

Banbury Unitarians News



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

Issue 23, July - September 2017 Contents

Letter from the Minister	page 2
Calendar for July - September 2017	page 3
Annual General Meeting	page 3
Pamela Parrish	page 4
The Next Right Thing: blogpost by Sue Woolley	page 4
Discussion Group Update	page 6
Regional Events	page 7
Who we are and how to contact us	page 8
A Prayer for Kindness by Alison Patrick	page 8

Letter from the Minister

Dear Friends,

We seem to be in the middle of a heatwave! Apparently, 21st June was the hottest day on record since 1976. Which doesn't surprise me. I hope that you are enjoying the sunshine, and not suffering too much from the heat.

As you know, this is the quarter when I will be on sabbatical. I am very grateful to you all for allowing me to do this. I will be spending my time analysing the 200+ survey forms I have received, and hopefully crafting the results into book form. In the last week in August, I will be at Summer School, as usual, and for the last two weeks (11th – 22nd September), my husband Maz and I will be going on holiday to Budapest, but for the rest of the time, I will be at my desk, at home, writing away.

During this time, Diane Rutter, Lay Assistant at Kingswood, has kindly agreed to provide pastoral oversight for the Fellowship. She will be leading our service at the end of July, and if you need her for any pastoral visits, she can be reached on either 01564-898943 or 0787-1215-920.

We decided at the AGM to go back to the Fellowship's former practice of having August "off", so there will be no service at the end of that month. The Discussion Group will be re-starting in October.

I will be holding you all in my thoughts and prayers during my time away, and will miss you all dreadfully! I look forward very much to seeing you all again on 24th September.

Sue

Calendar for July - September 2017

July

- Thursday 13th There will not be a mid-month gathering this month, as the minister is on sabbatical.
- Sunday 30th Worship service, led by Diane Rutter
(note: this is FIFTH Sunday)

August

- Thursday 10th There will not be a mid-month gathering this month as the minister is on sabbatical.
- Sunday 27th There will not be a worship service this month, as the minister is on sabbatical.

September

- Thursday 14th There will not be a mid-month gathering this month, as the minister is on sabbatical.
- Sunday 24th Worship Service, led by Sue Woolley

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

Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting was held after the May service. Our Treasurer, Elaine Nomura, reported that our finances were stable. Our three officers, David Heppingstall as Chairman, Michaela Heppingstall as Secretary, and Elaine Nomura as Treasurer, were re-elected unanimously for a further year.

Don Booth, in Any Other Business, requested at least one hymn from the pink hymn book in every service, and Sue Woolley has agreed to implement this request.

The officers and minister were thanked for their hard work over the past year, as was Doris Worrall for her faithful service with the refreshments.

Pamela Parrish

We also learned at the May service that Pamela Parrish, a long-standing and much-loved member of the Fellowship, has moved from Banbury down to Chichester, to be nearer her family. We wish her well. She will be missed.

~~~~~

## The Next Right Thing: Blogpost by Sue Woolley

It's a funny old thing, life. Every morning we get up, wash, eat breakfast, and then face the day ahead. But how often do we actually appreciate each day, moment by moment? And how do the choices we make, moment by moment, affect how our days go?

Wayne Muller, in his wonderful book *A Life of Being, Having and Doing Enough*, asks: "What is the next right thing for us to do? Where in this moment, shall we choose to place our time and attention? Do we stay or move, speak or keep silent, attend to this person, that task, move in this or that direction?"

I don't know about you, but to me, this seems to be such a simple approach to life, much less stressful than being worried about a thousand possible alternatives. You just concentrate on the Next Right Thing - give that your time and attention, and then go on to the next one.

But I'm very conscious that "simple" does not mean the same thing as "easy". This moment by moment approach to our lives \*is\* elegantly beautiful in its simplicity, but it is by no means easy to do. Because it means that we have to be conscious, awake, moment by moment, so that we make our many small choices with awareness, rather than blindly, depending on how we are

feeling at the time. Actively considering each choice, moment by moment, actually sounds quite like hard work.



But it is the most important work in the world.

Because if we look at our lives, really examine them, we can see that they \*are\* the result of all the choices we have made, in the past days and months and years. It is a gradual, moment by moment process, yet the results of it have shaped our lives. All of us are where we are now, today, because of our past choices. And where we end up, tomorrow and the next day, will depend on the choices we make today.

Samuel A. Trumbore wrote: "Each moment of wakefulness has so many gifts that offer energy and delight. Yet too often they seem unavailable, as the weight of our troubles press down on us ... Even in moments of great danger, the direction of attention is a choice. Fear can dominate the mind, binding it like a straitjacket. Or love can unbind it, and open it to resource and opportunity. ...

Holding reality and possibility together is the holy, hope-filled work of humanity."

May we all choose love, may we all choose to follow the Next Right Thing.

~~~~~

Discussion Group Update

Over the last couple of months, the Group has held very lively discussions about some of the questions in Sue Woolley's survey of Unitarian beliefs and spirituality.

The questions discussed were these:

- What does the word "Unitarian" mean to you?
- What role does reason play in your religious faith / spirituality?
- What does tolerance mean to you as a Unitarian?
- What / who is your religious authority?
- What does morality mean to you as a Unitarian?
- What are your views about religion and politics?
- What are your views on inclusion and equality?
- What are your views on war and peace?
- What do you believe about Jesus?
- How would you describe the Holy Spirit?
- What do you believe about the Bible?
- Would you describe yourself as religious, spiritual, or both?

Inevitably, and wonderfully, there were as many different responses as there were participants. The discussions were lively, but always respectful, and a joy to listen to, and to participate in. I believe that this Discussion Group has been a source of both spiritual growth and community building. Long may it continue!

Regional Events

MUA ANNUAL LUNCH

Guest Speaker: Rev. Feargus O'Connor,
Minister of Golders Green & St. Albans

When: Saturday 28th October 2017

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

Times: 11.00 for 11.30 am - c.3.00 pm

Cost: £10.00 a head
(more details from Sue Woolley)

~~~~~

**MUA of Lay Preachers & Worship Leaders  
in association with Local Leadership Strategy Group**

### Autumn Training Day

#### Safeguarding

**Workshop Leaders:** Rev. John Harley & Ms. Liz Hills

**Where:** Unitarian New Meeting Church, Birmingham  
B16 8BL

**When:** Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**Times:** 12.00 noon - 5.00 pm (coffee/tea from 11.30 am)

**Cost:** FREE

## Banbury Unitarian Fellowship

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

**Website:** [www.banbury-unitarians.org.uk](http://www.banbury-unitarians.org.uk)

**Minister:** Rev. Sue Woolley

01604-870746 e-mail: [revsuewoolley@gmail.com](mailto:revsuewoolley@gmail.com)

blog: <http://sue-still-i-am-one.blogspot.com>

**Chairman:** David Heppingstall

079-3155-9531 e-mail: [heppingstall@googlemail.com](mailto:heppingstall@googlemail.com)

**Treasurer:** Elaine Nomura

077-6967-8363 e-mail: [emtnomura@aol.com](mailto:emtnomura@aol.com)

**Secretary:** Michaela Heppingstall

075-9532-4778 e-mail: [heppingstall@googlemail.com](mailto:heppingstall@googlemail.com)

~~~~~

Look to this day!

Look to this day!

For it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course lie all the verities

And realities of our existence:

The bliss of growth,

The glory of action,

The splendour of beauty;

For yesterday is but a dream,

And tomorrow is only a vision;

But today, well lived,

Makes every yesterday a dream of happiness,

And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.

Attributed to Kalidasa