



Northampton Unitarians News

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

Issue 52, April - June 2016

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Statement of Belief (taken from our website)

Unitarianism is a religious movement in which individuals are free to follow their reason and conscience; there is no pressure from creed or scripture. We are open to change in the light of new thought and discoveries.

We believe that:

- everyone has the right to seek truth and meaning for themselves.
- the fundamental tools for doing this are your own life experience, your reflection upon it, your intuitive understanding and the promptings of your own conscience.
- the best place to do this is a community that welcomes you for who you are,
- complete with your beliefs, doubts, and questions.

We offer:

- liberty of conscience from imposed creed, confessions, and dogmas.
- a fellowship where people come together to worship; to share times of celebration and trial; and to help each other in the quest for a faith to live by.

We affirm the universal values of love and compassion, peace, truth, and justice.

We welcome all who come to us in the spirit of goodwill and enquiry, regardless of ethnic or religious background, age, gender, or sexual orientation.

Our thanks to the General Assembly Information Department, for extracts from 'A Faith Worth Thinking About' by Peter Sampson et al; and to Ipswich Unitarians for extracts from a leaflet by Rev. Cliff Reed.

Websites

www.northamptonunitarians.org.uk
<https://www.facebook.com/northampton-unitarians-565662053498558>
<http://sue-still-i-am-one.blogspot.co.uk>
<http://www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk>
www.unitarian.org.uk
www.unitariansocieties.org.uk

Calendar for April - June 2016

April

Sunday 10th Worship service, led by Rev. Sue Woolley
Sunday 24th Worship service, led by Dr. Mark Beaumont

May

Sunday 8th Worship service, led by Rev. Sue Woolley
Sunday 15th Soul Searchers, led by Mr. Simon Hall (see page 4)
Sunday 22nd Worship service, led by Mr. Jon Small
Sunday 29th Congregational Service

June

Sunday 5th Worship Service, led by Mr. Sandy Ellis (MUA)
Sunday 12th Worship Service, led by Rev. Sue Woolley
Sunday 19th Soul Searchers, led by Mr. Simon Hall (see page 4)
Sunday 26th Worship Service, led by Mr. Jon Small (Solstice)

*****Weekday Gatherings*****

There are regular Gatherings every Tuesday (except fifth Tuesdays) as follows:

1st Tuesdays: Discussion Group, on various topics

2nd Tuesdays: Happiness Project Group - based on Gretchen Rubin's book

3rd Tuesdays: Oasis of Calm Meditation Group

4th Tuesdays: Heart and Soul Group - for spiritual seekers

We also meet on **Friday evenings, between 5.00 and 6.30 pm**, to **Walk Away the Cares of the Week** on our Labyrinth (see p. 6).
More details on our website: www.northamptonunitarians.org.uk

*All Worship Services and Gatherings are held at
Northampton Unitarians Meeting House, St. Katherine's Terrace,
Northampton NN1 2AX.*

*Worship Services start at 10.30 am, Tuesday Gatherings at 7.30 pm
ALL ARE WELCOME!*

Northampton Unitarians' News-round

New Stained Glass Chalice is Put in Place, and Dedicated

At our service on Sunday 10th January, we were delighted to welcome Elizabeth Faiers, from York Unitarians. Elizabeth is a talented craftswoman, and has made us a beautiful stained glass chalice for the Manfield Room, our principal worship space. It was dedicated during our service, with these words:

*"Spirit of Life and Love, We give thanks for this beautiful chalice, carefully crafted by loving hands. May it be a light to us in our new home; may it be a light to us in this year, and in the years to come. May it remind us of the wider Unitarian community, of which we are a part.
Amen*



The Move to Weekly Worship Services

Observant readers of our calendar will have noticed that from 8th May, we will be holding our Sunday services EVERY Sunday, rather than on just 2nd and 4th Sundays, which has been our practice for many years. This was decided unanimously by the congregation at our Annual General Meeting on 13th March. Rev. Sue Woolley will continue to lead one service a month, on 2nd Sundays, and Simon Hall has volunteered to lead a Café Church style service on 3rd Sundays, starting on Sunday 15th

May. It will be called **Soul Searchers: A relaxed but uplifting spiritual encounter.**

We hope that this move to weekly services will encourage new people to join us on our Unitarian journey, and to discover the wonderful faith that is Unitarianism.

New Committee Members

It was quite an exciting AGM altogether. Sue Woolley had stood down from her role as Secretary at the beginning of the year, and Dr. Mark Beaumont was elected to this post. Mr. Jon Small is continuing with his two hats of Chair and Treasurer for the time being. We are also pleased to welcome two new members to the Committee: Mr. David Cook, and Mr. Simon Hall.

Grand Opening on Saturday 7th May

Our Meeting House will be holding a Grand Opening on Saturday 7th May, to which many Unitarians have been invited, not to mention representatives of other faiths and interests in the town. We hope that it is going to "put us on the map" locally.

Weekday Gatherings

Our other-than-Sunday Gatherings have started off in a quiet way - each Discussion Group has been attended by three or four people, as has the Oasis of Calm Meditation Group. The most successful group numerically has been the Happiness Project Group, and sadly, the Heart and Soul Gathering has attracted the fewest number. We are hoping that the lighter nights and warmer months, and also the forthcoming provision of an external notice board will tempt more people through the doors. Why not come along and see for yourself - details in the Calendar on page 3.

Walking Away the Cares of the Week: a blogpost by Sue Woolley

January was a very busy month, as some months are. So I was glad that it was coming to an end. And delighted to be able to see it out in style, as I welcomed people in to the first Walk Away the Cares of the Week at our Meeting House, using our brand new (to us) labyrinth mat. It is based on the labyrinth at Troyes Cathedral, and was made by my friend, Rev. Gillian Peel, and painted by her daughter. And it is sixteen feet square.



Setting up took a while, but was greatly helped by my friend, who had so kindly passed the mat on to the congregation (memo to self: it is much more intelligent to light the 24 tealights first, THEN strategically place them around the perimeter, not the other way round!). But it was done on time, the atmospheric

music was on the CD player, and the first people arrived to walk the labyrinth.

Peacefully, mindfully. The trick of walking a labyrinth mindfully is to focus on making each step, rolling from your heel onto your toe, gently lifting your foot, and placing it carefully down in front of you. As I walked, peacefully, mindfully, I felt my body begin to unclench and relax, and my mind began to quieten. Twenty minutes later, when I walked out again, I felt like a new person.

There is something about this kind of purposeful walking meditation that is very powerful, very soothing. I feel so very blessed that it is going to be something I am now able to do regularly. Why not come along and see for yourself? We meet every Friday evening, between 5.00 pm and 6.30 pm.

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

Northampton Unitarians

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Prayer by Maureen Killoran

May hope's light guard us and keep cynicism from our hearts.
May the energy of laughter build endurance for the dark times of
our lives.

May creativity's vision grant the possibility of seeing old
relationships with new eyes.

May the oil of healing keep us from anger's hardness or despair.
May the mantle of humility give courage to admit when we are
wrong.

May compassion's loom weave in us the discipline to forgive.
May patience help us bear in mind that ours is not the only scale
of time.

May the flame of justice be a beacon for the choices we must
make.

May peace be ever in us and sustain our stressful days.

Spirit of all blessing, be with us in the ordinariness of our days.
Amen