

# Horsham Unitarian Newsletter

## December 2022



### Active Hope

The season of Advent, that precedes Christmas Day, begins in many Christian churches with the lighting of a candle that traditionally symbolises hope. With so many challenges in our world it's something we could all do with a little of right now I think.



However, the Christmas period can often be little more than a distraction, or a momentary respite, before we are confronted by harsh reality once more in January.

So, for our book reading group that begins in January I have chosen a book that might give us a more of a solid foundation for our hope. That may provide us with practical ideas about how to live in hope, rather than some kind of wishful thinking. The book is *Active Hope* by Joanna Macey and Chris Johnstone.

They talk of hope as having two kinds of meaning. *The first hopefulness, where our preferred outcome seems reasonably likely to happen.* In this kind of scenario, our inclination to act is stifled if we don't rate our chances of success. *The second meaning is about desire....It is this kind of hope that really starts our journey – knowing what we hope for and what we'd like, or love, to take place. It is what we do with this hope that really makes a difference.*

They describe hope as a practice. *Like tai chi or gardening, it is something we do rather than have.* Just knowing that there is potentially a better way of living or a better outcome, is enough for us to engage with this practice. Certainty of success is not required, or even optimism for that matter, just a **desire** for something better for our world. *We focus on our intention and let it be our guide.*

If this sounds like it might be interesting to you then please do buy a copy of the book and join us on the dates advertised in this newsletter, or on the posters in the church. I've ordered 5 copies of the book for the church which are available for you to buy, or borrow if you are struggling financially. Please get in touch with me if you want one of these.

I will be in church for our Christmas Carol Service (please note the earlier than usual start time!) and on Christmas Day. Unity Café will also be open in between Christmas Day and New Year's Day. I hope to see you at one of these events, but otherwise I wish you and your family a happy and joyful Christmas, and a peaceful New Year.

with blessings,

Duncan

*All are welcome to call in for coffee and chat,  
and to participate in our Unity Café mornings  
from 10.00am to 12.30pm every Wednesday  
during December*

# This Month

## Saturday Afternoon, 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2.00pm Celebration of Rev Ashley Hill's Life of Service



On the afternoon of Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December we shall gather in the church to honour and to celebrate the life of the Rev Ashley Hills, friend and mentor to many Unitarian churches, and particularly known to us as a regular visiting preacher and a valued Trustee.

Ashley died on 20<sup>th</sup> October and our minister, Duncan Voice, conducted his funeral at Hither Green Crematorium in London, on 11<sup>th</sup> November. The celebration of his life at Horsham, also to be led by Duncan, offers an opportunity fully to appreciate Ashley's remarkably wide-ranging and distinguished preaching career and the personal qualities of integrity, dedication and humour for which he was so widely known and loved.

## Saturday Evening, 10<sup>th</sup> December, 7.30pm Concert of International Carols

This concert of carols in English, French and German (wording sheets provided) has long been an annual event in our church's Christmas calendar. It is hosted by the Horsham Twinning Association, alongside whose members we are invited to include any of our Unitarian congregation who would like to attend.



Entry is free, with a retiring voluntary collection which has, in the past, been a valuable supplement to our annual charity funds. Programme duration, including semi-professional choral contributions by Horsham's Pleasure Singers, is about one and a half hours (with short interval) and the evening concludes with Stollen and mulled wine.

## Sunday Afternoon, 18<sup>th</sup> December, 4.00pm Our Church's Christmas Service

This year, our service of readings and carols will begin at 4.00pm instead of the customary time of 6.30pm.

Our minister, Duncan Voice, will lead the service, during which we can expect the darkness of late afternoon to heighten the effect our traditional candle-lighting of the church (last year's altar display illustrated).



It is hoped that, following the service, all will stay to enjoy hot drinks and mince pies in the Church Hall.



## Horsham Refugee Support Group Special Christmas Appeal



Via our HRSG representative, Helen Davies-Terry, we have received this special appeal:

"Christmas is now approaching and we are planning our Christmas party for all the refugee families we support. As part of this, we like to give them a "community gift" and you may wish to contribute.

If you would like to support this Christmas appeal, please send a donation via an online payment to our NatWest account: Sort Code: 60-11-17 Account Number: [24068209](#). Please reference your donation "Christmas" and ensure your donations are received by **Sunday 11 December**, otherwise we may not be able to include them.

The donations will be used to buy vouchers so that families can choose how they spend their gift - on a treat for their children, towards their next food shop or on clothes and shoes. We will give all 12 of our local refugee families the same gift at our party in December".

## ...and in retrospect

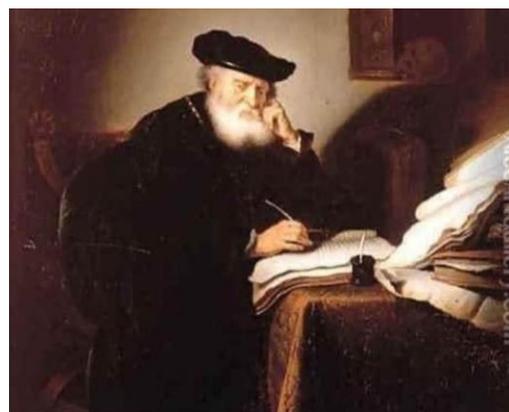


Our thanks are due to Stuart Coupe and his friends for the hugely entertaining 'Folk in the Fall' concert of folk songs they presented in our Church Hall on 12<sup>th</sup> November, raising over £160 for our charity *Practical Action*.

Well attended, and with enthusiastic audience participation, this lively evening merged banter and well-loved old favourites with creative and moving original compositions. Performers Left to Right: Brian Skinner, Mike Reinstein, Roy Nash, Mrs Reina Reinstein, Stuart Coupe.

### Our December services

Sunday 4th	Carol Chambers
Saturday 10th	2.00pm <b>Rev Hills Memorial Service</b> - Rev Duncan Voice
Sunday 11th	Francis Clark-Lowes
Sunday 18th	4.00pm <b>Christmas Service</b> Rev Duncan Voice
Sunday 25th	Rev Duncan Voice



My teacher told me not to worry about spelling because in the future there will be autocorrect. And for that I am eternally grapefruit.

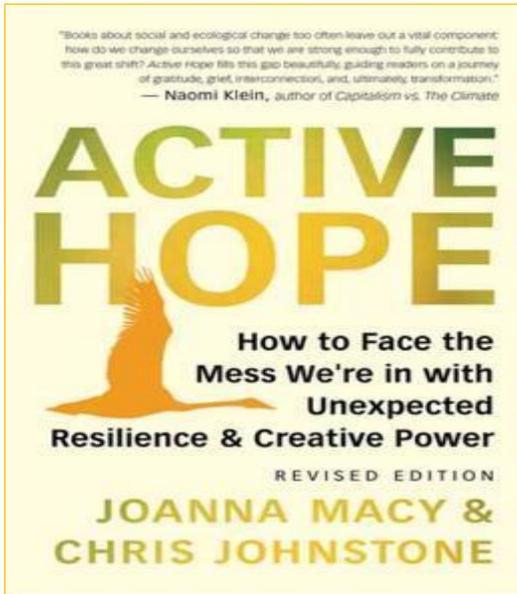
A happy and peaceful Christmas to all and apologies for self-indulgently including the joke opposite – which has a particular appeal to editors of newsletters. Patrick W-J (Ed.)

And for early next year, A Reading Group Directly Focused on The Crises We  
All Face Now and in The Future

# Active Hope

## Book Reading Group

Starting 14<sup>th</sup> January 2023



"The challenges we face can be difficult even to think about. Climate change, the depletion of oil, economic upheaval, and mass extinction together create a planetary emergency of overwhelming proportions. *Active Hope* shows us how to strengthen our capacity to face this crisis so that we can respond with unexpected resilience and creative power."

Discussion group meetings will be held in the church hall on the following Saturdays,

starting 2.30pm:

- 14<sup>th</sup> January - Chapters 1 and 2
- 28<sup>th</sup> January – Chapters 3 and 4
- 11<sup>th</sup> February – Chapters 5 and 6
- 25<sup>th</sup> February – Chapters 7 and 8
- 11<sup>th</sup> March – Chapters 9 and 10
- 1<sup>st</sup> April – Chapters 11, 12 and 13

To join in this discussion you will need to purchase a copy of *Active Hope*. Some copies will be available to purchase from the church in early December. Before each meeting, please try to read the appropriate chapters.

This will be a relaxed, informal group where we can reflect on the ideas presented in the book and share our personal perspectives.

Please contact Duncan, on 07771 609347, if you would like to attend or have further questions.

All are Welcome.