

# Unitarian and Free Christian



## Cairo Street Unitarian Chapel, Warrington Newsletter for September & October 2025



## Chair's Report

We had a very busy time in our chapel since the last newsletter. Our services continue on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month, led by our minister elect Rob Foreman and it always gives us great comfort and thought. He is also continuing with our study group 'Soul Searching', where everybody is welcome to participate in finding out more about the great thoughts in religion.

The Garden Open Day was a great and very well attended event, so many people admiring our well hidden beautiful garden, not realising what a treasure there is in the town centre. The Priestley Gates in the end of the garden have been lovingly restored by Ray and Peter and are now framing the lovely garden.

We will be open for Heritage Day on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September , where people are always interested and surprised about the historical significance of our chapel.

A great event is always a wedding in our chapel, and Lesley will be conducting our next one on the 20<sup>th</sup> September.

On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> we will have our annual Academy lecture, this year held by the renowned Warrington Historian Bill Cooke, we all are very much looking forward to his very in depth historical knowledge.

We will all take part in the Triennial Pilgrimage to Rivington Chapel on the 27<sup>th</sup> September. It is always a great event and a wonderful opportunity to meet all members of the other Chapels.

Wishing everybody a restful and peaceful time with autumn approaching

Best wishes

Friede

## Minister's Reflection

### Come Unto Me, All Who Are Busy

September is always a full month in our chapel life, and this year is no exception. We begin with **Heritage Open Days** on the 13th and 14th (10am–5pm), where we open our doors to celebrate the history and story of Cairo Street Chapel. Then, on the **21st of September**, we welcome **Prof. Bill Cooke** to lead our **Academy Service**, bringing his wisdom as historian and philosopher. And to close the month, on the **27th**, we join together for the **Rivington Pilgrimage** — a reminder of the rich roots of our faith tradition. A busy September indeed!

I'll be honest — personally, I'm busy too. Alongside services and events, I'm finishing my studies with Unitarian College. There are moments when I feel stretched thin, as though the rhythm of life is all action and no pause. And yet, I find myself pushing back against those old sayings: *"the devil makes work for idle hands"* and *"there's no rest for the wicked."* Both suggest that busyness is a moral good, that constant doing is a measure of virtue. But I don't believe that.

To me, rest is not laziness — it is holy. Rest is honouring ourselves as beings of body, mind, and spirit. Rest is one of the greatest gifts we can give, not only to ourselves but to the world around us. For in true rest, we rediscover compassion, creativity, and the strength to serve.

As Thomas Merton once wrote:

"There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence...[and] it is activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence."

And as the Gospel reminds us:

*"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28)

So as September unfolds, full of activity and opportunity, let's also remember that sacred pause. The stillness that renews. The gift of rest, which is not selfish but life-giving.

May we be busy when it matters — and at peace when it matters even more.

Your Minister Elect, Robert Dennis Foreman

Editor's Note: This article was produced by Ray Beecham to advertise our inclusion in the national Heritage Festival and for submission to the Warrington Guardian for their 11th September issue.

## **Visit Cairo Street Unitarian Chapel**

### **Walk into its Past and Discover its Amazing History**

Our story begins in 1662, when the Revd. Robert Yates, Vicar of St Elphin's Church was evicted on The Feast Day of St. Bartholmew for not undertaking the Act of Uniformity as ordered by King Charles II. This was not the first time the Revd Yates had fallen foul of authority. In 1649, during the English Civil War, he had spoken out against the Parliamentary organisation of Worship. He was arrested and tried at Lancaster Castle, where he was convicted and sentenced to death. He was determined not to retract his objection, and it was whilst he was writing his last speech and testament that he was reprieved.

He returned to Warrington and in 1662 when he was expelled from St Elpin's, many of his congregation followed him. The congregation that followed Robert Yates showed great courage in following their conscience and beliefs. Laws passed by Parliament made it an offence, punishable by fine, prison or transportation for five people beside family to meet for worship.

Discover how, under the Ministry of Dr. Charles Owen, the membership of the Chapel was 713.

During your visit, discover how Warrington Dissenting Academy was established in 1757.

How the members of the congregation shaped the economic growth and development of Warrington and their involvement in the political struggles of the time.

During the Heritage Festival, the Chapel and gardens will be open on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September from 10.00am until 4.00pm.

To close our contribution to the Heritage Festival, on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September at 3.00pm, Bill Cooke, a renowned local historian and author, will be presenting our Academy Lecture with the title:

**Joseph Priestley's impact on the twenty-first century**

## **Dates for our Heritage Festival contribution**

Saturday	13th September	<b>Open Day</b>	10.00am until 4.00pm
Sunday	14th September	<b>Open Day</b>	10.00am until 4.00pm
Sunday	21st September	<b>Academy Lecture</b>	3.00pm

# **Rivington Unitarian Chapel**

## **Triennial Pilgrimage**



**Saturday 27 September 2025**

**Lunch at Rivington Village Green Tea Room**

Sheephouse Lane, Rivington, Lancashire, BL6 7SD

**Guest Speaker: Professor Geoff Levermore**

President of the General Assembly

**Please bring banners to display in the Tea Room**

**Service in Rivington Chapel**

**Conducted by: Rev Cody Coyne**

Minister at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester

**Anyone from Cairo Street Chapel interested in  
attending should contact Friede Sheikh**



## Update on the Chapel Gardens

The Garden Open Day in July was a great success, with a large number of people attending during the day, most showing great interest in the Chapel and the gardens. As part of the preparation for the Open Day, Ray and Peter decided to restore the Priestley Gates at the bottom of the gardens. The gates were painted in black paint with the decorative features highlighted in gold (paint), the same colours as our main gates. Even before we had completed the painting, we were getting complementary comments from passers-by on Cairo Street on how they brighten up the area. The gates will need some structural repair at a later date ... but, considering that they are over 250 years old, they have stood the test of time very well.



**Chapel Flowers:** Ray Beecham 01229 586900

bee chamray@yahoo.co.uk

7th	September	In memory of Tom and Ivy Williams
14th	September	Jim Morris
21st	September	Marjorie Morris
28th	September	John and Elsie Tavlin
5th	October	Jim and Marjorie Morris
12th	October	Ettie Massey
19th	October	Zoe Davis
26th	October	Flower Fund

If you have any family members you would like to remember, contact Ray Beecham to join the Flower Fund and have them remembered in the Newsletter and in the relevant service.

**Chapel Services    Organist :** Peter / Stefan

7th	September	Rob Foreman	10.30am
13th & 14th September <b>Heritage Open Days</b>			
21st	September	<b>Academy Lecture</b>	Bill Cooke
5th	October	Rob Foreman	10.30am
19th	October	Rob Foreman	10.30am

## **Chapel Committee (2025 - 2026)**

Chair: Friede Sheikh

Committee Members: Ray, Lesley, Peter, Barbara, Gary, Helen

Chapel phone number: 01925 419693

Chapel Charity Number: 235996

Website: <https://cairostreetchapel.uk/>

## **Editorial Note:**

This Newsletter is now available as a PDF file. If you would like a regular PDF copy, please contact Peter on [peter.mcguigan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:peter.mcguigan@yahoo.co.uk)