



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

**Issue 53, July - September 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 & Social Media**

[www.northamptonunitarians.org.uk](http://www.northamptonunitarians.org.uk)  
<https://www.facebook.com/NorthamptonUnitarians>  
<http://twitter.com/@NtonUnitarians>  
<http://sue-still-i-am-one.blogspot.co.uk>  
<http://www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk>  
[www.unitarian.org.uk](http://www.unitarian.org.uk)  
[www.unitariansocieties.org.uk](http://www.unitariansocieties.org.uk)

## Calendar for July - September 2016

### July

Sunday 3rd Worship service, Rev. Jeffrey Bowes (Coventry)  
 Sunday 10th Worship service, Rev. Sue Woolley  
 Sunday 17th Soul Haven gathering, Simon Hall  
 Sunday 24th Worship service, Dr. Mark Beaumont  
 Sunday 31st Congregational Service. Theme: Growth

### August

Sunday 7th Worship service, Dorothy Haughton (Shrewsbury)  
 Sunday 14th Worship service, Rev. Sue Woolley  
 Sunday 21st Soul Haven gathering, Simon Hall  
 Sunday 28th Worship Service, Dr. Mark Beaumont

### September

Sunday 4th Worship Service, Jeremy Harris (Evesham)  
 Sunday 11th Worship Service, Rev. Sue Woolley  
 Sunday 18th Soul Haven gathering, Simon Hall  
 Sunday 25th Anniversary Service, Jon Small

### \*\*\*\*\*Weekday Gatherings\*\*\*\*\*

There are regular Gatherings on 2nd & 4th Tuesdays:

**2nd Tuesdays:** Happiness Project Group - based on Gretchen Rubin's book (no meeting in September)

**4th Tuesdays:** Discussion Group, on various topics (5th Tuesday in August)

We also meet on **Friday evenings, between 5.00 and 6.30 pm**, to **Walk Away the Cares of the Week** on our Labyrinth.

More details on our website: [www.northamptonunitarians.org.uk](http://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!*

## Chairman's Chat

One of the actions we decided we will definitely take now we are in our new Meeting House is to get involved in the local community. I believe our first opportunity has presented itself.

As a part of the Friends of Northampton Castle (FoNC), I advocated the demolition of the so-called Castle House which stood right opposite St. Peter's Church, and the use of the cleared area for a Heritage Space giving open views of all the history around that area. FoNC developed the idea of seats &c and a playground space. There was, initially, full support from the Borough Council (NBC), Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), South Northants Development Corporation and the Churches Conservation Trust who are responsible for St. Peter's.

After the demolition the site which had passed into the possession of the NCC was reviewed and 'an expert' who said as there had always been buildings on the site it should be built up. This is not correct, but the NCC decided that they wanted to build luxury flats on the site which would be snapped up by wealthy commuters who would probably use the nearby railway station. It seems the NCC has got its eyes on profit rather than community.

The area is largely flats and children living in them have nowhere to safely play. This area would be a definite asset to the community as well as celebrating the heritage of Spring Boroughs and the Town in general.

In the near future there will be a public enquiry and FoNC will be represented along with local community organizations. We (speaking with my FoNC hat on) have been advised by the Battlefield Trust who successfully opposed the development of the site of the Battle of Northampton in Delapre that experts plus a

*large number of people with local connections* swung the enquiry their way. This seems to me to be an ideal opportunity for Northampton Unitarians, who, of course, are now local, to join in.

Please think about this. It's an opportunity for us to get involved with the local community in a positive way. As soon as I know the date of the enquiry I will notify everyone. **Jon Small**

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## Our Grand Opening on 7th May

A goodly number of Unitarians and other friends gathered in our Meeting House on a beautiful sunny afternoon, to witness the dedication of our new building. The pictures below tell the story ...



The Dedication Service itself started at 2.00 pm, and was led by our minister, Rev. Sue Woolley. The congregation sang beautifully, and we were happy to start with hymn no. 172 *All Are Welcome Here*, written by our former minister, Peter Galbraith.



Greetings were brought by Derek McAuley, Chief Officer of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches, and Jane Couper, President of the Midland Unitarian Association. Gavin Lloyd read out some encouraging words from Rev. Peter Hewis, who was unable to attend.



Afterwards, we enjoyed a splendid buffet, provided by the staff of Elsie's Café, including a special fruit cake decorated with our Unitarian chalice symbol. It was a joyous and memorable occasion.

(report and images taken from our website; photos by Sue Woolley)

## Introducing our New Secretary, Dr Mark Beaumont



photo by Matt Appleby

As I have now been Secretary of Northampton Unitarians for over two months (already) I thought it would be good to introduce myself to you all. I was born in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire and have lived in Northampton since 1992. I studied here and did my PhD in Sheffield finishing it in 2003 – its' subject being synaesthesia – where people's sensations cross between sensory modes.

A music teacher who has set up the organisation Life Music Northants, I have been a Unitarian since 1996 when we were still at the 'Church on the Island' on Abington Square.

My beliefs are eclectic and, I suppose, relatively average in many respects for the less Christian kind of Unitarian. Underlying my pluralistic worldview is the notion that any spiritual experience or contact with the divine does not surface to cognition and are not specific in the way that conscious expressions of it are.

Of course all Unitarians are free to – indeed committed to – making up their own mind. It is our purpose as Northampton Unitarians that we share the possibility for members of the community decide responsibly on spiritual, worldview matters for themselves. Since moving into NUMH, indeed since starting

thinking about moving, we have moved towards the goal of 'going public' with greater energy than before. I am so happy to be Secretary of a Committee and congregation that is committed to driving things forward. Not everybody should be a Unitarian but everyone should know what Unitarianism is and I feel great that we are finally assuming a position where we can aspire to that.

As Secretary I have chief responsibility for correspondences and communications and, less obviously the conceptual organisation of ideas, projects and general direction. Any ideas that people feel will move us forward are therefore welcome and please contact me with regards to them. They need not even come from members or attenders – I am fond of the maxim in congregational development that the most important people to us are those who don't come here.

I am, in conclusion, very pleased with my active part in what is now a rapid progression movement. Most specifically, I am grateful that we are on track for Unitarianism having its rightful place in my adopted town and further afield.

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## The Archaeology of the Meeting House area

Six months ago we moved to our new premises – Hooray! And after all the kerfuffle I started to look around what to me was a familiar area of the Town. In 1964 my second dig was the remains of Northampton Castle and for much of my archaeological career I worked for the Northampton Development Corporation's Archaeological Unit and much of the work we did in the Town in the 1970s was in this area whilst it was developed.

Just south of the Meeting House is the junction of Marefair, Gold Street, Horsemarket and Horseshoe Street. This is the central cross-roads of the Anglo-Saxon Town which extended roughly



from West Bridge to the top of Bridge Street and from the Mayorhold to St Peter's roundabout, a lot smaller than now. Evidence also indicates that Marefair – Gold Street – St. Giles's Street – Billing Road → is the original prehistoric track that ran along the side of the River Nene and in Roman times connected Bannaventa and Duston Romano-British settlement to Irchester.

To the west along St. Mary's Street (where the Great Fire of 1675 started) is what is now Castle Hill United Reformed Church originally Castle Hill Meeting from which the first Northampton Unitarians seceded. Castle Hill is so called because it isn't the hill of the Castle! The Castle actually stood nearby and was largely quarried away in the 1890s by the North Western Railway Company, the Church is mostly built of Castle stone.

Northampton Castle was one of the four great castles of England and more Parliaments were held here up to the 1300s that anywhere else in the country. It was here that the barons forced the idea of Magna Carta onto King John, the unsuccessful attempt to try Thomas Becket and where he fled from to the continent and one of the last acts was the instigation of the Poll Tax which triggered the Peasants' Revolt.

The little park next to us is St. Katherine's Gardens once the site of St. Katherine's Church, built as a Chapel of Ease to All Saints' in the days when a lot more people attended services!

When we left Castle Hill Meeting we moved for a while into the upper room of a pub, the site of which is part of the new 'Bus Interchange on Bradshaw Street, and later to a church in King Street (long since demolished) just the other side of St. Katherine's Gardens. I have only touched on a few historical features of this area, but it holds great significance to the development of the Town and many connections with Northampton Unitarians.

One final thought, whilst measuring up outside for a notice board I found a small piece of Medieval pottery amongst the gravel. It isn't rolled, so it wasn't part of the gravel load tipped there so how it came to be there is a mystery.

**Jon Small**

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## Our Beautiful Wall Hanging

At our service on 12th June, we were delighted to welcome our friend, Rev. Gillian Peel, who presented the congregation with this stunning wall hanging, which she had made for us.



As Gillian had already visited our Meeting House, the wall hanging was designed with our colour scheme in mind, and you can see from the photo above the harmonious result. She was also careful to incorporate a boot, to represent Northampton's long tradition in the boot and shoe industry. We are most grateful for this lovely gift.

## Midland Unitarian Association Visit to Quarry Bank Mill & Styal Chapel

All congregations and friends are warmly invited to join this trip to Quarry Bank Mill and Norcliffe Unitarian Chapel at Styal, near Wilmslow, Cheshire, to meet with Unitarians from across the Midlands area.

Enjoy the Museum, gardens, and a short service at the Unitarian Chapel, in the company of friends from across the MUA.



**When:** Saturday 24th September 2016

**Where:** Quarry Bank Mill & Styal Chapel, SK9 4LA

**Timings:** We are planning to meet up at the Mill Café at 11.00 am, followed by a tour of the Mill at 11.15. Then after lunch at 1.30, we will be joining Rev. Alex Bradley, Minister of Norcliffe Chapel, Styal, which is in the grounds of the Mill, for a short worship service at 2.30 pm

**How to get there:** Located south of Manchester, off B5166, 2 miles from M56 exit and links from M6, SK9 4LA.

**Open:** 10.30am – 5pm

## Northampton Unitarians

Northampton Unitarians Meeting House,  
St. Katherine's Terrace, Northampton NN1 2AX  
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**Minister and Newsletter Editor:** Rev. Sue Woolley

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**Chairman & Treasurer:** Mr. Jon Small

e-mail: [jonasmall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jonasmall@hotmail.co.uk)

**Secretary & Organist:** Dr. Mark Beaumont

19B Linden Road, Northampton NN3 2JJ

tel: 079804 98970; e-mail: [drmarksmusic40@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:drmarksmusic40@yahoo.co.uk)

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### Prayer by Carol Meyer

May we open ourselves ever more fully to that Eternal Mystery which lures us onward towards life and creativity.

May we find the courage to live our faith, to speak our truth, and to strive together for a world where freedom abounds and justice truly does roll down like water.

May we know the fullness of love without fear, and the serenity of peace without turmoil.

May we hold one another in the deep and tender places with compassion, and may we grace one another by sharing our own vulnerabilities, being every mindful of the divinity within, that makes soul-mates of us all.

Amen