

May
2022



richmond + putney unitarians

the flame

This Year's General Assembly – A Meeting with Much Meaning

I bring you greetings from the meeting of the General Assembly! I've just returned home after three pretty intense days at our movement's AGM in Birmingham. Intense, in a good way, in that there was just so much packed into a relatively short space in time. There were of course the 'plenary' sessions of the programme too, which are concerned with the business of the national movement, including this year's proposed motions, which were:

- i) A call on the government to renew their commitment to a well-funded NHS, free at the point of use and to abandon plans and practices which further divert public resources to private health care companies;
- ii) To affirm with joy that each person's understanding and statement of their own gender identity is a matter of conscience and that transgender rights are human rights;
- iii) To look at the process behind our movements' rebranding and consultation strategies;
- iv) Whether to endorse the World Citizens Initiative: 'We the people's campaign';
- v) Administrative motions.

Each motion was thoughtfully debated, and the results can be seen in copies of the GA's *Zette*, the daily publication that covers the meetings, which I will leave in the church for you to look through. (If you can't get to church and you wish to know more about the results of the motions, please give me a call.) Aside from the business of the meetings there were informative and interesting sessions including: re-wilding, religious freedom, safeguarding, revitalizing worship, Taizé and inclusivity, to name a few. As if that were not enough there was also thought-provoking worship and one of my favourite activities . . . dinner! Delicious food, all prepared by someone else, with no washing up!

It is hard to adequately sum up all the business of the GA and listing all the things that went on may not be the best way to understand it. It was the first time the General Assembly had met since 2019, for reasons I need not describe. At first, for me, the meeting felt slightly odd. It took a while to realize that the feeling of 'oddness' was nothing to do with the meetings themselves, but due to fact that I had become unaccustomed to these types of gatherings. However, as soon as I began to exercise my atrophied capacity to be with and connect to so many people, the feelings of oddness went away.

In my opinion there were other differences to this year's meeting. I really felt at this year's GA that we were, as a movement, acknowledging where we were, where we are and where we are going to. The meetings were orientated to putting our values – of freedom, compassion and inquiry – at the heart of all we do; to recognizing and enacting our values in creating safe and loving spaces in our communities to facilitate each person's search for meaning; to making places where the big questions of life could be explored.

Overall, I feel that this year's many meetings at the GA were a great success. It was wonderful to see the connection between what is important to us in RPUC as equally important to our national movement. The wide range of theologies, philosophies and perspectives were present and honoured at the meetings, held together by the same spirit of compassion, creativity and co-operation. It was certainly a meeting to remember. If you think that you might like to attend the meeting next year, please do let me know!

Simon



MAY | services

All services are by Rev. Simon Ramsay and will be both in church and on Zoom, unless otherwise stated. The Zoom login link is given below.

Sunday Services at 11–12 a.m.
URL for Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/101828528>

Sunday 1 May – May Day, May Day!

When I was a child I can remember going to school on May Day and having to dance around a maypole. I can't remember the last time I saw the same celebrations that I participated in as a child...although I believe the tradition is still alive in the Isle of Ely. Let us explore and celebrate the beginning of being together.

Sunday 8 May – The Contemporary Heretic

Our Unitarian history is full of stories of people holding to *their* truth (with a small t!) against incredible odds. Striving for truth has always been at the centre of the path for the genuine seeker and has often been an uncomfortable mirror to societal injustice. How, as Gandhi succinctly asked, do we speak truth to power?

Sunday 15 May – Come As You Are!

If you went to church when you were a child the chances are that you would have worn your Sunday best. It was expected. Times have changed and the need to dress up on Sunday, for us, at least, has also changed. Wear and think what you want. No matter what your belief or doubt, you're welcome here. In this service I will explore the theme of hospitality.

This service will be preceded by a bring-and-share breakfast. As this is the first time back doing such an activity together, I will make 'ful madamas', a Lebanese breakfast dish. If you do intend on coming, please give me a call so we can co-ordinate our culinary efforts! The breakfast begins promptly at 0920 in the Ormond Hall.

Sunday 22 May – Abundance and Sharing

This service will be lead by Luisa Passalacqua.

Sunday 29 May – Reality with a Face

It is a human tendency to read human qualities into non-human entities. It's known as anthropomorphism. This tendency has been a central theme present in all religions throughout history. In this service we will look at why it is that humans do this.

MAY | what's happening

Sunday 1 | 2–3.30 p.m. Reflective Journaling Group (Zoom only)

We meet monthly on Zoom, usually the first Sunday of the month, with open minds and open heart for a time of shared reflection on our lives as they are unfolding.

If you are interested to know more please text or call Kitty Lloyd-Lawrence on 07976 615586.

Wednesday 4, 11, 18, 25 | 2–3 p.m. Coffee with the Minister

Come along for a coffee and a natter at Tide Tables, the cafe just below Richmond Bridge. Please contact me first to let me know you are coming, especially if the weather is poor.

Contact : Rev. Simon Ramsay /
minister@rpuc.org.uk

Wednesday 4, 11, 18, 25 | 6–7 p.m. Meditation (Zoom only)

There is no need to be a Zen master for this practice and practical guidance will be given to help you improve your meditation practice.

Contact : Rev. Simon Ramsay /
minister@rpuc.org.uk

URL for Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/205074902>

Tuesday 10 | 5.30–7 p.m. Management Committee meeting (Zoom only)

As is our tradition, these meetings are open to all to attend, unless a sensitive agenda item is tabled. The meeting will be on Zoom - if you wish to attend, contact info@rpuc.org.uk for the login details.

Contact : David Watson / info@rpuc.org.uk

Sunday 15 | 9.20– 10.30 a.m. Bring-and-share Breakfast

If you'd like to come, please do and bring some food to share! Simon is making his famous 'ful madamas' (a Lebanese broad bean-based dish).

Tuesday 17 | 6–7 p.m. CIO Q&A (Zoom only)

An information session on our application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organization (CIO) and our proposed constitution. Open to full members of the church, prior to our Special General Meeting on Sunday 22 May. A recording of this meeting will be made available to those who cannot attend.

URL for Zoom:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/81000731823>

Sunday 22 | 12 a.m. Special General Meeting

This is a single-issue special general meeting at which we will ask members to authorize the management committee to submit a CIO application to the Charity Commission. Unless further discussion is needed, the meeting will be purely procedural and last no more than ten minutes.

Tuesday 24 | 6–7 p.m. Evening chat with the minister (Zoom only)

Many of you can't make it to Coffee with the Minister at Tide Tables on a Wednesday. So this is another chance to have a chinwag and reconnect on Zoom.

Contact : Rev. Simon Ramsay /
minister@rpuc.org.uk

URL for Zoom:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/81000731823>



richmond + putney unitarians

We are a radically inclusive community of open hearts and open minds, where individuals are free to trust their conscience in matters of spiritual inquiry, and the inherent worth and dignity of all humankind is celebrated, irrespective of race, social status, gender or sexual orientation.

Contact

Minister

Rev. Simon Ramsay
07915 618549
minister@rpuc.org.uk

Newsletter editor

Louisa Watson
newsletter@rpuc.org.uk

General inquiries

info@rpuc.org.uk

Lettings inquiries

lettings@rpuc.org.uk

Minister's Availability

Our minister is available at the following times. Please do not contact him outside of these hours except for an urgent matter.

Monday	N/A
Tuesday	10 am–8 pm
Wednesday	12–8 pm
Thursday	12–6 pm
Friday	10 am–5 pm
Saturday	N/A

or at or after the church service on Sundays.

Find us

We are ten minutes' walk from Richmond Station (Southwest Trains, London Overground and District Line) and two minutes' walk from the bus station. Cars can enter Ormond Road one way only (from the Richmond Bridge end).



Richmond and Putney Unitarians,
Ormond Road,
Richmond TW10 6TH

For more information on RPUC visit our website:

www.rpuc.org.uk