



The Frambridge Chronicle



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

Dear Friends,

A question for you: Is a gardener someone who reads books about gardening and then tries to describe what a garden is and how flowers grow best? No, a gardener is most fully a gardener when they are in the garden gardening. While that person is gardening she may be hoping to become a better gardener with better understanding of plants and flowers but the experience of gardening is in the doing.

That's like the relationship between theology and faith. Faith is like the gardener stepping into the garden to do gardening rather than lying in bed – or reading about gardening! Theology is like the gardener trying to be more observant and reflective of both her surroundings and her own practice while gardening - in order to do gardening more authentically and harmoniously.

Faith of course is not supposed to obliterate doubt – these are supposed to work together for authentic living. Then theology becomes like a poem the poet writes reflecting on that experience of faith, but still from within faith.

Unitarian minister, Stephen Lingwood writes: “Unitarian faith is faith in the goodness, meaningfulness, beauty and holiness of life”.

In the talk from which the above quotation is taken, Stephen is hesitant to define the Holy because it is necessarily beyond tight definition. I suggest the following however: “The Holy is a dynamic interaction between subject and world manifesting as greater truth, greater beauty and greater love.” It's not a thing but the expression of a living, transforming relationship.

Stephen suggests even if we decide as Unitarians we should move away from Christian language we still need to commit to the “immediacy of the Holy”. This is our tradition – to see spiritual truth as readily accessible and not reliant on mediation by others.

Perhaps we aren't even primarily a group of people on a religious quest or a religious search after all? If the Holy is to be found it's right here now. If we can't find it right here now, we can have no certainty we will find it in another time and another place. It may not be easy to get in touch with what is Holy, but without faith in the Holy (substitute your own word by all means) life becomes sapped of the possibility of hope and joy. This hope cannot solely be about the individual – it must be about community and justice too to be authentic to our Unitarian tradition.

Theology is about our understanding of our “ultimate concern”, to use theologian Paul Tillich's words. Either our ultimate concern can, potentially at least, be related to right here in this moment – or we may insist that something is always lacking. Yet I believe the meaning is here now.

Whether we are in joy or despair today – or somewhere in between - a Unitarian theology (which is not primarily about whether or not you believe in God or not) IS about the Holy being with us right here right now, even though we struggle inevitably to comprehend it fully. (based on a talk given in September at Bury St Edmunds Unitarian Meeting House)

Blessings,

Matthew (minister)

N.B. the Minister's Rest Days are Thurs/Fri excl. pastoral emergency

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Service themes during Oct 2017		FRAMLINGHAM Congregation Meets at	BURY ST EDMUNDS Congregation Meets at
Date	Time	The Unitarian Meeting House, Bridge St, Framlingham, IP13 9AJ	The Unitarian Meeting House, Churchgate St, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1RH
1 OCT	3pm		Beyond Either/Or
8 OCT	4pm	Unitarian – Step by Step	
15 OCT	3pm		Late Harvest
22 OCT	4pm	NOT a Mighty Fortress	
29 OCT		Fifth Sunday – No Service	Fifth Sunday – No Service

Events (in the Meeting House unless otherwise stated) during September

Matthew will be running a new Monday night **spiritual study group** starting in October, once again using the book Soul to Soul. This group will take place at the home of Rayleen Finn on the Badingham Road. We are very grateful to Rayleen for once again offering her home. We had hoped to begin early in October however there are clashes so the group will most likely begin on Monday 30 October. Please contact the minister if interested.

Framlingham History Society & the Lanman Museum are holding an exhibition of local history in the Meeting House to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Lanman Museum on Saturday 7 October from 10.30am – 4pm. Admission is free.

We are delighted to welcome **RAMIVANA** in October for another of their harmonic sound concerts. This will be on Wednesday 18 October from 7-9pm (doors open at 6.30pm). The cost is £12 but concessions are £8. Further information is available at info@ramivana.com

Our next **MINDFULNESS** session with Barbara Winfield is on Monday 23 October, at 7pm as usual. If you are interested to come along and you have some previous meditation experience, please call her on 01728 720029 to find out more.

Every TUESDAY 10.30 – 12.30 CAFE CONNECT. It is pleasing that our weekly coffee morning is proving so convivial and popular. Why not pop along and sample the positive atmosphere yourself? You won't find better value cake anywhere in Framlingham!

Framlingham Art Club are resuming their fortnightly Monday sessions at the Meeting House with groups on the 2nd, 16th and 30th October, 10 am – 12 noon.

We are delighted that Fiona McAlpine has resumed her drama classes for young people in the Meeting House. To find out more, email Fiona at fiona@allegraproductions.co.uk.

Deadline for the November edition of *The Frambridge Chronicle* is noon on Monday 23 October.