



Northampton Unitarians News

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

Issue 63, January – March 2020

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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 January – March 2020

January

Sunday 5th Worship service, Rev. Sue Woolley (MUA)
Sunday 19th Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska
Tuesday 21st Walk the Labyrinth

February

Sunday 2nd Worship service, Rev. Jeffrey Bowes (Coventry)
Sunday 16th Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska
Tuesday 18th Walk the Labyrinth

March

Sunday 1st Worship Service, Mr. Gavin Lloyd (Oxford)
Sunday 15th Worship Service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska
Tuesday 17th Walk the Labyrinth

*****Weekday Gathering*****

Join us to walk our beautiful Labyrinth, based on the Troyes Cathedral Labyrinth. Find peace in the walking.

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 with refreshments at 10.30 am – the service
itself at 11.00 am; Labyrinth Walk at 7.00 pm*

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Neighbourhood and Community

Since this edition of our newsletter lands in January - Happy New Year for 2020! (if you pick this up to read later in the quarter substitute an appropriate greeting, Happy Valentine's, Dydd Gŵyl Dewi Hapus)

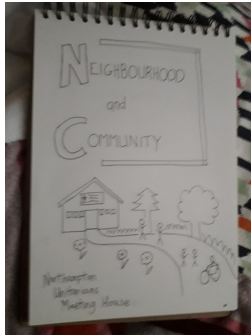
I've had a really warm welcome to the community since joining you in September and I very much enjoy our longer periods of time to chatter around the service on a Sunday. There's a few more of us around and we're definitely drinking more pots of tea and making more washing up, but as someone said "it's a lovely 'problem' to have"!

From January I'm leading our regular third Sunday service, and each quarter we'll gather to explore a different theme over the three months. In time there's potential for this to influence our programming beyond Sundays.

This quarter, our theme is Neighbourhood and Community. Hopefully this will give us an opportunity to think outside the walls of the Meeting House to our friends and neighbours locally in Northampton Town Centre, and also any connections we each have to our wider community. February is also LGBT History Month with the theme of Poetry, Prose and Plays. So our 3rd Sunday will also include the voices of the LGBT community.

For a long while Tuesday evenings once a month have given an opportunity to explore an alternative spiritual practice with our Labyrinth. It's been great personally to take the time to walk this and I'd encourage anyone who's not explored this before to come and try it out (also an opportunity for more tea and chatter afterwards... more washing up, lovely problem!). Using my musical background, I'm hoping to expand our Tuesdays with a Taizé Evening once a month. If you'd be interested in this please

let me know, once there's a bit of interest we'll choose which Tuesday of the month and hopefully get this going in the first half of the year!



Finally but **not least**... in November Rev Sue Woolley set us a challenge during her service... Could we open for a couple of hours during the week with some hospitality outside of our regular service time? ... now one of the other 'lovely problems' we have as a community is how involved in other things many of us already are! And obviously a number of us work regular hours during the week... However, after a bit of consultation and discussion, we've maybe stumbled upon opening on a Friday afternoon for a couple of hours. Another opportunity this affords is the potential to maybe hold a quiet reflective service early on a Friday evening. The inspiration for this is from our friends at Bridport Unitarians, who hold a 30 minute reflective service on a Friday evening, which draws in various folks who live and work in the surroundings of the Chapel. Regarding this I'll have a clipboard with dates and info about this available throughout January and we'll collectively put together a plan of what we'd like to happen and I'll put out appropriate publicity for what we decide... Watch This SPACE!

Aleks

Unitarians have many diverse faith communities – we are religious pluralists. It is one of our strengths, that we are able to accommodate people of differing beliefs. Today most Unitarian communities in the UK aver what Andrew Hill calls “an open acceptance and co-existence of different theological positions”. This is evident if you look at the various different societies affiliated to our General Assembly, from the neo-Pagan Unitarian Earth Spirit Network, and the spiritualist Unitarian Society for Psychic Studies, to the Unitarian Christian Association (to name but three). All their members are also Unitarians, and all believe in something beyond the human / natural world. Even within a small congregation such as ours, there could be Liberal Christians, religious humanists, universalists and experientialists. And some of us fall into more than one of these categories. But what matters is that we truly believe that Unitarianism is “the Religion of the Larger Affirmation”, to quote Alfred Hall, and that the values we share are more important than our diverse beliefs.

Michaela von Britzke wrote, “The times require us to move beyond our emphasis on the intellect and our dependence on the pulpit-based hierarchy, to become more expressive, egalitarian, and inclusive. We need to spend more time on holistic learning. We need to deal with shadows and projections, learn to deal with conflicts, work in groups, encounter each other deeply, in pain and joy. Sunday sermons, I believe, are the celebratory sauce for the bread pudding of daily living with integrity.”

In other words, we need to become a truly welcoming spiritual community, a place where our individual spiritual and religious quests can safely be undertaken, in an atmosphere of freedom and respect and acceptance. A base from which we can go out and live our faith, not just talk about it.

Sue

Regional Events

MIDLAND UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Guest Speaker: Helen Mason, Director of Unitarian College

Where: The Great Meeting House Unitarian Church,
116, Holyhead Road, Coventry CV1 3AE

When: Saturday 28th March 2020

Times: 10.30 for 11.00 am – c.4.00 pm

This is your chance to vote on what your District Association will
be doing in the next twelve months.

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### MIDLAND UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION SPRING TRAINING DAY

#### Ideas for Running a Thriving Congregation

**Course Leaders:** Diane Rutter (Kingswood), Laura Dobson  
(Chorlton) & Rev Andy Phillips (Sheffield Upper Chapel)

**When:** Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Where:** Unitarian New Meeting Church, Ryland St, Birmingham  
B16 8BL

**Times:** 9.30 for 10.00 am – 4.15 pm

## Northampton Unitarians

Northampton Unitarians Meeting House,  
St. Katherine's Terrace, Northampton NN1 2AX  
website: [www.northamptonunitarians.org.uk](http://www.northamptonunitarians.org.uk)

**Community Development Coordinator:** Ms. Aleks Zglinka  
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New Year Wishes by Neil Gaiman

May your coming year be
filled with magic and dreams
dreams and good madness.
I hope you read some fine books and
kiss someone who thinks you're wonderful,
and don't forget to make some
art – write or draw or build
or sing or live as only you
can. And I hope,
somewhere in the next
year, you surprise yourself.