

EAST MIDLAND UNITARIANS

(District Association of Congregations)

Seeks to employ a PARTNERSHIP MINISTER To be based at Belper, Derbyshire

Full-time appointment, at least half-time with Belper congregation:

- A trained minister to lead and support worship, and to provide rites of passage.
- To provide well prepared weekly worship, presenting the Unitarian message.
- The development of a hybrid delivery using both virtual and zoom meetings to reach Unitarians in the District without their own minister, as required.
- The use of social media to advertise worship and activities.
- Some mid-week activity such as a religious or discussion group.
- Pastoral care of the congregation
- To offer some assistance to other congregations lacking a minister.
- To agree a strategy to develop the congregation in conjunction with the District Association and the congregation.
- A commitment to engage in District events.

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PARTNERSHIP MINISTRY ROLE

The Belper Unitarian Congregation has undergone a renaissance in recent years as a result of the efforts and dedication of a small team of individuals. From only five or six, Sunday attendance now often reaches twenty or more, and much more for special and festive services. There are now around 30 people associated with the congregation. It is the Congregation's and the District Association's opinion that Belper offers a real opportunity for community growth and development if supported by committed ministerial leadership.

It is intended, if appointed, that you will work closely during the first two or three years with the Belper congregation, but providing some oversight to the almost closed cause at Derby. The objective is to consolidate, support and encourage the present Belper congregation, by conducting two or three services a month, any naming, wedding, or funeral services, producing the newsletter, engaging in pastoral work, and working with the local community. You will be expected to develop a range of mid-week activities based on the Chapel: either events that you would conduct, such as religious education or meditation groups, or by encouraging and organising activities run by others, who would benefit from having use of a space in which to meet.

During the initial period you will be expected to devote a small part of your time in assisting nearby congregations, especially those lacking a minister, particularly with rites of passage, the preparation of services, and the production of a newsletter. Reasonably close there is a house-based fellowship in Castle Donington, a small congregation in Nottingham, and possibilities at Loughborough, a university town. But much of your extra responsibility at first will focus on providing a monthly event at Derby, which would not necessarily be a service, but something to engage the use of the modern well-appointed building. There are only a handful of members, but good relations have been built up over the years with the University chaplaincy.

After two or three years, with the Belper congregation more securely established, you would be expected to give more time to the other congregations in the District in need of support. Even with this development of your ministry, the main focus will always be the Belper congregation, and you would be expected to provide at least two services a month, and maintain your work with the community. Since the ministry will be largely funded by the District Association, you will need to give your full support to District activities and attendance at the Quarterly meetings of the district association would be expected.

In turn the District Association will establish a sub-committee drawn from District Officers, Past Presidents, and members of the Congregation to oversee the ministry. The President of the District (currently Sir Peter Soulsby) will chair the sub-committee and be the line-manager for the minister. This is a partnership ministry with the District working in partnership with the Belper congregation, and other congregations in need.

FIELD ROW CHAPEL, BELPER

The Chapel is listed Grade II*, and is well-maintained, with an unusual amphitheatre design. The congregation sit in the original boxed pews raked up one side of the building with the minister, choir and organ in tiers on the other side of the chapel facing them. There is a modern kitchen and other services. The old school rooms, or meeting rooms, were sold many years ago, but the 'well' of the chapel provides space for gatherings, and the tier seating works well for meetings and services. The Congregation have sole use of the chapel building for worship, and there is at present no use by any outside body.

Morning services are held every Sunday, following the pattern of prayers, hymns, readings and an address. The Congregation is committed to a broad non-dogmatic liberal religious outlook. The members seek to be inclusive, tolerant, and respectful of the opinions of others.



Visit belperunitarians.org for more information about the congregation.

BELPER COMMUNITY LIFE

Belper is a pleasant market town of about 24,000 people, lying just south of the Peak District National Park, in a valley formed by the Derwent River, about 7 miles north of Derby. It has a considerable industrial heritage. The Strutt family, who build the Chapel, were together with the Arkwrights one of the ten leading cotton-spinning manufacturers at the end of the eighteenth century. The Chapel is in the historic part of the town, and lies within a neighbourhood of stone terraced and larger houses along the side of the valley, including the much sought-after housing the Strutts built for their employees. It is a particularly pleasant residential setting.

There is a railway service to Derby (journey time 12 minutes), with services to all parts of the country, and also to Matlock, the County town. The A6, a major trunk route, runs through the town. Belper has many community groups, such as the Belper Historical Society, the East Mill Museum (the former Strutt factory), the Caring & Sharing Food Bank, the Belper Folk Group, and the Strutt Centre showcasing arts and music. Any of these groups and others would offer an active minister a good opportunity to develop the Chapel's role in the local community.

Visit www.belpertowncouncil.gov.uk for more information about the town.

FRIARGATE CHAPEL, DERBY

Friargate Chapel, Derby, lies adjoining the commercial centre of the city, with neighbouring public housing, and was rebuilt in the early 1970s. It has a small meeting-room or vestry, kitchen and other services, and a large room with modern furniture intended for worship, but which is readily adaptable for other meetings. There is some parking.

**Please direct expressions of interest to Simon Bland, Ministry and Congregational Officer:
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