

Banbury Unitarians News



*A spiritual and religious fellowship, encouraging
tolerance and independent thought*

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Letter from the Minister

Dear Friends,

Once again we are coming to the end of the year, and what a year it has been! At our Discussion Group meeting in May, we decided to adopt Helen and Douglas House in Oxford as our Charity of the Year, and have been saving all our loose change ever since. We've also been supporting the Banbury Food Bank, which is great.

I'm delighted to announce that Rev. Ant Howe, minister of the Kingswood congregation, will be leading our Anniversary service at the end of October.

Our three Discussion Group sessions this quarter should provide much food for thought. In October, we'll be talking about the nature of the Divine; in November, we'll be coming to grips with the problem of evil - why good people suffer and die; and in December, we'll be asking the question 'Why do Unitarians celebrate Christmas?'

I hope that you will be able to come along to some or all of these.

In the District, we have our Autumn training day on Saturday 10th October, at Unitarian New Meeting in Birmingham, which is about Ministering to Our Communities. It would be great if somebody from Banbury could attend.

The District Annual Lunch will be at Kingswood on Saturday 31st October, and our Guest Speaker will be Rev. Winnie Gordon, minister at Birmingham and Kidderminster.

Wishing you all a lovely Autumn,

Sue

Calendar for October - December 2015

October

- Thursday 8th Discussion Group, led by Sue Woolley:
Who is this God person, anyway? (D. Adams)
- Sunday 25th Anniversary service, led by Rev. Ant Howe

November

- Thursday 12th Discussion Group: led by Sue Woolley:
The Problem of Evil
- Sunday 29th Worship service, led by Sue Woolley

December

- Thursday 10th Discussion Group, led by Sue Woolley:
Why do Unitarians celebrate Christmas?
- Sunday 20th* Carol service, led by Sue Woolley

*please note that this is on 3rd Sunday, rather than last Sunday.

*All worship services are held at
Grimsbury Community Centre and start at 11.00 am*

*Discussion Group sessions are held in the small room at
Grimsbury Community Centre and start at 10.30 am*

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### **Native American Words of Wisdom, offered by Beryl Thomas**

Some years ago, Jack and I travelled to Oklahoma to visit our daughter and family. While there in the small town of Bartlesville, we met and chatted with descendants of Cherokee and Osage Indians. We also visited their craft and cultural centres, which were very illuminating, and I bought some books of their poetry and prose. I particularly like the following extracts from *In Beauty May I Walk: Words of Wisdom by Native Americans*.

### With Clean Hands

O Great Spirit,  
Whose voice I hear in the winds,  
And whose breath gives life to all the world,  
hear me!

Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes  
ever behold the red and purple sunset. Make  
my hands respect the things you have made  
and my ears sharp to hear your voice.  
Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in  
every leaf and rock.

I seek strength, not to be greater than  
my brother, but to fight my greatest  
enemy - myself.

Make me always ready to come to you with  
clean hands and straight eyes.  
So when life fades, as the fading sunset, my  
spirit may come to you without shame.



### **Love by Chief Dan George**

Love is something you and I must have.  
We must have it because our spirit feeds upon it.  
We must have it because without it

we become weak and faint.  
 Without love, our self-esteems weakens.  
 Without it, our courage fails.  
 Without love we can no longer look confidently at the world.  
 We turn inward and begin to feed  
 upon our own personalities,  
 and little by little we destroy it ourselves.  
 With it we are creative.  
 with it we march tirelessly.  
 With it, and with it alone  
 we are able to sacrifice for others.

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Tribute to Tyndale: a blogpost by Sue Woolley

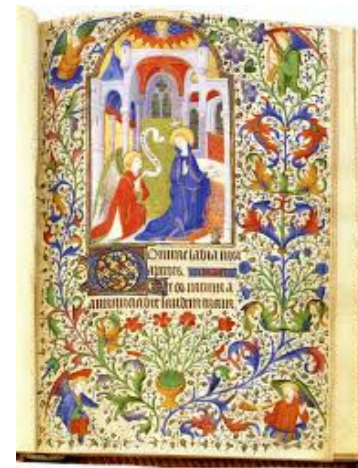
Back in August, my husband and I went down to London for the day, but not to see the Queen. The morning was devoted to visiting an exhibition called *Treasures of the British Library*, which was free to all comers.

It was absolutely marvellous, and took us well over two hours to get round. Of course, there was a section of sacred texts in amongst everything else, and we saw a copy of the *Codex Alexandrinus*, one of the three oldest extant Bibles in the world; some stunningly beautiful illuminated Qur'ans and Bibles, and the *Bedford Book of Hours*, which was so richly illustrated it took the breath away (see overleaf left).

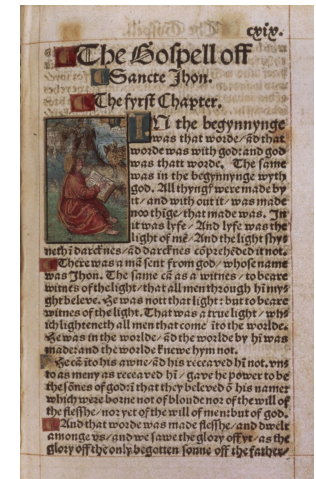
But the item which moved me the most was a little book, measuring about 4 inches across and 6 inches tall (see overleaf right). It was one of three remaining copies of the *Tyndale New Testament*, which had been published in 1526, in Worms, because Tyndale had had to flee from England.

My lovely book about the Bible by Gordon Campbell calls William Tyndale 'the father of the English Bible'. He was responsible for producing the first complete New Testament in

English, and had also partly translated the Old Testament, when he was executed for heresy in Belgium in 1536. Two years before that, he had produced a revision of his *New Testament*, about which Campbell comments "it has been estimated that 83 per cent of the KJV (King James Version) published in 1611 derives from Tyndale, either directly or indirectly through other Bibles."



Bedford Book of Hours



Tyndale New Testament

Two things moved me about actually seeing it - one was that I knew he had died because of his passion for making the text of the Bible widely available in English; and the other was that as I bent to decipher the close-set text (see above), I could suddenly feel how amazing it must have been to be an ordinary English person (or at least one of the minority who could read) to be able to actually read the sacred text of my religion in my own tongue for the first time, and no longer have to rely on the priest to tell me what the Bible said and taught. It must have been truly awesome.

I am so grateful to the British Library for putting on this sort of exhibition, free for all to attend. Long may it flourish!

Regional Events

Midland Unitarian Association of Lay Preachers And Service Leaders: Autumn Training Ministering to Our Communities: Part One

Led by: Diane Rutter, Nicky Jenkins and Kate McKenna

When: Saturday 10th October 2015

Where: Unitarian New Meeting House, Ryland Street,
Birmingham B16 8BL

Time: 10.00 am – 4.15 pm (coffee/tea available from 9.30 am)

Cost: Free to MUA delegates



Midland Unitarian Association Annual Lunch

When: Saturday 31st October 2015

Where: Kingswood Meeting House, Packhorse Lane,
Hollywood Worcs. B47 5DQ

Time: 10.30 am for 11.00 am

Guest Speaker: Rev. Winnie Gordon, Minister of Unitarian New Meeting, Birmingham and New Meeting, Kidderminster

Cost: £10.00 a head

More details about these events from Sue Woolley (see p.8)

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Secretary & Musical Director: Malcolm Sadler
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### Autumn by Rainer Maria Rilke

O Lord, it is time  
The summer was so vast  
Put your shadows on the sundials  
And in the fields let the wind loose.

Order the last fruits to become ripe  
Give them two more sunny days  
Push them to fulfilment  
And force the last sweetness into the heavy wine.

He who has no house now will not build one  
He who is alone will be so for a long time to come  
Will stay awake, read, write long letters  
And restlessly walk in the park among the blown leaves.

