



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

Issue 69, October – December 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 October – December 2021

Worship leaders for October – December are as follows:

October

Sunday 3rd Worship service, Jon Small
Sunday 20th Worship service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska

November

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

December

Sunday 5th A Celebration of Carols around the World
 Ms. Aleks Zglinska, Dr Mark Beaumont and
 Northants Life Music
Sunday 19th Worship Service, Ms. Aleks Zglinska

Message from our Community Development Coordinator: Northampton Unitarians are proudly LGBTQ+ inclusive

On Sunday, September 12th, 2021 Northampton Unitarians took the opportunity to join with other local, cultural, charitable, and civic organisations to celebrate Northampton Pride in the Market Square. Put together by a team of committed volunteers and supported by West Northamptonshire Council (as part of the local LGBTQ+ People's Forum previously supported by Northampton Borough Council) the event started with a Pride March along Abington Street and around the square. We had been able to set up a stall within the Market and were opposite Northants Rights

and Equality Council where a familiar face was hosting their stall (it was our very own Chris Nelson, find out more about the important work they do on their website, <https://northantsrec.org/>).

We had brand new postcards to hand out declaring “You are #QueerlyBeloved” with our contact details on the back and the fact that we are able to host the full range of weddings and other ceremonies at our Meeting House.



Thea Cochrane proudly shows off one of our #QueerlyBeloved postcards at our pride stall which is bedecked with rainbow ribbon bunting!

It was a great day, with lots of bright colours, and positive conversations with members of the public. Some of the young

people, particularly, were really pleased to pick up a colourful postcard and several folks thanked us for being an affirming religious and spiritual community. Several people also left prayers and messages on our prayer tree on the day which you can see in the Meeting House (Although it's currently undergoing a little makeover a coat of white paint and some glossy paper will have been applied soon!) We also took our very own non-binary dancing puppet Thay (pronouns they/them) and our big green story-loving dragon Ormebrekka, who certainly gained lots of attention and had to keep being wiped off after being repeatedly patted on the head, so they almost certainly both enjoyed the day out.

For this first time attending it was really very valuable to just be there alongside lots of other organisations and to be able to say "Whoever you are, whoever you love, you are welcome." Hopefully this is just the start of us being able to attend more events after the last eighteen months have been so empty of the usual community events in town. And also gave us an opportunity to be known about by many more people in the town who may have passed us by, and not known who we were or where they could find us!

Thank you to everyone who helped and those who did pop by during the day to support us, and to a friend of Aleks who was able to come and visit and gave us some extra help. We also deeply appreciated the messages of support from others who weren't able to be there, and from other Unitarians from elsewhere who were able to give us some tips and feedback on how best to show up to such an event. Hopefully next year with more of a lead up in terms of planning around the date we will be able to have more of us attend and be involved in the day.

Aleks

Growing into Beloved Community: Blogpost by Sue Woolley

In early September, I attended an inspirational conference at the Nightingale Centre at Great Hucklow. It was my first visit for two years and it felt so good to be back. For me, the Nightingale Centre is a very special place, my spiritual home.



Our guest speaker was Alistair McIntosh, Quaker and spiritual activist, and his theme was on becoming the beloved community. He explained it was about combining being engaged with the world and society from a deep place, in which we realise we are part of a deeper reality.

It doesn't matter what we call this deep, implicit, underlying order. He gave us many definitions: the Hindu word, *dharma* – the deep structure present in reality, the Taoist Way, or Christian God-consciousness. It's all about walking in the ways of good. It's about practising the central spiritual question of discernment: "Does this bring life? Does this lead you into life?" (rather than back into the concerns of the individual ego).

He explained that we live in a deeply materialistic society, in which it seems to make sense to compete. And that self-referential narcissism cuts us off from community. All of us are complicit in the capitalist, consumerist paradigm that is Western society.

But we all have souls – that deepest part of us that enables us to connect with each other on a deeper, more spiritual level. There is a level on which we are all members, one of another. He gave the example of the difference between being individual fingernails on a hand, and the hand as a whole.

At this deeper level of interconnection, we are able to grow into becoming the beloved community. But in order to reach that point, it is necessary to do deep, spiritual work, to get the shadows, the concerns of the ego, out of the way. Even then, we only get glimpses or intimations of the Way. It is a task that will take the rest of our lives.

Our job as Unitarians is to offer a safe and sacred space in which this deep spiritual work can take place. He quoted Ram Dass, "We are all walking each other home." Home in this context meaning being in right relationship with others and with the Divine.

It was a rich few days, and I came home feeling inspired and grateful and connected.

Northampton Unitarians

**Northampton Unitarians Meeting House,
St. Katherine's Terrace, Northampton NN1 2AX
website: www.northamptonunitarians.org.uk**

Community Development Coordinator: Ms. Aleks Zglinska
e-mail: aleks.zglinska@gmail.com

Chairperson: Mrs. Julie Small
e-mail: julieasmall@hotmail.co.uk

Secretary & Newsletter Editor: Rev. Sue Woolley
tel: 01604 870746 e-mail: revsuewoolley@gmail.com

Treasurer: Mr. Jon Small
e-mail: jonasmall@hotmail.co.uk

Organist: Dr. Mark Beaumont
tel: 079804 98970 e-mail: drmarksmusic40@yahoo.co.uk

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### *Harvest Thanksgiving by Gabor Kereki*

This is the day of thanksgiving.

Let us rejoice in it and be glad and let us count our many blessings.

Let us be grateful for everything in our life that is true and good and just and beautiful and of good report.

Let us be especially grateful for the bountiful harvest of the year, for the peace and comfort of our homes.

For the ties of love which bind our lives together, giving meaning and purpose and dignity to all our days.

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