

BITS AND PIECES . . . AND PLEASE KEEP THEM COMING IN!

Here is your 107th Midland Unitarian Association Bits & Pieces for April 2017. If you want any news from your congregation included here, please send it to me (details below)

HIGH TIDES AND LOW TIDES AT MUA 151ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 25th March saw nearly 40 Unitarians from across the District meeting at Kingswood Meeting House to take part in the 151st Annual General Meeting of the Midland Unitarian Association.

The business meeting was over in just under an hour, and included a special presentation to our dedicated Treasurer, Mr. Sandy Ellis, to mark his 34 years of service to the District. Our new President is Ms. Diane Rutter, of Kingswood, and our new Vice-President is Ms. Angela Maher, of Birmingham UNM. We also gave thanks to outgoing President, Mrs. Jane Couper of Evesham.

We also said goodbye to two members of the Executive Committee, Mr. Ash James of Kidderminster, a past President who has served the District faithfully for many years, and Mr. Rob Chapman of Shrewsbury. We wish them well.

We were pleased to welcome two new members onto the Executive Committee: Ms. Debra Burberry of Shrewsbury, and Mr. David Taylor of Stourbridge. We look forward to working closely with them on District matters in the future.

Business over, we came together in the Kingswood schoolroom to enjoy an excellent buffet lunch, laid on by Jill Bowie and her helpers. Then it was time to re-convene, for the new President's service, and to listen to our Guest Speaker, Rev. Danny Crosby, minister of the Altrincham and Urmston congregations in the North West.

Diane spoke about life in terms of high tides and low tides, varying between times of activity and involvement, and times of quietness and reflection. Life and ministry are sometimes brilliant, sometimes the reverse, but mostly about getting through the ordinary days every day. She shared a time of stillness and reflection by Simon John Barlow, which was about the holiness of ordinary days, and concluded with a hymn which she said could be the anthem for Unitarianism in the Midlands: no. 42 in the purple book *Remember the past, work in the present to ensure the future*.

Danny's talk was about how Love changes everything, and will be published in full in the May issue of *MU Now*. His theme was that impermanence is the energy and beauty of life, and that the spiritual life is about being awake to the wonders of life. There are both wonderful and painful moments, and everything is in change.

He commented that we seem to be living in more fearful times at present, to have lost faith with each other. But lots of people still look at life with loving eyes. He said that Love was equally as strong as fear. Taking up Diane's metaphor of tides, he explained that love and fear are like two forces pushing and pulling at our lives, and that we as Unitarians need to have faith in life, and try to live it in love. He concluded by asking those present to keep journeying on to new awakenings, and to live out of love, rather than fear.

All in all, it was a rich and enjoyable day.

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!