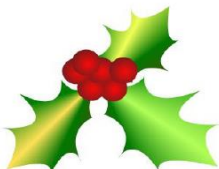
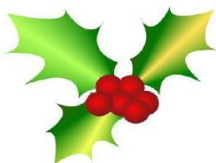


Warwick Unitarians  
Newsletter  
December 2019 and  
January 2020



Worship on Sundays at 4.30

<b>1<sup>st</sup> December</b>	<b>Diane Rutter</b>
<b>8<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Celia Cartwright</b>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Kath Forder</b>
<b>FRIDAY 4.30</b> <b>20<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Gavin Lloyd</b> <b>CAROL SERVICE</b>
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> December</b>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>
<b>29<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Diane Rutter</b>
<b>12<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Rev Sue Woolley</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Gavin Lloyd</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Angela Maher</b>

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**  
**AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR**  
**TO ALL READERS**

## **Service Leaders in December and January**

We are very honoured to have **Celia Cartwright** come to visit us in December. Celia is the current **President of the General Assembly** and in that role she has been travelling widely from her home in Kendal to foster congregations all over the country. She was very familiar with Warwick in her childhood and it will be a welcome return.

We shall welcome Pastor **Kath Forder** from Evesham to lead our worship again mid-December

The Carol Service on 20<sup>th</sup> December will be taken by **Gavin Lloyd** this year and will be our last Sunday service of the year: we shall not be holding a Sunday service again until the 5<sup>th</sup> of January when **Diane** will start the New Year off for us.

**Rev Sue Woolley** is the District Minister and she travels the area taking services. We are grateful to her for her ongoing support.

**Angela Maher** will also back again to lead our worship at the end of January.

**We will celebrate the birth of Christ in the traditional way with Christmas Carols at 4.30 on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December. All are most welcome – and please bring your friends. This service will be followed by conversation over Mince Pies and sherry in addition to the usual Tea.**

**The Chapel will be closed on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>, on Christmas Day, and on 29<sup>th</sup> December.**

**There will be a Friday Lunchtime service at 12.15 on December 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>.**

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> is of course the Carol Service at 4.30. Lunchtime Services will restart on January 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**All are most welcome to join us then.**

## WHAT'S ON

The Chapel is usually open on **Fridays** from about 11.30 for coffee and conversation before a short 20 minute lunchtime service of worship at 12.15 with prayer, reflection and music, taken by one of the congregation.

There will be **no Friday lunchtime services** though on December 20<sup>th</sup> (Carols later) or on 27<sup>th</sup>. We will resume on **January 3<sup>rd</sup>**, before Twelfth Night.

Lora Markham's **Mindfulness Meditation** group will meet at 10.30 on the 13<sup>th</sup> December and on 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January.

We usually have carpet bowls on **2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday** of the month. The next Bowls Day is **10<sup>th</sup> December** in the Chapel but starting at the later time of 2.30. **There will not however be a bowls session on 7<sup>th</sup> January**, as the weather may be uninviting, especially for anyone coming from Kingswood.

All welcome – experience not necessary, though a willingness to enjoy cake might be!

## ROUND-UP

### TAIZÉ SERVICE

On 20 October Elaine introduced a new kind of service to the Chapel congregation. She had been inspired by an MUA workshop session led by Ant Howe in Kingswood earlier in the year. Using the basic outlines of his service as a template, Elaine devised a service that combined readings and prayers largely chosen by her that could be broken up into sections interspersed with gentle repetitive singing of straightforward hymns that almost dissolve into quiet chants.

It is this combination of thoughtful text, whether in the form of prayer or of poetry, with the music that creates the ambience for deep spiritual reflection in the Taizé tradition. The music is provided by almost hypnotic gentle singing repetitions together of a simple tune,

sometimes on a single line, sometimes in canon and sometimes with harmonisations that emphasise the beauty of the melody.

The effect was very compelling, with everyone commenting very positively afterwards as we chatted over tea and the cakes provided by various members of the group. It seemed to be a pretty universal opinion that this was a format that we should revisit occasionally on future occasions.

## MUA ACTIVITIES

Our District Minister, Rev Sue Woolley, organises a wide variety of activities to encourage the congregations within the Midland Unitarian to gather together and develop. Each meeting is a valuable opportunity to connect with others in the area.

On October 26 the annual **MUA lunch** was hosted at Kingswood. After a brief service of chalice lighting and welcome the guest speaker was the Rev Cliff Reed. Cliff is Minister Emeritus at the Octagon Chapel in Ipswich and having been GA President twenty years ago he is now an honorary member of GA. But his big significance to the movement is that he has written prolifically in the Unitarian vein. He wrote the often quoted *Unitarian? What is that?* which helps to explain so much about our way of thought without ever laying down any binding or restrictive definitions, and he has produced many books of reflections and prayers which are widely used.

Cliff was invited this time to give us a flavour of his latest work, *Sunlit Smoke*, still to be published. The title was inspired by the sight of the smoke that arises from the chalice as it is blown out at the end of our services and circles gently upwards catching the light. He has produced an inspiring collection of writings on an extensive range of different themes which we will use in many future services, I am sure.

There followed a delicious meal and stimulating conversation, all rounded off with the traditional Unitarian toast to Religious Freedom the World Over.

A week later MUA held another interesting ‘training’ day called ***Beyond the Hymn Sandwich***, in New Meeting, Birmingham. Christina Smith, who has had considerable success in re-establishing a Unitarian community in Derby, led us in an exploration of different ways of creating engaging new services. The Friargate Chapel there had faltered some fifty years ago but Christina and her family have built up a new group with support from GA’s 20-20 growth group.

In her talk, she took us through some of the services that she has used in Derby and discussed the value of such variety using the human resources available.

We finished an interesting day with a session where we were invited to consider our own spiritual practice as it comes across to the passing visitor – a challenging perspective to reflect on.

### **‘WAR SCHOOL’ A Documentary Film**

Our congregation was invited by our Quaker neighbours to watch ‘War School’ on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> of October.

As perhaps you know I was a regular attender of the Quakers for three years, before moving to the Unitarians. It was very nice to meet many Quakers that I had not seen for a long time, including the nicely grumpy warden Edward Creasy.

The film shows many facets of how the military glamorizes war and the use of weapons and how it encourages young people to join the army. While the reality is completely different, how brutal, unjust and dehumanizing war is.

However, wars are extremely complex issues. It would be wonderful if humanity adhered to Quaker principles and rejected any type of violence. Having said that, I can’t imagine a Quaker being a Prime

Minister, but I can well imagine a Unitarian Prime Minister, compromising with an extremely complex issue and doing a good job.

You can watch a short trailer of the film in ‘youtube’.

<https://www.war.school>

Thanks for reading my article,  
Alfonso

[Comment from the Editor: Both Quakers and Unitarians have at times been at the forefront of contentious political and social issues – the latest perhaps being the question of same-sex marriages. Both are small denominations that have pulled beyond their weight in the past, and both have provided MPs and members of the Cabinet over the years.

One notable example of Unitarian influence is in the Chamberlain family which produced three outstanding statesmen of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Joseph had been a towering figure of Birmingham civic life and of Unitarianism there. He resigned as Mayor to become an MP, rising to become an influential member of the Cabinet under various Prime Ministers. Despite never becoming Prime Minister himself, he was one of the most important British politicians of his day, as well as a renowned orator and municipal reformer.

His sons Austen and Neville followed him into national politics and Cabinet responsibility. Neville did become Prime Minister, at a fateful time as war beckoned. Whether he should be called a Unitarian remains debatable – his upbringing most certainly was Unitarian and he was formed by the religious and social principles of his family and the wider circle of Unitarians who were so committed to the development of the city of Birmingham as it grew to be the nation’s second city.

As Alan Ruston says in his Unitarian historical miscellany *On the Side of Liberty*, he retained “nineteenth century Unitarian moral and social attitudes. The tenor of Unitarianism in the mid-nineteenth century centred on a serious concern for the condition of humanity which arose from their belief in a good and kind God and a conviction that man is not in essence evil.”

He was not known to frequent Unitarian church services. However, in 1938 Lord Cecil was able to write to *The Times* about Neville as PM: *I think it unseemly that a Unitarian should have a predominant voice in the appointment*

*of Bishops*. Neville's Unitarian conscience could surely be seen at work as he struggled with the resurgent threat of Hitler. His ultimately unsuccessful policy of appeasement was directed at the avoidance of hostilities and the defence of potential innocent victims of war. As Ruston says: "In dealing with Hitler, an under-developed sense of evil, a Unitarian attribute, may not have helped."]

## **UNITARIAN WOMEN'S GROUP WEEKEND**

On 18th October Christine Thompson and I drove to Great Hucklow for the annual weekend meeting at the Nightingale Centre, of the Unitarian Women's Group. UWG is now a well-established group of friends many of whom have known each other for 20 years or more, but, introduced by Christine, I was soon made to feel comfortable and welcome amongst them. (It also helped that there were at least seven other first timers there too). Within the weekend timetable there was an AGM and some planning for the following year's autumn meeting, which was to be about Climate Change and its effect on Women. This theme was to chime with that of next spring's GA 2020. But our main topic for this year was Women and Ageing. We were led by Cathie Mastalerz and Sarah Wilcox.

As I remember it, there were 37 of us, so introductions and discussions all together were possible. More often we broke into changing smaller groups to begin to tell our own life stories and discuss all sorts of aspects of ageing: a common thread was the shifting of responsibilities, changes in health and physical capacity (not necessarily all downhill!). People talked of their gloom and hilarity, their anger, but also their sense of peace, joy and relief. And then there was the question of planning ahead! Many of us seemed to be in our 60s and 70s, but by no means all. We were all at different stages and had useful messages for each other.

On the Saturday afternoon Christine and I set off to discover Castleton and the Hope Valley. We climbed Mam Tor, together with lots of families also out to walk in the Peak District on a fine autumn day.

Each of the two evenings ended with a calming epilogue.

On Sunday morning we set off for the Chapel next door for a moving service based on the telling of one person's story of growing up. We sang favourite hymns (pitched low enough for everyone to join in heartily).

There was a painting project in various stages, with all of us producing symbolic paintings of our visions for the future (for many of us this meant busking or rediscovering long lost skills). Our final summing up session took the surprise form of a gallery showing of all of our pictures.

Now I begin to understand the pull of Great Hucklow, such a comfortable setting for spiritual journeys, with its wonderful surroundings.

Jenny Burns

*The Holly and the Ivy  
When they are both full grown  
Of all the trees that are in the wood  
The holly bears the crown*

It is a lovely and very popular carol- but is ivy a tree?? The real partner tree for the Holly is perhaps not ivy but the Yew. Ivy just climbs through the branches of trees, (and not usually holly). Are there possible confusions here? Does IVY look like IW, possibly even pronounced i-oo? I read that the Scots Gaelic word for yew is *iubhair*, where the *bh* is pronounced like our *v* resulting a sound *iuv*, - confusingly similar to ivy. The symbolism of ivy is of wine and fidelity. Yew on the other hand is a symbol of death and rebirth: often found in churchyards, it is a very long-lived tree that almost regenerates itself, and seems to symbolise the new that springs out of the old. After the Winter Solstice we move into the future based on what we achieved in the past year. Yew is a much better 'fit' – but it doesn't fit the metre or the rhyme, so Ivy took its place in the Carol!

## THE CHAPEL TEAM

**Chair:** Malcolm Burns 01926 831559 **Secretary:** Elaine Nomura 01926 611964 **Treasurer:** Cherry Dodd 01926 491311

**Committee:** Christine Thompson and Adam Makinson

**Music:** Peter Flower 07508 042 694 **Lettings Secretary:** Angela Jefferies 07976 555 979