

Bits and Pieces . . . and please keep them coming in!

Here is your 84th Midland Unitarian Association Bits & Pieces for May 2015. If you want any news from your congregation included here, please send it to me (details below)

Midland Unitarian Association of Lay Preachers and Service Leaders: Conducting Rites of Passage Foundation Step Course

Session 1, Weddings: 9th May, led by Rev. Martin Whitell
Session 2, Christenings/Baptisms/Namings: 18th July, led by Rev. Lynne Readett
Session 3, Funerals: 26th September, led by Rev. Ant Howe
Session 4, Putting it all into practice: 14th November, led by Rev. Sue Woolley

Where: Kingswood Meeting House, Worcs. B47 5DQ

Times: 10.00 am - 4.15 pm (coffee / tea from 9.30 am)

Total Cost: £55.00 (£15.00 in advance, £10.00 for each session)

You **must** attend all four sessions to get your Local Leadership Strategy Group certificate, but if you are only interested in one or two, you are still welcome to come along for those.

For more details contact Rev. Sue Woolley - see below

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### **The Road Ahead Training Day - a report**

On 25th April, 13 Unitarians from seven MUA congregations gathered at Unitarian New Meeting in Birmingham to attend a workshop on Social Action, led by Rob Gregson and Ann Howell of Simple Gifts. It was a truly inspirational day. After giving us a brief overview of the history of social action in the Unitarian context, we were asked to share what our own congregations were up to, and it was interesting to see the variety of things we are involved in, here in the Midlands. Rob Gregson emphasised that this wasn't just about fundraising, laudable though this is, this was about action, and about transforming our souls as well as helping other people.

It was suggested that the process of deciding what social action to get involved in should not be just another committee meeting. In the afternoon, Ann Howell posted several sheets up on the wall, each with a different area of concern, such as economic justice / compassion for all living beings / women's rights and so on. Then she asked each of us to sign the three that were of most importance to us, and then to winnow this down further, and stand in front of the one that stood out in our minds. The result was fascinating – every sheet had at least one signature, and when we had to line up at the end, every sheet had at least one person in front of it. But it was a wonderful method of getting people involved in the decision-making process. It gives everyone the opportunity of sharing what they are passionate about.

The last section of the day was devoted to thinking about the way forward – so that each congregation could decide how they could get involved. Another useful exercise was to ask participants to list positives and negatives about getting involved in social action projects, and this was again very insightful. At the end of the day, we were asked to think about what our dream for our own congregations would be. All in all, it was a most thought-provoking, enjoyable day.

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from UNI-News 16/04/15 The Listed Places of [Worship Roof Repair Fund](#) website has added an update.

In his 2015 Budget speech to the House of Commons on 18 March, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a further £40million to the Listed Places of Worship: Roof Repair Fund. This new money brings the total funding package made available to £55million.

The initial scheme is now closed but the Fund will then reopen to new applications later this year, making awards from the additional £25m allocation during 2016. Any applicants who were unsuccessful during the first round of awards will be required to reapply.

If you have any contributions for the next *Bits & Pieces*, please send them to me at 5, Martins Road, Piddington, Northampton NN7 2DN or via e-mail to revsuewoolley@gmail.com . Thank you!