

In winter we return to our roots . . .



From 1923 until we built the main church building in 1927, the Cambridge Unitarian Church met in the hall behind the church. It was originally named the *Carpenter Hall* after Joseph Estlin Carpenter (1844-1927) who was a key figure in the project to build a Unitarian church here in Cambridge. In addition to being a Unitarian minister, Carpenter was also an expert in Sanskrit and a pioneer in the study of comparative religion. In part, it was this kind of openness to other religions and philosophies that led to Gandhi speaking in the hall in 1931.

Over the last 100 years the hall has proved to be the ideal space for all kinds of events: theatre, music, dance, Yoga, Tai Chi, storytelling, lectures, parties, political meetings, craft shows, poetry readings and much, much else besides. But, for many years we haven't used the hall for our own services, until now . . .

In the midst of the present climate emergency it's important that every community finds ways to reduce its carbon footprint and we have become ever more aware that heating the church in winter is not only increasingly pricey, but also an environmentally destructive thing to do. Given that we keep our hall warm for our hirers we thought it made great sense to use it ourselves during December, January, February and March. So, although on the first Sunday of the winter months we'll meet in the church, on the remaining Sundays we'll be "returning to our roots" by meeting in the hall. It's a move that serves to remind us, as one of our own theologians, James Luther Adams, once said:

In this church, we accept the truth: By their fruits shall ye know them; but we also accept the truth: By their roots shall ye know them. Where there are no roots, there will be no fruit.