



Northampton Unitarians News

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

Issue 86, December 2025 – February 2026

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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/NorthamptonUnitarians>
<http://sue-still-i-am-one.blogspot.co.uk>
<http://www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk>
www.unitarian.org.uk

Calendar for November 2025 – February 2026

December

- Sunday 7th Worship service, Chris Nelson, 11.00 am
- Sunday 21st Carol service, Jon Small, 11.00 am
- Thurs. 18th Threads, craft and chat group 2.00 till 4.00 pm
(early because 25th is Christmas Day!)

January

- Sunday 4th Congregational Circle Service. Theme: New Year
11.00 am
- Sunday 18th Worship service, Heather Korbey, 11.00 am
- Thurs. 29th Threads, craft and chat group 2.00 till 4.00 pm

February

- Sunday 1st Worship service: Rev Sue Woolley, 11.00 am
followed by committee meeting.
- Sunday 15th Worship service: Mark Beaumont
- Thurs. 26th Threads, craft and chat group 2.00 till 4.00 pm



The Gift of Wonder by Sue Woolley

At this time of the year (early December) I can end up feeling distinctly un-Christmassy. Positively bah-humbuggerish, in fact. As I have written elsewhere, “By the time December comes, we will be blatting around like the proverbial blue-bottomed flies, buying presents, sending cards, ordering turkeys and making the hearts of the supermarket shareholders glad by spending our hard-earned cash on excessive amounts of food and drink to see us through the festive season. Then, when Christmas Day has come and gone, many of us will end up with post-Christmas indigestion – too much food, too much drink, too much... everything.”

When I am doing the weekly food shop, the commercial overkill of Christmas is only too apparent. The supermarket shelves are groaning with “seasonal” goodies, most of which have either too much sugar or too much fat in them (which is why they are delicious, of course!) Not to mention the booze, which of course is (thankfully) irrelevant so far as I am concerned. But it is on offer on every aisle end.

So it was a particularly welcome gift this morning, to spot a toddler in a pushchair, gazing up at the Christmas decorations which festooned the supermarket ceiling, with a rapt expression of wonder on his face. I pointed this out to his Mum, and it made her day too. Of course, to him, it is all new and wonderful and wonder-full. I was so grateful for the reminder of what Christmas is really about – not the food and the drink and the presents, but the joy and the sharing and the sense of wonder at the birth of a child.

I believe that the 17th century French writer and moralist, Francois de la Rochefoucauld, has some good advice which, if taken by the world's governments, by all of us, would

transform the world for the better. It reads, "Before you ardently desire something, you should check the happiness of the one who already owns it."

We seem to be driven by a base desire for wanting more - more of everything. I have written before about the wonderful concept of *Enoughness* - of recognising that (at least in the West) we already have more than enough of everything. As John Naish wrote, "There is no 'more'. We have to learn to live 'post-more'."

So why this seemingly bottomless desire to have what the other person has? Perhaps if we learned to pause, and to check "the happiness of the one who already owns it", we might realise that actually, they are not that much better off than we are. And, perhaps more importantly, if we only paid attention to what we already have, we would be far more content, far less acquisitive.

It's hard - we live in a world in which the advertising and marketing industries batter our minds ceaselessly - "You need this", "Your life will be incomplete without that", and, worst of all, the more subliminal, nasty message, "Everyone else is having a better time than you are." I am already weary of the wall-to-wall Christmas adverts on Channel 4 - painting a picture of the "perfect Christmas", which is ours for the getting, so long as we lay out our hard-earned cash on X, Y, and Z. Top of my "non-essentials" list this year is a cocktail-making machine (£100 off!!) and the ubiquitous Quooker.

This year, our immediate family (me, my husband, my son and his partner, and my daughter and her partner) have decided to do a Secret Santa between us, and only get presents for the children. Which we've done in the wider Ellis family for years, thanks to the wisdom of my sister. Because Christmas is (or should be) about giving pleasure, rather than driving ourselves into debt to buy presents they don't really want for people we only see a

couple of times a year. We are opting out of the Christmas rat race and concentrating on spending quality time together instead. Which I believe is far more conducive to long-term happiness than that cocktail maker.



On a national level, the "ardent desire" for something is driven by lust for power and land, and fear of the other. But wouldn't it be wonderful if governments said to themselves, "Are we really going to be happier if we destroy the lives of the people of this

other nation? Should we stand back a little before jumping into the familiar pattern of violence, and really think about other ways we could improve the qualities of our own lives, here in our country?"

Which I'm sure are questions which are never, ever asked. Sadly... But this reflection may help to re-orientate us towards the things which really matter:

Let us take a moment to appreciate all the good things in our lives; our comfortable homes, our many possessions, which make our lives easy and secure.

But more importantly, the blessings which money cannot buy:

- the love of our families
- the companionship of our friends
- this beloved community of freedom and trust
- the beauties of nature
- our bodies – those complex systems which work in such mysterious ways
- our health
- the very air that we breathe

Help us to realise how rich we are already, and help us to ask the question "Do I need this?" rather than "Do I want this?" in relation to everything.

Help us to realise that true happiness lies in wanting what we have. And in a sense of wonder.

Amen

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Northampton Unitarians

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### *Chalice Lighting for Christmas* by Yvonne Aburrow

Every child is a miracle and a mystery  
And in the one born at midnight  
In the dark time of the year  
We see all children leaping into the light  
And as we light this flame  
We honour the light in everyone,  
the Christ in everyone,  
the child in everyone.

