

Calendar

August

Sunday 30th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Stewards: Bryan Wood and Josie Whiteley

September

Wednesday 2nd 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group
Sunday 6th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Stewards: Angelic Gomez and Graham White

Wednesday 9th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group
Sunday 13th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Stewards: Alan Barker and David Jones

Wednesday 16th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group
Sunday 20th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Agape Meal following the service
Stewards: Winnie Gordon and Angela Maher
3pm Alternative Afternoon Service

Wednesday 23rd 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group
Sunday 27th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Harvest Lunch following the Service
Stewards: Owen Beale and Ian Cook

Wednesday 30th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

October

Sunday 4th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Stewards: Hazel Reynolds and Jill Hudson

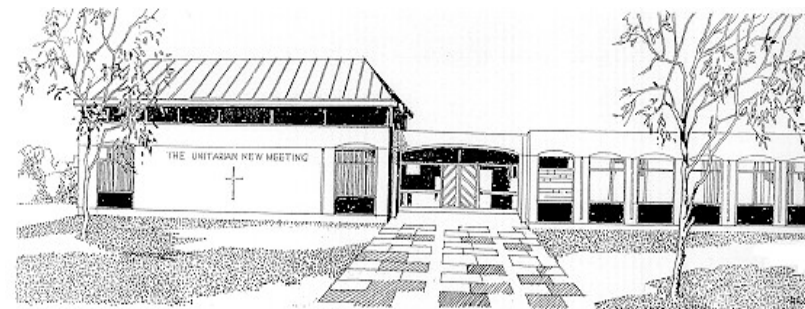
Wednesday 7th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group
Sunday 11th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Stewards: Angelic Gomez and Graham White

Wednesday 14th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group
Sunday 18th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Agape Meal following the service
Stewards: Alan Barker and David Jones

Wednesday 21st 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group
Sunday 25th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay
Stewards: Bryan Wood and Josie Whiteley

Wednesday 28th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Unitarian New Meeting Birmingham



September 2009

When the great Tao was lost ,
there came the ideas of humanity and justice.
When knowledge and cleverness arrived,
there came great deceptions.
When familial relations went out of harmony,
there came ideas of good parents and loyal children.
When the nation fell into disorder and misrule
There came the ideas of loyal ministers.

Lao Tzu

Over the last the few months we have heard many times news stories of MPs, and politicians generally, being corrupt. Now understandably this makes the population anxious and fearful for the direction that our politicians may take our country.

An aspect that further compounds our fear, is the use of political speak and political one-upmanship, as so often the issues that are

important to us seem to be evaded and brushed under the carpet. I've lost count of how many times I heard in interviews a random member of the public asked "who do you think you will vote for at the next election?", only to hear the reply "I don't know as I think they are all as bad as one another".

I have also heard many times that pulpit and politics should never be mixed. I agree with this to some extent, as I believe that a system of governance that is directed by a religious institution is something to be very fearful of. For me, however, it is a matter of degrees as most religious people are not people that wish to strap bombs to themselves and blow themselves up in public places, but are people like you and I trying to make sense and find meaning in the short time between the dawn and dusk.

Religion and politics are interrelated spheres of human life, and as such each of us has a responsibility to speak out against injustice from a place that is informed by our own faith and conscience.

There are many examples in history of people that took on this responsibility such as Jesus, the Buddha and the Prophet Muhammad. None of them aimed to be politicians, but each of them through their connection with a power higher than themselves greatly affected the politics in the countries that adopted their way. There are also examples closer to home in the history of our own congregation such as in the work of the Rev Joseph Priestley, Rev William Henry Crosskey and our small Social Action Group.

Although there have been many good works done by our forebears we are certainly not the only ones in the history of the city of Birmingham. We will be looking at their contributions in our gathering on Sunday 11th October.

Simon Ramsay

Forthcoming events

Dances of Universal Peace on the theme of 'Healing'
When: Saturday 4th October 2009
Where: Newcastle-under-Lyme Unitarian Meeting House
Times: 10.30am – 4.00pm
Further details from Janet Granger, 01538 308860 or dance@janetgranger.co.uk

Autumn Training: Prayer and Meditation
When: Saturday 10th October 2009
Where: Kingswood Meeting House, B47 5DQ
Times: 10.30 am - 4.15 pm (tea and coffee from 10.00)
Further details from Sue Woolley sue.woolley@virgin.net

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

Deep spirituality leads to action in the world.

Rev Peter Morales

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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Secretary: Ms Jill Hudson
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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.

The life of Philip Crosskey

Philip Harben Crosskey was born on 3rd August 1926 and died on 13th July 2009. He was born into a noted Unitarian family, his grandfather had been a Unitarian minister in Birmingham, and he and his family were members of the old Church of the Messiah in Broad Street. For those of us used to the sight of an imposing elderly gent sat in the middle row of the church it may be odd to realise that he was the youngest member of the Crosskey family. He had two older brothers, Roger and Henry and a big sister, Peg (later Peggy Beale). His father was a doctor in Birmingham, with his own practice and also worked as an anaesthetist in the Birmingham Children's Hospital, as was. His mother was a Labour Councillor for many years.

He went to school at Marlborough, following in his brother's footsteps. He studied medicine, which he told me was his mother's idea, designed, he felt, to keep him from the fighting that claimed his brother Roger's life. He was not kept entirely safe since he spent time in Kenya during the Mau Mau emergency as a medical officer but emerged unscathed and became a partner in a general practice in Bromyard, Herefordshire. There he met and married a local girl, Eithne Parker, and they had three children, Ruth, James and Robert Crosskey.

When he retired he and Eithne moved to a small holding in Little Cowarne where they kept sheep and Eithne had a garden with hundreds of different types of daffodil. Eithne died and he moved back into Bromyard. He kept himself very busy with all sorts of activities. In particular he had played a significant part in ensuring that Bromyard retained a local Hospital. He came back to UNM as a regular attendee and he became a member of the Vestry and then Chairman as well. He rang me earlier this year in June to say that

he would not be able to attend church due to his health and when we immediately went to visit he revealed that the bowel cancer he had fought for several years had returned and he had decided not to fight it any longer. He died at home, cared for by his children and mourned by many more.

What idea of the man does such a bare recitation of events give? Well it holds some clues to his character but it cannot be the full picture. My mother, his big sister Peg, used to recall fondly that when things were quiet when he was a small boy she would be told by her mother to go and see what Philip was doing and to tell him to stop. He was always able to understand the young and must, I think, have been able to hold on to his inner boyhood. Certainly as an Uncle his visits were much appreciated and his Christmas and Birthday presents were of the highest quality. Few uncles would have thought to give a disguise outfit including real false moustaches and gum with which to stick them on, or a tepee or a toy drum (which lasted all of a day before disappearing).

Visits to see the Crosskeys in Bromyard were also much appreciated although this was due in no small part to the excellence of Eithne's hospitality as well as his own. There was some dread in the visits too because he was always the proud owner of a Springer spaniel and they tended to be rather bouncy dogs! Later on when they moved to Rose Cottage in Little Cowarne he took great pride in his sheep, but availed himself of close circuit TV to avoid getting out of bed before it was inevitable at lambing time.

When Eithne became ill he played his part in caring for her as he had for so many patients in his practice and when she died he mourned her but did not let his grief get in the way of leading a busy and useful life. He told me on one of our visits before his death that he had always missed her deeply. He worried instead about his children and took great pride in their activities and especially in their

children, his grand children. He took particular pride in his first great-grandchild.

At New Meeting he was a self-effacing individual but he placed himself at the heart of the congregation and led very much by example. He helped us see our minister, Simon Ramsay, into place after a long gap without a minister. When activities were proposed he would play a quiet part in trying to ensure that they were successful. He helped to fund the Christmas Fayre last year without mentioning the fact to anyone and he offered quiet words of encouragement to the participants. He was always friendly and welcoming to all new faces at the church and when he felt that, for instance, his replacement as chairman needed a nudge in the right direction he would do so. He spoke as much as was needful at Vestry meetings and his contributions were sensible and thoughtful.

He looked after himself without demur but always with a view to ensuring that no one was left worrying about him. It is typical that he only told me of his final illness when he knew that it would affect his contribution to the church. He faced the discomfort and pain of death without flinching and was candid enough to say that this was not without apprehension. The true mark of courage is in facing the inevitable with dignity and that he did well. He spoke with pride and affection of his family as well as of his own children. Although he did not complain, he was worried that he might not see his brother Henry again before he died. In the end, he did get to see Henry over the course of a short stay and that must have been a great comfort.

He told me that he felt that he had lived a good and useful life. I told him this was certainly true and that he would be missed. I have tried to give a short description of him to you but I am certain that I have missed a great deal out. Like all of us I suppose he had his shortcomings but all in all he was one of nature's true gentlemen. When I left him the last time I wished him bon voyage. I had no wish to say

goodbye for the last time. I really hope that the journey has turned out well for him.

Owen Beale