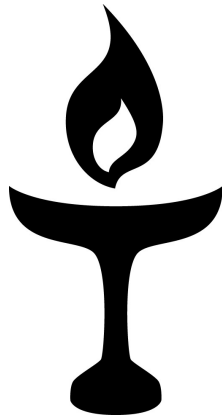


# MU NOW

\*\*\*\*\*



\*\*\*\*\*

## THE MAGAZINE OF THE MIDLAND UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 61

WINTER 2020/21

\*\*\*\*\*

[www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk](http://www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk)

### Officers of the Midland Unitarian Association

#### THE PRESIDENT

Ms. Debra Burbery,  
23a Ashford Way, Pontesbury, Nr. Shrewsbury SY5 0QT  
Tel: 01743-792722 e-mail: [debraburbery@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:debraburbery@yahoo.co.uk)

#### VICE PRESIDENT

Ms. Cressida Pryor,  
12, Cheltenham Road, Winchcombe, Glos. GL54 5ND  
Tel: 01242-604120 e-mail: [zenziallink@hotmail.com](mailto:zenziallink@hotmail.com)

#### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Ms. Diane Rutter,  
2, Packhorse Cottage, Packhorse Lane, Hollywood B47 5DH  
Tel: 0787-1215-920 e-mail: [dianerutter2004@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dianerutter2004@yahoo.co.uk)

#### SECRETARY / DISTRICT MINISTER

Rev. Sue Woolley, BA, MPhil, Dip RS (Open), Cert.Min.  
5, Martins Road, Piddington, Northampton NN7 2DN  
Tel: 01604-870746 e-mail: [revsuewoolley@gmail.com](mailto:revsuewoolley@gmail.com)

#### TREASURER

Mr Sandy Ellis. TD, BA, FCMA  
The Hermitage, Sale Green, Nr. Droitwich, Worcs. WR9 7LN  
Tel: 01905-391607 e-mail: [sandyellis1932@gmail.com](mailto:sandyellis1932@gmail.com)

### AIMS OF THE MUA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Support congregations
- Make things happen by providing leadership and initiating projects
- Find resourceful solutions
- Connect Unitarians in the Midlands.

**In this issue:**

MUA Officers and Aims of the Executive Committee	2
From the Editor	4
President's Piece	5
MUA District Minister Winter Update	6
MUA Executive Committee Key Messages	7
<i>Review: 'Dancing with Mortality' by Bert Clough</i> by Peter Godfrey	8
<i>Climate Change: a wake-up call</i> by Margaret Harris	10
District Round-up	12
Looking Forward to a Better Year	19
MUA Congregations: Contact Details	23

**From the Editor**

Welcome to the Winter 2020/21 issue of *MU Now*.

This slim issue contains some inspirational and fascinating pieces by Peter Godfrey, Lesley Harris, Margaret Harris (no relation!) and Fiona Checkley, among others, and a couple of contributions on the theme of *Looking Forward to a New Year*.

If you want more to read, please send your articles in!

My thanks to everyone who contributed.

**Submissions to *MU Now***

We are particularly looking for stories on local activities, or with a local interest, in addition to articles on the theme.

The theme for the next issue is "What will the 'new normal' look like for you /your congregation?" and the deadline for submissions will be **Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021**.

Please send your contributions to me at [revsuewoolley@gmail.com](mailto:revsuewoolley@gmail.com) or to 5, Martins Road, Piddington, Northampton NN7 2DN.

THANK YOU!

*Sue Woolley*

## President's Piece



A few weeks ago, I was waiting to pay for something in W H Smith, when I glanced at the newspaper stand and a copy of *Old Moore's Almanack* caught my eye. It reminded me of my grandparents who appeared to get a copy every year. I think in the hope of getting the winning numbers for the football pools! So, in a moment

of nostalgia and curiosity, I bought a copy to see what the astrologers thought lay ahead this year.

After a good read and rummage, I have concluded, as with much that astrologers say, the predictions can be interpreted in whatever way you want or desire as the reader... at the time of reading. However, one point did strike a chord... That the opening page states that 2021 will be *'The Year of The Great Reset'*.

After 2020, many of us will have reassessed and, in the spirit of New Year's resolutions, will reset our goals/aims/philosophies in our lives and the way we live as a result.

I am looking forward to a better year when we continue to appreciate the 'small' people or key workers in society. The ones that catch us when we fall, mend us, feed us, clean up after us and our environment. A year when we realise that a time of stillness, however short, in each day, is important. That we take time to communicate clearly, check our facts and do not underestimate human behaviour... good and bad. A year to continue to be flexible in our thinking, innovate and work in harmony with each other for the common good.

Maybe it is a tall order, but like at the bottom of Pandora's box, there is always the hope that some of these things will grow as the daylight lengthens.

**Debra Burbery**

~~~~~

## District Minister: Winter Update

Hello again. Here's a summary of what I've been doing, around the Midland Unitarian Association, and elsewhere.

**Leading worship around the Midland Unitarian Association:** Since lockdown, I have been producing an online service for the District each week, which has been posted around by e-mail and also on the MUA website. Sadly, the coronavirus is back in strength, and we are all once more in lockdown, although places of worship, mystifyingly, have been allowed to remain open, and I know that some of our member congregations will continue to meet in person, very carefully. I look forward to seeing all of you when I am able to visit you in person again. I am also available to conduct Rites of Passage round the District, should the need arise.

The **Autumn Training Day**, on Leading Small Group Ministry Online, was a great success. We are so grateful to Jane Blackall, Outreach Officer of Kensington Unitarians and a ministry student, for inspiring us all. The **Spring Training Day** and the **District AGM** will be happening on Zoom. Watch this space!

I am a fully qualified **spiritual director**. I offer direction sessions, on a one-to-one basis. Please contact me if you are interested.

And if you are feeling alone and would like to hear another human voice, please feel free to give me a call on 01604 870746...

Sue Woolley, District Minister, Midland Unitarian Association

~~~~~

## MUA Executive Committee Key Messages

The Key Messages below, from our September and November meetings, have already been shared in the relevant issues of *Bits & Pieces*, the monthly news-sheet sent to all congregations. Those not overtaken by time are repeated here:

Change in Officers of the Executive Committee: following the resignation of Angela Maher from the role of President at the end of July, which was noted with regret, the committee was able, under clause 8 of the constitution, to elect Debra Burbery as new President, and Cressida Pryor as new Vice-President (until the next AGM, on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March).

Inclusion of Officer contact details in future issues of MU Now: this had been agreed at the July meeting and has been implemented with the Winter 2020/21 issue, together with a statement of the Aims and Objectives of the Executive Committee (see inside front cover).

Debra Burbery: tel: 01743-792722; [debraburbery@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:debraburbery@yahoo.co.uk)  
Sue Woolley: tel: 01604-870746; [revsuewoolley@gmail.com](mailto:revsuewoolley@gmail.com)

~~~~~

## *Dancing with Mortality: Reflections of a Lapsed Atheist* by Bert Clough: review

Have you ever read a book in which the author refers to “the wondrousness of Unitarianism”? Nor had I until I read this new book by Bert Clough. Bert is Vice Chair of Oxford Unitarians – the Manchester College Oxford Chapel Society. He has an academic background, having been a policy researcher in education, training and lifelong learning. On retirement he was appointed a visiting professor at Leeds University.

The book is a paperback of one hundred and twelve pages. It is dedicated to Rev. Dr. David Usher who is familiar to most British Unitarians, and now to many in the USA where he has retired. The dedication is because the first time Bert attended a Unitarian service was at Meadow Chapel, Godalming, where the preacher was David Usher. David’s message was that religion had to be authentic. It should not be based on what we state we believe in by mouthing outworn creeds, but on how we behave and the “sanctity of the soul”. An authentic faith meant that you are encouraged to take your own unique experience in life and to craft it into your own understanding which makes sense to you as an individual and sustains you in times of crisis.

Bert says that there are many ways in which you can do this “and the wondrousness of Unitarianism is that they can be expressed and practiced in one religious community where there is no commonality of belief. More important is the commonality of purpose which helps us through the twists and turns of our disparate life journeys.”.

Marvellously, this introduction to Unitarianism led Bert not only to membership of our Godalming and Oxford congregations but

also to his becoming a lay preacher in those churches from time to time. This book is based on fifteen of Bert's addresses, each supplemented by additional material. Some of the addresses centre on general themes. For example, God, prayer, ethics, anti-Semitism, religion and politics, morality ("Morality is not about slavishly following political dogma or religious creeds. It is being able to step into other people's shoes" p.43), and war ("How then should we as Unitarians address the moral and ethical issues raised by war?" p.89). Others centre on the lives and teaching of spiritual teachers such as Bonhoeffer, the Buddha, Jesus, Capek, Dorothy Day, Gandhi, Gutierrez, Schweitzer, Wainstill and Martha Sharp, Simone Weil. I thought I knew something about most of these people but in every case Bert had information that was new to me – disgracefully I did not know that there is a Future of Humanity Institute in Oxford. Bert writes very movingly about these people and about how they can inspire us.

Every chapter makes interesting and provoking reading very largely because they are an expression of positive Unitarian thinking NOW. A delightful change from instances of negative thinking about Unitarianism. It is also good to find Bert quoting from Unitarians known to many of us personally – Ant Howe, Cliff Reed, Sarah Tinker, Brian Anderson and David Monk, for example.

Bert mentions how Unitarians began recognising women ministers over a hundred years ago (p.32) and were the first to take a positive stance on assisted dying (p.33). There is also reference to Unitarians helping Jews to escape from Prague (p.103) though this is about American Unitarians rather than British ones.

Several chapters end with a challenge to the reader. For example, the chapter on 'The Tide of Faith' concludes with the words,

"The fourteenth century Sufi poet, Hafiz, warned that 'the great religions of the world are like ships – and every sane person I know has jumped overboard'. Free-thinkers such as Unitarians need to crew the lifeboats."

Please buy this book – you will enjoy it. Better still, buy two – one for yourself and another to give to someone you know who may be interested in Unitarianism or to give to your church's library.

ISBN 978-1-8381695-0-3

£10 including postage: please contact [b.clough947@gmail.com](mailto:b.clough947@gmail.com) to buy your copy.

**Peter Godfrey**

~~~~~

## **Climate Change: A Wake-up Call**

Once this present lockdown terminates, then Christmas will take centre stage after a difficult year. But after Christmas, 2021 will be a wake-up call to action about the issue of climate change, even if Covid19 has not faded.

I have been interested in climate change for the past couple of years. I have read Isobel Losada's book, *The Joyful Environmentalist – How to practise without preaching*, which was published in July, and also David Attenborough's book, *A Life on our Planet: My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future*. In the latter book, there was a quote that affected me strongly: "We have less than a decade to switch from fossil fuels to clean energy." So this will require working at lightning speed, as he says.

We changed our lifestyles at an even faster rate in 1939/40 and remained cheerful whilst doing it, because we recognised how

essential it was. 2021 will need to be a great wake-up call to action – not only for spiritual people, but for the general “ever so comfortable, don’t disturb us” population. Unitarians and other like-minded folk could be setting examples and acting as ‘waker-uppers’ for others who would prefer to remain sleeping.

David Attenborough’s book is at no. 7 in the national non-fiction list at the moment. It (in my opinion) should be read by all our Unitarian ministers and as many others as possible – he gives the big picture, but also pointers for personal action. I believe that the UK needs to co-operate with our neighbouring countries, rather than isolating ourselves. Getting the present government to take rapid action in the right direction is going to be a very big job. Apart from important personal effort, and spreading the message, a united effort is required to put pressure on government, to start making serious headway.

David Attenborough believes that when we are wide awake, we can meet this huge challenge, but we cannot continue to keep our heads in the sand. The Grassroots Lion at last is waking – and not before time! It signals a certain painful process, for “high lives” to decline. But when the Lion’s roar (in the shape of Extinction Rebellion and other climate change activism) becomes so loud, then politicians need to fall in line, if humanity and the rest of the planet is to be saved from extinction.

**Margaret Harris (Shrewsbury)**

~~~~~

## District Round-up

### Christmas Service at Oat Street Chapel, Evesham

On 20<sup>th</sup> December, we had an in-situ Christmas carol service in the chapel, on the theme of “*How do we even know it’s Christmas at all?*” The chapel was looking beautiful with the Christmas tree put up by Mark and decorated by me, plus the lovely flickering candles and wonderful wreath contributed by Julia. The opening music was *Ave Maria*, following which Mark greeted everyone and then we had the carol *O Come All Ye Faithful*, sung by Eva Cassidy. Later towards the end of the service we had the same carol but this time in Latin – *Adeste Fideles*, sung by The Three Tenors, just showing how the same carol can work in two very different ways.

Mark firstly answered the question of “How do we even know it’s Christmas?” in a historical way by explaining the Solstice antecedents of our current Christmas festivities. The days around the Winter Solstice fell around the 25<sup>th</sup> December, when people were going through the shortest periods of daylight and were anxious to encourage the light to come back. Other antecedents were the birthday of the Roman God Mithras, involving the triumph of Light over Darkness, the Norse celebrations between 25<sup>th</sup> December and 6<sup>th</sup> January, the festivities of “Zagmuk” in Babylon and “Mother’s Night”, celebrated in England on 25<sup>th</sup> December. Finally in AD 336, as part of the Christianisation of the Roman Empire, it was stated officially that Christ was born on 25<sup>th</sup> December.

Somewhere between the mention of the Winter Solstice and the decision to have Christ born on 25<sup>th</sup> December, Mark went through the Biblical reading about the census and the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and we had the carol *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. The “hopes and fears of all the years” were definitely

with us while we listened to this carol. After explaining about AD 336, Mark had a light-hearted break, during which chapel members voted for which version of *Silent Night* they would like to hear and Sinead O' Connor's version won.

Having gone through historical reasons for knowing it was Christmas, Mark moved onto spiritual reasons for recognising that it was Christmas. He described how Andrew and The Transformers Children's Group had put together a video about the "Starfish story", in which the child who returns starfish to the sea, makes a huge difference to the ones he returns, even though he can only save a few of the starfish who have been washed up on the shore. Mark stressed that despite what various people over the years who have disapproved of Christmas have said, Christmas is a reminder of the difference that we can all make, a time to be inspired, and followed this with the carol *People Look East*.

Mark encompassed other aspects of Christmas by explaining how Christmas trees had been a symbol of life and how some of their decorations originated in Nordic mythology, and also described St Nicholas, the saint of children and travellers, who somehow merged with the roly-poly Santa created by Thomas Nash in 1892. Mark returned to the spiritual theme by emphasising that Christmas is all about the spirit of the Jesus story, that Christmas reminds us how enlightened prophets have been born to proclaim the word and serve as a reminder to set us back on the right track and to strive towards the higher life. But in the absence of the actual prophets, we need to treat Christmas as a "reminder time" of their wisdom and our potential to strive for good. This could be summed up with the saying "If Christ was born a thousand times anew, despair unless Christ is born in you". It is within us all to access, express and offer. Christmas is available all year for

us to light the darkness in our souls and move towards the Bethlehem that is in us.

At this point we relaxed and listened to *Once in Royal David's City*, which filled the chapel with peace and love. I found the words "And He leadeth in our sadness, and He shareth in our gladness" particularly comforting since we all need people to help us deal with our grief and to share our joys.

In the final part of his service, Mark read three of his poems, *Our Planet Still Hopes at Christmas*, *A Christ Renewal* and *A Christ Solstice*, since Christmas is also a reminder for us to extend compassion and care to our planet and remember to worship and respect our planet as our early ancestors did. In all, Christmas is a time for inspiration and striving high, what with the inspiring story of Jesus, the light to the East, aiming towards the Guiding Star. Mark expressed regret that we would not be able to do our traditional post-service socialising, but instead ended the service on a cheerful note with the carol *Ding Dong Merrily On High*.

In all, coming to the chapel for the atmosphere, the stained glass which shone through the proceedings, the wise and inspirational words from Mark, the company of us eight souls (myself, Andrew, Fleur, Gill, Pam, Eric, Ruth and Julia) was just so wonderful and so moving that I am glad we did it. I hope to have conveyed some of the atmosphere, inspiration and love to those of the congregation who were unable to attend and I would like to thank Mark very much for doing the service and thank everyone else involved for their support.

**Lesley Harris (Evesham)**

~~~~~

## Shrewsbury's Organ

Back in September 2016 the trustees at Shrewsbury Unitarian Church began discussing whether to proceed with a major full repair of our organ or to opt to purchase an electronic organ. Now, four years later, we have a resplendently renovated organ of which we all take great pleasure and pride!

Our organ was installed in 1914 in memory of Rev. James Street, who was minister for thirteen years and had organised a major renovation of the church. By all accounts he was an impressive man, described as one of the most widely known and eloquent Unitarian ministers. The organ commemorates his work in the cause of liberal religion and civil progress. The organ was manufactured by Peter Conacher's of Huddersfield, who made organs for many non-conformist churches. It is considered a 'workhorse' rather than a 'Rolls Royce' model with two manual keyboards, which is ideal for our small church. After 100 years a full repair was needed. The bellows needed to be removed and re-leathered – a task easier said than done as they measured 8ft by 5ft by 5 inches. Once removed, the bellows were to be re-leathered, using leather that is firm and supple and selected from sheep that have enjoyed a special diet! The organ's Great and Swell soundboards needed to be overhauled and re-leathered too, the under-actions needed to be overhauled, as did all primary and power motors, the valves needed new pallets and all the magnets needed checking. Everything would then be adjusted and tuned and reset for optimum working of the organ. On top of all this, the organ blower needed replacing – an inspection of its condition described it as "this unit is now on a downward spiral and the dreadful noise will only get worse as time passes."



After much deliberation, the church trustees decided to progress with the renovation of the organ, with an approximate expenditure of between £30,000 and £35,000. Longstaff and Jones, Organ Builders, who had been tuning and maintaining the organ for many years, were selected to proceed with the work and oversee the whole project (and affectionately referred to as Geoff and Kevin hereon in!).

In order to progress the work, we applied for financial assistance and were fortunate to secure grants from The Pilgrim Trust, On Organ and Shropshire Historic Churches Trust. Members of the congregation gave generously to the project and donations that we received from visitors to the church were directed to our organ fund.

Towards the end of 2018 the blower was replaced, with a fully refurbished blower installed in an acoustic enclosure cabinet, which also required the installation of a new three phase electrical supply. This was followed by the dismantling of the organ to get to the bellows – necessitating removal of two sets of Bourdon pipes and their wind chests, together with the bellow weights, which all had to be stored in the church. This took about five days, after which the bellows were collected by Alan Goulding of Pipe Organ Services near Melton Mowbray for re-leathering and return.



A long period of inaction then followed as Geoff and Kevin were working on an organ at Acton Scott (this village has been featured on the BBC's *Victorian Farm* programme). Unfortunately, they ran into a problem there, as the newly re-leathered bellows were then chewed through by mice and had to be redone!



Eventually, in at the beginning of February this year our organ renovation got underway. Thousands of tiny pieces were removed and then... COVID LOCKDOWN! Work began again in earnest in late April, with Geoff and Kevin spending nearly six months in the church, removing, cleaning and re-leathering thousands of intricate motors and mechanisms, repairing the organ case and console doors, cleaning and repairing the pipes and rackboards. The bellows were replaced and everything re-installed! The craftsmanship and attention to detail was truly amazing.

The result: a terrific sounding organ, full of gusto! What a journey it has been, but how pleased are we with the result. Our organist, William Smallman, attends our services twice a month and it is always a joy to listen to him playing the organ, even more so now. It is our hope that by next Spring the COVID situation will have improved sufficiently to enable us to host a concert of organ music and that some fellow Unitarians will be able to join us. Geoff, having spent over 50 years renovating organs, has finally retired and we are honoured that his working life ended by giving

our organ so much care and attention. We are equally honoured that Kevin will continue to look after our organ in the coming years.

**Fiona Checkley (Shrewsbury), who also took the photos.**

~~~~~

### **Closure of Kidderminster New Meeting House**

It is with deep sadness that Kidderminster Unitarian New Meeting House closes its doors and folds the congregation. The year began with very limited committee numbers and many members suffering long term health issues also meant low attendance at services. We also suffered the loss of beloved members (Roger Mathews, Geoffrey Shilvock).

At the beginning of the year, the congregation embarked on a new schedule of Sunday services and Friday coffee morning of once a fortnight. Then the Covid pandemic meant we all closed our doors, cancelled weddings and reverted to Zoom services for those who were able to connect. Some close friendships became limited to phone conversations as the virus progressed.

The rental of the building has affected the use by the Kidderminster Operatic and Dramatic Society as singing remains banned by government guidelines. In addition, the many workers working from home impacted the car park use. The future looked bleak for a return to normal with normal congregation numbers, and a final decision was made to sell the premises.

The doors of the church may be closed but the spirit of Kidderminster Unitarians lives on in the town. Long may it do so.

**Winnie Gordon**

## Looking Forward to a Better Year

### A couple of short pieces

First, a short poem attributed to Apollinaire, which seems to reflect what we have been experiencing during 2020, with getting to grips with Zoom and online generally:

“Come to the edge.  
We might fall.  
Come to the edge.  
It’s too high!  
COME TO THE EDGE!  
And they came,  
And he pushed,  
And they flew.”

Second, a short verse which I saw as part of a calligraphy exhibition. The piece was attributed to Helen Mary Skelton, but I don’t know whether she was the author or just the person doing the calligraphy.

“Would that I like thistledown could be  
Quiescent in the place wind chose for me.”

I find this very calming if I start to get annoyed by restrictions, or cross with what is going on that I can’t do anything about. It also helps me to look at and enjoy my surroundings when out on a walk.

**Alison Thursfield (Cheltenham & Gloucester)**

~~~~~

## Reflection on the end of the old year, the beginning of the new

Since the first lockdown began, on 23rd March, there has been much to be sorrowful about - the gatherings missed, the hugs and kisses unexchanged, the family members not seen, the friends lost - especially this last. But there has also been so much joy, so much connection, which has lifted my heart. Unitarians of all stripes have found new ways of staying in touch - via Zoom, via YouTube, via e-mail, via telephone, even via letters and cards. Two in particular stand out for me: Jane Blackall's wonderful Heart and Soul gatherings on Zoom, now also being led by others, have been a lovely way to connect for so many people. She has enabled a true ministry of joy to happen. I was so grateful when she consented to lead our Autumn Training Day, so that this soul-nourishing practice could be offered to more of our congregations. And Celia Cartwright's daily Ruminations on Facebook, recording the joys and sorrows of the year, another faithful ministry. Reading them each day has been a real spiritual pick-me-up for me and for many others.

For myself, when I have joined Zoom gatherings, it has been so good to talk to other people, both friends and strangers, to see well-loved faces and to make new friends. I very much enjoyed the Unitarian Carol Service via Zoom on the evening of Christmas Eve.

I found an anonymous quotation, which says, "The more joy we give to other people, the more joy returns to our own hearts." And I have found that this is so, this year. We are social beings and reaching out to others, in whatever way, has been such an important part of this year, which has filled my heart with joy. I have had so many appreciative e-mails from people who have read and listened to my online services, it has warmed my heart.

There has also been the lovely possibility of "attending" Zoom worship services all over the country and even further afield, which has been another source of joy. I understand that many new folk have attended Unitarian worship for the first time in this way. When we "get back to normal" (probably towards the end of 2021) I hope that these online gatherings will continue, as they have enabled us to reach out to people who would not otherwise cross our thresholds. I am certainly going to carry on producing an online service each week, as many of the congregations in the Midlands only meet twice a month, and I want to offer them some kind of worship on "non-Church" Sundays.

At the beginning of this new year, 2021, the quotation by Tseng-Kuang is most apposite, "Do not worry about the past, turn to the future." It reminds me of the annual joy and challenge of filling in my Year Compass, my husband and I do each New Year's Eve. We looked back on the past year (and oh my, what a year it has been!) and looked forward to a (hopefully) less constricted 2021. Although I must say at this point, I would far rather remain in lockdown longer and get this horrible virus defeated, than come out early and risk it going on indefinitely.

In spite of all its oddness - who would have dreamed that everyone not only could, but *should*, walk into a bank in a mask and ask for money and no-one would turn a hair? - 2020 has not been entirely bad. I turned 60 in February and am happy about that. My first novel, *One Foot in Front of the Other*, was published in October, and I would never have dreamed that I would be featured in a prominent broadsheet newspaper, talking about it. And I have crocheted four blankets and worked on my next book most days.

At this time of year, a time of endings and beginnings, I always find the words of 19th century Unitarian and Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson both challenging and reassuring:

"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he knows that every day is doomsday. Today is a king in disguise. Today always looks mean to the thoughtless, in the face of a uniform experience that all good and great and happy actions are made up precisely of these blank todays.

Let us not be so deceived; let us unmask the king as he passes! He only is rich who owns the day, and no-one owns the day who allows it to be invaded with worry, fret and anxiety.

You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. This day is all that is good and fair. It is too dear, with its hopes and invitations, to waste a moment on the yesterdays."

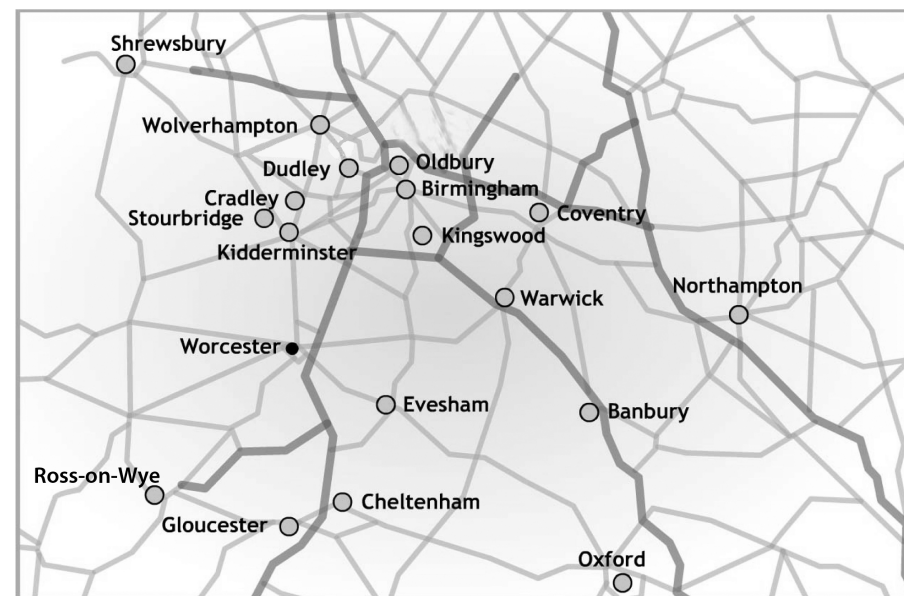
I hope that 2021 will be a better year for all of us - that we will all be vaccinated against Covid 19, that we will eventually be able to meet in person once more, and that our experiences of the past year will have turned us into kinder, more compassionate people. Another New Year was welcomed in at midnight on 1<sup>st</sup> January, full of hints and promises. We have another chance to learn new things, to make new friends, to appreciate old friends, and to recognise the Divine everywhere.

May it be so, for all of us.

**Sue Woolley**

## MUA Congregations: Contact Details

Name	Contact	Details
Birmingham		unitariannewmeetingbirmingham@yahoo.co.uk
Cheltenham & Gloucester	Alison Thursfield	01242 254825 ajthursfield@tiscali.co.uk
Coventry	Francesca Rogers	info@coventryunitarians.org.uk
Cradley	Sheila Powell	01384 838729
Dudley	Barbara Russell	01902 650168 barbara-russell@blueyonder.co.uk
Evesham	Lesley Harris	01242 573927 agonoid@gmail.com
Kingswood	Maria Govier	07816-159199 maria.heath@icloud.com
Northampton	Sue Woolley	01604 870746 revsuewoolley@gmail.com
Oldbury	Pamela Rose	0121 422 0311
Shrewsbury	Fiona Checkley	07487 531 913 shrewsburyunitarians@gmail.com
Stourbridge	David Mearman	01384 376478 davidmearman@hotmail.com
Warwick	Elaine Nomura	01926 611964 emtnomura@aol.com



**The Spring 2021 issue will be published in May**

**Please may we have your contributions on local matters,  
and on the theme of “What will the ‘new normal’ look like for  
you /your congregation?”**

**by Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Thank you!**