



Northampton Unitarians News

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

Issue 71, April - June 2022

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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
[https://www.facebook.com/Northampton Unitarians](https://www.facebook.com/NorthamptonUnitarians)
<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 to June 2022

Events for April, May and June are as follows:

April

Sunday 3rd Worship service, Mr. Gavin Lloyd
Saturday 9th Spring Open Day – see article below
Sunday 17th Easter Sunday Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska

May

Sunday 1st Worship service, Rev. Sue Woolley (MUA)
Sunday 15th Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska

June

Sunday 5th Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska
Sunday 19th Worship Service, Dr. Mark Beaumont

Message from our Community Development Coordinator: Northampton Unitarians

The daffodils are up and Spring has sprung at Northampton Unitarian Meeting House (NUMH) this year, and there has been some spring cleaning to boot! Lots of our spaces have had a refresh and will continue to be nurtured into the summer with some plants and seasonal decoration, as projects get ticked off the long list I've been working through since late last year when we took delivery of lots of resources I'd had in my previous work!

We very happily launched The Blue Boat at the start of March with a pancake party for St David's Day and Shrove Tuesday! It

was very well attended and jolly, thanks to everyone who took part. We're having a gentle and soft launch due to the complexities of coming out of the restrictions of recent times and finding our collective feet. We're subtling it "A Collaborative Community Project" and the page is available to follow on Facebook [Search @TheBlueBoatNN]. Initially, we're letting its journey be guided and grow somewhat organically, by the input from the folks who are involved. Queries or offers of support and help to either myself or Julie Small (contact details on p.8.) A display about the intentions of the project and further information is available at NUMH if you're not also on Facebook (updates will also be available on our website too as they become available)



Recently when I was catching up with a dear friend and supporter of my work they asked me what the vision was. Having had a think about this, I said, "I always love churches where you can feel the love and energy that's been put into the work in the

building come back to you and you inhabit the space." Many sacred places have this sense about them. There is so much love that has already gone into our building. Many volunteer hours from the community acquiring it in the first place, the legacy of our predecessors and our collective heritage as a community being able to be in a position to acquire a new home. And then making it our own, we have so many beautiful art pieces in our worship space, the leaded glass work chalice, the quilted banner, the First World War Honour Roll which is a beautiful piece of calligraphy. And we all often say more people should get a chance to explore them so...

We're holding a Spring Open Day in the Easter Holidays, on Saturday the 9th of April from 10 until 4. We'll have drinks and light refreshments available and a chance for community feedback with a survey asking members, friends and the wider public what they might want to see happening at NUMH and in association with our neighbours and other organisations in the town.

This is an opportunity to open our doors on a day other than Sunday and chat with folks. The pandemic has changed the way many of us view our shared spaces and it's good to take the opportunity to be thankful for our wonderful building. (Very Advanced Notice we will also be open during the Heritage Festival in September exploring the history of the local area with the assistance of our very own in house archaeological specialist Jon Small! Exact dates to be arranged)

Also coming up is the opportunity to revisit our commitment to each other by exploring the idea of Covenant which will be the theme of my services throughout the rest of the spring and summer seasons. Look out for more information about this as the theme progresses. There were definitely signs that now is time for this season of reflection in the message from Sue Woolley in the

District Annual Service at the Midland Unitarian Association AGM held in March, unable to attend in person Sue's prepared words were shared in her absence by Jane Couper of the Evesham congregation who was President of the MUA when we officially opened our building several years ago. At the time of our opening, it was my first visit and I was just a curious visitor from another congregation, though I immediately felt the warmth and welcome of this congregation and visited a few times before the opportunity to live in the county changed my course back in 2019. It's a great privilege to be on this journey with you. I hope that in the next few weeks and months we will be nourishing and fruitful and when I write again in the late Summer I will be able to share more happy news and there will have been more memorable moments created together, in community.

[Notice- A Camerados Public Living Room will be hosted by Aleks (but the hope is that in time others will join in organically!) throughout the summer (beginning in June, (weather and resources permitting!) in the adjacent St Katherine's Gardens by the old fountain and now empty plinth! A box of helpful materials for this project will be sent from the Camerados team supported by funding from The National Lottery after a really fruitful conversion with their wonderful support team member Yvonne. For more information about the Camerados movement visit <https://www.camerados.org> especially have a look at their principles which are used to hold spaces in which everyone is welcome to participate they're a great challenge to explore!]

Aleks

Building Beloved Community by Sue Woolley

Individuals need solid roots (a safe and happy home, a loving family and a solid moral and ethical grounding) if they are to grow into wise, virtuous human beings. If one or more of these

elements is missing, it will be that much harder for the person to grow up grounded and able to nurture others in their turn. Of course, it is far from impossible, many people overcome all kinds of deprivation and thrive in spite of them, but those growing up with solid roots will, perhaps paradoxically, find it easier to step out on their own as grounded adults.

When an individual joins a Unitarian congregation, they are becoming a member of a wider beloved community, that of the Unitarian movement. At their best, Unitarian congregations provide a safe haven for individuals wishing to explore what gives their lives purpose and meaning.

I know that my next statement will be controversial, but here goes: I believe that if Unitarian congregations wish to provide such a safe and sacred space, they need to work out some basic statement of how they intend to be in community – a covenant statement perhaps, like that at our sister congregation in Kingswood, or that of the Unitarian Universalist Association. One of the pages of the UUA's Tapestry of Faith learning scheme reads:

“The free church tradition of which we are a part does not offer up a creed, a certain set of beliefs, that everyone must accept in order to belong to the community. Instead, the boundaries of our community are determined by commitment and participation. Our central question is not, “What do we believe?” but rather, “What values will we uphold and how will we do this together?” Our covenant, the promised we make to each other in regarding how we will be a community of faith, is at the heart of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist.”

Maybe our congregations should do the same, so that our members and prospective members have some place to root their belonging, and thrive... We need to discover what we exist for, what our purpose as a Unitarian community is. I believe Aleks' initiative will prove valuable and inspiring.

Northampton Unitarians

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Community Development Coordinator: Ms. Aleks Zglinska
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Treasurer: Mr. Jon Small
e-mail: jonasmall@hotmail.co.uk

Organist: Dr. Mark Beaumont
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### Prayer by Richard Trudeau (extract)

May this be a place (for example) where no experience is necessary – where people are encouraged to risk new things.

May this be a place where people always feel that their efforts have been worthwhile, and their energy well-spent. And may this be a place where, as in a children's game, everyone gets to play.

May no-one feel invisible here or feel worried about what others might be thinking of them. May no-one be bored here: if a person isn't interested in what the worship leader is talking about today, may they be excited by the music, or by a conversation at coffee.

May this be a place where people are touched – if not by something said, then perhaps by something sung, or by the light coming through the windows, or by the sense that the people who come here support one another.

May this be a place where everyone feels safe: safe to follow their thoughts wherever they lead, safe to believe whatever they must, and safe to share whatever is on their minds and in their hearts.