

Calendar DECEMBER

SUNDAY 28th 11.00 am Morning Service with Winnie Gordon
Stewards: Bryan Wood and Josie Whiteley

JANUARY

SUNDAY 4th 11.00 am Morning Service with Cheryl Ford
Stewards: Owen Beale and Angela Maher

Wednesday 7th 6.30 pm Meditation Service and Discussion Group

SUNDAY 11th 11.00 am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Stewards: Jill Hudson and Hazel Reynolds

Wednesday 14th 6.30 pm Meditation Service and Discussion Group

SUNDAY 18th 11.00 am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Stewards: Winnie Gordon and Dolly Gordon

Wednesday 21st 6.30 pm Meditation Service
7.30 pm Spiritual Movie Club

SUNDAY 25th 11.00 am Morning Service with Agape Meal following the service.
Stewards: Bryan Wood and Alan Barker

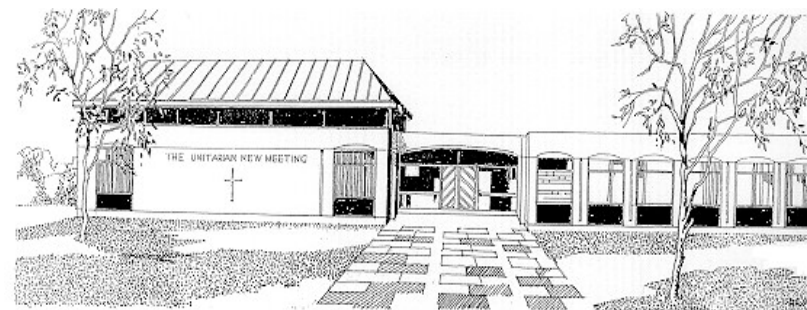
Wednesday 28th 6.30 pm Meditation Service and Discussion Group

FEBRUARY

SUNDAY 1st 11.00 am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay



Unitarian New Meeting Church Birmingham



January 2009

On the 13th of December UNM held its Christmas Fayre. From previous calendars you will have read that our reason for holding such an event was in response to statistics that suggested that the Ladywood area of Birmingham had the greatest number of children that were from a deprived background or from families with very low incomes.

I think that in retrospect if all of those concerned with the project knew exactly how much work this would take they would have thought twice. The fayre was a great success. Although the smooth running of the fayre relied upon us all working together there are a couple of people that deserve specific mention. Bini and Winnie were the chief organisers and without their hard efforts the fayre would have almost certainly never taken place. I would also like to thank Darren, who although he is not a member of the congregation, worked tirelessly by raising donations, wrapping presents and organising stalls. I would also like to thank those members from other congregations that came to Birmingham es-

pecially to help out. There are many others who gave a lot of help who I will thank personally as space in this short leader is limited.

On talking to some of the long standing members of the congregation I understand that it is quite a long time since UNM has done anything on the scale of the Christmas fayre. It seems to me that we must be in quite a healthy position to have a sufficient amount of people willing to put the requisite efforts in for the fayre to succeed.

Unitarianism, in its golden era, was primarily concerned with social initiatives for the poor by providing free schools, food and clothing. Although the Christmas fayre was not really on the scale of the initiatives of our forebears it is good to see the same spirit alive and well within our church.

Opportunities to serve others in church are wide and varied, some would say limitless and unrelenting, but we, the ones volunteering to serve, never end up impoverished by the experience but rather are enriched by it. As a church we can pat ourselves on the back in the knowledge that there are many families in Ladywood and across Birmingham, whose children have decent presents and a food hamper for this Christmas. We have gone a little way to show the people during the 'credit crunch' that they are not entirely alone and that there are people that care for them.

The Christmas Fayre has given each of us an opportunity to express our Unitarian faith through the actions of our hands, and judging by the amount of love and good cheer present on the day I know that you will all be thinking about the marvellous things that we can all do for 2009!! Maybe the memory of all the hard work needs to fade a little before I make such suggestions!

So before I frighten you all too much I would like, on behalf of the family Ramsay, to take this opportunity wish you all a happy and peaceful new year.

Simon Ramsay

Forthcoming Events

Sunday 25th January GA President Joyce Ashworth will be present. Agape meal following the service

Friday 6th to Sunday 8th February Unitarian Youth Programme Junior Weekend for 7 to 11 year olds at Great Hucklow. For more information contact Rev. John Harley (0207 240 2384).

Sunday 8th February Ministry committee meeting following the service.

Sunday 15th February Service of Welcoming and Rededication. Agape Meal following.

Sunday 1st March Vestry committee meeting following the service.

Wednesday 15th to Saturday 18th April Meetings of the General Assembly, at University College Chester. For more information contact Rev. Simon Ramsay.

Wayside Pulpit

Days like this are a reminder that true wealth is not about money. True wealth comes from happiness, from approaching the world with open eyes and an open mind, from learning to love what you have.

J.D. Roth

The Church is in Ryland Street, Five Ways, Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 8BL

Tel: 0121 455 8818 Website : www.birminghamnewmeeting.org.uk

e-mail: info@birminghamnewmeeting.org.uk

Minister: Rev. Simon Ramsay

230 The Avenue, Birmingham B27 6NU

Tel: 0121 243 1560 Mobile: 07915 618549

e-mail: ramsaysimon@blueyonder.co.uk

Secretary: Ms Jill Hudson

100 Elizabeth Road, New Oscott, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5AS

Tel: 0121 605 0389

Calendar Editor: Angela Maher

e-mail: amaher@theiet.org

In accordance with convention, all unsigned articles are written by the Editor. Any views expressed by the Editor make no claim to represent the views of the Congregation, or any person other than herself.

Poetry Corner

Sonnet XV

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment.
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment.
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheerèd and checked even by the self-same sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay,
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful Time debateth with decay
To change your day of youth to sullied night;
And all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

William Shakespeare

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

Having read in the December Calendar the suggestion for ceasing the roll call of names at the annual Remembrance Sunday service, I am writing to say that I would like to see this practice continued until the centenary of the end of the First World War. I think so many people, especially young men, sacrificed their lives that it is good to remember those from our church in person. If there are other or better ways of making their sacrifice more real to younger generations, as suggested, let's use those methods as well.

Yours sincerely

Jill Hudson

[If anyone else would like to contribute to the discussion, please feel free to write to me, either via email or c/o the church. Angela Maher, Editor]

Message from the Chairman

The end of one year and the start of the new always seems to lead us into retrospection - the guilty pleasure (?) of looking back to see what we have managed in a year. Well, we have done a lot as a church this year and much of it was good. Of course we suffered the odd downside such as losing more of our roof to thieves but on the whole we can be pleased with the way things have turned out. But I want to encourage you to look forward at this time rather than back but to bear in mind the latest of our successes.

That the Christmas Fayre was a success was largely due to the hard work of its organisers - Winnie Gordon and Bini Ramsay with much assistance from members of the congregation and others. There were too many helpers on the day to mention and others also baked cakes and gave presents and items to sell on the bric-a-brac stalls including our friends in the Kingswood congregation.

We had more presents than we could give away on the day but they will all find a good home this Christmas thanks to the Family Service Unit and the other charity involved (whose name escapes me at the time of writing!)

We have much to learn from this and I hope very much that we will build on the experience we gained and manage to do even better next year. And that is why I am asking you to look forward - look at the year ahead and turn your mind to what we can all do through New Meeting for ourselves and for others. Bear in mind also that we have the perennial problem of funding the church through another year and without any help from a crane!

Let us greet 2009 with a glad heart and without too much regret for all the things we did not manage to complete in 2008. Instead congratulate yourselves on all the things we did manage to do and let's set ourselves the task of accomplishing more in the year ahead. Happy New Year!

Owen Beale

Subscription Arrangements

We have decided to simplify the way in which members pay their subscriptions to UNM. We will no longer have an envelope scheme. Instead, all those subscribing members who are tax payers in the UK are asked to complete a Gift Aid form, which is enclosed with this calendar. This enables us to reclaim the basic rate tax paid in your subscription from the government at no cost to yourself.

We also encourage you, if you have a bank account, to complete a standing order mandate form (which is also enclosed with this calendar) together with instructions for completion. If you do not have a bank account, please send your subscriptions direct to the subscriptions steward.

When you have completed one or both forms, please send them to the subscriptions steward, Bryan Wood at the following address:

Flat 45 Beaumont Park
Persnore Road
Kings Norton
Birmingham B30 3AS

Thank you all for your help in this matter and please be as generous as you can with your subscriptions.

Roland Kay, Treasurer

Thoughts and Feelings

Most typical conventional religions tend to rely on our trust in the words of a historical prophet or sage, such that we tend to need a faith with little verification to follow the advocated teaching or way of life. Modern thought has questioned this to a point where many of us have rejected some of those traditionally accepted ideas, seeking a more tangible or verifiable alternative. In order to make progress it is necessary to develop a deeper relationship between our thoughts and feelings, so that we can evaluate what is what.

Virtually everything we do is guided by both our thoughts and feelings. Our thoughts tend to use ideas that have already been established in our sub-conscious mind (memory), often mostly when we were younger, as children whilst at school. As we grow up we have more inclination to

challenge some of these accepted ideas and change some of those values for carefully thought out reasons, often based on our experience of life as we grow older. Some people try harder to do this than others and Unitarian people are likely to be at least some of those. The question is what difference does this make to our lives and what governs how our emotions develop in relation to this?

As this subject cannot be adequately covered in a single article it may be developed further at a later date. **One question I'd like to ask is which is most important, how we feel or what we think?** Although thought cannot easily be completely divorced from feeling, the two are always busy inside us, even whilst we are sleeping. A good reason for practising meditation is to observe carefully how this process is working and whether we have any control over it. Although it is traditional for men to be perceived more as 'thinkers' than 'feelers', and women 'feelers' rather than 'thinkers', we all of course do both in abundance, with many modern women now thinking just as much as men ever have. Conversely, men can often be perceived today as trying to 'feel' more than they used to but not always with any less thought than before.

I conclude by suggesting that we can all learn by observing ourselves carefully, as many of us already do, whilst seeking greater insight into how we can change what we do and why. One problem today is that it regularly takes time for us to do this, together with all the other demands on our time and resources but, despite this, there does seem to be good reason to seek a deeper understanding of both ourselves and the world that we all share.

Kevin Edwards

Notice of Election of Officers to the Vestry

On Sunday 4th January nomination sheets will be placed on the notice board in the Priestley Room showing vacancies for officers and members of the vestry. This will remain in place until Sunday 1st Feb 2009. Anyone wishing to nominate a Church Member for one of the positions must obtain the prior consent of that member. The name of the person nominated must be entered on the sheet, together with the names of the proposer and seconder to the nomination. Retiring members of the Vestry Committee are eligible for re-election.

Jill Hudson, Secretary