



Northampton Unitarians News

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

Issue 68, July - September 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
<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 July - September 2021

First, my apologies for not producing a newsletter for April – June – it slipped off my radar somehow. 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. We hope to be resuming our monthly Labyrinth Walks soon. Of course, this may change if the coronavirus resurges. Worship leaders for July - September are as follows:

July

Sunday 4th Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinka
Sunday 18th Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinka

August

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

September

Sunday 5th Worship Service, Mr. Kieren Mardle-Moss
 (Coventry)
Sunday 19th Worship Service, Ms. Aleks Zglinka

***Our first AGM since 2019 will be held on 1st August, after the worship service. All are welcome to attend. Rev Sue Woolley, our Secretary, will be sending the documents to Aleks for wider distribution.**

Message from our Community Development Coordinator

Welcoming the Summer!

Way back in the Autumn I wrote in my piece about the green verges and the trees across from the Meeting House. I wrote a poem inspired by the spending time with the trees and it sent me off down a path which later arrived at Easter with my sharing of the EcoChurch award information with you and promising to take a more serious look at our environmental impact on the local area and the wider world through our action and inaction.

Well, I've filled in the questionnaire and we've got a bit of work to do! [If any of our wider readership wants to join EcoChurch online and select our church to be able to look at our survey information please do. If you need any help with it, do ask!]

Based on how much time we spend talking about the natural world and how elements of caring for creation feature in our worship we do quite well on the Worship and Teaching strand. (Although we could do more!) However, the element I want to encourage us to think about is Land. Theoretically we could probably tick the checkbox that says we are not responsible for any land at all, since the outdoor margins of our property are quite small compared to the grounds and graveyards of many churches that are listed with examples of good practice in the accompanying resources to the award programme. However, I think we could be doing a little bit more with our not a lot and still have a significant impact.

I've rescued a number of self-set trees from garden pots I've started over the years and you'll soon notice them nestled along the wall in the corner outside, they're not expensive plants, they're nature's gift, seeds that floated into my soil and turned into happy green

friends. Small trees that can host miniature wildlife... ladybirds, spiders, woodlice... these small creatures we can provide homes for and that helps local bird populations. When these trees are grown up more, we can hopefully find new homes for them elsewhere. One day they'll be big trees. We should do these things that have an impact on the future. We may never sit under the full mature canopy of our current tree children, but if we do this thing now we can send forth our intentions for a better greener world into the future.



The green top of a self-set Goat/Pussy Willow that is coming to live its best teenage tree in a pot life at Northampton Unitarians Meeting House.

There are many other things we can do in the here and now to make a healthier environment for everyone, hopefully some of these may become projects we can do together in the future. And hopefully we will be on our way to the Bronze Award level of EcoChurch very soon!

Meeting plans for Friends of St Katherine's Gardens

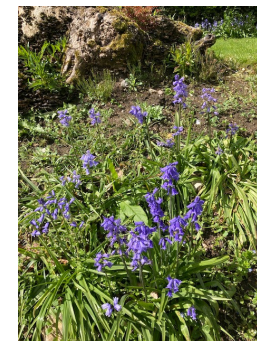
With the constantly changing situation regarding the Covid restrictions we've not been able to commit to holding the sort of first open meeting I'd want to be able to host for exploring working with other local people and organisations to look at if it's possible to improve safe use of our neighbouring small park. Several people have been very interested, so at the moment watch this space for when things change enough for us to hold a great welcoming open meeting.

Aleks

The Efficacy of Flowers: Blogpost by Sue Woolley

I love the quotation by Chao Hsiu Chen, “When a flower blooms, it shows us its beauty. If it does not bloom, it teaches us hope.”

Flowers show us their beauty and lift our hearts. I walk either in the fields around the village or in Salcey Forest most days and my heart is always lifted by the sight of a flower I have never seen before – snowdrops, primroses, daffodils, tulips, bluebells (see photo below) and wild roses. I mark the passing of the days and of the seasons by the flowers that bloom.



And I suppose that a flower that does not bloom *does* teach us hope, in that we can wait in patience for it to bloom.

But I have more often been taught hope by flowers that bloom in the oddest places – in the cracks of pavements, for example. They seem to prove that no matter what their environment, they will still burst forth in all their glory. And that we can do the same, no matter how harsh our own situation.

They can also teach us about the power of nature to overcome human-made environments. I can remember seeing a photo of Chernobyl, the Russian city which had the nuclear incident in 1986. Nature has taken it over now...



I think that flowers can be a potent symbol of hope. They hold out the promise that there will always be new life, even in the darkest times.

What brings *you* hope, as we come out of this pandemic?

Northampton Unitarians

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### From *Summer of Plenty* by Gabor Kereki

The air lingering among the trees is full with the fine atoms of summer. Brushed from the waving corn, swept from maturing grasses, sweetened by the fragrance of flowers, the golden dust of sunshine is breathed by every living thing.

The power of the sun is felt over land and sea; high over the lark's overflowing song, over the intensely glowing colours of flowers, where butterflies dance in rapturous motions.

Summer is the season of plenty; there is no limit to its generosity; everything is on a scale of splendid waste... Let us absorb the bounty of summer plenty into our lives; let us gather its broad happiness into our common existence. As we share the fine atoms of summer, so we shall enjoy their glory.

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