



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: July 2013

What's On...

Thursday 4th July, 7.00-8.00pm
'Heart and Soul' Spiritual Gathering
'Openness' (*outdoors in the park!*)
– coordinated by Jane Blackall

Sunday 7th July, 11am-noon
'A Long Wait:
The Unitarian Toleration Act'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 7th July, 12.45-2.45pm
Life's Ultimate Questions Special:
'What is God?' with Jane and Sarah

Monday 8th July, 7.00-9.00pm
'Rediscovering the Bible'
Bible-reading with David and Jane

Saturday 13th July, 10.30am-4.30pm
Worship Studies Course (2/4)

Sunday 14th July, 11am-noon
'Choose Life' led by Rev. Danny
Crosby, Lizzie Hornby & Sarah T

Sunday 14th July, 12.30pm
Small-Group Communion
Led by Jane Blackall

Sunday 14th July, 2.00-3.00pm
Nia Technique with Sonya Leite

Monday 15th July, 7.00-9.00pm
Management Committee Meeting

Tuesday 16th July, 12.30-1.30pm
Nia Technique with Sonya Leite

Thursday 18th July, 7.00-9.00pm
'Art Meditations' (session 3/4)

Sunday 21st July, 11am-noon
**'Life's Rich Pattern: Unitarian
ways of Celebrating Life'**
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 21st July, 12.30-1.15pm
'Finding Your Voice'
Singing Workshop with Margaret

Tuesday 23rd July, 12.30-1.30pm
Nia Technique with Sonya Leite

Tuesday 23rd July, 7.00-9.00pm
**Reading Group: 'Ten Poems
to Change Your Life'**

Thursday 25th July, 7.00-9.00pm
'Art Meditations' (session 4/4)

Friday 26th July, 6.00-9.00pm
Outing to London Zoo Late

Sunday 28th July, 11am-noon
**'The Spirit Lives to
Set Us Free: GA Sunday'**
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Tuesday 30th July, 12.30-1.30pm
Nia Technique with Sonya Leite

A Message from our Minister:

What Can We Do?

We've had various conversations lately here at Essex Church about social problems facing our society. And at some point in these conversations someone has often said "What can we do?" One of the issues we've discussed is the quite shocking increase in numbers of people living in poverty here in the UK. The Trussell Trust, main organiser of food-banks, reports a threefold increase in use of their service in the last year. Government statistics show that 13 million people are living below the poverty line, despite us being one of the world's wealthier nations.

So in response to the question "*what can we do?*" we've decided to do what we can to support our local food-bank. A collection box in the foyer will be there to receive any offerings of dried foods (see page 6 inside this newsletter for a list of requested foodstuffs). Later in the year we will hold one of our monthly charity collections to help the work of the Trussell Trust, a charity that receives no government funding for its vital work.

Another issue that is concerning many people is the increase in so-called 'hate crimes' in the aftermath of the murder of Lee Rigby, the young soldier killed in Woolwich. Attacks on Muslims have increased tenfold and a Somali community and education centre has been burnt down in north London. When people commit such violent atrocities one of their aims is the de-stabilisation of a society. They seek to disturb and disrupt. All the more touching then to see other people's efforts to re-assert human connectedness. Did you read about the mosque in York that served tea and biscuits to people attending an English Defence League rally? A simple, gracious, neighbourly act.

Ramadan begins this year on Tuesday 9th July and lasts for 30 days. It is a time when Muslims focus particularly on charitable giving. Perhaps this year it can also be a time of special charitable focus *towards* Muslims, who face discrimination because of the behaviour of a very few individuals who hold extremist views. During Ramadan Muslims seek to offer hospitality to others and to invite guests to join them in breaking their fast each evening. I hope to join both the Muslim groups that meet in our church for iftar, their evening meal. The Sufi group and the Eritrean Cultural Support group would be glad to invite you too – let me know if you are free after sunset one evening to join us. Such small human acts of hospitality can make a big difference in asserting once more our common humanity.

Rev. Sarah Tinker



In this month's newsletter...

* 'Friends in Need are Friends Indeed' by Jill Inskip * Food Bank Shopping List * Open Studio Exhibition at Essex Church * 'A Big Opportunity' by Carolyn Appleby * Report from the Billingshurst LDPA Quarterly Meeting * Outing to London Zoo Late in July * 'A Day of Stillness and Silence' at Lewes Chapel with Jef Jones and Stephen Crowther * 'All Will Be Well' – sermon by visiting preacher Rev. Sheena Gabriel * and much more...

Kensington Unitarians

At Essex Church (founded 1774), Notting Hill Gate

Kensington Unitarians are a community of kindred souls who meet each week at Essex Church in Notting Hill Gate to explore, reflect, converse, be still, share joys and sorrows, and support one another on life's journey. We are proud to be part of a worldwide and historic liberal religious tradition.

Our main activity is Sunday worship and we hold a service each week at 11am. All are welcome. Services are usually themed and include readings from a variety of sources, prayers, music, singing, stillness, and a short sermon. Our children's leaders provide an alternative programme of activities for younger people.

Small-group activities are another key part of our programme. We offer courses and one-off workshops exploring spiritual and religious matters and considering life's meaning together with others on the spiritual journey.



Kensington Unitarians at Essex Church
112 Palace Gardens Terrace
Notting Hill Gate
London W8 4RT

Office Telephone: 020 7221 6514

Email: info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Web: www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk

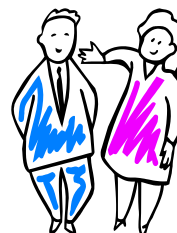
Congregational Lunch

12.30pm, Sunday 28th July 2013



A date for your diary – we will be having a congregational lunch after the service on 28th July – as usual it will be a bring-and-share meal so please plan to bring some food or drink and let us know via the sign-up sheet what you intend to contribute so that we can be sure we've got a good balance of offerings. Why not plan to bring along a friend? All are welcome.

Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



Stewarding:

7th July: Alice Lambert
14th July: Howard Hague
21st July: Tristan Jovanović
28th July: Michaela von Britzke

Coffee:

7th July: Jo Ridgers
14th July: Gil Hague
21st July: Sue Smith
28th July: David Talbot & ?

Greeting:

7th July: Roy Clark
14th July: Veronica Needa & Jo Ridgers
21st July: Gina Bayley
28th July: Carol Sheppard

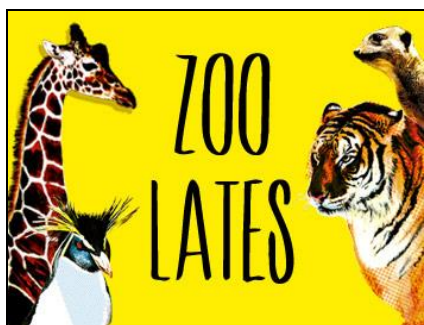
We circulate the rota list each month by email. Please contact Jane if you are willing to be on the rota mailing list.

rotas@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

The latest in our series of cultural outings:

London Zoo Late

BOOK NOW - Friday 26th July, 6-9pm



Our next group outing is to London Zoo for a 'Late' event on Friday 26th July. **PLEASE BOOK ASAP** as tickets tend to sell out weeks in advance and there are only a limited number of cheap tickets (the price goes up as the date approaches - full price is £25 - the very cheapest tickets had sold out at the time the newsletter went to press but there were still a few available at £18.18).

Visit: www.zsl.org/zsl-london-zoo/whats-on/zoo-lates

Please email Jane (jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) if you have booked a ticket and want to meet up on the night.

A Short Course this Summer with Kensington Unitarians

'Art Meditations'

Continues on Thursdays 18th and 25th July
6.45pm for 7.00-9.00pm, here at Essex Church



Following the great success of our first 'Art Meditations' course this January we will be offering a further four sessions at the church (upstairs in the worship space itself) during June and July. Each of these sessions will be stand-alone but of course it would be lovely if you could make it to the whole series.

In each session we will reflect on spiritual themes using visual art, sometimes by responding to images, and sometimes by playing with various media (paint, collage, etc) ourselves. No particular artistic skills are required – the emphasis is on exploration and expression rather than technical merit!

A good portion of each evening will be spent working in meditative silence and we will come together in the second half of each session to share our responses and insights.

It would be helpful to know if you are coming so we know how many tables to set out. Please get in touch if you are planning to come along: jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk



'All human beings are alone. No other person will completely feel like we do, think like we do, act like we do. Each of us is unique, and our aloneness is the other side of our uniqueness. The question is whether we let our aloneness become loneliness or whether we allow it to lead us into solitude. Loneliness is painful; solitude is peaceful. Loneliness makes us cling to others in desperation; solitude allows us to respect others in their uniqueness and create community.'

Henri J. M. Nouwen

Latest from the Church Committee



The first meeting of the re-elected management committee was held on Monday 3rd June. We were grateful again to Jenny our Warden for hosting the meeting as yet again every room in the building was occupied - a sign of our continual good stewardship of the building.

We were very pleased to welcome onto the committee Natasha Drennan who has a keen interest in social justice and environmental issues and would be happy to hear from others interested in working on these issues.

We discussed the matters raised at the AGM and plan to investigate the feasibility of using the organ for parts of the service, ways of formally acknowledging new members outside of the annual service of membership, and we will look at the possibility of buying a new wireless microphone for the lectern which we also hope to replace with a new one.

As many of you will be aware there has been an increase in need for food banks due to the current recession and we plan to work with a local food bank by having a box in the main foyer for people to donate items that will be useful. Look out for further information and the list of items that are most helpful. We are also planning to dedicate one of our monthly charity giving Sundays to this cause.

As you will see from the leaflets around, Jane and Sarah have been busy organising groups that help us in our spiritual and human journeys. Please remember to take some leaflets and spread the word amongst friends.

Please bring any comments or suggestions about how we can improve our life together to myself or one of the other committee members.

David Francis Darling
Chair of the Congregation

A Day of Stillness and Silence

Saturday 6th July 2013, 10am – 5pm



Led by **Jef Jones** and **Stephen Crowther**
At **Westgate Unitarian Chapel, Lewes,**
92a High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XH

Set aside the pressures and distractions of your daily life and experience the stillness of this historic chapel. During this day there will be periods of silence and time for reflection and prayer. This day will be an opportunity to explore the challenges and rewards of being with ourselves in silence.

To reserve a place please contact Jef Jones on 01273 710452 or email jefjones@btinternet.com

Places are limited so please book as soon as possible.
This one day retreat will be free of charge.

*Jef Jones is Lay Leader at Brighton Unitarian Church.
Stephen Crowther is a Unitarian Lay Preacher.*

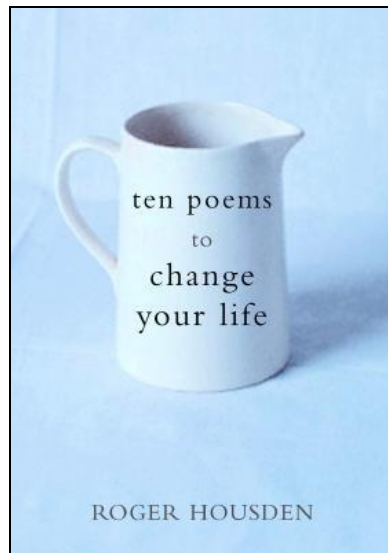
That's Rubbish! Walk Sponsored Litter-Picking for Simple Gifts After-School Club

Sunday 14th July, 2-4pm - Meet in front of
Garrett Centre, next to Oaklands School
(near Mansford Street Church, Bethnal Green)



Join the team from the SimpleGifts Unitarian Centre for Social Action to help beautify Bethnal Green and raise funds for the SimpleGifts After-School Club. Money raised will help to buy table tennis equipment, art and craft materials, and homework supplies to serve the 50-60 children who attend the club each week. Just bring yourself as equipment (bags, gloves, etc.) will be provided. Contact Rob at info@simplegiftsucsa.org.uk for more information or sponsor them via www.simplegiftsucsa.org.uk.

Essex Church Reading Group 'Ten Poems to Change Your Life' edited by Roger Housden



Tuesday 23rd July 2013, 7.00-9.00pm

The reading group's July session will be based on 'Ten Poems to Change Your Life'. This is a change to the previously listed title and it will be the 104th title discussed by the reading group since it started up ten years ago.

More information from Amazon UK:

"In this powerful book, Roger Housden harnesses the unique ability of poetry to touch the reader's inner-most feelings. For everyone who knows there is more to life than they are currently experiencing, it aims to bring an awakening... Through the voices of ten very individual poets, Housden directs each of us to examine the universal themes that pursue us through life: those that stir our eternal emotions and desires. The ten poems presented are timeless; affecting us with a powerful sense of reality, and moving us to alter the way we view ourselves and the world. With a penetrating commentary on each of the poems, Housden provides an insight into his own spiritual journey, and invites us to contemplate the significance of the poet's message in our own lives."

The group takes special care to ensure that everybody gets an equal opportunity to speak and be listened to. Members come together to share our diverse views and appreciate our differences in a spirit of curiosity and respect. The group has a relaxed and easy-going atmosphere and newcomers are always most welcome to come along to any session. The group has been meeting monthly since 2003. We take turns in choosing a book for everybody to read so we tackle a wide variety of material. For more information see:

www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk/book.html



A Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement Forms

Second Sunday of the Month from 2-3pm:
14th July, 11th August, 8th September 2013

TUESDAY CLASSES RESUME ON 16th JULY
(12.30-1.30pm each Tuesday lunchtime)

An hour of whole-body conditioning, done barefoot to diverse music. Delivering a cardiovascular workout for any level of fitness. Specific routines allow you to experience - the power of the martial arts, the stillness of the healing arts and the joy of movement through dance.

Cost £10 (£5 to members of church congregation).

Contact: Sonya Leite on 0207 371 1674.

Small Group Communion



Sunday 14th July, 11th August, 8th Sept
at 12.30pm Down in the Church Library

On the second Sunday of each month we hold a small-group communion, after the main morning service, downstairs in the library. These services are led by different members of the congregation. A team of volunteers take turns in leading the services so we can experience a variety of different approaches. The line-up for the next couple of months is as follows:

14th July – Led by Jane Blackall

11th August – Led by Susan Smith

8th September – Led by Heidi Ferid & Sarah Tinker

If you would like to find out more then please feel free to speak to Jane Blackall or Tristan. All are welcome.



KENSINGTON
& FULHAM

Kensington Unitarians Art Exhibition This Autumn

Part of Open Studios, 11th-12th October 2013

Pocket Arts is organising a new artists open studios festival for the Kensington & Fulham area this autumn. We have signed up Essex Church to take part and plan to hold an 'open studio' for members and friends to exhibit their own art and craft works to the congregation and the local community on 11th-12th October.

Planning is at an early stage but we are thinking of inviting people to show up to three art or craft works in the exhibition. We would like to produce a booklet to accompany the event including statements from the artists and pictures of the works.

It would be helpful to hear from you in the near future if you are interested in taking part. Please email Jane if you would like to be involved. It would be handy to know what sort of works you are thinking of showing so that we can consider how best to put on the display. We will also need volunteers to help set up and steward the exhibition in October so please get in touch if you are willing to help out with the practicalities (especially if you have any experience in putting on exhibitions of this kind!). Email jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk if you would like to be involved.

For more information about the event see: www.pocketarts.org



Food Bank Shopping List



We are hoping to contribute to our local food bank (see Sarah's article on the front page of this newsletter). The Trussell Trust has provided a list of items that they would particularly like us to collect and donate:

- Milk (UHT or powdered)
- Sugar (500g)
- Fruit Juice (carton)
- Soup
- Pasta Sauces
- Sponge Pudding (tinned)
- Tomatoes (tinned)
- Cereals
- Rice Pudding (tinned)
- Tea Bags / Instant Coffee
- Instant Mash Potato
- Rice / Pasta
- Tinned Meat / Fish
- Tinned Fruit
- Jam
- Biscuits or Snack Bars

If you would like to donate any of these items please bring them along to church next time you come. The church committee will need to arrange regular transport of the food we collect so if you might be able to help with this then let Sarah or a committee member know.



'I think that one of our most important tasks as Unitarians is to convince ourselves and others that there is nothing to fear in difference; that difference, in fact, is one of the healthiest and most invigorating of human characteristics, without which life would become lifeless.

Here lies the power of the liberal way — not in making the whole world Unitarian; but in helping ourselves and others to see some of the possibilities inherent in viewpoints other than one's own; in encouraging the free interchange of ideas; in welcoming fresh approaches to the problems of life; in urging the fullest, most vigorous use of critical self-examination. Thus we can learn to grow together, to unite in our common search for the truth beneath a better and a happier world.'

Adlai Stevenson

Summer Newsletter Deadline



The deadline for the summer issue is 14th July. This is a double issue for August/September. Please send your newsletter contributions to our editor, Jane Blackall, by then. Thank you!!!

Email your articles to:
jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Unitarian Christian Association Summer Gathering

'Christian Contemplative Worship and Meditation'



Saturday 27th July, 12 noon – 5pm
Meadow Chapel, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 3JB

12 noon - Lunch (free of charge)

1 p.m. - Contemplative Worship

2 p.m. - Introduction to Christian Meditation offered by Raymond Lamb of the World Community for Christian Meditation (www.christianmeditation.org.uk)

3.30p.m. - Presentation by Nick Morrice on his support of medical education in Nepal

4.30p.m. - Afternoon tea

Please contact the UCA Events Officer, Jeff Gould, if you plan to attend, for catering purposes. Email: jeffreylanegould@btinternet.com or telephone 01625 403509

Godalming Unitarians: www.unitariangodalming.org.uk



Friends in Need are Friends Indeed



I was so glad to be able to make another of my annual pilgrimages to Essex Church on May 19th in order to share in the service and AGM, and meet again those friends there whom I have known for a long, long time. It is now 28 years since Essex Church came to my rescue, and it is out of great gratitude for that fact that I still try to make an appearance once a year so that I may give thanks and revive old and precious memories.

From 1980 to 1985 I had been employed by the Church of England's Committee for Social Responsibility to run one of its London 'WelCare' social work schemes – this one in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and housed in an office just behind Portobello Road. Its work was particularly directed towards the support of young single parents – acting as independent adjunct to the social services department – but many other vulnerable individuals, from all walks of life, came within its orbit, too. The Committee for Social Responsibility acted as managers of the scheme and provided accommodation; necessary finance (it was a free service for all who applied for help) came entirely from Trust Funds and similar bodies; and the work expanded and flourished.

In the spring of 1985, however, the Church of England suddenly decided that it could no longer afford to keep the project going and that it would be closing down the enterprise within a few short months. Inevitably, the decision came as a huge shock to me, not only because it would entail the loss of my own livelihood but also because I considered it to be so wrong to let down – at such short notice – those many clients who looked to WelCare for help, and for whom no alternative support of a similar kind was on offer.

Happily, a possible solution occurred to me out of the blue, and, by the grace of God – as I really do believe it to have been – it proved to be a viable one which saved the day for all of us! Thanks to past family connections with Unitarians, and living in the vicinity as I then did, I had frequently attended services at Essex Church, and had come to know the minister, Francis Simons, quite well. I took my dilemma to put before him, and, promising that (as I had been careful to confirm beforehand) the main funding would still be available from existing benefactors, I asked him whether he felt that the church might be willing to accommodate me and take on official responsibility for the work involved. Francis immediately offered me one of the rooms in his manse which had access to the road, for use as an office in which interviews and counselling could take place (I made many home visits, too), and the congregation's committee – under the enthusiastic chairmanship of John MacCormack – quickly agreed (no doubt with plenty of very understandable reservations!) to take what was a pretty daring leap of faith into the unknown. By September 1985 we were up and running as 'UnityCare' (sub-titled 'Unitarian Community Enterprise') and, with scarcely a hiccup and only a minor change of address, the work amongst existing and new clients continued and prospered for over six more happy and successful years.

It could not, of course, go on for ever. By the end of 1991, I was already two years over the (then) women's retirement age of 60. In addition, the main charity which had, so generously, funded the scheme for over eleven years indicated that – because of so many other worthy requests for its help – it might soon have to withdraw its support. All in all, it seemed to be the right point at which to wind things down; but, this time, I was given enough breathing space in which to stop taking on new clients and to prepare existing ones for the changes which lay ahead. I was also able to give fair warning to the Borough's social services and those other bodies which had made many referrals to both WelCare and UnityCare over the years, and who all expressed great sorrow at the ending of a service which they said they regarded as being a wonderfully valuable alternative resource in the local area.

Thus, almost by default – and thanks entirely to the trust and courage of Francis Simons and Essex Church at the time – what I truly believe to have been a really useful piece of work had been maintained in Kensington and Chelsea; against all the odds and for much longer than might otherwise have been the case – winning the genuine appreciation of all concerned, and also acting as a very worth-while and warmly acknowledged public example of Unitarian outreach in the local community.

Is it any wonder that I still feel such a huge measure of gratitude to Essex Church for the timely 'bail out' it so readily provided all those years ago? All being well, I hope to be with you again at next year's AGM!

Jill Inskip



'We have a common interest in caring for everyone in our society that each of us flourishes when we all thrive emotionally, spiritually, economically, intellectually, culturally, and physically. One natural consequence of such mutuality is a deep and immediate responsibility to build a world based on justice, equality, fairness, and peace, a world that cares for the well-being of everyone on the planet.'

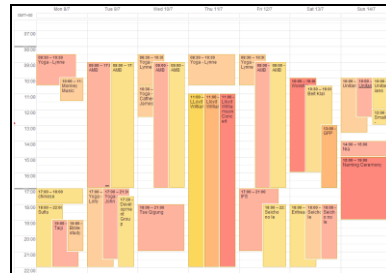
Yet it would be a mistake to characterize our social role in terms of what we "must" do or "should" do for others. 'Responsibility' too often conjures up an image of a stern teacher or relative or preacher shaking their heads at us, scolding us for not being 'responsible' enough. We are seeking a world governed by love and generosity, not by emotional or moral coercion, and certainly not by rules of political correctness or by bureaucratic attempts to reduce love to a series of bank checks for anonymous citizen-beneficiaries. It's time to reaffirm how very good it feels to live in a society in which people care for each other, how much that by itself raises the quality of life and the standard of living for everyone. Social responsibility is a joyous activity that deeply connects us to others.'

Rabbi Michael Lerner

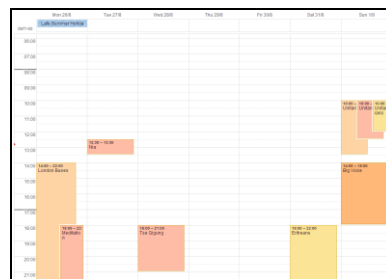
Warden's Column

Essex Church is now moving into its quietest period of the year. Most of our regular bookings take a summer break, so July feels a bit like a succession of "lasts" . . .

- 5th July is the last Ashtanga yoga practice
 - 8th July the last session of the Chinese Children's choir
 - 10th July is Catherine James' last yoga class
 - 11th July is Lloyd Williamson school's summer concert
(although this marks the end of the school term, the nursery in our basement actually carries on running – with reduced numbers – throughout the summer)
 - 12th July is the last Associated Board music exam
 - 13th July the last Guild of Pastoral Psychology lecture
 - 18th July the last Analytic Psychology lecture
 - 23rd July the last pregnancy and osteopathy yoga classes
 - 27th July the last Independent Guild Psychology lecture
 - 29th July the last Monkey Music pre-school children's music session
- even the Church book group is taking a break in August



Bookings in June (above)/August (below)



During August our busiest nights will be Saturday (with Seicho no Ie occupying the whole upstairs and the Eritrean support group in the library) and Monday (with Sufis chanting in the library and Tai Chi in the Hall). Tse Qigung will continue to offer their Tai Chi & Chi Gung classes on Wednesdays and Beit Klal synagogue will be here on alternate Fridays and Saturdays as usual. Nia dance will also be continuing to run on Tuesday lunch times. All the same – that feels like blessed peace and quiet! No daytime activities for the whole of August and even a couple of completely free evenings – bliss ☺

Jenny Moy

Art and Spirituality Network Day Workshop:

Making Art through the Spirit of Music, Rhythm & Stillness



**Facilitated by Isa Levy with Elaine Giles
Saturday 13th July 2013, 10.00am – 4.30pm**

Muswell Hill Local Meeting, Friends Meeting House, Church Crescent, London, N10 3NE

We will be taking sound as our theme: whether it be the sound of silence, Tibetan bowls, Debussy, Rock or African drum beat. We will spend the day mindfully moving from one to the other sharing our experiences, expressing our inner rhythms through the creative spirit.

Cost: £25 (incl. art materials + drinks – reductions available if needed). Advance booking essential!

To book and for information on the Art & Spirituality Network and further workshops visit: www.artandspirituality.net

'Finding Our Voice'

Singing Workshops with Margaret Marshall

**Sundays 18th August, 15th September
(please note: no session in July)
12.30 to 1.15pm, at Essex Church**



Margaret Marshall has worked as a professional singer all her adult life and is also a very experienced singing teacher. She has been singing in our choir here at Essex Church for over thirty years now and we're delighted that she is leading monthly sessions to help us all find our voice.

These workshops are for anyone who is prepared to open their mouth and make a sound. Margaret will show us how to improve the quality and strength of our voices. Using a few simple exercises we'll gain joy and confidence in our singing by learning how to produce and develop the voice, something everyone can do. We'll work with the breath and overcome unconscious blocks that can prevent us singing with our true potential.

Fun and achievement are guaranteed and these sessions are designed for everyone, whatever your experience or ability. All are welcome.

July Multifaith Calendar

✿ 1st July - Chokor (Cho Kor Du Chen) - Buddhist

This is a Tibetan and Nepalese festival that commemorates the first teaching (the turning of the wheel of law) given by the historical Buddha. It is a colourful and relaxed mid-summer festival, when statues of the Buddha and copies of the scriptures, engraved on narrow, rectangular wooden blocks, are carried round the district with music and jollity, symbolising the promulgation of the Buddha's teaching. The whole community, clerical and lay, male and female, joins in the processions and the picnics that follow.

✿ 9th July - Anniversary of Martyrdom of the Bab - Baha'i

This day recalls the death of the Bab, executed by firing squad in Tabriz, Persia, at noon on July 9th in 1850. Baha'is commemorate his death at noon with readings and prayers from the Baha'i Scriptures. It has become a holy day of rest when Baha'is should refrain from work.

☪ 9th July (to 7th August) – Ramadan – Muslim

Ramadan is the name of the 9th month of the Islamic Calendar. During Ramadan Muslims fast from dawn to sunset. The Muslim year is a lunar year, so Ramadan moves forward by ten or eleven days each year. Fasting (sawm) is one of the five pillars of Islam, requiring self-discipline and giving everyone some experience of deprivation. Those who are not able to fast are expected to give charity to compensate for the lost days. While children may be encouraged to fast, the full fast is not compulsory until maturity, but many still attempt to keep some, or even all of it. For Muslims it is the holiest month and one they try to dedicate to spiritual renewal, prayer and intensive devotional reading of the Qur'an. It is the month in which, according to Islamic belief, the Prophet received the first revelation of verses of the Qur'an. No food or drink may be consumed during the hours of fasting, and those fasting must also abstain from smoking and from sexual relations. Muslims who are travelling or sick and women who are pregnant or nursing a child are excused from fasting but are required to make up the days of missed fasting during the year ahead. After the custom of the Prophet, the fast is traditionally broken each evening by taking dates and water.



☪ 10th July – Ratha Yatra – Hindu

'Chariot journey'. This is observed most notably at Puri in the Indian state of Orissa, where processions of thousands of devotees pull huge waggons (rathas) supporting images of Krishna. He is known under the name of 'Jagannath', (Lord of the Universe), from which the term 'juggernaut' comes in English. Krishna is attended by his brother and sister. The festival and others like it are celebrated in Britain with processions through various parts of London on appropriate Sundays.

✿ 16th July – Tisha B'Av – Jewish

This is the saddest day of the Jewish calendar. A full day fast is held at the conclusion of three weeks of mourning and reflecting on the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem and other tragedies in Jewish history. The Book of Lamentations is read at this time.

✿ 22nd July – Asalha Puja – Buddhist

Dhammacakka day – 'The turning of the wheel of teaching'. This is a Theravada celebration of the First Proclamation by Gautama to five ascetics in the Deer Park near Benares. In it he taught the Middle Way, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths.

23rd July – Birthday of Haile Selassie I – Rastafarian

This is one of the holiest days of the Rastafarian year. It is celebrated with Nyahbinghi drumming, hymns and prayers.

☪ 31st July – Lailat-ul-Qadr / Night of Power – Muslim (Shi'a)

This commemorates the night in 610 CE when the prophet Muhammad received his first visit from the angel Jibril (Gabriel) and his revelation of the Qur'an. Muslims believe that the date of this night is kept secret by God, but that they 'May seek the Night of Dignity in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan' (Bukhaari, quoting Aisha, who heard it from the Prophet). Many Muslims spend the last ten days and nights of Ramadan secluded in the mosque, praying and studying the Qur'an, to ensure they receive the special benefits promised for their prayers and devotions on Lailat-ul-Qadr. For the purpose of communal activities, or for those who can only spend one night in devotions at the mosque, Sunnis favour the 27th day (beginning the evening of the 26th) whilst the Shi'a favour the 23rd day of Ramadan. Of this night, the Qur'an states, "Lailat-ul-Qadr is better than a thousand months." Surah 97:1-5 (see esp. 97: 3).

'We tend to consider imagination too lightly, forgetting that the life we make, for ourselves individually and for the world as a whole, is shaped and limited only by the perimeters of our imagination. Things are as we imagine them to be, as we imagine them into existence. Imagination is creativity, and the way we make our world depends on the vitality of our imagination.'

Thomas Moore

'The Wisdom of Trees'

A retreat led by Rev. John Harley



Friday 5th – Sunday 7th July 2013
Hilfield Friary, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 7BE

A weekend of creativity, reflection exploring the theme of trees through art-making, walking, meditation, poetry ritual and silence. This retreat invites participants to get in touch with their creative and spiritual selves, make connections with others and the world and gain insights into themselves – all in the healing presence of trees.

The weekend is open to all fellow travellers – those of faith and those of no faith or religion. The retreat will involve some walking around in the woods but no long walks. Every care will be taken to make activities safe and restorative – yet working creatively with others can have the potential to bring up powerful emotional material for people. John is a trained therapist though the retreat is not essentially offered as therapy – therefore participants are encouraged to take responsibility for their own emotional processes.

John Harley is a dramatherapist, art teacher and Unitarian minister. He has been facilitating creative workshops for nearly twenty years and is the Chair of the Art and Spirituality Network, an organisation that offers opportunities for mindful creativity in safe, supportive group settings. He is fascinated by the interplay and dialogue between what some of us call spirituality – or exploration of the beyondness and mystery in this life – and our expressive, artistic, intuitive selves. He believes that when we give ourselves permission to play, take creative risks and get in touch with our bodies we can access a natural emotional intelligence and a sense of well-being and groundedness.

Cost £155 – £170 - all meals and resources included.

For more information visit: www.beherecreate.co.uk

'Rediscovering the Bible'

A monthly bible-reading group at Essex Church



Meeting on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7pm:
8th July, 12th August, 2nd September 2013
(please note irregular date in September)

We started a monthly bible-reading group back in late 2012. In the sessions we simply read through the bible together, pausing to reflect, and share our own thoughts and feelings on what we read. We began with the Acts of the Apostles and we have now gone back to the beginning to tackle Genesis. We were very pleased to welcome eleven people to the first session and a core group have continued to gather each month since then. There has been a lot of laughter and fun in these sessions as well as exploration, discovery and learning.

Do contact us (email jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) if you have any questions or just to let us know you're planning to come along. The bible-reading group is open to all who share a spirit of goodwill and curiosity about discovering the text anew – no particular theology will be presumed – please bring along a bible (any translation you like) if you have one. This group is offered in conjunction with the Liberal Christian affinity group of the district association (LDPA) and we hope to see friends from throughout the region at these meetings.

David Darling and Jane Blackall

'Many Western people are becoming uncomfortable about the absence of spirituality in their lives. They do not necessarily want to return to pre-modern religious lifestyles or to conventionally institutional faith. But there is a growing appreciation that, at its best, religion has helped human beings to cultivate decent values.'



Islam kept the notions of social justice, equality, tolerance and practical compassion in the forefront of the Muslim conscience for centuries. Muslims did not always live up to these ideals and frequently found difficulty in incarnating them in their social and political institutions. But the struggle to achieve this has been for centuries the mainspring of Islamic spirituality.'

Karen Armstrong

Unitarian Peace Fellowship Retreat Inner and Outer Peace



8th – 10th November 2013
Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow

As Lyndon B Johnson once said 'peace is a journey of a thousand miles and it must be taken one step at a time' – come and take your first step with the members of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship for an inspirational weekend at the Nightingale Centre, as they lead you on a 'journey of the spirit and soul' with workshops on:

- Peace in our lives - how we ground ourselves and our peace witness in our theology and spirituality.
- Peace and the creative process – an opportunity to create a 'mandala' or creative writing around peace.
- Commemorating World War I – a Peace Perspective

The weekend begins on Friday with a buffet supper, and ends on Sunday with lunch after attending the Remembrance Sunday service at Great Hucklow Unitarian Chapel.

INCLUSIVE COST: Sharing a normal twin room – £102, Single occupancy of twin – £112, Sharing an en-suite room – £117, Single occupancy of en-suite room £127. Everyone is welcome.

Contact Rev. Sue Woolley for further information:
sue.woolley@virgin.net / 01604 870 746

'Scientist, mathematician, and educator, Dr. Warren Weaver, said that applying [the scientific] principle of complementarity to religion both sustained and liberated him:

"If I ask a question from one point of view, I will have one answer; but sometimes if I ask the same question from another and quite different point of view, I may very well have a second answer. The second answer may be inconsistent with the first, but it can be viewed as complementing the first, even though it is contradictory. And the two answers together, will provide a richer, truer picture than either separately."

The complementary approach tries to keep us open to looking for the truth in what the intellect tosses aside in pursuing one path. It's a both/and approach. So the universe can be both purposeful and purposeless at the same time. It depends on our context. We don't have to decide for just one over the other. Find the truth in each one, even though we can't fit them together in a consistent way. We can follow the arguments of each position, so just keep both of them going at the same time. Keep the vision stereoscopic. There's more reality in it.

With respect to an image of God, for example, we can be theist, deist, polytheist, pantheist, atheist, and agnostic all at once. There can be something in each perspective that speaks to us and carries a truth for us. At one time we may lean more in one direction, and at another time in another.'

UU Minister, Rev. Bruce A. Bode

One Light Spiritual Gatherings 'Mothering/Fathering'



Friday 12th July 2013
6.30-8.15pm – Here at Essex Church

The gatherings are led by graduates of the Interfaith Seminary.

Come and enjoy as we gather in healing and loving connection to Spirit. Come help us create a sacred space, bringing in the One Light, One Love for which we all long - with silence, music, spiritual transformation journey, and eternal inspiration from all faiths and none. Bring your beloved eternal self, family & friends.

Forthcoming Gatherings:

9th August – Health; 13th September - Accomplishment

*These events are free. Donations for expenses are welcome.
Any surplus will go to Essex Unitarian Church*



'It is crucial that we hold our dream for a more compassionate order before our eyes without assuming either that the dream is impossible or that it can be actualized by any five-year plan.

Speaking about the human plight, Reinhold Niebuhr once remarked that "nothing worth doing can be accomplished in a single lifetime." To avoid despair, to be animated by hope, it is not necessary to know that our dreams for a just and compassionate order will come to pass in short order. It is necessary only to follow a vocation that leads us in the right direction.'

Sam Keen

Billingshurst LDPA Quarterly Meeting



It was almost standing room only for the LDPA District Quarterly meeting held at Billingshurst Unitarian Chapel in June. If you have never been to Billingshurst it's worth a visit. You can read more about the chapel's history online (there is an article about the chapel on Wikipedia).

The service was ably led by Stuart Coupe, a member of the Horsham congregation, who with his wife Jan has put a great deal of effort into re-vitalising the congregation at Billingshurst. Their main way of achieving this is through music. They formed a group called Evershed Arts, with the aim of using the building as an arts venue and so encouraging people to venture inside. This level of local usage has enabled them to secure a grant from English Heritage and they now are committed to raising a further £50,000 for much needed repair work for the chapel roof.

In his service, entitled 'Is any of this sounding familiar?' Stuart spoke of the many connections between folk music and Unitarianism. I had never heard of Lucy Broadwood, a local Unitarian and folk song collector, and had not realised that Pete Seeger had a Unitarian connection. With a piece performed by a member of the South Downs Uilleann Pipe Society, who use the chapel as rehearsal space, and some hauntingly beautiful songs from a band called BeHeld, this was a delightful way to spend an afternoon. Watch out for information about the next District Quarterly meeting, which will take place on Saturday 19th October.

Sarah Tinker and David Darling

Photographs by James Barry from Billingshurst Blog



Good Cause Collection of the Month:



The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches Collection on Sunday 28th July

For our next fourth-Sunday charity collection we will be supporting the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (often referred to as 'the G.A.'). This is the organisation which connects our individual congregations. Through the efforts of a handful of paid staff, and a great many volunteers up and down the country, the GA provides a number of vital services for Unitarians in the UK, including:

- Training Unitarian ministers
- Training Lay Worship Leaders
- Training religious education leaders
- Providing grants to help churches pay ministers
- Providing information and publicity about Unitarians
- Providing worship material, hymn books etc.
- Representing a Unitarian perspective on national, governmental, church, and social responsibility bodies (such as the recent campaign for marriage equality).
- Organising special events such as summer school
- Organising a national youth programme
- Acting as trustees of the Nightingale Centre, our denomination's conference centre in the Peak District.
- Supporting congregations through times of change

The GA is largely reliant on donations from individuals and local congregations to carry out all these tasks on our behalf. Please give generously, if you can, to the collection on 28th July.

For more information see: www.unitarian.org.uk

Previous Charity Collections:

Thank you for your generosity in contributing to recent charity collections. I am pleased to let you know that we will be sending the following donations to good causes:

April – British Red Cross (UPF Lent Appeal) – £181.22

May – Arts Emergency Service - £63.29

June – Arundel Castle Cricket Foundation - £116.83

Lammas Gathering



Sunday 4th August, 12.45-2.45pm
After the service here at Essex Church

Lammas is a pagan festival of thanksgiving for early harvests and a time to take stock of what we have in store.

We will use this image to consider our own lives and create together a simple ritual of appreciation. Please bring lunch if you are staying for the gathering.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

International Association of Religious Freedom

From the AGM of British IARF on 18 May 2013, the big news is the announcement of the 2014 IARF Congress.

The August 2014 Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) will be held at the University of Birmingham, U.K. The theme will be RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, GLOBALISM AND THE DIGITAL AGE (exact title still to be approved). Skh Muhammed Amin-Evans is chair of the host committee. In early summer 2013, details will be on www.iarf.net.

As a "warm-up" to August 2014, you are invited to RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY, 20-23 August 2013 at Horsham, West Sussex (20 minute train ride south of London Gatwick Airport). Hosted by IARF, the World Congress of Faiths, and Horsham Interfaith Forum. For details see events at www.worldfaiths.org.

Students and young adults may apply to be IARF Interns, helping to host IARF Horsham. Please send applications with a brief bio to r.boeke@virgin.net.

Blessings and hope,
Richard Boeke - Chair, British IARF

A Big Opportunity



You may or may not have noticed individuals around London and other towns and cities standing outside shops selling "The Big Issue," which is a weekly publication. Look out for a man or woman wearing a sleeveless red tabard and official badge over their clothes, holding up a tidy pile of magazines protected from the weather.

Find £2.50 of your money and buy one. I hope to sell you the reason why it would benefit you both. The vendor selling you it has paid for their stock and can't return it nor get their money back. He or she will get £1.25 from your purchase so they need to sell quite a few to have a viable income. What else might you buy for £2.50? How about a coffee out? Perhaps you buy quite a few of those in a week. How about foregoing one? Have a cup at home and save the planet by not throwing away a disposable one.

It's always nice to have a chat when you are out. It is likely that you will have at least a brief one with this person, who has known what it is like to be homeless and is still in that position or vulnerable to being so. Now, even if they are homeless they can be proud to be earning at their regular pitch. A slogan on each magazine is "Trade not Aid." The trained vendors are not entirely left to their own devices, however. They can draw on the resources of "The Big Issue Foundation," which exists to help them rejoin mainstream society. It is a registered charity which is happy to receive donations. If you would like to follow that up see: www.bigissue.org.uk. The web address for the magazine is www.bigissue.com

When I buy a copy I not only feel good for being supportive, I really enjoy reading it. It is very upbeat and positive, unlike the media in general, which is often depressing. Current affairs and information about books and films etc are covered, as is social commentary, such as in John Bird's column, which I especially enjoy. He co-founded the set up with Gordon Roddick in 1991. The back page is about a particular vendor. Once in a while I remember coming across them.

You could just put your copy in the recycling when you have read it. I used to do this but now I try and read it within the week. Then I leave it in a public place, such as in a library or on the tube or a bus. I hope this will give someone the pleasure of reading it and that they will take up buying their own copy. Buy one and see how it goes.

Carolyn Appleby

'All Will Be Well'

Sermon by Rev. Sheena Gabriel – 2nd June 2013

An audio podcast of this sermon is available on our website.

I wonder what your reaction is, to the words "All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well". Perhaps they resonate? Or maybe they provoke feelings of cynicism or irritation? Dame Julian of Norwich, who penned these words, was a Christian mystic living in the 14th century. We don't know much about her early life, but we know she became an anchoress – living in a cell attached to the parish Church of Saint Julian in Norwich. When she was around 30, during a serious illness, she had a visionary experience – recorded in a book known as *Revelations of Divine Love* – possibly the first book written by an English woman.

Julian insisted that God is pure love and contains no wrath; it is we humans who project our wrath onto the Divine. Julian taught that sin was part of the learning process of life, and spoke of God as Mother, as well as Father. Her radical and optimistic theology is all the more remarkable, when we think of the period she wrote in. She lived amidst the horrors of the Black Death and the 'Hundred years war' between England and France. It was a time of peasant uprisings, with the Catholic Church in schism. In contrast to the priests who taught that the misfortunes afflicting the population were punishments from God, Julian's words were a source of light and hope. But of what relevance are her words today? Is the notion that 'all shall be well?' simply blind optimism, which flies in the face of reality?

Perhaps some of you have read the children's book 'Pollyanna' by Eleanor Porter? (It was one of those improving books of which my grandma approved!) The main character, Pollyanna, is orphaned and goes to live with her stern Aunt. Pollyanna's philosophy of life centres on "The Glad Game", which involves finding reasons to be glad in every situation. When her aunt sticks her in an attic room without carpets or pictures, Pollyanna enthuses about the beautiful view from the high window. When she's sentenced to bread and milk in the kitchen, Pollyanna thanks her aunt profusely, because she likes bread and milk - and she likes Nancy the servant! With her sunny disposition, Pollyanna brings so much gladness to the dispirited New England town, that she transforms it. She teaches others to "play the Glad game" - including a querulous invalid and a miserly bachelor - and even her Aunt softens under Pollyanna's relentless cheerfulness.

The book was so successful that eleven more Pollyanna stories, known as "Glad Books", were penned by other authors. At the height of her popularity Pollyanna became known as "The Glad Girl", and "Glad Clubs" sprang up (I have no idea what they do, but apparently one such club still exists today in Denver!) And the author's home town still hosts "The Official Pollyanna Glad Day" each summer. Now I wouldn't be surprised if all that 'gladness' leaves you feeling a bit grouchy! The novel brought the word "Pollyanna-ish" into the English language – a term used pejoratively for someone whose optimism is excessive and rather naive.



But more disturbing than sweet Pollyanna, is the positivity shown by the main character in Voltaire's satirical novel, 'Candide'. Dr Pangloss teaches that in this 'best of all possible worlds', everything happens for a reason. Utterly blind to his own misfortune, as well as the horrors endured by his friends, Pangloss insists every twist of the plot is for the greater good. This philosophy can be detected in some religious beliefs - the idea that all will be well in heaven, so we should passively accept misfortune in this world; or the New Age belief that we create our own reality, and suffering is illusory.

So how does this relate to Julian of Norwich's words? Are they just a childlike Pollyanna-ism, or a Dr Pangloss spin on suffering? I don't think so. Julian did not deny life's difficulties, nor was she immune from them. She lived through the Black Death, which killed nearly half of the population of Norwich. Some scholars suggest she married, and lost her husband and children to the plague, prior to becoming an anchoress. And she herself nearly died from serious illness. Julian makes it clear that God will not shield her from suffering. In her words: *"If there is anywhere on earth a lover of God who is always kept safe, I know nothing of it... But this was shown, that in falling and rising again, we are always kept in that same precious love"*

Julian in her visions, hears Christ tell her that 'all shall be well' – but she argues back, 'Ah good Lord how can all things be well, because of the great harm which has come through sin to your creatures?' It took Julian nearly 20 years to accept these words. She did not trot them out as a pious platitude, but questioned, doubted, and wrestled with her God, until finally she could make the words her own. (Julian wrote two accounts of her visions – a short version immediately afterwards, and further reflections many years later, which show she was still grappling with this idea.)

For Julian, it was her strong belief in the unshakeable love of God - that gave her reason for hope. Some of you may share a similar conviction. But even if you don't - perhaps you have a philosophy of life that enables you to make sense of the notion that 'all shall be well'? It could be a belief in the Buddhist principle of non-attachment, with its possibility of transcending the cycle of suffering and duality. Or belief in the goodness of human nature, that envisages a world where we finally learn to live at peace. Or a perspective that sees the planet as a self-renewing organism – capable of regeneration, long after humans have done their worst.

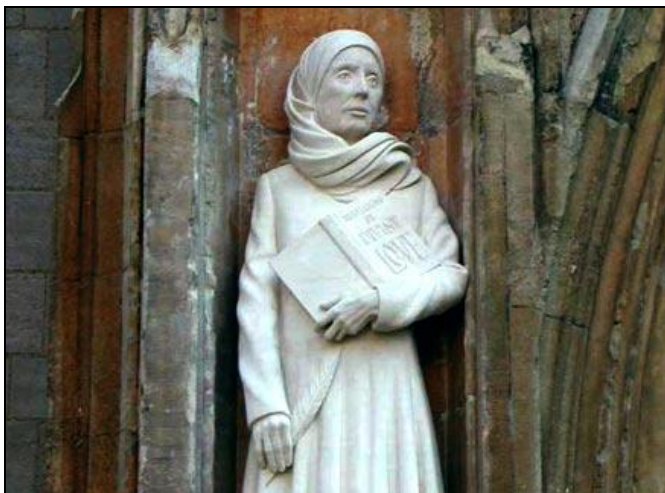
‘All Will Be Well’

Sermon by Rev. Sheena Gabriel (continued)

And even if you *can't* believe that 'all shall be well' – on a psychological level there is something to be said at times, for 'acting as if' it were true. In therapy, one technique for dealing with difficult emotions is to act the opposite to how you feel; smiling, or finding something to laugh about - when you feel like crying. This is based on the notion that action precedes motivation. By 'acting as if', we stimulate endorphins – feel good chemicals – which can raise our mood. This doesn't mean we should smother painful feelings, or deny problems. Forced positive thinking can be damaging, but at times, 'acting as if', enables us to stay afloat in the sea of distress or pain. It helps us hold the opposites in creative tension; I feel sad, there is pain in my life – that is a reality - but that is not the whole of it. I choose in this moment, to enlarge my vision, to see what else is present. This seems akin to the Buddhist doctrine of Two Truths. Relative truth is based on appearances, and describes our experiences in this concrete world. Absolute truth describes an Ultimate reality that cannot be seen. In our limited perception, we suffer and hurt, but there is a larger reality, transcending human preoccupations.

Some people argue that if we kid ourselves 'all shall be well', we become passive bystanders and do nothing to improve our situation. But the opposite is also true. Whilst realists insist we are doomed as a species, that climate change is too far gone, that war will never cease – such voices can paralyse, with the futility of it - whereas holding onto a more hopeful vision, spurs us to positive action.

Whilst others claim we are alone in the universe, and that 'all will not be well', still I hold onto the conviction that beyond my limited human understanding, there is a loving presence, which upholds the universe. This faith cannot be proved – on one level it seems foolish – but it enables me to live more joyfully and confidently in the world, than I otherwise could. I do not wish to force my faith onto you. It is up to each of us, to find a world-view we can live by. And so I leave with you the invitation to experiment with the notion that 'all shall be well' – to wrestle with the words as Julian did – and see if you can make them your own. For some of you this will make sense as a spiritual reality, for others it may be a psychological tool; to make a conscious choice to live and act as though 'all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well...' and to see what difference this makes in your own life. So may it be.



Summer Solstice Stroll



Roy and Caroline near Canary Wharf at the start of the walk

A small group of hardy(ish) souls set out from Tower Hill station for our summer solstice stroll on 21st June. In truth, the start of the walk seemed a bit inauspicious, as 2/3 of our party found their train stuck one stop away from the meeting place when the circle line was suspended and so had quite a walk before we'd even started. The weather forecast for the evening was also looking somewhat dubious, which may have deterred others from joining us.

However, I'm pleased to report that we were rewarded for our endeavour, as the sun came out and it turned into a lovely evening for a gentle stroll along the river. We were all a bit tired and so we decided to cheat and cut the walk short, taking the Docklands Light Railway to Westferry, missing out Wapping (where much of the Thames Path is not actually on the waterfront) and walking down the west of the Isle of Dogs from Canary Wharf instead. We ended up in Island Gardens where, to my surprise, we found an extraordinary outdoor theatre performance featuring aerial sway pole dancing in progress ('The Limbless Knight').

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the walk was that it was a good opportunity for a long chat, in an unpressurised setting, where we could start getting to know each other a little better. If you would be interested in coming on future walks or other cultural outings please do get in touch with me (jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) as I want to make sure that we are putting them on at times and dates that suit as many people as possible.

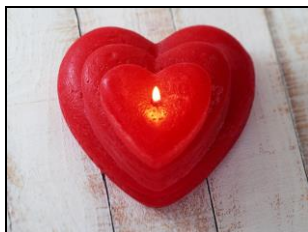
Jane Blackall



Roy and Jane near the end of the walk on the Isle of Dogs

A New Venture Here at Essex Church for 2013...

'Heart and Soul' Midweek Spiritual Gatherings



Thursday 4th July 2013 from 7-8pm

*Gathering at 6.45pm downstairs in the library
Followed by social time and refreshments*

Since the start of this year, we have been holding regular 'Heart and Soul' spiritual gatherings on the first Thursday evening of each month, for new and alternative forms of Unitarian worship. These gatherings are led by members of the Worship Leaders' Practice Group. If you feel enthusiastic about the prospect of midweek services and experimenting with different forms of worship then please do come along and support us or get involved.

The next gathering, on Thursday 4th July, will be on the theme of 'Openness'. We are planning to take our worship outdoors into the park (if weather permits) and so it is important that you arrive on time so that we can all walk to the park together at 7pm. The logistics may mean that the gathering ends a bit later than 8pm. It might be wise to bring a cushion, pad, or folding chair if you need one instead of sitting on the ground.

This month's gathering will be led by Jane and Jeannene. Please contact Jane (jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) if you have any questions or would like to know more.

*Real fearlessness is the product of tenderness.
It comes from letting the world tickle your heart,
your raw and beautiful heart.*

*You are willing to open up, without
resistance or shyness, and face the world.
You are willing to share your heart with others.*

Chogyam Trungpa



Sunday Services in July

**7th July, 11am – 'A Long Wait:
The Unitarian Toleration Act'**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

It's hard to imagine that until 1813 it was against the law to hold Unitarian beliefs. July marks the 200th anniversary of the Unitarian Toleration Act – clearly a piece of legislation in need of celebration and where better to celebrate than here at Essex Church, with the first avowedly Unitarian congregation here in England. Founded in 1774, how did our congregation manage to break the law for 39 years?

14th July, 11am – 'Choose Life'

**Service led by Rev. Danny Crosby,
Lizzie Hornby and Rev. Sarah Tinker**

This service will explore the moments in our lives when we meet those forks in the road and have to make important decisions. The key to making those wise choices is discernment. Danny is minister with the Unitarian congregation in Altrincham.

**21st July, 11am – 'Life's Rich Pattern:
Unitarian Ways of Celebrating Life'**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

We are fortunate as Unitarians in being free to create unique ceremonies to mark life's stages. In this service we will consider the importance of rites of passage and ways we might balance tradition and innovation in such ceremonies.

**28th July, 11am – 'The Spirit Lives
to Set Us Free: GA Sunday'**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Our congregation is a member of the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches, (fondly known as the GA) an organisation which we both contribute to and receive from. Today we will be celebrating this organisation to which we belong and its role in supporting the cause of liberal religion. We will be having a bring-and-share lunch after this service.

