

Fellow Seekers

April 2025

Monthly News and Views from the Bath Unitarian Fellowship for its Members and Friends



“Learn as if you will live forever, live like you will die tomorrow.” *Mahatma Gandhi*

Next Meeting at Barrow Castle

Sunday 27 April

10.45 Coffee, 11.15 Worship

Theme: Life and Death are One
Led by Peter

We will be joined by members of Judy's Sufi Caring Group

Reflection: *the Joys of Spring*

I hope everyone enjoyed the sunny days we had earlier this month, which brought out the best of our spring flowers. Recently (but not on 1 April) there was an article in the paper claiming that research has shown that grey rainy days dampen our spirits. Hmm. I think that could be worthy of inclusion in my ever-growing anthology of statements of the blindingly obvious. It's provisionally entitled *Tanks Have Right of Way*. (Of course they do – who is going to sit there and argue the finer points of the Highway Code with over 60 tons of pressed steel with a thumping great gun on top?) A friend sent me an offering for my collection, of advice seen on a ready-meal pack: “May be hot when cooked.” I can only hope that if intelligent life from another planet ever finds us they don't see these, or they might assume we all have IQs in single figures.

Seriously, though, spring this year has been a joy to behold, and a meteorological gift, even if in so many ways the world is a very dark place. There are still wars, natural disasters, and the ever-present threat of climate change and economic meltdown, whether the sun shines or not. Yet we can be forgiven for enjoying a break in that darkness, and making the most of the sunshine, as we journey towards Easter.

Many Christians call Easter “Passiontide” as it is the narrative of the suffering of Jesus and redemption of humanity in mainstream denominations. However, “Easter” is believed to be a corruption of the name Eostre, a Germanic goddess associated with spring and the dawn. Eostre is generally associated with themes of fertility, renewal, and the changing of the seasons, as her name is etymologically linked to words related to dawn and the east. She is often depicted with symbols of spring, such as eggs and hares, which have become integral elements of the modern Easter celebration. It is nothing unusual for a Christian Festival to absorb a Pagan one – it was quite consciously done all over the Roman Empire – but it *is* unusual for a Christian festival to be so tied to its roots in the Jewish calendar that the calculation of its date has lasted for around two millennia. But then, it is the central and essential basis of the Christian Faith, which was paradoxically founded in Judaism.

How Unitarians view the Easter narrative varies widely. Some hardly mark it at all, except as a spring holiday. Others regard it as part of the Mystery of God's interaction with the world. Some attempt to find historical explanations for the events of Easter Sunday. Others see it as a metaphor for the human struggle with suffering and death, and/or the triumph of hope versus despair. Alternatively it can be seen as the return of life in the natural world after the barrenness of winter, or the occasion for feasting after the deprivations of Lent (more real in history than in the present). All these differing interpretations are arguably valid.

I confess that at times I have embraced any of the above approaches to the Easter narrative at some time in my life, and I find it highly unlikely that what happened over those three historic days will ever be other than a matter of faith, rather than history. We will probably never know what actually happened on that first Easter Sunday. I'm pretty sure, however, that its meaning will not be blindingly obvious.

Kay

Poem of the Month

Vegetation

O never harm the dreaming world,
The world of green, the world of leaves,
But let its million palms unfold
The adoration of the trees.

It is a love in darkness wrought
Obedient to the unseen sun.
Longer than memory, a thought
Deeper than the graves of time.

The turning spindles of the cells
Weave a slow forest over space,
The dance of love, creation,
Out of time moves not a leaf,
And out of summer, not a shade.

Kathleen Raine

Gaza Appeal

At the General Assembly last year, there was a resolution regarding aid to Gaza. There is an ongoing appeal for humanitarian aid via the Red Cross – lest we forget. Please visit the GA website for more information - <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/2025/04/01/saving-lives-honouring-and-acting-on-our-2024-general-assembly-resolution-6-on-gaza/>

Child Poverty

Our Chief Officer, Liz Slade, has joined other faith leaders in signing a letter to Bridget Phillipson and Liz Kendall calling for a reduction of child poverty in the UK. Go to the GA website for more information at <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/2025/04/01/saving-lives-honouring-and-acting-on-our-2024-general-assembly-resolution-6-on-gaza/>

Words to Ponder

“There are realities which do exist but not in the way that things exist. These are the spiritual realities. No one can deny that love, and hope, and goodness, and compassion exist, but they do not exist as things. They are qualities, experiences, emotions, aspirations. So if we talk of God as existing, we have to do so with the understanding that we are using the concept of ‘existing’ in the same sense that we use when speaking of spiritual realities. Spiritual realities are not bound by time and space. They transcend them.”

From *Life Spirit* by Rev Davd Usher

And finally . . . a Unitarian Universalist prayer for Easter

In the Rising Sun Today
We all know loss and pain.
Let none of it divide us.
In the rising sun today
Let us do together what we cannot do alone:
Roll away the stones that close our hearts.

By Joel Miller



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