

Banbury Unitarians News



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

Issue 17, January - March 2016 Contents

Letter from the Minister	page 2
Calendar for January - March 2016	page 3
Christmas poems, offered by Beryl Thomas	page 3
<i>Winter's Day (after Stephen Spender)</i> by Pamela Parrish	page 5
<i>Being Present: a blogpost</i> by Sue Woolley	page 6
Regional Events	page 7
Who we are and how to contact us	page 8
<i>Song of the Angels</i> by Howard Thurman	page 8

Letter from the Minister

Dear Friends,

I can't believe that I am just about to start my fifth year as your minister. The time seems to have zoomed by. We have had our ups and downs, but it has been a quiet joy to me that most of you make the effort to attend our end of the month worship service so faithfully, and that several of you also make it to our mid-month Discussion Group regularly.

Our three Discussion Group sessions this quarter should provide much food for thought. In January, we'll be talking about the nature of the Divine; in February, 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 Easter?' (If two of these sound familiar, it is because they were postponed until now as we spent some time in October and November discussing the General Assembly's *A Vision for Our Future*.) I hope that you will be able to come along to some or all of these.

The District's very special 150th Annual General Meeting will be at Kidderminster New Meeting House on Saturday 26th March, and our Guest Speaker will be Rev. Ant Howe, minister at Kingswood. It promises to be a very good day, and I hope that some folk from Banbury will be able to attend.

As we enter a new year, let us hold in our thoughts and prayers those members of the congregation who haven't been so well of late. Thinking particularly of Malcolm and Rosemary. We hope to see them back with us in 2016.

Wishing you all a Peaceful and Blessed Christmas & a Happy New Year, Sue

Calendar for January - March 2016

January

- Thursday 14th Discussion Group, led by Sue Woolley:
Who is this God person, anyway? (D. Adams)
- Sunday 31st Worship service, led by Sue Woolley

February

- Thursday 11th Discussion Group: led by Sue Woolley:
The Problem of Evil
- Sunday 28th Worship service, led by Sue Woolley

March

- Thursday 10th Discussion Group, led by Sue Woolley:
Why do Unitarians celebrate Easter?
- Sunday 27th Worship service, led by Sue Woolley

*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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## Some Christmas Poetry, offered by Beryl Thomas

### *BC:AD* by U.A. Fanthorpe

This was the moment when Before  
 Turned into After, and the future's  
 Uninvented timekeepers presented arms.

This was the moment when nothing  
 Happened. Only dull peace  
 Sprawled boringly over the earth.

This was the moment, when even energetic Romans  
 Could find nothing better to do  
 Than counting heads in remote provinces.

And this was the moment  
 When a few farm workers and three  
 members of an obscure Persian sect

Walked haphazard by starlight straight  
 into the kingdom of heaven.

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The Christmas Life by Wendy Cope

Bring in a tree, a young Norwegian spruce,
 Bring hyacinths that rooted in the cold.
 Bring winter jasmine as its buds unfold -
 Bring the Christmas life into this house.

Bring red and green and gold, bring things that shine,
 Bring candlesticks and music, food and wine.
 Bring in your memories of Christmas past.
 Bring in your tears for all that you have lost.

Bring in the shepherd boy, the ox and ass,
 Bring in the stillness of an icy night,

Bring in a birth, of hope and love and light.
Bring the Christmas life into this house.

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**Winter's Day (after Stephen Spender)  
by Pamela Parrish**

Scintillating, shimmering air,  
Ice-blue with bone-dissolving chill -  
A day when birds, poised, hunger driven,  
Quest for food.

Leaden skies, withholding blessed  
Snow to shroud around with warmth,  
The plants and flowers  
Laid below

Standing trees, stark against a  
Frozen sky

Icicles hand from branches bare  
Tinted by the setting sun.

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Being Present: a blogpost by Sue Woolley

It is nearly 2016, and the joys, excitements, fears, and trepidations of a new year beckon. There are things I'm looking forward to, and things that I'm decidedly not. So I turn to Ralph Waldo Emerson, for some challenging yet reassuring advice on how to live this next year:



"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he knows that every day is doomsday. Today is a king in disguise. Today always looks mean to the thoughtless, in the face of a uniform experience that all good and great and happy actions are made up of precisely these blank todays.

Let us not be so deceived: let us unmask the king as he passes! He only is rich who owns the day, and no-one owns the day who allows it to be involved with worry, fret, and anxiety.

You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely, and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. This day is all that is good and fair. It is too dear, with its hopes and invitations, to waste a moment on the yesterdays."

Regional Events

Midland Unitarian Association of Lay Preachers And Service Leaders: Worship Studies Course Foundation Step

Led by: Winnie Gordon, Ant Howe, Stephen Lingwood,
Jane Russell, and Sue Woolley

When: Saturdays 23rd April, 14th May, 11th June 2016

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

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

Cost: £39 to MUA participants / £48 to others



Midland Unitarian Association Annual General Meeting

When: Saturday 26th March 2016

Where: Kidderminster New Meeting House,
Church St, Kidderminster DY10 2AR

Time: 10.30 am for 11.00 am

Guest Speaker: Rev. Ant Howe,
Minister of Kingswood Meeting House

Cost: £5.00 a head for lunch

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

Banbury Unitarian Fellowship At Grimsbury Community Centre, Burchester Place, Banbury OX16 3WT

Website: www.banbury-unitarians.org.uk

Minister: Rev. Sue Woolley
01604-870746 e-mail: revsuewoolley@gmail.com
blog: <http://sue-still-i-am-one.blogspot.com>

Chairman: David Heppingstall
079-3155-9531 e-mail: heppingstall@googlemail.com

Treasurer: Elaine Nomura
077-6967-8363 e-mail: emtnomura@aol.com

Secretary & Musical Director: Malcolm Sadler
01789-205571

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### Song of the Angels

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 people;  
To make music in the heart.

**Howard Thurman**

