

Newcastle Unitarians

Report to the NUA, 13 February 2018

Sale of building

The Newcastle Unitarians have continued to work towards selling our building. Following the lack of progress on selling the building to Harrison Developments Ltd, the Management Committee voted 5-3 to recommend selling the building to Tyneside Group Ltd., who have recently purchased and developed the flats next to our church building. (The other three votes were for leasing the building to ReCoCo and Tyneside Heritage Group.) At a Special Congregational Meeting held on 14 January 2018, the congregational approved this recommendation, with 12 votes in favour, one abstention and one vote against. We have instructed our agents to proceed with this sale.

New home

We are continuing to address the challenge of where we meet next. Current plans are to continue to meet in the current building until the sale is complete (we do not anticipate this being in the near future as the buyer has to complete surveys on the building). After this, we will explore the possibilities of continuing to lease the Turner Hall from the buyer, meeting in another location such as Martin Luther Kirche in Newcastle, or another location.

Membership

We have recently had some new visitors, and some occasional visitors have been able to join us more regularly. We will review our publicity plan soon and consider what activities and events we might next like to try to raise awareness of the church in the local area – Northern Pride has been suggested.

Events

We have not had any recent events, but Ben MacLeod (as the church's representative) and Diana Bebbly (as a day delegate) will attend the General Assembly 2018 as our representatives, and Louise Reeve will attend as the Northern Unitarian Association representative. We also hope to take part in the annual NUA Whitby Trip!

Activities

The Badminton Club continues to thrive! Our Reading Group continues to be led by Diana Bebbly; we meet monthly, and read a short text at the meeting, then discuss it. Attendance has been good and we are now wondering if we can publicise the reading group more widely.

Charity collection

We have continued our scheme to make a monthly donation of goods to the Joseph Cowen Centre for the Homeless, including coffee and tea, men's socks and underpants, toiletries, and instant soup and porridge.

Worship

We have continued to enjoy services with a varied set of worship leaders both from our own resources and also from outside. We are grateful to all those Ministers and Lay Leaders who take services for us, and we are especially appreciative of all the work done by Joan Large in organising the pulpit supplies, and both Joan Large and Sheila Fay for arranging flowers. Joan Large's impending retirement from the management committee (and her duties as Pulpit Secretary), combined with the difficulties of attracting travelling speakers to lead worship at Newcastle, has recently led the Management Committee to consider the possibility of having more lay-led services taken by members of the congregation, and perhaps inviting speakers from other religious traditions in the local area to speak about their religious views at our services.