

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

Here is your 145th Midland Unitarian Association Bits & Pieces for August 2020. If you want any news from your congregation included here, please send it to me (details below)

RE-OPENING OUR PLACES OF WORSHIP

I am sure you have all heard the news that churches and chapels may re-open for worship, observing safe social-distancing measures, from 4th July. I have sent round two documents, one from the General Assembly and one from the LDPA Council, which detail the many factors which congregational committees will need to take into account before they make the decision to re-open. Please let me know when and if your church or chapel is planning to re-open, so that I can share it with other congregations in the District. So far as I know, only Warwick has re-opened so far (see Christine Thompson's report overleaf, about their experience).

ONLINE ACTIVITIES ROUND THE DISTRICT

District Minister's service, posted on <https://www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk/>

Online Gatherings with Rev Mark Hutchinson:

Heart and Soul gatherings, Saturdays 11.00 am, Sundays 6.00 pm

Touching the Spirit, Wednesdays and Thursdays 11.00 am

e-mail reverendhutch@gmail.com for Zoom details.

Birmingham UNM services with Rev Winnie Gordon: Sundays 11.00 – 11.40, followed by coffee and chat.

e-mail revgordon.unitarian@yahoo.com by Thursday of preceding week for Zoom details.

Bayshill Unitarians (Cheltenham) are doing their weekly service via Zoom.

Kingswood services with Rev Ant Howe:

posted on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYsw1tuoOiaTxV-T1r-xwVQ>

Shrewsbury Unitarians Coffee and Chat: Sundays 11.00 am

e-mail shrewsburyunitarians@gmail.com for Zoom details.

District Minister's weekly blogpost: usually posted on a Friday. <http://sue-still-i-am-one.blogspot.com/>

KEY MESSAGES FROM JULY MEETING OF MUA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1 Rev Ant Howe has left Kingswood Meeting House after 14 years as their minister. The Executive Committee offers him our very best wishes for the future.

2 MUA Annual Lunch: After some discussion, the Committee has decided not to hold the Annual Lunch this year, as we do not want to put vulnerable people at risk. This is a source of regret to us, because it is one of the opportunities for people from all over the District to meet together in community.

3 MU Now: The District Minister has asked Secretaries of congregations to let her know how many hard copies of the magazine their congregation needs (by 6th August please). In the meantime, please send your items (either news about your congregation, or on the theme of 'Spirit') to me at the address below. Thank you.

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 Thanks!

PTO for a report by Christine Thompson on the re-opening of Warwick Chapel

First service at Warwick Unitarian Chapel since lockdown on 26.07.2020

Preparations:

- e-mail sent to regular congregation members to inform of chapel opening
- chairs for congregation and speaker set out beforehand, all at least 2m apart (except family groups whose chairs were together)
- only one toilet opened with sanitiser and wipes
- front and back doors open for flow of air through the building
- sanitiser at entry and exit
- envelopes for collection to put on tray at front (not passed round)
- Infra-red thermometer to test temperature (non-contact) on entry to chapel
- service prepared with no hymns but additional musical interludes

Results:

- chapel full with 17 members of the congregation (including 3 couples, 1 family of three)
- introduction by Committee Chair stressing precautions, said masks were optional as 2m spacing, and asking to be informed if anyone became ill later
- everyone seemed to enjoy the service, appreciated the speaker and the musical interludes played by our skilful pianist
- no refreshments afterwards or socialising inside but garden available for those who wanted to chat
- list made of those who attended (to inform if anyone became ill later)

For consideration:

- invite comments from participants
- should we wear face-masks?
- should we turn away any who arrive late if chapel is full - how would we do this?

Have we missed anything?

Christine Thompson, Warwick Unitarians