



Next Meeting

at Barrow Castle

Sunday 27 November

10.45 Coffee, 11.15 Meeting for Worship

Led by Tim

Theme: A Candle of Hope

“This story may not be just as the Lord told it, and yet may contain as its mirror as much of the truth as we are able to receive.”

George MacDonald, *Autobiography*

Reflection

It has been said that if those of the Jewish and Christian Faiths are “the people of The Book,” Unitarians are “the people of books.” Even after a serious cull I have enough books around me to keep me going for a couple of centuries. A friend asked me recently if I have read any good books lately, and I had to admit that I read fewer these days, while my reading of articles has substantially increased. I hope this is not because my attention-span is dwindling. I prefer to think that I want to access more than one viewpoint on a topic.

It is only natural that what we write conveys our own perspective, and what we choose to read tends to reinforce our own leanings. This can, however, be taken too far. Among some sectors of both US and UK society it is no longer customary to read a newspaper or watch a TV news bulletin, but to obtain information from websites accessed by smartphone. This was one explanation given for the widespread belief in America that Donald Trump had won the 2019 Presidential Election, when all the evidence stated that he had lost. Here in the UK we have examples of professional advice being ignored while unproven theories are regarded in the same way as cult religious texts. The dangers are obvious, and one of the most important things we can bequeath to our children is a healthy dose of informed critical thinking – though I think they may have developed that for themselves!

The policy of the Lindsey Press, the publisher of Unitarian books, is to have, wherever possible, a number of contributors. This reflects the fact that Unitarians don’t have a single unified understanding of religious issues (or, as one wag put it, wherever three are gathered together there will be *at least* four opinions). Unitarianism was formed by people who read the Bible for themselves and made up their own minds according to what they found there. Some attempted to read the Gospels as historical biography, but that approach has waned. Instead, we may see them as they were probably intended: as insights into the Mystery of God from the perspective of different groups of followers of Jesus.

Let’s follow in their footsteps and listen to a variety of voices of wisdom and, hopefully, truth. But even Truth is a relative concept.

Kay

General Assembly Launches New Worship Resource

Worship Words

Original material for Unitarian worship written by a number of authors

Launch on Wednesday 23 November at 7 pm via Zoom

Go to [Worship Words Launch - The Unitarians](#) for further information

We Remember



Peace is not the product of terror or fear.

Peace is not the silence of cemeteries.

Peace is not the silent result of violent repression.

Peace is the generous, tranquil, contribution of all to the good of all.

Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity.

It is right and it is duty.

Oscar Romero

This is the field where the battle did not happen,
where the unknown soldier did not die.
This is the field where grass joined hands,
where no monument stands,
and the only heroic thing is the sky.

Birds fly here without any sound,
unfolding their wings across the open.
No people killed – or were killed – on this ground
hallowed by neglect and an air so tame
that people celebrate it by forgetting its name.

William Stafford, 1914-93

Editor's note: As a child I visited my maternal grandparents at their home in Colenso Place, Leeds. At the time I simply took the name for granted, but later discovered Colenso was a battle during the Boer War, in 1899. (It was a British defeat.) We still name streets after battles – there are several Goose Green Ways. Perhaps if we are serious about peace we might name them instead after famous Quakers and other peacemakers?

Kay

Words to Ponder

If our faith is to live and grow, we must talk and listen to people of other fields and other faiths, to poets and philosophers, sociologists and politicians, mathematicians and astronomers, all who work and think at the frontiers of human knowledge and experience; to people of other religions than our own, those who come at God from a different angle, and those for whom God appears only as darkness.

From *Bread of the World* by John Hadley

A Celtic Blessing

May all that is unforgiven in you be released.

May your fears yield to your deepest tranquillities.

May all that is un-lived in you blossom into a future graced with love.

From *Benedictus* by John O'Donohue



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