

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

Here is your 132nd Midland Unitarian Association Bits & Pieces for July 2019. If you want any news from your congregation included here, please send it to me (details below)

THOUGHT TO PONDER (from Cotswold Group Newsletter)

One of Rev Peter Hewis' readings at the Asparagus Lunch Service was from a book called 'Lovey Mary' by Alice Hegan Rice; I've selected some extracts for our 'Thought to ponder' this month.

Miss Viny is showing Lovey Mary around her 'Denominational Garden'.

"Oh, law, don't talk to me 'bout caged-up flowers! I don't b'lieve in shuttin' a flower up in a greenhouse any more 'n I b'lieve in shuttin' myself up in one church."

"This here is a denominational garden, an' I got every congregation I ever heard of planted in it. I ain't got no faverite bed. I keer fer 'em all jes alike. When you come to think of it, the same rule holds good in startin' a garden as does in startin' a church. You first got to stiddy what sort of soil you goin' to work with, then you have to sum up all the things you have to fight ag'inst. Next you choose what flowers are goin' to hold the best places. That's a mighty important question in churches, too, ain't it? Then you go to plantin', the thicker the better, fer in both you got to allow fer a mighty fallin' off. After that you must take good keer of what you got, an' be sure to plant something new each year. Once in a while some of the old growths has to be thinned out, and the new upstarts an' suckers has to be pulled up. Now, if you'll come out here I'll show you round."

Then Miss Vimy describes her plants in terms of denominations...

Baptists," said Miss Viny, waving her hand toward a bed of heliotrope and flags. "They want lots of water; like to be wet clean through... Phlox are Methodist; no set color, easy to grow, hardy an' vigorous." ...

"An' here," continued Miss Viny, "are the Unitarians. You may be s'prised at me fer havin' 'em in here, 'long with the orthodox churches; but if the sun an' the rain don't make no distinction, I don't see what right I got to put 'em on the other side of the fence. These first is sweet-william, as rich in bloom as the Unitarian is in good works, a-sowin' theyselves constant, an' every little plant a-puttin' out a flower."

Full text available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5970/5970.txt>

*****MUA SKILLS AUDIT*****

In the piece above, Unitarians are described as "rich in bloom as the Unitarian is in good works, a-sowin' themselves constant, an' every little plant a-puttin' out a flower."

During the recent MUA Committee Day at Holland House, one of the ideas that came up was a revival of the MUA Skills Directory, which was organised by our former District Minister, Rev. Michael Dadson, in 2004. The Executive Committee is minded to revive this idea, and when I visit your congregations over the next few months, I will be asking you all what skills you have to offer other congregations in the District, and how we might share these skills for the benefit of all. So that we can "take good keer of what [we've] got, an' be sure to plant something new each year."

We are stronger together than we are in our own little congregations – I am sure that if we all worked together, each congregation could become stronger, and more able to carry on the Unitarian witness which is so important to us all.

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