

Calendar

January

Wednesday 27th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 31st 11am Morning with Rev. Simon Ramsay

February

Wednesday 3rd 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 7th 11am Morning with Rev. Bob Wightman

Agape Meal following the service.

Wednesday 10th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 14th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Wednesday 17th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 21st 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Children's activities during the service

Wednesday 24th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 28th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Communion Service following

March

Wednesday 3rd 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 7th 11am Morning with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Wednesday 10th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 14th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Wednesday 17th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 21st 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Children's activities during the service

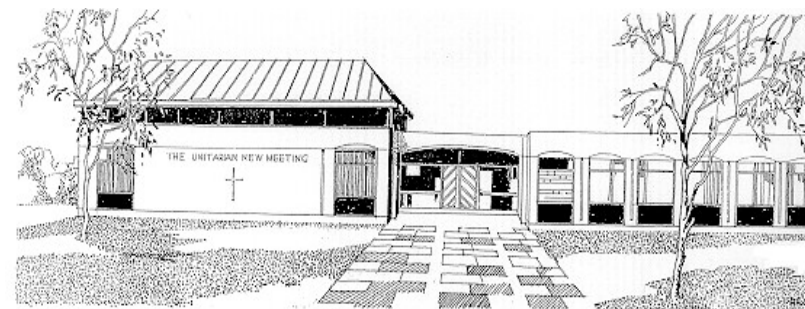
Agape Meal following the service

Wednesday 24th 6.30pm Meditation and Discussion Group

Sunday 28th 11am Morning Service with Rev. Simon Ramsay

Communion Service following

Unitarian New Meeting Birmingham



February 2010

This is the first leader article written since Christmas and I trust that the season brought you everything that you needed and that cold weather snap didn't cause too many problems!

The snow has now thawed and it is time once again to get back to the task of being a church community. Last week, in the Sunday service, we discussed how important it is not only to be together in spirit, but also about how essential our physical attendance in the church; the presence of everyone is needed.

This is especially the case on Sunday 7th February when Rev. Bob

Wightman, the president of the General Assembly, is visiting to take the service. Following this we will have our Agape meal to make Rev. Bob feel especially welcome.

In a congregation such as ours, which doesn't impose beliefs or practices upon any of its members, it can seem that there are few requirements. Other churches place quite stringent requirements upon memberships in the form of minimum donations and formal commitments to work. We, however, are a little more open hearted about and allow people to volunteer what they can afford to give, whether it be in time or money.

Unitarian New Meeting, after all, belongs to each and every one of us and therefore the responsibility of whether we thrive or not belongs to each and every one of us. There are always many jobs to be done and if you would like something to do then please come and speak to me to see what we can arrange.

The life of the church is not all about work; our reason for being is for the spiritual elevation of all. We have, of course, our Sunday service and the Wednesday meditation service, but there are other, new, activities to get involved in. We are re-forming the choir where Rev. Ant Howe will be coming every other Tuesday to teach hymns from the new hymn book (please look on the notice board for details) and I will also, in February, be running a course that helps us to better understand where we stand and what we believe spiritually. In the summer we plan to run a course on Art and Spirituality - this is currently being written!

I think that we have many things to look forward to in 2010 and I relish the opportunity to tread the path together with you.

Simon Ramsay

Forthcoming Events

Midland Unitarian Association Alternative Worship Training

When: Saturday 13th February 9.30 to 4.00

Where: Great Meeting House, Coventry

Further details from Sue Woolley on 01604 870746 or

sue.woolley@virgin.net

Unitarian Christian Association Synod and Annual General Meeting

When: Saturday 6th March 12.30 to 4.30

Where: Kingswood Meeting House, Packhorse Lane, Hollywood

Further details from Ken Howard on 0161 330 1295

American Patchwork Quilting Retreat

When: Friday 19th to Sunday 21st March

Where: Nightingale Centre, Hucklow, Derbyshire

Further details from Stella (Nightingale Manager) on 01298 871218

Midland Unitarian Association Annual General Meeting

When: Saturday 27th March 10.30 to 4.00

Where: Unitarian New Meeting, Birmingham

Further details from Sue Woolley on 01604 870746 or

sue.woolley@virgin.net

Annual Meetings of the General Assembly of Unitarians

When: Thursday 8th to Sunday 11th April

Where: University of Nottingham

Further details from Andrew Mason on 0207 240 2384

Wayside Pulpit

What makes me get up in the morning is the love I feel for my family and friends and humanity as a whole.

Greta Simone

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 February.

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.

from Love life, not stuff

We're in love with stuff — with shopping, with acquiring, with owning, with collecting.

Let's lust after life instead.

Our obsession with stuff has become unhealthy. When we have a void in our lives, we buy things. When we have problems, we buy things. And these things are becoming more and more expensive, bigger, shinier ... more wasteful.

This obsession with stuff leads to owning a lot, having a lot of clutter ... and yet this stuff doesn't fill our lives with meaning.

It leads to deep debt, from buying so much, and needing bigger houses and storage spaces to contain everything. Financially, we're worse off than ever, because of this obsession with stuff.

We buy things when we're depressed, we buy things for others to show how much we love them ... and in this way, stuff has separated us from actually dealing with our emotions, blocked us from truly connecting with others.

Let's replace that lust for stuff with a lust for life.

Rediscover a passion for life. Get outside and feel nature, appreciate the beauty of the world around you. Get active, do some gardening or yardwork, play a sport, go for a walk, take a hike, go for a swim, ride a bike. Feel the life coursing through you. Breathe it in.

Leo Babauta @ Zenhabits.com

The paragraph church

'Non-subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. That's not a name, that's a paragraph.'

That's a quote about our sister denomination on the island of Ireland. I hasten to add that it was stated by a minister of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, so it's not meant to be derogatory. In common use, the denomination is called NSPCI, and whatever else you might say about the long name, it does at least describe them well.

The NSPCI is not exactly Unitarian and has no proper parallel outside Ireland. Its history is as a **'non-subscribing'** church. Its primary ethos is that individual Christians must decide for themselves how to follow Christ's teaching, and that they should not be bound by compulsory subscription to man-made creeds. This means that in the NSPCI, members do not have to agree with specific beliefs, but follow their conscience in interpreting the Bible.

'Presbyterian' describes a way of organising churches that is influenced by passages in the Book of Acts in the Bible. In Presbyterian denominations (including the NSPCI) congregations are run by boards of elders, and individual congregations are not independent, but are instead answerable to the wider denomination through the Presbytery or Synod.

The NSPCI is clearly part of religious traditions on the island of **Ireland**. Most of the member churches are in Northern Ireland, but there are also congregations in Dublin and Cork in the Republic of Ireland.

The paragraph church does exactly what it says on the tin.

Angela Maher

Meetings

Ministry committee Sunday 7th February
Vestry committee Sunday 14th February

The Mother Moon

The moon upon the wide sea
Placidly looks down,
Smiling with her mild face,
Though the ocean frown.
Clouds may dim her brightness,
But soon they pass away,
And she shines out, unaltered,
O'er the little waves at play.
So 'mid the storm or sunshine,
Wherever she may go,
Led on by her hidden power
The wild sea must plow.

As the tranquil evening moon
Looks on that restless sea,
So a mother's gentle face,
Little child, is watching thee.
Then banish every tempest,
Chase all your clouds away,
That smoothly and brightly
Your quiet heart may play.
Let cheerful looks and actions
Like shining ripples flow,
Following the mother's voice,
Singing as they go.

Louisa May Alcott