

Cambridge Unitarians

Monthly Newsletter - November 2015

For your diary

Sun 1 Nov : Services at 10.30am and 6.30pm. Bring & Share Lunch. Music: Julian Warren (organ)

Wed 4 Nov : 7.30 for 8pm : Worship Workshop exploring what worship is.

Sun 8 Nov: Services 10.30am and 6.30pm. Music: Peter Shepherd (piano)

Wed 11 Nov : 7.30 for 8pm : Worship Workshop exploring the elements that make up a service of worship.

Sun 15 Nov : Services at 10.30am. Music: Julian Warren (organ). No evening service at church. Andrew Brown will be preaching at evensong at [Queen's College Chapel](#) at 4.30pm.

Wed 18 Nov : 4.30pm : Church Committee.

Sun 22 Nov: Services 10.30am led by Lewis Connolly. Music: John Dillistone (organ). No evening service.

Mon 23 Nov : Cambridge Showcase : 12noon-8.30pm : 15 contemporary arts and crafts designer-makers exhibit their latest collections. <http://cambridgeshowcase.org/2015-exhibitors>

Wed 25 Nov: 12noon-2.30pm. Lunch Club Christmas Dinner. Offering companionship, good food and an opportunity to talk about a particular issue that is relevant to the well-being and happiness of retired people or those planning retirement. As this is a festive occasion, a donation of around £5 is suggested to cover the cost of the meal. Contact: 01480 432284.

Sun 29 Nov: Advent Sunday : Services at 10.30am and 6.30pm. Music: Richard Hinitt (organ)

Wed 2 Dec : 7.30 for 8pm : Worship Workshop about writing and giving an address.

Sun 6 Dec : No Bring & Share lunch on 6 December. The December lunch will be on 20 December. Music: Julian Warren (organ)



Image: 'Cambridge Showcase' is the new name for 'Cambridge Christmas'. It's an annual event when 15 contemporary arts and crafts designer-makers exhibit their latest collections annually in our church hall - this year on Monday 23 November between 12noon and 8.30pm.

Weekend for teenagers at Great Hucklow

Attention all families with children in the range of 11-17 years!

My 13 year old daughter will be attending a Unitarian Youth weekend at Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow, Buxton, SK17 8RH from 18:00 on Friday 13 November to 14:00 on Sunday 15 November. If there are other teens in this area who might be interested in attending and carpooling, please can their parents be in touch with me: anne@annechampion.com.

More information on the weekend's program can be found at: <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/pages/youth-programme> .

In brief: Inter/Senior weekend is a time for exploration, understanding and reflection. Participants investigate a variety of topics in a range of creative ways. Activities can include art, crafts, drama, games, creative writing and local walks. A safe and trusting bond is created between all involved during the weekends. The group always enjoys welcoming new people and great friendships are forged between all members of the group. Inter(11-14 years) and Senior(14-17 years) weekends meet together at the Nightingale Centre, whilst running their own individual programmes.

Anne Champion

Survey of church members and friends - September 2015

The church committee is very grateful to everyone who took the time to complete the questionnaire in which we sought to gain comments, ideas and suggestions that would help us to plan the future direction of our small, but very special, church.

Around 40 people responded, most of whom were local to Cambridge and attend church regularly.

Several responses came from people on our mailing list who live abroad but appreciate the contact with their Unitarian roots. One said 'it keeps my spiritual faith alive' as there is no Unitarian church nearby. Respondents spanned the age ranges from teenage upwards, but more people at the older end of the age spectrum took part.

We've been looking closely at everyone's comments, and have started to make contact with those who volunteered their time and skills. What follows here is simply a summary of some of the main themes that have emerged from the survey.

Reasons for being part of our church ranged from having been a Unitarian for years, to being invited along by a friend and staying. Reasons for staying included the church's liberal, open-minded ethos, its tolerance and diversity, that we are LGBT friendly, acknowledging both our Christian and Enlightenment roots and being intellectually challenging.

Finding a welcome and meeting 'nice people' in this 'very special fellowship' were mentioned by several respondents. But conversely, one person implied that he/she was out of contact because the church wasn't a very vibrant, active community.

Children and Young People.

Top of the list - how do we provide a programme for the children of our church? One person wrote 'I wish more children and families would attend'. 5 people said they wanted to be involved, and this encourages us to think that

we might, at last, get a small steering group together to take the the plans for a children's programme forward. We have funding for a paid Children's Leader. Someone said it was important that children learn about traditional Christianity before becoming dissenters, another that Bible stories should be included in their programme, and a third said they should learn about other faiths. Someone mentioned that a children's programme might help to equip young people to use wisely the internet, mobile phones, sex and drugs.

Worship - a central activity in our religious life. Most people seemed fairly happy with the format of our service, but some would like to hear 'more voices' and see more congregational participation in our services.

Fortunately, 7 people offered to lead the opening prayers/meditations, and 6 expressed an interest in helping to plan and organise services - which could be crucial during Rev Andrew's sabbatical next summer.

Unitarians hold a variety of views on Christianity. So, although one person expressed concerns that perhaps we weren't Christian enough, several people suggested phasing out the Lord's Prayer, or replacing it with another communal prayer. It was suggested that our services need to be more inclusive to children and young people, and we could learn from looking at what other churches do. Teaching unfamiliar hymns might make for more inclusive worship, and choice of more modern hymns would be good. Could we change the format of services on occasion? A more varied structure? Or a meditative service once a month?

The thoughtful, challenging preaching was mostly seem as one of the things that attracts people to our church, but some people appealed for a less intellectual, more spiritual approach. There was an appeal for services to focus on serious, topical issues. Clearly a balance to be struck in this area.

Publicity and outreach. Your committee has been addressing how to publicise our church, our ethos and what we offer to the community at large. We've recently launched [Facebook](#)

Survey of church members and friends - September 2015 and outreach.

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and [Twitter](#) feeds for the church. If you use these media, please get involved by 'liking', commenting or following us. We are already working on improvements to signage at the church.

But what about linking to other websites? What about banners, leaflets, greater use of Radio Cambridge and local newspapers? Networking and word of mouth is crucial (many respondents told us they'd first come here because invited by friends). Good suggestions were to take part in Freshers Fairs at our local universities. and make contact with local schools. One respondent has worked in the printing trade, and could be a help with designing and printing leaflets.

The monthly newsletter meets with widespread approval, but awareness of the [minister's blog](#) seems scanty.

Special events. There were plenty of suggestions for 'special events'. These included talks aimed at students, programmes of interesting relevant speakers and workshops (well, we have had occasional events like that already, including the discussion on 'Religion after the Death of God' planned for 28 October), philosophy or theology courses. Social events might include film nights, games nights, a reading club, a walking group, coffee mornings, organ recitals.

Links with other communities. Two suggestions mentioned linking up with other organisations, such as the Quakers (in fact, we are already having preliminary conversations with the Jesus Lane Friends Meeting). But what about the Sunday Assembly? Could we work together with them? Our links with the wider Unitarian movement could be strengthened and promoted.

Social Action. It was obvious from the responses that our members and friends support a wide range of good causes. As a church, we already support the Food Bank, and have a Christmas Appeal for a chosen

good cause. We volunteered for an emergency winter night shelter scheme, but issues beyond our control meant we had to withdraw. Could we do more?

Volunteering. You may have heard Andrew Brown talking about our church's future as 'ministry led, not minister led'. We are a small congregation, and the input that individuals make to the success of what we do is invaluable. It was very encouraging indeed that so many people offered their skills and their time to different aspects of the church's life. The church committee is in the process of contacting those who volunteered, to see how you can become involved in a practical way.

Pastoral care. This currently falls mainly to the minister. But could the load be shared by setting up a small pastoral care group to help him? Some older members might benefit from help with transport to/from church. And a volunteer exchange was suggested too.

Suggestions for change. The committee is taking on board comments about print size. Improvements to toilets and disabled access are already at the planning stage

Thanks. Finally, some 'thank yous' from the survey which may indicate that we are, sometimes at least, doing the right thing :

- to all who work hard to keep the church going
- to Andrew Brown for visiting someone diagnosed with cancer.
- for the opportunity 'to have my voice and participate'.

Christmas Choir

I thought it would be good to get a few folk singing carols together this Christmas. We won't do anything too ambitious: just two or three short items. I suggest we sing during the service on Sunday 20 December. We shall rehearse after the service on Sunday 13 December and for 15 minutes before the service on the 19th. If you are interested, please let me know and tell me which part(s) you usually sing in a choir.

Mark Mason 07976371528

cambridgepianoteacher@gmail.com

Refugee Crisis

John Clifford, President of our General Assembly, has urged Unitarians to respond with compassion towards 'the desperate people seeking refuge on our continent as they escape intolerable living conditions as a result of war or oppressive political regimes'.

His full statement can be read at:

<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/news/refugee-crisis>

If you would like to make a contribution to the welfare, relief and support of refugees, it is possible to do so by sending a cheque to:

*Laura Deacon, British Red Cross,
44 Moorfields, London, EC2Y 9AL*

Cheques should be made payable to British Red Cross with 'Unitarian Churches Clara Barton Appeal' clearly marked on the back.

All money donated via the Unitarian Churches' Clara Barton Appeal for the British Red Cross will be allocated with immediate effect to their Europe Refugee Crisis Appeal. If you wish to donate online please go to the Clara Barton Fund's [Virgin Money Giving](#) page.

Links with wider Unitarian movement

A comment received in the recent survey of the congregation mentioned the need to improve our awareness and involvement with the wider Unitarian movement. One way to do this is to read the fortnightly magazine, [The Inquirer](#). Shirley usually has a few copies to give out. If you find you like *The Inquirer*,

please consider taking out a personal subscription (currently £35 a year).

If you use social media you may like to investigate the Facebook group [UK Unitarians](#).

Remember also that our own church has recently set up a Facebook page [Cambridge Unitarians](#) where forthcoming events and other interesting things will be posted. Please 'like' our page and add comments.

We also have a twitter feed [@CamUnitarian](#).

Worship Workshops:

Wednesday evenings 4, 11 November and 2, 9 December - 7.30 for 8pm finishing by 9.30pm

An opportunity for all members and friends of the congregation to learn more about how worship services are created. During our minister's sabbatical next summer, the congregation is likely to have a bigger than usual role in organising our services. These workshops are an opportunity to learn, to explore and to build confidence in a crucial area of church life.

Themes covered include : What is worship? What elements make up a service of worship? Hints and advice on writing and giving an address, and practicalities such as voice production.

The workshops will be led by our minister, Andrew Brown.

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/>

Hall Bookings: Marie Paisley 07527 890164
roombookings@cambridgeunitarian.org

Minister: Andrew J Brown 01223 576952
minister@cambridgeunitarian.org
<http://andrewjbrown.blogspot.com>
[@caute](#)

Pastoral care: Please let Andrew Brown know of any cases of sickness or if you would like him to meet with you or someone else.

Minister's Rest Days: Mon, Tue

Minister Emeritus: Frank Walker
01223 874460

Chairman: Andrew Bethune 01480 387883

Vice-Chairman: Tony Burns 01480 432284

Treasurer: Shirley Fieldhouse 01223 426514

Secretary: Sabrina Lewins 01223 476237

Committee Members:

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