



Moving on -

With Lewis' 3 month term of notice having run its course after the St Cecilia service on 24th November, we are faced with a new chapter in the life of our Meeting House community. This isn't one we had in any way anticipated having to face, especially as only a couple of days before Lewis handed in his notice two of your trustees had had a seemingly positive meeting with him about the future unfolding of his ministry. But, as they say, life is full of surprises. Though we all know that endings - and consequently beginnings - are part and parcel of life on this earth, it seems appropriate for me as your chairperson to offer these words.

I suppose each of us will have varying feelings about endings and about beginnings. Some of us may feel dismay at having to move on from a situation which had become familiar and possibly comfortable. It can often feel hard to recognise that an era is over and be ready to let go, especially if there's some unfinished business around. And of course we need to recognise and fully acknowledge any feelings of unease, regret or dissatisfaction that may be present and not sweep these aside.

But at the same time, when one door closes another opens, so we need to ask how best to approach this

period when there is no minister heading up our Meeting. Well, for one thing, we've been here before. Bidding farewell to Cliff, albeit fortunately for us only in his role as our minister after 36 years in post, was a major event, but we held together and we survived. Then when the two year interim ministry of Jim Corrigan came to an end, during the interval when the search for a permanent minister was ongoing, once more we held together and survived. And I know that that will also be the case now.

This newly opened door can bring with it not only feelings of excitement but also particularly an enhanced sense of community as we pull together to maintain the spiritual life of the congregation, of which our regular Sunday service is the lynch pin. Not long after Lewis had tendered his resignation, Linda offered to co-ordinate a group to ensure that each week there would be someone to lead our service and she has already fulfilled a primary role in contacting potential service leaders and drawing up a schedule so that we know where we are. We are grateful to you, Linda! And Sandra, Riena, Beryl, Tessa, Morag, Robert and myself will be helping and supporting her to the best of our ability. And if any member or attender feels moved to join the group, they would be more than welcome.

(cont. overleaf)

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Minister Lewis Connolly with his wife Cat, after his last service with us on 24th November

Moving On – cont.

At the first Trustee's meeting following the receipt of Lewis' resignation, we agreed to have a "breathing space" until the New Year before embarking on the search for a new minister. We will attempt to keep you fully informed of any developments. Meanwhile steps are under way to let out the Manse in the Tuddenham Road in order to generate some extra income.

There will no doubt be challenges ahead but as we take our first steps on this new path, I'm feeling optimistic and confident.

Ann Baeppler

Chair of the Meeting

Worship Group

As mentioned in Ann's message above, the Worship Group are now responsible for the services each Sunday. At our meeting we decided to have a Circle Service once a month, usually on the last Sunday, led by a volunteer co-ordinator, usually a member of the Worship Group or the congregation. The Circle Service will have contributions along a theme (chosen by the co-ordinator) and will be publicised one month in advance to invite contributions. We will invite the congregation and members to suggest any other topics/changes/new ideas they would like us to include in the services, so please pass your ideas to Linda King. We will offer a pulpit fee and expenses to all who take the full service. We aim to have one non Unitarian per month leading the service or doing the address.

Services in December –

1st - Linda King & congregation. Followed by Communion.

8th - Martin Spettigue – a Hindu from Sri Chinmoy

15th - Rev Matthew Smith – Unitarian Minister

21st - Carol Service- Saturday evening – 6pm

22nd - Adam Whybray – then mince pies & mulled wine and the Bits and Bobs charity table

25th - Christmas Day Service 11.45 led by Cliff Reed

29th - Ann Baeppler – Circle Service - Gratitude

The Circle Services will be planned round a theme and we invite contributions to the service from members of the congregation to make each service relevant to that theme and to our congregation. This can include a reading, poem, song, reflection or meditation. Please contact Ann Baeppler (in person or by email - annbaeppler@gmail.com) to contribute to the December service on 29th on the theme of 'Gratitude'.

The Circle Service on 26th January will also be our annual membership service, so the theme will be 'Belonging' and will be co-ordinated by Tessa Forsdike. Please contact her to contribute your ideas – tessa@tessajordan.co.uk

This is an opportunity to build our community and for all to be involved in worship.

Restoration Fund Update

Thank you to everyone who sent in their written evidence of how important the Meeting House is to them.

We gathered a collection of supportive messages – evidence from our Visitors Book (during 2019 we had over 1,374 visitors, including over 750 on the heritage Open Days in September); letters from individuals (including some from far afield in France, Switzerland, Liverpool) and over 84 emails – these came from the local community and from as far away as Australia, France, Canada, USA and Newcastle, UK. People have written as a representative of their organisation – the Ipswich Subud Group; the Ipswich Hindu Samaj group; the Building Advisory Group of the General Assembly of Unitarians; the Newcastle Unitarian Community; the Norwich Unitarians – and also as individuals expressing their very personal experience of the Meeting House. Michael Lumb the artist, has written of his artwork installation which was displayed in the Meeting House. Professor Emeritus Chris Green, the lead conductor of the Trianon Group, who have given concerts in our Meeting House expresses his support and has offered to do another concert as a fundraiser in 2021 (they are very popular and booked up for 2020). Helen

Restoration Fund Update cont.

Taylor writes as an Interfaith Minister. Rev. Cliff Reed and Rev. David Robins both write as previous Ministers at our Meeting House.

All the evidence was submitted to Viridor for their grant meeting and they have asked for more information and will review their decision about awarding a grant at the next meeting. So we have an extension to our window of opportunity to collect evidence of the relevance and importance of the Meeting House. If you have not yet sent in your message, or if you know of anybody else you can ask to write, please send all supportive messages to Tessa Forsdike on tessa@tessajordan.co.uk and she will add them to the body of evidence we can submit alongside our application. We now have until the end of December. Let's add more names to the list!

Events in December

Wednesday 4th December 7pm to 8.30pm – at Christ Church United Reformed/Baptist Church, Tacket Street, Ipswich IP4 1AU. **A question time event for the Ipswich constituency has been organised by the United Nations Association Ipswich and District and Ipswich Amnesty group.** All are welcome. Questions must be submitted in advance to Michael Medhurst via medhurst.michael@yahoo.co.uk or 01473 257649 no later than 5pm on Monday, 2nd December. All candidates for Ipswich have been invited. The question time will feature candidates from as wide a political spectrum as possible. For further information or to take part on social media please visit

www.una.org.uk/branch/una-ipswich-and-district

Wednesday 11th December at 8.00 pm the St John's

Chamber Choir will give a concert at the Bury St Edmunds Meeting House, raising funds jointly for their choir and the Friends of the Unitarian Meeting House. St John's Chamber Choir returns with a programme of Christmas choral music, some well-known, some unknown, and some a tease of the familiar with a contemporary step change. Tickets will be £8 if bought in advance, £10 on the door and include a glass of wine and a mince pie. For advance tickets, email: tickets@stjhnschoirbase.or.uk or phone 07922 075695

The Poetry Group

Our chosen poet in November was Fleur Adcock: born in New Zealand in 1934, she has spent much of her life in England and is the recipient of many poetry prizes.

Here is one of her best known poems:

WEATHERING

Literally thin-skinned, I suppose, my face catches the wind off the snow line and flushes with a flush that will never wholly settle. Well: that was a metropolitan vanity, wanting to look young for ever, to pass. I was never a Pre-Raphaelite beauty, nor anything but pretty enough to satisfy men who need to be seen with passable women. But now that I am in love with a place which doesn't care how I look, or if I'm happy, happy is how I look, and that's all. My hair will grow grey in any case, my nails chip and flake, my waist thicken, and the years work all their usual changes. If my face is to be weather-beaten as well that's little enough lost, a fair bargain for a year among the lakes and fells, when simply to look out of my window at the high pass makes me indifferent to mirrors and to what my soul may wear over its new complexion.

More events in December-

3rd December – Trustees meeting

Saturday 7th December 7.30pm – United Nations Association Annual Celebration of Human Rights - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948. This Celebration, for people from all faiths and none will be hosted by the Ipswich Buddhist Centre and will be held at the Ipswich Buddhist Centre, 4 Friars Bridge Rd, Ipswich IP1 1RR. This year's theme will be based on Article 18.

8th December at 7.20am – Tessa Forsdike on BBC Radio Suffolk – reviewing the news and promoting our Meeting House

A visit to Soweto



This photo shows the church in Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa which is the religious home for 80 to 100 congregants on a Sunday. During a work/holiday trip recently David and I were fortunate enough to include visit to the area and it prompted me to reflect on our struggles to maintain our own church building and what the most important issues are. Perhaps there is no answer, but it is still worth taking the time to reflect.



These photos were taken in the shanty town where a large number of families still live. Soweto is also changing and there are two more standards of housing built there, including fine brick-built ones. Those living in shanty accommodation are waiting their turn on the list for a 'proper' home. They may wait five years.
Tessa Forsdike

TWAM - (Tools with a Mission)

The demand for desktop and laptop computers is so great, but the quantity being donated is becoming more sparse. Please do keep your ears to the ground and if you hear of schools or companies replacing their computers please see if they will donate them to us. Often I find that you don't know who you know, and a notice in a church/parish/community magazine may identify somebody in an influential position in an organisation who can help source computers for us. They need to be a minimum of Windows 7 to be suitable to send out. We have a great IT team who can offer security assurances if required.

Mike Griffin Chief Executive

If anyone from the congregation can donate a computer or other tools, please speak to David Forsdike or Riena Jackson who both volunteer at TWAM. They will be pleased to organise collection.

Noah's Ark

The vessel, which measures 70metres long, doubles as a museum containing a wide range of Christian stories from the Bible, sculptures and a 12ft tall Tree of Life. The replica is set to stay in Ipswich for up to three months.

Noah's Ark is the brainchild of Dutch TV producer Sir Aad Peters, who created the vessel to be a centre where people from a range of cultures and beliefs could meet and share their stories. Sir Aad said: *"If you know your own stories, it is easier to understand the culture of others."* It has welcomed more than 500,000 visitors on board since it was created in 2010. Noah's Ark, which will be found in Orwell Quay is now open to the public.



The 2019 AGM – 10th November 2019

Karen Tricker had once more kindly formatted our annual report which was sent out electronically to all members.

The minutes of the AGM will be available in due course courtesy of our Hon Secretary, Riena Jackson but I wanted to write a few words about the current Board of Trustees. Sandra and Malcolm Hawes and Tessa Forsdike did not wish to stand for re-election and John Ellis had already resigned a few months previously. We are grateful to each one of these for their contributions to the life of the Meeting House. Riena Jackson, Paulette Reed, Linda King, Andrew Gibbs and myself agreed to serve for one more year only, when new trustees will need to be elected. If sufficient numbers cannot be found, then an alternative arrangement will have to be put in place, possibly involving payment to suitable administrators.

Ann Baeppler

General Assembly Annual Meetings

(Birmingham) - 7-9 April 2020

We are excited to announce that the keynote talk at next year's Annual Meetings will be given by activist, writer and academic Dr Alastair McIntosh on the theme 'The Revolution Will Be Spiritual'.

Registration for the Annual Meetings opens in January 2020.

<https://unitarianmeetings2020.com>

Food for Thought -

"Have you ever noticed that the only metaphor we have in our public discourse for solving problems is to declare war on it? We have the war on crime, the war on cancer, the war on drugs. But did you ever notice that we have no war on homelessness? You know why? Because there's no money in that problem. No money to be made off of the homeless. If you can find a solution to homelessness where the corporations and politicians can make a few million dollars each, you will see the streets of America begin to clear up pretty damn quick!"

- George Carlin

Birthdays–

Happy birthday in December to Ray Seal on 12th; Carol Gibbs on 26th and John Hamilton on 30th.

Just joking ...

How did the ornament get addicted to Christmas?

He was hooked on trees his whole life.

Why was Santa's little helper depressed?

Because he had very low elf esteem.

What do you call a kid who doesn't believe in Santa?

A Rebel without a Claus.

Why do Christmas trees like the past so much?

Because the present's beneath them.

Why is Santa so good at karate?

Cause he's got a black belt.

What part of the body do you only see around Christmas?

The mistletoe.

What do you get when you cross a duck with Santa?

A Christmas Quacker.

Disclaimer – We welcome contributions from all members and friends of our congregation. Views expressed in the articles are those of the individual and not necessarily those of our congregation or of our Unitarian community

Contacts Contributions PLEASE for the next newsletter to Tessa before the deadline of Tuesday 24th December – to ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or post to 48 Crabbe Street, Ipswich IP4 5HS
To contact our Secretary, Riena Jackson, ring 01473 210064/email mjack76748@aol.com
Website - <http://unitarianipswich.com>

Thought for the month

Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive.

The Dalai Lama