



Unitarian Peace Fellowship Newsletter

*For all within our denomination who witness to the
belief that war and preparation for war are
failures of humanity*

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www.ukunitarians.org.uk/peace/

Musings from the Chair

In 1918, on the eleventh day of the eleventh month at the eleventh hour, the Great War (WWI) came to an end. This war was 'the war to end all wars' ... this war sparked the growth of many peace networks within British churches as well as in other nations ... this war had now ended.

We, of course, know that it didn't end all war. In fact, within two decades Europe and the world were at it again. Many now recognise that the terms of surrender demanded of the Germans, the economic disparities, people's sense of powerlessness, all contributed to the discontentment which spawned the growth of various 'fascist' movements throughout the world. The best known being of course in Germany and Italy.

We equally know that had the German nation been treated with greater respect and compassion, then the Nazis may not have gotten the foothold that they had. Hindsight is always 100%, but equally, not to learn from the past, both triumphs, and especially, mistakes, means that we are doomed to repeat these mistakes. It is fairly certain that this sense of mistake with the Armistice of 1918 led, after WWII, to the development of rebuilding Europe under the Marshall Plan, and the will for the development of the United Nations and also for the European Union.

It is clear that at the end of WWI the winners sought vengeance, and at the end of WWII, the victors sought a form of enlightened, self-protective compassion.

As we look to 2018 and the centenary of the Armistice / end of WWI, the Peace Fellowship committee is focusing on compassion, especially our denomination's partnership with the Charter for Compassion. We hope that many within our Beloved Community will make this their focus. How does Compassion

inform our behaviours? Our interactions? Our approach to other religious communities? Our dealings with ourselves and other Unitarian congregations?

Are we truly living out our agreements we made when we signed on to the Charter?

Believing that communication is important to compassion, the UPF is joining with the Unitarian Renewal Group, the Unitarian Earth Spirit Network, and the National Unitarian Fellowship, in hosting a weekend retreat at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow, on 26th – 28th October 2018. The theme is *Endings and Beginnings*, and it will be a time for us to meet with others of like mind to network, explore and work together.

As always, I and the members of the UPF committee hope that you will have a great holiday season, a Merry and Joyous Yule, Christmas, Kwanza, Hanukkah, and a blessed and peace-filled New Year.

Rev. John Carter, UPF Chair

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## **Peace Fellowship Matters**

**PUTTING IT POLITELY,  
WE NEED THE MONEY, PLEASE!**

Many thanks to those of you who **have** paid your subscription for 2017/18. To the many of you who **haven't**, this year's subs are as follows:

|              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| Individual:  | £9.00  |
| Small Group  | £18.00 |
| Large Group: | £27.00 |

**And there is still time to donate to our 2017 Appeal**, which was launched at the General Assembly meetings in April, and is in aid

of **Women's Federation for World Peace**. This is a world-wide organisation which empowers women to work where they are, for peace and reconciliation. (see below).

**We would be very grateful** if you would send your cheques, made payable to 'The Unitarian Peace Fellowship', to our Treasurer, Celia Cartwright. (address on back page). Please write on the back of the cheque what the payment is for (i.e. subs / appeal / both). Thank you very much.

### **GA President's message for 2017 Peace Fellowship Appeal**

“I wish to congratulate the Peace Fellowship on its choice of the Women's Federation for World Peace UK to be the choice of this year's Peace Fellowship Appeal. As registered pacifist for nearly fifty years, I have always felt that demonstrations and placard waving are not enough to bring about a lasting peace in our world. To paraphrase the “gun lobby” in America, it is not weapons that kill it is the people who use them that kill. The WFWP UK and others like them realise it is society that needs to change in order for world peace to come about.

The WFWP works at all levels to empower women and girls, everything from education to service projects to improve their day today lives. It also has advocacy projects at the U.N. and other regional and local institutions. A good example of how empowered women can make a difference and bring peace is former president of Liberia Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. After years of civil war, she was the one who finally brought peace to her country.

Yes, it is important to ban nuclear weapons and protest against war profiteers but these will not bring about lasting peace. Only the work of organisations such as the WFWP can bring this about so I urge you all to give generously to this year's Peace Fellowship Appeal.” **Rev. Charles VanDenBroeder**

## UPF HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY FOR 2017/18



UPF invites you to support Women's Federation for World Peace by friending them on social media as well as with financial contributions.

Webpage: [www.wfwp.org.uk](http://www.wfwp.org.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WFWPIEurope/>

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The Charter for Compassion

The focus of the Peace Fellowship's work in 2018 is going to be the Charter for Compassion.

The Charter for Compassion, launched by Karen Armstrong in November 2009, invites us to “restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion, to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate, to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures, to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity, to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.” How might this work out in a Unitarian context? How can we incorporate compassion into our lives and into the lives of our Unitarian communities?

The Golden Rule lies at the heart of all religions. It asks us to do as we would be done by, and to not do to others what we could not like done to us. Imagine what the world would be like if everyone followed it! If every person genuinely tried to behave to the rest of humankind with a concern and care for how they would feel. As it says in the *Charter for Compassion* “Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creature, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.”

As Unitarians, our beliefs and values chime in closely with this. Here are some extracts from *A Faith Worth Thinking About*:

“We believe that everyone has the right to seek truth and meaning for themselves, and that the fundamental tools for doing this are your own life-experience, your reflection upon it, your intuitive understanding and the promptings of your own conscience.”

“We affirm that people should enjoy individual liberty and private judgement in spiritual matters; that respect for integrity is preferable to the pressure to conform; and that our beliefs may change in the light of new understanding and insight.”

“Unitarians find their bond of unity in shared values, such as ... mutual respect and good will in personal relations; constructive tolerance and openness towards the sincerely-held beliefs of others; peace, compassion, justice and democracy in human affairs.”

We, the Unitarian Peace Fellowship, are a Unitarian community. If we are to embrace the Golden Rule, we need to start here, where we are. Let us ask ourselves the questions

- Have I shown mutual respect and goodwill to my friends and neighbours?
- Have I practiced constructive tolerance and openness towards the sincerely-held beliefs of others?

- Am I doing as I would be done by?

Until we can answer a wholehearted “yes” to these questions, there is little point in us trying to practice compassion in the wider world.

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### **Joint Gathering planned for October 2018**

The Unitarian Peace Fellowship is pleased to be joining the Unitarian Earth Spirit Network, the National Unitarian Fellowship and the Unitarian Renewal Group for a joint Gathering in October 2018. The theme for the Gathering is to be “**Endings and Beginnings**”, and it will be taking place at the Nightingale Centre at Great Hucklow, during the weekend of 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Please put the date in your diaries now!





## Unitarian Peace Fellowship Vision



The Unitarian Peace Fellowship was founded in 1916 in the darkest days of the First World War to witness for peace and against the futility of war. Today we maintain that witness. Our vision includes the ethos and values of the Charter for Compassion. The surest route to peace is through the compassion of human beings for each other and for all living things. We support and encourage Unitarians in their witness for Peace and Compassion locally, nationally, and internationally.

### Unitarian Peace Fellowship Officers & Committee

**Chair:** Rev. John Philip Carter, 9. Hoyle Road, London SW17 0RS. Tel: 020-8682-3353 e-mail: revjohn.ukuni@gmail.com

**Treasurer & Membership Secretary:** Rev. Celia Cartwright, 16, Nether St, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7DS Tel: 01539-733403 e-mail: revcelia51@gmail.com

**Secretary and Newsletter Editor:** Rev. Sue Woolley, 5, Martins Road, Piddington, Northampton NN7 2DN. Tel: 01604-870746 e-mail: revsuewoolley@gmail.com

**Committee Members:**

Mrs. Joyce Ashworth, 2, Daffodil Close, Shawclough, Rochdale OL12 6NY. Tel: 01706-659294 e-mail: joyce.ashworth@btinternet.com

Rev. Cody Coyne, Cross Street Chapel, Cross Street, Manchester M2 1NL Tel: 07786 820 383 e-mail: rev.c.coyne@gmail.com

Rev. Feargus O'Connor, 11, Claremont Square, London N1 9LY. Tel: 020-7837-4472 e-mail: ggunirev@aol.com

Mrs. Christina Smith, 27, Morrell Wood Drive, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 0JD Tel: 01773-829736 e-mail: smith.christina@yahoo.com