections to the executive council of the GA, and may represent the congregation at the annual meeting of the GA. We generally reimburse the fees of our GA delegate in full, and we have a standing policy of providing financial support to Members if they wish to further their Unitarian education – for example by taking a course in leading worship services or attending the online Summer School programme. The Friends membership is particularly suitable for anyone who is already a member of another Unitarian congregation, for example.

Anybody interested in becoming a subscriber is invited to contact the Treasurer/Acting Membership Secretary, Christopher Whitehouse via treasurer@OxfordUnitarians.org. If paying the full rate would create a difficulty, please let us know, since we would not wish to create any financial hardship.

Christopher Whitehouse
Treasurer

From the Worship Group - Jacky Woodman

We have now been using the UUA's *Soul Matters* resource packs for over a year, and they continue to be well received. The monthly routine now feels familiar: the Worship Group usually introduces the theme on the first Sunday of each month and the resource pack is then distributed via email. Everyone is encouraged to dip into the resources and select whatever form of reflection appeals to them: spiritual exercises, readings and 'wise words', discussion questions, video, podcast and music playlists and much more. Later in the month (allowing time for reflection on the theme), a member of the Worship Group facilitates a discussion on the theme. The group session is open to all and does not depend on having attended services, read the resources or having to sign up beforehand.

The themes for April to June 2024 will focus on the gifts that our Unitarian values foster.

July and August will be 'easy-going' theme-free months with a wide variety of service leaders, worship formats and social events over the summer. We look forward to welcoming Prof Geoff Levermore, the incoming GA President, to lead our service on 14th July.

The Gift of...
April: Interdependence
May: Pluralism
June: Renewal

Themes to June 2024

There will be restricted access to chapel on 12th May (Town and Gown) and 30th June (Race for Life) while 'fun runs' take place in and around the city centre. On these dates, hybrid services (in chapel and on Zoom) will go ahead as usual but with the service format weighted more towards Zoom. Details regarding access to chapel will be in the weekly email bulletins (though it seems to be getting harder to access the city centre during these events, whether on foot or by car). While these restrictions can be inconvenient for Sunday worship, I tend to view this as an opportunity to try new ideas. Therefore, the discussion group which I'll be facilitating for the month of June on the theme of *Renewal* will be an online event via Zoom on 30th June.

As we do not have a minister or any paid administrative staff to organise or support our worship services, we rely on volunteers. If you would like to help in any way, from stewarding, to helping with organising refreshments after services, or contributing to services through readings or co-leading then please contact me or any of the Worship Group or committee members with your ideas on supporting and assisting with worship. Our services are very much a team collaborative effort every Sunday and the time and talents of all our volunteers who make it happen is appreciated.

The Worship Group currently consists of eight members (Jacky Woodman, Mphala Mogudi, Julie Page, Sue Sinnamon, Steve Hodges, Patsy Clarke, Sheila Bond and Kay Wardle) who work collaboratively, but new members are always welcome; forthcoming Worship Group meetings will be announced in the weekly email bulletin.

We look forward to welcoming everyone, whether in person or online to our Sunday worship and trust that you will find a find a sacred space that is warm and welcoming.

Jacky Woodman
On behalf of the Worship Group



Tips for Reading in Chapel - Sheila Bond

One of the most common pieces of feedback that the Worship Group receives is that a service leader, or reader, cannot be heard. We understand how much work goes into preparing services, and we are most grateful to those who volunteer to read for us; it is with this in mind that we have put together some tips. Many thanks to Judith Fantozzi, Peter Hewis and Josephine Seccombe for their input.



Preparation, preparation, preparation: Take time to know your reading. No last minute stuff – as readers we need time to absorb the reading, so that it becomes part of us and more like a conversation.

See the picture: If it is a story, there will be a scenario to observe. See it as we read. If we see it, the congregation will too.

On the day of the service, **get to the chapel in good time** and test the sound system by asking someone to stand towards the back of the chapel while you read. Then reverse the procedure by having a friend speak into the microphone while you see what it sounds like at the back.

Consider whether you will **use the step** inside the pulpit; it is important that the congregation in chapel and online can see your face. Just take care when stepping down; when fully absorbed in your service, it is easy to forget that you are standing on a step!

Use the lectern for your script or notes. If you hold your paper between your face and the microphone the volume of your voice will be severely reduced. Any rustling of the paper will be amplified by the microphone.

Speak directly into the microphone, but do not 'eat' the microphone. Our microphone is different to those of music artists which have to be as close to the mouth as possible. Microphones for speaking into are designed to be used between 6 and 9 inches from your mouth. Bend the microphone so that it is roughly in line with your mouth. It is helpful to put it back to where it was for the next person, who may not realise it has been moved.

Even with a microphone, you need to **project your voice**. In other words, don't just use your normal conversational voice.

Speak slowly and clearly: It is very hard to speak too slowly – if you feel you are talking too slowly, you are probably about right. Do not be afraid to use pauses – there are natural breaks in any reading. These should be observed and made use of, rather than rushing through to get to the end. Pause for a breath and an obvious thought.

Connect with the Congregation: Use eye contact. We are speaking to real people, not the air! Let it be natural and not forced. Find out where the blue light of the webcam is and, as well as scanning the congregation, let your eye contact also go to the webcam occasionally, so that those at home also feel connected with our service.

Breathe: Breathe from the diaphragm (deep into the abdomen), not upper-chest shallow breathing. Chest breathing will never produce the volume of sound necessary to carry the voice beyond the first couple of pews.

Stand firmly: Balance your body at its centre of gravity – usually at the waist. Otherwise you wobble. Generally it is wise to have your feet slightly apart.

Stillness: The more you move, the more the attention of the Congregation shifts from the reading to you. It is better to avoid fiddling, pushing hair aside or adjusting glasses. Do this before you start. However, there is some difference here between readers and preachers: preaching may naturally give rise to more animation and movement.

Enjoy: If you enjoy reading, the audience will enjoy listening to you!

An invitation to Feel a Little Bit More Powerful Together - Holly Templer

This picture was taken on Friday 8th March 2024, just after we met with our MP for Oxford East, Anneliese Dodds. We were there to ask Ms Dodds if she thought a Labour government would support a community-led national programme of repair and retrofitting of social housing; to make warm homes that don't cost the Earth, as part of the Citizens UK National Climate Justice campaign. She said Yes!



Left to right: Holly with Max and Jess, student ambassadors from The Oxford Academy in Littlemore, Jane Fisher from the Quakers, & Anneliese Dodds, MP for Oxford East

After the meeting I heard 16-year-old Jess (pictured, centre) say:

"I feel excited and a bit more powerful now, because now she knows who we are and what we are doing, and we know a bit more about her and what she cares about. So next time we meet with her we might be able to ask her to do something."

That's exactly how I feel too. We have started to build a relationship with Ms Dodds, and several other decision-makers in Oxford, so that we can ask them to do stuff that will make the world a little bit more wonderful. I've tried to make changes in other ways: signing petitions, writing letters, and taking part in marches and demonstrations. I've even tried illegal direct action, when I shut down a coal mine in South Wales for a day with 100 other people. But all that stuff left me feeling burnt-out, discouraged and powerless, because none of it resulted in tangible lasting change.

And that's why I am inviting you to attend the Thames Valley Citizens Oxford Assembly on 18th April. This assembly is the next time we will be meeting with Anneliese Dodds, and this time, instead of being just four people representing three different organisations, we could be up to 150 people, representing 20 organisations from across Oxford and the Thames Valley. And she, or one of the other decision-makers at the assembly, might agree to doing something really worthwhile. There will also be candidates at the assembly who are standing for election in the Oxford City Council and the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner elections on 2nd May. What we will be asking them has yet to be decided at the time of going to press, but here are some possibilities we are considering:

Housing Justice

1. **Private Landlords:** An anonymous Whistleblower Portal for tenants and accountability for property inspections.
2. Ask Oxford City Council to support our General Election campaign to ask the next government to do a **national Community-led Repair and Retrofit programme**.
3. Ask **GreenSquareAccord Housing Association** to have staff based in Oxford

Safety

1. **Make Misogyny a Hate Crime** in the Thames Valley
2. **Make South Park Safe** with better lighting and a footpath.

Perhaps you're thinking, *"These things aren't going to stop climate change, or address the huge housing crisis in Oxford!"* And that is true – they won't, on their own. But we are playing the long game, strategically picking worthwhile 'big asks' that we are confident we can achieve at this stage, whilst we are still growing our alliance in the Thames Valley. If we can get a large audience to turn out to this assembly, to show that we are a powerful alliance, then we could win support for all our 'big asks'. And then more people and bigger institutions, like maybe Oxford University, will be inspired to join us. So, when we meet with these decision-makers next time, we'll be a little bit more powerful, and able to ask for more.

That's why I'm going. I hope you will join us, so that we can all feel a little bit more powerful together.

The link for tickets: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/thames-valley-citizens-oxford-assembly/>



Thames Valley Citizens Oxford Assembly
Thursday 18th April, 18:30-20:30
John Henry Brookes Building
Oxford Brookes University
Gypsy Lane Oxford OX3 0BP

TWENTY QUESTIONS FOR SUE SINNAMON

In conversation with Catherine Robinson

Revd Sue Sinnamon moved from the USA to live in Abingdon with her husband, Revd John Maxwell Kerr, in 2021. She currently serves as the Chair of our Chapel Society.

As a young person, what was your ambition in life? It was to help others, especially people who were considered marginalized.

In fact what did you end up doing? Many things! In college I worked with Upward Bound, a programme for disadvantaged High School students to prepare them for college; I organized and ran a swimming programme for neighbourhood children at the college pool; and I worked with Vista Volunteers, who were organizing the garbage workers in a campaign for fair wages and working conditions launched by the Revd Dr Martin Luther King. This was 1968 in Florida.



Sue Sinnamon

After college I worked with Planned Parenthood in San Francisco, providing pregnancy and abortion counselling, and staffing clinics. (At that time abortion was legal only in California and New York.) This led to graduate courses in Women's Studies and counselling. Then I began work in Alternative High Education, which led me to learn about humanistic and transpersonal education and psychology, and I trained as a Psychosynthesis practitioner. This was all in the 1970s and 1980s. I was well placed to see the beginnings of that movement. It led me into Humanistic Religious Education, and eventually I backed into becoming a Unitarian Minister. I had never met a woman minister until I joined UU circles, and even then the ministry was mostly male, and women were relegated to the basement to work with the children, earning 60 per cent of what male ministers made.

Eventually I felt called to become a minister of Religious Education, working with families and women. I was ordained by Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1990. From there I went to the Unitarian Church of Evanston, Illinois in 1999. I worked for the Unitarian Universalist Association from 2007 to 2014, when I became the Assistant Minister at the First Unitarian Church in Richmond, Virginia. I currently serve as a spiritual director, and I train religious professionals in small-group spiritual direction.

How did your childhood shape your adult self? From a very young age I was aware of all the 'differences' around me. In the exclusive neighbourhoods and country clubs there were no Jews and no Catholics. I sensed the racial tensions affecting the Cubans and people of colour. All these divisions made no sense to me. I was encouraged to explore and learn new things. My father went to law school in his 40's. Lifelong learning was a family value.

How do you relax? I like taking long walks along the Thames, and reading and cooking. I travel to learn things, especially with the Jungian Institutes, which organize travel worldwide with expert lecturers. Most recently we went to Prague with a group learning about medieval Christianity and alchemy.

What is your favourite book or author? It's impossible to choose one. I read 20th-century fiction, most of it written by women, often from other cultures: for example Edwidge Danticat, a Haitian-American novelist; and African writers, writers from India, and African American writers.

Favourite film or play? Again, I can't choose just one. I re-watch all the early musicals that I grew up with, and I love the current films. I try to stay abreast of trends like Barbie, and I still enjoy old favourites like Love Actually and Four Weddings and a Funeral.

Favourite musician or piece of music? Joni Mitchell. She has accompanied me all these years, and her performance of 'Both Sides Now' at the age of 80 sums it all up. At home I keep Radio 3 on most days, and I love Choral Evensong.

Twenty Questions for Sue Sinnamon - continued

Favourite work of art? I love the female impressionists for their use of colour and light. No one favourite, but many delights.

If you could acquire one particular talent or skill, what would it be? To be a jazz musician: I wouldn't mind improvising on the piano or bass.

What is your most treasured possession? My collection of gods and goddesses from all over the world.

Who or what has been the most important spiritual influence in your life? Carl Jung has helped me understand the landscape of the soul. His writings on the roles of consciousness, shadow, archetypes, myth, and the use of imagery have enhanced my understanding of spiritual maturity.

Do you have a personal sacred place? I think it is by the ocean. I have always lived near water. First the Atlantic Coast of the USA, then the Pacific Coast, and then the Great Lakes have all nourished my spirit – and now the Thames in Oxfordshire.

Which half-dozen individuals, dead or alive, do you most admire? Gloria Steinem, Angela Davis, and Alice Walker: revolutionary women who stood their ground against patriarchy and racism. They are activists, academics, and artists, all very strong women. They gave me strength and a voice. ... And Katie Geneva Cannon, Rachel Held Evans, and Nadia Bolz Webe – all theologians and activists. Cannon is the great mother of Womanist Theology. She has nurtured generations of Black women academics and theologians. She was the first Black woman to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church in the USA. She died in 2018 at the age of 68, but her work in womanist and Black theology continues around the world. ... Evans is probably best known for her book *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*. A former Evangelical, she became a voice for progressive, inclusive, loving theology. She died at the age of 37. ... And Bolz-Weber is a Lutheran Minister and founder of the Church of All Saints and Sinners in Denver, Colorado. She is the author of *Pastrix*, about her own radical life of faith. These three woman built communities of integrity, hope, and inclusion. I have learned much from them all.

What good causes are closest to your heart? Any cause that helps children and their families into education and out of poverty is close to my heart. Planned Parenthood is another favourite, because of its advocacy for women's reproductive health and autonomy. And finally, my favourite Facebook group is Clergy with Cats: a worldwide group that rescues, fosters, and supports its members in their ministries.

When and how did you become aware of Unitarianism? When I first began working as a Humanistic Religious Educator for the Washington Ethical Society, I joined a group of religious educators who were largely Unitarian. Some of my best mentors and teachers came from this group, and my work with them and the Psychosynthesis Community led me to Unitarian ministry.

What do you value most about the Unitarian faith? Its curiosity and openness to people from all areas of life and all parts of the world. There is a way we foster authenticity in relationships that brings me joy.

What aspects of our movement would you like to change? We must change to survive and thrive. I wish we were not so afraid of change.

What is your favourite hymn? Any hymn that we know and can sing joyfully together. I am very fond of gospel music.

What are you most grateful for? For the beauty of this planet and all its life. For community, and the love that we share and spread. For the embrace of the spirit that surrounds us all.

What are your remaining ambitions or aspirations? I think I am beyond the age of ambitions or aspirations. But I want to be able to mentor those who would like to have me share my experience with them. I have had a long and fulfilling life, with lots of adventures and more to come, I hope.

The Human Fellowship - Peter Hewis

Peter writes: I used these words as a meditation on *Transformation* on Sunday, 10th March 2024

Let us sing of the men and women who have cherished their homes and gardens on this earth, our homestead. For they have turned the forests and the wilderness into farms in villages and cities. Their coming and going have worn paths across the world and made friendly ways for our feet. They have plied the roads of the seas, and taught us to escape the reefs and the weather.

No longer need we wander, to gather nuts and berries, to find roots and apples.
No longer do we lie cold and hungry to trap the wandering hare and the antelope.
No longer do we huddle in thickets and crouch in caves to escape the wind and the sleet.

Our cities are mild and fraternal places when seen against the jungles that our fathers and mothers roamed for a million years.

It is easy to give thanks to one god, to imagine his single presence, to speak to his one ear.

It is not easy to give thanks to five hundred generations, from whom we have received our customs and our arts, our laws, and our learning and our civility.

Our gratitude will be known as we become one with them, and in our turn leave benefits to five hundred generations that follow us, to generations beyond end, if men and women can make their peace with themselves, and establish their security in the universe.

Kenneth L Patton

Congratulations!



Congratulations to Chapel Society member **Torkill Fozzard** who has won medals for his piano playing at the Woodley Arts Festival. Torkill is pictured here during the online chat after the Sunday morning service showing everyone his Silver medal for the 2024 festival (right), and his Gold medal for 2023. The Woodley Arts Festival takes place near Reading and gives performers of all abilities the opportunity to perform in front of a professional adjudicator in a supportive and friendly atmosphere. Although the festival is competitive, they aim to emphasise the enjoyment of performance and the appreciation of others' efforts. Well done Torkill!

Torkill played for our online services during lockdowns and still occasionally plays for us during our online coffee mornings.

Forthcoming Services and Service Leaders

Revd Feargus O'Connor and Bert Clough



Feargus O'Connor

Feargus O'Connor and Bert Clough are both Unitarians who are devotees of Dr Albert Schweitzer and share his compassion for fellow sentient beings. They will co-lead a service devoted to the life and spirituality of Schweitzer. Feargus was until recently minister of Golders Green Unitarians where he has held inter-faith celebrations for animals for over twenty years. He represents Unitarians on the board of the Animal Interfaith Alliance. Bert is a member of MCOCS and a Quaker attender. He has recently written a children's story book on chicken liberation.



Bert Clough

Feargus and Bert have written an introduction to Albert Schweitzer and his work on page 11. The charity collection at this service will be forwarded to the British Red Cross Gaza emergency appeal. (See the weekly email bulletin for ways to donate.)

Feargus and Bert lead our service on Sunday 14th April

Adam Slate



Adam Slate

Adam Slate currently serves as ministry intern at Rosslyn Hill Chapel in Hampstead, London and is pursuing a Master of Divinity degree at Phillips Theological Seminary. He is committed to building connections within and between congregations, to racial equity and justice work, and to sharing Unitarian values with a world that desperately needs them.

Adam's service will consider 'Growing Friendship': Research has shown that friendships make us healthier and happier, give us a sense of belonging, support us through major life events, and help reduce stress and loneliness. Yet for all these benefits, making friends can prove to be surprisingly difficult, especially as we age. At this service, we will explore how we can build better friend relationships.

Adam leads our service on Sunday 21st April

Revd Dr Claire MacDonald

Claire MacDonald is an old friend of the Chapel Society, having undertaken a student pastorate in Oxford during her ministry training at Harris Manchester College (2015-17). She was previously minister at Lewisham Unity and is currently Tutor in Ministerial Studies at HMC, as well as being the first Unitarian chaplain since Revd Peter Hewis. During term time Claire is resident in Oxford at HMC on Wednesdays and Thursdays and leads a non-denominational gathering for worship every Wednesday at 5.45 pm in the chapel.

Claire is a writer with a background in performance and she has collaborated with Catherine Robinson and Revd Maria Curtis on *Cherishing the Earth*, a Unitarian book on eco-spirituality.



Claire MacDonald

Claire's service is called *It's In Our Hands* and asks us to consider if the future is in our hands. If it is, how might we shape it together? If we suspect it might not be, then what do we do – and how might religion be a liberatory platform for change, not only for us, but for all beings? This service thinks aloud about our interdependence and what that means for people care, earth care and our own human future. We will hear the hopeful words and images of poets and thinkers, and reflect on our own hopes and dreams, with a little music, some silence, a time for quietening the mind in prayer and a little conversational greeting on this late April Sunday.

Claire leads our service on Sunday 28th April

Megan Manson



Megan Manson

Megan Manson is head of campaigns at the National Secular Society. She previously worked for the Japanese government promoting cultural exchange and language learning. She has long been active in local interfaith initiatives. Her faith tradition is paganism. In February 2024 Megan led a service for us on *Secularism. Justice and Equity*. Megan's next service for the Chapel Society will address the monthly theme of *Pluralism*.

Megan leads our service on Sunday 19th May

Mary Jones

Mary Jones lives near Chichester and leads services at John Pounds Church in Portsmouth. She studied Liberal Theology with Exeter University in Cornwall, exiting Anglicanism and finding Unitarianism in 2017. She became a Unitarian Chaplain at the Cornwall Campus of Exeter University, a role she continued online as a virtual chaplain during and post Covid, after moving to Hampshire.



Mary Jones

Mary leads our service on Sunday 16th June

Revd Jenny Miller



Jenny Miller

Revd Jenny Miller, MA (Distinction), MA (Distinction) LLB (Hons), Dipl (Psych) is an ordained Interfaith Minister, having studied with the OneSpirit Interfaith Seminary in London, as well as being a Worship Service Leader of the Unitarian and Free Christian Church. Jenny's background is formerly in both Law as a Solicitor and with professional qualifications in Transpersonal Psychotherapy and Integrative Child Psychotherapy, with specific experience in Bereavement Counselling. Jenny was an MA Tutor in Transpersonal Child, Adolescent & Family Psychotherapy before having three daughters, including twins, which keeps her busy as a mummy!

Having recently completed a second Masters Degree with Distinction in Christian Spirituality at Sarum Theological College, with a specific focus in interreligious mystical theologies, Jenny is now researching for a PhD which spans the interdisciplinary subjects of Mystical Theology, Transpersonal Psychology and the Philosophy of the Self. Jenny has been invited to speak on areas of Interfaith, Mystical Theology and Transpersonal Psychology at leading University Conferences, including *The Borderless Borders of Faith* at SST (Society for the Study of Theology), *Florence Nightingale's Mystical Theology* at St Mary's University London, *Interreligious dimensions of Action and Contemplation* at MTN (Mystical Theology Network), *Practical Mysticism* for the Mysticism and Lived Experience Network and *The Depth-Apex of Mystical Theology and Transpersonal Psychology* for the forthcoming International EUROTAS Conference at New College, Oxford. Jenny was the joint winner of The World Congress of Faiths' Essay Award 2019 on the subject of *Is Interfaith Worship a desirable practice?* which was published in The World Congress of Faiths' International publication *Interreligious Insight*. Jenny's articles and poetry are regularly published in *The Inquirer* and *Stella Polaris*.

Jenny gives regular worship services and talks on various subjects as an Interfaith Minister for various chapels, churches and organisations. Jenny's next service for the Chapel Society will be a Sufi-inspired service on the *Renewal of the Divine Self*.

Jenny leads our service on Sunday 23rd June

For video and audio recordings of past services led by all the worship leaders featured see:
<https://www.oxfordunitarians.org/past-services/>

SCHWEITZER AND REVERENCE FOR LIFE

Bert Clough and Feargus O'Connor

Albert Schweitzer was a doctor, musician, and theologian – all professions he excelled at. As a missionary in Africa, he developed his ideas on the Reverence for life. The civilising power of Reverence for life was a theme in his Dale lectures at our neighbouring college in Oxford, Mansfield College, where he was a visiting lecturer and where he also played the organ.

Schweitzer believed that we must fight against the spirit of unconscious cruelty with which we treat animals. Animals suffer as much as we do. True humanity does not allow us to impose such suffering on them. Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace.

Although Schweitzer remained a Lutheran throughout his long life, he realised that Unitarians and Quakers and the spirit of humanism “might rekindle the true spirit of Jesus.” After the Second World War, it was only a substantial gift from the Unitarian Universalist church that kept his missionary hospital in Lambarene open.



Portrait of Albert Schweitzer
Artist: Arthur William Heintzelman, 1891-1965

Dates for your diary



**The Power of
Story + Song**



The next Festival of Unitarians in the South East (FUSE 2024) will once again be held at The Friars retreat centre at Aylesford in Kent, 14-16 June. The festival theme is *The Power of Story and Song* and the theme speaker is the Jerusalem-based storyteller and singer Hanna Yaffe. Residential bookings close on Friday 17th May.


Booking and programme - including an exciting Youth programme for ages 5 to 17 - available online at: <https://www.ldpaunitarians.org/fuse2024>

Summer BBQ: Sunday 11th August 2024

The Chapel Society's annual summer barbecue returns this year hosted at the home of Jacky Woodman in Headington on Sunday 11th August 2024 from 1-4 pm. ALL WELCOME! Bring family and friends and enjoy an afternoon of fun and fellowship.

Further details will be published in the weekly email bulletin closer to the date.





Oxford Unitarians

We are a religious community that is inclusive, not exclusive. Our Chapel embraces all free-thinking Christians but equally those of other faiths and those who have none but are also seeking a spiritual path. We respect and value the views of all those entering this church for your insight can deepen our religious community. We hold to no conformity of belief but seek communality of spiritual purpose. Our religion is about deeds not creeds. Our purpose is to help us follow a spiritual path authentic to each of us.



Oxford Unitarians

www.OxfordUnitarians.org

✉ Contact@OxfordUnitarians.org

f www.facebook.com/OxfordUnitarians

📍 [@OxfordUnitarian](https://www.instagram.com/OxfordUnitarian)

The newsletter is compiled by Chapel Society volunteers and contributions from members and friends are welcome. Please email any contributions or comments to:

OxfordUnitarians@gmail.com

The Manchester College Oxford Chapel Society committee exercises final editorial control.

Deadline for next newsletter: Sunday 16th June 2024