



Northampton Unitarians News

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

Issue 81, September - November 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/NorthamptonUnitarians)
<http://sue-still-i-am-one.blogspot.co.uk>
<http://www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk>
www.unitarian.org.uk

Calendar for September - November 2024

September

- Sunday 1st Worship service, Jon Small, 11.00 am
- Sunday 15th Congregational Circle Service.
Theme: Autumn & Harvest 11.00 am
- Weds. 25th Macmillan Coffee Afternoon 2.00 pm
See attached poster for more information.

October

- Sunday 6th Worship service, Mark Beaumont, 11.00 am
- Sunday 20th Worship service, Aleks Zglinska, 11.00 am
- Weds. 30th Threads, craft and chat group 2.00 till 4.00 pm
followed by Labyrinth Walk, 5.30 till 6.30 pm

November

- Sunday 3rd Worship service: Rev Sue Woolley, 11.00 am
followed by committee meeting.
- Sunday 17th Worship service: Heather Korbey
- Weds. 27th 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

Autumn is my favourite season, though I am usually a fan of whatever season is the current one! Interestingly, I have realised more clearly that the seasons as they are understood by the English-speaking countries of the Northern Hemisphere are very euro-centrally defined. We imagine autumn as a time of crisp mornings, crunchy leaves underfoot and berries, these are all signs we can look for in our English surroundings. Still, the passion for these signs has spread to the rituals and activities of many other places that do not have the same climate as we do here, particularly in the south-west of America where people use plastic decor items to evoke the sense of the season that we find in the traditions of many of our ancestors. People all over the world mark change in different ways. With my departure from this community as a leader I look forward to being welcomed back as a friend, some of that will be familiar to us all, and some of it will feel new, and different. I will no longer be able to reel off the upcoming events because we planned them together, I will be looking to you sharing the notices!

Autumn is sometimes considered a transitional season, it's the bit in between the extremes of warmth and cold. Summer the height of the heat, Winter the depth of the freeze and both Spring and Autumn are seasons of motion from one direction to another. This we know is caused by the consistent motion of our globe around the Sun, and due to the axial tilt of the Earth the concentration of the Sun's rays across the surface of the planet where we are situated changes. We feel this change in our bodies, we experience it in the change of behaviour of our fellow beings journeying with us on our "Blue Boat Home". You'll probably notice that suddenly your house is filled with spiders, (sorry to those whose skin shudders at the thought) but these eight-legged marvels are utterly uninterested in you and your family. They are

seeking shelter to start a family themselves! They are small, just want a corner and they will eat other household pests you don't need munching through your carpet and sock drawer, like moths, carpet beetles, woodlice etc.

If you can stand to permit them room try not to kill them, and don't be tempted to "put them back outside where they belong". They want shelter, historically they'd be using piles of leaves, tree hollows, caves, and hedges to hide amongst, but since your house is now where those things used to be, if you have to remove them from your dwelling, pop them in a shed or a bin/wood store!

I look forward to Autumn myself because of the embodied sense of change I experience with all my senses, I look for berries, and leaf colour, I pick up shiny multicoloured leaves from the pavement and walk over grass verges and park greens covered in drying curled foliage just to experience "THE CRUNCH". Our senses open up a path for communication between ourselves and the wider world around us. As part of this Autumn's workshop from the MUA, I will be bringing my experience and creativity to the workshops with a version of my "Sensory Sojourn" which I trialled at the General Assembly venue this last Spring for participants of the large national gathering for Unitarians in the UK and Ireland. One of the activities and resources I make available is sets of artistic prompt cards, I have ones which speak of body positivity, I have a set which details constellations you might be able to see in the night sky, I bring pebbles, shells, found objects, religious and secular artworks. All these things are an invitation to experience more, to be more, to open ourselves up to that sense of deep connection with one another and our surroundings. I'm going to leave you with three suggestions from a box I recently acquired called "Ways of Tuning your Senses". With charming artwork from Japanese artist Shuku Nishi these particular cards' images resonate with me as connected to my past experiences of Autumn as a season, and the reverse of each card

gives a prompt of an activity to do. Maybe we could all try at least one of these soon and see how it changes our understanding of the world, within and without.

This will be my last contribution to your newsletter and so as I try all these things out myself I hope you will put this somewhere like a noticeboard or the fridge door at home and commit to trying something, it will be an experience we do apart from one another, in different counties (me on the western edge of the West Midlands and Worcestershire border, most of you folks in Northamptonshire) where the rain runs which falls on our respective homes, travels in the opposite direction and spills into the sea on either side of our small island, but it shall connect us in intention. May it be so, and farewell for now.

The three activities: see pictures below for prompts...

1. Go out in bad weather. What is bad weather?
2. Learn to recognise the smell and taste of approaching rain, hail or snow and your body's reactions to an impending storm.
3. Spend time in a graveyard. Appreciate your own impermanence.





Aleks

Northampton Unitarians

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### *Blessing for the Equinoxes* by Laura Dobson

(the Autumn Equinox falls on 21<sup>st</sup> September)

As light and dark are poised in equilibrium for a brief pause in the cosmic dance,  
May you pause today to breathe deeply the air of inspiration,  
feel the warmth of the fiery sun of passion on your skin,  
drink deeply from the waters of the well of belonging,  
and touch the sacred grounding earth beneath your feet.  
May you find the balance you need, today and every day.

Blessed be.