Winter 2025

The Fulwood Messenger



The Magazine of Fulwood Old Chapel
(Unitarian)
Whiteley Lane, Sheffield S10 4GL



Message from the Chair

Dear All,



Autumn is here in its full glory as I write this, but the leaves will soon fall and the darkness will fall. Once the clocks go back we feel we have definitely lost the light evenings. We have to embrace the darkness but perhaps not hide away, go out into the ink and get used to the new reality.

At the same time if we are lucky enough we can get cosy inside with our heating. We can do our own hibernating for some of the day or all of it. I often save jobs, indoor jobs for this time of year, but , sadly, don't usually get round to doing them! Just as, in the summer , I vow to make the most of the light nights and walk more , go out in the evenings, sit out more, I usually don't... Our best laid plans...

A constant however is the chapel and our meeting here. These Sundays run throughout the year, it is rare that we do not have a service. It is both a source of comfort and joy that we can cross the seasons together, see the changing weather, the different celebrations.

I am pleased to announce that the floor is finished and as many of you have seen, it looks stunning , as it probably looked in the beginning. There is also a new bench on the corner of School Green Lane and Moorcroft Road. This is to replace the old one which was becoming unsafe. There are some pictures celebrating this.

A big thank you to all for supporting our chapel and way of doing things. We lose some of our members, sadly the latest was Jon Clennell, a very sad loss, he did so much to support us all. We also gain members and I'm happy to say people who are happy to return. Also it has been lovely seeing Judith back in chapel after her hospital stay.

I am wishing everyone health and comfort in the coming months.

Jane

The old bench gone and preparations underway for the new installation.







I asked Peter to write the following piece

Jonathan Clennell

22nd October 1935 - 31st August 2025

It was with great sadness that we heard of Jon's death at the age of 89 at the end of August. A service of celebration of his life was held at Fulwood Old Chapel on 23rd September and Jon and Sue's son, James, gave the eulogy. This was a very affectionate but also a very informative account of Jon's varied and eventful life.

Jon and Sue started coming to Fulwood Old Chapel about 12 years ago. It quickly became apparent that a guiding principle of Jon's life was that of service, firstly in the army, then as an outdoor pursuits trainer and finally in the Probation Service in Sheffield. He was enthusiastic about working with young people and his enthusiasm was fuelled by a sense of justice; he wanted to help these young people to gain confidence and to overcome the shortcomings and difficulties of their early lives.

He combined this with a love of the outdoors, of wildness and of physical challenges. This spirit of adventure took him on a field trip to Antarctica after he left the army and then later, when he and Sue moved to Abney Low in Derbyshire, he delighted in the fact that there was no mains electricity or water. He loved looking after the generator and the pump that brought water up from the local brook. His love of nature led in later life
to his keen interest in environmental issues and he was quick to see the value of installing solar panels and running an electric car.

This was an important characteristic of Jon. He didn't just want to talk about issues; he wanted to get actively involved in tackling them. When he discovered our Chapel and began to come regularly, he quickly volunteered to be on the committee and his thoughtful suggestions and advice, particularly on safeguarding issues, were greatly appreciated. He also backed up this practical bent with great intellectual curiosity.Feeling that his education at Ampleforth had left him short of expertise in science, he had the courage to rectify this by studying for an Open Unversity degree; he was in his 60's when he graduated.



Jon and Sue had a devoted life together for many, many years. It was appropriate and delightful that a poem by Sue celebrating their years at Abney Low was read out at the service. Jon will be greatly missed.

The flowers put into the chapel for the funeral were beautiful, and remained in the chapel for two Sunday services.

Earlier in the year we lost our good friend Esme Wall, shortly before her 100th birthday. The family had been planning a party at the chapel to mark the occasion, and decided to have the party anyway. Esme's daughter, Philippa, writes:

We treated the day as a celebration of her long, full and successful life, and toasted her on the day with Prosecco, a drink she loved. I've attached a photo of her ashes wearing the 'well-travelled hat' as it was known. The badges are what she collected from each trip, though some had to be removed as it got rather heavy. She got the hat on our epic trip together to Canada in 1998, a year after my dad died, and it went with her on every holiday, last being worn on a day out in Derbyshire in summer 24.



I popped into the chapel earlier in that day and saw the photo boards of Esme's long life laid out ready for the party. Two of the photos featured Esme dressed for the Ladies' Concert, in which she was always an enthusiastic (and skilful) participant. I couldn't resist taking a quick snap of them and including them here. The Fulwood Fairies and the naughty schoolgirls... (Ed.)



The whole family together at the party.





Esme in her ‘Well Travelled Hat’

The Art Appreciation Group



I've had enthusiastic reports about the new Art Appreciation group. Philippa wrote:

I don't know if you have time to make mention of the art group in this month's messenger, but it was a really good afternoon. We heard about, and saw photos from Marie's visit to the Hockney exhibition in Paris and then heard from Jill about how she accidently became an artist back in the 70's. She propped up the paintings she had brought with her from those early years and Richard got the attached photo.

Ariane Lawson also sent the following to me:

A huge thank you to Anne Rayner who initiated the new Art Appreciation meetings following her much enjoyed and well attended Music Appreciation ones. We would like also to say a huge thank you to Marie Fitzpatrick and Jill Eke for opening these together on October 12 and giving us such an excellent afternoon.

In the first half, Marie made a splendid job of communicating her affinities with and interest in David Hockney and his work. Everyone seemed captivated and inspired by her talk and many contributed comments and questions !

In my view the appreciation of techniques and craftsmanship is interesting and informed but what really matters - and I believe is the purpose of these meetings - is to be able to express what you feel in front of the artist's work, maybe also feel who the artist is and what he/she wants to share or simply fix somehow in time and in space, for others or just themselves.

With her knowledge and experience in communication, psychology and poetry, and with lots of lively comments, Marie expressed so well her enthusiasm about viewing the Hockney Retrospective in Paris in the summer. It was brave of her, our music specialist! to start the series on visual arts. She did it splendidly.

Then came Jill's contribution, also very touching, honest and interesting, and again feeling 'Live'. Peter and I had already had the pleasure to discover Jill's work and feel that her paintings are skilful and distinctive. Like the artist herself, they are strong, expressive, skilful, attractive, with a twinkle in the eye. Jill showed us well chosen landscapes and portraits from the 70s, her early period. She talked about the circumstances around their creation in the open air, and conveyed her lifelong love for nature and beautiful landscapes. It was very personal and interesting to hear how she came to become an artist and how she would choose what and where to paint.
Congratulations and thank you again to Anne, Marie and Jill.

Clearly this was a successful session which brought a great deal of pleasure to those attending. I'm sure that there will be similar occasions in the future. The Music Appreciation group, running monthly, usually on the third Sunday – and also initiated by Anne Rayner – continues to be popular with those attending.



Early Autumn Prayer by Cliff Reed

House-martins swoop and swerve
in the bright autumnal sky,
feeding up for the long journey south.
O God of Nature's wonder,
bring them safely back to us in Spring
and grant us all another year
of life and plenty.

Women's League

The Sheffield District Women's League meets in the Hollis Room at Upper Chapel on the first Monday of each month, starting at 11.00 and finishing about 1.30. You can park on the chapel forecourt. We have coffee between 11.00 and 11.30, and then most months have a visiting speaker. In 2025 we had a visit from Seth Jenkinson (and hope he'll be coming again), we heard about the B'hai Faith from Phil Croft and his family, Florence Nightingale (in the disguise of Joy Parker) came to see us, we had a session of Belly Dancing, Brian Holmshaw has given us another of his very interesting glimpses in to the social history of Sheffield, and we've had a metaphorical tour of Sheffield's sewers. We've also had the occasional crafting session You'll find some familiar faces if you join us but will soon make new friends. Gentlemen are welcome as visitors, too. Ask me (Sue) for details.

A thought: looking at the edition, has it occurred to you, as it has to me, what a jolly interesting (not to say knowledgeable) lot we are in our own quiet way? I was quite spellbound at Jon Clennell's funeral, hearing of the very many facets to his character and his adventurous life; we have travellers amongst us, musicians, artists, poets, scientists ...
But most of all, good friends.



David Edgar
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Cropped into ellipse.



Our Harvest Service was led by Jane Moore on October 19th, and was followed by a soup and sweet treats lunch.






150
188
44
Vespers 6





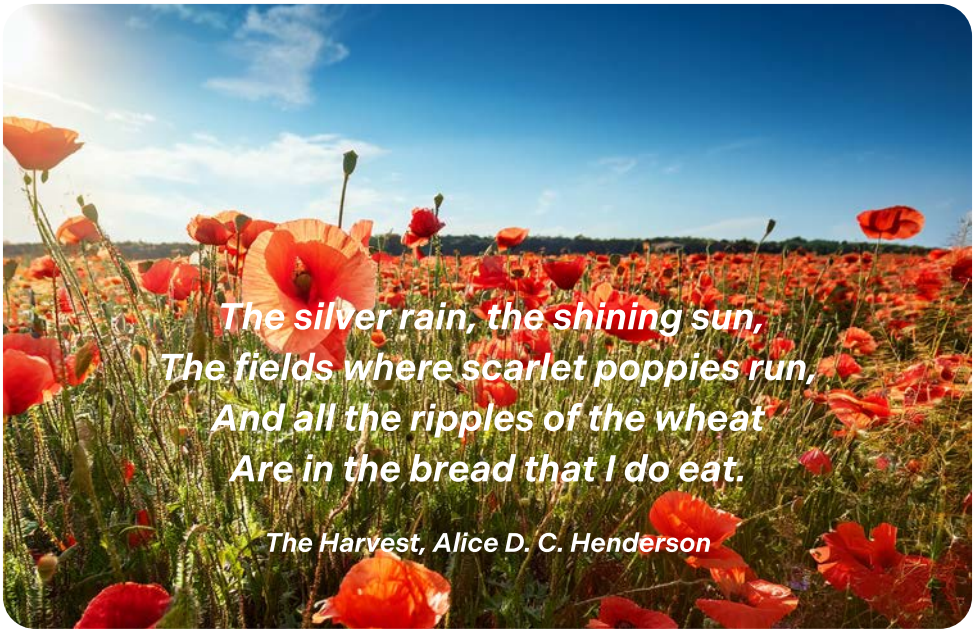
Spinners and Weavers



We are daughters of the stars, we are sons of the earth,
We are spinners and weavers in this web of life,
And the joy that we weave reaches out beyond the stars
And deep within the centre of our being.

We are daughters of the orchards, we are sons of the fields,
We are planters and reapers in this web of life
And the vision that we weave.

We are daughters of tomorrow, we are sons of our dreams,
We are planners and builders in this web of life,
And the future that we weave...



Our Remembrance Service

will be on Sunday November 9th, starting at the earlier time of 10.45am, so that we can mark the 2 minute silence at 11.00 a.m.

Threads of courage, woven tight,
In darkest days, they found the light.
Soldiers, animals, nurses, strong,
Their silent echo still lives on.





Recently I was invited to take a Sunday service in Hollywood (Birmingham!!) at the Kingswood Meeting House, where I photographed this war memorial, carved from a tree stump.



Some of you will be aware that I'm a dreadful pedant when it comes to grammar and punctuation. There have been several poems written to illustrate the vagaries of English spelling, and here is one of them which highlights the joys of automatic text correction by your pc.

Ode
to a Spell Checker
by Jerrold H Zar

Eye halve a spelling check her,
It came with my pea sea.
It plane lee marks four my revue
Miss steaks aye kin knot sea.

Eye ran this poem threw it,
Your sure reel glad two no.
Its vary polished in it's weigh,
My checker tolled me sew.

A check her is a bless sing;
It freeze yew lodes of thyme.
It helps me right awl stiles two reed,
And aides me when aye rime.

Each frays come posed up on my screen,
Eye trussed too bee a joule;
The checker pours o'er ev - Edery word
To cheque sum spelling rule.

Bee fore wee rote with checkers
Hour spelling was inn deck line,
Butt now when wee dew have a laps,
Wee are knot maid too wine.

Butt now bee cause my spelling
Is checked with such grate flare,
There are know faults with in my cite,
Of nun eye am a wear.

Now spelling does knot phase me,
It does knot bring a tier;
My pay purrs awl due glad den
With wrapped words fare as hear.

To rite with care is quite a feet
Of witch won should be proud;
And we mussed dew the best wee can
Sew floors are knot aloud.

That's why eye brake in two averse
Cuz eye dew want too please.
Sow glad eye yam that aye did bye
This soft wear four pea sea.

So now yew no.....

piece on earth its his
your the same
it was knot there's



Christmas



...is coming! You really didn't need me to tell you that, did you? It's a bit difficult to avoid.

I like Christmas, personally, although I no longer festoon my house as I used to do. Honestly, when I had a husband to share the burden and to reach the high places, it used to be like living in Santa's Grotty! All the family come one day between Christmas and New Year and there are so many of us now that there wouldn't be room for a tree anyway! Otherwise I'm content to be quieter through the madness.

We tend to be assailed with heart-rending images of the elderly sitting alone and sad at Christmas: I know of some who thoroughly enjoy Christmas day to themselves. There are some good things on the TV apart from anything else – and time spent with the family isn't joyful for some. Let's try not to make the people who like spending Christmas alone feel guilty about it – and at the same time not feel bad about enjoying ourselves with family and friends if that's what we're doing!

Nigel writes to say:

"There will be a Christmas lunch at the Chapel on Tuesday 16th December. Details, menu etc will be displayed on the Chapel notice board. Many thanks".

So do sign up. The one we had last year was really enjoyable.





Please note that we have our

Carol Service

on December 21st, and of course there will be a service on Christmas Day, but note that it will be at 10.30 a.m. so as not to interfere with those luscious lunches!

A Christmas hymn I've come to like very much is 'O Holy Night'. I don't think it's sung a lot in church congregational services – possibly because it sounds so much better when sung by a choir! (In my opinion!)

'O Holy Night'

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;

Chorus
Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.
O night, O holy night, O night divine

Music can mean a lot at this time of year. With my father I used to listen to the Service of Lessons and Carols from King's College, and watch the New Year's Day concert from Vienna. I'll still listen/watch, it's just a bit different on your own...

This has come from Christine Hyde

After the Storm

Returning after a family wedding in Norfolk, I did not witness storm Amy at her most ferocious, but I could still appreciate the effects.

A heavy metal garden chair, the `bistro' type, in racing green, was now lying horizontal a hand's width away from the landlord's glazed doors. A grape-like bunch of pumpkin shaped tomatoes. Still green and with some size to grow into. Now lying forlornly on the soil surface. The thick stem bent at right angles over the string it was meant to have been supported by.

On closer investigation, this green umbilical cord was still capable of sustaining the fruit towards ripening. I balanced the green harvest on my outstretched palm as I offered it over a supportive horizontal cane. Seems snug now; let's see where the next wind blows.

Bold pansies now seem shaken. Diminutive relatives, the violas, remain upright and happy- faced. The purple aster, a recent recommendation from the local garden centre, has fared well. Thin stems and glorious flower heads supported by its growing up through the arching limbs of a wild rose.

Sunflowers might have had a merry dance around their supportive canes in my absence, but they remain standing. Plates of downward looking heads a useful feast for the birds. The high winds will have whipped the skirts of the mature conifer. It was so stressed by prolonged droughts over the summer that dead patches had appeared. These have now been plucked by the storm, so the tree appears a happier and homogeneous green.

Storms can change things, can't they?







Mike Day responded promptly to my heartfelt plea for Material.

Certainty

Certainty spreads not with grace but as
A disease with no fresh shoots of thought
Or deed as society quietly stagnates. Gone
Is compassion, only the Leaders' convictions
Command this creeping dystopian world.
Only they choose the vision of the future.
Their bigger picture sanctifies what will come,
Their brutal actions ensure domination.
Can we below challenge the holy word and
Dispute the gospel that all must follow.
Remember the dissenters of half a millennium
Ago and see what is before us and question.
Children starved, women defiled, cities destroyed
Land grabbed, peoples othered, beliefs crushed.
We may feel we can only stand by but what of our
Moral obligations to this and future generations.
Words are perhaps passing noises but they are
Important to say: This is wrong and it must stop.
How to challenge the egos that seem strong,
That perpetuate their own myths and destroy
Lives with their contagion. What drives them on,
The perceived glory of success or the deep fear
They will be found out as hollow men protected
Only by their lonely illusion of certainty.

Mike Day
8.2025[3]



We all have the birds visit our gardens at some point, but I was surprised to hear that our Sparrows are on decline, the one little bird you would think most hardy.

Our other wild animals have suffered badly in the past years, due to poisonous pesticides affecting them through the food chain and the mass building of industrial parks and housing estates that have pushed so many animals away from their native homes. This is why a Badger, Fox or Hedgehog may be seen around peoples gardens of an evening. Instinct brings them back to their neighbourhood searching for food. - We all share this world, and we all have a right to live in it after being given our lives, the best way we can.

Please could you give a little help to our lovely wild creatures. Please! Don't use Slug Pellets, they are ingested by Birds, Hedgehogs & Mice and poisoned, they have also been eaten by Cats who have died as a result. It's awful!

Fresh water is good, by keeping a bowl in your garden it is a big help, and if you so desire, for Hedgehogs a few cat biscuits (probably liked by the Foxes as well) - For any wild animal to visit you is an honour to be cherished.

With love and care

Sue Hedges (Fundraiser & Trustee, Mill House Animal Sanctuary)

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Now at: Thorne Royd Hornthwaite Hill Road Thurlstone Sheffield S36 9QL

www.animalsheltersheffield.co.uk







Serendipity

I nearly didn't come to chapel last Sunday – there were things I needed to do (including making a start on The Messenger!), but something drew me there. I was so glad. For one thing, on the way there, Classic FM on my car radio played 'Jerusalem', and having sung that at the end of every term during my seven years at Grange Grammar School for Girls (followed a decade later by Ann Bateman (Jenkinson)) I was able to join in and sing it lustily – if not tunefully – on the way down Quiet Lane.

I arrived to find our chapel bathed in sunshine and Peter smiling in welcome on the lawn. I was already glad I'd come..... Then I walked into the chapel and saw Judith Short sitting there, so I was even more glad that I'd come. I'd have hated to miss her after all this time and it was such a joy to have a Sunday Hug.

Peter's thoughtful service chimed so well with what I was feeling that morning, and then to cap it all we sang the hymn 'To be a Pilgrim' – which I had sung at the beginning of every term during seven years at the Grange ...etc.

As I progressed through school, the hymn used to make me smile, as I felt that it was chosen far more to encourage the teachers than the pupils. 'Hobgoblin nor foul fiend can daunt his spirit'. Huh! They had nothing on 600-odd adolescent girls. Incidentally, two of my teachers were from Sheffield Unitarian circles – Miss Barbara Hall was one of the daughters of the Rev. Dr Hall, Minister at Upper Chapel prior to WW2, and Mrs Florence (Tim) Whitby was the wife of the Rev George Whitby, Minister at Upper Chapel straight after WW2. Mrs Whitby was later ordained and moved away, but eventually retired and became the Chair of FoC, and was good enough to marry Graham and me in the chapel. Lots of memories.

I'm so glad that I came to chapel that morning. **Sue.**

Submissions for the next edition of The Messenger

Our next issue of The Messenger will be the one for Spring, Please let me have anything you'd like to be included by **12th January, please.** I'd love to print any snippet of news you may have, or any item which has caught your eye and which could interest or entertain other readers.

You can send items to me at susantoulson@gmail.com,

or by text message to 07971 924 329 You can send me items by post, of course, too.

Ariane Lawson also responded to my plea for material for the Messenger. I'm sure that you will be as pleased as I am that she did. Thank you Ariane.

October 2025 'The Gates of Hope'

Life took me from the Congo to Brussels, Paris, London, Manchester, to Sheffield.

Since August 2025, I have been living in England for 50 years, half a century! Two thirds of my life!

Thinking about this with amazement, I feel that I could hardly remember who I was in 1975 and start reflecting on who I am now, with some 'what if I had...' or 'hadn't...' Most of us 'people of a certain age' will know what I mean.

Many people in England have left behind their homeland, somewhere else where all is different, climate, culture, cuisine... They left their family, their friends, their language, their work, all they knew. Finding all this in a new, unknown country requires great sense of adventure, courage, goodwill, hope and love given and received. The newcomers' excitement, anguish, discoveries, struggles can be a great source of joy and learning if they are shared with the locals and felt by both sides but sadly this is not always seen as possible.

In her October 5th service, Sarah Tinker was speaking about 'Hoping, not hating', in her usual deeply felt, well expressed, well illustrated way. She reminded us that 'we are more human than otherwise'. (Richard Gilbert).

Sarah also quoted Victoria Safford :

'Our mission is to plant ourselves at The Gates of Hope'(....) The place of truth-telling, About your own soul first of all and its condition.
The place of resistance and defiance,
The piece of ground from which you see the world
Both as it is and as it could be,
As it will be;
The place from which you glimpse not only the struggle,
But the joy of the struggle.
As we stand there, beckoning and calling,
Telling people what we are seeing
Asking people what they see.

It occurred to me that these words were reflecting how I felt when I came over to England, in love with the man who has been my husband for a life time since. But, importantly, I was also, as expressed by Victoria Safford, looking for a place of truth-telling about my own soul and its condition, for the place of resistance and defiance. Age 25, I felt both the struggle and the joy of the struggle, the freedom of my own choices, standing there, beckoning and calling.... This has been my life and soul's journey telling people what we are seeing, asking people what they see.

I had to learn how to understand people here, the English language and body language, the elements of culture, history, religion, alliances, the impact of the Commonwealth, all that made them who they are. So, slowly and because 'love comes more naturally to the human heart than the opposite' (Nelson Mandela) I became 'one of us', loving being here and 'being British.

50 years later we are living in Sheffield and love it. Very soon after our arrival, we discovered by chance, this community of considered and friendly people. Unitarianism, corresponds to all I had been

looking for the whole of my life: a spirituality that is open-minded, free thinking, universalist, humanist, undogmatic, mindful of Nature and the Earth and all-welcoming.

50 years in the wonderful (despite Brexit!) United Kingdom, proud to have been a British Citizen for over 40 years (and hurting for those who also are but suddenly face expatriation), and very grateful to be a Unitarian – I am praying for people of all faiths to find a way to live peacefully together.

Such is the destination of my journey, and I offer many heartfelt thanks to all who helped me on the way...

Ariane Lawson October 2025



In this issue we also welcome in the New Year. I imagine that if we were to take a poll amongst us all about our feelings at New Year, we would have a good many different accounts. In the days when I went to new year parties, midnight usually found me locked in someone's bathroom sobbing..... I don't do it any more, (the parties or the sobbing), but I sometimes view January 1st with mixed feelings.

My mother used to say to me (I think with more hope than truth) that she was sure that 'this is going to be your year....' Mike Day and I have an excuse for feeling a bit apprehensive as we both have a birthday following hot on the turn of the year – maybe others of you have too. Mine's a Big Birthday, but I'm not going to complain. After all, getting old is a definite improvement on the alternative.

I found this prayer for the New Year on the website of the Montreal Unitarian Church.

by Rev. Diane Rollert *January 7, 2023*

The clouds are rolling
low and heavy
across the mountains,
sinking, as a blue sky emerges
to let the sun break through.

Motion, revelation, hope.

Black shadows of the trees
stretch across the snow covered hills,
pines glisten green in the light,
as the wind forces them to dance.

Resilience, curiosity, tenacity.

I'll take this day with gratitude,
and try to lower my expectations
of what I should pray.

I'll open my heart
to the uncertainty
of this new year,
as much as I will try
to learn how to accept
the trials and gifts
of the one that has passed.

The shadows are as beautiful
as the contrasting snow,
the swift moving clouds
as compelling
as the tranquil sky
they reveal.

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For personalised ceremonies and hire of the Chapel or Old Schoolroom, please email
booking@fulwoodoldchapel.uk

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Services and Service Leaders

Services begin at 11.00 unless otherwise stated, and finish around noon.
Everyone is welcome to share tea and coffee and conversation afterwards.
We do not take an offertory at our services.

November:

9th - 10.45am Remembrance Day - Janet Rowson
16th - Ed Fordham
23rd - Peter Rowson
30th - Rev. Maria Pap

December:

7th - Rev. Sarah Tinker
14th - Jane Moore
21st - Carol Service
25th - 10.30am Christmas Day - Peter Rowson

2026
January:

4th - Christine Hyde
11th - TBA
18th - Jane Moore
25th - Rev. Maria Pap

February:

1st - Rev. Andi Phillips
8th - Rev. Sarah Tinker
15th - Rev. Patrick Timperley
22nd - Rev. Maria Pap

www.fulwoodoldchapel.uk