

Cambridge Unitarians

Newsletter - May 2016



[Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign](#) and [Cambridge Calais Refugee Action Group](#) Four Cambridge Unitarians attended a fund- and awareness-raising event (15 April), supporting refugees in Cambridge and across Europe. There was a peace procession, information fair, a panel discussion and live music from Afro Tema, The Suits, Souljah Fiya and the Warning Shadows. The event raised £10,000 for supporting refugees.

Minister's sabbatical

Our love and best wishes go to Andrew Brown as he starts his sabbatical this month. He'll be reading, studying, writing and do some cycling. And also speaking at the Sea of Faith Network's conference in July on 'The freedom to be tomorrow what we are not today'! We hope that he finds the summer refreshing and invigorating, and we look forward to his return in September.

Our services during the sabbatical will be led either by invited guests, or by some of our own church members.

If any pastoral needs should arise over the summer, please contact either Shirley Fieldhouse or me.

Andrew Bethune

For your diary

Sundays 1 May: 10.30am - family service of prayers, hymns, readings, music and an address followed by Bring & Share Lunch.

Sunday 8 May : 10.30am. Stephen Watson, a member of our congregation, will speak on 'The Spirit of Three Angels'.

Sunday 15 May: 10.30am service. Frank Walker, our Minister Emeritus will lead worship and speak on 'Are our conflicts really necessary?'

11.45am (approx) A short celebration of Communion for Pentecost Sunday.

Sunday 22 May : 10.30am. 'Our church, our community' - an opportunity to talk together about what our church means to us.

Wed 25 May : 12noon-2.30pm. Lunch Club Offering companionship, good food and an opportunity to talk about a particular issue relevant to the well-being and happiness of retired people or those planning retirement. A donation of around £3 is suggested to cover the cost of the meal. Throughout 2016, we will be exploring 'Attachment and Separation'. Contact: 01480 432284.

Sunday 29 May : 10.30am service led by Yvonne Aburrow from Oxford. Her address is entitled 'Why I am a Wiccan'. Yvonne has been a Pagan since 1985 and a Wiccan since 1991, and is a friend of the Unitarian movement. She has written several books, the most recent being on inclusive Wicca and (co-edited with Christine Hoff Kraemer) on Pagan Consent Culture. She is a former editor of *The Unitarian* magazine, and has written a collection of Unitarian prayers, chalice lightings, and meditations.

Music at morning services:

1 May - Julian Warren (organ)
8 May - Rosemary Wheeler (piano)
15 May - Julian Warren (organ)
22 May - John Dillistone (organ)
29 May - Richard Hinitt (organ)

Accessibility project:

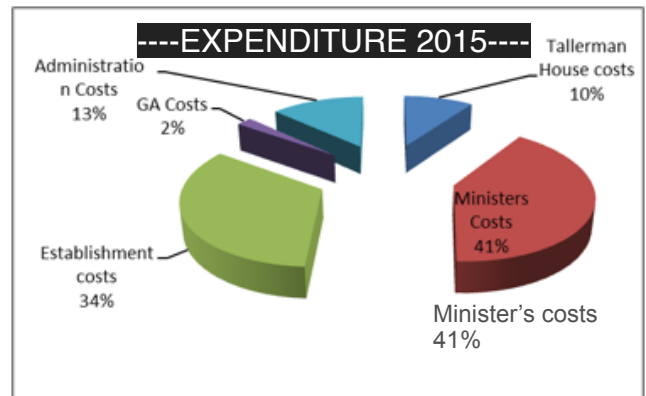
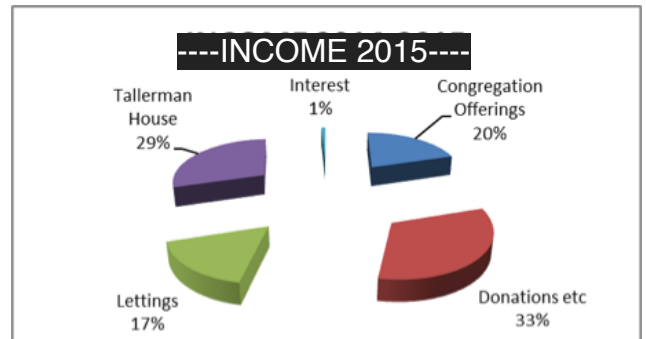
improving access to church and hall

We are now at the stage of waiting for pre-planning advice from the City Council. This should help to identifying key planning issues and requirements, and ensure that the detailed plans to be developed by our architect later while be approved.

Church AGM

At our AGM on Sunday 17 April, attended by 28 people, the church committee was re-elected. The Statement of Accounts and Trustees Report were adopted, and the Budget for 2016 approved. Total income was £105,265 and expenditure £74,431. Donation income included a legacy of £5,000 from Jonathan Harrison and £25,000 earmarked for the Ministry Development Fund for which we are extremely grateful. In round figures, there was a surplus of income over expenditure of £30,000. However if we set aside the £25,000 for MDF, the surplus of income is the more modest figure of £5,000. It could have been a bit more except we started using commercial cleaners rather than doing the cleaning ourselves. In a full year this will cost around £2,500. Our overall assets show that we are worth over £3 million, a large increase over the previous year. This is because the premises (church, hall, manse, Tallerman House) were re-evaluated. The rents from Tallerman

House, the result of a bequest in 2003 provide a significant proportion of our income. In the budget for 2016 we have suggested under normal circumstances we should again have a small excess of income. But we are unable to show the costs of the Accessibility Project (ramp, canopy and refurbished toilets). We hope most of those costs will be covered by grants; the remaining costs coming from church funds. To mitigate that, a plea is made to members to review their donations - in an upward direction!



About our church

This church belongs to a liberal Christian tradition which welcomes the loving, critical and enquiring spirit. It is founded upon an 'open trust' which imposes no doctrinal tests upon its minister or members. We meet in the spirit which is exemplified in the life and utterances of Jesus, for the worship of God and the service of humankind.

Church address: Memorial Church (Unitarian),
5 Emmanuel Road, Cambridge CB1 1JW

www.cambridgeunitarian.org

@CamUnitarian

<https://www.facebook.com/Cambridge-Unitarians-446299165559139/>

Minister: Andrew J Brown 01223 576952
(Please note - the minister is on sabbatical and summer vacation during May-August.)

minister@cambridgeunitarian.org

<http://andrewjbrown.blogspot.com>

[@caute](http://caute)

Pastoral care: During the minister's sabbatical (May-July) and summer vacation (August) please contact Shirley Fieldhouse or Andrew Bethune if you know of anyone who is ill or in hospital, or has any other pastoral needs.

Chairman: Andrew Bethune 01480 387883

Vice-Chairman: Tony Burns 01480 432284

Treasurer: Shirley Fieldhouse 01223 426514

Secretary: Brendan Boyle 01480 387883

Committee Members:

Katie Burns 01480 432284

Sue Tombs 01223 844454

Minister Emeritus: Frank Walker
01223 874460

Hall Bookings:

Sue Tombs 01223 338543

roombookings@cambridgeunitarian.org

GA 2016 Feedback for Cambridge Unitarians

Five from Cambridge attended the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (GA) – Andrew Brown, Shirley Fieldhouse, Brendan Boyle, Sue Tombs and Andrew Bethune.

GA is a 3-day conference giving Unitarians an opportunity to meet together. In 2016 there were about 300 of us from all over the UK plus a few from Ireland.

The web address is <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/pages/2016-unitarian-meetings>

The day starts with a short morning prayer/meditation (optional!). Mornings are mostly taken up with business, including receiving reports from many committees, voting on 'motions' and such like. Late mornings and afternoons offer a range of optional fringe events.

Each evening there is a large event:

- Day 1 *Opening Celebration*. 'A surprise', writes Shirley. 'Unlike previous ones, it concentrated on 100 years of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship and inevitably focussed on the suffragette movement in the 1916. The Celebration included a worship-type meditation. A long Celebration - well, the readings of the suffragettes' letters to politicians were extremely wordy!'
- Day 2 *Social Evening* – an excellent band, dancing and a bar.
- Day 3 *Anniversary Service* – which, rather to Shirley's surprise, included dancing for those who wished to participate.

There is also a short epilogue in the late evening.

Formal meetings

The formal business or 'plenary' meetings were non-contentious. A list of 'resolutions' (i.e. decisions) taken in the formal

meetings can be found at https://www.unitarian.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/files/Documents/2016_Annual_Meetings/Resolutions_2016.pdf

There were three motions that members of our congregation may be interested to follow up. The first was about covert surveillance by the UK security services. A Bill is currently going through parliament and the main recommendation of the motion is that the Bill should be amended to include the 8-point plan proposed by Liberty (The National Council for Civil Liberties). You may wish to contact your MP about this.

Another motion urged Unitarians 'to respond with compassion and generosity to the Clara Barton Red Cross Interfaith Emergency Appeal for urgent medical aid, food and shelter for the millions of victims of the war in Syria and the care of millions of refugees, including many vulnerable children and elderly people in desperate need of humanitarian aid and shelter'.

A Climate Change motion encourages individuals and congregations making rational changes to personal lifestyle to reduce personal carbon footprints and for church congregations to do the same.

Would people find it helpful if in future we ran the motions past the congregation for comments before each GA?

While past meetings had sessions on how to attract new members, this time we had the [Next Steps](#) leaflet (or 'Vision Document' as people seem to be calling it). This arose out of two consultations in 2015 on the future. It details seven worthy aims for 'Reaching outwards' and eight for 'Improving ourselves'. Shirley writes: 'It had the purpose, as in former years, to increase numbers, but I cannot help thinking it is a question of whistling to keep up one's spirits as the number of Unitarians continues to fall. Likewise, the number of full-time ministers decreases. The few ministerial students in training this year may wonder, when they graduate, if they will find a church that can afford a full-time minister'.

From the perspective of our own congregation here in Cambridge, we seem to be doing several of the things locally that are mentioned e.g. trying to explain our identity, offering web based study resources, engaging with the wider community, collaborating with likeminded organisations, promoting Unitarian thought and writing.

One of the ideas mentioned in *Next Steps* is 'campus ministry', and this was developed in our feedback meeting. Suzanne Hartland has already had some conversations with Derek McCauley about this, and we have indicated to Joan Cook, the GA person co-ordinating the campus ministry idea, that we might be interested in following this up. Some GA money may be available to develop a campus ministry based on the church here in Cambridge.

Sue wondered if *Next Steps* could be read alongside the '5 Stones' that Andrew Brown talked about on 17th April.

There is a video supporting the *Next Steps* document and it can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzvQIGp1zw>. Short clips from the video are available. We might watch it either during a service in the summer or on a Wednesday evening in the autumn.

For any of you who don't have internet access, we can supply print copies of any of these documents on request. We also have a copy of the DVD.

Keynote Speaker – Tehmina Kazi proved controversial. She is Director of British Muslims for Secular Democracy and talked about the Government's 'Prevent' scheme, which aims to prevent young people from becoming radicalised. The audience asked her a lot of good, probing questions.

Workshops – There is so much choice in the programme. It is easy to decide what to do if there is only one event taking place, such as the plenary (i.e. business) sessions, not easy in the afternoon when there is a choice of four 'fringe' events. Here are a few that stood out for us.

John Relly Beard lecture – a presentation about how faith and religion is portrayed through cinema, and how this has changed over time.

The Inquirer – Highly entertaining presentation by guest speaker Ruth Gledhill, for over 20 years religious affairs correspondent of The Times – her uncle and aunt are members of Norwich Unitarians.

Buildings Advisory Panel – encouraging us as to look at how we might reduce our carbon footprint – and review our energy suppliers. There is a national project underway to measure how our individual churches compare with target guidelines proposed by the Church of England for their buildings.

Banner - Many Churches/Chapels have a banner – these were walked round the main room at the Anniversary Service and left at the back for everyone to admire. What about it Cambridge? Can we do a banner? Either traditional which requires sewing or a modern type banner to show case a modern city? Could be useful when any of us are attending events such as the recent refugee support event at the Guildhall.

Comments

Sue writes: As a 'newbie' to the GA it was very interesting and a great learning experience. The biggest thing I came away with was - to paraphrase Francis David - 'We do not need to worship alike to love alike'. It is easy to become insular in our own little church, with its own ways and great Minister and forget there our other Unitarian churches out there, who might do things differently. Meeting people from other churches/chapels has given me renewed interest in visiting other Unitarian congregations and seeing what they are doing. Perhaps this is the biggest thing one can take away from GA.

Shirley writes : I find GA Meetings a wonderful opportunity to meet up with old friends and to put faces to new names, such as the GA Treasurer. He appears to be a 'manager' type who will keep a close eye on finances. I didn't get up early enough to go to the short

services starting at 7.30 am, but there were other opportunities for worship. At the start of each morning business meeting there were opening words and supplemented one morning by a hymn. Anyone wishing to broaden their knowledge of Unitarians beyond the Cambridge church, should attend the meetings next year, same place, from 10-13 April.

Brendan writes – I'd strongly recommend attendance next year. Great opportunity to meet with like-minded people. Excellent catering and location!

New Books on sale at GA

The Lindsey Press (the denomination's press) launched two new books:

Living with integrity: Unitarian values and beliefs in practice, edited by Kate Whyman. (Lindsey Press, 2016. 978-0-85319-088-2. £8.50)

This has 12 essays on by Unitarians on topics reflecting on how their faith and their values influence their daily lives. At the launch, Paul Kenyon read abstracts from his chapter within this book *Including 'the Other'*, reflecting on his experiences as a BBC Panorama reporter, with particular reference to a one man who died while fleeing out of Sub-Saharan Africa across a dangerous migration route.

On the side of liberty: a Unitarian historical miscellany, compiled by Alan Ruston. (Lindsay Press, 2016. 978-0-85319-078-5. £9.50)

Alan, in his own dramatic style, read extracts. He has concentrated his *Miscellany* on individuals from the past 300 years. In the 17th century sermons could be rather long! Alan read an extract from such a sermon and makes the comment: 'What a marathon: service: sermons lasting two hours or more, with 30 minutes extempore prayer and about 20 minutes spent explaining a text'. [Unlike our Cambridge 60 minute service!]

At another book launch, Rev Sue Woolley, presented her book *Gems for the journey: one Unitarian Pilgrim's Progress* (Unitarian Christian Association, 2016. 978-1-326-53354-0. £8.00).

In 27 short essays she describes the books that have influenced her from childhood to her present position as East Midlands district minister and minister to the Northampton church.

Just one letter: my journey from 'M' to 'F' by Kirstie McEwan. (2nd edition, 2015.

978-147091803-3. Published by the author. Hardback £17.99. Paperback £8.99. Also available on Kindle £2.69).

The Unitarian Women's Group had as its guest speaker Kirstie McEwan who gave an account of life as a transsexual, having lived for the first 50 years as a man (married with three daughters) and then making the difficult journey over several years to transition to a female. What determination she needed to carry through the process! She is using her experience to train as a therapeutic counsellor. For Sue, this was by far the best workshop of the whole GA.

Sue wondered if *Living with Integrity* and *On the side of Liberty* could be used to form a service or the basis for a discussion group.

At the feedback session on 20 April we talked about purchasing copies for the church library.

Compiled by Andrew Bethune with contributions from Shirley Fieldhouse, Sue Tombs and Brendan Boyle