

Banbury Unitarians News



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

Issue 22, April - June 2017 Contents

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Letter from the Minister

Dear Friends,

It is Spring, and the days are getting longer, and the sun is occasionally showing her face. The Winter has been hard for many of us: Beryl broke her wrist, Jack has been in hospital, and other members of the congregation continue to “enjoy poor health”, as that ridiculous phrase has it.

But amongst it all, we have continued to meet, faithfully and with full hearts. I think that the spirit of this Fellowship, of its members, is truly wonderful.

Our Annual General Meeting will be taking place after the service on 28th May. I hope that all of you will be able to attend, so that we can review the year, and make plans for the coming one.

We have continued to support the Helen and Douglas Hospice in Oxford, and some of us have continued to bring items for the Banbury Food Bank. I urge you to add just one tin or packet to your shop at the end of the month, and bring it along with you, as our donations can make a real difference to the lives of those who have so very little.

I'm afraid that there won't be a mid-month Gathering in April, as I will be attending the annual meetings of our General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. But things will be back to normal in May. Please see the calendar for details.

I wish you all a very Happy Easter, and look forward to seeing you at Fellowship soon.

Sue

Calendar for April - June 2017

April

- Thursday 13th There will not be a mid-month gathering this month, as Sue Woolley will be at the General Assembly meetings.
- Sunday 30th Worship service, led by Sue Woolley
(note: this is FIFTH Sunday)

May

- Thursday 11th The British Unitarian Journey: Session 3
The Unitarian Story in Britain
- Sunday 28th Worship service, led by Sue Woolley + AGM

June

- Thursday 8th The British Unitarian Journey: Session 4
Unitarianism Worldwide
- Sunday 25th Worship Service, led by Sue Woolley

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

OUR AGM WILL BE HELD AFTER THE MAY SERVICE

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

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AN IMPORTANT REMINDER: We all started out well last year, bringing contributions in for the Banbury Food Bank, and our loose change for the Helen & Douglas House Hospice. But for one reason or another, our enthusiasm seems to have flagged, and apart from a faithful few, contributions (particularly to the Food Bank) seem to have dried up. **Please try to remember to bring something to the end of month service - you could be making a real difference to local people, who don't have enough to eat.**

## A Tale of Human-kindness, as told by Beryl and Jack Thomas

One cold February afternoon, Jack and Beryl had gone into Banbury to shop for some birthday cards, as there were a flurry of birthdays coming up. Beryl fell, and broke her wrist.

Nearby, there were a group of young men, dressed in typical “tough guy” clothing, and sporting tattoos and piercings. Jack was worried about how to get help, and Beryl was in considerable pain.

Just then, one of the tallest and most hulking of the young men came up to them. They felt a little afraid – what if he tried to rob them?

But they could not have been more wrong. The young man, whose name was Kev, proved to be an angel in disguise. He had come over to see whether he could help, and competently took charge of the situation. He phoned an ambulance on his mobile, and waited with them for it to arrive. When it didn't turn up, he commandeered a taxi from the rank across the road, helped Jack and Beryl into it, and generally looked after them.

It just goes to show – you can't judge by appearances.

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My Creed: Blogpost by Sue Woolley

At the end of 2016, I felt called to articulate my beliefs:

I believe in an all-loving God, who is
creator of all things,
at the centre of all things,
and also the flow in-between,

which we name Spirit.

I believe that Jesus was the Son of God,
as we are all sons and daughters of God,
But that God flowed in and through him
in a particular way,
so that he could share some important truths with humankind,
as other prophets have, before and since.

I believe that every human being has the God-given right
to seek truth and meaning in their lives,
And that the tools they must use to do this
are faith, reason, and conscience,
based on their own lived experiences.

I believe that faith must involve uncertainty and mystery,
because this is where God lives.



I believe that every human being is loved by God,
and is worthy of that love.
But I also believe that we are free to choose
to turn our backs on Her,
separate ourselves from the flow of Love,
choosing independence over communion.

I believe that dark and dormancy
are as important as light and growth;
and that our lives move in cycles,
or perhaps spirals.

I believe in the sovereign importance of compassion,
in loving your neighbour as yourself,
which means also loving yourself,
as Jesus taught.

I believe that living authentically, wholeheartedly,
being vulnerable and open to new light
and new ideas,
is vital for spiritual growth.

I believe that words and actions both matter;
words help us to comprehend our world,
actions flow from that understanding.
And when our actions match our values,
that is the virtue of integrity,
to which I aspire.

I believe that all any of us can do
is the best that we can,
with the tools that we have,
at any particular time.
That we will always make mistakes,
and upset and hurt other people,
and ourselves.

Therefore I believe that we have to be responsible,
accountable,
for our words and our actions,
to each other, and to God.

Regional News

Saturday 25th March saw nearly 40 Unitarians from across the District meeting at Kingswood Meeting House to take part in the 151st Annual General Meeting of the Midland Unitarian Association.

The business meeting was over in just under an hour, and included a special presentation to our dedicated Treasurer, Mr. Sandy Ellis, to mark his 34 years of service to the District. Our new President is Ms. Diane Rutter, of Kingswood, and our new Vice-President is Ms. Angela Maher, of Birmingham UNM. We also gave thanks to outgoing President, Mrs. Jane Couper.

Business over, we came together in the Kingswood schoolroom to enjoy an excellent buffet lunch, laid on by Jill Bowie and her helpers. Then it was time to re-convene, for the new President's service, and to listen to our Guest Speaker, Rev. Danny Crosby, minister of the Altrincham and Urmston congregations in the North West.

Diane spoke about life in terms of high tides and low tides, varying between times of activity and involvement, and times of quietness and reflection. Life and ministry are sometimes brilliant, sometimes the reverse, but mostly about getting through the ordinary days every day.

Danny's talk was about how Love changes everything, and will be published in full in the May issue of *MU Now*. His theme was that impermanence is the energy and beauty of life, and that the spiritual life is about being awake to the wonders of life. There are both wonderful and painful moments, and everything is in change. But that love underpins everything.

All in all, it was a rich and enjoyable day.

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**A Prayer for Kindness**

God of life and love,  
Help us to be kind to each other.  
In our daily lives where we feel sometimes overwhelmed by our  
own and others problems  
Help us to be kind to each other.  
In this world where there is conflict and suffering that we do not  
know how we can end  
Help us to be kind to each other.  
On this earth where there is so much wonder that we cannot  
always even see  
Help us to be kind to each other.  
In this life where there is so much love for us to seek and find and  
give  
Help us to be kind to each other.  
Help us to be kind to each other.  
Amen  
**Alison Patrick**