

Issue 11 - Summer 2025

## The Associate Newsletter



Dear Friends and Associates of Unitarian College,

Welcome to this summer edition of our newsletter. As you can see, it has been a very busy and exciting time at the College. The very good news is that we plan to valedict six, yes six, Ministry students in the coming months. It always feels so good to know that we are placing brilliant people into our congregations, and as always my thanks go to Rev Ant Howe and Rev Melda Grantham for their diligent and careful commitment to supporting our Ministry students through their training journeys.

Our Lay Leadership programme is also going from strength to strength, with all three levels of our lay training - Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced - fully subscribed with extra courses being held sooner for so many applicants. The Lay students flourish under the encouraging tutoring of Rev Winnie Gordon and her team of Minister assessors.

Our work with children and families is also transforming into UniYouth, a new weekend with programming for 7-11 year olds and 11-14 year olds together at The Nightingale Centre. Keep an eye out for reports about that. It will be an amazing experience for all concerned - fun, worshipful, gently challenging and a place where lifelong friendships will be built.

Our international work is significant with more and more people accessing our programmes from Europe and beyond. It was a delight, and a real learning experience, for Winnie and I (and three of the Ministry students) to attend the UUA General Assembly in Baltimore recently. Ant has been supporting the International congregation in Prague, and we are forging links with the European UU group to see how we can work with them moving forward.

As always, I thank you for your ongoing support as we do not receive any grant funding from anywhere - so all our work is paid for from our own fundraising. We are very grateful for an anonymous benefactor who match funds all Unitarian donations, so everything you can give is worth double to us.

Finally, thanks to our hard-working administrator, Jen Brenner, without whom this newsletter would never get out to you (or look so professional).

I wish you all a lovely rest of the summer and we hope to catch up with you soon. Warmest regards,

Helen  
Director, Unitarian College  
07494 49574

## Ministry Student Update



Our Ministry students gathered in May at the beautiful Quaker-owned Charney Manor in Oxfordshire for our spring Residential. This was the first time that Unitarian College had visited this venue and we were all very impressed! Our focus at this residential was pastoral care. We were joined by visiting tutors Rev Chris Buice and Rev Sheena Gabriel. Chris is Minister to Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville. Sheena is a good friend to Unitarian College, having taught our Ministry Students before, also teaching on our Foundation and Advanced Lay Leadership steps. Our next Ministry Training Residential takes place in September at Holland House in Worcestershire.

Most exciting is that we expect five of our Ministry students to complete their training by this autumn, with a further student completing early next year meaning six new Ministers on the GA Roll at next year's General Assembly Annual Meetings! We look forward to the outcome of this autumn's General Assembly applications (deadline 4<sup>th</sup> Sept), interviews and welcoming a new batch of Ministry students in due course.

At Ministry in the Making in July, we celebrated the amazing contribution of our Board Chair, Dot Hewerdine, as she steps down from managing MiM, after 14 years.

## Lay Leadership Update

### **Introduction to Rites of Passage**

A group of 20x students gathered at The Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow for the Rites of Passage training. Some students were undertaking this training as part of their Advanced Lay Leadership course; others elected to take this training as a stand-alone course. The course focussed on baby welcoming, weddings and funerals, and while some of the weekend was carried out in lecture format (ie covering legal issues), the majority of the weekend was experiential in nature and a lot of fun!



### **All About U**

All About U was a new course where 30x people from the UK and around the world attended over three Wednesday evenings via zoom. The course is designed for those new to Unitarianism, or those wanting to stretch their knowledge. We covered Unitarian history, theology, our social justice and service, and the different "flavours" of Unitarianism. In the final session, students shared their own statements of belief which was a moving and emotional experience.



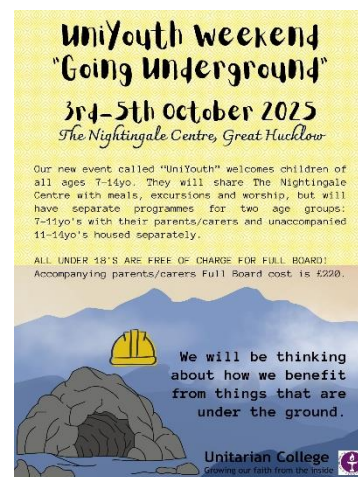
### Lay Leadership Update (cont'd)

#### **Lay Worship and Leadership Pathway**

The Foundation Course in September is now fully booked and closed, however, the next round will start in January 2026. An Intermediate Course is being held in October and the current Advanced group is finishing up their series of residentials this September. There are a lot of assignments and excellent services being written and given. If you need to fill your pulpit, please get in touch, we have a huge group of students willing to step in.

### Children and Families Update

Our new “UniYouth” event, with the theme “Going Underground”, is being held from the 3rd-5th October where we will welcome children of all ages 6-14yo. They will share The Nightingale Centre with meals, excursions and worship, but will have separate programmes for two age groups, 6-11yo's with their parents/carers to accompany, and unaccompanied 11-14yo's housed in a separate wing. Accompanying parents/carers Full Board cost is £220, but all Under 18's are free of charge for Full Board including the excursion.



### Annual Meetings



We had a wonderful time in April at the UK GA Annual Meetings where Helen presented at our two Plenary sessions, with one of them a special celebration of three of our recent students being welcomed onto the new GA Register for Lay Leaders. We are also so pleased that Marion Baker, on our Board of Trustees, was given an honorary membership to the General Assembly.

Several of us from the college - staff and ministry students - attended the UUA GA in Baltimore, MD, USA in July to celebrate in their spirit and theme of "Meet the Moment". There is a lot of uncertainty in the current political climate in America, and we want them to know we stand behind them in their passion for truth, justice and freedom of belief.



## Upcoming Events & Courses

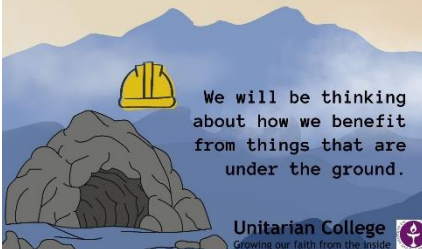
**UniYouth weekend**  
**"Going Underground"**  
3rd-5th October 2025  
*The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow*

Our new event called "UniYouth" welcomes children of all ages 7-14yo. They will share The Nightingale Centre with meals, excursions and worship, but will have separate programmes for two age groups: 7-11yo's with their parents/carers and unaccompanied 11-14yo's housed separately.

ALL UNDER 18'S ARE FREE OF CHARGE FOR FULL BOARD!  
Accompanying parents/carers Full Board cost is £220.

We will be thinking about how we benefit from things that are under the ground.

**Unitarian College**  
Growing our faith from the inside



**Lay Worship Leadership**  
**Foundation Course**  
Winter 2026

Are you inspired to lead Unitarian services with your unique voice, need help with leading, or want to improve the quality of your worship leadership?

For more info, contact us at:  
Admin@unitarian-college.org.uk

**Unitarian College**  
Growing our faith from the inside  
www.unitarian-college.org.uk



**ALL ABOUT U**  
A New Course at Unitarian College

Another round to follow soon!

An Introductory Course to learn about Unitarian theology and values, a bit of history, share your experience, and find where you fit in to enhance the future of Unitarianism.

Please express your interest by contacting:  
Admin@unitarian-college.org.uk

**Unitarian College**  
Growing our faith from the inside  
www.unitarian-college.org.uk



## Save The Date - Carol Service Friday, 12th December

The Ministry Students will again be leading a Christmas Carol Service in the Old Chapel, Great Hucklow. The Service this year will be on Friday, 12th December 2025 at 7:30pm. Come and enjoy in the festive season, all are welcome to join us for this Service. If you would like to join us for the holiday meal before the service, please contact The Nightingale Centre to book directly.



## How You Can Help



Unitarian College could not function without the generous financial support given to us by individuals, congregations, districts and Unitarian trusts. We are very grateful for all those who support our work and who believe in our vision of 'growing our faith from the inside'. The work and scope of the college has scaled and, with that, our costs. If you feel you could support our work with a one-off or regular donation, below are our details:  
Bank Account: 00032558  
Sort Code: 40-52-40

## Our Objective

Unitarian College is a national College providing training, education and development for all Unitarians, including Ministry Students, Lay Leaders, Adults and Young People. Our College is not based in one place as our training and courses take place in variety of locations and online, so that all of us can access them. **Thank You For Your Support!**