



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: December 2011 / January 2012

What's On...

Thursday 1st December, 7-9.00pm
'The Humane Virtues: Tolerance'

Sunday 4th December, 11am-noon
'Comforting the Afflicted'
Led by Members of the Congregation

Thursday 8th December, 7-9.00pm
'The Humane Virtues: Forgiveness'

Sunday 11th December, 11am-noon
'Let There Be Light'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 11th December, 12.30pm
Small-Group Communion
Led by Tristan Jovanović

Sunday 11th December, 2-3.00pm
Nia Technique
Class led by Sonya Leite

Tuesday 13th December, 7-9pm
Creativity Group:
'Decorations for the Church'

Sunday 18th December, 11am-noon
'Christmas Carol Service'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 18th December, 12.30pm
Congregational Christmas Lunch

Saturday 24th December, 5pm
'Candlelit Christmas Eve'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Please note: there will be no service on Sunday 25th December

Sunday 1st January, 11am-noon
'Farewell and Welcome'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 8th January, 11am-noon
'William Tyndale: Lost in Translation'
Service led by Tristan Jovanović

Sunday 8th January, 12.30pm
Small-Group Communion
Led by David Francis Darling

Sunday 8th January, 2-3.00pm
Nia Technique
Class led by Sonya Leite

See page two for more events...

A Message from our Minister:

Lights Shining in Dark Times



When the children were little there was a country lane that we often used to drive along on our way home. As we turned a particular corner, and passed a small cottage, we'd all look at an upstairs window in hope. And at night time and in the winter our hope was nearly always rewarded by the sight of an illuminated white goose, standing proudly there for all to see. It was an electric lamp and in later years I did find a shop that sold them. But for many years that goose seemed remarkable and quite unique to us. We'll never know what motivated the people who lived there to place that goose in the window but I hope they sensed what pleasure it gave us and no doubt many other travellers on that quiet little road on the outskirts of town.

We're at 'that' time of year again, when the days are ever shorter and sunshine feels precious. There is more darkness than light here in the northern hemisphere. People the world over are struggling with all the usual challenges of life and our individual stories are played out against a backdrop of world financial turmoil and civil unrest. In such times one answer might simply be to hibernate, to snooze under the duvet and hope for better, brighter, times ahead. Another way might be to join the illuminated goose brigade.

I'm not advocating the mass purchase of lamps in the shape of farm animals. In these times of austerity and soaring fuel costs we'd better not use any more electricity than is strictly necessary. But as spiritually aware people we can perhaps access something just as effective. I really do believe there is an inner light that shines within us all and within the whole of creation. Our task could then be to notice that light all around us and find it, and activate it, within ourselves. It's there in the glimpses of sunlight, in the colours of autumn leaves, in the fresh breeze. It's there in a shopkeeper's smile, a bus driver's patience, a thoughtful question, a kindly word or deed. Light is used symbolically in all the world's religions, perhaps because when we really trust light we can better embrace darkness.

As Christmas time approaches my hope is that its powerful imagery of Jesus' humble beginnings, of a tyrant outwitted, of guidance by a shining star, may help us find our way through the dark times, and may remind us of our own inner light that can shine out and bring cheer to fellow travellers, however gloomy the weather might be.

Season's Greetings.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

In this month's newsletter...

* New '7 O'clock Social' Group to launch in January * Visiting OLSX at St. Pau's * 'Small Group Communion: One Year On' by Tristan Jovanović * News from Lucky * Report from the Unitarian Women's Group Conference by Juliet Edwards * 'Singing in Community' with Jo McAndrews returns in January * Community Choir * 'Defenders of Faith?' – a recent 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

What's on in January *(continued)*

Sunday 15th January, 11am-noon
'Can You Know this is True?'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 15th January, 12.30-1.15pm
'Finding Your Voice'
Singing workshop with Margaret Marshall

Tuesday 17th January, 7-9.00pm
7 O'Clock Social – Tea, Cake and Chat

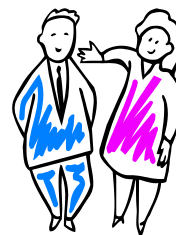
Sunday 22nd January, 11am-noon
'Home'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Tuesday 24th January, 7-9.00pm
Reading Group:
'Broken for You' by Stephanie Kallos

Sunday 29th January, 11am-noon
'Charles Dickens: His Social Message'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 29th January, 2.00-6.00pm
'Singing in Community'
Workshop led by Jo McAndrews

Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



Stewarding:

4 th December:	Heidi Ferid
11 th December:	Alice Lambert
18 th December:	Natasha Drennan
24 th December:	Tristan Jovanović
1 st January:	Heidi Ferid
8 th January:	?
15 th January:	?
22 nd January:	?
29 th January:	Tristan Jovanović

Coffee:

4 th December:	John Hands
11 th December:	Ruth Okine
18 th December:	Caroline Blair
24 th December:	David Darling
1 st January:	Sue Smith
8 th January:	Jo Ridgers
15 th January:	Caroline Blair
22 nd January:	Carol Sheppard
29 th January:	Jane Blackall

Greeting:

4 th December:	Carol Sheppard
11 th December:	?
18 th December:	Sue Smith
24 th December:	Jo Ridgers
1 st January:	John Hands
8 th January:	David Darling
15 th January:	Jo Ridgers
22 nd January:	Natasha Drennan
29 th January:	?

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

Essex Church Creativity Group



Tuesday 13th December 2011, 7.00-9.00pm

At December's creativity group we will be making simple Christmas decorations (paper chains and the like) to brighten up the church and hall in advance of the Carol service and lunch. For this reason we will be meeting a week earlier than usual on 13th December. As ever, all are welcome, and no particular skills are required!

The creativity group has been running once a month for nearly ten years. Regular members have decided to give it a rest, in its current form, and perhaps have occasional projects and sessions for specific art and craft activities. In 2012 we hope to have some sort of celebration of all the creativity group has done over the last 10 years but in the meantime why not come along to this session and help give the creativity group a good send-off. As ever there will doubtless be various treats to share!

Jane Blackall

7 O'clock Social Group



Tuesday 17th January 2012, 7.00-9.00pm

We are taking a bit of a break from the creativity group after Christmas, and thought instead we would have a general tea, cake and chat group downstairs in the library at 7 o'clock on the third Tuesday of each month.

Anyone is welcome to come along, bringing something to do (sewing, knitting, drawing, anything you like) or just bringing yourself. We will sit for a couple of hours just to chat and have a drink and a snack. We hope it will offer a nice warm space where anyone who wants to get to know others from the church a little better might like to pop in and talk, listen or just sit just as they choose.

Caroline Blair

Membership 2012

In January current members and friends of our congregation will be receiving their annual letter and form to fill in for membership. It's good practice to ask people to renew their membership in this way each year and we'd be grateful for your feedback on how our re-vamped form feels to receive and fill in. We'd also be grateful if you could return the forms speedily to the church office or even fill them in straight away on a Sunday morning.

Membership is a really valuable way to show that you support our congregation and are in accord with its liberal religious ethos. If you want to know more about what membership entails then do get in touch with me and have a chat.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

Christmas 2011 at Essex Church



**Carol Service and Congregational Lunch
Sunday 18th December 2011**

We will be holding a Christmas carol service, followed by a congregational potluck lunch, on Sunday 18th December. Why not bring a friend along for this festive occasion?

**Candlelit Christmas Eve Service
Saturday 24th December 2011, 5-6pm**

On Christmas Eve there will be a special candlelit service at 5pm (please note we will not hold a service on Sunday 25th, Christmas Day, due to the lack of public transport).

**Christmas Eve Meal
Saturday 24th December 2011, 7-9pm**

As has become a tradition at Essex Church, a few members of the congregation are planning to go out for dinner at a reasonably priced local restaurant, after the service on Christmas Eve. Please speak to Juliet Edwards if you would like to come as she will book a table in early December.

'The Core of Religion'

Karen Armstrong gives Annual
Younghusband Lecture



Wednesday 7th December, 6.30pm
Liberal Jewish Synagogue,
28 St. John's Wood, London NW8 7HA

Karen Armstrong is the internationally celebrated commentator on contemporary religion and author of numerous books. Her most recent book, "Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life" has led to the founding of the Charter for Compassion. On 7th December, at 6:30pm, she will give the annual Younghusband Lecture, sponsored by World Congress of Faiths, on "The Core of Religion".

Entry is by ticket only, available from the World Congress of Faiths at 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG. Tel: 020 8959 3129 or online at www.worldfaiths.org (tickets are £5 for members of WCF, £10 for non-members).

Charities We Support



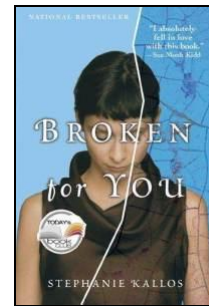
We're still working towards this year's contribution of £1,000 towards our Swaziland Education Project so if you would like to make a donation please write cheques to Essex Church but clearly marked with Swaziland at the top. Special thanks to regular visitor from the States and friend of the congregation, Gerry Lucovsky, who made a donation in memory of his wife Bobbi who died last month.

The committee also makes regular monthly payments to St Mungos, a charity which aims to 'open doors for homeless people'. And this winter we have also made a contribution to the West London Churches Homeless Concern which provides nightly beds in this area as well as on-going care and support, providing laundry and warm clothing.

Essex Church Committee

Essex Church Reading Group

'Broken for You' by Stephanie Kallos



Tuesday 24th January 2012, 7.00-9.00pm

The reading group's January session will be based on 'Broken for You' by Stephanie Kallos. This book was suggested by Michaela von Britzke and will be the 88th title discussed by the Essex Church reading group.

From a review on Amazon.co.uk:

"With a riotous energy that recalls the works of John Irving and Anne Tyler, Broken for You is a debut novel of infinite charm and tremendous heart that explores the risks and rewards of human connection, and the hidden strength behind things that only seem fragile. When we meet septuagenarian Margaret Hughes, she is living alone in a mansion in Seattle with only a massive collection of valuable antiques for company. Enter Wanda Schultz, a young woman with a broken heart who has come west to search for her wayward boyfriend. Both women are guarding dark secrets and have spent many years building up protective armor against the outside world. But as the two begin their tentative dance of friendship, the armor begins to fall away and Margaret opens her house to Wanda. Along the way, a famous mosaic artist is born, a Holocaust survivor is reunited with her long-lost tea set, and a sad-eyed drifter finds his long-lost daughter. Funny, heartbreaking, and alive with a potpourri of eccentric and irresistible characters, Broken for You is a testament to the saving graces of surrogate families, and shows how far the tiniest repair jobs can go in righting the world's wrongs."

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

Small Group Communion



**Sunday 11th December 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. We have been experimenting with services led by a variety of different people over the last year and we have been very encouraged by the experience so far.

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

11th December – Tristan Jovanović
8th January – David Francis Darling
12th February – Jane Blackall
11th March – Tristan Jovanović

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

Communion: One Year On

On a late summer morning last year, Jane Blackall and I sat discussing how we could best introduce a communion service to Essex Church. Many of you participated in our congregational communion service, which caused some consternation at the time but was over all well-received.

We have held a monthly communion after the main service on the second Sunday of every month for about a year. Each month is different: anyone who would like to take on the challenge of composing a communion liturgy is welcome to lead and we range from the unabashedly liberal Christianity of the occasions led by me or David Francis Darling, to the wholesome earthiness brought by Jane Blackall or Stephanie Saville, to the poetry of John Hands. We welcome each other's understanding of what a communion service is meant to be and how each month comes shaped by our own theology and tradition.

Jane maintains a file of past services (available in the library for reference), which can be used as inspiration but also serve as a living record of how many expressions of Unitarianism we have in our congregation. The elements we choose to include or focus upon are both seasonal and timeless and often lead to lively discussion. When I have spoken about our services with Anglican priests with whom I am acquainted, they are envious of the freedom we have to create and explore. They are bound to their liturgies whilst we need only hold ourselves to account for each other.

The regularity of our group has become rather comforting. We take great solace in our escape to the lower room where we break bread and drink wine, hold hands to bless and forgive, and sit in silent contemplation of the gathered community we create. We would love to welcome you. Come and break bread with us.

Tristan Jovanović

Exploring Shapes and Colours

with Heidi Ferid

After the service 'Seeking the Spiritual in Western Art', on the first Sunday in November, Heidi led this practical art workshop. It was brilliant!

I really enjoyed one exercise where we worked in a pair using just one piece of paper between us. We had to communicate without words and take turns to make marks in response to one another. Each had a different colour so it was easy to see who had contributed what. It was really fascinating to do it and observe the feelings that came up.

I hope we have more workshops like this in future.

Jo Ridgers



News from Lucky

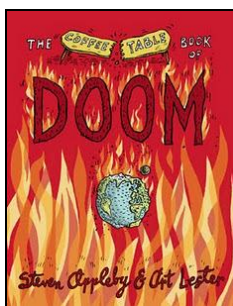


I happened to see a notice about the Universal Spiritual Gathering held at Essex Church monthly, usually on Friday evenings, by graduates of the Interfaith Seminary and since I was in London on that particular Friday in November I popped in to join them and was delighted to see Sarah. She asked me to write a bit for the newsletter about what's been happening for me and Albert since we moved to Brighton. We're doing really well – both in love though perhaps not quite as much with each other as with our dog Tilly. She's a rescue dog and a complete bundle of love, and a creature that teaches us lessons every day.

We're also learning about the British legal system as we wade through property issues and we've both passed our British citizenship test and pledged our allegiance to the Queen. That's felt like a new phase of our life here, putting down roots, no longer visitors here in Britain. Sorry we don't get to see all of you at Essex Church that often but we care about you still and send you love from the south coast!

Lucky Dolan

'The Coffee Table Book of Doom'



The latest addition to our library is co-written by Art Lester, one time minister here at Essex Church and Steven Appleby, the Guardian cartoonist. It's called 'The Coffee Table Book of Doom' and it manages to be both entertaining and informative about the many possible sources of impending doom – from global warming to nasty new diseases and prophets ancient and modern proclaiming that 'the end is nigh'. It's also available through the Guardian bookshop, Amazon, or your local bookshop and would make a perfect Christmas present for over-cheerful friends. You can find out more about gloom and doom on Art's blog tiny.cc/8f14f or by following @Doomwatchers on Twitter.

One Light Spiritual Gatherings: 'Gifts of Light'



**Friday 9th December 2011
6.30-8.15pm – Here at Essex Church**

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

We warmly invite you to join with people of all ages from all faiths and none in a glorious Candlelit Celebration of the One Light at the Heart of All. With music and meditation we offer gifts of light from our own spiritual paths and Light bearers of the seven rays bring gifts of eternal wisdom from their vibrations. Bring your beloved eternal self, your family, children and friends. All, all are welcome.

Join with the inspiring voices of Rev Razia Aziz and her group of singers to fill the Church with joyful sound. We will be singing 'Thousand Ways of Light' by Chloe Goodchild, 'Blessed' by Razia Aziz and 'Now Let us Sing!' - a traditional Gospel song with a toe tapping rhythm.

Festive Treats and lantern making at 5.30 pm
Spiritual Gathering by Candlelight at 6.30pm
Vegetarian supper served at 8.15pm

These events are free.
Donations for expenses are welcome.
Supper is £6. 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'

Forthcoming Gatherings

(2nd Friday of each month):

13th January - 'Stillness'
with Illumina Sacred Sound

10th February - Contentment

Visiting St. Paul's:

In Support of Occupy London Stock Exchange

Isn't pride one of the deadly sins and therefore best avoided? Well I did feel proud of us Unitarians when we went to support the campaigners camping out at St Paul's. First of all I counted 19 of us there, from 6 London congregations. Then Linda Hart spoke as part of the 'sermon on the steps' and just happened to be one of the few women to speak and brought a moving message of support and hope. Linda is minister of our Richmond congregation and has spent a fair bit of time with the campaigners – including running a very popular knitting group there in the Tent University. We Unitarians clutched our wholesome home made banners and looked sufficiently cheery

to be photographed repeatedly by passers by. And I felt proud of the protestors themselves who were managing their meetings with such dignity and care, using some of the compassionate communication methods that we learnt in a course here at Essex church last year. And which congregation had the most members there? Yes it was Kensington Unitarians and I am proud of the way we stuck it out and got a bit chilly and laughed and really wanted to make a bit of a difference in the world. One afternoon of protesting might seem to be neither here nor there in the greater scheme of things but I really do believe that everything we do can make a difference and I know how many of us want to create a fairer and more sustainable world for everyone. Perhaps a bit of healthy pride can help after all. Maybe it's greed we need to watch out for.



Sarah Tinker

I was glad to show my support in some small way and took two shoeboxes full of home-made traybakes to donate to the food tent. You can see Linda Hart's contribution to the 'Sermon on the Steps' online via this link: www.bit.ly/sermonLH

Jane Blackall

The demonstrations protesting against the gross inequalities in Western Society are clearly not going to go away. In one form or another they are going to continue until not only the politicians, share-traders and bankers finally realise that protests against them are mutating into a much more fundamental debate about Equality as such, but also that this is an issue which is addressed to all of us who are concerned about the materialist directions our society is taking. Those of us who are old enough to remember and participate in the arguments about socialism, know that at depth most of these debates too arose out of the inequalities in society and how these might be addressed. So I felt I wanted to be present at least once to listen to the discussions on the steps of St Paul's, and feel I am a part of what is going to be a debate which is going to move ever further into the body of our society and what we are pleased to call our "civilisation".

John Hands

I would like to share my thoughts about the occupy movement. For me this is a next step after Brian Haw and the Parliament Square protest. First of all I feel there is a very important issue of free speech in our democratic society. These protests should be possible as long as they are non-violent. A quest for a fairer society is behind all these protests. Many issues come to mind: high unemployment among the young, growing extremes of wealth and poverty, terrible and ultimately pointless wars... there are no easy solutions to all this. However, it seems clear to me that all this comes down to a lack of compassion. Respecting all of our human family is a core value. The occupy movement is a voice of dissent and I think it is important for us Unitarians to support it. I am working on some paintings and collages in connection with these themes.

Heidi Ferid

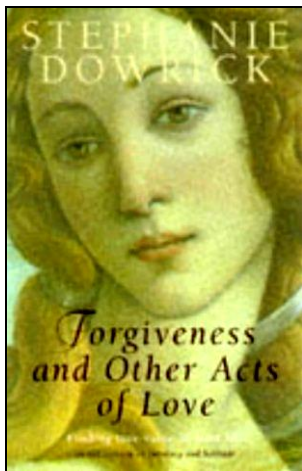
I often ask 'What am I doing here?' I have an inner Moaner reminding me that it is cold and no-one is listening and just as they have not 'banned the bomb' so are they not going 'to ban greed'. And yet I go to St. Paul's and I am glad as soon as I get there. Of course it is nice to see friends and feel a part of something but it is the questioning and the dialogue that holds my interest. This is how it was at other important times, I remember the profound discussions we would have at Greenham where everyone's voice was heard and you dared to dream. Here were a group of people who had the courage to say we should live more thoughtfully, that justice mattered and they did not have the answers, indeed it sounded as though we should all discover our values for ourselves. How very Unitarian! In the past we discussed how do we 'Carry Greenham home' and we found ways to make amusing videos, some went to prison and that kept the debate fresh in people's minds. People complained that we were untidy and the tents were an eyesore however the camp endured for years. There is a question about carrying the spirit of the occupation home, to ask whether our daily lives conform to our beliefs and how we might influence and question others. I want to thank those people in their cold tents for their gentle spirit, their courage and imagination and fun.

Carole Grace

A New Adult RE Course at Essex Church this Autumn:

'The Humane Virtues'

Six Thursday evenings from 3rd November



We're studying Stephanie Dowrick's book forgiveness and other acts of love in which she considers in depth what she describes as humane virtues – courage, fidelity, restraint, generosity, tolerance and forgiveness. We have had much discussion about other virtues that we'd want to add to the list of virtues and thought of plenty including trust and love and discernment.

We're still pondering quite how to define a virtue. What's good about this book is that it gets you thinking and talking as Dowrick's approach to these qualities is often a bit unusual. We liked her interesting views on fidelity which has less to do with sexual commitment and more to do with being true to oneself.

"To bring fidelity to life – taking on what it means to be consistent, persistent, trustworthy, committed, truthful, loving, and delicate in your discernment between what matters and what does not – you need to be capable of vigilance, of staying awake to the subtlety of what happens between you and other people this is not easy It involves being 'transparent' to your own self-deceptions."

We talked with one another about how we can best hear the urgings of our souls. Here are some of the ways we listed: being outside in nature, walking, driving, stop, listen and pay attention, check my habits regularly, meditation, music, listening, singing, allow times to be still and times in the bath tub.

Carol, Michaela, Sarah, Jami and Kathryn

There are two more sessions of the course and you would be welcome to join us for either of the sessions. Although it is desirable to read the book beforehand it is not essential:

1st December – **Tolerance**
8th December – **Forgiveness**

Exploring Spiritual Paths Within British Unitarianism

Saturday 3rd December from 2.00-5:30pm
at Golders Green Unitarians



Ann Peart, General Assembly President and former minister and long term member of Golders Green Unitarians will lead a session in which she will talk of her own journey within Unitarianism. There will be opportunity for discussion and for sharing of individual journeys within small groups. This will be followed by a bring and share meal, which will end by about 5.30pm.

All from the London District are invited but Ann especially hopes to meet up again with Unitarians from Golders Green and from other parts of London. Booking is not essential, but it would help with catering if you could let Feargus O'Connor know if you intend to be present.

Venue: Golders Green Unitarians, 31 ½ Hoop Lane,
Golders Green, London, NW11 8BS

Unitarian Christmas Cards for Sale



We have received some information about Unitarian Christmas Cards which are being sold John Pickering and Katie Hall who are members of Kendal Unitarians. On the back of each card are inspiring words that reflect Unitarian thoughts and values. Cards cost 75p each plus postage and packing. For more information contact John Pickering on 01539 754 343 or email creative@arten.plus.com.

We also have some cards left over from our previous art and craft fairs and fundraising campaigns so please speak to a member of the committee if you would like to buy some for the benefit of our own church community.



**A Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement
Forms led by Sonya Leite**

**Second Sunday of the Month from
2-3pm: 11th December, 8th January**

An hour of whole-body conditioning, done barefoot to diverse music. Delivering a cardiovascular workout for any level of fitness. Specific routines allow you to experience - the power of the martial arts, the stillness of the healing arts and the joy of movement through dance. Cost now £8 (£5 members). **Contact: Sonya Leite on 0207 371 1674.**

A project of the Unitarian District Association:

**Neighbourhood
Dinner**



**Saturday 10th December at 7.00pm
Bethnal Green, Mansford St Mission,
117 Mansford Street, E2 6LX**

The District is launching a Community Ministry of Social Action based at Bethnal Green. Its first project will be a Neighbourhood Dinner, to be held at the Mansford St Mission, and which will be free of charge to all.

Rev. Rob Gregson is taking the lead in organising this project, with a team of helpers. If you would like to volunteer on the day - setting up, cooking, serving, cleaning up, or in any other way, please contact Rob: mattorobg@gmail.com or telephone him on 07411280667.

This Neighbourhood Dinner is only the first project for the District's Community Ministry of Social Action. If you would like to be involved in any way, please contact Rob as above. This Community Ministry is being initially funded by the District Minister's Social Action Fund. Donations to the Fund are most welcome.

**'Singing in Community'
with Jo McAndrews**

**Essex Church in association with
the School of Playback Theatre (UK)**



Sunday 29th January 2012, 2-6pm, at Essex Church

An afternoon full of song!!! Singing together creates connection, deepening of listening, and opening of hearts. We welcome everyone with an inclination to sing whether experienced or a beginner. This is an opportunity to learn many and playful ways to make harmony together as a large group – a capella! We welcome Jo McAndrews back from Stroud after the blissful weekend she created for us in October 2011.

For anyone who loves singing, this is a wonderful chance to fill the beautiful space of Essex Church – the home of the Kensington Unitarians – with our voices and meet people from all over the world.

Cost: £20 / £15 / £10 depending on income or whatever you feel you can afford. To book please email info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk and make cheques payable to Essex Church.

'Every Person Has a Song'

Community Choir with Jenny Thorn

Tuesday evenings from 10th January – 7th February 2012

Singing is a joy and lifts the soul whatever is going on in life - sharing with others, even more so!

Grateful song, sorrowful song - come and find your voice - bring a song you love, and learn one another's.

Ancient song, new song - come and experience old and new music from many different cultures, also gentle ways into creating new melody and harmony, exploring the language of music.

Come and join a friendly group on Tuesday evenings between 7 and 9pm. One more session this term, 6th December, starting again weekly from 10th January till (inc) 7th February – £6 per session.

Details of local venue (near Latimer Road tube station), and how to get there, from Jenny at jen.thorn@uwclub.net.

The Good News



The Good News
Is always arriving
Here – now – and
In the air everywhere
Around us. In
Cries of birds
Colours of flowers
Hidden in nests
Waving to us
From forests and fields
Sound of waterfalls and
Streams, calling us in
Oceans thunder in
Strident winds in
Faces of children, even
Animals declare it
To us
The Good News that
Doesn't come from afar
Needs no-one to interpret it but
Is around us and in us:
No distinction.

John Hands



Festival of Unitarians in Southern England

From the 3rd - 5th February 2012
at the Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing

**A weekend by the sea filled with
Celebration, Inspiration, and Education**

"Lighting the fuse for an explosion of Unitarian vitality"

- For Unitarians and other seekers with a passion for the future
- Sponsored by the London and Southeast district and open to all
- More than 20 workshops including workshops on spirituality, congregational health, worship
- Humour with a message from keynote speaker Robin Ince
- Multiple workshops: traditional, contemplative, contemporary, more!
- Programme for children and youth
- Bursaries available to make this event accessible to all
- Main worship service led by Rev. Patrick O'Neill

We would like to get a number of participants going along from Essex Church. The committee is keen to encourage people by making a contribution towards the cost of attending. Please speak to Sarah, Jane, or one of the committee ASAP if you are interested.

For more information: www.fusefest.org.uk



A group of young people from the 'Big Voice' project (organised by Jennie Blair and which our congregation helped to support) went to Lambeth Palace to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury and learn about the relationship between the church and politics.

Mary Blackall 1939-2011



My mum, Mary Blackall, died in St. Joseph's Hospice on Friday 18th November after a long illness. Her health had been poor for some years, due to an autoimmune condition which caused her liver to fail, and in the last 12 months she had increasingly suffered from confusion and tiredness as a result.

Some longer-standing members of the church will have met mum, as she occasionally came along to our carol services or art and craft fairs, until her health prevented her from doing so. A few will be aware of all the little ways in which she supported us behind the scenes, helping to proof-read newsletters, making various craft items to sell for fundraising, and also creating some of the panels for our seasonal wall-hanging (there are usually two of her appliqué pieces at either end of the display at the front of the church). Also, mum's legendary bread pudding often made an appearance at our bring-and-share lunches.

The picture above was taken just a couple of weeks before mum died. She had long been intending to knit herself a hat to wear about the house and, on a difficult weekend when she hadn't been at all well, I decided I would spend the day crocheting us an (almost) matching pair. I got dad to take a photo of us modelling them. It was a rather lovely moment and I'm glad we have a picture to remember it by.

I would very much like to thank all of my friends from church for your support throughout this difficult year.

Jane Blackall

February Newsletter



The deadline for the next issue is **Sunday 15th January**. Please send your contributions (articles, poems, news, etc...) to Jane Blackall or a committee member by that date. **Thank you!!!**

Warden's Column



At our staff meeting on Thursday, we discussed the accessible toilet door again. It was just me and Sarah, as Jane couldn't be there because of her mum, but we had a lovely centred meeting – gathered round the beeswax egg candle given us by Mary Spurr and which has nearly burnt out now after perfuming our discussions almost all year.

The agenda/minutes for these meetings (posted on the back of the office door) is an evolving record our small triumphs and irritations and once more we came back to the best way to indicate to people how to open and close the accessible toilet (and not end up stuck in there in the dark, not realising the light-switch is on the outside!)

We agreed that a general policy of leaving the door shut rather than open, but with a clear sign on it saying "Don't pull the handle" was having some success – but Sarah thought it would help to add a picture of the open/close buttons to it and an arrow pointing their way. We also need a similar sign for the inside of the door and maybe something around the buttons that draws attention to them. We have considered the radical step of putting a sign actually on the handle that physically prevents you from using it – but we're holding back on this for the time-being.

It's surprising how counter-intuitive people find this door. The initial problem was that people would step inside, press the close button and then look around increasingly frantically for the light switch as the door slowly shut them into pitch-blackness and they had to fumble around for a way to get out again. It can be a pretty traumatic experience, but for that reason it's a mistake you generally only make once! Now the main problem seems to be people going in when the door's already open and using the handle to shut it. It's not just that we want to save people effort, the mechanism is actually quite delicate and we had to have it adjusted a few months ago because the door had tilted towards the floor. This is likely to be due to the angle people pull the handle at.

On the plus side – the toilet is now regularly being used by disabled people at the Seicho no Ie service on Saturday night and is also popular with their children: Gitana, our cleaner, has told me she's had to turn the power off a few times when they've got particularly obsessed with playing with the buttons ☺

By the time we'd discussed all of the above and what we could (and couldn't) do about it, we were feeling a familiar mixture of impotence and amusement. We finished the meeting with a moment's thankfulness, blew out the candle and sent the light to Jane.

It often seems ridiculous that we spend so much time worrying about these little things – seemingly to little effect - but then every now and then, someone will have a flash of inspiration that leads to a solution we're all really pleased with. Maybe one of you reading this is thinking "but all you need to do is . . ." if so, please let us know! Our continued experience in our staff meetings, is that sharing a problem you're stuck on is often helpful, even when you think you've already considered all the possibilities – so it's in that spirit I offer you this account of our labours!

Jenny Moy

Multifaith Calendar of Festivals for December/January

☪ 6th December – Ashura – Muslim

Ashura is a day of mourning for some Muslims, particularly the Shi'ite communities, because of the martyrdom of Hussein, the second son of Ali and Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter. The festival is celebrated by the Shi'ite communities in Iraq, Iran and the sub-continent of India.

✝ 8th December – Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Catholic

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is mainly marked by the Roman Catholic church, to celebrate the doctrine that Mary herself was born free from original sin, leaving her sinless to bear Jesus.

☸ 8th December – Bodhi Day – Buddhist

On Bodhi Day some Buddhists, for example those in the Pure Land tradition, celebrate Gotama's attainment of Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya, India.

★ 21st-28th December – Hanukkah – Jewish

Hanukkah is the Jewish celebration of the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem, after it was recaptured from the Syrian Greeks in BCE 165. Candles are lit, one for each of the eight evenings of Hanukkah and food cooked with oil is eaten, to remember the miracle with oil that kept the Temple lights burning.

✝ 24th December – Christmas Eve – Christian

On Christmas Eve churches hold evening carol services and Midnight Masses to herald the arrival of Christmas Day and celebrate the birth of Jesus.

✝ 25th December – Christmas Day – Christian

Christmas Day celebrates the birth of Jesus who Christians believe to be the Son of God. Gifts are reminders of the offerings brought to the infant Jesus in Bethlehem.

✝ 26th December – Zartusht-no-diso – Zoroastrian

Indian Parsi Zoroastrians commemorate the death of Zarathustra according to the Shenshai calendar.

✝ 1st January – The Circumcision or Naming of Jesus – Christian

The Christian Church celebrates the circumcision or naming of Jesus at eight days old in accordance with Jewish custom, as recorded in Luke 2:21.

☪ 5th January – Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji – Sikh

Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Sikh Guru, formed the order of the Khalsa on Baisakhi (Vaisakhi), and instituted the Five Ks. Important anniversaries associated with the lives of the Gurus are referred to as Gurburbs, and are marked with an akhand path, an unbroken reading of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

✝ 6th January – Epiphany – Christian

The twelfth day of Christmas, celebrates the visit of the wise men, or magi, to the baby Jesus. It is particularly important in the Orthodox church, where the baptism of Jesus and his first miracle at Cana are also remembered at this time.



✝ 6th-7th January – Christmas Eve and Day – Eastern Orthodox and Armenian Churches

Many Eastern Orthodox and Armenian churches still use the Julian rather than the Gregorian calendar. This means that they celebrate Christmas and other fixed festivals thirteen days after the Western churches, so the 6th and 7th January in the Orthodox calendar equates to 24th and 25th December in the Western calendar.

☸ 14th January – Makar Snkranti / Lohri / Pongal – Hindu

Makar Snkranti / Lohri is a day for almsgiving and putting right disagreements and quarrels. The festival is called Lohri in the Punjab, and Pongal in Tamil Nadu and celebrated with special food (Tamils eat a rice dish, pongal). Punjabi families (including some Sikhs) celebrate Lohri following the birth of a son.

☸ 16th January – Shinran Memorial Day – Buddhist

The day is celebrated by some Buddhists in the Mahayana tradition. Shinran Shonin (1173 - 1263 CE) founded Jodo Shinshu, one of the schools of Pure Land Buddhism.

✝ 18th-25th January – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has become ever more widely celebrated with the growing commitment to ecumenism among churches. Special services and other events are held. The theme for 2012 comes from the churches in Poland, who have reflected upon their own experience as a nation, and in particular how they have been changed and transformed by the upheavals of their history, and sustained by their faith.

☸ 25th January – Honen Memorial Day – Buddhist

Honen is one of the outstanding figures in the history of Japanese Buddhism, and the founder of Jodo Shinshu, one of the schools of Pure Land Buddhism.

★ 27th January – Holocaust Memorial Day – Jewish

A remembrance day for all those who suffered at the hands of the Nazis during World War 2 (1939-45). It aims to help ensure that no such atrocity happens again, by keeping fresh the memory of all who suffered and died at that time.

☸ 28th January – Vasanta Panchami / Saraswati Puja – Hindu

Widely celebrated in India, and by Hindus around the world, this festival is usually linked with Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and learning. Yellow is a predominant colour in the celebrations, to indicate the onset of spring and because of its associations with Saraswati.

Unitarian Women's Group

Report of Annual Weekend Conference
at Great Hucklow: 28th – 30th October 2011

I became a member of the UWG soon after it began in 1981. It has meant a great deal to me personally and the group's activities opened my eyes and mind to new ideas and helped me to gain confidence. At each annual meeting we try to strike a balance between serious and fun activities. We also have our AGM, when we plan policy, choose a delegate and a speaker for our slot at GA and plan for the following year's conference.

We had a most interesting talk by a speaker from Womankind Worldwide which was another opportunity to hear about the work of an organisation chosen by the Unitarian Peace Fellowship for their 2011 appeal.

This year's topic was "Femaleness, Feminism and Spirituality". On Saturday morning Ann Peart had led a session on prayer and sexuality and on Saturday evening there was a talk led by Nicky Jenkins and followed by small group discussion, on the question 'Is feminism old hat and how can we bring a female aspect to our spirituality?'

I enjoyed leading a session which I had called "poetry for pleasure". I had selected poems, all but two of them written by women, and I was touched by the sensitivity with which they were spoken by the women who had offered to read. There was also one ballad called 'The Strange Visitor' which we read chorally. Each part was so well dramatised that, at the end, when we all leapt up, in a supposedly frightening way, we were all in fits of laughter!

On Saturday afternoon we had a 2 ½ hour drumming lesson which was very popular. Some effort had been made to find a woman to lead this group and she started by showing us a film about the sense of rhythm in African life from crushing cassava to a local festival. Then we were introduced to djembe drums. There was one for each of us. Imagine more than twenty of us concentrating hard on maintaining the rhythm that we had been taught and our instructor performing a solo against our background drumming. There was intense concentration on our faces.

There is always warmth and friendship at these weekends and of course it's a pleasure to be at the Nightingale centre in Great Hucklow. It was very pleasing that several first time attendees came along.

Sunday morning began after breakfast with a final business meeting in which plans for next year fell into place. We went to the service at the Unitarian chapel, ably led by Liz Shaw. The weekend finished after lunch, which included a spectacular bread and butter pudding!

Next year's meeting will be from 26th to 28th October and the topic will be "The power of anger in the work of love". If you think you might be interested come and speak to me.

Juliet Edwards

'Finding Our Voice'

Singing Workshops with Margaret Marshall

Sunday 15th January, 19th February, 18th March
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 now 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.

A workshop from the Art and Spirituality Network

'A Magical Mystery Tour Through Colour'

Saturday 14th January 2012, 10am - 4:30pm
at Golders Green Unitarians

Explore the imaginative and emotional qualities of colour with art-making, movement, gentle creativity and ritual - a workshop led by Angela Schutz and John Harley.

Cost: £25 (includes art materials and drinks
- reductions available if needed).
Advance booking essential.
Bring some lunch to share.

**For a booking form and further information go to:
www.artandspirituality.net**

Venue: Golders Green Unitarians, 31 ½ Hoop Lane,
Golders Green, London, NW11 8BS

'Defenders of Faith?'

Sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker – 20th November 2011

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



If you take a British coin out of your pocket and look around its rim you will probably find the letters FD or 'Fid Def' engraved on it – abbreviated forms of the Latin words Fidei Defensor. Fidei Defensor is a title given to Henry VIII way back in 1521 by the Pope. The pope also conferred this honourable title on Henry's then wife Catherine of Aragon. What happened next is the stuff of childhood history lessons – suffice to say good old Henry bade both the pope and Catherine farewell but kept that title – Defender of **the** Faith – and it has been used by English monarchs ever since to mark their position as head of the Church of England. That is the faith they are defending – Anglicanism. Back in 1994 Prince Charles, who has quietly done a great deal to promote inter-faith dialogue, Prince Charles commented, "I personally would rather see [my future role] as Defender of Faith, not *the* Faith."

I wonder if any of you ever find yourselves defending faith in some way?

A friend who is a GP and I were comparing the merits of our jobs. We both spoke of what we called the party phenomena when complete strangers on hearing of your particular line of work embark on in-depth discussions that you'd rather avoid. Jim gets the 'Oh doctor, I've had this ingrowing toe nail for ages' sort of line or this 'strange pain in my left buttock'. I get the 'oh what a fascinating job – so what do you think happens after death or what's your take on the virgin birth?' And sometimes I am on the receiving end of people's rage about religion – be it from the militant atheist stand point – the 'how can you be so deluded when there's not a shred of evidence?' or the 'world would be alright if it wasn't for religions – they cause all the wars' – or sometimes I am cornered by the religious enthusiast.

A while back I was button holed at a party by someone who complained vigorously to me about the growth of religious pluralism in this country. She had picked the wrong person if she was hoping to convince me of her view point. So far as I'm concerned 'it's a done deal' as they say. We live in a multi-cultural society and that brings with it multiple religions. We are living in a multi-faith world. In Britain we are religiously diverse and I believe that fact strengthens British society rather than weakens it – which is not to say that the religiously diverse path is always an easy one to walk. But my party conversation reminded me of how words can be used and misused. Religious pluralism would generally be defined as an acceptance of religious diversity but it also has come to refer to inter-religious dialogue – the bringing together of people from different faiths – not to convert one another but to hear what each other has to say with the aim of understanding one another better. Religious pluralism is used by some to mean that all religions have validity and worth – a view often held by Unitarians. A sort of institutional level version of 'there is something of God in everyone' that we have happily borrowed from the Society of Friends. And it is this view that the woman I met at the party was passionately arguing against – 'no no no' she said – for her, her faith was true and therefore others were false.

Furthermore she held it as a god given duty to assist people like me in accepting her truth and turning away from falsehood. She wanted to save my soul. Would it be intolerant of me to suggest that all parties should have detectors placed at the door that would beep if anyone with these sorts of views was about to enter? These kinds of discussions are not fun – it's hard to say politely to someone – 'no thanks – if saving my soul means I'll end up as tedious a party guest as you – well I'll chose eternal damnation any day!'

I'm telling you the funny side of this but when I did a google search on the computer for religious pluralism – within two minutes of searching I found this quotation from an American evangelist Randall Terry:

"I want you to just let a wave of intolerance wash over you. I want you to let a wave of hatred wash over you. Yes, hate is good... Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a Biblical duty, we are called by God, to conquer this country. We don't want equal time. We don't want pluralism."

That's not quite so funny.

But maybe Randall Terry is not to blame. Both Christianity and Islam contain within their sacred texts clear teachings that they are the only true faith, and that their followers have a duty to encourage non-believers to turn to their faith. This is saving souls.

But in Britain today the imperative seems to me to be less about saving souls for the future life and more about building harmonious communities for now and for that kind of building work interfaith dialogue seems vital. This week in November has been designated Inter Faith Week by the Inter Faith Network and there are many events taking place to celebrate the connections between faith groups.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to promote good relations between people of different faiths in this country. Its member organisations include representative bodies from the Baha'i; Buddhist; Christian; Hindu; Jain; Jewish; Muslim; Sikh; and Zoroastrian communities; national and local inter faith bodies; and academic institutions and educational bodies concerned with inter faith issues. The Network works with its member bodies to help make the UK a place marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network's way of working is firmly based on the principle that dialogue and cooperation can only prosper if they are rooted in respectful relationships which do not blur or undermine the distinctiveness of different religious traditions.

‘Defenders of Faith?’

Sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker *(continued)*

Unitarians around the country play their part in organisations such as this. At a local level here in Kensington and Chelsea we have a Forum of Faiths supported by the borough with the aim of bringing faith communities into dialogue with one another. This kind of dialogue between faiths does not seem a big deal to us today but if we take ourselves back to the Victorian era then faiths other than Christianity were regarded with suspicion and there was considerable ignorance of their beliefs and practices, even amongst scholars.

This is not the time to embark on lengthy descriptions but perhaps some brief snapshots might help to show ways in which Unitarians made a considerable contribution to the development of awareness of other faiths. I have ministerial colleague Vernon Marshall to thank for some of this information. Vernon has written about the work of Sir William Jones a judge in Bengal and later Unitarian who was the first European to study Indian sacred literature back in the late 1700s. James Freeman Clarke, professor of theology at Harvard University in the late 1800s, was the first academic in the world to offer a course in what was called Comparative Religions. Here in Britain Joseph Estlin Carpenter, again a Unitarian, taught Comparative Religions at Oxford University and did much to bring an awareness of Buddhism’s teachings to the west.

In 1893 the first Parliament of the World’s Religions met in Chicago with much effort on the part of Unitarians – and still meets every five years to this day.

Unitarians helped to found and continue to be involved with a number of world wide inter-faith organisations including the IARF – International Association for Religious Freedom and the WCF – the World Congress of Faiths that is organising the Karen Armstrong lecture some of us will be attending in December.

As Unitarians we are only a tiny little group of religious liberals. But when I look back at the history of inter-faith dialogue and study I can see the considerable contribution we have made over the centuries. A bit like Cen Llwyd’s reading we heard earlier on when he described the importance of all the minor tributaries that lead into the River Teifi – we can be those small streams that nonetheless make a profound difference. I think many of us share an awareness of Jung’s living waters image that was the basis for our meditation today – we believe that the waters of the spirit are one and that all the rich variety of the world’s religions are human manifestations of something much deeper. We humans are so very diverse no wonder our religions reflect that diversity. But beneath all the outer trappings of faith there is surely a oneness that our faith reflects. Not for nothing does our name start with Uni – united in the oneness of all that is.

We live at a time when much that is wrong about religion is painfully obvious. Religion can clearly bring out the best and worst in us humans. But I don’t think the answer is to imagine a blissful happy-ever-after life without religion – which is the simplistic message of some vocal atheists. Get rid of religion and all will be well? I don’t think so. Because of course the problem is not religion it’s *us*, us humans. For we are both the potential trouble makers and the potential peace makers. We are the ones who have a choice.

We are the ones who have a choice and we are the ones who have a voice. And I want us to use our voices to be defenders of faith. I think it’s one of the things we do well here at Essex Church – we create spaces in which we can become more articulate about our own faith and allow one another chance to explore beliefs in a safe space. We practice here so that perhaps, when we get trapped in a corner at a party, we can be utterly persuasive in our role as defenders of faith. It’s a part of human existence that I think is worth defending. Amen

Maidstone Visitors

Not all the visitors from our Maidstone congregation are on this photo as they couldn’t be prised from the coffee tables. It was lovely to have them join us for a service in November and we appreciate the effort they made to drive here (an hour and a half each way - which matches the dedication of some of our most stalwart members). The Unitarian chapel in Maidstone is a beautifully maintained historic building where the essayist William Hazlitt’s father was minister. A return visit was suggested for June 2012 when I’m hoping that a group of Kensington Unitarians might lead their evening service and have an afternoon exploring the locality. Let us know if you get to visit another church - Unitarian or otherwise - as there’s much we can learn from such visits.

Rev. Sarah Tinker





“To take Christmas seriously requires nothing less than a complete change of heart. This year, let’s try to take it seriously.

Peace in our homes – for everyone we greet there.

Peace in our neighbourhood – for all our neighbours.

Peace as a true national platform.

Peace as the centrepiece of a living religion that saves.

After all, we too can do our part to save the world – one heart, one neighbour, one magnificent, unforgettable dream at a time.”

Rev. Forrest Church

Sunday Services at Essex Church

4th December, 11am – “Comforting the Afflicted”

Service led by Members of the Congregation

The festive season can be a difficult time for many who, for whatever reason, feel unable to join in with the jollity that society seems to require of us at this time of year. In this service, we hope to offer words of comfort to those who are feeling low, and also offer a reminder that each of us has something worthwhile to offer to others who are in need.

11th December, 11am – “Let There Be Light”

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Celebrating precious warmth and light at this dark time of year. With a ceremony of welcome for Hugh and Martha Pritchard and readings by Scott Varland.

12.30pm - **Small-Group Communion**,
led by Tristan Jovanović (lasting ~30 minutes)

18th December, 11am – “Christmas Carol Service”

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Join us for a good sing at our traditional Carol service. Why not invite a friend along? This service will be followed by congregational Christmas lunch – all are welcome – please bring along some food or drink to share if you can.

24th December, 5pm – “Candlelit Christmas Eve”

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

As has become our tradition, we will be holding a special candlelit service at Essex Church on Christmas Eve, which will be followed by an opportunity to go out for dinner at a local restaurant. Please contact Juliet for more information.

Please Note: There will be no service on Christmas Day

1st January, 11am – “Farewell and Welcome”

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Including a simple ritual to bid farewell to the old year and a welcome to the new. An interactive small group worship service for New Year's Day.

8th January, 11am – “William Tyndale: Lost in Translation”

Service led by Tristan Jovanović

A multilingual service about the birth of the English Bible, the strife it caused and the peace we long for in the New Year.

12.30pm - **Small-Group Communion**,
led by David Francis Darling (lasting ~30 minutes)

15th January, 11am – “Can You Know this is True?”

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Based partly on the work of Byron Katie we will use this question to explore what truth means and why we value it.

22nd January, 11am – “Home”

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Home can be a powerful image for us humans. What does it mean to feel 'at home' in the world and how can a church community assist us in building a sense of belonging wherever life may lead us.

29th January, 11am – “Charles Dickens - His Social Message”

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

2012 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens, one time member of Essex Street Chapel. This service will celebrate his writings with their oft times contemporary message of the need for social justice.