



Membership Service and Lunch

We look forward to officially welcoming as members Liz Constable and Hilary Hamilton at our service on Sunday 30th January. It is also a chance for all current members to renew their commitment and for anyone new to our congregation who may be interested in connecting in a more established way to find out what it means to become a member. If you want to know any more, do speak to one of the Trustees.

We will also enjoy a shared lunch afterwards – all welcome, even if you do not bring food with you. Our experience is not quite the loaves and fishes fable, but there is always enough delicious food for everyone and the chat is stimulating.



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Why Domestic Abuse is Everyone's Business

As part of our support for our chosen charity, Lighthouse, we are offering two awareness sessions to inform people about the issues connected to Domestic Abuse.



The aim of these sessions is to get people talking about what the abuse means, how it affects people and how we can support (mainly) women. Domestic abuse is a topic which makes people uncomfortable, often because they don't know what to say, find it difficult to accept or to recognise. Then those who need support are left alone and struggling.

So please start talking about it now – and invite anyone who may be interested to join us for the sessions –

Thursday 3rd February at 2pm

or

Tuesday 15th February at 7pm

at our Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House

Five Celebrations



During the Christmas holidays I learned of another cultural festival which was completely new to me. I was semi familiar with Jewish, Muslim and Hindu festivals which hold a similar importance for believers in those faiths as Christmas does for Christians.

My granddaughter's Montessori Nursery held a celebration with songs and dances at Christmas time and the programme made a point of wishing us all a happy holiday, whether Christmas, Hanukkah, Diwali, Ramadan or Kwanzaa ... and a happy new year to make sure they covered all options.

As I had never heard of the Kwanzaa celebration, I had to check on Google. It told me (via Wikipedia) that it is an annual celebration of African American culture which takes place from December 26 to January 1, culminating in a communal feast called Karamu usually on the sixth day. It was created by activist Maulana Karenga, a Black nationalist and professor of Pan-African studies at California State University at Long Beach. It is based on African harvest festival traditions from various parts of Africa, including West and Southeast Africa. Kwanzaa was first celebrated in 1966, which is a long time not to have heard of it.

It seems that the non-religious festival grew out of the political and Black Power struggles in the 1960s and 70s. It is based on African first fruits traditions of giving the first produce to the

Gods. The name Kwanzaa is from Swahili *matunda ya kwanza*. The rituals of the holiday promote *Nguzo Saba*, the "seven principles of African Heritage" that Karenga described as "a communitarian African philosophy". Each day is celebrated to mark one of the principles and a candle is lit on the seven branched candelabra.

The principles are -

- Umoja (unity)—To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.
- Kujichagulia (self-determination)—To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.
- Ujima (collective work and responsibility)—To build and maintain our community together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems and to solve them together.
- Ujamaa (cooperative economics)—To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.
- Nia (purpose)—To make our collective vocation the building and development of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
- Kuumba (creativity)—To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
- Imani (faith)—To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Whatever our faith tradition (or none), these principles seem universal.

Five Celebrations (cont.)

As I delved further, I discovered there are some disputes about Maulana Karenga's criminal record (he is currently on parole) as to whether his charge was due to political pressures and the rivalry between his organisation US magazine and the Black Panthers. This, whether true or not, does not detract from the ideas behind Kwanzaa.

I do not know of anyone in the UK who celebrates this festival and would be interested to hear how familiar with it readers are.

Tessa Forsdike

Birthdays in February

Happy birthday wishes to Jean Odell on 1st ; Robert Waller on 2nd; Ali Mercer on 3rd ; Kate Dickinson and Rachel Hamilton on 5th ; Tracy Sakals on 11th ; Linda King on 14th; Beryl Beech on 16th ; Ralph Spence on 19th ; Tessa Forsdike on 20th and to John Ellis on 29th.

Once more John has to decide whether to celebrate on 28th February or on 1st March and this year it is a big 90 years he will be celebrating – congratulations John!

Services in February

6th – led by Jodi & John Warren - Ipswich Unitarians.

13th – led by Andrew Benedict, East of England Faiths Agency

20th – led by Rev Joy Croft, Retired Unitarian Minister, Norfolk.

27th – led by Revs Celia & John Midgley, Retired Unitarian Ministers from Yorkshire via Zoom

All services start at 10.45 and are in person and simultaneously via Zoom. To be added to the Zoom link mailing list, please contact Tessa Forsdike

(tessa@tessajordan.co.uk) or Robert Waller

(bob.waller2255@gmail.com)

Poetry Group

The poet for next month is 24th February is Norman MacCaig and the meeting is at 2pm on 24th February.

Contact Riena Jackson for details -

riensjackson@icloud.com

Volunteering for TWAM

I became aware of TWAM after I retired and was in a position to give some time to what I thought was a very worthwhile cause. TWAM is an acronym for Tools With a Mission and the idea is to refurbish no longer wanted items for use in Africa. TWAM will take any hand tools, spanners, manual or electric sewing machines, knitting machines, books and computers. They are sorted, cleaned and repaired and the electrical items are PAT tested before they are sent off in a shipping container to various countries in Africa.

For as long as I can remember I have always taken things apart and had a go at repairing them so it was ideal for me when I was set to work on refurbishing sewing machines. Most of the time a good clean and lubrication will get a machine running as good as new but occasionally more complex problems do arise. Usually with a bit of thought and application the vast majority of machines can be made to run and sew as new. Any machines that are beyond repair are stripped of the good parts leaving us with a good supply of used components which we can use to bring machines up to scratch. Some of the manual machines are over one hundred years old and after they have been serviced they will probably be good for another century of use.



Volunteering for TWAM – cont.

It feels good to be part of something that can make a real difference to people's lives. A sewing machine will give both men and women an alternative way of earning a living and supporting their family.

If any of you have items to pass on, I am happy to deliver them to TWAM for you. They also have a pick-up service for bulkier items such as treadle sewing machines so feel free to contact me on 07855 297909.

David Forsdike

Book Group

We next meet on Thursday 3rd March via Zoom at 7pm and will be discussing 'Open Water' by Caleb Azumah Nelson. All welcome – contact Tessa Forsdike for the link.

GA AGM

The 2022 Annual Meetings of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches will be held at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole on 19-21 April 2022. Because of coronavirus uncertainty over the Christmas period, we have decided to pause opening bookings until Tuesday 1 February, when our new, simpler online booking system will open. So, make sure you're ready to book by then, especially if you'd like to claim one of the limited number of subsidised tickets for those struggling financially, Under 40s and Newcomers <<https://civicrm.unitarian.org.uk/civicrm/mailling/url?url=909&qid=25001>> , as these will be allocated for a 'first come, first served' basis. At a congregational and district level, make sure you choose your delegate(s) soon, so that they can book as soon as possible. The deadline for submitting motions is 22 February. <<https://civicrm.unitarian.org.uk/civicrm/mailling/url?url=910&qid=25001>> There will be an online Motions Guidance Session <<https://civicrm.unitarian.org.uk/civicrm/mailling/url?url=911&qid=25001>> on 3 February at 7pm for those submitting a motion, or considering doing so. 2022 will not be a 'normal' year as covid-19 continues to affect everything we do and our Annual Meetings team are working hard to deliver a safe, enjoyable and inspiring event.

Ipswich CAN

The Clean Air Now campaign in Ipswich is inviting us to write to our local councillors to express our concern about the local air quality.

You can do this online -

https://actionnetwork.org/letters/03cf02bfcc51f70092af702a3cbc8c99bc9ef94?source=direct_link&

Activist Tony Horner writes - *All you need to do is put in your address. Action Network will then work out who your councillors are and automatically email them.*

This action will take less than a minute, but it is essential for us to make progress.

Let us know how you get on. Perhaps share your replies and we may put them on the website.

Remnant oddments?

Do you have oddments of material lying forgotten in the corners of drawers? Paula Chapman would like them please to make bags for the Care Packs we are giving to Lighthouse. Tessa will pass them on.

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 Friday 25th February by email to

ipswichunitarian@gmail.com or post to 48 Crabbe Street, Ipswich IP4 5HS

To contact our Secretary ring 01473 728498

email tessa@tessajordan.co.uk

Website – www.unitarianipswich.com

Thought for the month

Water is fluid, soft, and yielding. But water will wear away rock, which is rigid and cannot yield. As a rule, whatever is fluid, soft, and yielding will overcome whatever is rigid and hard. This is another paradox: what is soft is strong.

— Lao Tzu