



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: December 2019 / January 2020

What's On...

Sunday 1st December, 11am-noon
'It Is Enough'

Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Wednesday 4th December, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Thursday 5th December, 6.45 for 7-8pm
'Heart & Soul' Spiritual Gathering
'What We Need' led by Jane Blackall

Sunday 8th December, 11am-noon
'Lonely Hearts'
Led by Jane Blackall

Sunday 8th December, 12.30-1pm
Inclusive Communion
with Jane Blackall

Wednesday 11th December, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Sunday 15th December, 11am-noon
'Carol Service – Gifts Everlasting'
with Sarah Tinker & Jeannene Powell

Sunday 15th December, noon-1.30pm
Congregational Christmas Lunch

Sunday 15th December, 2.00-3.00pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Wednesday 18th December, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Saturday 21st December, 12.30-4.30pm
Winter Solstice Gathering

Sunday 22nd December, 11am-noon
'Winter Stores'
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 22nd December, 2-5pm
Festive Tea Dance with Rachel
in aid of Stonewall Housing
for LGBTQIA+ and Allies

Tuesday 24th December, 5pm-6pm
'Candlelit Christmas Eve'
Led by Jane Blackall & Congregation

Sunday 29th December, 11am-noon
'Having it All?'
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 29th December, 1-4pm
'The Year Compass' Workshop
led by Sarah T and Jane B

**See inside back cover for
What's On in January 2020**

Scarcity and Abundance

A Message from our Minister

'They who know they have enough are rich.'

- Tao Te Ching

Welcome to Kensington Unitarians' newsletter, the winter edition, and to our ministry theme for December of scarcity and abundance. It's a theme that fits the season. As secular Christmas celebrations involve feasting and gift giving, and capitalist economics require consumer excesses to keep dreaded recessions at bay, it's hard not to be drawn in to a search for 'more'.



I'm grateful to Unitarian John Naish for his book *Enough: Breaking Free from the World of Excess*. His explanation of the evolutionary advantage humanity gained through seeking 'more' back in our Neolithic days, struck a chord with me. Hunter gatherers gain advantage by seeking what they need whilst they can, by collecting and storing all that is necessary for their survival. Their curiosity, and attraction towards something new or different, keep them alert and perhaps alive. But for many of us living in western post-industrial societies today, this search for 'more' now leads to complex and stressed lives, stuffed fridges, groaning bookshelves and cupboards, or the restlessness that may fuel our search for new adventures, new experiences, new entertainments.

This unsatisfied yearning for 'more' is played out in a world where we are all too painfully aware that many people's daily experience is of 'less'. The poverty on Britain's streets is there for all of us to see. We live in a global community where the majority of human beings are still living without adequate food, clean water and basic medicines.

In the midst of so much injustice let's do what we can to right such basic wrongs. And why not appreciate the simple pleasures that don't have to cost much: a shared meal, a homemade card or present, the delights of singing and dancing and having a laugh, or walking in the parks together. Whoever you are and whatever you believe, you are welcome to join our various Christmas celebrations this December and to hear that traditional message of peace and love and goodwill to all. Jesus' messages were radical 2,000 years ago and they can still make us stop and think today. Let's step away from the busy world of 'getting and spending' for a while and join in quiet reflection, in community with others. Together we can create some truly satisfying experiences, that don't cost the earth but do engage the heart.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

In this month's newsletter...

* 'Twas the Week Before Christmas' – call for volunteers to help with building tasks in December * 'Q&A' with Liz Tuckwell * 'Evidence of a Spiritual Life' reflection by Jeannene Powell * Men's Group * Kensington Singers – Why Not Join for 2020? * Festive Tea Dance in aid of Stonewall Housing * 'Laurits Andersen Ring's "Winter Day"' by Roy Clark * GreenSpirit Group: Solstice Gathering * Year Compass Workshop * 'Tick Tock' reflection by Rev. Sarah Tinker * 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.

If you are aware of any member of our community who is unwell or suffering in some way and who would welcome contact from others in the church, please contact our minister.



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Christmas Events at Essex Church



Sunday 15th December, 11am onwards Carol Service & Congregational Lunch

Save the date and join us for a hearty sing of familiar carols. It's a great occasion so why not invite your friends and stay behind for a bring-and-share congregational Christmas lunch after (please bring simple dishes which can be served from the container you bring them in and don't need heating up).

Tuesday 24th December, 5pm-6pm Candlelit Christmas Eve Service

We will be holding our traditional contemplative evening service on Christmas Eve, with well-known carols, and candlelit silence. This will be followed by time for refreshments.

Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



We need lots of lovely people to muck in to make the church a hospitable place so if you haven't taken on one of these volunteering tasks before please consider giving it a go (you might consider 'shadowing' a regular to get trained up). We realise that it can be hard to commit in advance but you could always ask someone else to stand in if it turns out you can't come.

Stewarding:

1 st December:	Charlotte Chanteloup
8 th December:	Juliet Edwards
15 th December:	Julia Alden
22 nd December:	Michaela von Britzke
24 th Dec (5pm):	Brian Ellis
29 th December:	Michaela von Britzke
5 th January:	Juliet Edwards
12 th January:	Alice Lambert
19 th January:	Niall Doherty
26 th January:	Charlotte Chanteloup

Coffee:

1 st December:	Liz Tuckwell
8 th December:	Helena Coope
15 th December:	(self-service during lunch)
22 nd December:	John Humphreys & Pat Gregory
24 th Dec (5pm):	Heidi Ferid
29 th December:	Geoffrey Olans
5 th January:	Brian Ellis
12 th January:	John Humphreys & Pat Gregory
19 th January:	Julia Alden
26 th January:	Liz Tuckwell

Greeting:

1 st December:	Roy Clark
8 th December:	John Newton
15 th December:	Charlotte Chanteloup
22 nd December:	Liz Tuckwell
24 th Dec (5pm):	Roy Clark
29 th December:	David Carter
5 th January:	Maureen Cummings
12 th January:	Charlotte Chanteloup
19 th January:	??? (can you help?)
26 th January:	Juliet Edwards

We circulate the rota list each month by email. Please contact Jane if you want to sign up for one of the forthcoming slots.

jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

'Twas the Week before Christmas



In the week of the 16th to 20th December we're planning to get some small jobs done here at the church and we'd be glad of help. Whilst the building's quiet we'd like to sort the kitchen cupboards, clean them and clear some clutter. Gitana our hard-working cleaner takes a well-earned break over Christmas and it would be lovely to have the building looking good when she returns. For outdoor types leaves need sweeping and walkways need pressure washing if you are feeling very hearty.

The hymn cupboard in the church needs a tidy (thank you to Sonya for sorting the other two candle cupboards). There are windows we could clean indoors and out, some tablecloths needs a wash and a bit of sewing and the library shelves are long overdue for a tidy, along with a clear out of some odd titles that have crept in from other people's overfilled shelves we suspect. And do have a look in the library whenever you are here in church. It has some great titles and we do occasionally buy new books. Thank you Juliet for buying Unitarian minister Ann Peart's book on *Unitarian Women and Their Legacy of Dissent*. It's a fine testament to the value of educating girls, something that Victorian Unitarians really encouraged.

Let me know if you'd like to join the volunteering team in Dec. Seasonal treats will be on offer for all involved.

Sarah Tinker

Children's Group Winter Break

We'll be taking a break over Christmas so there won't be a children's group at church on December 22nd, 24th or 29th but we'll look forward to seeing you in 2020 and children are always welcome at the services – just bring something you'd like to read or do.

Happy Christmas everyone!

Nadia, Enea and Greta

Church Committee & Congregational News



Roy



Maureen



Brian



Heidi



Harold



Jennifer

The committee met in late October and late November, just after this newsletter was printed. As always if you have anything you'd like the committee to know about or discuss then do please let one of us know. We'll next be meeting on Sunday 9th February as a one off experiment to avoid a winter evening meeting.

Jenny Moy our warden carried out a fascinating analysis of all the lettings where we give groups a discount or space to meet for free. It turns out we are a very generous congregation and by charging sensible fees for most groups we can afford to be generous to those who need it. Do ask Jenny for a look at her list if you would like to know more.

Jenny and Juliet our treasurer are carrying out a much needed review of all our standing orders and direct debits. The list makes for interesting reading and we recommend that we all do this kind of review with our own bank accounts from time to time.

We have submitted our Annual Report and accounts to the Charity Commission as required and we have paid our £2,000.00 quota payment to our General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches, which helps to provide centralised services like leaflets and advice.

Annie Fowler is heading off for Cardiff and we hope she comes back to say hello whenever life brings her back to London. Billy Jackson sends us greetings from Sydney Australia where he can be found playing piano to delight the Sydney Unitarian congregation. Come back soon Billy, though we will understand if you wait till winter has passed.

We are sending best wishes to Lee Minghi whose recent London stay was brought to an earlier end than intended after she was knocked down by a cyclist and sustained a fractured wrist. Hope the healing goes well Lee and that we see you and Julian back in London for springtime.

We send our congratulations to Sofie and Magnus in Sweden on the happy news of their daughter Wendela's birth. And we send best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all absent friends and to all those unable to come to church because of health concerns. Do let us know if you hear any news of congregation friends and members near and far.

'Charity is about giving a hungry person some bread, while justice is about trying to change the system so that nobody has excess bread while some have none; charity is about treating your neighbours with respect, while justice is about trying to get at the deeper roots of racism; and charity is about helping specific victims of war, while justice is about trying to change the things in the world that ultimately lead to war. Charity is appeased when some rich person gives money to the poor while justice asks why one person can be that rich when so many are poor.'

Ronald Rolheiser

Q&A with Liz Tuckwell

#4 in a new series where congregation members answer a range of questions so we can get to know each other better.

Who are you?

I'm Liz Tuckwell and I'm a regular attender at Essex Church although I don't come every week. I live nearby in Kensal Rise, so the church is only a bus ride away. I took early retirement after working for a council for 30 years. My last job was as a Housing Regeneration Manager. I now spend my time between travelling and writing.

When did you first come to Essex Church?

Quite some time ago now. At least four or five years, I think. Time goes by so quickly.

What brought you to this congregation?

It was actually my twin sister, Lynne Markey, who brought me here. She had been reading about Florence Nightingale as part of her nursing degree and wanted to learn more about Unitarians. She asked me to come with her to a service and I stipulated it had to be near to me. So, she found Essex Church for me. Caroline Blair (now sadly departed) took the address at the first service I attended. It was about what happens after death. I was particularly interested in her address because she mentioned she was an agnostic, which I am, and it hadn't occurred to me that you could go to church and still be an agnostic.

What roles or tasks have you taken on at Essex Church so far (or which are calling to you)?

So far, I've made coffee, been a greeter and a steward. I've written articles for the newsletter. I've once or twice read pieces out for a service, for example, when people were asked to write a piece on what they were passionate about. I chose fiction writing. I've also done the workshop for readers but haven't been called on to try out my training yet for that.

What other religious communities have you been connected to (if any)?

I haven't been connected to any other religious communities since I was a child and used to attend a Church of England Sunday School. I must say if you had told me ten years ago that I would be regularly attending a church, I wouldn't have believed you.

What difference has belonging to this congregation made to your life?

I had to think hard about this question. It's given me a space and time to think about issues that I sometimes forget about or don't think enough about, in the busyness of everyday life. It makes me questions my ideas about faith. I feel it encourages me to want and try to be a better person (I wouldn't dare say that I have become a better person). It's also given me the chance to meet new people and have interesting conversations. I also look forward to seeing regular members of the church as well.

What do you tell friends and acquaintances who ask you 'What's Unitarianism'?

The glib way is to say, 'It's like Quakers with singing.' Or I say that it's a very liberal church. If I want to give a better explanation, I say that it's a church without a creed with roots in Christianity, and that you are free to explore your own beliefs. Also, that Unitarians believe in toleration, compassion and social justice. Actually, I try not to mention the word church because I think people make (usually wrong) assumptions about Unitarianism and about me then.



What is your favourite hymn (and why)?

'One More Step' by Joyce Poley. It really speaks to me. The first verse is: 'One more step, we will take one more step, till there is peace for us and everyone, we'll take one more step.' The following verses start with, 'One more word', 'One more prayer', 'One more song', 'One more seed', 'One more bridge', and the last verse is: 'Day by day, we will live day by day, and when we stumble we'll begin again, and take one more step.' To me, it embodies the idea of social justice and community, and the need not to give up on just causes however difficult it might seem. I think it's a perfect hymn for Unitarians. Not be confused with the hymn that starts, 'One more step along the way I go,' although I do like that one too. I also love 'Blue Boat Home'.

What memorable ideas, readings, or stories have you been introduced to at church??

One address that has stuck in my mind, mentioned the idea that you should accept that everybody has 'stupid moments' when they don't behave well. When I get annoyed by people doing things like standing in the middle of exits at tube or train stations or leaning their backs against a pole so no one else can hold on, I tell myself that they are simply having a "stupid moment" and I have them myself. That usually helps to reduce my irritation.

Do you have any hobbies, pastimes, passions or enthusiasms you can tell us about?

I'm learning Esperanto, the international language. It was created by LL Zamenhof in the late nineteenth century as a way to solve the problem of communication between countries. It was meant to be an auxiliary language, a second language for everyone. It's much easier to learn than natural languages, and it has been said that learning Esperanto makes it easier to learn other languages. Some people say that Esperanto is irrelevant today and that English is now the international language. However, a strong argument for Esperanto is that it's not owned by any one country or culture. And just think how much paper the EU and the UN would save if everyone spoke the same second language!

How is creativity expressed in your life?

I'm a writer of fantasy and science fiction and I've had a couple of short stories published in anthologies and on websites and I've self-published a couple of books of short stories as well. I also embroidered one of the flowers on the latest wall hanging in the church, which I enjoyed doing although I'm not that brilliant at needlecraft. I also enjoy knitting although I haven't done very much of that for a while.

What one piece of advice for life or pearl of wisdom would you like to offer to newsletter readers?

Talk to the older members of your family and ask them questions about their lives if you're in a position to do so. My parents came from a generation where they didn't talk much about their childhoods or early lives. I regret now that I didn't ask them more about that, and about their parents and grandparents before they died. So much of my family history is lost to me now.

Festive Tea Dance in aid of Stonewall Housing

Sunday 22nd December, 2-5pm at Essex Church
Starting with a dance lesson for beginners!



We invite you to our next Sunday Afternoon Tea Dance in aid of Stonewall Housing! We had a great time in September (as you can see from the photos!) and we'll be back in December for a Festive Special (please note the change of date to the 22nd). There will be tea, cake, partner dancing and line dances from 2-5pm. All are welcome - complete beginners to life-long dancers alike - and even if you think you have two left feet this will be a relaxed and welcoming space for all to enjoy. The afternoon will begin with a dance lesson led by Rachel Sparks.

Save the date now to come to this fun event in aid of a good cause (£5 of the door price goes to Stonewall Housing, a charity providing safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people fleeing violence, harassment and abuse). There's no need to bring a partner so just come as you are - do tell your friends though - the more the merrier! We encourage gender neutral partnering which means anyone can lead/follow. We are family-friendly so children come for free with any paying adult. Tickets are limited and cost £12 in advance (£15 on the door). Pay it forward tickets are priced at £10 and all proceeds of this ticket will go to Stonewall Housing. Book online: www.rachelsparksdance.co.uk/book-online. Members of the congregation get free admission. You are invited to bring your own home-made cakes to help raise money for our nominated charity and of course donations are very welcome. If you have any questions do email Rachel on hello@rachelsparksdance.co.uk

For more information contact:

rachel@rachelsparksdance.co.uk or visit
www.facebook.com/rachelsparksdance

Volunteers will be needed to help with the reception desk / tea stall – please email jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk if you can help!



Sunday Conversation

on the theme of 'Lost and Found'

Sunday 26th January, 12.45-2pm



Bring your sandwiches stay behind after the last service on January to join in a conversation on the month's ministry theme of 'Lost and Found'.

Men's Group

Tuesday 10th December, 7pm
Here at Essex Church



We are restarting the Men's Group at Essex Church. It will be an informal gathering where men can support and nurture each other in the day-to-day challenges of being a man, or just being.

This first session will allow us to rekindle and develop new friendships and discuss any burning issues. It is also a space to relax, laugh and feel cared for.

In the past we have identified issues that particularly affect men, including: how society creates expected roles and responsibilities, competition, role models and also how little space is made available for deeper sharing. As a consequence, depression and mental health issues are prevalent in the male population. Everyone is welcome to bring their experiences and topics for discussion.

The first event will at 7 pm on Tuesday 10th December 2019, in the library downstairs at Essex Church.

You are very welcome. If you are interested and have any questions, please contact me.

James Blair

Contact: jim_blair_rhino@hotmail.com / 07734511921

Good Cause Collection of the Month:

'Glass Door: London Homeless Charity'



Collection on Sunday 15th December

London's largest emergency winter night shelter, Glass Door provides a safe, warm place to sleep for about 120 men and women every night in winter -- from November to April. We are able to do this thanks to partnerships with churches across the boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Wandsworth and Richmond. Guests of our emergency shelters also receive a hot supper and breakfast in the morning, cooked and served by volunteers. These free services are a life-line to those who would otherwise be sleeping on the street. Our dedicated caseworkers also offer year-round advice, advocacy and practical support to help find solutions and get people back on their feet. Thanks to our partnerships with Chelsea Methodist Church, Ace of Clubs and the Vineyard Community Centre, guests of these drop-in centres can have lunch, do laundry, take a shower, and speak to a Glass Door caseworker. Glass Door not only saves lives by providing refuge from the cold, we also help our guests build more stable futures.

Website: www.glassdoor.org.uk

'Camp Jojo'



Collection on Sunday 26th January

'Camp Jojo' is a small voluntary organisation set up by people with first-hand experience of the joys and challenges faced when parenting a child with complex needs. We have a vision to support families of children with complex needs and disabilities to enjoy a totally accessible camping holiday, and make new friends who understand their situation. We want to provide all the physical, emotional and practical support needed to make camping not just an experience but a relaxing break for the whole family. This charity is supported by Colchester Unitarian Fellowship (see recent district newsletter for more details or visit: www.campjojo.org).

Recent Charity Collections:

September 22nd – **Simple Gifts** – over £150

October 27th – **Red Cross** – £115 + £156 from poetry event

Warden's Column: What's On in our Busy Building



At Juliet's suggestion, Jackie our Gardener has planted some more bulbs in the front and back gardens. There are a mix of purple and white alliums in the side bed at the front (under the Wisteria) and the second of the three stepped beds has assorted dark tulips in the middle and orange parrot tulips (Professor Rontgen) at the end near the entrance. There are also some purple crocuses on the corner near the bench.

Out back, more dark tulips in the bed beside the bench and multi-coloured ones against the wall by the Buddha and some mini alliums at the front of that bed. There are also irises behind the bench and the first of the three rectangular planters.

I'm hoping they'll all come up and delight us, but I have to admit I'm most curious about one of the mini alliums - Allium Vineale aka "Dready". Here's an excerpt from the catalogue description

If you love flowers that look like they just came to life from a Dr Seuss illustration or a science fiction story, Allium 'Hair' is for you! What should you compare it to? Tentacled aliens? Cute critters with purple faces and unruly mops of green hair? The flowers begin as small purple globes atop straight stems. Then each floret begins to develop long, twisting green tendrils that reach out and curve around upon themselves. Over time, they mature to a vivid red. Check out this utterly bizarre, fantastical, wonderfully weird allium. This "I can't believe my eyes!" flower will draw you and your friends in for a closer look.

And apparently it's also resistant to deer and rabbits - neither of which are commonly spotted in the church garden, but we do get fair amounts of foxes & squirrels, so hopefully it will also survive those ok.

Can't wait for Spring ☺

Jenny Moy



FUSE Festival will be returning to the Chatsworth Hotel in Worthing in February 2020. Visit www.Idpaunitarians.org for all the details of the programme and how to book. There will be a wide variety of workshops to refresh your spirituality, develop our community, create social action, and inspire your creativity. FUSE is a good opportunity to meet Unitarians from congregations across the district – and beyond – with plenty of time for conversation and fellowship. The basic cost for attending is £280 for single occupancy. Some bursaries are available. Speak to Sarah, Jane or a committee member ASAP for more information. **Late booking fees apply after 31st December.**



Working From Within

Visit www.Idpaunitarians.org for booking and further details.

Thematic Ministry



By working with a monthly ministry theme in many of our activities here at Essex Church we hope to deepen the life of the community and our own spiritual explorations. Everyone is encouraged to get more involved so do have a look at the themes planned for the months ahead and let us know if you'd like to suggest a reading or a piece of music, bring your own thoughts to one of our Sunday morning gatherings, lead an activity or an outing, or write something for the newsletter.

Have a look through this list of themes for 2020 and see what they spark off in you: 'Lost & Found', 'Rebellion, Defiance & Dissent', 'Self & Other', 'God & the

Divine', 'Desire & Wanting', 'Bodies & The Material World', 'Seeking Paradise', 'Conflict & Harmony', 'Change & Continuity', 'Limits & Boundaries', 'Legacy, Inheritance & Looking Back', 'Nurturing & Nourishing'. This December we're exploring Scarcity and Abundance as our theme. Here are some quotations for you to consider. Since we are in a season of gift giving, why not write these words out for your friends, or for yourself – they'd make an ideal, alternative Christmas present!?

Quotations on Scarcity and Abundance:

- 'Giving is the secret of abundance.' - *Sivananda*
- 'Be content with what you have, rejoice in the way things are. When you realise there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you.' - *Lao Tzu*
- 'For me, the opposite of scarcity is not abundance. It's enough. I'm enough. My kids are enough.' - *Brené Brown*
- 'The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much it is whether we provide enough for those who have little.' - Franklin D Roosevelt
- 'The first step towards discarding a scarcity mentality involves giving thanks for everything that you have.' - *Wayne Dyer*
- 'You pray in your distress and in your need; would that you might also pray in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance.' - *Khalil Gibran*
- 'I have the greatest of all riches: that of not desiring them.' - *Eleonora Duse*
- 'The finest gift you can give anyone is encouragement. Yet, almost no one gets the encouragement they need to grow into their full potential. If everyone received the encouragement they need to grow, the genius in most everyone would blossom and the world would produce abundance beyond our wildest dreams.' *Sidney Madwed*
- 'When we choose not to focus on what is missing from our lives but are grateful for the abundance that's present ... we experience heaven on earth.' - *Sarah Ban Breathnach*

Sarah, Jeannene, and Jane

'Whenever people are crowded closely together in customer-filled stores at Christmas time or in modern apartment blocks, they need to remember that we live on more than just bread. Our lives are also fed by kind words and gracious behaviour. We are nourished by expressions like "excuse me" and other such simple courtesies. Our spirits are also richly fed on compliments and praise; nourished by consideration as well as food. Rudeness is but another mark that our time-is-money society is lacking in spirituality if not also in its enjoyment of life. Gracious behaviour is due to the elderly, to the stranger, and to those who serve us. These service-persons are just that — persons and not robots. We express our belief in their personhood by the sacrament of courtesy. As well, we are enlivened and healed by that expression of respect, dignity, and gracious kindness that flows from the heart.'

Edward Hays

Kensington Singers Why Not Join in January?



As our first term draws to a close in our new venue with you at Essex Church I wanted to write and thank everyone for making us so welcome in your warm and activity-filled church.

It's a pleasure to have some of your congregation members taking up our offer of a few free places in the choir and we might be able to squeeze one or two more in if you are interested. Why not come along to our first spring term rehearsal on Monday 13th January and give it a try. We do ask choir members to ensure they can attend at least 70% of rehearsals in order to keep up. Here are the rest of the dates for next term - Jan 13th, 20th, 27th, Feb 3rd, 10th (nothing on 17th February due to half term) Feb 24th - March 2, 9, 16, 23, with a concert on March 30th, venue to be confirmed nearer the time.

Kensington Singers Christmas Concert

Monday 16th December, 8.00pm
St. Gabriel's Pimlico, SW1V 2AD

You are very welcome to join us on Monday 16th December at 8.00pm at St Gabriel's, Pimlico, SW1V 2AD for our Christmas Concert when we'll be raising money to support West London Action for Christmas. Tickets are £8 from merrilysing.bpt.me or on the door or pop along to a rehearsal in early December and buy a ticket in advance.

Hannah Brine



Thank You!

Many thanks to our anonymous donor who sponsored this colour edition of the newsletter to cheer us all up this winter! Do get in touch if you'd like to be a sponsor.

'The Year Compass'

Sunday 29th December 2019, 1-4pm
New Year Workshop: Booking Essential



Come and join us after the last service of 2019 for a gentle workshop which will allow us all an opportunity to reflect on the year that is now past, to look ahead to 2020, and consider what qualities we might wish to bring into the New Year. This will be a meditative session, mostly spent on our own, but with opportunities to share some of our insights with others towards the end. We'll be using the 'Year Compass' workbook, as we have for several years now, to structure our private reflection. Please book your place with Jane (jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) by Christmas Eve if you are intending to come so that we can make sure there are enough resources for everyone who wants to take part.



Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement Forms
Third Sunday of the Month from
2-3pm: 15th December, 19th January

Midweek class - Wednesdays - 12.30-1.30pm
Last class 18th December, restarting 8th January

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. Led by Sonya Leite.

Cost £10 for drop-ins (£8 to concessions / church members) or a block of 5 classes for £40 to use within a 3-month period.

'Tick Tock'

Reflections by Rev. Sarah Tinker
From the service on Sunday 17th November

'In Search of Time'

I'm grateful to a book by Dan Falk called *In Search of Time: Journeys along a Curious Dimension* – which I've been skim reading this week. Though I'm not sure if grateful is the best description for my response to this book – because in truth it's left me thoroughly confused about the concept of time. Time is both seemingly simple and remarkably mysterious and complex. Both scientists and philosophers have been pondering time – well, since time began, or since humanity started to think about time and its passing.

Our ability to think about time is fascinating in itself. We have the gift, or is it sometimes a curse – of memory – of thinking back to times past and what happened or what we or anyone else did or did not do or say. And we have a gift, or is it sometimes a curse - of imagination – for we can project ourselves into the future and imagine that which has yet to occur. We can also imagine the past, perhaps quite wrongly, but certainly vividly. We could right now imagine London in Roman or Tudor times – and this now busy area of Kensington as a small village on the outskirts of the city.

When we think about time we generally imagine it flowing ... in one direction. An event occurs in the present and then it is past and the future is ahead of us – we are moving towards the future or is the future moving towards us? I wonder how you experience time and the feeling that it is passing. How would you describe time? Many of us imagine time as a commodity – we speak of saving time, wasting time, making time for something that matters to us. We seek time to catch our breath.

We have Einstein and others scientists to thank for complicating matters, for exploring time as another dimension, in which everything is relative – where there is no one truth about time, and past and future can exist simultaneously. And I think it was Einstein who defined time as '*nature's way of keeping everything from happening all at once*'. No wonder we pay such attention to the seasons and the earth's response to changing light levels. No wonder we use the seasons as an analogy for our own lives.

We human beings have been observing time for a very long time. Discoveries from as far back as 30,000 years ago, of animal bones, tusks and antlers marked with carved notches – seem to show that people were aware of 13 lunar cycles that occurred before the stars in the night sky repeated their movement. And once people were living in settled farming communities they began to map the days, months and years – and immediately came upon problems because the lunar cycle of roughly 13 months does not fit perfectly with the solar cycle, as neither the lunar nor the solar cycles are neatly divisible whole numbers. Adjustments have to be made from time to time – like the leap years in our current Gregorian calendar. There's long been a bit of a historical myth that there were riots here in England back in 1752, when the government belatedly made the move from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, by then in use in much of Europe. They had to lose 11 days and so went from Weds 2nd to the 14th September. Apparently the so called Calendar Riots never actually happened but I bet some people were upset about those lost 11 days, particularly if they missed their birthday!

I mentioned the seasons just now. Their mirroring of the passing of our own lives is something that artists and poets and musicians have long responded to. So I was grateful to Margaret for suggesting that she sing Fauré's song '*autumn*' – a beautifully melancholy expression of time passing and life's regrets.



'Our Relationship with Time'

I'm not the best person to be talking about time and our relationship with it – because my personal relationship with time is somewhat dysfunctional. And I can't really blame time for that – because time is doing what time does – it's passing – and I don't care what Einstein says – I know I'm getting older, I know I'll need to buy a new calendar soon for the year 2020, I know that if I don't get on with this service and finish by noon, you'll all be cross with me. So don't believe those physicists, when they say that time is an illusion. I've got a wristwatch – I know the truth. It is 11.42am on Sunday 17th November in the year 2019. Ah, now it's 11.43.

I'd like to improve my relationship with time – but it may be too late. I mentioned earlier the civil service management course I went on all those years ago when we were taught to pay attention to all the people we worked alongside – especially those who cleaned our buildings and maintained them for us. On another occasion we were sent on a time management day course and I was teased mercilessly as the only person who turned up late. In truth, my work as minister here at Essex Church is the only job that I've ever been regularly on time for – and that's because I live here, on top of the church.

My problem with time is having completely unrealistic ideas of how much time everything will take and so I try to cram something extra into an already busy schedule. I wonder how you would describe your relationship with time. Are there aspects of that relationship you'd change if you could? Are you someone who plans ahead and arrives in good time for appointments? Do you feel wistful like Fauré in his autumn song we heard earlier on, aware of time passing, and opportunities perhaps missed? Are you particularly aware perhaps of the variable ways in which time seems to pass – rushing by when we're engaged with some enjoyable activity and slowing down when we have to wait – particularly when that waiting is out of our control – the traffic jam, the checkout queue in a supermarket, waiting for someone to ring or email?

I'm grateful for the spiritual teachings I've received over the years about time – the reminders to pay attention to the here and now – the only moment there is; the valuing of *being* over *doing* in our driven 21st century capitalist world, with our endless injunctions of fast cars, fast food, fast tracks, overtaking lanes on motorways and career ladders to climb. It's helpful to be reminded of all the cultures where living too speedily is regarded as unpleasant, uncouth, simply wrong.

(continues overleaf)

'Tick Tock' *(continued)*

reflection by Sarah Tinker

It's helpful to be reminded that time comes in many forms. In Greek we have two different words for time. *Chronos* time is the time of clocks and schedules, whereas *kairos* time is sometimes described as time of the spirit – the knowing of the opportune moment in which to act – rather like the *wu wei* of Taoist philosophy – being patient yet alert to the best time to be in the flow of that which is – being patient and accepting that sometimes waiting is all we can do.

I'm grateful to meditation teachers like Jack Kornfield whose quotation is on the front of today's order of service – 'the trouble is we think we have time'. Kornfield goes on to consider the life occasions when time is in charge rather than us. Haven't most of us had experiences where time *has us*, rather than us *having time*. We are less in control than we like to think – as we realise in life's big moments when situations turn all of a sudden and life is no longer as it was. Then all experience is heightened – for we are there, and nowhere else – in that moment and no other.

So my friends, I hope you have a healthier relationship with time than I do, I'm grateful that life has thrown us all together into this shared moment and I trust that we will all have time to sit over a cup of tea or coffee after this service and find time for conversation and company – for that which matters most. For love and companionship are surely greater than any clock and any calendar. Amen.

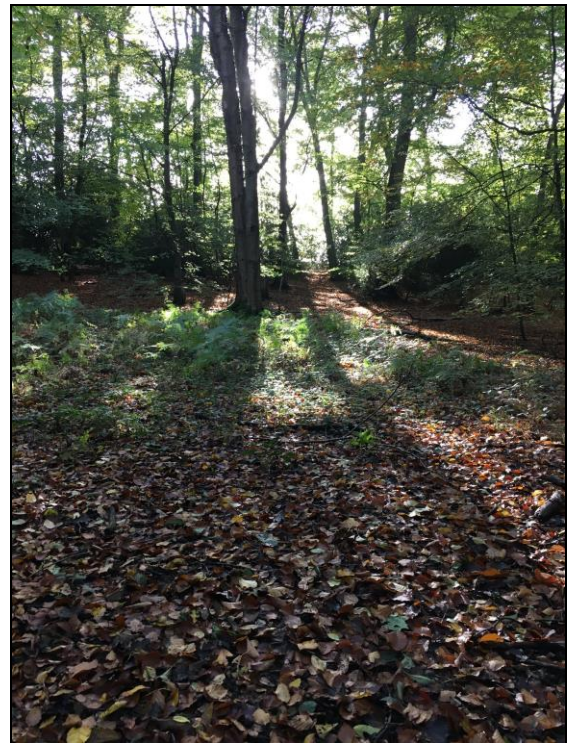
'Tinnitus for Christmas'

Artwork by Eliz Beel



Eliz Beel's illustration of the experience of tinnitus - sometimes described as 'the devil's orchestra'.

OneLight Gatherings Here at Essex Church



With gratitude to Kensington Unitarians for sharing your beautiful worship space with us during the last year. Our November gathering welcomed over 40 people who really appreciated your warm and welcoming space and the music from the Threshold Choir, which sounds so beautiful in your hall.

'Gift of Gathering'

Friday 13th December, 7 - 8.30pm

Join us for this non-denominational sacred circle, celebrating what nourishes and sustains us; singing and sharing in the breaking of bread together to mark the seasons, the great celestial bodies, the cycles of Nature, the nourishment of the Divine. Led by Rev Alison Trower and The Heart Of London Threshold Choir. Free / donations.

'The Twelve' Film Screening

Friday 10th January, 7 - 8.30pm

Screening a special film offering heart-opening messages from twelve incredible Elders from around the world who decided to travel thousands of miles and unite to create a better future for humans. We will be joined by wonderful singer Kate Allan who will lead us in creating sacred sound together. Free / donations.

Sacred Circle for Christmas Day

Wednesday 25th December – To Be Confirmed

Christmas Day can be a time of mixed feelings such as grief, alienation and expectation. OneSpirit minister Rev. Alison Trower is testing the idea of holding a non-denominational singing and sharing circle to co-hold these mixed feelings together. If you are interested please email her at lostpropertyart@yahoo.co.uk so she can see how many wish to come.



Beginners Course in Heart Meditation

**Classes Held on Various Tuesdays
3rd, 17th Dec & 14th, 24th Jan from 6.30-7.30pm
Downstairs in the Library Here at Essex Church**

If you're interested in tapping into a lasting source of inner-peace, and beginning a journey of self-discovery then come and join this Heart Meditation course for beginners. Using ancient rhythms played on a frame drum, the teacher will guide you on a step-by-step process for quietening your mind and truly 'listening to your heart'. Held on various Tuesday evenings, from 6.30pm-7.30pm, first class is free and donations are welcome thereafter.

To confirm course dates and book a place email:
infoheartmeditation@gmail.com

For more information visit: www.heartmeditation.eu

'Finding Our Voice' Monthly Singing Workshops



**Sundays 19th January, 16th February from
12.30pm to 1.15pm at Essex Church
(note there is no class in December)**

Margaret has worked as a professional singer all her adult life and is also a very experienced singing teacher. 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 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 sessions are designed for all, whatever your experience or ability.

Happy Café at Essex Church

Next: Sunday 19th January 2020, 3-6pm

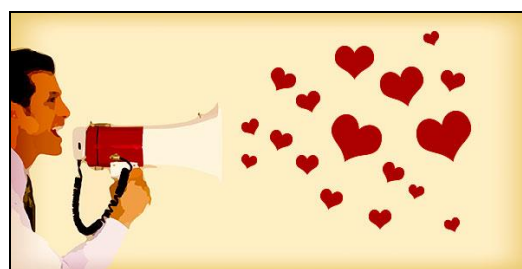
(please note – December meeting has been cancelled)



Happy Cafés are part of the Happy Café Network which is being set up by members of the Action for Happiness network. A Happy Café provides a warm welcome for anyone interested in happiness and wellbeing and encourages them to meet together for a drink and a friendly chat. In a Happy Café you can find inspiring and informative material, participate in events and meet people to discover new ways to improve wellbeing and help make others happier too. Here's Pamela from the Happy Café team who led a beautifully relaxing yoga session for everyone here at Essex Church. She's demonstrating the selection of unusual tropical fruits we were invited to taste- all part of 'Do Something New November', the latest Happy Café initiative to improve our well-being. Anyone for a slice of dragon fruit?

Hucklow Summer School 2020 For Personal and Leadership Development

'Speaking the Truth in Love'



**22nd-29th August 2020 at the Nightingale
Centre, Great Hucklow, Derbyshire**

Theme Speakers: Linda Hart, Mel Prideaux,
Ann Peart, Louise Baumberg, and Stephanie Bisby

Engagement Group Facilitators:

Lindy Latham and Nicola Temple
Claire MacDonald and Marta Pacini
Daniel Costley and Cody Coyne
Kate McKenna and Catherine Coyne

Children and Young People's Leaders:

Claire Maddocks and Jim Blair

Visit the website after Christmas to download an application form and/or speak to Jane Blackall for more information:

www.hucklowsummerschool.co.uk

Laurits Andersen Ring's 'Winter Day'

As an artist ...and an art lover, perhaps unsurprisingly I spend a lot of time looking at art. That means many happy hours' meandering through the many public galleries with which we are blessed here in London. A few years ago long term readers may recall I was moved to write an article for this newsletter about a particular painting hanging in the National Gallery. That painting was *Winter Landscape* by Casper David Friedrich. In particular I wanted to share something of my interpretation of its religious symbolism which I thought might be of interest.

I have recently been looking regularly at another winter painting hanging in the same gallery, *Road in the Village of Baldersbrønde (Winter Day)* by Laurits Andersen Ring.

Ring is hardly known outside of his native Denmark where conversely he is perhaps the most celebrated painter from that country. He came from humble origins and never distanced himself from his background, but rather made it a constant theme, depicting in most of his work the reality of rural life. Most of his paintings depict the village scenes and landscapes of southern Zealand where he was born and grew up.

What I find most captivating about this painting is its quiet yet powerful visual meditation on the mystery of our human lives. There are no people present but their presence is everywhere from the banked up snow and the ruts left in the road by carriage wheels to the rather spindly row is of tree saplings lining the road. The scene is melancholy and somewhat austere with the many shades of grey skilfully applied to invoke a sense of the biting cold and bleak terrain. It is essentially non-descriptive yet somehow manages to be realist and symbolist at the same time. No mean feat. In Ring's art for example the road and the path are recurring themes. The road in *Winter Day* is no exception as it leads the eye into the painting and out again, and serves as a symbol of human existence.

What the artist seems to be saying... to me at least is that God or divine spirit can be found in the ordinary and everyday and the spaces in between, as here in the most unprepossessing of outlooks. This examination of the beauty in the mundane is something I am concerned about in my own work. Having read that Ring was an avowed atheist, perhaps my interpretation and feelings about this work are out of line with the artist's aims. However the picture works by provoking in the viewer through form and colour



meditative feelings that lead one to contemplate and examine ones inner life and views which in my case tend towards the pantheistic.

His use of symbols is not overtly religious and much less obvious than in the work of Friedrich certainly in this painting. Nevertheless inspired by psychological symbolism, he infuses his landscape with an otherworldly mystique and "strange mixtures of mood" which serve reinforce the tendency of the viewer to contemplate the world and our place in it. This feeling is reinforced by his use of a modern photographic cropped perspective, Ring shares something else with Friedrich in being under represented in this country. Indeed This is the first-ever painting by the Danish artist to enter a UK public collection.

Winter Day on a winter's day ...well, any day is a good day to visit a gallery in my view but perhaps as the nights draw in and the temperatures drop now might be the best time to escape the seasonal chill by stepping into the National Gallery to look anew at winter through the eyes of a fine painter.

Roy Clark



Carols, Cookies & Crafts Open House

You are cordially invited to Carols, Cookies and Crafts Open House on Thursday December 12 from 6-10pm. Along with Holiday cheer it is a housewarming celebration of Jan and Andrea's move to Hampstead and will be held in the new studio. Drop-in between 6pm and 10pm to visit and share some joy of the season. No gifts, please - but if you would like to bring homemade holiday cookies (biscuits) to share, I will add them to the table. There will be music, snacks and crafts for all ages. People will be dropping in and popping out as they like. The only ones staying the whole time - will be the hosts! To join us - send me an e-mail and I will give specific directions and a google map link: info@soundpractices.org. All the best.

Andrea Lowry and Jan Offner

Singing



where goes the song once sung
there is no frame or pedestal
print book or gallery
where do the voices land
once sprung on ephemeral air
but on the instant ear
art of a moment lost
fragile beauty remembered

Brian Ellis

Aging

time's door opened
easy under life's
inexperienced hand;
set squarely framed
hinges swung silent,
the keeper counting
each allotted pass.

now against my shoulder
the creak and scrape
of hinges worn
and weathered frame;
I'm nodded through,
no need to count
the passes left are few.

Brian Ellis



December 3-7, 7:30pm
£16 | £12 concession

153 Old Brompton Rd
London SW5 0LJ

thedraytonarmstheatre.co.uk

020 7835 2301

[@draytonarmsSW5](https://twitter.com/draytonarmsSW5)

[f Drayton Arms Theatre](https://www.facebook.com/DraytonArmsTheatre)

Inclusive Communion

8th December and 9th February, 12.30-1.00pm



Once a quarter we hold a small-group communion, after the main morning service, downstairs in the library. A team of volunteers take turns in leading the services so we experience a variety of approaches. All are welcome to participate. December's communion service will be led by Jane Blackall.



Climate Change Art: 'Arctic Dreamers' by Heidi Ferid

'Evidence of a Spiritual Life'

Reflection by Jeannene Powell

From the service on Sunday 6th October

I love Unitarianism. I love its inclusivity and the way it draws on wisdom from various sources, from world religions, to philosophy and science, to new age spirituality, popular culture and counter culture thinking. But with such a breadth of sources to delve into, Unitarianism is often thought of as a religion which is ungrounded and scratches the surface of things, without the core and substance to allow people to go more deeply.

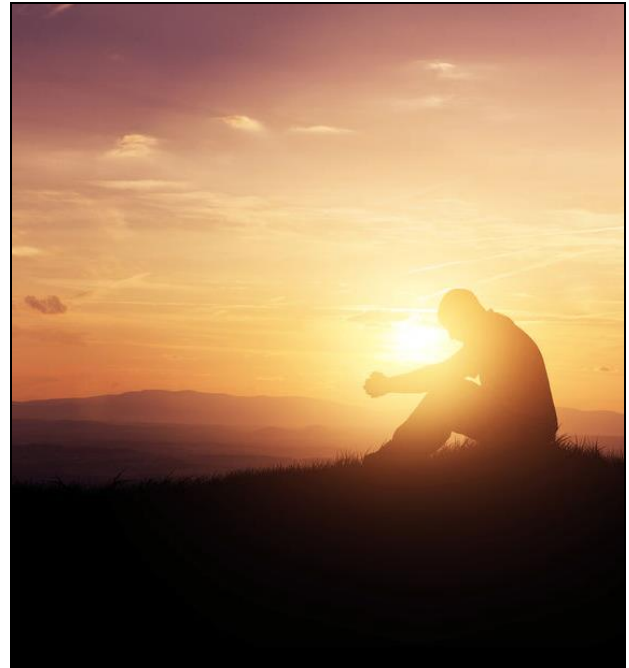
And with a growing tendency in western societies to indulge in what might be called, "Spiritual Shopping" – being able to buy the latest guru's top selling book one week, getting tickets to see the leading spiritual teacher the next week, choosing from the large catalogue of retreats spanning a multitude of faiths and disciplines, all without making a long-term or even any ongoing commitment – I can see why it's easy for people to think of Unitarianism in much the same way.

But Unitarianism is a religion with such a rich and long history – of over 600 years – and there is so much scope and opportunity for us to go deeper into our own commitment of what Unitarianism means for us as individuals and as a community.

For our chalice lighting today, the children's group said the prayer (along with the actions) with which they light their children's chalice each week: *"We are the church of the open mind. We are the church of the loving heart. We are the church of the helping hands."* A very simple and easy way to think of what Unitarianism stands for. Our openness of mind to exploring the wisdom from many beliefs, having questions - not always with distinct answers – and allowing our spiritual and religious journey's to unfold and change as we unfold and change. Our loving hearts, coming together in community with each other, striving to put love for humanity above cultural, sexual, gender, age, class, bodily ability, race, theist, atheist beliefs or any other differences we may have. And using our hands, our actions to help others, and work for equality and justice in our world.

The reading we heard earlier, which told of the seminary professor in Kansas being accused of being a Universalist and put on trial by the Southern Baptists, posed an intriguing question about how someone could show evidence that they are part of a religious institution. Robert Walsh writes, *"The Kansas City story proves that having the right beliefs is not enough."* and later writes the quote we've taken for the order of service, *"Beliefs, no matter how noble, must be embodied in a living institution or they will have no convicting power."*

Our actions – what we do, how we live day to day, because of our spiritual or religious lives – is an important factor in expressing and evidencing our faith. The Sufi story we heard at the beginning of the service, about the Teacher and student being run off the road by someone carelessly driving a carriage, and the Mystical Teacher's response being to bless the carriage driver, rather than curse, was one of the ways he evidenced his commitment to his spiritual tradition.



What about us? How can we go deeper, commit to and evidence our spirituality and religiosity within this living Unitarian tradition and institution? How do you?

There are so many possibilities and ways to commit more deeply to our own spiritual growth within this worldwide faith: even simply by reading books about Unitarianism, or borrowing books from our library downstairs. We can go to events held by the wider Unitarian movement, such as going to annual GA meetings, FUSE weekends, or Hucklow Summer School week. If you don't want to (or aren't able to) travel further afield, there are often other events here on other days or after Sunday services, such as the, "How to be a Unitarian" course, our "Heart and Soul" gatherings or our new "Green Spirit" group if those type of things take your fancy. And something I do sometimes, especially if I'm unable to attend a service in person, is listen to services from Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist congregations via their podcasts, YouTube channels or live stream online facilities. All inspiring, guiding and supporting us in embodying and living our spirituality, both within, and outside of these walls.

And of course, leading busy lives as many of us do, Sunday morning for some of us is all we have, and coming here as often as we're able to, is what we can do. It's how we commit. And that's valuable too, as everyone who attends, helps to create and enrich our community, and contributes to this living, growing and ever changing tradition.

So to end with, I'm going to ask you a similar question from our reading we heard, and invite you to ponder it over the next few days, even over this month of exploring "The Religious Life." *"If someone said that you were not affiliated or connected to Unitarianism in any way, how would you evidence otherwise?"* At some point as the answers bubble up for you, you may choose to share what you came up with. And in doing so, may spark ideas for others, helping them in their deeper commitment themselves.

We may not all be able to bless those who run us off the road, but I'm sure that there is something, that each of us here, has brought to the table of commitment, to our own spiritual lives, in a Unitarian way. Happy may you ponder. Amen.

West London GreenSpirit Group

Winter Solstice Gathering Saturday 21st December 12.30pm to 4.30pm



Here's the table from our Samhain gathering when we each brought something to speak about as we honoured our ancestors. With photographs and artwork, names and even a brazil nut shell (considerably larger than you might have imagined), a metal workhouse token, a jar of homemade jam and a bus from Ecuador – we clearly come from interesting and varied roots.

Everyone is invited to bring lunch to share and to join us for this winter solstice gathering as we spend time together in stillness, song, gentle movement, words and ritual to honour the sun as giver of life here on earth, trusting its warmth to return to us as the seasons turn. Depending on the weather we hope to get outside for twenty minutes to honour the sunset, at 3.53pm. So do bring warm outdoor clothes. Let Sarah our minister know you plan to come along so we can choose the best room to be in for the group size. This is one of the chants we'll be singing as a midwinter blessing to one and all. Happy Winter Solstice greetings to everyone.

*May the long time sun shine on you
All love surround you
And the clear light within you
Guide your way home.*

In the summer our fledging GreenSpirit group was formally welcomed and recognised by the GreenSpirit Council and we now have a page on the GreenSpirit website. We're planning a programme for our meetings in 2020, hoping to tie in with some key festivals in earth centred spirituality and to provide a variety of activities. These may include a trip to Oxford to admire the Burne Jones stained glass windows in the chapel of Harris Manchester College, which has a proud history of training candidates for Unitarian ministry as well as now being the top Oxford College offering courses for mature students. From there we'll visit the Rollright Stones in the Cotswold Hills, said to date back to 3000BC. We'll also have some evening speakers, rituals to honour particular festivals and times out of doors. Have you a favourite tree in Holland Park that you'd like to show us in the spring after church one day?

January Meeting, Here at Essex Church

Thursday 30th January 6.45 for a 7.00pm start to 8.30pm, a shared ritual of darkness and light to honour Imbolc and Candlemas.

Our next tasks are to create a GreenSpirit page on our Kensington Unitarians website and to plan more publicity, as our group is open to everyone who cares for our planet. GreenSpirit themselves publish a high quality magazine three times a year and a copy of that will be available in our church library. You can take out individual membership for £24 a year (with a £12 concessionary rate), details on the website, where you will also be able to subscribe to a free monthly e-newsletter, full of information and ideas on ways to live more harmoniously with all of creation. Here's one of GreenSpirit's aims: 'to embrace mystery, paradox, uncertainty and shadow, learn to think 'both/and' rather than 'either/or' and to repair the ravages of dualistic thinking, separation and fragmentation.' If this interests you, do come and join us at one of our meetings soon. You can contact us on eco@kensington-unitarians.org.uk or have a chat after church one Sunday.

David Carter and Sarah Tinker

What's On...

Thursday 2nd January, 6.45 for 7-8pm
'Heart & Soul' Spiritual Gathering
'The Lost Times' led by Sarah Tinker

Sunday 5th January, 11am-noon
**'Losing our Bearings
(and Finding Them Anew)'**
Led by Jeannene Powell

Wednesday 8th January, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Sunday 12th January, 11am-noon
'Souls Lost and Found'
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Wednesday 15th January, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Sunday 19th January, 11am-noon
'Coins, Sheep & Other Lost Items'
with Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 19th January, 12.30-1.15pm
'Finding Your Voice'
Singing Workshop with Margaret

Sunday 19th January, 2.00-3.00pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Sunday 19th January, 3.00-6.00pm
Happy Café @ Essex Church

Wednesday 22nd January, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Sunday 26th January, 11am-noon
'Finding Our Niche'
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

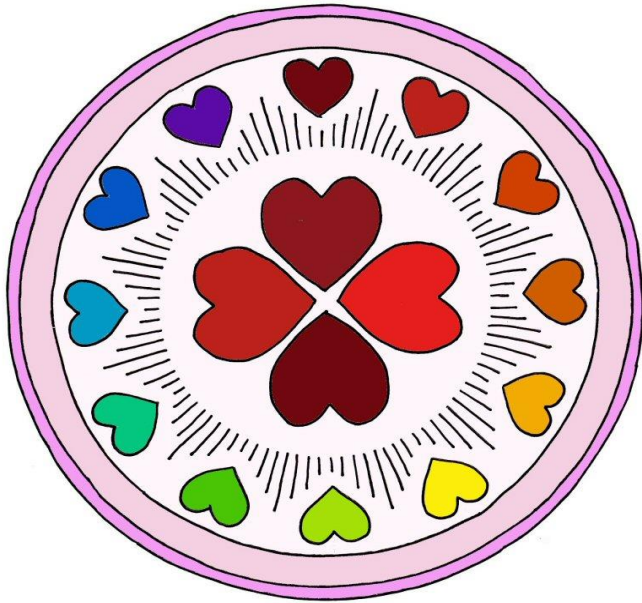
Sunday 26th January, 12.45-2pm
Sunday Conversation
'Lost and Found'

Wednesday 29th January, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Thursday 30th Jan, 6.45 for 7-8.30pm
West London GreenSpirit Group
Ritual for Imbolc and Candlemas

"God" is another name for "reality," for the reality that actually creates, fuels, sustains, and saves all life. The lives of saints witness to this God at both the macrocosmic and the microcosmic levels. At the macrocosmic level God is the Yes that the scientific story does not give us – God is not only the source of life but its direction toward flourishing. At the microcosmic level God is also the Yes that helps each of us get out of bed in the morning and keep going.'

Sallie McFague



'Heart and Soul' Midweek Spiritual Gatherings

Thursdays 5th December and 2nd January, 7-8pm
gathering at 6.45pm downstairs in the Essex Church library

Come and join us for our monthly alternative spiritual gathering, with music and silence, words and prayers, and a chance to explore the evening's topic in relation to your own life. In December, Jane Blackall will lead our gathering, on the theme of 'What We Need'. In January, Sarah Tinker will lead on the theme of 'The Lost Times'.

The contemplative hour will be followed by time for refreshments (home-made cake) and fellowship. All are welcome to join us. If you'd like to have a go at co-leading a Heart and Soul session, or doing a reading, please get in touch with Sarah to find out more: sarah@kensington-unitarians.org.uk.

Services at Essex Church

Sunday 1st December, 11am
'It Is Enough'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Join us for our first Sunday in Advent and consider what 'enough' means for you today.

Sunday 8th December, 11am
'Lonely Hearts'

Service led by Jane Blackall

Gerald Arbuckle describes loneliness as '*a feeling of isolation, of not belonging, emptiness, a feeling that no one cares, no one notices... a feeling of deprivation that painfully but hopefully turns outward for fulfilment.*' Most of us will have experienced such feelings at some point in our lives and, for some, loneliness may be a persistent aspect of our day-to-day existence. In this service we will reflect on loneliness and the yearning for meaningful connection.

Sunday 15th December, 11am
'Carol Service – Gifts Everlasting'
Service led by Sarah Tinker & Jeannene Powell

A great opportunity to invite your friends to join us in a traditional feast of carols and readings, with a shared lunch to follow.

Sunday 22nd December, 11am
'Winter Stores'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

A solstice celebration of nature's plenty.

Tuesday 24th December, 5pm
'Candlelit Christmas Eve'

Service led by Jane Blackall and Congregation

Join us after dark on Christmas Eve for a contemplative hour of readings and carols by candlelight (followed by mince pies!)

Sunday 29th December, 11am
'Having It All?'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

In a world full of potential and possibility how do we make choices? Followed by our 'Year Compass' workshop where we can look back over our past year and forward to the year ahead.

Sunday 5th January, 11am
**'Losing our Bearings
(and Finding Them Anew)'**

Service led by Jeannene Powell

There are times in life when we can feel a sense of having lost our direction, and New Year provides the perfect time to examine where we are in our lives and set new goals and intentions for the year ahead. So join us for this service as we say, "Goodbye" to the old year, then "Hello" to the new, and our hopes for the months in the year to come.

Sunday 12th January, 11am
'Souls Lost and Found'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

What does this mean for us Unitarians?

Sunday 19th January, 11am
'Coins, Sheep & Other Lost Items'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Exploring biblical and other stories about losing and finding in life.

Sunday 26th January, 11am
'Finding Our Niche'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Many of us yearn to belong somewhere in this world, but it's not always easy in a 21st century city. Followed by a Sunday conversation on our month's theme of 'Lost and Found'