



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: October 2012

What's On...

Sunday 7th October, 11am-noon
'A Push and a Pull'
Led by Jane Blackall

Thursday 11th October, 7-9.00pm
'Spirit in Practice' (1/9)
Led by Sarah Tinker & Jane Blackall

Sunday 14th October, 11am-noon
'Restless Curiosity'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 14th October, 12.30pm
Small-Group Communion
Led by David Francis Darling

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

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

Thursday 18th October, 7-9.00pm
'Spirit in Practice' (2/9)
Led by Sarah Tinker & Jane Blackall

Sunday 21st October, 11am-noon
'Unitarians in Transylvania'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 21st October, 12.30-1.45pm
'Finding Our Voice'
Singing workshop with Margaret

Tuesday 23rd October, 7-9.00pm
Reading Group:
'Better Times Will Come'
by Diana Jones (*lyrics*)

Thursday 25th October, 7-9.00pm
'Spirit in Practice' (3/9)
Led by Sarah Tinker & Jane Blackall

Sunday 28th October, 11am-noon
'All Souls'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

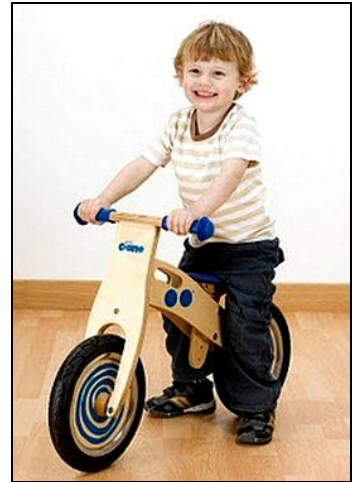
Sunday 28th October, 12.30-1.30pm
Congregational Potluck Lunch

Sunday 28th October, 1.30-3.00pm
Congregational Growth Gathering

A Message from our Minister:

Balance

Party politics is perhaps best avoided on the front of a church newsletter but I refuse to link London's rent-a-bicycle scheme with a popular politician whose name begins with B. I'm not too keen either on riding a bike that is plastered with the name of a bank, but oh the joy of walking out of our building and finding bikes aplenty sitting there waiting to be borrowed. And then cycling round the corner and entering parkland that takes you all the way to the Thames with only the occasional road to cross.



Mind you, if you'd witnessed my attempting to cycle at the age of 7 you'd have perhaps thought it unlikely that I'd be zipping around London on two wheels with such confidence fifty years later. I come from a large family, not averse to teasing, and I was teased mercilessly for my inability to master riding a bike. My little bicycle had stabiliser wheels -- an extra two wheels attached at the back of the bike to help with stability and some expressed doubt that those extra wheels would ever be removed. This early cycling shame has left me quite alert to young children on bicycles and in the park you can now find the tiniest of toddlers cycling with ease. And why? Well it all seems to come down to something called a balance bike. A balance bike has no pedals. The child sits on it and puts their feet on the ground and bit by bit they get the hang of ... 'balance'. From that they can make an easier transition to a proper bicycle with pedals and brakes.

What I didn't understand as a child was that balance is far from being a static state. Balance requires the making of constant, ideally small, adjustments -- adapting to the circumstances we find ourselves in, fitting ourselves to the changes within and beyond us. Once we've 'got' this we don't have to think about it anymore; we are constantly re-balancing ourselves without conscious thought. But in our wider lives, it's perhaps good to be more consciously aware of balance, or our lack of it, from time to time and a time of seasonal change provides an ideal time for such a process of self-reflection. In our harvest festival and equinox celebration last month we asked what areas of our lives could be more in balance and what simple adjustments might we choose to make in our ways of being or thinking. *Rest before we get exhausted, don't spend too long in front of computers, get out in daylight, laugh more, plan treats* -- were some of the ideas people came up with after the service.

I wonder what balancing acts your life might appreciate this autumn?

Rev. Sarah Tinker

In this month's newsletter...

* 'Hucklow Summer School – Sacred Living' by Carol Sheppard * Swaziland News * Congregational Growth Gathering * Reports from the Forgiveness Project Exhibition * 'Rediscovering the Bible' – new group with David & Jane * Poems by John Hands * Worship Studies Course in 2013 * 'Spirit in Practice' RE course at Essex Church * 'Stonehenge: Meaning and Mystery' sermon 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.



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Congregational Lunch

Sunday 28th October, 12.30pm



There will be a potluck lunch after the service on Sunday 28th October. Please put the date in your diary and plan to be there with some food and/or drink to share. All are welcome.

This will be followed by a 'Congregational Growth Gathering' (see opposite) where we will begin to explore our next steps towards attracting more people to our services and events.

Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



Stewarding:

7 th October:	Tristan Jovanović
14 th October:	Juliet Edwards
21 st October:	Heidi Ferid
28 th October:	Natasha Drennan

Coffee:

7 th October:	Margaret Darling
14 th October:	Jo Ridgers
21 st October:	Ruth Okine
28 th October:	Sue Smith

Greeting:

7 th October:	Sue Smith
14 th October:	Carol Sheppard
21 st October:	Jo Ridgers
28 th October:	Annie Fowler

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

rotas@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Small Group Communion



Sunday 14th October 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. We hope that a team of volunteers will continue to take turns in leading the services so we can experience different approaches. The line-up for the next few months is as follows:

- 14th October** – Led by David Francis Darling
- 11th November** – Led by John Hands
- 9th December** – Led by Tristan Jovanović

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

Congregational Growth Gathering



**Sunday 28th October, 1.30-3.00pm
After the Congregational Lunch**

Before starting ministry training I was a member of a congregation in suburban Sheffield. The area is a popular one in which to live and once people settle there, they rarely leave. Consequently the chapel's congregation is also very settled and although new people have arrived over the years it is quite rare to see a stranger at a service. I look back on that now from a London perspective. Experts in church growth tell us that an inner city congregation such as ours can expect to have an annual turnover of 20%. It is normal for 20% of a congregation like ours to move on each year – because of work or relationship changes, in search of accommodation, or because another spiritual path has opened up for them. Such a high level of change can be demanding for those who remain. It means we have to deal with much 'making of relationships' and then saying of farewell when people move on. On the positive side, it is a rare Sunday when we have no new faces joining us for worship. We have a good potential for attracting new people.

This October our London Unitarian District (LDPA) is again asking its congregations to take a census of everyone who attends worship each Sunday. So even though the weather is getting chilly and you have many other calls on your time, I'm asking everyone to do all that they can to come to church this October and to consider this issue of growing our congregation. Kensington Unitarians are maintaining a good presence here in the world and yet do you sometimes think, as I do, that there are probably many other people out there who could really appreciate, and benefit from, our particularly welcoming and thought provoking approach to matters religious and spiritual?

Make a note in your diary of our lunch on 28th October, which will be followed by a congregational growth gathering from 1.30 to 3pm. In readiness for that, Jane Blackall has prepared some questions for you to ponder during the month ahead:

- *List 7 specific ways in which your life is / could be better for being part of a Unitarian community (and which of these is most important for you?)*
- *List 7 specific ways in which Unitarian communities make / could make the world a better place (and which of these is most important for you?)*
- *Think of a friend who is not part of a religious community who you think would benefit from being part of a community like ours. What could you say to them to convey what Essex Church means to you?*

Rev. Sarah Tinker

New Course for the autumn here at Essex Church:

'Spirit in Practice' Starting Thursday 11th October 2012



Make a note in your diaries of the dates for our next small group course – running on Thursdays, 7pm-9pm from 11th Oct – and 10am-4pm on Saturday 10th Nov.

The workshops that make up the Spirit in Practice series are based on three key ideas:

- That life is a spiritual quest and that exploring together can at times be more helpful than exploring alone.
- That this spiritual search can be more effective if we have some training and discipline—not to mention some practice, in both senses of the word—that helps us pay attention to the sacred.
- That everything in our lives that can serve as a tool for this exploration.

Drawing on a model developed by the Zen Mountain Monastery for the training of its students, Spirit in Practice focuses on eight spheres of holistic and wholehearted spiritual practices. These spheres are:

- Personal spiritual practices
- Communal worship practices
- Spiritual partnerships
- Mind practices
- Body practices
- Soul practices
- Life practices
- Justice practices

Our small group courses are a great way to deepen our connections with one another and with our Unitarian community. The course is open to anyone who would appreciate this sort of experience – you don't need to be a member of Kensington Unitarians or even regard yourself as a Unitarian – all you need is a willingness to join in an individual and group exploration of what spiritual practices you already follow and those you would like to develop.

We'd suggest that you check that you are able to commit to at least 6 of the 9 sessions and get in touch with Jane to reserve a place: jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk.

From the preface to the course: 'Developed in response to many UU adults' desire to engage in life-giving spiritual practices, Spirit in Practice provides avenues for deepening spirituality and affirming spiritual growth in the congregation. Participants are invited to reflect, share, and grow together, exploring ways to nurture their connections with the sacred in everyday life.'



Hucklow Summer School - Sacred Living

I have been asked to write something about Summer School and this seems like a very good idea to me as I am new to the whole experience and have come to it with fresh eyes. To be honest, I must say that I was totally unprepared for what Summer School was all about. Jane had said how wonderful the experience was and that, for her, it had been a life-changing experience, and I did register that but I didn't fully take that on board and I suppose I was quite blasé about travelling up to Great Hucklow and the week that would follow. I wasn't prepared, then, but maybe that was part of the delight of it all. That I had no preconceived ideas and that I had not really given it too much thought other than to read the literature and find out what I needed to pack in my case, if anything. As it turned out, all I really needed to take was myself and so that is what I did.

I shall start with the journey up to Sheffield which passed without event until we got to Sheffield itself. Jo and I took the train from St Pancras and spent the whole two hours and seven minutes talking about our respective summers. This passed the time really nicely and, before we knew it, we had arrived at Sheffield station. That is when the adventure really began because the local bus didn't turn up. So picture this, there were five of us waiting for the local bus and a few had either had very long journeys or had been waiting a long time already. We had a little chat and decided to take a black cab to the centre as the next bus wasn't due for another couple of hours. And what if that didn't turn up either?!!! We all marched back to the station and pounced on the first cab driver we saw. The poor man was faced with five strangers with rather a lot of luggage asking if he could take us to this tiny village in the midst of the Derbyshire dales. Anyway, we all piled in and somehow he managed to get us there and we all gave a cheer of relief and gratitude. I think it rather made his day and I like to think that the good cheer that started at that moment carried us all through the rest of the week.

I always relate to places and spaces and as soon as I walked through the front door of the Nightingale Centre I felt as though I was in a special place. A safe space. It is a really beautiful place full of interesting spaces and, as soon as I had bagged the best bed (in my triple room – 'now that will be interesting', I thought, sharing with two other women), I went off to explore. As I said before, there are lots of places to sit and stare and rooms that have more of a purpose like the dining room and the meeting rooms. My favourite place of all was the sun terrace and the sensory garden and I have many fond memories of sitting with a cup of tea or a glass of wine, either on my own or with others at the end of a busy day during the social hour, and just drinking in the pure beauty of the country around me. Hills and trees and sky and clouds – a perfect picture of England at its best.

There is so much to say about Summer School and it is difficult to encapsulate it all in a short piece of writing. There were certain things that were compulsory – like attendance at the morning theme talks and working within our chosen Morning Engagement Groups – but there were many more things that we could choose to dip into or not as we saw fit. We could sit by ourselves, we could take ourselves off to explore the surrounding countryside, we could do all the workshops or none at all. In other words, the choice was ours and it is important to realise the necessity of pacing oneself as it would be very easy to overdo it. Personally, I really needed quite a lot of time to reflect and process what I had learned or what has been shared by others.



Hucklow Summer School

(article continued from previous page)

I chose the Morning Engagement Group entitled 'Hello ... and Goodbye' because that is the one that appealed to me most of all. There have been many beginnings and endings in my life and I thought that it would be interesting to explore the subject in a little more depth. But again, I was totally unprepared and rather caught off guard by the nature and power of the work that we ended up doing as a group. The broader concept of the group was the importance of creating rituals in life to mark important occasions and life transitions. I began by thinking that it would be quite easy for me to choose something quite unconnected to myself and create a ritual around that but that, if the week was to have any real significance and a deeper meaning, then I would need to take a risk and share something more of myself and create something more powerful than that. The past 13 years have been exceptionally difficult for me with a lot of traumatic events to deal with one after the other and I soon realised that I wanted to create a ritual that enabled me to symbolically let go of all those things and move forwards into a new part of my life with a fresh start and a clean slate, so to speak. I must tell you that the rituals created by all of us that week will stay with me for the rest of my life and the power of the emotions created, expressed and released was a privilege for me to witness and be involved in. Special indeed.

Away from the emotions of the group I took part in some wonderful workshops: I had the luxury of two hours to sit and write about a picture of a shoe (amazing what wonderful free associations can come from that), I took part in a singing workshop where I thought the power of our singing would literally raise the roof of the tent we were sat in, I watched the sun go down on a beautiful Silent Meditation walk with Sarah and I sat round a campfire and told stories of my childhood with Caroline and Jim.

Throughout the week I laughed until I cried and I cried tears of such pain and yet such sweet relief too. I ate good food and shared endless cups of tea with new-found friends as we sat and talked. And every evening, I took such great pleasure in being the 'Lady of the Lamp' as we walked in silence and darkness to the sweetest little Unitarian Chapel for our daily Evening Epilogue.

I know that my life was changed by that week and I do not say that lightly. Great Hucklow and Summer School are a perfect little bubble of love and trust and respect that is so very hard to find on the outside. But one good thing is that it is there to access again whenever one chooses and I will most definitely. Jane was right and I shall listen more carefully in future and really take that on board. And, to end, I must also say that I had such great fun sharing a room as I had two of the most brilliant roomies!! Who knew!!

Carol Sheppard

Group photograph courtesy of Ned Prideaux

Worship Studies Course

Foundation Step at Essex Church in 2013



We are *tentatively* planning to run the Worship Studies Course (Foundation Step) in the district during 2013. The course will take place at Essex Church in Kensington over four full Saturdays:

16th March / 13th July / 21st September / 30th November

The course is for anybody who would like to be involved in leading worship in their own congregation or in churches around the district. It would also be useful for people who already lead worship and who would like to develop their skills and share hints and tips with peers. The course covers reflection on the meaning and purpose of worship; issues around speech, presentation and communication; the process of crafting a high-quality service; and other practical matters that worship leaders need to consider.

This is a nationally recognised course which will be run in cooperation with the GA's Local Leadership Training Action Group and utilising a variety of tutors. There will be a registration fee of £5, and a fee of £10 per session, and to receive the WSC foundation step certificate involves successfully completing an assessment process and attending at least three of the training days. It will also be possible for people not wanting to work towards the certificate to attend these training days.

We would like to hear from you by the end of November 2012 if you think you would be interested in taking part in this course so that we can decide whether we have a viable group of participants. Please contact jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk to register your interest or with any queries you may have.

Rev. Sarah Tinker and Jane Blackall



Back in the last century – the early sixties – I was with a party touring Greece when we came to Olympia. The games were not on at the time but we had with us a Professor Trypanos who gave lectures and had written a book about the games.

We took our places on the heavily restored starting blocks and raced along the track rather more fully clothed than those early runners. No crowds to shout encouragement, the air clear and still, high in the mountains, all was peaceful.

A nightingale was singing in the sunshine. That night, the face of the man in the moon breathed benevolence.

Stephanie Saville

Good Cause Collection of the Month:

Unitarian Peace Fellowship

Collection on Sunday 28th October



From the Unitarian Peace Fellowship Newsletter: *'Founded in 1916, the Unitarian Peace Fellowship is for all those within our denomination who witness to the belief that war and preparation for war are sins against God and failures of Humanity. We believe that right relationships can only be established through understanding and love. We therefore pledge ourselves to the promotion of goodwill, justice and peace between people and nations.'*

The Peace Fellowship organises an annual appeal for a cause which aligns with its aims and does worthwhile work within our denomination to inform and educate.

Recent Charity Collections:

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

July – 'Yes to Life' (cancer support charity) – £100

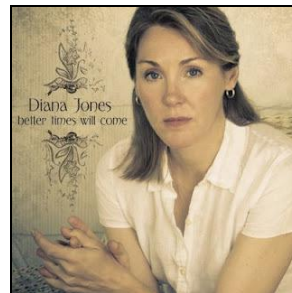
August – 'Down's Syndrome Association' – £96.76

September – 'The Forgiveness Project' – £159.60

Essex Church Reading Group

'Better Times Will Come'

by Diana Jones



Tuesday 23rd October 2012, 7.00-9.00pm

The reading group's October session will be based on 'Better Times Will Come' by Diana Jones. This is something a little different to our usual selections, as it consists of the lyrics from an album which we will read as poetry, a choice which was suggested by Gisela Boehnisch. This will be the 96th title discussed by the reading group. You do not necessarily need to buy the album as we can make copies of the lyrics available for people to read beforehand.

From the album review in the Guardian:

"Jones carries with her a flavour of a bygone era: spare acoustic backings and flinty tales about folks fallen on hard times, delivered in a distinctive voice. This follow-up to 2006's much-praised My Remembrance of You brims with cameos of characters in struggle; a "soldier girl" en route to boot camp, an abused wife, a doomed miner trapped underground. There's resignation but also hope in her stories, elegant accompaniment from fiddle and mandolin, and buoyancy in her drawing vocals."

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

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



A Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement Forms

Second Sunday of the Month from 2-3pm:
14th October, 11th November, 9th December

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.

'The idea of spiritual practices encourages individuals to take responsibility for their own spiritual development by spending time working on it, deliberating on its meaning and how best to pursue it, seeking to understand the sacred through reading and the counsel of others, and seeking to have contact with the sacred through personal reflection and prayer.'

Robert Wuthnow

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.

Michael A. Schuler

(words read each year at our church AGM)

Equinox Walk: Richmond Park



Seven Sweet Lasses of Richmond Hill, with token male in tow, celebrated Autumn Equinox with a gentle hike across Richmond Park. Parakeets and deer in profusion came to watch as the group made their way around a two hour circuit in the afternoon sunshine from Pembroke Lodge. For some the highlight was the pink-and-red glow of the setting sun in the west, for others it was fish and chip supper in the Roebuck pub.

Another walk (somewhere else, equally lovely) is planned for Winter Solstice. Please join us if you care to.

John Davies



'Rediscovering the Bible'

A monthly bible-reading group at Essex Church



**Meeting on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7pm:
12th November, 10th December, 14th January**

Throughout this year there has been a bible-reading group in the London district, organised by Jim Corrigan of Golders Green Unitarians, which we have enjoyed being a part of. Sadly, this group will soon come to an end, as Jim is taking up a new post as minister of Ipswich and Framlingham.

We thought that we would like to continue the good work of the Golders Green group here in our own congregation, and so are proposing to offer something similar at Kensington, for a trial period of six months beginning in November 2012. We will simply read through the bible together, pausing to reflect, and to share our own thoughts and feelings on what we read. Our intention is to start with the Acts of the Apostles.

Do contact us (email jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) if you have any questions or just to let us know you're planning to come along. The bible-reading group is open to all who share a spirit of goodwill and curiosity about discovering the text anew – no particular theology will be presumed – please bring along a bible (any translation you like) if you have one.

This group is offered in conjunction with the Liberal Christian affinity group of the district association (LDPA) and we hope to see friends from throughout the region at these meetings.

David Darling and Jane Blackall

LDPA Quarterly Meeting

Horsham Unitarian Church

Saturday 20th October from 1.30pm

The District is pleased to accept the kind offer of the Horsham congregation to hold the Autumn Quarterly Meeting in its handsome Chapel on Worthing Road, RH12 1SL. There is limited off-street parking, the bus station is directly opposite, and the train station less than a mile's pleasant walk away. The Rev. Daniel Costley, minister at Sevenoaks and a former member of the Horsham congregation, will lead the service starting at 1.30, and then there will be a programme (details yet to be confirmed) followed by an opportunity to socialise over afternoon tea.

The Forgiveness Project – 9th-16th September 2012

Thank you to everybody who helped in any way with our week of hosting The F Word exhibition here at Essex Church. It was quite an experience to spend a whole week focusing so intently on one issue and by the final Sunday I felt quite filled by all the stories I'd heard and conversations I'd been part of. Many of the groups that rent our building became involved by hosting events and I was touched that we ended the week with story-telling for the Jewish festival of Rosh Hashanah, beautifully led by Sef Townsend. It felt like a particular gift to us all and people responded by spontaneously taking a collection to support his work, with peace keeping and community connecting through story telling in the Middle East. Here are some photos from the week and responses from both visitors and members.

Rev. Sarah Tinker



As part of the forgiveness project I showed my Four Season Butterflies paintings. The connection between butterflies and forgiveness is certainly not an obvious one, but to me butterflies, with their beauty, fragility and strength are powerful symbols of transformation - and forgiveness is a process of transformation. It was a pleasure to take part in the Playback Theatre workshop and then attend the evening performance, all led so ably by Veronica Needa from our congregation. I was impressed with their ability to take something from people's brief words about an issue in their lives and then play it back to them in movement and sound. A healing and transformative process.

Heidi Ferid

We were very lucky to have Marian Partington as our guest on the first day of the 'Forgiveness Week' and she offered a workshop, 'Salvaging the Sacred', which was rather special. Marian shared something of her own story, telling us of her sister Lucy, a remarkable young woman who was missing for many years before it was discovered that she had been murdered by Frederick and Rosemary West. A very powerful moment in the workshop was when Marian passed round a small bag that Lucy had woven from wool she had gathered. This somehow made the story more real. Participants in the workshop took time in silence to express their own stories of forgiveness on prayer flags which were strung together and flown in the back garden at the close of the session as, aptly, we heard 'Let it Be' playing from a neighbouring house.

Jane Blackall

Some comments from the exhibition guestbook:

"The stories are very touching and inspiring. I have tried this in a tiny way to bring healing in Zimbabwe and this work encourages me to pick that mission up again. Thank you."

"The exhibition is enormously powerful and healing vicariously even just reading about it. Continue with your good work!"

"I have been so fortunate as to visit this Unitarian church today. I had no idea that the exhibition and wonderful work was taking place. I feel fate brought me here as I work in this field and would like to remain in contact."

"I was very grateful to hear Marian and be part of the workshop which was very moving. Hearing everyone's stories from their own lives was a strong reminder of the need for sharing to remember we all have a common humanity. I hope the rest of the week is insightful and touching for everyone."

"I came to the service on 9/9/12 knowing I had forgiven my family for past hurts. I came to the exhibition with an open mind, thinking all my personal issues were resolved. However, whilst here I realised I must let go of my resentment that it's always me who instigates contact with my sister. It's been because of this that I've not contacted her for months. Once I'd returned home I rang my sister. She was out. I suggested a date to meet up in my answerphone message."

"I was attracted by 'The F Word'. I thought it was a genius idea so I came in to investigate. Then I found Playback Theatre. Good luck for the future. I was walking by."



We have a few copies of Marian Partington's book *If You Sit very Still* available for sale at the special exhibition price of £14 and some copies of The F Word exhibition catalogue for £5. See Jenny or Sarah if you would like to buy a copy and both publications are now in the church library for you to borrow.

The Forgiveness Project

(continued from previous page)



What a week that was! Busy. Vibrant.
So much tea-making and washing up!
What a delight to have the church so full of visitors.

I was on greeting duty both Sundays and for the 4-6pm slot prior to the Playback Theatre performance on Thursday evening. People came. They didn't exactly stream in but even so it was delightfully difficult to keep up as another and another new person arrived needing to be told about the project, directed to the toilets and offered tea. I loved that! I had a little daydream of how it could be if we had this many people on a regular basis. It felt so good to have such a mix of people; new and longstanding, occasional too.

While we waited in the foyer for the last few people to arrive on Sunday morning someone commented "I know hardly anyone in there!" as they peeked through the doors. It gave me a thrill to hear that sentence. THAT surely is what we're aiming for - to have a church space filled with people who are at first strangers. People who will come again - or not. People who will be drawn to the place and might want to come again, even regularly perhaps, but not be drawn into the family, the community of the church. That's not necessarily what people are searching for. Some are of course, but not everyone is looking to belong. Some are looking for a place to just 'be' and to hear words that make some sense to them after the sometimes tedious certainties of some mainstream religions. Some want to be in a place of beauty and tranquillity away from the rough and tumble of city life. Some just want peace and stillness.

There's a place for us all. There's a place for those of us who want to be at the heart of it all and also for those who want to remain on the edge, who want to remain anonymous. It's quite hard to be anonymous in a small community such as ours but with a bit more effort I think it's possible to meet the needs of a lot more people. Diverse people. Unitarian sympathisers, Unitarians in the making and people who subscribe to nothing.

The Forgiveness Project Week opportunity gave me a tiny taste of that and it has whetted my appetite! Amen!

Jo Ridgers



Warden's Column

I'm writing this on Monday 17 September, somewhat exhausted by the last week, which was dominated by the Forgiveness Exhibition we were hosting here and related events.

The task this morning, was to dismantle the exhibition towers – something I was more than willing to do, as keeping them up has been a real nightmare. We must have averaged at least one collapse a day over the course of the exhibition week as when anyone tried to move them, or even just brushed against them, it usually ended in disaster.

We were understandably somewhat irritated by this. We'd hired the exhibition in this format on the basis we'd be able to push it out of the way to accommodate our various bookings, so it was a shock to discover it was so fragile. We'd also really struggled to get it up in the first place, because the instructions were so inadequate and we were disappointed that it generally seemed a bit shabby and poorly constructed.

So it was in a somewhat self-righteous frame of mind that I started to dismantle it, mentally composing a critical email about its shortcomings. At that point, I suddenly realised with horror, that although it was the second day of Rosh Hashanah and the synagogue needed to use the whole ground floor of the building, I'd forgotten to cancel our regular Monday morning children's music classes.

All thought of moral superiority over the exhibition makers fled from my mind. What on earth was I going to do? And as I scrambled for a solution I was repeatedly humbled by the generous and creative responses I was given. Rabbi Judith offered to delay the start of their service, Lucy Williamson offered to accommodate one of the classes in the nursery, the music teacher Anat (who turned out to be Jewish herself) didn't speak a word of reproach and saved the day by managing to squeeze 12 toddlers and their mums into the library. Everyone was simply wonderful, and while I was running around - clearing furniture out of the library, putting up signs, helping Anat move her equipment downstairs – Sarah quietly took over taking down the towers.

I realised once more what an absolute privilege it is to work here and how at best – staff, congregation and user groups – we do manage to embody some of the principles the building exists to support. Two recurrent themes of the last week have been how hard it can be to forgive yourself but also how powerfully acceptance of your own failings, mistakes or violence can help in forgiving others. I really feel I experienced that this morning. The way people responded to my mistake – and how it changed how I felt about the problems with the exhibition – was a potent reminder that it's far more comfortable to feel like a fallible person in a supportive community of other fallible people than to feel resentment about the efforts you're making and how other people are letting you down. To stay in the present, and connected to each other – at the moment that feels like the essence of forgiveness to me.

Jenny Moy

Unitarian Christian Association Autumn Meeting



Saturday 27th October, 12 noon – 4pm
Brighton Unitarian Church, New Road, BN1 1UF

The Unitarian Christian Association will hold its autumn gathering at the Brighton Unitarian Church on Saturday 27th October.

All interested persons are warmly invited to share lunch from twelve noon, for which there will be no charge. A service of worship will be held in the tradition of the ecumenical community of Taizé, Burgundy in France, beginning at one o'clock in the afternoon. From two o'clock, Unitarians from the Southeast of England will offer short presentations that will encourage dialogue and conversation on contemporary liberal Christian attitudes to timely subjects. The day's proceedings will end at four o'clock with the serving of afternoon tea.

If possible, please indicate your interest in attending by contacting the UCA's Events Officer, Jeff Gould.

Telephone: 01625 403509
Email: jeffreylanegould@btinternet.com

Information from Richard Boeke of the IARF

Non-stop Turmoil or Global Spring?

Changing Values for the 21st Century

Friday 26th October, 7.30-9.00pm

An open lecture by Jim Kenney,
co-editor of 'Interreligious Insight' - entry: £5.

Saturday 27th October, 10am-4pm

Day conference - entry: £10 including
vegetarian lunch, at St. Margaret's
Church, Lee Terrace, London, SE15 5EA

For more information contact: Alan Race

Telephone: 020 8318 9643
Email: alan.race2@virginmedia.com

Forgiveness: The Great Undoing

Special Findhorn Event
28th September – 4th October 2013

"That which un-does us, embraced with love, is our greatest ally."

You can find out more about this event on the website of the Findhorn Community where it will be taking place next year. Sarah our minister found the first Forgiveness Conference at Findhorn such a life-changing week that she would like to support someone else in fund-raising to attend this conference. Get in touch if this calls to you.

For more information see: www.findhorn.org

In a Mountain Village Bar: Pampeneiria, Andalusia

Three stocky late middle- aged Englishmen
From where? - Yorkshire? Lancs? – it had to be
One of these. I couldn't tell. Perched themselves upon
Uncomfortable Spanish bar stool – ordered beer
For themselves, gin and tonic for their bulky wives
Who banished themselves outside – no doubt to smoke
And gossip. Almost I thought a strange species or
Nationality foreign to mine. They occasionally
Glanced at me and Heidi: no doubt picked up our
Scraps of cultivated bla. 'Have to be Southerners' they
Might have thought: 'not one of us. Piss artists:
Sound their aitches, look different: la-de-dah'

I listened, and was curious. Three of my own countrymen
Denizens of a world I had never entered.
What to say? How to begin it? Much more difficult than
Speaking Spanish to the Barman, his wife and small
Lisping child. How to speak to three of my own
Foreign countrymen?

We might have talked about
Worlds we had never thought existed beyond
Turbulent oceans of our indifference and ignorance:
Struck down stereotypes, rooted out prejudices
Founded new colonies of understanding and enlightenment,
Acquired more in half-an-hour's sharing of experience
Than anything they gained on the golf-courses of Marbella
Or we, adrift in our rented olive orchards.

So nothing was said across our taut fences
Of embarrassment and ignorance. They drank up
Paid, and passed out, with never a word of recognition.
Shepherds striding through mist, pedestrians groping through
London fog. I remembered that well: they most certainly did not.
Our worlds like satellites steering swiftly away from collision.

John Hands: September 2012

News from Swaziland

Essex Church are sponsoring two orphans in Swaziland: Patience Qinisile Zeeman and Fortunate Qiniso Zeeman. Swaziland is one of the poorest countries in the world, and has the highest rate of HIV infection of any country. Sadly that means that there are far too many orphans in Swaziland. Patience and Fortunate live with SOS Children's Villages, a charity that supports orphans in small houses with a 'mother' and an 'auntie' to look after each group.



We are very grateful for the on-going support of members of the congregation, and would be happy to hear from anyone who would like to make a donation towards this project.

The village has sent the following reports:

Patience Qinisile: Qinisile is a healthy, tiny but dynamic young girl who likes playing with her friends, although her best friend is her twin sister Qiniso. She is a nice and an ever smiling little girl and it is very difficult for her to cry even when provoked by her friends. She continues to be an active little girl who likes playing skipping ropes, swings and racing around the village. She is so loving and caring mostly to her twin sister, this is seen especially when her sister is not in a good mood. She also shows these elements to her youngest brother and other young children at the village. Qinisile is now more responsible although she is not perfect when performing most of her chores; this is because she is more to outdoor games so sometimes she feels like she is delayed by the house chores. She relies a lot on her sister who reminds her to perform her house chores now and then, and who even assists her most of the time. She sometimes leads the Sunday school choir on Sunday. She enjoys sweet things like chocolates and ice cream, she has recently gained weight a little bit.

Like her sister, Qinisile is progressing well at school, sometimes she gets assistance and motivation from her twin sister and mother, and otherwise her performance is steady and very impressive. Her best subjects are mathematics and science, she calls herself a dentist.

Fortunate Qiniso Zeeman: Qiniso is a very respectful and humble child. She gets along very well with her brothers and sisters in the house even though she is best friend with her twin sister Qinisile. She enjoys outdoor games, and she is fully responsible in the house. She always comes first whenever their mother calls for them. She is warm-hearted, kind and loving, most particularly to the younger children in the village. She attempts to perform every task in the house. She is very supportive to her twin sister Qinisile.

This sweet little girl is now 11 years old, she is more intelligent than her age and she is just hyper-active. Tennis is her favourite sport. Most of the time she is found in a group of children and she is always the leader during playing time, and she always comes up with new games and new discussions. She enjoys debating about best singers and best celebrities. She is a child with good morals. She makes sure she attends church service every Sunday and she is a member of the village choir. It takes her no time to forgive if she has been wronged or has quarrelled with one of her friends.

Academically, Qinisile is excelling. She is intelligent and self-driven and she is never reminded when it is study time. She likes reading books and the bible. Her favourite subjects are mathematics and science. When she grows up she wants to be a doctor and an artist in her leisure time.

Caroline Blair

LDPA Workshop on Facebook, Twitter & Google Docs

Wednesday 31st October from 11am-3pm at Unity Church, 277A Upper Street, Islington, N1 2TZ

On FACEBOOK but don't know how to use it? Want to TWEET? Andy Pakula is offering a training session on Facebook/ Twitter/ Google Docs to the LDPA. Cost - £10 (concessions for students/unwaged). NUMBERS LIMITED - first come, first served.

Programme: Group instruction plus one-to-one tuition. Bring a lap-top or let him know this isn't possible.

Refreshments: Bring packed lunch plus something small to share e.g. fruit, home-made biscuits, dip.

Register on-line at www.new-unity.org/events/computer-workshop
Or express interest / find out more by contacting apakula@gmail.com

Mozart Magic



O! the quick-stepping sprightly brilliance of his music!
Is Mozart still with us? Isn't he playing just behind
The raised lid of the piano? Can you see his incredibly
Nimble fingers chasing each other black over white
Light and shade streaking across the resounding keyboard?

Can he have been so long away? Where else has he been born?
In some other world? – a poet? – a painter? A politician even?
Mathematician or satellite-maker, striving to make connections
Between worlds across the divided cosmos?

A woman of great beauty and renown? A debutant of many
A brilliant season? Or ceramic-sculptor
Devising forms of exquisite feature? Where has he been?
What doors has he flung open? How many of how many souls
Have risen to welcome him?

And now here once more just behind
That keyboard, that ineffable blend of sadness and joy,
Prising open our hearts like silver blades prising
Open oysters. Born again!
Mozart our supreme musician, born again
For ever and ever being born again.

John Hands

*The London branch of the Alister Hardy Society
invite us to their October lecture:*

Spiritual and Psychical Experience: a non-reductionist neurochemical perspective **A talk given by Dr David Luke**

**Thursday 4th October at 2.30 for 3pm,
here at Essex Church**

This talk will explore what can be learnt from the traditional use of psychoactive substances for spiritual, shamanic and healing purposes and their links with the mystical. David Luke is Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Greenwich and has a particular interest in transpersonal experiences. Tickets £6.00.



8th-10th February 2013

Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing

Information from the District Association (LDPA)

The inaugural Festival of Unitarians in the South East (FUSE) 2012 was a great success. Were you one of the 129 people who came together from throughout the South East, plus others from as far afield as the West Country, East Anglia, the Midlands, the North West and Scotland for a weekend of inspiration, education and celebration? If so, you will probably be keen to come again. If you missed the first one, you will not want to miss FUSE 2013.

FUSE 2013 will be held again at Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing, over the weekend of 8 – 10 February. Rev. Bill Darlison will be the preacher for the Main Service, and will also present an optional workshop on the Friday afternoon. His workshop is titled 'The Celestial Journey of the Soul' and will be based on his book "The Gospel and the Zodiac" in which he propounds his theory that Mark's gospel is astrologically based. Robin Ince will again be the Keynote Speaker, this time giving a presentation on "The Importance of Being Engaged", a timely tribute to one of his heroes, Charles Darwin.

Planning is already well under way, with a full programme of Workshops, Worship, Presentations and Contact Groups, as well as time to relax and network. Attendance is expected to be even higher, so book early at fusefest.org.uk/registration-form.

There is an early bird discount for registration before 1st November. Applications for bursaries must be received no later than 1st December.

FUSE website: www.fusefest.org.uk



Olive Trees at Dawn



Grey-green, silver sheen, unstirring
Witnesses of slowly dawning day: nothing
Unforeseen! You may exclaim "Nothing
Unanticipated growing here, Evolution's
Tireless strategy working through these
Untiring trees, this watchful orchard.
Rejoice in what you see! Hold fast to
Rational ascendancy!"

But my hopeful questions
Will not be denied: 'Are these symbols of our
Awakening day: unspoken hopes informing
Speechless aspirations, desiring triumphs we can't foresee?
So much beyond as yet unseen, so much within
Of ingenuity and depths unplumbed, and high expectancy.

John Hands

One Light Spiritual Gathering



Friday 12th October 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'

'Finding Our Voice'

Singing Workshops with Margaret Marshall

**Sundays 21st October, 18th November,
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.



Next Newsletter Deadline



The deadline for the November issue is **Sunday 14th October**. Please send your contributions to Jane Blackall or any committee member by then. Thank you!!!

Email your articles to:

jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

'Stonehenge: Meaning and Mystery'

Sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker – 12th August 2012

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

Have you visited Stonehenge lately? Was your visit as dismal as Bill Bryson's trip, humorously described in his book that we heard an extract from early on – *Notes from a Small Island*? After eleven minutes staring gloomily at the stones amidst the crowds he wanted nothing more than to get back on the bus to Salisbury. I pass Stonehenge every month when I drive to Somerset to visit my mum and it's the road that I drive on that causes Stonehenge at least some of its problems. The A303 is busy and the constant roar of traffic filing past cannot help to create a positive atmosphere for viewing an ancient monument.

It was a different experience hundreds of years ago. William Stukeley, an 18th century antiquarian, wrote of his approach to Stonehenge, *"From a distance, its appearance is stately. As you advance nearer, the greatness of its contour fills the eye in an astonishing manner. When you enter the building and cast your eyes around the yawning ruins, you are struck into an ecstatic reverie, which none can describe, and they can only be sensible of it that feel it."*

John Constable described Stonehenge as *"a mighty enigma on the wilderness of Salisbury Plain"* and William Blake pictures it as the work of the giant Albion who stands above it with his stone working tools, giving a sense of England as a chosen, and divinely inspired, land.

The archaeologist Jacquetta Hawkes suggests that "every age has the Stonehenge it deserves or desires". In 21st century Britain we certainly face assorted dilemmas in managing such ancient monuments. Many of us yearn for a sense of connection with our ancient past. Yet there are so many of us that we may all too easily, by our very presence, destroy the atmosphere that draws us to such sights in the first place. Stonehenge, as a scheduled ancient monument, is owned by the Crown and cared for by English Heritage - and looking after it is a problem. Wouldn't most of us like to visit such places alone or with a few selected companions? Instead you have to queue even to get into the car park on busy days and I have never driven past without there being several coaches parked in the car park. Stonehenge has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1986 and attracts visitors from around the world – just under one million visitors a year according to English Heritage. For such a popular attraction to have such poor facilities to welcome visitors does seem a missed opportunity. Bill Bryson expresses this with characteristic irony when he writes:

"This is, after all, merely the most important prehistoric monument in Europe and one of the dozen most visited tourist attractions in England, so clearly there is no point in spending foolish sums making it interesting and instructive."

But there is a plan to build a new visitor centre and to close part of a road in order to make the site a little more like the grassland plain it was originally built in. Sadly there is little hope now that the once planned tunnel to hide the road beneath Salisbury Plain can ever be afforded.



Meanwhile, some very interesting archaeological exploration has been taking place in the surrounding area – for there are hundreds of other prehistoric sites within 2km of Stonehenge. Most are much less obvious sites, and because of that they have been less disturbed and so new discoveries can still be made beneath their covering soil. For example, the Stonehenge Riverside Archaeological Project discovered that another bluestone henge had been sited near the end of what's known as the avenue of stones, which connects Stonehenge with the River Avon. This whole area is a wondrously complex site of ancient remains. At Durrington Walls, just a few miles away there are remains of massive timber circular buildings; then there is Silbury Hill – at 130feet high, the largest human made mound in Europe, with close by the, to my mind, far more atmospheric stone circle of Avebury – with its circle twice the diameter of Stonehenge.

It's hardly surprising that ever since visitors reached Stonehenge in any great numbers there have been endless theories about its purpose and origins. Built by giants, aliens, people from the Continent or Egypt; constructed by Druids or by Merlin and his friend King Arthur or by beings from Atlantis? We can take our pick of these creative ideas but perhaps we need to turn to archaeologists for more grounded theories. Most recent research shows that the site was developed in at least three distinct phases over thousands of years – starting with a large ditch and timber henge in around 3200BCE, in the Neolithic Period – the late stone age, when farming settlements had been established. In the second phase of Stonehenge's construction, the great bluestones were brought from Wales -- perhaps around 2900BCE, and in a third, thousand year phase, the most complex stone work was erected – these great lintels in the outer circle with an inner horseshoe shape and a further structure re-using the bluestones. This last phase of construction lasted till about 1600BCE in the early Bronze Age and also saw the creation of that mile and a quarter long Avenue which connects Stonehenge with the River Avon.

This was never one project – its meaning and use changed over time – and it seems likely that it was never finished. But we do know two of the most likely ways in which Stonehenge was used - though since all this happened in pre-history – before things were written down – every conclusion we draw in a way comes from an intriguing meeting of our own humanity with the stones themselves. Pre-historians ask themselves 'what might these monuments say about the many people who worked so hard to build them over thousands of years?' And we can ask 'what might these monuments say of us?'

Stonehenge was, it seems likely, built for both ritual and cosmic purposes. Much is said of its astronomical alignments – that a particular stone, the heel stone, is touched by the

‘Stonehenge: Meaning and Mystery’ by Rev. Sarah Tinker *(continued)*

dawning sun on the summer solstice. A similar alignment occurs at the winter solstice too. The people who built this stone circle were sophisticated in their observations of the heavens above them and probably sensed a connection with the cosmos that is hard to imagine today. Mircea Eliade – a renowned professor of the history of religion writes that in archaic astronomy man felt “himself indissolubly connected with the cosmos and the cosmic rhythms”.

I wonder how you feel when you look up into the night sky? Does it touch you to realise how very tiny our planet is in the vast reaches of space? There is something so very universally human about staring up at the stars in wonder. Perhaps that's why I so like the quotation we might soon have on our notice board outside on the street – Oscar Wilde's comment that “we are all of us in the gutter, but some of us are looking up at the stars”.

So Stonehenge was built with a sense of awe for the cosmos. It was also seemingly built for ritual function – specifically people's relationship with those who had died. It dealt with the essential human condition of knowing that we die, that our lives are finite. For ancient people a belief in a spirit realm where the ancestors lived on seems to have been likely – places like Stonehenge then were built in order to recognise and celebrate the connection with the ancestors in this other realm. Mircea Eliade writes that the “ideas of perennality and of continuity between life and death are apprehended through the exaltation of the ancestors as identified, or associated, with stones”. The latest archaeology in the area of Stonehenge suggests that the circle was primarily connected with rituals to do with death,

that human remains were brought by boat along the River Avon and processed along the stone avenue and that a few remains were cremated and buried within the henge itself. The stones with their solidity and rootedness in the earth have such a sense of permanence – they will outlive us all. And the earth and the moon keep turning and the stars appear at night and the sun rises and sets following a rhythm that was noted by those people of ages long past. Meanwhile here in 21st century London we are in the midst of an artistic and sporting feast as the Olympics, Paralympics and their accompanying Cultural Olympiad get into full swing. Until 1952 Olympic medals were awarded for the arts but now we have a far more eclectic array of cultural treats to entertain us.

High on my list is Jeremy Deller's piece called *Sacrilege*, which is touring Britain, and is the inspiration for the theme of today's address. He has created a replica of Stonehenge as a bouncy castle and both children and adults are invited to jump upon this replica of an ancient monument in various parks and municipal gardens around the country. How delightful an idea is that - when Stonehenge itself is fenced off to protect it from the public and from some people's uncontrollable desire to carve their names upon its ancient stone, we can instead bounce on a life size model of it. Perhaps this is the Stonehenge that our era both ‘deserves’ and needs - for we live in a crowded land and we cannot all visit an ancient site like Stonehenge and have deep and meaningful experiences there. But through an artistic project such as this perhaps we can reclaim Stonehenge as an idea, an image, to be enjoyed by everyone. Sport for all; art for all; worthy aims I think when you live in a crowded land.

2012 Channing Lecture: ‘Leaving Egypt’

**Saturday 20th October, 6.30 pm
Golders Green Unitarians,
31½ Hoop Lane, London, NW11 8BS**

You are cordially invited to the Channing Lecture which will be delivered by Rev. Dr. David Usher, our District Minister.

In an environment of general indifference to organised religion, and the decline of our denominational fortunes, British Unitarians can often be heard pining for a return to erstwhile strength and prosperity. Yet how willing are we to do what might be necessary to leave the exile of decline for the promised land of growth? As Channing had finally to abandon something he held very dear in order to establish something with new energy, David's lecture will challenge our determination to cling to the present at the cost of the future. There will be time for responses and discussion.

There will be an admission charge of £5, part of which will be donated to the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. All are welcome. Please tell your friends.

Safeguarding Training

**Saturday 13th October 2012
10 for 10.30am-4.30pm at Essex Church**

Every congregation is now compelled by law to have a trained Safeguarding Officer and Policy. A training day including important information about safeguarding and a session on volunteering will take place here at Essex Church on Saturday 13th October.

The Safeguarding training will be provided in the morning by Churches Child Protection Services (CCPAS) and will be followed in the afternoon by a two hour workshop on various aspects of Volunteering:

- Opportunities
- Processes
- Mutual expectations
- Support

If you would like to attend you will need to register your interest by 1st October so please be sure to contact the Local Leadership Strategy Group for a booking form as soon as possible: UnitarianLLSG@gmail.com

Sunday Services at Essex Church

**7th October, 11am –
'A Push and a Pull'**

Service led by Jane Blackall

From time to time we may experience the sensation of 'hot' ambivalence towards the opportunities that life presents to us – more than just a cool 'take it or leave it' – occasionally feeling strongly drawn towards a new experience and yet held back at the very same time. This kind of tension can feel quite uncomfortable but in this service we will explore the possibility that it may be a sign which can help us identify our 'growing edge'.

**14th October, 11am –
'Restless Curiosity'**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

The Vikings had a word '*aefintyr*' to describe humanity's restless curiosity. This is the yearning that led to so many of the world's discoveries. It is the spirit that encourages us to explore within. Yet it is balanced by our understandable fears and our desires for security. How can we best live a life that balances our curiosity and our fear?

12.30pm - **Small-Group Communion**
led by David Francis Darling (lasting ~20 minutes)

**21st October, 11am –
'Unitarians in Transylvania'**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

In this service we will mark the remarkable development of Unitarian thought in 16th century Transylvania. Come and find out about the one and only Unitarian monarch, consider the value of religious pluralism and hear more about the 80,000 Unitarians living in Romania today.

**28th October, 11am –
'All Souls'**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

On this Sunday closest to All Souls' Day and the Day of the Dead we will hold a simple ceremony to honour those who we love who are no longer with us. You may wish to bring a photo of someone you remember in love to add to our table. Our ceremony will also honour the pagan new year of Samhain.



Multifaith Calendar

✧ **1 - 8 October – Sukkot – Jewish**

The harvest festival commemorating the 40 years that the Jews spent in the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land after escaping slavery in Egypt. A temporary hut with a roof covered only with branches - called a *sukkah* - is used during the festival. In some warmer countries families may live in their *sukkah* as well as eating there. Four species of plant are used symbolically during the festival - the *lulav* (palm branch), the *etrog* (a yellow citrus fruit), the *hadas* (myrtle) and the *aravah* (willow).

✧ **9 October – Simchat Torah – Jewish**

Simchat Torah marks the completion of the annual cycle of reading from the Torah. When the reading of the last Torah portion concludes, the reading proceeds immediately to the first chapter of Genesis without a break, as the Torah is a circle, and never ends. Children dance and sing as all the Torah scrolls are paraded around the synagogue, giving as many people as possible the honour of carrying a Torah scroll.

🌀 **16 - 24 October – Navaratri / Durga Puja / Dasserah – Hindu**

This festival, known by different names, is one of the few celebrated across India. Navaratri means 'nine nights', the length of the festival - the final three days being the most important. In the north of India the goddess Durga is worshipped on the eighth day.

✧ **20 October – Anniversary of the Birth of the Báb - Bahá'í**

Bahá'ís celebrate the birth of the Báb (the title means 'the gate' in Arabic) in Shiraz, Persia in 1819. The Báb was the prophet-herald, whose mission was to proclaim the imminent arrival of 'Him Whom God shall make manifest,' - Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. Bahá'ís observe this holy day by abstaining from work. Gatherings on the day usually involve prayers, devotional readings, music and fellowship.

🌐 **21 - 28 October - Inter Faith Week of Prayer for World Peace**

The week is supported by members from many different religious communities. A collection of prayers drawn from the literature of several world religions is published for use during the week.

🕌 **26 October – Id-ul-Adha / The Festival of Sacrifice – Muslim**

This major Muslim festival marks the end of the Hajj (the pilgrimage to Makkah). Animals are sacrificed by pilgrims at Mina, on the way back to Makkah from Mount Arafat, in commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. Muslims around the world share in the celebrations, sacrificing an animal if they can afford it, the meat being distributed to the poor and shared with family and friends.

🌀 **30 October – Pavarana – Buddhist**

The day marks the end of the Rains Retreat and is also known as Sangha Day. Monks who have completed the three month retreat invite their associates to reprove them for any failings (Pavarana means 'to invite').

🌀 **31 October – Kathina Day – Buddhist**

In the Theravada Buddhist tradition, Kathina Day is celebrated by the lay community offering monks new Kathina robes at the end of their three month Rains Retreat. The date of the festival varies according to when the rainy season arrives in different countries.