



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: June 2012

What's On...

Sunday 3rd June, 11am-noon
'Hospitality'
Service led by Members
of the Congregation

Sunday 10th June, 11am-noon
'Jubilee'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 10th June, 12.30pm
Small-Group Communion
Led by Tristan Jovanović

Sunday 10th June, 2.00-3.00pm
Nia Technique
Holistic movement with Sonya

Saturday 16th June, 1.30-4.30pm
LDPA Quarterly Meeting in Lewes

Sunday 17th June, 11am-noon
'Flower Communion'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 17th June, 12.45-1.30pm
'Finding Our Voice'
Singing workshop with Margaret

Thursday 21st June, 6pm
Midsummer Walk
Meeting at Gospel Oak Station

Sunday 24th June, 11am-noon
**'Challenges to Civil
and Religious Liberty'**
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 24th June, 1pm
Outing to Maidstone – please
sign up in advance with Sarah

Tuesday 26th June, 7-9.00pm
Reading Group: 'Quiet: The Power
of Introverts...' by Susan Cain

Dates for your Diary:

Sunday 1st July, 12.45-2.30pm
'Shaping the Future' Workshop

Thursday 5th July, 7.00-9.00pm
'Living Faith' Course (1/4)

Sunday 22nd July, 12.30pm
Congregational Potluck Lunch

A Message from our Minister:

Noticing the Driver

Ministry brings interesting encounters with other human beings. Last month I needed to help someone who was struggling to catch a tube. We had to talk to the Transport for London staff who stand at the barriers at Notting Hill tube station. I've been no more than vaguely aware of them in all the years I've been using that tube station, but on that particular evening asking for their help was the only way to proceed. And there they were.

Two women in TfL uniforms, who instantly picked up on the problem and came up with a way forward. We sorted it out between us. And the next evening as I came through the ticket barrier, I caught their eye and said "hello and thank you". They remembered me. Now I remember them and look out for them whenever I'm in the station.

That first late night encounter set me off on a 'noticing' phase. Do you ever get those? It happens to me from time to time where I've been swanning along in life, quite oblivious to everything, when something pulls me up short and shouts "pay attention". Bodies can do that. A sore foot or an aching tooth are remarkably effective tools for paying attention. Children can do it too. Little children who see the world from their own perspective – nearer to the ground and attuned to a whole different rhythm of life. Teenagers are very good at pulling us up sharp if we dare to let them close to us. "Do you know what you look like in that?" or "why do you always say?" - keen observers of other people's foibles.

So now I'm in a 'paying attention on public transport' phase. I've moved on from the staff at the barrier or in the ticket office. I've started to notice the workers who quietly move around the platforms and trains with litter picking devices and a sack, picking up all the stuff that the rest of us leave behind. But my favourites for noticing at the moment are the drivers. This is a bit of a challenge. On the tube you really do have to pay attention if you want to spot the drivers because they zoom past at quite a pace. But they are there on every tube train, paying attention so that the rest of us can get to where we want to go safely. Looking out for the drivers has brought to my attention that most of the time I focus entirely on trying to be the first to get on in order to grab a seat. Drivers are there to be noticed on the buses too. Perhaps it's because we mostly pay with Oyster cards now, there is generally not much of an interaction to be had with a bus driver. I'd previously only noticed the ones who were nasty to people. But now I'm meeting their eye and saying thank you as I get on and it brings a whole new feel to the journey. I wonder what's helping you to pay attention this month?

Rev. Sarah Tinker



In this month's newsletter...

* 'How to be a Green Traveller' by Caroline Blair * News of 'Living Faith' RE Course * 'Unitarians, Come Out!' by Jane Blackall * 'Good Morning To You Too' by Ann Mamak * 'The History of Essex Hall' by Howard Hague * June's Good Cause: 'Send the Net' * Library Recommendation: 'Falling Upwards' by Richard Rohr * A Midsummer Walk * 'The Venerable Bede' – Sunday sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker * and much more...

Kensington Unitarians

At Essex Church (founded 1774), Notting Hill Gate

Kensington Unitarians meet to share experiences, to learn from each other, to explore our diverse faiths, to welcome spiritual seekers and offer companionship on life's journey.

The community meets for a service each Sunday at 11.00am. The format varies, and usually includes music, singing, meditation, an address, an opportunity to share joys and concerns, and a children's group. Our wide range of activities includes religious education courses and spirituality workshops, meeting for fellowship, engagement groups on a variety of themes, community arts projects, regular chanting and dance sessions, and opportunities for quiet meditation. All are welcome to come and join us.

Many other groups share our church building. If you are interested in hiring one of our rooms for your own organisation or event please contact our warden by telephone or email.



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

"To find your religion, it's not enough just to open one's mind and think deeply. Each of us must also open all of our senses and experience the world. Religion grows from the heart as much as the head, and it cries out to fuse body and mind.

Faith is an orientation of the whole personality, a total response. It's not just a belief – the holding of certain ideas – which is a function of the mind alone. Beliefs can be expressed in propositional form to which adjectives true and false may be attached. Faith, by contrast, is the opposite of nihilism and despair. It may or may not include beliefs, but it is much larger; it is the ability to experience the universe as meaningful. Having faith means that our lives hold together and make sense at a deeper level. Rather than seeming absurd.

Therefore your religion is something you not only think about but also sing, dance, eat, paint, and sculpt. To find your religion you must engage all of your senses. You should feel it as well as explain it, hear it as well as see it. Taste it as well as smell it."

UU Minister, Rev. Scotty McLennan

Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



Stewarding:

3 rd June:	Annie Fowler
10 th June:	Gina Bayley
17 th June:	Ruth Okine
24 th June:	Tristan Jovanović

Coffee:

3 rd June:	Natasha Drennan
10 th June:	David Talbot
17 th June:	Margaret Darling
24 th June:	Jo Ridgers

Greeting:

3 rd June:	Jo Ridgers
10 th June:	Gisela Boehnisch
17 th June:	Alice Lambert
24 th June:	Gina Bayley

In recent months, we have been circulating the rota list via email, and this seems to be working well.

Please contact Jane with your email address if you are willing to receive this email once a month.

rotas@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Outing to Maidstone

After the service on Sunday 24th June



Our minister, Rev Sarah Tinker, will be taking the service at Maidstone Unitarian Church at 6pm on Sunday 24th June. We thought that it might be nice to organise a group outing from our congregation – an afternoon out in Kent, a tour of the gorgeous and historic Maidstone Chapel, a picnic tea – and perhaps an opportunity to take part in the service.

Please sign up to let Sarah know you'd like to come by June 20th. We are also looking for someone who might be willing to drive if a second car is needed.

Midsummer Walk

Thursday 21st June, meeting 6pm



To mark the longest day we are going to have an evening walk. The plan is that we will take a gentle stroll around Hampstead Heath and possibly up Parliament Hill. We will meet at 6pm by Gospel Oak overground station. It may also be possible to offer lifts going from church if needed. Please speak to Jane (or email jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) if you would like to come along. All are welcome.

A four-part course at Essex Church this summer:

‘Living Faith’

Begins Thursday 5th July, 7.00-9.00pm



This summer we will be offering a new four-part course which will provide an opportunity to reflect on your own faith, how your spiritual and religious outlook is integrated into the rest of your life, and what it means to be part of a Unitarian faith community.

Over four Thursday evenings in July we will consider different dimensions of our faith and how it is expressed in our lives:

- theology and spirituality**
- community and relationship**
- action and service**
- practice and commitment**

We would encourage you to attend all four sessions to get the most out of the course and please sign up in advance by speaking to Jane or emailing jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

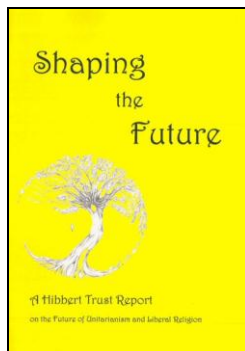


A workshop this summer at Essex Church:

‘Shaping the Future’

**Prospects for Unitarianism
and Liberal Religion**

Sunday 1st July, 12.45-2.30pm



On the first Sunday in July we will be having an afternoon workshop exploring issues raised by the ‘Shaping the Future’ report recently published by the Hibbert Trust (founded in 1847 under the will of Robert Hibbert, a Unitarian, to further public interest and private scholarship in liberal religion). This report was the result of a collaborative inquiry into the future of Unitarianism and Liberal Religion and it offers an overview of the challenges that our denomination is facing and suggestions as to what might be the best course for future development.

You will need to read the report (just 21 pages) or at least the executive summary (4 pages) before coming to the meeting. It is freely downloadable from the Hibbert Trust website or we can print a copy for you if needs be (please contact Jane).

**To download a copy of the report please visit:
www.thehibberttrust.org.uk/about.htm**

[Having been asked “Why use the word God at all?”]

“I believe that the word ‘God’, and the symbol of the supernatural power and infallible source of revelation that it represents, is the single most powerful force in this struggle between fundamentalism and pluralism, and I am simply unwilling to let the opposition have full access to a symbol of that kind.

If we cede to them the word God and basically say, ‘God is what you say God is, we simply think that’s wrong,’ we have ceded the battle as far as I’m concerned...

Faith is a commitment to live as if certain things are true, and thereby help to make them so. Faith is a commitment to live as if life is a wondrous mystery, as if life is good, as if love is divine, as if we are responsible for the well-being of those around us. Faith is a leap of the moral imagination that connects the world as it is to the world as it might become...

Religion is the way of living necessary to sustain faith. It includes stories, symbols, songs, rituals, and spiritual practices.”

UU Minister, Rev. Galen Guengenrich

How to be a Green Traveller

Ideas from several websites for the holiday season...



1. Re. flying. Yes, the carbon footprint of flying is very high compared with land travel. But a lot of countries depend very heavily on tourism to lift them out of poverty. Few of us are about to sail to Mauritius for a holiday, for example, but their economy would be in trouble if the tourists stopped coming. So the advice here is, consider land travel if it is a realistic alternative to flying.

2. Conserve resources. Water is a huge issue in some countries. A luxury hotel in a very dry place might (as happens in Goa) be depleting local farms of water by providing such amenities as power showers. Be prepared to live more like the local people do – their way of life will have been designed round their environment instead of trying to impose alien ways onto it.

3. Keep your impact on the environment to a minimum. Be aware of any plants or animals that are endangered or uncommon and don't collect or buy product relating to these. If the local water is safe to drink, take a reusable water bottle rather than constantly buying plastic bottles. Treat any river or stream as someone's water source and keep it clean.

4. Use local providers. Shop at shops owned by local people, eat at their cafes, stay in their inns, use local tour guides etc. Avoid services where it is clear that local people are only employed in menial roles.

5. Don't teach children to beg. In some countries the habit is already ingrained, but if it isn't, don't go round scattering coins, sweets and gifts among local children (or adults).

6. Beware of false 'ecotourism'. A lot of companies will use terms like 'ecotourism', 'green tourism', 'adventure tourism' to describe things that are actually quite destructive. If a company is offering luxurious accommodation on previously unexploited land, it is unlikely to be very green at all. True green travel in areas without a traditional tourist infrastructure is likely to mean accepting existing standards of living, not expecting something you might get in a luxury hotel.

7. Be prepared to share whatever you have learned when you get home, and to reflect on whether there is anything you could do to repay the country for the hospitality they have shown you.

Caroline Blair

Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT)

Arms Trade Day of Prayer

Sunday 3rd June 2012



10 year-old Mona Al-Samouni in the wreckage of her home. She survived a bombing in Gaza in January 2009. Thirty members of her family including her parents were killed. She is just one of the millions of children worldwide affected by armed conflict. Photo: Rafahkid / FlickrR

Monday 4th June is the International day for Children as Victims of War, and ahead of this, on Sunday 3rd June, is a day the Christian Network of CAAT have called the fifteenth annual 'Arms Trade Day of Prayer'. They say:

"As Christians we are called to welcome children. Yet children are refugees, victims of war and want, child soldiers, victims of conflict and injustice, injured and killed by small arms and gun violence. This is not OK.

CAAT condemns the UK ministers who aim to arm more despotic regimes this year, sending sales delegations to countries who use violent repression like Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan and Nigeria. The UK promotes and sells weapons to countries with very poor human rights records, including Columbia, India, the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam.

Our task as Christian peacemakers is to expose this rotten underbelly responsible each and every day for visiting yet more death and destruction upon the world – especially upon the children."

For more info: www.caat.org.uk/getinvolved/christian

July Newsletter Deadline



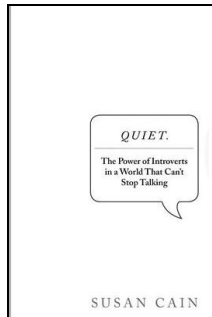
The deadline for the next issue is **Sunday 17th June**. Please send your contributions (articles, poems, news, etc...) to Jane Blackall or a committee member by then.

Email: jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Essex Church Reading Group

'Quiet'

The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking by Susan Cain



Tuesday 26th June 2012, 7.00-9.00pm

The reading group's June session will be based on 'Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking' by Susan Cain. This title was suggested by Caroline Blair and will be the 93rd title discussed by the reading group. From the description on Amazon UK:

"Our lives are driven by a fact that most of us can't name and don't understand. It defines who our friends and lovers are, which careers we choose, and whether we blush when we're embarrassed. That fact is whether we're an introvert or an extrovert. The introvert/extrovert divide is the most fundamental dimension of personality. And at least a third of us are on the introverted side. Some of the world's most talented people are introverts. Without them we wouldn't have the Apple computer, the theory of relativity and Van Gogh's sunflowers. Yet extroverts have taken over. Shyness, sensitivity and seriousness are often seen as being negative. Introverts feel reproached for being the way they are. Susan Cain shows how the brain chemistry of introverts and extroverts differs, and how society misunderstands and undervalues introverts. She gives introverts the tools to better understand themselves and take full advantage of their strengths. Passionately argued, superbly researched, and filled with real stories, Quiet will permanently change how we see introverts - and how you see yourself."

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

Foundations of Our Liberal Faith



This three session course is still progressing but here's some information so far. We are regularly reviewing the courses we offer here at Essex Church and the way we advertise them. Some of our courses might attract the general public and be another way of helping people to find out about us and what we offer the world. But the history of liberal theology? Perhaps not so much of a crowd puller. So we advertised the course within the London District of Unitarian congregations and it's good to have people attending from our Watford, Richmond and Rosslyn Hill congregations along with Kensington Unitarians.

Each session has focused on a different century. Did you know that the last person to be executed for blasphemy in Britain was Thomas Aikenhead, a university student, who was hanged in Edinburgh in 1697? He refuted the doctrine of the Trinity. Between 1689 and 1710, it is estimated that over 1,000 dissenters' chapels were built. None were specifically Unitarian as this term was not in common usage at the time. It was not until the Trinity Act of 1813 that holding Anti-Trinitarian beliefs was made legal. More in next month's newsletter!

Rev. Sarah Tinker

An event in Commemoration of the

350th Anniversary of the Great Ejectment

Saturday 9th June, 10.30-4.30pm

Dr. Williams's Library, 14 Gordon Square, WC1H 0AR

The great Ejectment of 1662 was a formative event in the history of English and Welsh Dissent, and its influence extends through the centuries to the Free Churches of today.

This event is devoted to a reappraisal of the Ejectment and a consideration of its ecumenical significance. Four lectures will be given by distinguished scholars: Prof. J. Gwynfor Jones, Dr. David Appleby, Dr. Eryn M. White, and Rev. Prof. Alan P.F. Sell. These will be summaries of their substantial chapters that will be published in a book ('The Great Ejectment of 1662') to be launched on the same day.

There will be no charge for the day, and lunch and tea will be provided, but places are limited and will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis. If you wish to attend please write to the director of the library: conference@DWLib.co.uk

Good Cause Collection of the Month for June:

'Send the Net' Faiths uniting to end Malaria



*"If you think you are too small to make a difference,
try sleeping in a room with a mosquito"* – African Proverb

The irritating hum of a mosquito is more than just an annoyance. Because malaria spreads through mosquitoes, one small, itchy bite could be a death sentence. It is one of the largest killers of people in sub-Saharan Africa and also a major killer of people in South Asia and Latin America. There are over 300 million cases per year, 1 million of which are fatal. The biggest victims of malaria are children under the age of five, with one child dying every 60 seconds.

We can change this. 'Faiths Act' is a multi-faith global movement which inspires and mobilises people of faith to take action towards the UN Millennium Development Goals. In particular, it focuses on eliminating deaths from malaria. During World Malaria Day 2011, 19,000 Faiths Act supporters in over 40 countries organised World Malaria Day events. As well as the tens of thousands of pounds raised by these events, a life saving anti-malaria bed net was sent to families in Tanzania and Ghana for every 10 people involved.

Between April 25th – June 15th, congregations and communities across the UK will concentrate their time and efforts to raise funds to each send at least 12 bed nets – at £10 each – for distribution by Send The Net 2012 partner: Health Poverty Action. Health Poverty Action is a terrific global health NGO running vital and successful anti malaria programmes across malaria stricken countries such as Namibia, Somaliland and the Burma/China border. This is one of those rare cases where the solution to a huge and deadly problem isn't complicated or costly. Your pledge to raise just £120 is enough to save the lives of 12 families. All it takes is your support to make it happen.

Our fourth Sunday collection on 24th June will be for this charity.

For more information see: www.sendthenet.com

Cats and Dogs



Poor dogs.
On leashes.
Nowhere to go
But where their master decides.
Sadly circumscribed.

So give me a cat.
They'll none of that.

Ann Mamak

Ann also sent in the following quotations:

"Cats seem to go on the principle that it never does any harm to ask for what you want".

**Joseph Wood Krutheh,
'The Twelve Seasons' 1949**

And not to be outdone by the 'Zen Birding' article (from Anders) in last month's issue...

"The reason domestic pets are so lovable and so helpful to us is because they enjoy, quietly and placidly, the present moment."

Arthur Schopenhauer

(...if that's not a Zen cat, I don't know what is! – Ann)



"Only you know what you need to relinquish in your own life. We all need to work on our tendencies to be greedy, acquisitive, angry, jealous, manipulative, or overly dependent. Every little renunciation of every self-defeating habit or thought process makes the next one easier. We begin to feel lighter. We begin to feel energized. We begin to see more clearly. We begin to find what we are looking for. We actually feel different, and it's extremely satisfying."

Lama Surya Das

The Forgiveness Project

9th-16th September here at Essex Church



Look out next month for a leaflet detailing the week in September when we will be hosting the Forgiveness Project or 'The F Word' as it is now known. It will run from 9th to 16th September and as well as opening the exhibition to the public there will be lots of other linked activities, many co-organised by the groups that use our building: story telling for Rosh Hashanah, a ritual from the Dagara tradition, a Sufi concert, to mention but a few.

It would be lovely to have as many congregation members involved as possible, not least because we want to have the church open all week. So do put these dates in your diary and let us know how you would like to be involved.

Jenny and Sarah

'The Line Dividing Good and Evil'

Forgiveness Project Annual Lecture
Tuesday 3rd July at 6.45pm
Royal Geographical Society, SW7 2AR



The Forgiveness Project annual lecture this year is on 3rd July at 6.45pm at the Royal Geographical Society. The title of the lecture is 'The Line Dividing Good and Evil' and it will be given by Dr Gwen Adshead, Forensic Psychotherapist, of Broadmoor Hospital. Joining a panel discussion after the lecture and sharing some of their story will be Marian Partington, Erwin James and Kemal Pervanic.

Tickets, priced at £10 each (plus booking fee) can be purchased online (see www.theforgivenessproject.com) or send a cheque made payable to 'The Forgiveness Project, together with a SAE, including telephone number to: 42a Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 0RE.

Unitarians, Come Out!

At the recent Essex Church AGM there was some discussion about various ways in which we could make the church more widely known and attract more people to our services and events. We spoke about putting more notices up inside the church to draw the attention of the many people who already pass through, or leaflet dispensers out on the street, and trying to get more people involved in presenting a lively presence online via Facebook. These are promising ideas and I hope we will follow up on them all.

At the same time it was noted that the best way for churches to attract new people is through word of mouth. For some of us, this is a bit of a tricky issue, so I wanted to write about it.

Many of us feel awkward, to say the least, discussing our church attendance with non-religious friends. I find that many people who would otherwise be my 'natural allies' in social and political circles are very hostile towards religion and they can make harsh generalisations and assumptions. Often it feels easier to keep my head down and say nothing.

However... I would like to encourage every person reading this to consider ways in which they could 'come out' as a Unitarian to their friends and acquaintances! Not, of course, by cornering them and saying "Let me tell you all about Unitarianism..." (although it'd be good to have something up your sleeve to say in case they turn out to be curious and ask what it's all about) but just by mentioning you are going to a Unitarian event (rather than just saying 'church'), or maybe talking about something interesting that you heard in a service, sharing a link to a notable sermon or newsletter on Facebook, or taking a spare copy of the newsletter to pass on to them. I think it is better to *show* people what we are like than to *tell* them, and by allowing them to read or listen to us first, it is a quite unthreatening way of endorsing what we do and then letting people check us out in their own time. Or, if you feel like it, why not invite a friend to come along one Sunday, perhaps before going on somewhere else?

This is not about 'converting' people in the sense of telling that they're doing something wrong and we're doing it right. Think about it: there are many people out there who don't have any sort of regular spiritual practice or faith community and who might appreciate what we have to offer here just as much as we do. I reckon you would be doing those people a favour to let them know what this Unitarian business is all about so that they can come along to a service or group and see if it suits them too. Being part of this community has changed my life entirely (for the better!) and it could be just as transformative for other people if only they knew about it.

We use these words, by Michael A. Schuler, to close our AGM each year, and I hope we can all take them to heart:

If you are proud of this church, become its advocate.

If you are concerned for its future, share its message.

*If its values resonate deep within you,
give it a measure of your devotion.*

*This church cannot survive without your faith,
your confidence, your enthusiasm.*

Its destiny, the larger hope, rests in your hands.

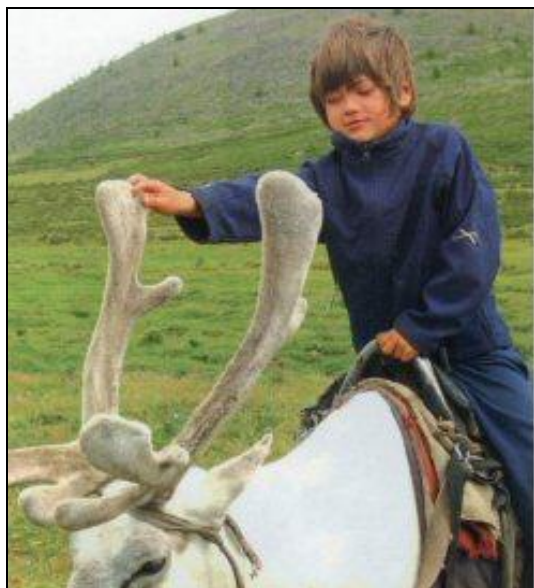
Jane Blackall

Presented by The Guild of Pastoral Psychology

'The Horse Boy'

A film by and presented by Rupert Isaacson

Thursday 7th June, 7.30pm Here at Essex Church



Rupert will present his film 'The Horse Boy', the story of his family's pilgrimage to Mongolia in search of Shamanic healing for their autistic son. Rupert has travelled extensively in Africa, Asia and North America and is the founder of The Land Rights Fund, a non-profit organisation that fights to restore tribal land to the indigenous peoples of Botswana. This was the subject of his first book 'The Healing Land', a Kalahari Journey. His second book, 'The Horse Boy', helps fund The Horse Boy Foundation set up to help families with autistic children.

Visitor Entry £15, Concessions £9 (to include a glass of wine)

The Guild offers a meeting place for those who wish to explore the religious and spiritual quest, enhanced by the insights of Depth Psychology, especially the works of C G Jung.

For more info see: www.guildofpastoralpsychology.org.uk



"There is a special place for sermons in the midst of life's babble that is not filled by other forms of communication, a place for the unique discourse which is both thoughtful and emotional, practiced within the context of worship, [relating] preacher and people to shared religious traditions, faiths, and meanings,

that all might enlarge their understanding, experience broader sympathies, awaken slumbering hopes, explore new cosmic expanses, change their lives, and be moved to redemptive action."

UU Minister, Rev. Jack Mendelsohn



A Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement Forms led by Sonya Leite

**Second Sunday of the Month from
2-3pm: 10th June, 8th July, 12th August**

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 £8 (£5 to members of church congregation).

Contact: Sonya Leite on 0207 371 1674.

Small Group Communion



**Sunday 10th June at 12.30pm
Downstairs 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 and we have been very encouraged by the experience so far. We hope that a team of volunteers will continue to take turns in leading the communion services so that we can experience different approaches. The line-up for the next few months is as follows:

10th June – Led by Tristan Jovanović

8th July – Led by John Hands

12th August – Led by Sue Smith

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

A Brief History of Essex Hall – our National Headquarters

The Rev Theophilus Lindsey, being unable to reconcile his theological doubts within the established church, resigned his post as vicar of Catterick (North Yorkshire) in 1773. He moved to London and decided to form a congregation of like-minded individuals. Eventually he found a room in Essex Street, near The Strand, which could serve as a meeting room. The first service was held on 17 April 1774, with some 200 people present including Joseph Priestley and Benjamin Franklin (and, it is said, government agents to keep an eye on things). It was the first avowedly Unitarian place of worship in the country. Essex Street had been

developed in the 17th century on the site of the former town house of the Earls of Essex. The arch over the water gate, which would have lead from the gardens down to the Thames, can be seen at the bottom of Essex Street. The congregation was successful, the premises (a former auction-room) were bought and the Essex Street Chapel opened in 1778. The only known illustration of Lindsey's chapel is the engraving of the interior reproduced in Mortimer Rowe's fascinating *The Story of Essex Hall* (Lindsey Press, 1959), which shows the centenary service in 1874.



ESSEX HALL FROM STRAND, AUGUST 1944: FOREGROUND CLEARED

Worship continued on this site in Essex Street until the 1880s. Because of a declining resident population in the area, the congregation decided to move westwards to join a group which was already meeting in a temporary 'Iron Church' erected at Kensington Gravel Pits, later The Mall, in what is now Notting Hill Gate. Meanwhile two Unitarian organisations, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association (founded 1825) and the Sunday School Association were looking for new premises in central London. After complicated financial negotiations, it was decided that the Essex Street building would be taken over by these two organisations and a new 'Essex Chapel' would be built in Kensington, the name to indicate continuity with Lindsey's original congregation. Essex Church ('Kensington Unitarians') still occupies the same site in Notting Hill Gate, though the Victorian neo-gothic church was replaced by a modern building which opened in 1977.

In 1928 the General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches had been formed from the amalgamation of the British & Foreign Unitarian Association and the National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian and other Non-Subscribing or Kindred Congregations, with headquarters remaining in Essex Street.

Essex Hall survived the London Blitz of 1940/41 (when a number of London Unitarian churches were destroyed), but was hit by a flying bomb late at night on 28 July 1944. The building was largely destroyed (see the photos in Mortimer Rowe's book), but fortunately there was no one in the Hall at the time. For the next few years the General Assembly carried on its work based at Dr Williams's Library in Gordon Square [the home of one of the largest collections of non-conformist and dissenting material in the country]. Eventually Essex Hall was rebuilt and the new premises were opened on 25 October 1958. Unitarian Headquarters currently occupies part of three floors of the building, with the other floors and rooms rented out to provide income.

Howard Hague



Unitarian London and South East District Event **LDPA Summer Quarterly** Saturday 16th June, 1.30-4.00pm, Westgate Chapel Lewes

The LDPA District has accepted the kind invitation of Westgate Chapel in Lewes to hold the Summer Quarterly in their beautiful meeting house on the High Street. The Chapel has historic associations with Thomas Paine, who lived next door for a while and attended the chapel and who was one of the leading authors of American independence.



The service will be led by Rev. Andie Camper, Minister Associated with the Lewes congregation, and will feature the fine organ being played without an organist! The offertory will be for Simple Gifts, the new District Social Action Project based at Mansford St Mission, Bethnal Green. A brief Extraordinary General Meeting will be held to ratify the new constitution as passed and approved at the AGM in March and as required by the existing constitution, and then there will structured conversation with fellow Unitarians from throughout the district. Congregations are asked to appoint their voting delegates according to their own democratic process. The host congregation will provide afternoon tea, and then for those who wish there will be the opportunity to visit Lewes Castle, a very short walk from the chapel. Entrance is £6.60 for adults, £5.90 concessions, £3.30 children. Please note that parking is challenging in Lewes. Best is to go up the High St beyond the chapel to a car park on the left down a lane by a church. Trains depart from London Victoria, and the chapel is a half mile walk from Lewes station.

N.B. If any members of the Essex Church congregation would like to attend the committee is happy to cover travel costs.

World Pride

Saturday 7th July from noon onwards



Organised by InterPride, WorldPride promotes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues on an international level through parades, festivals and other cultural activities... and it is coming to London this July!

Shiobhan Joseph (of New Unity Unitarians) has taken the lead in organising a Unitarian group to take part in the parade! The Parade begins at 1pm at assemblies in Baker Street. The route is approximately 2 miles long. If you would like to join in or show your support but are unable to walk in the parade, please get in touch with Shiobhan anyway (shiobhanr@hotmail.com) as there will also be a Unitarian Stall in Trafalgar Square which needs volunteers! This is a great opportunity to show our support for full equality and also get ourselves a bit better known. See Shiobhan's Facebook page: <http://on.fb.me/UniWP12>

One Light Spiritual Gatherings 'Community'



Friday 8th June 2012
6.30-8.15pm – Here at Essex Church

The gatherings are led by graduates of the Interfaith Seminary. All are welcome.

Come gather in healing and loving connection to Spirit. Come and help us to create a sacred space, bringing in the One Light, One Love for which we all long – with music, meditation, and eternal inspiration from all faiths and none. Bring your beloved eternal self, family, children and friends. All are welcome.

These events are free.
Donations for expenses are welcome.
Any surplus will go to Childline

For further information contact service hosts:

Rev. Pamela Ramsden - 07966 478 980
Rev. Kathryn Reynolds - 07976 739 286

'In loving connection with Essex Unitarian Church'



international association for

religious freedom

belief with integrity

The International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), the world's first international inter-religious organization, is now a UK-based charity working for freedom of religion and belief at a global level.

We have a century-plus history of encouraging tolerance and interfaith encounter through dialogue and social justice projects. Since our 1900 founding by Unitarians, various faith traditions have been represented in our member groups, Chapters and young adult network, including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Shinto, Sikh and Zoroastrian.

The IARF's British Chapter held their AGM and special meeting to mark the 350th anniversary of the Great Ejection of 1662 in Croydon Unitarian Church in May. Gordon Deaville and I were there to represent our congregation and to hear the speakers Rev Andrew Hill, Sheikh Muhammad Amin-Evans and Peter Sampson. Andrew Hill retired a few years ago as minister of our Edinburgh congregation after a long and happy ministry. He is well known for his contributions to worship through music and prayer. Here is the prayer he brought to the IARF worship.

'So let us pray:

As we commemorate persons who in the seventeenth century chose loyalty to conscience rather than conformity to narrow law let us hold in our minds:

- those who in times since have also preferred and prefer loyalty to conscience rather than conformity to narrow law;
- those who when choosing partners have preferred and prefer personal choice to societal convention;
- those who during violent suppression have preferred and prefer non-violent response to conventional violence;
- those who have spoken and speak bravely for minority views amidst a popular majority;
- those who have enjoyed and enjoy variance in choice and style when faced with social convention and tradition.

May the still, small voice of conscience and of choice rest in our minds and may it stir us to voice and to action when occasions arise.

Amen.'

Report by Rev. Sarah Tinker



“Good Morning to You Too”

Any time from 4.30am a relentless banshee-wail- after -banshee-wail- after -banshee-wail is shrieked through the early morning quiet and calm of the Mamak household. T.C. is up so why aren't we? “I need fuss – bathroom tap water – biscuit-from-

a-hand – my space on the bed” is how we've learned to interpret those truly dreadful and very loud screeches. Then I make him a comfy nest on the soft Indian quilt complete with wall to lean against – no I know he shouldn't sleep on the bed, but what a cat wants, a cat gets: if he doesn't feel up to jumping on the bed, a weak pathetic little meow will just make it out of his mouth, and there I am, scarcely awake, but so well-trained to obedience, lifting him onto the bed. If, that is, Billo has jumped to it and vacated his, or rather T.C.'s, side. Poor old Billo, who started off totally indifferent to him, now leaps obediently out of bed to let him on because what a cat wants... Our day has begun.

He further asserts his power by lying just far enough away from me so that I have to stretch to stroke him. No, I have no choice in the matter for he inclines his head and eyes in my direction, not looking at me, but clearly demanding “stroke me” and who am I but a willing and adoring slave, grateful for being given a chance to serve yet again. The scenario moves on as he falls asleep after arranging himself to his desired pose, invariably accessorised by Billo's bitter complaints: “Little devil, wake him up, wake him up. He wakes us up then goes back to sleep himself.”

Next, after getting ready, Billo fetches us our breakfast cereal. “Us” being me, himself, and – you got it – T.C. Yes, he has his tiny bowl, no spoon of course, a little cereal with a little skimmed milk. He raises his head as Billo comes into the room, scans the tray expectantly and if feeling so inclined he'll get up and we put the bowl on the bed next to him on a magazine... but if he declines such effort I hold the dish on my hand and offer it to him and hold it until he's had his fill. After which he disdainfully turns his head away and goes to sleep again. Then I eat my own.

This takes us to the ritual of the pills. As three oldies we are kept going by pills. The eighth age of man and cat. I put out five each for Billo and myself and two for T.C, plus five treat biscuits to take away the nasty taste from his mouth. I have a gadget to cut the big pill in half and squeeze his mouth open and, one-by-one, drop the three bits into his throat. He hates it so I have to be ready and quick with the tid-bits. Then he goes to sleep again. I never know if I am forgiven.

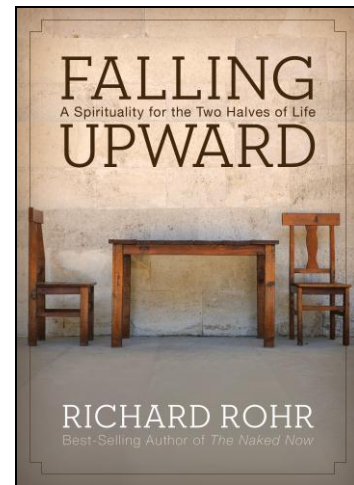
And, at last, our day begins to happen. One of the first jobs I do is write my shopping list. It often starts with ‘Tins tuna T.C. W not M&S’. You see, he doesn't like M&S tuna. Only John West from Waitrose will do. Often it's the only thing I need from there so I have to make a special journey... which I do. With pleasure!

Ann Mamak

A Recommendation from our Church Library

‘Falling Upward’

A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life
by Richard Rohr



I would like to heartily recommend this recent book by Franciscan priest Richard Rohr, director of the Centre for Action and Contemplation, and author of numerous books on spiritual matters.

In this book he reflects on the shape of our lives – how in our youth we are focused on establishing an identity, achieving, and being ‘successful’ on society's terms – and how most institutions we are involved with are geared up to reinforce these priorities. However, Rohr suggests that the difficulties, failings, and loss of control that many experience as life unfolds are the foundation for our spiritual growth and transformation. He states:

“Most of us tend to think of the second half of life as largely about getting old, dealing with health issues and letting go of our physical life, but the whole thesis of this book is exactly the opposite. What looks like falling can largely be experienced as falling upward and onward into a broader and deeper world, where the soul has found its fullness, is finally connected to the whole, and lives inside the Big Picture.”

There is such a lot of good stuff in ‘Falling Upward’ that it is hard to give a sense of it in this brief review. I have listened to the audiobook version several times now and always hear something new in it each time. Why not borrow the hardback copy from our church library and see what you think?

Jane Blackall

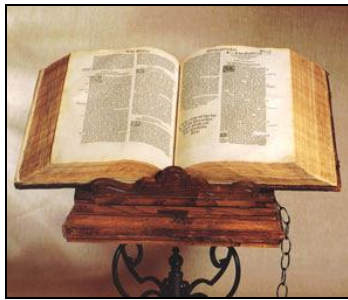
Call for Articles: *As mentioned at the recent AGM I would very much like this to be the start of a series of short articles reviewing and recommending titles from our church library... any offers? In case you are not aware of its existence – the library collection is kept downstairs in the church and anybody is welcome to borrow from it – all you have to do is sign the book out and leave contact details in the special record book provided.*

“Our purpose in life is spiritual transformation, and every encounter with a stranger is an opportunity to draw closer to that purpose. Every human being is a universe, and, like all universes, every person is still in the process of creation. When we come into someone's life, we enter an alternate world, and by entering it we change it... When you cross paths with a stranger, a dimension comes into being, one in which both of you reside. Every interaction with a new person is an opportunity to transform both your life and theirs. This is an immense opportunity, if only we choose to recognize and take advantage of it.”

Rav P. S. Berg

New study class in London District for 2012:

‘Fresh Approaches to the Bible’



**Continuing Monday 18th June, 7.30pm
Golders Green Unitarians,
31 ½ Hoop Lane, London, NW11 8BS**

A monthly Bible-reading group started up in the London District in February. Organised by the London District Liberal Christian group, and led by its co-convenor Jim Corrigan, meetings are held at Golders Green Unitarians.

The plan is to start with Luke's Gospel, reading it chapter by chapter, with space for reflective discussion. No specific Biblical knowledge is required, just a willingness to engage with the texts. All are welcome. Classes are to be held on the third Monday of each month. Jane and David from Kensington have been to most of the sessions so far and if you are thinking about giving it a try and want to find out more you could ask them about it.

The nearest underground station is Golders Green (Northern Line, Edgware branch), the church is 6 minutes walk away. Walk from the station northwards up Finchley Road, take the first turning to your left into Hoop Lane, and you will find the church about 60 metres along on the right.

If you require further information,
please contact Jim Corrigan on 020 8361 1843
or via email at: jim@corrigan.myzen.co.uk

June Multifaith Calendar

✠ 3rd June – Trinity Sunday – Christian

Trinity Sunday is celebrated a week after Pentecost. Christians reflect on the doctrine that the Trinity is the three parts of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (In the Orthodox Church All Saints is celebrated.)

✠ 4th June – Wesak / Vesakha Puja / Buddha Day – Buddhist

Buddhists celebrate Wesak, or Vaisakha Puja, or Buddha Day, according to their tradition. This is the biggest of the Buddhist festivals, with lay people coming together at monasteries. Houses are decorated with lanterns and garlands, and temples are ringed with oil lamps. Theravadin Buddhists celebrate the life of Gotama Buddha on Wesak: his birth, enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree in Bodhi Gaya, and his final passing away.

✠ 4th June – Saga Dawa – Buddhist

This Tibetan and Nepalese festival, on the full moon day of May, celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha. The festival is a day of strict Buddhist observance, with fasting. It is also a festival of lights, as lamps are lit everywhere. When Saga Dawa is celebrated in the UK the emphasis is on the joy associated with the Buddha's birth and enlightenment.

✠ 7th June – Corpus Christi (Roman Catholic) / Day of Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion (Anglican)

The festival of Corpus Christi in the Roman Catholic Church, or the Day of Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion in the Anglican Church, occurs 60 days after Easter and celebrates the Eucharist. In the ancient world it was customary to scatter flowers in the path of important people as a sign of respect and reverence. This custom was adopted by the Church to honour the Blessed Sacrament, carried in procession on the festival of Corpus Christi.

☪ 16th June – Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji (1606) – Sikh

This festival commemorates the fifth Guru who made the first compilation of the Sikh Scriptures, the Adi Granth, and supervised the completion of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Guru Arjan Dev Ji was executed on the orders of the Moghul Emperor for refusing to pay a fine arising from a charge of treason. Sikhs hold a gurburb on this day, including an akhand path, a non-stop cover to cover reading of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

☪ 17th June – The Prophet's Night Journey and Ascension (Laylat-ul-'Isra wal Mi'raj) – Muslim

In the tenth year of his prophethood, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) journeyed from Makkah to Jerusalem and through the heavens to the presence of God, all in one night. The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem marks the rock from which Muhammad (pbuh) ascended. On the journey the Prophet received the command to pray five times a day.

☪ 21st June – Ratha Yatra - 'Chariot journey' – Hindu

This festival is most notably celebrated at Puri in Orissa, India, where thousands of people push huge wagons (rathas) with images of Krishna, known as 'Jagannath' (Lord of the Universe), from which the term 'juggernaut' comes in English. Ratha Yatra is celebrated by Hindus in Britain with processions through some cities.

Warden's Column



I've been having a bit of a tidy up in the office this week – and it inspired me to do an overhaul of the cupboard in the lobby too. This is the one facing you as you come in – with copies of the newsletter etc. on top. The inside tends to get a bit messy, so recently we've been covering it with a pretty cloth – but it's potentially a very useful space, so we're going to have another go at keeping it tidy and getting some value from it.

The main thing that lives there is the lost property box, which now has a new printed sign on the front to make it look smarter (we may even upgrade to a translucent plastic box eventually :-)) I've also created a separate box just for lost umbrellas – we have large numbers of these (unsurprisingly) most of which have been here for a long time and are ready to be rehomed. So if you could use a new umbrella, please take a look.

The trays to the side are a useful place to store the various signs different groups put up when they're in the building and to put post that arrives for user groups. I've also created a Unitarian tray, mainly to store the visitors' book during the week. On Sundays this can be put out on top of the cupboard – but it shouldn't be on public display the rest of the time for data protection reasons.

The lobby area has changed a lot since I came to the Church and hopefully is now much more light and welcoming. Leaflets used to be displayed on the long solid table from the Hall, which lived just inside the door alongside the stair-rail – the new translucent racks and are much less obtrusive. Jane's plan to declutter the Church noticeboards by just having 4 A4 notices on each is working fairly well (though my user group board lets the side down rather!) and it's good to have new ceiling and lighting (especially now it's led bulbs :-)) I guess the next step would probably be to replace the furniture (much as I'm fond of the wicker set). I think we've held back on this because it's awkward to know how to manage the curved recess – but maybe inspiration will strike soon! There's also been talk about finding somewhere to display the wooden angel wings from the old church building.

Of course what goes on in the building is what really matters – but there's no harm making a good first impression!

Jenny Moy

The Gnostic Way

following the call of Jesus to 'know yourself'
an experiential day with Martin Nathanael

Saturday 30th June 2012, 10am–5pm
Held here at Essex Church

The Gnostic Christians followed the teachings of Jesus, performed the same rites of initiation, and used many of the same sacred writings as those who are now seen as orthodox. Once Christianity became the state religion of Rome, diversity was discouraged, and this eventually led to severe persecution, along with the destruction of "non-canonical" writings. Eventually, the profound Gnostic stream of Christianity disappeared – or did it?

Martin will show how the experiential approach of the ancient Gnostic Christians was kept alive over the centuries, how the same ideas and practices kept re-emerging and would not go away . . . because they answered a deep spiritual need that was not otherwise being addressed. This is a Christianity which is not afraid of diversity, acknowledges both masculine and feminine expressions of the transcendent Godhead, is equally open to men and women, encourages enquiry and points to the way of realising the divine nature or Christ-Self within. The day will provide an opportunity to meet teachings and practices which nurture the soul's journey into Oneness.

Cost: £40 - for more information, contact Martin:
01904 691201 - martin.nathanael@btinternet.com

United Religions Initiative UK invites you to an evening of:

'Faith, Food, and Friends'



Thursday 14th June from 5-7pm
Central Gurdwara, 58-62 Queensdale Rd, W11 4SG

For further enquiries please contact
Kiran Bali on 07944 335 855.

From their website: "United Religions Initiative UK works with communities to facilitate a greater understanding and respect between people of different faiths and none. We promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings. Our activities demonstrate: 'Spiritual diversity is a blessing not a threat.'"

'The Venerable Bede'

Sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker – 13th May 2012

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

"In 731 AD, in the most far-flung corner of the known universe, a book was written that represented a height of scholarship and erudition that was not to be equalled for centuries to come. It was called the Ecclesiastical History of the Angle Peoples and its author was Bede. A long way from Rome, in a monastery at Jarrow in the North East of England, his works cast a light across the whole of Western Civilisation and Bede became a bestseller, an internationally renowned scholar and eventually a saint. His Ecclesiastical History has been in copy or in print ever since it was written in the eighth century and his edition of the Bible remains the Catholic Church's most authoritative Latin version to this day. How did Bede achieve such ascendancy from such an obscure part of Christendom? And what was so remarkable about his work?"

Words from Melvyn Bragg

So begins a radio programme from the long-running 'In Our Time' series on Radio 4 (first broadcast in 2004). It caught my ear then as Radio 4 programmes often seem to do – one minute I'm happily washing up with the radio burbling away in the background, then something catches my attention and I just have to sit down and listen. This programme was one such moment. I'd known the Venerable Bede's name since I was a child and remembered it perhaps just because it sounds so, so... so memorable I guess! But that half hour radio programme gave me a deeper insight into one man's life and achievement. Insight also into monastic existence, and a realisation that these so called 'dark ages' weren't quite so dark after all. Apparently scholars no longer use the term *dark ages* to describe the medieval period – we may not have many cultural records from these times, but what we do have shows remarkable depths of study and considerable awareness of the wider world.

Even in the northern lands of what were yet to be called England. For Bede lived in the kingdom of Northumbria, in Jarrow and Monkwearmouth, between the years of 672 to 735. We know little of his family, although it is most likely that he came from a noble background. He himself describes his home as being near to the monastery. The Anglo Saxons were Germanic and noble families had a tradition of fostering out their children – and so it was that Bede at the age of 7 joined the monastery – a bit like going to boarding school. He was rarely to leave the place from then on. Was he a particularly scholarly or spiritual child? We'll never know if something marked him out as suitable for a monastic life from a young age, but it seems that he flourished in that environment.

And what was the monastic life like? I don't know what the word monastery conjures up for you – especially a monastery in the north east of our land? Chilly? A bit bleak perhaps? Well, it was a religious order and the day would have been punctuated by regular services – 8 in all – from early in the morning through to early evening. All monks would be expected to do some manual work each day in order to remind them of the value of humility. The monks would have their particular areas of expertise and in a medieval monastery being a scribe and a scholar were often



interchangeable and much time would have been spent in reading and writing. And this is what Bede spent most of his life doing. But it is perhaps not accurate to think of such a monastic life as especially harsh or lacking in comfort. These seem to have been cultured people who received visitors from far afield, dined together, sang beautifully and had harp music played for them.

And Bede had access to one of the best libraries in Christendom – with books collected by the nobleman Benedict Biscop – who founded the Monkwearmouth monastery in 674. Biscop travelled the world and collected books and relics and other treasures, which then needed to be cared for. Such a library would only have had 200, perhaps 300 volumes, a tiny collection to our modern minds, but at the time it really was a remarkable collection – the very best of writing available and containing the key works of early Christianity. Bede's own studies were based on these volumes but also demonstrate a breadth of originality that is impressive. He wrote at least 30 works of his own – much is Biblical commentary but he also covered issues of natural history, time, grammar and poetry. Many of his works survive to this day, some of which can be found translated online. The most famous of these is *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, or *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People*.

In this five volume work he laid out the history of the coming of Christianity to these shores from the arrival of Julius Caesar to his own time. It is credited as the first writing of English history and in many ways it is an impressive work of scholarship. No modern student can get away with writing an essay that does not credit its sources – Bede in the 700s pioneered the use of footnotes to explain his sources and he developed a sort of bibliography to list the other works he had consulted. He used oral testimony where he could. No work of history can claim to be unbiased and Bede's Ecclesiastical History is no exception. His purpose was to show the unfolding of God's plan for this land. His take on the pagans is of foolish, misguided souls who must be saved. But despite this, his work is a detailed and fascinating account of the issues of his time. And what makes it timeless perhaps is its view of the English as having a distinct identity as a people – an idea otherwise not yet considered in that era.

'The Venerable Bede'

by Sarah Tinker (continued)

Of his many other works perhaps the key one to be aware of was his new translation of the Bible into Latin – written in the 700s AD, no doubt by a team of monks of which Bede was probably in charge – it was until the 1960s the authorised translation used by the Catholic Church. And his feast day is still marked on the date of his death – May 26th. What an achievement for a medieval monk working in the northernmost reaches of the known world.

I mentioned AD – Anno Domini – the year of Our Lord – it was Bede who pioneered the use of AD and BC to define time. And there are so many other aspects of his life and work we could explore. But something that comes across in much of his writing is his essence – he seems to have been a gentle character who used his position to attempt to guide people in how best to live. He warns kings and rulers of the power of the written word to record their deeds – that what they do for good or ill will live on long after their deaths. He encourages his students to work hard and is critical of English people's laziness in learning languages. No change there then. The quotation we have used on the front of today's order of service,

"Better a stupid and unlettered brother who, working the good things he knows, merits life in Heaven than one who though being distinguished for his learning in the Scriptures, or even holding the place of a doctor, lacks the bread of love."

gives a picture of a man who knows human beings, and their strengths and weaknesses, well. Bede himself describes his life: "While attentive to the discipline of mine order and the daily care of singing in the church, my constant delight was in learning or teaching or writing". His student Cuthbert wrote of Bede's love of music and poetry and conveys Bede's deep contentment with his monastic life. And Bede himself conveys the importance he placed on Christian values of love and charity. We must do what we can whilst here on earth and be ever aware of the mysteries beyond. This is famously demonstrated in his image of human life as the flight of a swallow across a hall. These words are reported by Bede as having been said by a pagan ruler who was about to convert to Christianity.

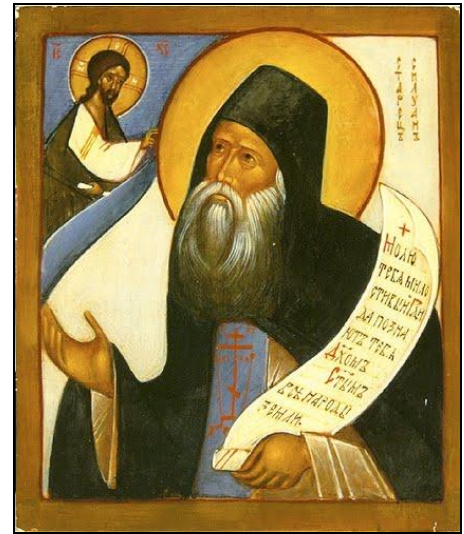
"This present life of man, O king, in comparison with the time that is hidden from us, is as the flight of a sparrow through the room where you sit at supper, with companions around you and a good fire on the hearth. Outside are the storms of wintry rain and snow. The sparrow flies in at one opening, and instantly out at another: whilst he is within he is sheltered from the winter storms, but after a moment of pleasant weather he speeds from winter back to winter again, and vanishes from your sight into the darkness whence he came. Even so the life of man appears for a little time; but of what went before and of what comes after we are wholly ignorant. If this new religion can teach us anything of greater certainty, it surely deserves to be followed."

[Footnote: a free translation from Bede's *Historia*, Book II]

Bede was a man of deep faith, a man of his time, yet someone who through his studies and his writings reached out to people who would live centuries beyond him. He knew many of the mysteries that puzzle us to this day and he found certainty, in the face of the unknown, through his faith. The Venerable Bede. Amen.

...an event linked to the Art and Spirituality Network...

An Introduction to Icons 'A Living Tradition'



Monday 18th June, 6.30-8.00pm
Room 3.02, University of the Arts,
272 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7EY

*A personal journey: the meaning, making and use of
the sacred images of the Christian East.*
An illustrated talk with Patsy Fostiropoulos

The next event of the Art and Spirituality network is on 18th June, when Patsy Fostiropoulos will introduce us to some icons in the Eastern church, and how they are used and made today in a continuing, living tradition. Patsy is a respected iconographer and former pupil of Leonid Ouspensky. She is based in London, and her icons can be found in churches, cathedrals, homes and other centres of prayer and meditation in many Christian traditions, across Britain and beyond. Those who are able to stay are welcome to join us for a simple meal afterwards.

ADVANCE BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL

To reserve your place: email chaplaincy@arts.ac.uk
or phone/text 07843 329 587

**For further information about these and other
events visit: www.artandspirituality.net**

"A transformation in consciousness is something that opens the door for us. It's almost as though we are in a small, enclosed, dark room. We feel constrained, we feel limited in some way, and then the door swings open – and suddenly there's a sense of possibility where there might have been none before. There's a sense of having options where we didn't perceive any before. And there's a change in perception, especially in terms of scope."

Sharon Salzberg

Sunday Services at Essex Church

**3rd June, 11am –
“Hospitality”**

Service led by Members of the Congregation

This summer, Londoners will be called upon to offer a welcome to visitors from all over the world, as we host the 2012 Olympic Games in our home city. In this service members of the congregation including Jo Ridgers, Jim Blair, and Juliet Edwards will offer reflections on different aspects of 'hospitality'.

**10th June, 11am –
“Jubilee”**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

As the country celebrates the Queen's Diamond Jubilee this year, in our service we will consider the Judaic and Christian meaning of Jubilee as a time of resting and restoring.

12.30pm - **Small-Group Communion**,
led by Tristan Jovanović (lasting ~20 minutes)

**17th June, 11am –
“Flower Communion”**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

First established by Czech Unitarian Minister Norbert Čapek, the flower communion is a simple yet evocative ritual. Bring a flower and take a different flower home with you (and we will have a few spares just in case...). Together let us celebrate the unique, the beautiful and the transient in human life.

**24th June, 11am –
“Challenges to Civil and Religious Liberty”**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Nonconformists have been drinking a toast to 'civil and religious liberty the world over' ever since the so called Glorious Revolution of 1689. Such liberties are still threatened today. What are the threats and what can we do about them?



‘Finding Our Voice’

Singing Workshops with Margaret Marshall

**Sundays 17th June and 15th 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. Along with Harold Lorenzelli 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 and 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.



“To receive kindness does us good. Think of a time someone has been kind to you, in a big or a small way: A passer-by gave your directions to reach the station or a stranger threw herself in a river to save you from drowning. What effect did it have on you? Probably a beneficial one, because if someone helps us when we need it, we feel relief. And everyone likes to be heard, treated with warmth and friendliness, understood, and nourished. Something similar happens on the other side of the equation: Giving kindness does us as much good as receiving it. The true benefit of kindness is being kind. Perhaps more than any other factor, kindness gives meaning and value to our life, raises us above our troubles and our battles, and makes us feel good about ourselves.”

Piero Ferrucci