


<p><b>December 2019 Newsletter</b></p>	
<p><b>Hull Unitarian Church</b> Chamberlain House, Park Street, Hull, HU2 8TA</p>	

### Reimagining This Time of Year

Rev. John Philip Carter

*“and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”* Luke 2:18 & 19

When I started my first ministry, just out of University, the young adults of the congregation and I developed a weekly ritual. We would drive half an hour to the local roller skating rink for their Sunday late evening church skate. They would play contemporary Christian music, etc. as we skated

around enjoying our time together.

The thing that stood out for me from these evenings was our trips back home, listening to the radio and the music. Our local FM station each Sunday evening played a syndicated program call Dr Demento, humorous music, and the show covered many of the acts on both sides of the pond. We heard some of Morecambe and Wise, more of Benny Hill and a lot of Monty Python. Alongside the US acts of Spike Jones, Stan Freberg, Tom Lehrer just to name a few that we heard each week. One of the American acts that I continue to enjoy, by the name of Weird Al, did parodies of current popular music hits at the time. So songs like Queen’s “Another One Bites the Dust” became “Another One Rides the Bus”, or Michael Jackson’s “I’m Bad” became “I’m Fat”, etc. His clever lyrics were and are fun and very creative.

Two of our favourite Dr Demento’s broadcasts were his most popular shows: the annual Christmas / Holiday show, and his best of the Year show played in January of the New Year. The Christmas show played the various humour carols, parodies and original pieces which came from several decades of the 20th century. It did get a bit hard to take at times, but in many ways it recast the season and caused us to stop and ponder the meaning of this time of year.

While songs like “Grandma Got Ran Over by a Reindeer”

seemed crass, others like “All I Want for Christmas is my Two Front Teeth” or the other version which was “my upper plate” brought joyous laughter. Equally a retelling of “Twelve Days of Christmas” reflected a contemporary disquiet with the over commercialism of the Christmas season, and the two that I heard were from the 1950s and 60s.

These songs pushed me to recognise that the greater truth became clear with the parody instead of the sacred. These songs called me back to seeking the meaning behind the hype, behind the season, including the traditional stories of this time of year. I began to ask: What is the power expressed in the birth of a child? Any child, not just a holy one. Why is it important for us to examine ourselves and make new year resolutions? As well as recognising how this season creates more discord while we sing of Peace on Earth. Equally, how many people feel abandoned and severely alone in the celebrations that emphasise family and community.

I seek not to answer these ponderings of my Ministerial life, but to invite you to reflect these things and this season for yourself. How does this season speak to you? How does it enrich your life? The lives of others, our local community?

And...

Maybe, just maybe....

We as a congregation can provide a refuge for people during this time of joy and stress, of loneliness and family, of peace and division. Maybe this is our work for Christmas... that we may live out Mary’s prayer called the Magnificat, or these words from Howard Thurman

“When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
the work of Christmas begins:

to find the lost,  
to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations,  
to bring peace among the people,  
to make music in the heart.”

May you have a blessed Christmas, Yule, Hanukkah, Kwanza, Season of Light, and New Year. And if you can do join us for our Christmas Carol and Readings service on the 15th of December.

Salam, Shalom, Peace

Rev John

### Unitarian Sunday Services in December/January at 11.00 am

If you have not attended worship in a Unitarian Church, it is not quite what some people imagine. No one will tell you what to think, but what you hear may start you thinking. Your ideas are welcome and people enjoy the fellowship and the thoughts that are shared. We always conclude with refreshments and time for sharing.

Please note there is no morning service currently planned for the 15th of December (see details on the carol service).

On the 22nd of December we have our Advent Café Church led by Martin King with the theme "God Bless us and Disturb us". Please bring poems, songs, stories, pictures, whatever you can around the theme. See the following song as a taster of the theme, a Christmas message relevant for today.

**God Bless Us and Disturb Us** (To the tune of God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen)

God Bless us and disturb us  
As we celebrate this feast  
When Christ who was the highest  
Came to earth to be the least  
Lest we confine to Satan's power  
Those for whom joy has ceased.

CHORUS:  
O Come Christ the Saviour  
From below, from above  
And infect the depths of earth  
With heavenly love.

Where Colombia's people  
Cry for justice which is true.  
Where Iraq's hungry children  
Cry for food which is their due  
Where North Americans declare  
"Our wealth has come from you

CHORUS

When powers thrive on heroin  
Where people run from pain  
Where parents watch an addict child  
Left life run down the drain  
Where hope's a hit, a drink, a shot  
And death seems like a gain

CHORUS

Where Christian folk detach ourselves  
From following the cross  
By spotlighting the cradle  
As if that was all there was  
Where who gets what at Christmas  
Turns our minds from grace to dross

CHORUS

From Bethlehem and Washington,  
Iraq and old Queen's Park  
To where a star is needed  
Since the night is doubly dark  
To where our lives await the Lord  
To Set us on God's mark

CHORUS

Date	Worship Leader	Topic	Music
Dec 1st	Chris Carr	World AIDS Day	
Dec 8 <sup>th</sup>	Rev John Carter		
Dec 15 <sup>th</sup>	Rev John Carter	Carol Service (15:00)	Andrew Palfreman
Dec 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Martin King	Café Church	n/a
Dec 29 <sup>th</sup>	Rev John Carter		Recorded
Jan 5th	Rev John Carter		
Jan 12th	Chris Carr		
Jan 19th	Rev John Carter		
Jan 26th	Brigitte McReady		

### Carol Service—15th of December

Our Carol Service is at the church on the 15th of December at 3 PM, with a buffet. We will be joined by residents from the Leonard Chamberlain Trust properties. Again please note that there is no Sunday service planned for this day.

### Community Christmas Dinner

As usual we will be hosting our community Christmas dinner at the church on the 25th of December. Please contact us for more details.

### Mindfulness at Park Street

Every Thursday we gather from 2.00 pm for meditation from 2.30 pm to 3.20 pm followed by discussion and refreshments. Please note that the timing of meditation is under review. Ask James Bell for more information.

### Charity Coffee Mornings - Fridays 10.30 to Noon

Our coffee mornings are an opportunity for enjoyable refreshments and good fellowship. Funds raised will be used for the relief of need in our community and to help to subsidise our next outing.

### Fundraise for a Charity of Your Choice

Would you like to raise funds for a charity that you support? You can by organising a Friday coffee morning at the church. You will receive £15 to purchase raffle prizes, and there is bric-a-brac stored in the church that you can sell. Invite representatives of the charity to join you, and let our members and friends learn about the charity that you support. Please contact Daniel to express your interest.

### How to Contact Hull Unitarians

Phone: 01482 224 662 or 07468 538 821;  
email: [hullunitarians@gmail.com](mailto:hullunitarians@gmail.com)  
facebook.com/hullunitarians.org.uk  
[www.hullunitarians.org.uk](http://www.hullunitarians.org.uk)