



Northampton Unitarians News

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

Issue 80, June - August 2024

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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/Northampton Unitarians](https://www.facebook.com/Northampton%20Unitarians)
<http://sue-still-i-am-one.blogspot.co.uk>
<http://www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk>
www.unitarian.org.uk

Calendar for June to August 2024

June

- Sunday 2nd Congregational Circle service.
Theme: Harmony 11.00 am
- Sunday 16th Worship service: Flower celebration,
Aleks Zglinska, 11.00 am
- Weds. 26th Threads, craft and chat group 2.00 till 4.00 pm
followed by Labyrinth Walk, 5.30 till 6.30 pm

July

- Sunday 7th Worship service, Aleks Zglinska, 11.00 am
- Saturday 13th Northampton Pride – more details to follow
- Sunday 21st Worship service, Aleks Zglinska, 11.00 am
- Weds. 31st Threads, craft and chat group 2.00 till 4.00 pm
followed by Labyrinth Walk, 5.30 till 6.30 pm

August

- Sunday 4th Worship service: Rev Sue Woolley, 11.00 am
followed by committee meeting.
- Sunday 18th Worship service: Aleks Zglinska
- Weds. 28th Threads, craft and chat group 2.00 till 4.00 pm
followed by Labyrinth Walk, 5.30 till 6.30 pm



Message from our Community Development Coordinator: Northampton Unitarians

Happy Summer greetings, I am certain Summer is here, however, I am also sure we are seeing the effects of climate change in our weather patterns. This winter just gone was one of the wettest on record, holding the current number 8 spot on average. The trend is that our winters are getting wetter. We also saw minimal frost and snowfall, the last significant very snowy year across the whole of the UK was over a decade ago in the winter of 2010/2011. Newspapers still print their “Arctic Blast” stories to drive clicks these days instead of physical sales, but the promised snow storms never materialised. There were a few nights where we had a little snowfall in certain spots in England, but I still have three full containers of doorstep salt, and my snow shovel gathers cobwebs in my shed.

I know our congregation has a great heart for climate action. The opening of this year's Unitarian General Assembly Annual Meetings was opened by the Unitarians 4 Climate Justice group. The group is a grassroots organisation of Unitarians from across the UK who are moved to work for climate justice. They organise conferences, join in with local and national action, encourage each other and share information and resources in their WhatsApp group. (Ask Aleks for an invite if you would like to be included; it's open to anyone interested.) Their next event is a second conference for Unitarians held at Cross Street Chapel in the centre of Manchester, *Faith in our Future II*, on Saturday 14th September between 11 am and 4 pm and promises “an enriching, informative gathering of climate conscious Unitarians for discussion workshops and connection” the current Unitarian GA President, Professor Geoff Levermore, will be one of the speakers. Geoff is a leading voice on the scientific case of climate action and there will be the opportunity to take part in a “climate cafe” which might be a model we could use to develop our

conversations locally too. (Information is available by joining the WhatsApp group or on Facebook)

July as ever is Pride Month and this year to try and make the most of our energy and resources we have plans to open our space for a Pride Cafe for the afternoon and Aleks will be bringing a taste of the Sensory Sojourn space for Neurodivergent folks to the sanctuary area of the church. We have registered to take part in the parade with our banner if people are willing and able to walk the main event will once again take place at The Waterside University Campus and we will leave from the town centre and walk over to the Campus, (I'm hoping to park my car near the university to allow us to get a lift back to the church afterwards!) We hope that inviting the wider community into a building it showcases our commitment to inclusion and helps support the festivities! More details will follow closer to the time.

Before then on Sunday the 2nd of June, in our usual service at 11 am is our now Annual Flower Celebration in its third consecutive year. Celebrating this uniquely Unitarian festival with the sharing of flowers we invite you this year as part of our commitment to sustainable practices to bring a small bedding plant or two to add to the colourful planters we put outside for the summer season. Last year we had a shower of Busy Lizzies and Petunia plants but it would be great to have as diverse a range as possible and give the bees and butterflies something to feast on.

On the same day, we are holding a Bring and Share **Big Lunch** event from 12.30- 2.30 everyone from the local community is welcome at either event or both! On the day we will be raising funds towards upgrading our toilet facilities to make them more accessible and provide a wheelchair-accessible toilet for our building to widen our welcome. There will also be a small raffle (donations of items are welcome.)

Aleks

The Power of Lies by Sue Woolley

This post is a bit more cynical, a little more world-weary, than my usual upbeat ones. But with Rishi Sunak announcing the date of the next General Election this week, and the latest news about the past-President of the US, I thought it might be worth sharing...

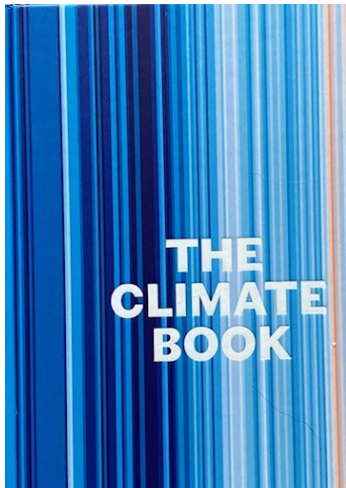
The more successfully someone lies, and the more people he convinces, the more chance he will end up believing in his own lies." These are the words of Hannah Arendt, who, according to Wikipedia, was "a German-American historian and philosopher... one of the most influential political theorists of the 20th century."

She died in 1975, not long after the Watergate scandal had rocked the US. I cannot help wondering what she would have thought of the political scene today, not only in the US, but also over here. Because I can think of two particular blond-haired politicians, about whom her words are prescient...

According to my *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, the meaning of the word "politics" is "the science and art of government", and a politician is defined as, "One skilled in politics, statesman; one interested or engaged in politics, esp. as profession."

When I was a small child, nearly sixty years ago, it seemed that most politicians were in politics for what they could give, not only for what they could get. They were expected to have certain ethical standards and, if scandal attached to them, they were expected to resign. And I am sure that this is still true of some politicians, particularly at a local level. I am also aware that a lot of good work is done by the House of Lords and House of Commons committees.

Yet sadly, it is a long time since I have trusted the word of most politicians. Many today, it seems, believe their own propaganda wholeheartedly. Take the climate change crisis, which Aleks mentioned in her piece on page 2, as an example. The Paris Agreement was signed by most nations of the world in 2015 and yet, nine years later, we are little closer to doing anything much to mitigate the effects of our polluting, planet-destroying, wasteful ways. I strongly urge anyone who cares about the future of our planet to read *The Climate Book*, compiled by Greta Thunberg. It is not an easy read, but a necessary one.



It can be hard to believe in the goodness of people sometimes, when so much evil is being done in our names. And when it seems we have so little power or influence over the people who are supposed to be running the country “for us”. I guess that the least any of us can do is to stand in our own integrity, stand up against the lies that many politicians tell, actively campaign for change, and try to make a positive difference in our own small corners of the world.

Northampton Unitarians

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*Chalice Lighting for Midsummer* by Yvonne Aburrow

The light is at the height of its power  
The Sun shines fiercely.  
But now that power must wane  
Descending into the darkness  
to be reborn.  
Light and darkness dance  
in the crucible of desire  
and bring forth life.  
So we light the chalice flame  
to represent life, hope, love and laughter.