



Unitarian Peace Fellowship Newsletter

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

Issue 3, Spring 2011

Contents

Words from the Chair	page 2
Report of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship AGM	page 3
WOMANKIND Worldwide: the 2011 Appeal	page 4
Motions at the GA meetings in Swansea	page 6
Unitarian Peace Fellowship gathering	page 7
Unitarian Peace Fellowship Vision & Contacts	page 8

(photos in this issue are by Giles Croucher pp.3 & 6 and John Hewerdine p.5)

Words from the Chair

The GA Meetings held in Swansea this year proved an enjoyable experience, meeting old friends and finding new ones.

As the chairman of the Peace Fellowship I went as our delegate and attended all the business meetings and some of the fringe meetings too, as many as time would allow.

The Peace Fellowship AGM was my “main event”; all office holders were re-elected and the rest of the business was dealt with quite speedily so that our guest speaker from Womankind Worldwide could have the maximum time to tell us about the organisation we are supporting for our Annual Appeal 2011. Janet Swinney explained what is happening in different countries and the kind of help that they are able to offer to women. It’s mainly overseas now as projects here have been completed.

One piece of news from the AGM is that Chris Goacher, who has been our Secretary for many years, is standing down at the next AGM (2012) and so we need to be thinking about a replacement.

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to Chris for everything he has done over the years and for his unfailing support both personally and with the Fellowship.

Please also take note that there will be a day in Norwich on Saturday 22nd October details of which can be found in this newsletter and it would be very good to see some of you there. Accommodation is available for those wanting to attend.

Yours in Friendship

Joan Norton



Our publication, *Pens for Peace: an Anthology of Meditations by members of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship*, is still available from our Chair, Joan Norton (details on page 8) at a cost of £1 + 50p P+P

Unitarian Peace Fellowship AGM, Swansea

The AGM was very brief this year, in order to allow maximum time for our Guest Speaker, Janet Swinney from WOMANKIND Worldwide (see report on page 4).

The current officers and committee were re-elected, with Joan Norton continuing as Chair, Chris Goacher as Secretary, Mike Tomlin as Treasurer, Sue Woolley as Newsletter Editor, and Joyce Ashworth, Feargus O'Connor and Carol Chilton as committee members. New subscription levels were approved – see flyer with this issue.

In his report this year, Secretary Chris Goacher commented that “our most significant piece of work is the Annual Appeal which goes from strength to strength” – not only did the Fellowship raise the princely sum of £4,422 for UNICEF’s work in Haiti, we have also responded to other emergency situations around the world, notably the flooding in Pakistan (over £3,000). As Chris said “Our thanks go to all those individuals and congregations that have given so generously.”

Sue Woolley

Peace Vespers at Swansea



Sue Woolley led the Peace Vespers very successfully. After an introduction of harp music (played by incoming Welsh Secretary Carwyn Tywyn) we sang the appropriate hymn *Let There Be Love*, written by the late Rev. Francis Simons, to that wonderful Welsh tune *Ar hyd y nos* (*All Through The Night* for Anglophiles). A suitable time of stillness and reflection followed, and the spoken service closed with the prayer popularised by Mother Teresa “Lead me from death to life ...” Closing harp music enhanced the calming aura of the service.

Hazel Reynolds

WOMANKIND Worldwide: the 2011 Appeal

“One girl, one woman, one person at a time ... thus change will come.” This quotation comes from the website of WOMANKIND Worldwide, an international women’s human rights charity working to help women and girls transform their lives in Africa, Asia and Latin America. They deliver the essential support – funding, expertise, contacts and publicity – that women’s organisations need to amplify their voice, increase their impact and bring about greater change.

The Peace Fellowship’s Guest Speaker at our Annual General Meeting in Swansea was Janet Swinney, educationalist, journalist and author, who has been voluntarily supporting WOMANKIND Worldwide for the past seven years, ever since her research work uncovered disturbing facts about the inequalities and violence a large proportion of women suffer worldwide – a situation she found wholly unacceptable. The information below is from her talk, from a WOMANKIND Worldwide brochure, and from their website.

WOMANKIND Worldwide helps women in developing countries – silenced or isolated by harmful traditions, conflict, violence and intimidation or the sheer exhaustion of surviving in poverty – to have a distinctive say in what goes on in their family, community and country.

Throughout the world, there are millions of women and girls who don’t have any choice about what they can do or say each day – simply because they are female. WOMANKIND Worldwide supports women who have decided to speak out and join with others to create change in their own lives. They in turn will educate and support others to do the same – it is a virtuous circle.

The support WOMANKIND Worldwide offers is very practical; they aim to help women challenge violence and discrimination and claim their rights and improve their lives by working with women’s organisations, through long-term partnerships. In this way they ensure solutions that are firmly rooted in local communities, conditions, contexts and needs. They are guided by what women say they want to change, and then help them work out how to get that change, often involving men in the process.

The practical support given by WOMANKIND Worldwide might include childcare, so that women can meet and plan; transport home at night, as many women can only meet once everyone is in bed; reading and writing lesson so that women can get at and share information and legal help.

The charity also prepares the ground with husbands and village elders, so that they see the benefits of women becoming better informed and confident. They help women to gain public speaking and negotiation skills so they can present their cases persuasively to decision-makers.

The organisation was founded in 1989, and operates through partner organisations in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. One of its principal aims is to unleash women's potential – to recognise it and develop it in their homes and in their communities. This work is, to some extent, supported financially by Trusts and Foundations, but individual donations are an extremely important way of furthering and extending the range of projects.

If you have not yet contributed to this worthy Appeal, we urge you to send your donation NOW to Unitarian Peace Fellowship Treasurer Mr. Mike Tomlin, 1, The Oval, Brookfield, Middlesbrough TS5 8ET. Please make your cheque payable to 'Unitarian Peace Fellowship' and mark on the back what the payment is for (e.g. appeal, subscription).

Sue Woolley (with help from Joyce Ashworth's report in *GAZette*)



Motions at the GA Meetings in Swansea

This year the Peace Fellowship were involved with two of the six motions debated at the GA Annual Meetings in Swansea. The UPF motion, Motion 5, congratulated Amnesty International on its 50th Anniversary in July 2011, noting its “devoted work for human rights and civil and religious liberty worldwide; its determined advocacy of all victims of injustice and political and religious persecution, in particular women, gay people and vulnerable minorities; and its campaigns against the death penalty and judicial injustices”, and encouraged Unitarian congregations to mark this anniversary appropriately. It was proposed by UPF Secretary, Chris Goacher, and seconded by UPF Newsletter Editor, Sue Woolley, both long-term members of Amnesty International. We are pleased to report that it was passed unanimously.

Sue Woolley also seconded Motion 4, which was proposed by fellow UPF committee member Feargus O’Connor. It affirmed the Charter for Compassion, urged fellow Unitarians “to reflect on the *Charter’s* vital humanitarian message, inspired by the Golden Rule, and to act in its spirit” and asked that steps be taken towards the General Assembly becoming a Partner Organisation of the Charter. Once more it was passed unanimously, and the first steps have been taken towards our goal.

(left to right: Feargus O’Connor, Sue Woolley and Chris Goacher)



Unitarian Peace Fellowship Gathering



Refugees in Norwich, past and present

When: Saturday 22nd October 2011

Where: Octagon Chapel, Norwich

Programme:

- 1.00 – 2.00 Tour of Octagon Chapel
- 2.00 – 3.15 Speaker 1 Bruce Chilton, Octagon Chapel
Speaker 2 Norwich Red Cross Asylum Seeker
Officer
- 3.15 – 3.45 Refreshments
- 3.45 – 5.00 Speaker 3, Chair of the Norwich Justice & Peace
Group followed by Plenary session entitled
'Asylum seekers and refugees – what can we do?'

Accommodation is available with Unitarian families in Norwich.
Please contact:

Carol Chilton, 22, Marston Lane, Norwich NR4 6LZ
Tel: 01603 506014
e-mail: carolchilton@hotmail.co.uk

Unitarian Peace Fellowship Vision

Founded in 1916, the Unitarian Peace Fellowship is for all those within our denomination who witness to the belief that war and preparation for war are sins against God and failures of Humanity. We believe that right relationships can only be established through understanding and love. We therefore pledge ourselves to the promotion of goodwill, justice and peace between people and nations.



Unitarian Peace Fellowship Officers & Committee



Chair: Mrs. Joan Norton, Caretakers Cottage, Channing Hall, 45, Surrey Street, Sheffield S1 2LG. Tel: 07933 165 707
e-mail: jimbeth51@gmail.com

Secretary: Rev. Chris Goacher, 19, De Montfort Road, Hinckley, Leics LE10 1LQ. Tel: 01455-636602
e-mail: chris.goacher@ntlworld.com

Treasurer: Mr. Mike Tomlin, 1, The Oval, Brookfield, Middlesbrough, TS5 8ET. Tel: 01642-592145 e-mail: mike.tomlin1@btinternet.com

Newsletter Editor: Mrs. Sue Woolley, 5, Martins Road, Piddington, Northampton NN7 2DN. Tel: 01604-870746
e-mail: sue.woolley@virgin.net

Committee Members:

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

Mrs. Carol Chilton, 22, Marston Lane, Norwich NR4 6LZ.
Tel: 01603-506014 e-mail: carolchilton@hotmail.co.uk

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