

## **In Praise of the Sandwich and the Sandwich Maker** **by Joan Wilkinson**

On the Sunday preceding the Spring Equinox, I was fortunate enough to be visiting the Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich, where I was treated to the most wonderful sandwich of a service, substantial with tasty flavoured sauces. Although the theme for the day was: 'It's just another day', for me it was much more than that.

From the moment of stepping into this beautiful, historic building I felt included. The congregation was a wonderful balance of the generations just as the balanced service included all.

Music was integral, opening with a prelude on the organ, *Minuet* by Jacques-Christophe Naudot. This time was used as a period for calming down into the spirit of community and prayer. Before the address we heard a musical interlude on the piano, *Romance* by Shostakovich. As a postlude to round off the service we heard the organ playing, *Minuet* from '*Samson*' by G F Handel. In 2002 the magnificent organ was completely refurbished and it was an unexpected treat to hear it played, and so well. That the organist was just at home on the piano was a bonus for this passing visitor. Fortunate indeed is a congregation to have the benefit of both instrument and musician both competent and happy to play.

Two children helped to light the chalice as later four children collected the offering. This was very informal as each one attempted to reach the most people. Afterwards the service leader asked if everyone had been included who wished to be and someone in the congregation was heard to say, "oh yes", and "twice". The children's story, *The Ant and The Bear*, fitted the Spring Equinox theme and was a new one for me. I can't have been the only adult there to appreciate the story.

Not only were the children fully included before they left for their Sunday Club. The adults had the opportunity to express their joys and concerns, lighting a candle if they wished, and they did.

The hymns for the day were taken from both the purple and green book and were well spaced through the service and all suited the theme for the day: *Hope is Born in Springtime*, *Lady of the Season's Laughter*, *View the Starry Realm of Heaven* and *All Things Bright and Beautiful*. The service leader had been brave enough to include two that were clearly new to many there, but which again supported the balance of the whole service.

The Address had been thoughtfully created, celebrating the coming of the Equinox and a time of celebration, when we can say that 'the light is winning'. There will be a moment prior to this when light and dark will be in balance.

It is this thought of balance that I will remember from this service. Well crafted and well presented. A sandwich service well made, given with grace and received with gratitude.

*Joan Wilkinson*