



The Frambridge Chronicle

**News from the Minister & Congregation of the Unitarian Meeting House,
Bridge Street, Framlingham**



The Serenity Prayer by the 20th century theologian Reinhold Niebuhr may be familiar:

*God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things which should be changed,
And the Wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.*

This prayer suggests our circumstances are not completely within our power to alter however much our positive thinking may help; nevertheless, we can choose the attitude we bring towards accepting the circumstances we may face.

Acceptance is also of course about coming to terms with ourselves which involves finding ways to lessen the stream of self-criticism that all too often dogs our thinking. Failure to accept ourselves can be very harmful.

There is actually a vital role for our little congregations at Framlingham and Bury St Edmunds in this regard. My hope is that the mutual acceptance we seek to practice in Unitarian congregations acts to reinforce our own self-acceptance: one way we can overcome little by little our own lack of self-confidence, which causes us to judge ourselves far too harshly. Together we can also gradually learn through experience, as a spiritual discipline we might say, that we are more likely to be compassionate towards others when we are compassionate towards ourselves.

If we are all spiritual pilgrims then our journey will be immeasurably enriched by finding a haven where we are truly accepted, where we can be ourselves, where we can even be enriched in who and what we are. This haven can then be a model of what we wish for others, and we may be motivated to struggle for justice for those who are marginalised so that they too may find love and acceptance.

Rev. Cal Courtney writes of a tiny Unitarian congregation he served as minister: "*We decided to abandon the burden of worry and embrace instead, as wholeheartedly as we could, the adventure of faith. Central to this adventure was the obligation to keep our doors open for other travellers who might come our way.*" "Keeping our doors open" in the sense in which Cal means is not primarily a matter of unbolting physical locks – it is about our attitude of openness towards others. By allowing others to be different and accepting them for it, we recognise our common humanity. So may it be!

[Adapted from a talk given at Bury St Edmunds Unitarian Meeting House, 21 Feb 2016]

Blessings,

Matthew

Please Note: The Minister's **rest days** are **Thursdays & Fridays** except in case of a pastoral emergency

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Services in March 2016			
Date	Time	The Unitarian Meeting House Bridge St Framlingham, IP13 9AJ	The Unitarian Meeting House Churchgate St., Bury St Edmunds IP33 1RH
6 March	3 p.m.		Who is the REAL you?
13 March	4 p.m.	Gas, Fizz and Freedom: Lessons from Joseph Priestley	
20 March	11a.m.		"When Heroes Go Down".: A service for Palm Sunday
27 March	4 p.m.	Always come back to Life	

The Monday Study Group, 7 p.m. @, Pilgrims Cottage, Badingham Road, Framlingham. Tel: 01728 723322.
Monday 8 March Session 3 "Balance"; Monday 22 March Session 4, "God".

Regular events in the Meeting House during March:

Mondays & Fridays 09.30 – 10.30 a.m. 'SCHOOL RUN YOGA' This term ends on **18 March** for the Easter Break. Please contact Angie Foster: **07799 402946 (mobile)**, email: angieleefoster@me.com for confirmation of times and dates for next term.

Tuesdays 10 – 12 noon: CAFE CONNECT our community Coffee Morning, **all welcome, Fair Trade refreshments** & conversation plus some bakery goods for sale.

Other events in the Meeting House during March:

SATURDAY 5 MARCH promptly @ 7.30 p.m.: Jane Austen at Home A costumed recital-performance of extracts from her writings **Tickets £10 (£8 Concessions) at the door or call** Helen on 01728 723127 or email life.sliceof@gmail.com

Wednesday 9 March, 10.30 a.m. The Framlingham Unitarian Trustees will meet

Saturday 12 March 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. GREENER FRAM: Swap or Mend Fair Trade Refreshments for sale. Volunteers can offer stitching, leather work, simple electrical repairs (with PAT testing), metal work (incl. welding), wood work and stone work. See Greener Fram website www.greenerfram.co.uk/ for items for sale and wanted.

News

SATURDAY 19 MARCH, 11 a.m. Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House, Eastern Union Extraordinary General Meeting, chaired by Alan Ruston, to discuss the future. Please bring your own lunch. Hot drinks provided. It is anticipated this session will last well into the afternoon. **It is vital that as many Unitarians as possible take part - will the Eastern Union will have a future in its present guise or become something else? Unitarians in East Anglia are scattered over a wide area: an association to provide each other with mutual support & encouragement is much needed: USE IT, or LOSE IT! –Ed.**

Rev. Matthew Smith is now the first minister in Framlingham authorised to conduct Marriages for people of the same gender. Also, Matthew will be representing Framlingham at the Unitarian General Assembly Meetings in Birmingham 30 March – 2 April, which will be preceded by the Ministers' Conference at the same venue.

Framlingham Unitarians send Warmest Congratulations to Rev Lewis Connolly who on 1st March 2016 takes up his appointment as Minister to the Ipswich Congregation. All good wishes to Lewis and his wife, Kathryn, as they embrace their new lives among us Unitarians in Suffolk and the wider reaches of East Anglia.

FRAMLINGHAM FAIR TRADE Fortnight opens with a **Fair Trade Pop-Up Stall** in Framlingham Town Library from Friday 26 February to Saturday 5 March. Please see local Press and Town Notices for other events.

All material for the APRIL edition must be with the editor by 10.00 hrs Monday 21 March 2016