

Conversation pieces for a memory-friendly trail

INTRODUCTION

Built in 1708 as a 'Meeting House for Protestant Dissenters' on the site of an orchard just inside the old town walls, the Great Meeting Chapel is the earliest domestic brick building in Leicester and has been Unitarian since the early 19th century. The organ, parts of which date from 1850, is reputed to be one of the best in Leicestershire. The interior was significantly modified and improved in 1866 and is little changed since, giving a 'time capsule' effect. There is a fine collection of internal memorials. Outside, the old graveyard has been converted into a garden, one of the few green spaces in the city centre.

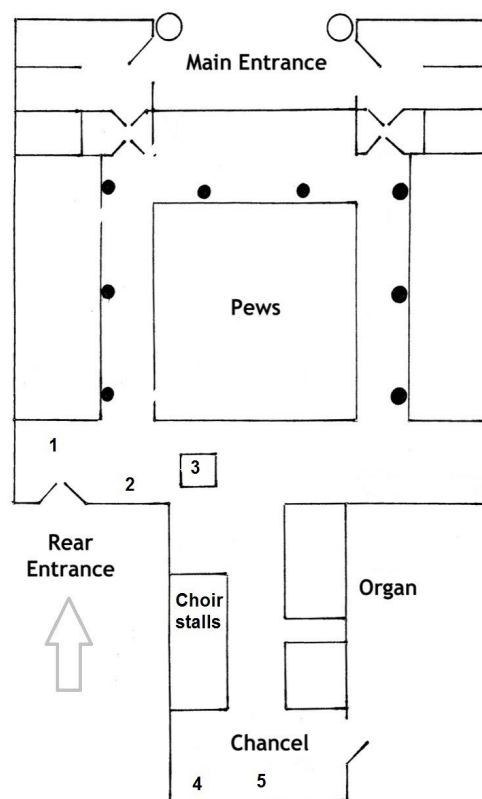
1 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Stand here for a moment and take a deep breath through your nose. Hold it for a couple of seconds and then breathe out. What do you notice? Are there any smells or sensations that come to mind, for example can you smell flowers or polish?



3 PULPIT

Share your thoughts on who would use this and what they would do from here. Touch the Pulpit — what is it made of and what does it feel like? Can you see carvings and what are they of? Do you remember sitting and listening to very long talks from the person standing in a Pulpit?



5 TOP TABLE

What catches your eye, for example the flowers or the candle. Do you have a favourite flower? Do you like to see candles in a place of worship?



2 FONT

Spend a few minutes here and share what you notice. For example, what is the font made of and what does it feel like? Talk about what would happen here and any thoughts on who would do what. Do you have memories of naming ceremonies?



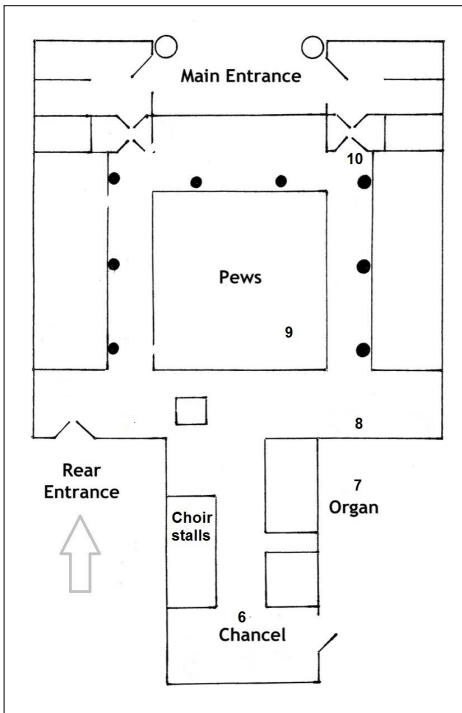
4 FLOOR TILES

Look at the patterns of the tiles. Which part do you like best?



6 STAINED GLASS WINDOW

Look up at the window behind the top table. What thoughts come to mind? What colours can you see? Do the figures remind you of a story? What sort of glass is this? Which is your favourite part of this window?



7 ORGAN

Have you ever played an organ or any other musical instrument? Do you have any favourite pieces of music that you remember being played on an organ? Were you ever in a church choir and do you remember any of the hymns that you sang?



8 WALL MEMORIALS

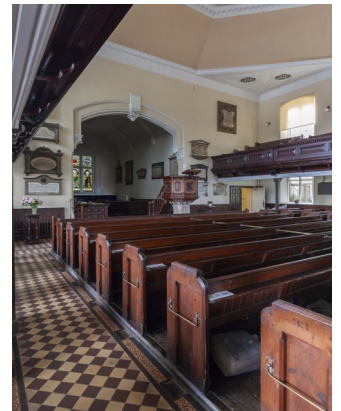
Touch the memorials on the wall to Annie Clephan and Edwin Clephan. Do they feel different from each other?



9 PEWS

Sit down in one of the pews. Do they feel comfortable or not?

Do you remember seats like these?



10 DOORS

Take a moment to look at the blue doors at the back of the Chapel. What do you notice about them? Run your hands over them and describe what they feel like. Are they warm or cold? Give the door a push and open it. Would you say it opens smoothly, is it heavy or light to push?



11 DRAWING

Draw a picture of the best thing you have seen here today.