

UNITARIAN ANNUAL MEETINGS 4-6 APRIL 2023



HANDBOOK

Welcome to the 2023 Annual Meetings!

We're so glad you're here – thank you for making the time and space to spend these days with your fellow Unitarians.

This handbook has all the information you need about what's happening when and where. But do ask for any help you need – either from our staff and volunteers, or from another attendee. We have the whole hotel to ourselves, so anyone you meet should be a kindred spirit! And of course, if your question is about your room, the restaurant, parking, the pool etc please go directly to the hotel staff - they will be most able to help.

One of the reasons we have chosen this venue is the opportunity it offers for connection outside of the programmed events.

We are proud of everything that's on the schedule, but we also recommend that you take time for a chat over a cup of tea with a friend (old or new), or to take a look round the grounds, or to sneak off for a breather in the quiet room. This is your time, and we hope you spend it choosing the Annual Meetings experience that is right for you.

Thank you to the many many people who are making this event possible, behind the scenes or in front of a microphone – it really is a collective effort, co-created by our community, and everyone here will play a role towards this being a welcoming, stimulating, inspiring event.

We also encourage you to think of the members of our community who can't be here in person – whether the barrier is time, money, or health – and invite you to consider how you might bring the spirit of the meetings back to them.

Thank you for being here, and for all you do throughout the year.

**Liz Slade, Chief Officer,
on behalf of the GA team and Annual Meetings Panel**

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

The 94th Annual Meetings

Staverton Park Hotel, 4-6 April 2023

ARRIVALS:



LOCATION

The Meetings will be held at Staverton Park Hotel. Plenary sessions will be held in The County Suite with other meetings taking place in breakout rooms. All meeting rooms are within the same building. The Anniversary Service will be held in The County Suite.



PARKING

Free parking is available on site. There are disabled parking spaces near the front of the hotel. For those with mobility difficulties, we would recommend that you unload your luggage at the main entrance and then park your car in the car parks provided. Cars should be left at the main entrance for the minimum amount of time possible to avoid congestion. There are 4 charging points for electric vehicles on site.



REGISTRATION

Checking in for bedrooms is from the main hotel desk in Reception. You may check in to your room from **3pm** on the day of arrival. Luggage may be left, at the owner's risk.

Participants register for the Meetings and collect their arrival packages from the GA registration desk in the main entrance on the first day. GA staff and / or volunteers will be on hand here to help with registration and directions. The registration will open at 11am. Name badges will be issued at registration – please remember to use them.

Those arriving after the first day are advised to contact a member of GA Staff to arrange to collect their arrivals packages.



ACCESS FOR THOSE WITH MOBILITY ISSUES

The venue benefits from all meeting rooms being in the same building. Floors are flat and there is a lift to all floors. Please note that there is only one lift for the hotel, so those without mobility issues are encouraged to use the stairs during the conference.



ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Participants will be accommodated in the main building – all rooms are under one roof. Be careful to keep your room locked when you are not in it.

Meals will be served in the Restaurant. All meals are provided via serving stations, so you can drop in during the mealtime rather than having to be there at the start of the mealtime.

Breakfast:	7-9am
Lunch:	12:45–2pm
Dinner:	7.10–8.30pm



BANNERS

During the Opening Worship on the first day there will be a parade of banners. Congregations, Districts, and affiliated societies with banners

are requested to bring them and to take part. Each banner should have a designated carrier and it is asked that these people assemble at the room 15 minutes beforehand, so that instructions may be given.



BAR

The Bar is by the entrance. A 20% discount can be obtained on drinks by showing your conference badge.



BOOKSHOP

The GA Bookshop will be in the Warwick Room on the ground floor.



BUSINESS MATTERS

We draw your attention to the following requests and hope that, if everyone notes and acts in accordance with them, the business will proceed with fairness, interest and efficiency.

Please therefore:

- be in your seat in good time before each meeting is due to start.
- have with you all your documents, ballot papers and voting card; and please note that ballot papers and voting cards are not transferable.
- acquaint yourself with Standing Orders (Document AGM05/23); they are designed to help us all cope with our AGM business procedures.
- try not to leave during or before the end of plenary sessions; YOUR participation and vote are important.
- note the use of “for” and “against” microphones and line up at the relevant microphone if you wish to speak. This gives the Chair an idea of the level of interest in continuing the debate
- If you have mobility issues which make it difficult to move to a microphone, please raise your hand, and a roving microphone will be brought to you when instructed by the Chair.



CASH

There is no cash machine on site, please bring some cash, as stalls, donations etc often require cash. The hotel bar and GA bookshop accept card payments, and there will be a facility to make Anniversary Service donations by card if you wish.



CHAPLAINCY

The Ministerial Fellowship will again be running a Chaplaincy service during the Meetings, in Meeting Room 45. Opening times will be circulated and posted on the room door, and there will be a waiting room next door.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Important note: All parents are reminded that the conference's youth programme ends at the Youth dinner slot each day. During the evenings parents are responsible for their children and teenagers.

0 - 5 years, GA Crèche:

Due to demand we're offering a crèche facility to help meet the care needs of babies and toddlers. The crèche is open between 8:45am and 12:50pm and between 2pm and the Youth dinner slot. This year's provider is All Events Childcare - A local registered childcare provider.

6 - 11 years, GA Kids (Junior Programme):

Our popular Junior Programme will once again be welcoming 6 to 11 year olds each day of the Meetings. Sessions run between 8:45am and 12:50pm and between 2pm and the Youth dinner slot, with trained leaders. Activities will be varied and lively.

12 - 17 years, GA Teens (Senior Programme):

The Seniors follow an exciting programme of their own supported

by our talented youth workers. Sessions run between 8:45am and 12:50pm and between 2pm and the Youth dinner slot, with trained leaders.

Family Swimming:

A reminder that the hotel gym offers 2 family swim sessions each day which participants are welcome to attend. Session 1 runs from 9-10am and session 2 runs from 4-5pm. These sessions are not organised or supervised by the General Assembly. If attending, participants are the responsibility of their parents.



DEPARTURES

Rooms must have been vacated, with keys returned, by 10am on the day of departure. Luggage may be left, at the owner's risk, with the hotel reception.



DISPLAYS AND STALLS

Various activity/goods stalls will be in the Taylor Room, and will ordinarily be staffed during the Tea / Coffee breaks.



EXTRAS

If you wish to book additional items, such as room service, you will need to leave credit card details with Reception.



GA ZETTE

The Zette Office will be in The Oxford Room on the first floor, Editors to be announced later.

Advance submissions for inclusion in the first edition should be emailed to zette.editor@gmail.com. There will be a collection box for articles & messages in the stalls area during the day.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

GA staff and volunteers will be available to help. You will usually find assistance at our Welcome Desk.



HEARING LOOP SYSTEMS

Hearing loops will be fitted to selected areas in the Main auditorium and the breakout rooms. The areas covered by the loop system will be marked on the floor. If you require the assistance of the loop system, please sit in these areas. Those who do not require the loop system, please ensure there is plenty of space in these areas for those who do.



IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

The telephone number of the venue is: (01327) 220 676 and there is a 24-hour switchboard service.



MEDICAL ATTENTION

If you have a medical condition that could possibly require attention during the Meetings it would be very helpful if you carried, in your wallet, handbag or other item that would usually be with you, a sheet of paper stating:-

1. The diagnosis
2. A list of your medicines
3. The name and telephone number of your own GP.

Participants are also asked to inform the Conference Manager of these matters when registering to enable us to have this on record during the Meetings.



MEDITATION ROOM

In addition to the Quiet Room, Room 29 on the ground floor has been made available as a room for meditation and quiet reflection for use at any time during the Meetings. There are comfortable sofas, and you're welcome to bring your own yoga mat.



MEETING SPACES FOR GROUPS

Sometimes a group will want to take advantage of having so many of their people on-site, and want to get together for a meeting, or a chat about their activities. We've therefore arranged for the Nottingham and Leicester rooms to be available – you don't need to book, just go and use them.



POSTAL ADDRESS

If you expect to receive post during the Meetings, please ensure that it is addressed appropriately: Unitarian Meetings, c/o Staverton Park Hotel, Daventry Rd, Daventry, NN11 6JT.



QUIET ROOM

The Quiet Room, prepared by the Kingswood congregation, will be in the Lincoln Room.



REFRESHMENTS

A larger tea and coffee space will be made available next to the exhibition space at break times. Aside from that, there are 'energy stations' with tea and coffee machines, and snacks such as fruits and cakes / biscuits, available free throughout the conference. Enjoy!



SPA, POOL & GYM

Use of the pool, jacuzzi, sauna and gym is included in your delegate rate. There are designated times for children's swimming.



WI-FI

To use the hotel's Wi-Fi, please connect to the Staverton Guest network. There is no password. If you have problems connecting, please contact the hotel rather than GA Staff.



WORSHIP

- (1) Morning worship will take place at 8am. Those attending are asked to be in their seats five minutes before the start, i.e. by 7:55am. This year there will be two different options for the morning worship on both mornings. On Wednesday morning there will be : A) a meditational style (in the Canterbury / Stafford Room) led by Richard Bober, and B) a devotional style (in the Durham / Exeter Room) led by Rev Tony McNeile.
- (2) The Communion Service will be on Thursday morning in the Durham / Exeter Room led by Rev Cody Coyne and Rev Daniel Costley. There will also be a meditation style gathering at the same time in the York / Windsor Room led by Rev Laura Dobson.
- (3) An Opening Worship will start the Meetings at 2pm on the first day in the Queen's Suite.
- (4) The Anniversary Service will take place in the Queen's Suite.
- (5) The morning Plenary Sessions (2 & 4) will start with devotions, as will Plenary Session 3.
- (6) Various worship sessions will take place during the breakout sessions.
- (7) The Closing Session will be held immediately after the end of the final Plenary Session.

DAY 1 - TUESDAY 04 APRIL

SCHEDULE

2-2.30pm - Opening Worship (County Suite)



A time of celebration as we begin our time together. Our Opening Worship will give us chance to sing, reflect, and pray as we seek a blessing on our Meetings and give thanks for our gathering. Includes banner parade.

2.40-3.55pm - Plenary 1 (County Suite)

3.55-4.50pm - Tea & Exhibitions (Taylor Room)

4.50-5.50pm - Book Launch: Cherishing The Earth (Winchester/Gloucester Room)



'Cherishing the Earth – Nourishing the Spirit' presents a range of Unitarian responses to the global ecological crisis. Contributors include ministers, lay people, and children; their insights range from the prophetic and political to the practical and intensely personal. The chapters are interspersed with poems, prayers, and short rituals. Each ends with questions for reflection and discussion, providing a resource for study by individuals and small groups. Maria Curtis, the commissioning editor, will introduce short presentations by four of the contributors: Winnie Gordon, Jo James, Rob Oulton, and Ann Peart.

DAY 1 - TUESDAY 04 APRIL

4.50-5.50pm - Religious Freedom (York/Windsor Room)



The International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) will be holding its first in person Congress for several years in Transylvania, Romania from 4-6 Sept 2023. The theme will be “Reconciliation through Faith” with a focus on how the religions of the world can be promoters of peace rather than of conflict. This will be an opportunity for British Unitarians to begin together to explore the implications and provide some early contributions to the event. We will also be challenged to ask ourselves “Do Unitarians really care about injustice outside the UK, especially when religious freedom is under threat?”. With some external input the session will be a facilitated conversation.

4.50-5.50pm - Youth (Durham/Exeter Room)



‘I can’t wait to high-five a friar!’ - Rhosi, 14, Bath Unitarian Fellowship. It’s been another promising year for youth start-ups with new initiatives popping up in congregations, districts and other Unitarian associations. In this workshop, I’ll be joined by some of those brave pioneers who have agreed to share their experiences to date of attempting to create rich, purposeful and fun youth provisions from scratch. Come and hear why this exploration matters to them, how they’re going about their work and what’s emerged from their explorations so far. It promises to be an inspiring conversation. I hope you can make it.
Speaker: Gavin Howell, GA Youth Officer.

DAY 1 - TUESDAY 04 APRIL

4.50-5.50pm - National Unitarian Fellowship (Canterbury/Stafford Room)



Mark Hutchinson and the NUF committee will be presenting their vision of how the new collaborative partnership between the NUF and the Unitarian Transformers will operate. They will be launching the new online gathering to be called 'Unitarian

Connections'. There will be a question and answer session to follow.
Speaker: Rev Mark Hutchinson.

5.50-6.10pm - Break

6.10-7.10pm - Congregational Support (Winchester/Gloucester Room)



We are constructing a Congregational Support online toolkit to help congregational life. The congregational toolkit session will explore the existing resources and seek consultation on which elements of support materials will

be most useful for the running of a congregation and chapel. Please come with suggestions, thoughts and ideas and any examples of information you have found helpful.

Speaker: Simon Bland, GA Ministry & Congregational Support Officer.

DAY 1 - TUESDAY 04 APRIL

6.10-7.10pm -The Ethnic Minorities Heritage Spiritual Space (York/Windsor Room)



The Ethnic Heritage **only** slot is a group welcoming and supportive to those who self-identify as from an ethnic minority background as defined under the British/ UK protected status. We are unapologetic in recognising the need for People of Colour, of Mix/Multiple-Heritage, of White Passing, and of Ethnic Minorities to create and hold spiritual space where they can be their whole authentic self. We come together to explore our heritage history and cultural needs, challenges and hopes for spiritual growth, and for a creation of a Unitarian Theology inclusive of Ethnic heritage. This space is explicitly for those who self-identify with a heritage rooted in the African, Asian, Caribbean, Latinx, West Asian, Pacific diaspora and of Ethnic Minorities as described under UK legislation. If this is you, you are welcome to join us for conversation and activities.

6.10-7.10pm - Youth Leading Change (Durham/Exeter Room)



Join #Blessed, a young adult group from Gellionnen Chapel, on our journey through the last year of achievements, challenges, and lessons learned as a thriving Unitarian youth group. Our session encapsulates what a modern youth group looks like, the importance of intergenerational collaboration, and how together we can challenge the system. Social activists, environmental advocates, and community campaigners, #Blessed are true examples of faith in action. Join us in the exploration of Youth Leading Change, the future of UK Unitarianism.

DAY 1 - TUESDAY 04 APRIL

6.10-7.10pm - Social Action (Canterbury/Stafford Room)



“Say Your Peace: Giving a Voice to Unitarian Social Action”

We explore the notion of peace in modern society. Peace being not just an absence of war, but a state of plenty, in both a physical and spiritual sense. Where

everyone has what they need to thrive, from the basics of food and shelter, to a mutually supportive community who accepts them as they are, and including all the tools they need to live their fullest, most creative lives. How do we see the path to peace? How do we develop our message of support to the most marginalised groups among us? How do we express our notion of peace? Through discussion and thought-provoking activities, explore the social issues that are currently driving Unitarians to action and get inspired to live out our collective values and promote a peaceful future.

Speaker: Ann Howell, GA Social Action Officer.

7.10-8.30pm - Dinner

8.30-9.30pm - Keynote: ‘From Consumer to Citizen’ - Jon Alexander (County Suite)



For this year’s John Relly Beard Keynote Lecture, Jon Alexander will be in conversation about the themes of his book ‘CITIZENS: why the key to fixing everything is all of us’. He will be sharing his experience of working with communities,

faith groups and corporations, and his work to shift the dominant story of the individual in society from Consumer to Citizen.

DAY 1 - TUESDAY 04 APRIL

Among other plaudits, CITIZENS was recently listed by McKinsey as one of its Top 5 Recommended Books in its Summer Reading Guide 2022, described as “an underground hit” in the Financial Times, and selected by the World Economic Forum for its CEO Book Club.

After a successful career in advertising, Jon was drawn to explore alternatives to the consumerism that work promoted, and in 2014, he co-founded the New Citizenship Project to bring the resulting ideas into contact with reality. In CITIZENS, he is ready to share them with the world.

9.30-9.45pm - Break

9.45-10.15pm - Peace Vespers (County Suite)
Led by the Unitarian Peace Fellowship

9.30pm onwards - Social Time

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL

7-9am - Breakfast

**8-8.30am - Morning Worship: Meditation
(York/Windsor Room)**



A quiet preparation for the busyness of the coming day. A time to gather our inner calm, to allow that to be our centre and our foundation as we go into the day. We will work with the breath and our capacity to cultivate a compassionate presence with ourselves and with others. Led by Richard Bober.

**8-8.30am - Morning Worship: Devotion
(Durham/Exeter Room)**



“A Unitarian Prayer Meeting” - Start the day with a lively start! Prayer comes from the heart, words of love for people and the world. Singing projects love of life and lifts the spirit. Let us be joyful in our prayer and our singing. There will be a prayer table. Bring or write a prayer to share. Led by Rev Tony McNeile.

9-10am - Plenary II (County Suite)

10-10.45am - Coffee (Taylor Room)

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL

10.45-11.45am - Associate Members' Reception (Winchester/Gloucester Room)



All Associate Members at these Annual Meetings are invited to their own Reception. Who are Associate Members, and what is Associate Membership, I hear non-AMs ask? Briefly, they are people who look beyond their own congregation

towards the General Assembly, the body behind these Meetings to which all our congregations belong, and are interested in its work. They pay an annual subscription and receive information about some of the formal workings of the General Assembly – which includes an invitation to this Reception! All are welcome to join us for a tea and coffee (please grab one from the machines just outside the room) or juice; and a chance to meet others. Whether you are a long-standing Member, a new Member, or thinking about becoming a Member, we'd love to see you. Thank you for your interest and support of the General Assembly.

10.45-11.45am - Renewing Our Faith (York/Windsor Room)



Nurturing inclusive and welcoming worship, presents: "Renewing our Faith". Come and explore the meaning of faith, the sources of faith and how we can invite others to join us in our quest. New and old members of the URG Committee will ask,

"What makes us come alive?" Come and share your views with us. This session is organised by the Unitarian Renewal Group (URG).

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL

10.45-11.45am - LGBT+ Voices (Durham/Exeter Room)



LGBT+ Unitarian Voices is a new project that lifts up the voices of LGBT+ Unitarians. Project leaders Dr Lizzie Kingston Harrison and Rev Dr Rory Castle Jones have been gathering, recording, and sharing stories from the struggle

for LGBT+ equality - seeking to learn from the past and to celebrate the movement's significant contribution to LGBT+ inclusion within the denomination and beyond. Come along and find out more about the project, hear from LGBT+ Unitarian pioneers - and discover our fascinating hidden history!

10.45-11.45am - Torbay Project (Canterbury/Stafford Room)



'Just have faith, trust and go with the flow...' - Ellie, 17: Fellow collaborator with LocalMotion Torbay. It's been a year since I relocated to Torbay to take up a new role with the General Assembly. Its remit is to explore and see what comes

from working in a more emergent way. In this session, through the local initiatives that I've supported so far, I'll talk about some of the opportunities, challenges and surprises that have arose from this way of working. To those interested, I'll also extend an invite to join me in creating an online supportive community for those wishing play with this approach in their respective settings. Hopefully, a session that generates much food for thought. I look forward to seeing you there. Speaker: Gavin Howell, Project Officer.

11.45am-12.05pm - Break

12.05-12.50pm - Plenary III

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL

12.50-2pm - Lunch

2-4.20pm - Future Generations Open Space (Winchester/Gloucester Room)



“Open space: what do future generations need from us now?” This is an interactive session, using ‘open space technology’, a method for hosting group conversations about the topics that really matter to those in the room. Open space was

created when conference planners realised that often the most meaningful conversations at an event happen in the coffee breaks – so what would happen if you put those informal conversations on the programme itself? Come to take part in small-group discussions around the theme of what future generations might need us to be doing now. This is a chance to connect with other Unitarians while sharing and learning from each other’s perspectives. We would encourage you to come for the whole of the double session if you can, but we know this won’t be possible for everyone who wishes to take part. We will be co-creating the agenda at the start of the session, where there will be a chance for anyone to offer to host a discussion. Led by: Liz Slade and Rev Laura Dobson.

2-3pm - Women’s League (York/Windsor Room)



The Unitarian Women’s League will hold its Annual General Meeting which will include the presentation of their financial accounts. Afterwards a discussion on ‘The future of the Unitarian Women’s League’ will take place. This will give all

the attending members and friends a chance to put forward their ideas and thoughts to the Central Committee on what they see as the way forward.

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL

2-3pm - Imagining Our Legacy (Durham/Exeter Room)



A worship experience when Unitarians in Wales explore their visions for the future. Come and join us as we hear from a diverse range of voices expressing their hopes and intentions. Featuring those present as well as some members of the South Wales District on screen, and of course there will be some singing! Croeso cynnes to you all.

2-3pm - Together In Meditation (Canterbury/Stafford Room)



You are warmly invited to join Richard Bober from The Meditation Fellowship, Rob Oulton, Rev Sheena Gabriel, and Lizzie Kingston Harrison (Congregational Connections Lead) for a time of meditation, gentle discussion, and fellowship. This will be a good chance to find time for rest and contemplation during a busy few days, whilst finding out more about our Thursday evening online meditation sessions, and opening up space for an explorative discussion on the ways in which meditative practices can be integrated into our Unitarian worship and church communities. Speakers: Richard Bober, Rev Sheena Gabriel, Lizzie Kingston-Harrison, Rob Oulton.

3-3.20pm - Break

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL

3.20-4.20pm - Stories from the Pandemic (York/Windsor Room)



“Everything Brought to Speech: Oral History in the Aftermath of Pandemic “
In the fall of 2022 members and friends of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln, Nebraska recorded stories from three years of religious life during the Covid-19

Pandemic. We'll hear some of those stories, reflecting on the individual and communal traditions in Unitarianism, and will reflect on the opportunities and challenges of bringing this work to other congregations and communities. Speaker: Rev Oscar Sinclair serves as the Senior Minister of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln, and is on sabbatical this spring, visiting the Sevenoaks Unitarians in Kent. This oral history project was conducted as part of his doctoral studies at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington DC.

3.20-4.20pm - 60 Years of Welsh Unitarianism (Durham/Exeter Room)



In this presentation Rev Eric Jones will reflect upon how Unitarianism in Wales has evolved and changed over the past sixty years. Eric has served in ministry for over sixty years, both in congregations and as Secretary and Treasurer of the

Welsh Department. Nationally he has contributed to many Unitarian bodies and was General Assembly President in 1989/90. He will offer a personal insight as well as drawing upon a wider Welsh context. A short annual general meeting of the Unitarian Historical Society will also be held.

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL

3.20-4.20pm - Christian Solidarity Worldwide (Canterbury/Stafford Room)



Christian Solidarity Worldwide's team of specialist advocates work on over 20 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, to ensure that the right to freedom of religion or belief is upheld and protected. Our vision

is a world free from religious persecution, where everyone can practise a religion or belief of their choice. The right to freedom of religion or belief is also known as the 'first freedom' given to humanity by God. It's a touchstone human right, often serving as a 'litmus test' for whether other rights are at risk of being abused. It's a right we must protect, defend, and restore. CSW seeks to challenge and change the laws, behaviours and policies which lead to abuses of the right to freedom of religion and belief. We have over four decades of experience advocating for freedom of religion or belief around the world. This session is organised by the Unitarian Christian Association. Speaker: Neil Corner, Head of Major Donors, Christian Solidarity Worldwide.

4.20-4.50pm - Tea (Taylor Room)

4.50-5.50pm - Membership Sustainability (Winchester/Gloucester Room)



One of the biggest challenges facing our movement at the moment is the continued drop in membership in most of our congregations, and that many of our local leaders don't have the 'next generation' to pass the baton onto. Many congregations have reported that as Covid has changed the patterns

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL

of people's lives, attendance has changed. This interactive workshop is a chance to share your perspectives with the Executive Committee and those from other congregations, as well as hearing how the EC have been reviewing this issue. By pooling our collective insights, we will be able to reflect on the context we find ourselves in, and share insights on what helps to nurture healthy congregations. This session is organised by the GA Exective Committee.

4.50-5.50pm - Empathetic Embrace (York/Windsor Room)



This General Assembly we embrace the divine via democracy. How does the divine embrace us? This worship service we will contemplate the journey of democracy as a sacred practice. We can reflect on an empathetic divine which help us to build a beloved community of peace, abundance and equality.

Led by Rev Julio Torres

4.50-5.50pm - Weddings (Durham/Exeter Room)



An opportunity to hear more about the Unitarian Weddings Project, for discussion and to ask your own questions. Are you ready to host more weddings in your building? Are you confident with your knowledge of the legal

requirements? Are you aware of the proposed changes in marriage law? How do you get the word out that you can offer a dream wedding to those who are searching for a venue? Are you worried about the capacity within your congregation to take on more weddings? Come along and join in the conversation, make some connections and pickup some tips that could help you to make someone's dream wedding a reality.

Speaker: Melda Grantham, Weddings Project Lead.

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL

4.50-5.50pm - How Organic Is Organic? (Canterbury/Stafford Room)



A speaker from the nearby Ryton Organic Gardens charity will be helping with advice about setting up and managing an organic garden that will benefit the health of human, animal and nature. Ryton Organic Gardens are particularly keen to see more green spaces managed using organic principles including back gardens, schools etc. They have worked with some Churches with regards to their graveyards and open spaces through their volunteer programme. This session is organised by the Unitarian Earth Spirit Network.

5.50-6.10pm - Break

6.10-7.10pm - Inquirer Reception (Winchester/Gloucester Room)



The Inquirer is the longest-lived non-conformist paper. The first issue was published in July 1842. Published fortnightly, it is the voice of the British and Irish Unitarians and Free Christians. It contains news, predominantly within the UK, reflective words, articles on contemporary matters, and letters to the Editor. Last year's quiz was so well-received we're offering you the chance to join in another one (but with different questions). There'll also be the chance to reminisce looking back at previous issues and photos. And members of the Board will be circulating to chat with Friends and subscribers, and with those who have yet to join the fold of The Inquirer's loyal supporters. And we'll be offering you a glass of wine or soft drink. Chair: Diane Bennett.

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL

6.10-7.10pm - Singing For Joy (York/Windsor Room)



Come along and enjoy some singing with Unitarian Women's Group Chair, Sue MacFarlane. Sue trained as a Natural Voice Practitioner, and loves to help people find their voice and sing for pleasure. The workshop will include some body, breath and voice warm up exercises, before spending time singing together. Everybody is welcome at the workshop, where songs will be learned by ear. Sue suggests that you hydrate with a couple of glasses of water a few hours prior to the workshop, and that you bring water to sip during the session.

6.10-7.10pm - Unitarian College (Exeter/Durham Room)



"Growing our faith from the inside". Staff and students from Unitarian College will showcase our new pathway to lay leadership and provide an update to colleagues on developments in Ministry training. The sessions will also cover our important partnership with the Hibbert Trust, and details of the international convening on the future of Unitarian leadership taking place in Prague in October 2023.

6.10-7.10pm - Climate Justice (Canterbury/Stafford Room)



How do we meet the challenges of the climate crisis with love, hope, courage, and connection? Join Lizzie Kingston Harrison, Congregational Connections Lead, for a chance to discuss the most urgent problem we face. With plenty of

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time to build new relationships and share ideas, this workshop is an invitation for us to work together and shape how we move forward as a Unitarian community in this time of challenge and opportunity.
Speaker: Lizzie Kingston Harrison, Congregational Connections Lead.

7.10-8.20pm - Dinner

8.20-8.30pm - Break

8.30-9.30pm - Anniversary Service (County Suite)



Preacher: Rev Winnie Gordon

9.30pm - Social Time

DAY 3 - THURSDAY 06 APRIL

7-9am - Breakfast

8-8.30am - Morning Worship - Meditation (York / Windsor Room)



“Breath of Life meditation” - an invitation to start the day in a gentle, grounded way, by entering into a conscious, sacred relationship with the breath in our bodies as the life-force, our connection to the One Source of Life we share.

Led by Rev Laura Dobson.

8-8.30am - Morning Worship - Communion (Durham/Exeter Room)



Marking the end of Lent, and the remembrance of the Last Supper, our Maundy Thursday Communion Service draws upon Christian and other traditions to reflect on the eternal themes of Community, Sacrifice, Sharing and

New Life. Inspired by the work of Rev Phillip Hewett, this inclusive communion is open to all. Led by Rev Cody Coyne and Rev Daniel Costley.

9-9.45am - Plenary IV (County Suite)

9.45-10.15am - Coffee (don't forget to ensure you've checked out!)

DAY 3 - THURSDAY 06 APRIL

10.15-11.15am - Criminal Justice (County Suite)



“Why our criminal justice system is broken & how we can fix it”. Called to the Bar 30 years ago and now a leading criminal defence barrister who has represented clients in some of the most complex, serious and headline-grabbing cases,

Chris Daw KC is also a popular writer and commentator on topical legal issues for national publications, tv and radio. Presenter of the five-part 2020 BBC television series, “Crime - Are We Tough Enough?”, he is also the author of “Justice on Trial”, a book which challenges everything we think we know about crime and punishment in Britain and presents radical solutions for our broken and failing justice system. This session is organised by the Penal & Social Affairs Panel.

10.15-11.15am - Rooted Ministry (Winchester / Gloucester Room)

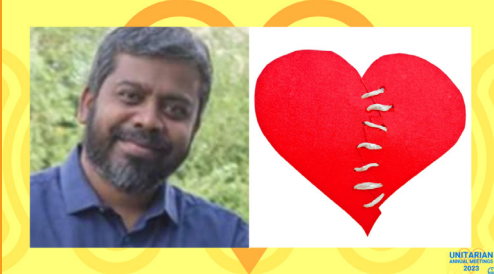


“Rooted Ministry: Community Mapping for Congregations”. Unitarian Congregations exist in the context of their surrounding communities. How do we draw on the strengths and needs of the town or city we are in to strengthen our congregations

and better serve the wider community?
Speaker: Rev Oscar Sinclair.

DAY 3 - THURSDAY 06 APRIL

10.15-11.15am - Interfaith Dialogue (Durham/Exeter Room)



“Interfaith Dialogue – an Avenue to Peace”. The Centre for Reconciliation is the Unitarian Peace Fellowship’s Charity for 2023. Their mission is to work with faith, cultural and ethnic communities, religious leaders and schools to help

increase peace and harmony amongst multi-faith and multi-cultural communities through social events, training and mediation.

Subash Chellaiah, Executive Director of the Centre for Reconciliation in Lincoln, was born in India and has degrees in Theology and Interfaith Relations. He has over two decades of experience of humanitarian work in the UK and India and has worked in the Chaplaincy field for 10 years.

10.15-11.15am - Governance & Safeguarding (Canterbury/Stafford Room)



Good governance is the bedrock on which strong communities and sustainable activities are based. How can you develop practices and an outlook that makes governance part

of the growth strategy? This workshop looks at the basics not as compliance requirements, but as mechanism for making a safe, sacred space accessible for all and inclusive.

Led by: Simon Bland (GA Ministry & Congregational Support Officer) and Gavin Howell (GA Youth & Safeguarding Officer)

11.15-11.30am - Break

11.30am-12.20pm - Plenary V (County Suite)

12.20-12.50pm - Closing Session (County Suite)

12.50-2pm - Lunch

2pm - Departures

PLENARY SESSION AGENDA

President: Rev Sue Woolley

The detailed agenda for the Plenary Sessions will be distributed separately.

MOTIONS FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023

The following motions have been submitted for consideration at the GA Annual Meetings 2023. Amendments may be submitted at any time prior to the final vote on a motion. However, it is in the best interests of clarity for amendments to be advised as far in advance as possible.

As per the Resolution at the 2018 Annual Meetings, the following administrative motions are not considered to be part of the maximum 4 ordinary motions. The process to select ordinary motions will therefore not be required this year.

ADMINISTRATIVE MOTIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The GA Executive Committee, in its capacity as Trustees of the General Assembly, proposes a motion to the General Assembly meetings in 2023 to add under Section 11 of the Constitution the following paragraphs:-

“Participation in meetings by electronic means

a) A meeting may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the charity trustees in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants.

b) Any charity trustee participating at a meeting by suitable electronic means agreed by the charity trustees in which a participant or participants may communicate with all the other participants shall qualify as being present at the meeting.

c) Meetings held by electronic means must comply with rules for meetings, including chairing and the taking of minutes.”

2. That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.

3. That Shaw Gibbs be appointed as Auditors.
4. That Rev Dr Rob Whiteman be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2023-2024.
5. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Rev Dr Rob Whiteman for his service as Acting Treasurer during the year 2022-2023, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
6. That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
7. That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
8. That Vince McCully be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2023-2024
9. That Professor Geoff Levermore appointed Vice-President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2023-2024.
10. That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Rev Sue Woolley as President during the year 2022-2023.

DAY 1

TUESDAY 4 APRIL

UNITARIAN
ANNUAL MEETINGS
4-6 APRIL 2023



2pm	Opening Worship (County Suite)			
2.30pm	Break			
2.40pm	Plenary I (County Suite)			
3.55pm	Tea & Exhibitions (Taylor Room)			
4.50pm	Book Launch	Religious Freedom	Youth	National Unitarian Fellowship
5.50pm	Break			
6.10pm	Congregation Support	Ethnic Minorities Heritage Space	Youth Leading Change (#Blessed)	Social Action
7.10pm	Dinner			
8.30pm	Keynote Talk (County Suite)			
9.30pm	Break			
9.45pm	Social Time		Peace Vespers (County Suite)	

Room Colour
Code Key:

Winchester /
Gloucester

York /
Windsor

Durham /
Exeter

Canterbury /
Stafford

DAY 2

WEDNESDAY 5 APRIL

UNITARIAN ANNUAL MEETINGS

4-6 APRIL 2023



7-9am	Breakfast			
8-8.30am	Morning Worship A: Meditation	Morning Worship B: Devotional		
9am	Plenary II (County Suite)			
10am	Coffee			
10.45am	Associate Members	Renewing Our Faith	LGBT+ Voices	Torbay
11.45am	Break			
12.05pm	Plenary III (County Suite)			
12.50pm	Lunch			
2pm	Future Generations Open Space	Women's League	Imagining Our Legacy	Together in Meditation
3pm		Break		
3.20pm		Stories of Pandemic	60 Years of Welsh Unitarianism	Christian Solidarity
4.20pm	Tea (Outside Taylor Room)			
4.50pm	Membership Sustainability	Empathetic Embrace	Weddings	How Organic?
5.50pm	Break			
6.10pm	Inquirer	Singing For Joy	Unitarian College	Climate Justice
7.10pm	Dinner			
8.30pm	Anniversary Service (County Suite)			

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DAY 3

THURSDAY 6 APRIL

UNITARIAN
ANNUAL MEETINGS

4-6 APRIL 2023



7-9am	Breakfast			
8-8.30am	Morning Worship A: Meditation		Morning Worship B: Communion	
9am	Plenary IV (County Suite)			
9.45am	Coffee (Outside Taylor Room)			
10.15am	Rooted Ministry	Criminal Justice (County Suite)	Interfaith Dialogue	Governance & Safeguarding
11.15am	Break			
11.30am	Plenary V (County Suite)			
12.20pm	Closing Session (County Suite)			
12.50pm	Lunch			
2pm	Departures & Coaches (from outside the hotel)			

Room Colour
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Gloucester

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Exeter

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