



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

**Issue 67, January – March 2021**

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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/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](http://www.unitarian.org.uk)  
[www.unitariansocieties.org.uk](http://www.unitariansocieties.org.uk)

## Calendar for January – March 2021

We are delighted to report that our Meeting House has now re-opened for worship, with all social distancing and anti-COVID measures in place. However, we will not be resuming our monthly Labyrinth Walks until after Christmas, at least. Of course, this may change as the COVID situation develops. At present, we are in Tier 2. Worship leaders for January - March are as follows:

### January

Sunday 3rd   Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska  
Sunday 17th   Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska

### February

Sunday 7th    Worship service, Rev. Sue Woolley (MUA)  
Sunday 21st   Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska

### March

Sunday 7th    Worship Service, TBC  
Sunday 21st   Worship Service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska

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## Message from our Community Development Coordinator

The year has turned, 2021 is here and I think about where we were this time last year. Looking forward to new opportunities and plans we had made and settling into the rhythm of things being a little different around our meetings Toast, Toys, Tea etc... and January came and went without much hitch. Then in

February, the roof came off the Sol buildings and the main road being closed meant the Meeting House was probably the most peaceful it has been in years. As I pottered around the space and sorted out a stack of leaflets one day I naively thought it couldn't get much quieter... the only noise was the gentle tink of a rod piling machine for the redevelopment of the residential section of our neighbourhood over the main road (you may have noticed recently all the remaining dwellings have been emptied and blue fencing has gone up around the site). And so we met in March as expected, our final meeting being the week before lockdown, and then suddenly the town was quieter still.

Some of the most memorable days of my childhood are those when it snowed and from the lofty vantage point of the house we lived in (several hundred feet above sea level), clinging to side of the Rowley Hills in the West Midlands, we could see the difference the inclement weather would make to the thousands of households as well as the businesses, shops and schools etc we could see in the surrounding Black Country. You can see the highest summit of the range, Turners Hill, from Junction 2 of the M5, if you're ever driving that way, or have a look on Google Maps! The world would change, the sound of the roads would die down, and standing in our back garden I'd be suddenly more aware of the trains in the distance as they moved up and down the West Coast Mainline a couple of miles away. The change in the environment would alter colour, the smells on the air, everything would go through a slightly different filter in the snowy and iced chill, built up landscape.

Now it's likely that the worst of our winter weather this year, as is most often the case, will come in February or March, and there may be some snow days ahead of us this winter. But it is also likely that our reaction to them has been forever altered by the circumstances of 2020. Many people can work from home, children can be sent school work... we could just carry on, but

maybe there is something to be said for stopping. The pause we take when circumstances force us to stop has a different quality to the times we choose to slow down (if indeed you do ever choose to slow down, I can recommend it, but very much in the vein of do as I say not as I do!) Such times, if they come unexpectedly, can provide us with a jolt and a change to our perspective that we hadn't been able to previously consider. Life contains many of these moments both in connection and community with others and in our personal circumstances, a colleague of mine taught me the word "lifey" to mean that which is of life and just happens... and I have embraced it within my own mindset and spiritual practice for dealing with life's joys and sorrows. Something recently prompted me to look up if it had a definition in any recognised dictionary! And it turns out Merriam-Webster has it listed as word of mainly Scottish origins meaning "spirited." As a mainly Unitarian, whose spiritual path comes mainly from the seeking of truth and meaning wherever it is to be found, this recognition of the energy inherent in existence with its myriad of light and shade seems to fit just right for now. The last year has given me an opportunity to have more individual conversations with many of you, which have been an unexpected blessing. Coming into 2021 we do so with a whole host of ideas from the conversations we have had over the last 12 months, and a great deal of hope for the coming year. So I would like to wish you all a very lifey time in the coming months as we continue to connect as a community in whatever forms that takes.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT - Online Heart and Soul Circle**

Beginning in January, Aleks is hoping to begin hosting an online Heart and Soul Circle.

Following the training that was available via the MUA (Midland Unitarian Association) on leading small group worship and prayer we've been given the excellent opportunity to use this

simple format for prayer and reflection and the weekly resource produced by Jane Blackall of Kensington Unitarians to form a new regular contemplative spiritual gathering. The time and date for this has yet to be decided. However, this is an exciting development and will be available via Zoom both to existing members and friends of Northampton Unitarians and the wider community (potentially others from around the country since the gatherings take place online!) If you are interested in going onto the list to participate in this group, which will be led by Aleks please email me (Aleks.Zglinka@gmail.com) with the subject **Joining Northampton Heart and Soul Circle** and let her know if any particular day and time within a week would work best for you and even if you're not able to join Northampton's eventual slot(s) the contact details for other online gatherings are shared weekly on the Heart and Soul Circle website (again email Aleks if you want a link to these details)

Once we're again able to meet in small groups at the Meeting House our intention is to offer both the virtual and an in person version of the programme.

*Aleks*

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### **A Yuletide Tale by Jon Small**

Back in the old days when the Soviet Union was still around there was in a distant, forested area a papermaking collective. Rudi, as he was known to his colleagues and his wife, Olga worked at the mill, but proved to be a lazy fellow so the Commissar gave him the job of tree sizing. This involved him going around a designated part of the forest and measuring the girth of the trees. When he found one of a suitable size he marked it with a white cross in paint and later the loggers would come along and cut it down to be pulped. Rudi was required to go out every day and

could only take a day off if it rained, if it snowed he still had to go out and measure trees.

Rudi and Olga were given a small log cabin amongst the trees, partly built into an earthen bank. It was a cosy little place with only two rooms, one at the front functioned as a living room and kitchen whilst the smaller room at the back was the bedroom.

One morning Olga got up and started to prepare breakfast, she knew if she didn't have his breakfast ready he wouldn't get up being so lazy. When it was nearly ready she shouted through to the back room, "Rudi your breakfast's ready – get up you lazy sod!"

Now a wind had sprung up a little while before Olga had risen. In the wind was rain and it was blowing across the cabin from the back to the front. Rain was splattering onto the window in the bedroom to Rudi's delight but all that could be seen from the window in the front was flurries of snow being blown off the cabin roof.

"It's raining, I'm not going to work today – I'll have it in bed."

"It's not raining you lazy bugger – it's snowing!"

"It's raining!"

"It's snowing – I can see it from the window, get up and get ready, what if the Commissar come round – you'll get the sack!!"

"It's bloody well snowing!"

"I tell you it's RAINING! It's RAINING, if you don't believe me, come in here and look."

Olga slammed down the porridge spoon and stalked through into the bedroom.

"Look", said Rudi, pointing at the rain pattering on the window pane, "what's that then?"

"Oh, yes it *is* raining – sorry."

"That's alright after all, Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear!"

## Northampton Unitarians

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### Words for a new year by Sydney H. Knight

The New Year is before us, like morning-fresh untrodden snow, unmarked by human tracks. As we walk the days ahead, may our paths be straight and clear, widening into highways fair. Where we pause and have dealings with others, may homes of fellowship arise. May streets and market-places echo with gladness; may we build a city of tomorrow, peopled with understanding and rich with praise. The New Year is like a day yet un-lived; a tomorrow yet to dawn; without life, empty. We shall fill the coming year with our daily living; it is ours to make or mar.

May our dreams and hopes be worthy of the best within us, and our lives be worthy of our dreams. Amen