

Banbury Unitarians News



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

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Letter from the Minister

Dear Friends,

It is so good to be back with you! I've missed you all dreadfully over the Summer, and am looking forward to returning to our regular pattern of mid-month Discussion Group and end of month worship service.

It has been a very busy Summer for me, mainly spent analysing the 257 survey responses I received from the questionnaire about Unitarian beliefs and spirituality, and writing up the results of that analysis into a coherent narrative. It has been a fascinating and very insightful process.

I hope that you have been enjoying some of the warm and sunny weather we have had. I spent a joyful week at the Nightingale Centre at Great Hucklow, which is known to some of you, participating in the annual Summer School, which was a deep and rich experience.

At the end of August, we had a weekend of celebration for my husband Maz's 60th birthday – a village party on the day, and a Woolley Gathering a couple of days later. It was really special, and reminded me how blessed I am to have family and friends to share these special times with.

Being thankful is something which we can never practice too often – appreciating what we have can lift our spirits, no matter how low we may sometimes feel. Or so I have found ...

*Yours in fellowship,
Sue*

Calendar for October - December 2017

October

- Wednesday 11th*** Discussion Group.
Topic: Starting a Gratitude Practice
- Sunday 29th Worship service, led by Sue Woolley
(note: this is FIFTH Sunday)

November

- Thursday 9th Discussion Group.
Topic: Perspectives on Divinity.
- Sunday 26th Worship service, led by Sue Woolley

December

- Thursday 14th Discussion Group.
Topic: The ideal Unitarian worship service.
- Sunday 24th Worship Service, led by Sue Woolley

*Note alternative date: I am away with my covenant group on the Thursday.

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

*All Discussion Group meetings are held at
Grimsbury Community Centre, and start at 10.30 am*

Change of venue for Worship Services

From September, we will be meeting in the small room to the left of the front door, rather than in the main hall of the Community Centre, as it will be so much easier to heat.

Pamela Parrish

Members will be pleased to hear that Pam has now settled in well at her new home in Chichester, and has made friends with the other residents. Her contact details are as follows:

Mrs. Pamela Parrish, Abbeyfield Home, Oakshade, Market Avenue, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1JR. Tel: 01243-533 518

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## Quiet Interval of Peace: Blogpost by Sue Woolley

I've just spent a week in the beautiful Welsh village of Trawsfynydd. Its setting is beautiful, above a deep blue lake, with the green and brown mountains and hills, noisy with sheep, all around. Last night, on my return, I felt moved to write a sestina about it:



## Trawsfynydd: A Sestina

I have this blessed interval of peace,  
A pile of books and notes and files to read,  
The hours stretch out before me like a path,  
A week out of time to do some writing.  
Inside the cottage all is very still;  
Out in the world, the sky is dazzling blue.

Unsettling my mind, I'm yearning for blue –  
The hills lure me out with promise of peace.  
I walk to the lake, its quiet waters still,  
The beauty of God is there to be read.  
Yet somehow I must get back to writing ...  
I sigh and retrace my steps down the path.

And muse as I walk down the soft, green path,  
Turning my back on the water so blue,  
On my research, that I should be writing;  
Instead I'm possessed by a deep, quiet peace,  
Which bids me forget what I need to read  
And start on this poem in quietness still.

So I get out my journal, sit quite still,  
Fall into reverie, follow the path  
Of my thoughts as I write, re-write, then read,  
Begging the muse to come out of the blue  
Bestowing on me her blessing of peace  
As words start to flow, and I am writing.

Bliss happens. I would not exchange writing  
The joy of creation, that serves to still  
My restless heart and restore my lost peace,  
Placing me firmly back on the right path.  
Words down on paper – why was I so blue?  
I pull the files towards me, start to read.

I read and take notes, then once again read,  
Nothing now stops the flow of the writing.  
I glance outside, the sky is now dark blue.  
I look at my watch, quite unready still  
To stop work just yet, now seeing the path  
To fulfilment, and a deep, grace-filled peace.

No more time to read, it's time to be still;  
No more swift writing, I've mapped out the path,  
With quick strokes of blue, time to trust in peace.

Not the best sestina in the world. But it has satisfied a very deep  
need in me, to translate what is in my heart into words on paper.  
Writing is such a glorious satisfaction. I feel so very blessed.

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Survey Update

Some of you were kind enough to complete my survey about Unitarian beliefs and spirituality. As I compile this newsletter, at the beginning of September (early, because Maz and I are off to Budapest on the 11th) I have received comments on the second draft from my mentor, and will be “tweaking” the manuscript during the next few days, before sending it off to the Lindsey Press for consideration on 10th September.

It has been an absolutely fascinating exercise, discovering the huge range and variety of beliefs and perspectives held by the 257 respondents. One conclusion I can share straight away: we Unitarians truly are united in our diversity!

I'm not sure when I will hear from the Lindsey Press, but am hoping that the book will be available at our GA meetings in 2018.

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)

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**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)

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Harvest Thanksgiving by Cliff Reed (from *Sacred Earth*)

At this celebration of harvest we give thanks
For the golden grain we saw in our summer fields,
And for its harvesting.
We give thanks for the fruit of our orchards and vineyards,
For the vegetables that swell in the rich earth
Or grow green in the sunshine and the rain.
We are so blessed, and yet we take it all for granted.
Forgive us.
We hold in our loving thought and prayer the people
Of our one world who suffer the devastation
Of natural – and not-so-natural – disaster.
We pray for the lands where the harvest seems one
Of hatred and of death; where terrorism, cruelty, and
War raise bitter crops of misery and vengeance.
We give thanks for the harvests of earth and spirit.
We pray that all who are denied them now will
Soon receive their bounty through the workings of
Your love in human hearts like ours. Amen