



## Contents –

- 1 – Happy New Year
- 2 – Xmas photos; Services; Thank you; Good News
- 3 – Raising Awareness of Displaced Persons and Refugees;
- 4 – Our Lifespan; Reply; Miranda McIntosh
- 5 – Collection; Charity Funds; New Year's Wish; Monton Unitarian Appeal; Contacts; Thought for the Month

## Happy New Year for 2020

We wish everyone a happy and healthy 2020 and look forward to seeing and sharing with you over the months to come.

Above is a photo taken by Maggie Hodges at our Carol Service by Candlelight and overleaf are some more Christmas photos – thank you Maggie!

Lighting the advent candles on Christmas Day



**Services in January** (all start at 10.45)

5<sup>th</sup> - Martin Gienke from Bury Unitarians  
12<sup>th</sup> - Riena Jackson from Ipswich Unitarians  
19<sup>th</sup> - Ian Hartley from the Ipswich Quaker Meeting  
26<sup>th</sup> – Circle service led by Tessa Forsdike and Congregation - also Membership service. The theme will be 'Belonging'

During the service on 26<sup>th</sup>, Claire Johnson and Daniele Falcinelli will be welcomed as members. Please come to give them a warm welcome and to share lunch together afterwards. All food contributions welcome.

**Thank you**

Thank you to all who led and contributed to the services in December – including Linda King; Martin Spettigue; Matthew Smith; Cliff Reed; Adam Whybray and Ann Baeppler.

During his service on 8<sup>th</sup> December, Martin Spettigue quoted from Sri Chinmoy's work –

*'My ultimate goal is for the power of love to replace the love of power within each individual. My ultimate goal is for the whole world to walk together in peace and oneness'*  
*'God wants us to be happy, happy, happy all the time.'*

With our ginger wine after the service on Christmas Day – and Paulette showing off her Christmas jumper!



**Good news ... (we hope!)**

The Trustees recently heard by email from the officials at Historic England to inform us that (subject to agreeing to the conditions) they will grant us £421,000 towards our Restoration Fund for our Meeting House. This is wonderful news and means that we are well on the way to raising the full amount needed. We are still awaiting the confirmation of this offer in hard copy but with Christmas interrupting the postal services, we are confident that this is a formality (and crossing our fingers!).

At the Carol Service we collected a total of 109 signatures on our petition asking donors of grants to recognise the vital importance of our Meeting House to the local community and its contribution to life in Ipswich. This petition, along with all other evidence of support will go with our application to funders at Viridor at the beginning of January. We hope they will also be able to donate a substantial amount and that the work will be able to start very soon.

## **RAISING AWARENESS OF DISPLACED PERSONS AND REFUGEES**

At the beginning of December my partner Peter Watkins told me that he had been brewing a project for the week before Christmas: to meditate each morning for half an hour in our local church (St Mary's Harkstead) from 10.30 – 11.00 holding the plight of refugees and displaced persons in loving and prayerful awareness and then to walk to each of the four other peninsula churches in turn, again being conscious of all those forced to flee their homeland for whatever reason.

Each morning up to six of us sat in a circle around a candle in the south aisle of St Mary's Church, Harkstead – Peter invited us to be heartfully and compassionately at one with all refugees, at one with their suffering and fears, with their hopes and hopelessness, with their courage and discouragement. Each half hour was concluded with a blessing:

*"May the blessing of sanctuary be yours. May freedom from suffering and fear be yours. May peace be with you. May hope fill your hearts and may you find kindness and goodwill wherever you seek it."*

Then whoever felt moved to do so, joined in the walk, with the routes planned as far as possible to avoid roads – fortunately there is a wide network of footpaths on the Shotley Peninsula.

Peter didn't make a big deal of his plan, just letting friends and neighbours know about it and leaving any further response or action to them. Speaking personally, I know that something in me shifted as a result of the four times I was able to join in the meditations and my walk on the Monday to St Mary's Erbarton and on the Friday to St Michael's, Woolverstone.

Now I must not let my increased awareness become blunted, remembering that actions speak louder than words.

*Ann Baeppler*

## **Hoping It Might Be So**

On a beach a father sits inconsolable in his loss.  
Two dearest children and his beloved wife  
Perished  
In the crossing.  
The dream of sanctuary,  
The hope of a better life  
Free from war has ended.  
A volunteer, with nothing but her humanity,  
Sits, arms around him,  
Trying in vain to subdue the unbearable grief.

Such despair – how can his suffering heart  
endure?

To witness this, to WITNESS this  
Surely the most militant bearer of arms  
Would cast aside his weapons  
In an act of love and contrition?

Hoping it might be so.

*Peter Watkins*  
(\*from "Enough to Love a Multitude")

## **Birthdays in January**

Happy Birthday to Paulette Reed on 14<sup>th</sup>; to Richard Dighton on 21<sup>st</sup>; to Clive Jordan on 24<sup>th</sup>; to Riena Jackson on 26<sup>th</sup>; to Juliette Spence on 27<sup>th</sup>; to Mark Hawes on 29<sup>th</sup>.

## **Events in January**

3<sup>rd</sup> – Meeting of Grant Funding Group with Historic England

13<sup>th</sup> – East Anglian Unitarian Womens' Group meeting in Bury St Edmunds 11am to 2pm – theme for discussion – Gender identity – speak to Riena, Paulette or Linda for more details.

14<sup>th</sup> – Worship Group meeting (to plan future services) – 2.30pm at Linda King's home.

29<sup>th</sup> – Holocaust Memorial Day – Ipswich Faith and Community Forum "STAND TOGETHER" at The Auditorium, First Floor, Waterfront Building University of Suffolk, IP41QJ - 12.30 – 14.00  
Please Join us for Food and Refreshments

## **Our Lifespan ...**

When God created the world and was about to determine the duration of life for all the creatures, the donkey came and asked, "Lord, how long am I to live?" "Thirty years," answered God. "Is that all right with you?" "Oh, Lord," replied the donkey, "that is a long time. Think of my tiresome existence carrying heavy loads from morning until night, dragging bags of grain to the mill so that others might eat bread, only to be cheered along and refreshed with kicks and blows! Spare me part of this long time." So God had mercy and gave him eighteen years.

The donkey went away satisfied, and the dog made his appearance. "How long do you want to live?" said God to him. "Thirty years was too much for the donkey, but you will be satisfied with that long." "Lord," answered the dog. "Is that your will? Just think how much I have to run. My feet will not hold out so long. And what can I do but growl and run from one corner to another after I have lost my voice for barking and my teeth for biting?" God saw that he was right, and he took away twelve years.

Then came the monkey. "Surely you would like to live thirty years," said the Lord to him. "You do not need to work like the donkey and the dog and are always having fun." "Oh, Lord," he answered, "so it appears, but it is different. When it rains porridge, I don't have a spoon. I am always supposed to be playing funny tricks and making faces so people will laugh, but when they give me an apple and I bite into it, it is always sour. How often is sorrow hidden behind a joke? I cannot put up with all that for thirty years!" God had mercy and gave him ten years.

Finally man made his appearance. Cheerful, healthy, and refreshed, he asked God to determine the duration of his life. "You shall live thirty years," spoke the Lord. "Is that enough for you?" "What a short time!" cried the man. "When I have built a house and a fire is burning on my own hearth, when I have planted trees that blossom and bear fruit, and am just beginning to enjoy life, then I am to die. Oh, Lord, extend my

time." "I will add the donkey's eighteen years," said God. "That is not enough," replied the man. "You shall also have the dog's twelve years." "Still too little." "Well, then," said God, "I will give you the monkey's ten years as well, but you shall receive no more." The man went away, but he was not satisfied. Thus man lives seventy years. The first thirty are his human years, and they quickly disappear. Here he is healthy and happy; he works with pleasure and enjoys his existence. The donkey's eighteen years follow. Here one burden after the other is laid on him; he carries the grain that feeds others, and his faithful service is rewarded with kicks and blows. Then come the dog's twelve years, and he lies in the corner growling, no longer having teeth with which to bite. And when this time is past, the monkey's ten years conclude. Now man is weak headed and foolish; he does silly things and becomes a laughing stock for children.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm  
(noticed and submitted by Linda King)

The following is a reply given by the Very Revd Joe Hawes, Dean of St Edmundsbury when asked 'What do you want to tell our readers about most?' Published in the East Anglian Daily Times 21 December 2019.

*There is a part of you, of every human being, which is infinitely older than you are, given to you to nurture and grow. Call it your soul, your essential self, it doesn't matter, but it exists. It is the part of you which belongs to God and is lent to you while you are on this earth. Nurture it, grow it, by loving and caring for others, loving yourself, accepting change, knowing that you are loved more than you could ever imagine and that you can change the world, perhaps not in great ways, but in small ways with great love. And that is what having faith means. All the rest is detail.*

## **Miranda McIntosh**

Miranda will soon be moving into sheltered accommodation – we wish her well and hope life will become a little easier for her there.

## Collection

*"We have drunk from wells we did not dig, warmed by fires we did not build. As we dedicate ourselves to the work of this community we'll now take up the collection".*

It's been announced and yet there are times when I approach an individual and it's only then that they start fumbling in their wallet/purse/pocket for loose change. Not so long ago I heard on the radio that the collection/offertory had risen considerably at a particular church since they decided to bring in the new technology of 'swipe and give'. At our Meeting House we have the choice of setting up a standing order, paying by cheque, or putting old fashioned coins or paper money in an envelope (identifiable to you for gift aid purposes), and dropping it in the collection bag as it is taken around during the service. I have been taking up the collection for a number of years now and it is interesting to see what, if anything goes in the bag.

At certain times of the year there are coins from around the world depending on where people have been for their holiday; there can be chocolate or other sweets (thank you, more please!); empty envelopes, and most recently there was a plectrum! Is someone suggesting I should learn the guitar? Some people date and write their name and the amount on the envelope, some draw a picture or write a quiz question, and others just the initial letter of their surname which can be tricky, Usually I'm able to decipher the clues and so allocate the funds to the correct person, but sometimes a bit of detective work is required or a telephone call just to be sure.

I appreciate and enjoy that all-be-it-brief interaction with attendees/members as not everyone stays for the refreshments we serve after service. I dare say that it will not be long before it is suggested that we go down the 'app' road. Happy giving everyone.  
Paulette Reed

## Charity funds

After the service on 21<sup>st</sup> December, Sandra and Malcolm Hawes raised £65 for the St Elizabeth Hospice with their mulled wine and mince pies. Linda King raised £50 on the Bits and Bobs stall – and she also won the cake!

## My New Year's Wish ...

In front of me there is a sheet of paper, with Sunday dates from January to December 2020. One column is headed 'Service Leader/Congregation'. That's one of us, some of us, or all of us! My wish is that the gaps on the Sunday mornings can be filled without causing me too much hassle. Selfish? 'You bet' ... we all have our failings, so indulge me! Leading or taking a speaking part in a service can be a pretty frightening prospect if never done before so, if you'd like to but can't quite take that first step, come and talk with me. Just by talking, doesn't put a name in a gap. The first gap date is the 23 February, so, plenty of time to think about it.

I do have another wish, 'may this coming year be all that you wish it to be'... and, as received in a card from a friend, 'may you look forward to this coming year with hope and vision and the strength & courage to meet all challenges' - I envisage our congregation having to meet many challenges throughout 2020!

Linda King

## Monton Unitarian Church Appeal

If you can donate to this other Unitarian chapel needing funds, please go to <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/montonchurchaccessibilityproject>

**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 Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January – to [ipswichunitarian@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:mjack76748@aol.com)  
Website – [www.unitarianipswich.com](http://www.unitarianipswich.com)

**Thought for the month** (as it IS January)

Those who think they have no time for exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness – Edward Stanley