

Calendar

September

Sunday 30th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Harvest Lunch following the Service

October

Sunday 4th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Wednesday 7th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 11th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Wednesday 14th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 18th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Agape Meal following the service
3pm Alternative Afternoon Service

Wednesday 21st 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 25th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Wednesday 28th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

November

Sunday 1st 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Wednesday 4th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 8th 11am Service of Remembrance with Rev.
Simon Ramsay

Wednesday 11th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 15th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Agape Meal following the service
3pm Alternative Afternoon Service

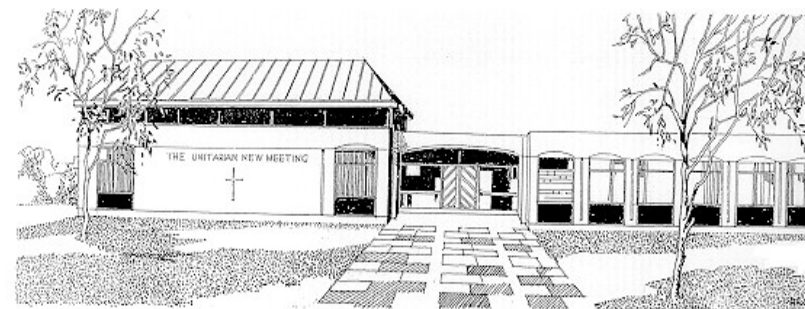
Wednesday 18th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 22nd 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Wednesday 25th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 29th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Unitarian New Meeting Birmingham



October 2009

If we can really understand the problem, the answer will come out of it, because the answer is not separate from the problem.

J. Krishnamurti

Over the summer in Birmingham we have had two occasions of social unrest in the city centre. Both times were brought about by the protests from groups known as English and Welsh Defence League, and the Unite Against Fascism group. The reason for the protest by the English and Welsh Defence League was as a result of the

apparent 'abuse' by Muslims of British soldiers that had fought in Afghanistan and Iraq, parading in Luton. The Unite Against Fascism protest was in reaction to the English and Welsh Defence League.

On watching interviews with people representing both sides it was clear to me that unrest was more emotionally charged than anything else; neither side seemed to put forward arguments that made much rational sense. It was unrest caused by fear and ignorance rather than understanding. Tensions rose between the two groups and violence ensued. My question is: 'Are the opinions of either group representative of the population as whole?'

Now I admit that haven't asked everyone in the country what their thoughts are, but my experience, through seeing many people from different faiths and communities, is that people on the whole just want to get on and go about their life peacefully and without hindrance.

As a minister of a liberal religious congregation, that accepts that reason has an important place in seeking truth and meaning in our life, I find myself saddened by the lack of thought of both sides; especially when the protests ended in violence.

My worry is that in uncertain times people grasp for the easy answer that supports their unexamined fears and as such they will move toward the ill founded answers. In my mind, violence is never the answer because, as the Jewish theologian Hannah Errant states, it can only come from a deep sense of powerlessness.

In the above quote Krishnamurti writes 'the answer is not separate from the problem'. Does it not therefore become the responsibility of those who are willing to think and reflect upon the problem, to move away from the extremes and to be a much needed voice of reason?

Simon Ramsay

Forthcoming events

Carrs Lane Lectures in Radical Christian Faith 2009

Worshipping with Integrity in a Radical Context

When: Thursdays in October

Where: Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham (behind Marks & Spencers)

Times: 6.00 pm – 7.30 pm

Further details at <http://www.carrslane.co.uk/news/life/lectures> or

Carrs Lane Church Tel (0121) 643 6151

People of Faith in Civic Life

When: Sunday 11th October 2009

Where: Unitarian New Meeting Church, Birmingham

Times: 1.30 pm - 5.00 pm

Further details from Ruth Tetlow, 0121 449 4892 or

ruthtetlow@btinternet.com

Birmingham District Women's League Autumn Meeting

When: Saturday 17th October 2009

Where: Unitarian New Meeting Church, Birmingham

Time: 11.00 am to 2.30 pm

Further details from Miss Ann Hughes, annhughes999@aol.com

Midland Unitarian Association Annual Lunch

When: Saturday 31st October 2009

Where: Kingswood Meeting House, B47 5DQ

Time: 10.30 for 11.00 am

Further details from Sue Woolley e-mail sue.woolley@virgin.net

Wayside Pulpit

Into every tidy scheme for arranging the pattern of human life, it is necessary to inject a certain dose of anarchism.

Bertrand Russell

About the congregation

Unitarian New Meeting Church is a loving and caring community that values freedom of belief and religion, worshipping in the heart of Birmingham. You are warmly welcomed to any of our services or events.

We are affiliated to the General Assembly of Unitarians and Free Christians, and the Midland Unitarian Association.

You can find us in Ryland Street, Birmingham B16 8BL
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About the calendar

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Contributions are most welcome. The next deadline is 15th September.

All views expressed in this calendar represent those of their author(s) and not necessarily the congregation. By convention, any unsigned articles are written by the editor.

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone. As you read this the year will properly be on the turn. Like most of you I'm never very sure where the time goes! At the turn of the seasons though I always seem to stop and think about this more than at other times. I've never been very fond of the winter and tend to get gloomy as the weather changes for the colder. But I get great reassurance from the cycle of the year, knowing that each season is the precursor to the next lets me leap from Autumn to Spring without thinking too much about Winter, come though it must (but I did look at the new thick coats in Marks and Sparks longingly today!)

This morning we were woken by a thump from outside. We had come home from holiday (in tin bath land as Tracy knows it or Wales as the rest of us would call it) to find a dead blackbird on the patio so I thought it would be another dead bird. Well so it was, but not in the way I had thought because there was nothing on the patio but when I looked to my left I was gazing straight at a young peregrine falcon tearing the breast feathers off a pigeon and using our neighbours' flat roof as a dining room table. I was so impressed, I made Tracy come and have a look.

Now I know this sounds rather like the nature's notes column in the paper but the thing I'm trying to get at was that this too was a part of the cycle of life. The pigeon's life was over but the falcon's was just at its start and whilst the poor pigeon would rather have gone on as it was at least it had died to feed a bird whose numbers are rather less than those of the pigeon population and which will bring pleasure to many. We have in the past joined the number of people admiring the falcon's nest at the Glover's Needle spire in Worcester and I like to think that this was indeed a local falcon, if not just for local people!

When we go we leave behind us the love and affection we have built up over the years and in its way that has just as real an effect on people as if we too had been used to feed the next generations.

Each passing is a ripple in the pond of life and has its effect on those touched by it. We need as we pass through life to remember that we do not know when we will go and that we must live life properly in order to make the right ripples when we go.

Owen Beale

James Anthony Davenport

On 5th August 2009, at Hinckley Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel, Graham and Catherine White attended a service of thanksgiving to celebrate the life of James Anthony Davenport (Jim). The tribute below is partly taken from the service which was conducted by Jim's great friend and admirer, the Rev. Peter Hewis.

James Anthony Davenport 14th June 1924 – 27th July 2009

Having been a member of the Hinckley Chapel all his life, 'Jim' in later years became a member of Unitarian New Meeting. Sadly his attendances were few since health problems intervened.

Jim loved his Chapel. He liked to describe Unitarians as believers in "one God, no Devil, and 20 shillings in the pound!" His Father ruled the Chapel committee with a rod of iron. If there was a deficit at the end of the year, he paid it off. Jim stated that he had "no intention of doing any of that, but if you want anything then ask for it and I will say yes or no."

He conducted services from time to time and during one particular interregnum, and is remembered as being the only person ever to

have made the congregation sing the same hymn twice during one service.

As a Trustee he transformed the finances at Hinckley and subsequently those of the North Midland District Association.

A successful knitwear manufacturer, Jim established factories in Hinckley and Louth and played an active part in the Hosiery Manufacturers Association. The wider community also benefitted from Jim's enormous drive and ability. A school governor at Higham and Redmoor and Chairman of the Dixie Grammar School Foundation, much of his community work was as a councillor on Market Bosworth Rural District Council, then later with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, and for many years he served on the Leicester City Council..

No-one could guard taxpayer's money better than Jim who was often quoted as saying, "the easiest thing in the world is to spend someone else's money".

Generous to a fault, a determination second to none, challenging and with a mind of his own, and above all else a devoted family man, may Jim rest in peace. He was a mentor and friend of so many and though much has been taken away, much will endure.

The Benediction at his funeral service echo the words of Theodore Parker:

May ours be a religion which,
Like sunshine, goes everywhere;
Its Temple, all space
Its Shrine, the good heart
Its creed, all truth
Its ritual, works of love;
Its profession of faith, divine living.

Graham White