Ipswich Unitarian Meeting

Volume 12, Issue 11 November 2026

Almost there!



Solar Panels have now been fittted to our Meeting House roof on the south side of both roofs. We are still awaiting permission to site the battery at the rear of the building and anticipate that this will be granted soon so that the final part of the installation can be completed in November.

We will then benefit from a reduced price for our electricity and will be able to afford to heat the building more effectively and for longer. No longer (we hope) will we have the juggle of how cold is the weather, how soon can we switch the heating on, and how can we afford it?

More news in the next issue ...



Contents

1 Almost there!
2 – Scouts visit and Investiture; Containers Gone; Choosing our Charity to support in 2026/7; Services
3 – Ipswich Bach Weekend; Ipswich Book Festival; Book Group. Poetry Group.
4 – A Visit to St Edmundsbury Cathedral Library
5 – Christmas Bits and Bobs Table; Birthdays in November; Trees poem and Joyce Kilmer; Language of Faith; Thought for the Month; Contacts

Scouts Visit and Investiture



The 26th Ipswich Scout troop visited the Meeting House on 22nd October and Linda King, Tessa and David Forsdike went to tell them all about the Meeting House, the history and something about Unitarianism. The visit was part of their work to earn badges, to find out about their local history and places of interest. They also held the investiture of three new members of the troop.

The scouts were interested in the spy hole, the wig pegs, how many organ pipes there were, and they liked going up into the high pulpit to pretend they were holding a service. We used the questionnaire prepared by the Ipswich Arts Society. At the end of the meeting Linda asked what they thought Unitarianism was and a young scout replied *'It's where you come to find out what you believe'*. As a definition of Unitarianism we thought it very accurate.



Containers gone!!

The work on the cladding on our neighbours' flats is almost finished and so ReGen have removed the containers for which they were hiring space on our forecourt for a year ... we have enjoyed the contact with the workmen but are relieved that the containers are finally gone. The skip will also be removed soon ...



Choosing a charity to support

As we near the Meeting House AGM on Sunday 22nd November (after the service), we need to think about which charity we wish to support for the next year's fundraising. This last year we have fundraised for the Shelley Centre – for riding for the disabled. We like to choose a charity which has local connections. If you have suggestions please email them to Liz Constable - elconstable@gmail.com We will vote at the AGM.

Services in November

1st - Rev Matthew Smith, Minister to Framlingham & Bury St Edmunds.

8th - Lizzie Kingston Harrison, Minister in Training, Ipswich. Remembrance Sunday.

15th - Safeguarding Sunday led by the Meeting House safeguarding officers.

22nd - Robert Waller, Ipswich Unitarian. St Cecilia's Day

Ipswich Bach Weekend

Over the weekend of 16th,17th and 18th October we were treated to a fantastic series of concerts with Jorge Jimenez on violin and Joy Smith on harps and narrating tales from Johann Sebastian Bach's era. Jorge played the full set of partitas and sonatas, explaining what was happening in Bach's life when he wrote the music.

The Meeting House was filled over the days and several people who had only booked for the first concert extended their reservation for the whole weekend. We are so lucky to have such professional and internationally recognised musicians playing in our Meeting House. Following our concerts they will be playing in Venice and at the Barbican in London ...! We look forward to their next visit!





Ipswich Book Festival

The Meeting House hosted part of the Book Festival – a talk by Caroline Quentin about her new book *'Drawn to Nature'.* This was one of the most popular events of the Book Festival, attracting over 150 people – so our Meeting House was full, with the upper gallery front row also full.



The photo shows Caroline with Paulette Reed, Linda King and Tessa Forsdike.

Book Group

The next meeting of the Book Group will be on 3rd December at 7pm – via Zoom.

Poetry Group

Our next poetry meeting will be on 26th November at 2pm on Zoom. We will be looking at the poetry of Georgia Douglas Johnson, an American poet. Contact Riena Jackson for the link - rienajackson@icloud.com

A Visit to St Edmundsbury Cathedral Library

The library, founded in 1595 is housed up a narrow winding staircase above the North West porch of St Edmundsbury Cathedral: it is the oldest parish library in England.

The main reason for my visit was to view close the 'Bury Psalter', a 600 year's old illuminated Latin Manuscript book of Psalms from around 1400. Returned to its original home after 500 years it is one of only two books from the vast medieval library of the Abbey known to remain in the town.



After the Dissolution of the Abbey of St Edmund in 1539 it passed into private hands until 1706 when it was gifted to the local grammar school and many years later was placed on loan and into the care of the Bury Record Office. Following the amalgamation of all local Record Offices into Suffolk Archives at Ipswich, the owners of the Psalter, The Trustees of the King Edward V1 Grammar School Foundation Trust, gave it as a permanent gift to the Cathedral earlier this year so it would remain in Bury St Edmunds.

The Psalter contains the Psalms of David; collection of hymns and music, a list of saints and the liturgical calendar, all beautifully scribed and illuminated on pages decorated with wonderful artwork of brilliant colours and gold leaf lettering. The fact that this was written in the scriptorium by scribes and illuminators at St Edmundsbury Abbey with quills, homemade ink, poor lighting and very cold in winter months is remarkable.

Other equally interesting but different books had been chosen for our group to look at: one which I found fascinating was *'Opera omnia' Vol 2 (Wittenberg, 1582)* which is a compilation of many of Martin Luther's works between 1519 – 1524, a time when there was deep hatred between the Roman Catholics & Protestants. It was especially uncomfortable to look at as Martin Luther had chosen to include an engraving by Lucas Cranach the Elder which was widely circulated in a leaflet in the 16th century.

The accompanying information by the book read '*A misshapen calf, born in Freiberg, Saxony, on 8th December 1522 had hind legs straight as a human's, a bald patch on the head, a lolling tongue and only one eye. A skin flap on the back was said to resemble a monk's cowl, which along with the 'tonsure' led to it being called the Monk Calf.*

Martin Luther and his follower, Philip Melanchthon, took this monstrous birth to be a sign of God's displeasure with monks. They explained that the Monk Calf signifies that monasticism is nothing more than an outward appearance of holiness……..' .

Since my visit, I've read that the library also contains a copy of the first printed Latin Edition of the Koran printed in Zurich 1543 with a preface by Martin Luther; hopefully he was kinder with his words than in the etching he chose to put in *Opera omnia!*

There is always an exhibition of the books in the Treasury and to arrange a library tour contact Stephen Dart, Keeper of the Library or Hannah, the Visitor Manager in the Cathedral on 01284 748721 or visitor.office@stedscathedral.org

By Linda King

Christmas Bit & Bobs Table

It may seem some time away but now is the time to start searching the drawers & cupboards for all the unwanted gifts and nearly new items which are being saved for our annual Bits & Bobs Table, to be held after the service on the 6th December.
Proceeds from the stall will go to our designated charity for the year., chosen at our AGM.

Birthdays in November

We wish everyone who celebrates their birthday in November a really good time, including Hilary hamilton on 11th ; Erin Reed on 16th ; Franklyn Bradbrook on 24th and Mathilda Hawes on 24th.

Trees poem and Joyce Kilmer

My daughter Rachel and her family, plus Hilary are in Boston where son Finn was competing in The Head of The Charles rowing race. Fantastic race, sadly Finn was pipped at the post by 00.845 seconds!
They are house sitting just outside of Boston and the address is Joyce Kilmer Road. The namesake died in the First World War (1896 - 1918).
Rachel being curious looked him up. Joyce wrote a beautiful poem called Trees which was set to music. My mother loved it because my father who had a beautiful voice often sang it for her, and Kate once sang it in the Meeting House.
by Rosemary Hamilton

We all love this simple but beautiful worded poem.

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
against earth's sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain

A tree that winter takes her frame
And, 'neath the cold, her latent leaves
Hides in the wood a nest of ease
Where squirrels hide their nuts in peace.

A tree that o'er the summer walk
Leans in the golden weather;
and lights the green and golden leaves
with gladness in the morning breeze.

A tree whose glory and whose lifetime
Are in the keeping of the earth
And which enricheth, that we may see,
The sights and sounds of earth and heaven.

The Language of Faith - Final Free Online Course of 2026!

Do you have a complicated relationship with religious language? Perhaps you've had negative experiences in other traditions which have left you prone to reacting or rejecting it all together. Perhaps you feel fairly new to all this and crave a deeper understanding of religious language. Perhaps it all just seems weird or confusing. Come as you are. Let's find new ways to reclaim it, explore it and more deeply consider it, together.
Sign up for this four-part course in November, led by Dr. Rev. Jane Blackall and Jasmine Cooray of Kensington Unitarians. All are welcome and invited to explore religious language, together with others locally, nationally and internationally.
Nov 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th : 7-9pm on Zoom
Sign up with jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk to book your place.

Thought for the month

Boundaries are the antidote to emotional exhaustion. - *Anne Katherine*

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 25th November ideally by email to tessa@tessajordan.co.uk. To contact our secretary, ring 07980 641620, email ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or ring our Treasurer on 01473 610723