



## Christmas Traditions



For many years our Christmas tree by the pulpit has been donated by the Hawes family, with Malcolm Hawes dedicated to ensuring it was well fixed in place using orange binder string. As he is no longer with us we felt bound to ensure the tradition continued. The photo shows Paulette Reed with Mark Hawes setting up the tree. Thanks to the family.



Further thanks go to the Hawes family for the permanent loan of their 'witches cauldron' which we have borrowed in the past for celebratory events at Christmas. It is a very useful piece of kit and we've enjoyed many a cup of mulled wine or spiced ginger cordial kept at the correct temperature over the years and will do too for years to come.

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## Beryl Beech update



Beryl's daughter Alison sent this update - I do share UMH / Trustee information with Beryl from time to time and thought you might like a bit of an update.

She is well but a little more frail. She still recognises all of us and with a little prompting recalls her friends. The Alzheimer's and dementia continue to gradually diminish her, as to be expected.

She will be 96 in February. She is happy in Norwood. If anyone wants to visit, I am happy to advise the best times of day. Contact Alison on [alisonsarahbeech@hotmail.com](mailto:alisonsarahbeech@hotmail.com)

Here is a recent photo of her with her much adored great-granddaughter, Piper, who is now 9 months old.

We know that some of her friends from the Meeting House are able to visit and will bring us Beryl's news too.

## Big Garden Birdwatch

Big Garden Birdwatch is the largest garden wildlife survey in the world, and we'd love for you to be a part of it! Thousands of nature lovers will be counting birds from their gardens, balconies, parks and local green spaces over one weekend.

It's fun, free and will only take an hour, whenever it suits you, from **Friday 24 – Sunday 26 January**.  
<https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch/fags>

## Ride and Stride 2024

The final total for the money raised at the annual Ride and Stride event held in September was £193,794.02 – half of which will have been returned to the churches who were sponsored in the event – it is a really good way to support your own and the county churches. Thank you for your support – both in opening your church, chapel or meeting house and for all those who sat in, welcoming visitors, and those who rode bikes or walked round the churches to raise funds. It takes time for all the funds to be collected, hence the delay in me writing to you all. There may even be a trickle of more money to come, but this is almost £200,000, so will be a valuable resource for local buildings for worship.

Simon Ronan – the Chair of SHCT Ride and Stride said - *"It was a lovely sunny day, with not too much wind, and, as always, a great turnout of walkers, bikers, and drivers, on a day to be enjoyed by all. Over 800 churches throughout the County were open on the day. We thank everyone for their support in sponsoring, and to those manning the churches to welcome cyclists, walkers, and vintage cars. We have had several runners take part this year, so perhaps that is a challenge for joggers and runners to join in with the cyclists and walkers on our big fundraising day on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2025?"*

Thank you to our riders and striders who contributed to this amount and raised funds for our Meeting House too.

## Yvonne Gray

We send our condolences to Ian Gray and the family on the death of Yvonne.

A service of celebration for her life will be held in the Meeting House on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January at 12 noon. All are welcome to attend.



## Public Lecture

**The Surrey Churches Preservation Trust (SCPT):  
Public lecture: Rebuilding Notre Dame Cathedral  
in Paris – Relearning the Art and Science of the  
Great Mediaeval Anglo-Franco Cathedrals**

Thursday 23 January 2025, 7pm, Guildford, Surrey  
The event will be delivered by two distinguished experts in historic architecture: Jonathan Deeming RIBA SCA AABC, Surveyor to the Fabric of Canterbury Cathedral, and Lian Harter, Senior Project Lead at Purcell.

This is A Ticket Only Event: Advance Booking Essential

via <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/surrey-churches-preservation-trust>

## Book Group

We will meet on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January at 7pm via Zoom to discuss 'James' by Percival Everett. This short-listed Booker prize novel tells the story of Jim from his own perspective rather than through the eyes of Huckleberry Finn. Ask Tessa for the link – [tessa@tessajordan.co.uk](mailto:tessa@tessajordan.co.uk) – all welcome.

## Services in January

5<sup>th</sup> - Linda King, Ipswich Unitarians.

12<sup>th</sup> – TBA

19<sup>th</sup> - Rev John Carter, Unitarian Minister

26<sup>th</sup> - Paulette Reed. Ipswich Unitarians.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICE followed by lunch.

Thank you to everybody who has either led or taken part in services during 2024.

Membership of the Meeting House is open to all who feel aligned to our approach and our Unitarian ethos. If you have been attending services for a few months or even years and feel ready to make a formal commitment, do speak to one of the trustees. Membership gives us opportunities as well as responsibilities. As members we commit to supporting the meeting with a regular financial donation, to engaging in the life of our community and we also then have the chance to vote on matters relating to the big decisions and to stand as a trustee. A feeling of belonging is often important in our life.

## Friends of the Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House

The Friends group will hold their AGM on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January at 6pm in the Meeting House. The business part of the meeting will be brief. Afterwards architect Stuart Edgar will be giving a talk entitled 'Architectural Oddities' where he will focus on features we see in buildings every day but that no longer have purpose, or that are added to new buildings but which are non-essential or which have no practical purpose. He will illustrate his talk with slides.

All are welcome, whether already a Friend or not, and this might be the time to join?

## Birthdays in January

Happy birthday wishes go to Paulette Reed on 14<sup>th</sup>; Riena Jackson on 26<sup>th</sup>; Juliette Spence on 27<sup>th</sup>; Mark Hawes on 29<sup>th</sup>.



A scene of karaoke carolling from First Unitarian Universalist, Richmond, Virginia, sent to us from Dee de Roche who regularly joins us for our services via Zoom.



### The Shortest Day

by Susan Cooper

*And so the Shortest Day came and the year died  
And everywhere down the centuries of the snow-  
white world*

*Came people singing, dancing,  
To drive the dark away.*

*They lighted candles in the winter trees;  
They hung their homes with evergreen;  
They burned beseeching fires all night long  
To keep the year alive.*

*And when the new year's sunshine blazed awake  
They shouted, revelling.*

*Through all the frosty ages you can hear them  
Echoing behind us – listen!*

*All the long echoes, sing the same delight,  
This Shortest Day,*

*As promise awakens in the sleeping land:*

*They carol, feast, give thanks,  
And dearly love their friends,  
And hope for peace.*

*And now so do we, here, now,  
This year and every year.*

*Welcome Yule!*



The Bradbrook family singing at our Candlelight Carol Service.

### Thought for the month

When asked what surprised him most about humanity, the Dalai Lama answered – ‘*Man! Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he doesn't live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived.*’

### 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 Forsdike before the deadline of Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January ideally by email to [tessa@tessajordan.co.uk](mailto:tessa@tessajordan.co.uk)  
To contact our Secretary, ring 01473 728498 (or email [tessa@tessajordan.co.uk](mailto:tessa@tessajordan.co.uk)) or ring our Treasurer Robert Waller on 01473 610723.