



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: March 2012

What's On...

Thursday 1st March, 7-9.00pm
**'Lent Study Group (1/4):
The Unreconciled - Self & Other'**
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 4th March, 11am-noon
'Big Questions'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 4th March, 12.45-2.30pm
'Life's Ultimate Questions'
Workshop led by Jane and Sarah

Thursday 8th March, 7-9.00pm
**'Lent Study Group (2/4): The
Unreconciled - Wounds & Healing'**
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 11th March, 11am-noon
'Doom and Gloom'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

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

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

Thursday 15th March, 7-9.00pm
**'Lent Study Group (3/4): The
Unreconciled - Separation & Unity'**
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 18th March, 11am-noon
'Half the World'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 18th March, 12.30-1.15pm
'Finding Your Voice'
Singing Workshop with Margaret

Tuesday 20th March, 7-9.00pm
7 O'Clock Social:
Tea, cake, and chat – all welcome.

Thursday 22nd March, 7-9.00pm
**'Lent Study Group (4/4):
The Unreconciled - Truth & Lies'**
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 25th March, 11am-noon
'Hajj & Other Spiritual Disciplines'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Tuesday 27th March, 7-9.00pm
90th Reading Group: 'Women Who
Run with the Wolves' (*chapter nine*)

A Message from our Minister:

Musings on a Quad Bike



Are there any quad bikers out there reading this church newsletter? If so, I'd love to hear from you. The theory goes that if we understand another person's reality we'll feel less judgemental towards them. If we know where the other is 'coming from' our world could be a more harmonious place. In my view the world would be a more harmonious place if no quad bike riding took place at times when, and in places where, I am going out for a quiet walk. No quad bikes would be ridden along peaceful green lanes, their churning wheels leaving deep muddy furrows that make walking a misery.

I tried to look at it from the bikers' point of view. It's clearly exhilarating to drive a powerful machine up and down steep and uneven terrain. They probably enjoy the fresh air and the countryside. Driving fast must be fun. The noise of revving engines is probably quite appealing when you are the one doing the revving.

But the noise of their engines can reverberate across a valley and disturb the peace for literally miles around. One loud quad bike can be heard by many people. On the day in question I had a sit down on my own and thought about the problem. And just on time the quad bike, and its rider, approached me. It was being ridden by a young boy, not yet a teenager. He was clearly proficient, clearly having a great time. What kind of grumpy old woman would want to deny a young person such pleasure? I'm not ashamed to say – it's me. Because the pleasure of an individual was being gained at the expense of many others. Everyone in the valley that day would have heard the loud bike yet only one person, the rider, was gaining from the experience.

Much has been said and written about the individualism of our times. We engage in far less 'associational activity' than we used to, activities that bring us together with others. We join fewer trade unions, clubs, churches, teams. We increasingly choose individual activities that we enjoy alone or that have a limited connection with others. But that perhaps makes it all the more vital that we continue to engage in ethical thinking about our place in the world and our ways of living. We have to encourage each other to ask questions about how we live and about what is, and is not, acceptable. After musing on the noisy quad bike for an afternoon I've decided that 'something should be done about it' – that it's not acceptable for one individual's pleasure to hurt other people's ears. There must be a compromise that allows bike riders their fun without causing the suffering of others. All I've come up with so far is that their rides should be limited to wet afternoons on their own private property. Once I've dealt with the quad bike problem I'll be moving on to noisy headphone wearers on public transport and I'd be interested to hear what issues are engaging you at present. If you like considering life's knotty dilemmas then why not join us for our first 'Big Questions' session in March here at Essex Church. It's much more satisfying to curse quad bike riders in a group than on your own, and you never know - the bike riders might come and join us.

Brmm, brmm.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

In this month's newsletter...

* Reports from FUSE in Worthing: 'Festival of Unitarians in the South East' *
90th Book Group: 'Women Who Run with the Wolves' * Church Membership 2012
* "Don't Give the Bible Away to the Fundamentalists!" by David Francis Darling *
'Life's Ultimate Questions' Workshop * 'Carpe Diem' – Sermon by Harold Lorenzelli
* 'Charles Lamb and his Aunt Hetty' by Howard Hague * 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

Officers of the Church Management Committee



Caroline Blair
Treasurer



David Darling
Chairperson



Jane Blackall
Secretary

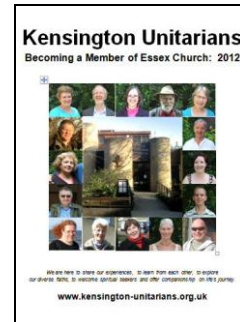
We would like to keep you informed about some recent changes to the church management committee.

Our long-serving treasurer, Juliet Edwards, stepped down from the role at the end of 2011, as planned, and is just finishing up last year's accounts for the annual report before having a well-earned rest. Caroline Blair (previously our chairperson) is our new church treasurer, so we would like to ask stewards to give the Sunday collection to Caroline in the first instance from now on.

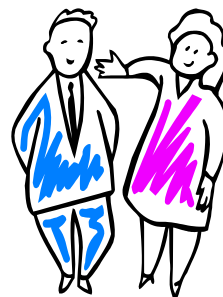
David Darling is the new chair of the congregation. Jane Blackall continues in the role of congregational secretary.

Church Membership

A reminder for anybody who hasn't yet returned their membership form or letter for 2012 – we would very much appreciate it if you could send it back as soon as possible – if your paperwork has gone astray then please do get in touch with Jane or Sarah and we can easily get you another copy. Thanks to all who have returned forms already.



Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



Stewarding:

4 th March:	Tristan Jovanović
11 th March:	Veronica Needa
18 th March:	Howard Hague
25 th March:	Natasha Drennan

Coffee:

4 th March:	Sue Smith
11 th March:	Sonya Leite
18 th March:	Gill Hague
25 th March:	Ruth Okine

Greeting:

4 th March:	Gina Bayley
11 th March:	Carol Sheppard
18 th March:	Arthur Krebbers
25 th March:	Jo Ridgers

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

'Life's Ultimate Questions'



Workshop after the service at Essex Church on Sunday 4th March from 12.45 – 2.30pm

Inspired by some recent (lively!) theological conversations after our Sunday services we have decided to hold a series of afternoon workshops in which we can explore issues (maybe of a theological, philosophical, or ethical nature) that members of the congregation care about.

We would like to hear from you if there are any specific questions that you might like us to consider as a group in this or a future session. We would encourage you to focus on matters that are of concern to you – perhaps those that you have pondered for years and keep returning to, or which have a bearing on your daily life, rather than the usual 'hot topics' that get a frequent airing in the media – but whatever you are interested in please let us know (email secretary@kensington-unitarians.org.uk or jot your ideas down and give them to Jane on a Sunday morning).

Jane Blackall and Sarah Tinker

Singing in Community



The photo above shows congregation member Sonya Leite in fine voice with visitors at the 'Singing in Community' workshop led by Jo McAndrews at Essex Church at the end of January. This was Jo's second visit to run a workshop at the church and we hope it won't be her last.

Congregational Lunch

Easter Sunday 8th April from 12.30pm



A date for your diary: we will be having a congregational potluck lunch after the service on Easter Sunday. Please bring along some food or drink to share – there will be a sign-up sheet nearer the time – and why not invite a friend?

Lent Study Group: 'The Unreconciled'



Thursdays 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd March from 7 to 9pm in the library at Essex Church

Lent is traditionally a time for study and reflection and in these sessions we will utilise Bible study and other source materials for individual and group exploration. In a world that so often feels broken and divided how do we reconcile conflicting elements in ourselves and in the world in which we live? Our sessions will focus on:

**Self and Other
Wounds and Healing
Separation and Unity
Truth and Lies**

Each session will include ideas for us to consider further in the week ahead. Please contact Sarah Tinker on 020 7221 6514 or info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk to book a place in this group. We'd ask you to commit to attending as many sessions as you can as both you and the group will benefit from our commitment. Everyone is welcome.

(With thanks to CTBI – Churches Together in Britain and Ireland for use of their resource material.)

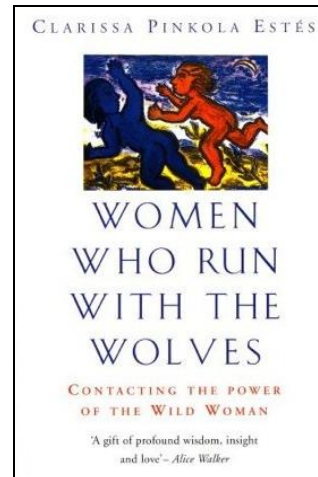
“The powers of the soul enable connection and interaction with others. To be human is to be embedded in the intricate web of life. To be alive is to receive the world through all the channels of the senses, all the sensitive modes of feeling that are ours, and to respond with our own contribution. We give to life our touch, our word, our action, our embrace, our guidance, our acceptance, our censure, our blessing. All living is in community and in connection with others. Love is what happens in the vibrant interchange between living beings and life forms. It is the experience of being drawn to one another, of interacting with each other to create happiness and joy, to labour to care for life’s daily needs, to give refreshment to the soul. Love blesses the intersections among individual beings and the whole fabric of existence.”



UU Minister, Rebecca Parker

Essex Church Reading Group

‘Women Who Run With the Wolves’ by Clarissa Pinkola Estes



Tuesday 27th March 2012, 7.00-9.00pm

The reading group’s February session will be based on ‘Women Who Run with the Wolves’ by Clarissa Pinkola Estes. This is a long book so we will focus on just one chapter (‘Returning to Oneself’, chapter 9) in particular. This title was suggested by Sarah Tinker and will be the 90th title discussed by the reading group. We can provide a photocopy of selected extracts if you would like to take part - please contact Sarah or Jane if you would like one.

From the description on Amazon.co.uk:

“The ‘wild woman’ is the wise and ageless presence in the feminine psyche that gives women their creativity, energy and power. For centuries, the ‘wild woman’ has been repressed by a male-orientated value system which trivializes women’s emotions. The author uses a combination of time-honoured stories and contemporary casework to explain that the ‘wild woman’ in us all is innately healthy, passionate and wise. Passionately written and compelling in its arguments, Women Who Run With the Wolves will give contemporary readers a new sense of direction, a self-confidence and purpose in their lives.”

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

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

Hucklow Summer School

For Personal and Leadership Development

‘Sacred Living’

Encountering the Holy in the Everyday



18th-25th August 2012
Great Hucklow, Derbyshire

Theme talks by a team of speakers:

Bill Darlison, Sue Woolley,
Danny Crosby, Kate McKenna, Margaret Kirk

A Choice of Four Engagement Groups:

‘A Conscious Life’ - Rita Woditsch and Linda Hart
‘Living With Meaning’ - Jef Jones and Kate McKenna
‘Hello... and Goodbye’ - Michael Dadson and Ned Prideaux
‘Bright Lights’ - Lindy Latham and Kate Buchanan

For more information and an application form visit

www.hucklowsummerschool.org.uk

Basic cost: £440 (adult in shared room)

Applications are due by 16th April 2012.

New study class in London District for 2012:

‘Fresh Approaches to the Bible’



**Continuing Monday 19th March, 7.30pm
Golders Green Unitarians,
31 ½ Hoop Lane, London, NW11 8BS**

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

The plan is to start with Luke's Gospel, reading it chapter by chapter, with space for reflective discussion. No specific Biblical knowledge is required, just a willingness to engage with the texts. All are welcome. Classes are to be held on the third Monday of each month.

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

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

“Don't give the Bible away to the Fundamentalists!”

Unitarians are probably not best known for regular bible study, though in the 19th Century we were at the forefront of modern biblical studies. I was therefore intrigued by the invitation from Jim Corrigan of the London District Liberal Christian Affinity group to attend the first of a monthly bible study to be held at Golders Green Unitarian Church.

Sixteen of us attended and it was quite a mixed group, all of us were connected with a Unitarian congregation, but not everyone would call themselves Unitarians. There were a couple of Hindus, two Roman Catholics, Atheist Unitarians and some who would describe themselves as Unitarian Christians. Some were there because they wanted to learn more about the bible, some to try to heal bad experiences of the bible, and some because they had never read it before.

We looked at St Luke's gospel and for the first 25 minutes we simply read the text, taking a few verses each. We then had a period of silence and then there was an opportunity to share any thoughts or questions that had arisen from the text. Jim was keen to point out that this wasn't meant to be an intellectual exercise but an experience of the heart.

We then repeated the exercise with some more verses. I must confess that I was slightly apprehensive about the evening but I came away feeling nourished and glad that I had taken part. It reassured my belief that the bible is a book that may not always be literally true but it is a source of truth and resonates with many of our own beliefs and struggles today. I would recommend this group for anyone who, however hesitantly, would like to explore the bible more. The group meets on the third Monday of every month at Golders Green Unitarians.

David Francis Darling

“To me, the distinctive quality of a religious community – as compared to other kinds of communities – is the experience of worship, when we evoke our sense of being part of some comprehensive whole. Worship is a discipline of opening our hearts to people we don't fully know, our minds to ideas we don't fully comprehend, and our souls to a divine presence we cannot fully name. Worship reminds us of the ignorance that infuses everything we know and the mystery that lies beyond our understanding. In worship, we contemplate the mystery of God. Though others may describe the experience differently, God is our name for the experience of being connected to everything – our comprehensive sense of all that is good and all that is possible. In worship, we contemplate the mystery of God.



We also interpret the wisdom of religion. We take up the challenge of holding fast to what is true and letting go of what is false. If it's false, we throw it out. This effort is made easier because we also explore the insights of science as part of our worship, which sets us apart from most other religious traditions. We take scientific research as seriously as we take religious wisdom. You can never be wise with your mind turned off.

The purpose of worship, and of our religious community as a whole, is two-fold: to awaken our sense of the sacred and to transform ourselves and our world. We want our lives to be different, and we want our world to be different. Everything we do as a religious community serves the goal of transforming our lives and our world. Religion holds up a comprehensive vision of the good and moves toward it. Religion is about transformation.”

UU Minister, Galen Guengerich

'Finding Our Voice'

Singing Workshops with Margaret Marshall

Sunday 18th March, 15th April
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.

A local lecture you might be interested in:

'Double Belonging'



Wednesday 7th March, 6.00pm
Loyola Hall, Heythrop College, W8 5HN

A public lecture by Professor Catherine Cornille

Professor Cornille is a member of faculty at Boston College who taught for ten years at the University of Leuven. Her research interests focus on the Theology of Religions, the theory of Interreligious Dialogue, concrete questions in the Hindu-Christian and Buddhist-Christian dialogues, and the phenomenon of inculturation and intercultural theology. Publications include (ed.): 'Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity'.

Sit in Peace in Trafalgar Square with Thich Nhat Hanh



Saturday 31st March, 2.30-4.30pm

Imagine the energy of thousands of people gathered together meditating on the open grounds of Trafalgar Square with one of the most influential people of our time. Zen Master, author, poet and peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh will guide a sitting meditation on Saturday 31st March in Trafalgar Square.

This is a free event and everyone is warmly invited to join in this celebration of peace within us and around us. This event is open to everyone, all ages, from every path, experienced or not.

Sitting meditation is one of the ways to contemplate peace. We invite you to sit together in silence, generating the energy of peace, solidity, and freedom. You may like to bring something to sit on (it may be a good idea for this to be waterproof). You are welcome to sit on the benches and steps in Trafalgar Square.

"If in our daily life we can smile, if we can be peaceful and happy, not only we, but everyone will profit from it. This is the most basic kind of peace work." — Thich Nhat Hanh

'True Peace and Happiness in the Here and Now' with Thich Nhat Hanh

Thursday 29th March, 7pm (doors open at 6pm)
Royal Festival Hall, Belvedere Road, SE1 8XX

This talk is an opportunity for people of all faiths and backgrounds to hear this remarkable teacher share his wisdom and guidance on the transformative practice of mindfulness and liberation. Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh teaches us that the conditions we need to be peaceful and happy are already present – in the here and now. Through the practice of mindfulness we can learn to connect with these conditions, to be nourished by the many wonders available to us in every moment – not as an idea or theory but as a lived reality. Through this powerful practice of mindfulness we also learn how to listen deeply and compassionately to our own and others' suffering, without fear or judgement, and by doing so to help transform suffering into peace and joy in the here and now.

For more information/tickets: www.southbankcentre.co.uk
(at time of going to press some £25/30 tickets were still available)

The Alister Hardy Society

for the study of Religious & Spiritual Experience

**'Personal Experience & Interpretation
Working Together for Better Understanding'
Thursday 26th April from 3pm at Essex Church**

Members of the public are welcome at the 2012 talks of the Alister Hardy society. Entrance £7.50 [AHS members: talks, £6.00; evening discussion, £4.50; afternoon & evening, £8.00].

3.00pm AHS London Group Dialogue: 'Personal Experience & Interpretation Working Together for Better Understanding' with Diarmuid O'Murchu and David Boulton.

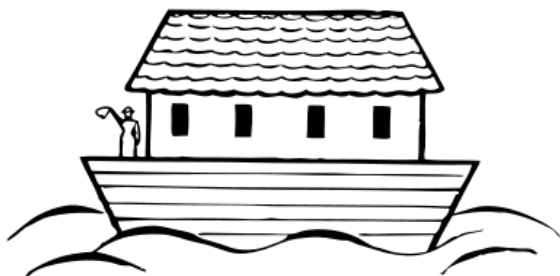
5.00pm Shared supper (bring finger food, tea/coffee provided)

5.45pm Evening discussion.

SoFiC (Sea of Faith in the Churches) Day Conference

'Being Church – On a Rising Tide?'

10th March 2012 at Essex Church



Could we really prepare to move off from the place where we've been marooned for so long?

In what direction might we head?

This conference will investigate flotation and course setting on the Sea of Faith.

Speaker: Rev Canon Brian Mountford

Vicar of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford and author of "Christian Atheist"

Sea of Faith in the Churches provides a meeting place for those SoF members – and their friends – who find themselves in the midst of or, more commonly, hovering on the edge of the Christian Church. The conference fee is £10 per person. Hot drinks will be available, but participants are asked to bring their own lunch. Please send a cheque (made out to 'Sea of Faith in the Churches') and S.A.E. to Peter Stribblehill, 9 Melbray Drive, Melton Mowbray, Leics., LE13 1JS, no later than 29 February.

'The Heart and Soul of Worship'



**31st March and 14th April, 10.30am-4.00pm at
Richmond and Putney Unitarian Church,
Ormond Road, Richmond, TW10 6TH**

Following the successful One Day Workshop held at Richmond in November, Linda Hart and David Usher will be offering a two-part Worship Workshop on March 31st and April 14th, again at Richmond Unitarian Church.

Participants will preferably attend both sessions. In addition to looking at some of the practicalities of how to craft worship, there will be two specific foci.

1. Worship as Spiritual Direction. What is the intention of worship, and how does it tune into our experience of the holy? How does that experience then give guidance in how to shape our lives.
2. Curating for worship. This will focus on both the development of one's personal scripture (the prose, prayers, poems that speak to the deepest heart), the insights that shape your own life and that are universally applicable.

Cost: £12 per individual session; £20 for both. Ideally, participants will attend both sessions. To register, contact Rev. David Usher (davidusher@ldpa.org.uk or telephone 01732 455 14). Cheques to be made payable to LDPA.

Fairtrade Fortnight

27th February to 11th March 2012



A few years ago Essex Church committed itself to be a Fairtrade Church and part of that commitment involves us encouraging all our members and user groups to buy fair trade whenever we can.

In Fairtrade Fortnight there will be lots of publicity so it's a good time to spread the word and fill our cupboards with fairly traded products. Tea and coffee, biscuits, chocolate, bananas, T shirts – are all readily available now, so let's look out for more unusual products and bring them along to our service on 4th March.

FUSE 2012: 'Festival of Unitarians in the South East'

When I received my FUSE weekend timetable a couple of days before I went, I raised one or even more eyebrows. There were 30 optional workshops over two days, as well as two main worship services and a 'keynote speech'. As far as I can tell, the 'Fun Event' on Saturday night failed to occur because by then the only 'fun event' anyone could contemplate was a blood transfusion.

It looked wildly ambitious, but ran like clockwork; at every stage, everyone had the choice of a 'worship' workshop, a 'congregational health' workshop or a 'spirituality' workshop; people could follow one thread throughout the weekend or mix and match; or anyone was welcome to take time out whenever they wanted. There was a pleasant serendipity to being by the sea: if anyone's brain felt in need of a rest, there was in almost infinite length of quiet beach to walk, and the grey winter mists only served to soften the views and throw into relief the busy little sandpipers¹ scurrying to and fro.



Unless we go to the General Assembly, most of us will never have been with 120 Unitarians at once. I can confirm that they were invariably polite, welcoming and cheerful, even when the non-vegetarians accidentally ate all the vegetarian sandwiches and when the ceremony of quiet reflection for Imbolc was located next to what appeared to be the hotel's annual 'throw a skip load of crockery down a flight of stone stairs' ceremony.

There are hopes that this FUSE weekend will be the first of many. Would I recommend it? Yes, absolutely. The very fact that it had such a lot of choice means that there should be something that everyone will love, and after all, what else were you going to do on a freezing weekend in February? Much better to spend the weekend meditating, discussing or writing along with like-minded people than wondering whether it is too cold to get out of bed at all. To next year then...

Caroline Blair

¹ *I have no idea if they were sandpipers. They might have been warthogs for all I know.*



FUSE was a good experience for me. The location was great – a nice hotel with friendly staff. Perhaps we could do it in March next year; this would give us the hope for better weather. The programme was excellent – Patrick O'Neill's reflections on spiritual community were an important reminder for me – and I felt the whole weekend was a wonderful bonding experience. Sarah Tinker's morning practice of *Do-In*, Chinese Self Massage was also very good, I tend to forget how important it is to remember the body when we try to address issues of the spirit. I also enjoyed Linda Hart's workshop on writing as a spiritual practice and hope to incorporate some writing into my day. I was happy to see a number of children and young people and the puppet show they presented to everybody at the end of the weekend was lovely.

Heidi Ferid

The FUSE weekend offered a very wide range of planned workshops and also time to meet both old and new friends. The weekend focused on three main themes; self development, spirituality and congregational health. There was also a strong subtext, in that the time had arrived to be more proactive in reaching out to new members. The weekend included a full timetable with meditation and prayer throughout. I found the event challenging, thought provoking and also inspiring. Sharing good practice felt very supportive. I particularly enjoyed the Enneagram workshops, which offered a cognitive and spiritual framework for understanding self and others. The workshop was elegantly delivered. The organisational team had worked very hard to deliver an excellent weekend. To cap it all, we were only yards from the sea; given the minus 2 temperature I restrained myself from swimming, but did fit in a couple of beautiful walks.

Jim Blair



I have never attended an event like this before so had no idea what to expect but, from the moment I stepped through the front door of the hotel, I knew that I was in good hands. I thought that the whole event had been incredibly well planned and the hotel itself couldn't have been more hospitable. The room was extremely comfortable and the food was excellent - even down to the extra thick toast at breakfast - always a sign of true generosity of spirit, I think.

Anyway, enough of those kind of details and on to the festival itself. There was such an amazing range of things to take part in and contribute to that it was often quite difficult to decide what to attend. There was a lot to make you think and some things that really challenged my idea of what being a Unitarian is all about. I chose an interesting mix of workshops to go along to ranging from things I had no concept of - like the Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality - to workshops on Engaging in Social Justice and the Future of Spiritual Community which I had much more of an idea of their content and of what they were trying to say. I also went to a couple of workshops that were pure fun - the ones on music and storytelling. I was most intrigued by the talk on Ignatian Spirituality and most interested in

finding out about the proposals for the Mansford Street building (in Bethnal Green) to become a centre for social justice projects in the local area. I would be very interested in becoming involved with this in some way. One regret I had is that I didn't attend the workshops on the Enneagram - other people who had attended the workshops made it sound so interesting that I wish I had gone along to that. However, it is certainly something that I shall look out for in the future.

Other highlights of the weekend were the keynote talk by Robin Ince - what an amazing mind that man does have - as well as the closing ceremony (very emotional and moving) and a quick sneak away for a walk along the beach - equally good for the soul, I assure you. All in all, it was a quite remarkable weekend and comes highly recommended. All I can say is many, many thanks to Essex Church for making it possible for me to attend.



Carol Sheppard

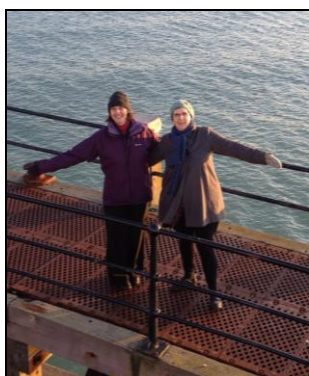
Looking back on my experience of the weekend, two weeks later, what still seems fresh is above all the opportunity it offered for me to make contact once more with fellow Unitarians I had not seen for some time (and also to talk to those I had not met before). This usually manes most conferences or public meetings I attend – not many nowadays, I admit! – seem fruitful and worthwhile.

Apart from this I attended the atheist spirituality workshop, and among other things I was quite surprised to learn (because I hadn't thought about it before) that there are people who see themselves as atheists and also as spiritual beings. I had tended to think these are mutually exclusive categories! But I would still like to know more about what are the foundations or sources of what atheists feel is spirituality. No doubt I may soon be enlightened on this matter by those who know more than I do about atheism. Both Heidi and I enjoyed the festivity of the final meeting and service, especially the opportunity the children had been given to make their own theatrical puppet performance, which was much enjoyed.

The hotel was particularly comfortable and the food and service excellent, we thought. But it would be much more delightful if future FUSE events could e arranged at a time in later autumn or early summer – or perhaps after Easter – when the town, parks, and promenades would be so much more pleasant to stroll around in? Most of us need time, I think, to take time off from the meetings to absorb and reflect upon what we have been saying and listening to. I would like to take this opportunity to heartily thank all those who spent so much time and effort in making the conference happen at all, and for it to be such a happy occasion.

John Hands

This was described as a Festival of Unitarianism in the South East and it was in many ways a feast of a weekend. When I'd told friends that I was off for a weekend in a Worthing hotel in February with 120 other Unitarians some doubted my sanity but it turned out to be both entertaining and useful. Useful because it got me thinking once again about what is unique about our movement and how best can we convey what we offer to those who have never heard of Unitarianism or who cannot imagine just how liberating (and demanding) a liberal stance on faith can be. Entertaining because there was such a delightful variety of activities



on offer. My Saturday started with a kundalini yoga session and reached a peak of good humour late in the afternoon with keynote speaker Robin Ince's 90 minutes stand up comedy on topics dear to my heart - life, the universe, human potential for greatness and utter stupidity etc etc. We talked a lot about modern spirituality and what people want and need from a church in the 21st century. One thing that most of us said was that it's good to do more than just Sunday morning worship and that we valued getting away from time to time with like minded folk. We're lucky here at Essex Church to have a committee that's prepared to part fund people to attend events. So do let me or someone on the committee know if you'd perhaps like to come along on another similar weekend or have a think about the Hucklow Summer School in August, which brings Unitarians together from all around the country. That only has room for about 50 of us but the scenery of the Peak District is even better than the sea front in Worthing.

Sarah Tinker

Tenebrae Service

Thursday 5th April, 7pm
in the library at Essex Church



This small group worship focuses on the themes of Holy Week and the events leading to Jesus' death on the cross. Tenebrae means shadows or darkness in Latin. We will meet in candle light and hear a series of readings taken mainly from the Gospels.

Readings will be interspersed with music, including a Taizé chant, and the candles are extinguished one by one until we are left in darkness and slowly and silently leave the room. The themes of Easter-time – betrayal, confusion, anguish, despair, humiliation, death – are often avoided or hidden in our modern society. Yet there is strength to be found in sitting with the unpalatable, as witnesses to that which is.

It would be good to have a number of people actively involved, so do get in touch if you would like to be one of the readers.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

7 O'clock Social Group



Tuesday 20th March 2012, 7.00-9.00pm

We are taking a bit of a break from the creativity group, 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. We have committed to run this group until Easter and will review the situation at that point so do come along and support it if you want the group to continue.

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 as they choose.

One Light Spiritual Gatherings: 'Kindness'



**Friday 9th March 2012
6.30-8.15pm – Here at Essex Church**

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

Come and experience profound sound healing with the wonderful Lou Beckerman plus music and song from Razia Azia.

Lou is a truly multi-talented soul. She is an inspirational singer/songwriter, concert performer, sound and song therapist, voice facilitator, workshop leader, healer, nurse and artist. At the heart of 'Renaissance Woman', as she is often called, is her love of music and her joy in using it to enhance everyone's life. For Lou, singing is like breathing; an essential part of life. We are also blessed to have the marvellous singer/songwriter Rev. Razia Azia with us. She and Lou will be singing a beautiful interfaith song together.

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'

The **FORGIVENESS** project

at Essex Church in 2012

Early notice about an exhibition and series of events we are planning for this autumn:

The F Word: Images of Forgiveness exhibition is a thought provoking collection of arresting images and personal narratives exploring forgiveness in the face of atrocity. First launched in London in 2004, it has since been displayed in over 300 venues worldwide.

Drawing together voices from South Africa, America, Israel, Palestine, Northern Ireland and England, the exhibition examines forgiveness as a healing process, a journey out of victimhood and, ultimately, a journey of hope. We are planning to host this exhibition here at Essex Church and hold talks and workshops on this vital theme for all of us. The dates are September 9th to 16th and it would be good to have offers from anyone who'd like to get more involved in the organisation of this week.

Sarah Tinker

Old Dog



On the sofa where you know you shouldn't be
In the vestibule sprawled across the kitchen doorway
At midnight waiting at the door when we thought
You'd gone home – somewhere, if you still have one.
Sloping upstairs where you know you should never go
Drinking the pussycats water, putting the birds to flight,
Dodging the chateau watch-dogs grosser and more active
Than you'll ever be again; peering anxiously around
The door, thumping it with your drumstick tail to see
If we've forgiven – or at least forgotten.
Biting your ticks and scratching your fleas in the kitchen,
Barking at night when you can't bear to be
Shut outside any longer. Old dog
Fatuously calling 'au revoir' as I look around
At you for the last time, I catch only a slight
Trembling of the gladiolus as you plunge in, and perhaps
A white paint-brush tip of your tail.

John Hands

Small Group Communion



**Sunday 11th March at 12.30pm
Downstairs in the Church Library**

On the second Sunday of each month we hold a small-group communion, after the main morning service, downstairs in the library. These services are led by different members of the congregation and we have been very encouraged by the experience so far. We hope that a team of volunteers will continue to take turns in leading the communion services so that we can experience different approaches. The line-up for the next few months is as follows:

11th March – Tristan Jovanović

8th April – David Francis Darling

13th May – Leader To Be Announced

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

Unitarian District AGM



**24th March 2012 from 1.30pm
Unity Church, Islington, N1 2TZ**

The London District and Provincial Assembly of Unitarians in London and the South East (LDPA) will hold its Annual General Meeting on Saturday 24th March 2012 at 1.30pm at Unity Church, Islington, London. This is your opportunity to come and learn about the activities of the Council and District Minister and future plans as well as an opportunity to meet with Unitarians from across the District. This is an exciting time for the District with the recent successful FUSE weekend and a number of ideas for future developments.

March Multifaith Calendar

✿ March – Losar – Buddhist

This New Year festival is celebrated in Tibet, and often Nepal, and includes the rededication of the country to Buddhism. The miracles performed by the Buddha at Sravasti are celebrated.

✝ 1st March – St David's Day – Christian

Saint David, the patron saint of Wales, lived in the 6th century CE. A monk, abbot and bishop, he helped to spread Christianity among the Celtic tribes of western Britain.

✝ 2nd March – Women's World Day of Prayer – Christian

This international, interdenominational prayer movement, begun in 1887, looks to a different country each year for service material. This year's order of service comes from Malaysia.

✿ 7th March – Magha Puja – Buddhist

This day commemorates the occasion when the Buddha predicted his death and recited a summary of his teachings and a code of discipline (which monks are expected to recite every fortnight) to 1,250 enlightened followers on the full moon of Magha. The day is observed with meditation, chanting and listening to sermons.

✿ 8th March – Holi – Hindu

Various stories are associated with the Hindu spring festival. One story involves Krishna and his antics with the gopis (milkmaids), which gives rise to the tradition of throwing coloured powders and dyes. The story of Prahlada and Holika is also associated with Holi. Prahlada worshipped Vishnu in defiance of his father, and survived when his aunt, Holika, immune to fire, held him while she sat on a bonfire, giving rise to the tradition of lighting bonfires.

✿ 8th March – Purim – Jewish

Purim commemorates a troubled period of Jewish history, and how the community was preserved. The story is recounted in the Book of Esther (the Megillah), which is read in the synagogue, on the eve of Purim and also on Purim itself. Colourful costumes and masks are sometimes worn and there is lots of noise as the name of Haman (the villain of the story) is drowned out with boos and rattles (graggers).

☪ 9th March – Hola Mohalla / Hola Mahalla – Sikh

Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Sikh Guru, introduced the festival as an alternative to Holi, in 1680. It takes place on the day after the end of Holi. First celebrated at Anandpur, in India's Punjab, it includes competitive displays of swordsmanship, horsemanship, archery and wrestling, and displays of weapons and symposia of poetry.

✝ 17th March – St Patrick's Day – Christian

Patrick lived in the 4th century CE, and was held captive in Ireland as a young man. He escaped, became a priest and then returned to Ireland to spread the Christian Gospel. The shamrock is his symbol and is worn on St Patrick's Day.

✝ 18th March – Mothering Sunday (Simnel Sunday) – Christian

Mothering Sunday, the 4th Sunday in Lent, has now become secularised and is popularly known in the UK as Mother's Day. It was traditionally a Sunday when Christians visited their 'mother church' and took gifts to their mothers, often including a simnel cake.



✿ 20th March – Jamshedi No Ruz – Zoroastrian

The Zoroastrian New Year celebration, according to the Fasli calendar used in Iran. Individuals may pray prayers of repentance for thoughts, words and deeds during the past year, and in so doing prepare for a commitment for future goodness in a spiritually cleansed state. There is a special meal and elder members of the household giving younger members gifts. Families may sponsor a thanksgiving ceremony performed by a priest, or priests, at their home or in the temple. No Ruz is deeply embedded in Iranian culture, and is still celebrated as the New Year in Islamic Iran, although without any religious connotations.

☪ 21st March – Naw-Rúz - Bahá'í

Naw-Rúz is the Bahá'í New Year's Day and coincides with the spring equinox. It is an ancient Persian festival celebrating the 'new day' and it marks the end of the annual 19 Day Fast for Bahá'ís and is one of the nine holy days of the year. Celebrations start at sunset on March 20, often by gathering for prayer and a festive meal.

☪ 23rd March – Varsha-Pratipada – Hindu

Varsha-Pratipada is also called Yugaadi, which is a combination of the words yuga (era) and aadi (beginning). The first day of Chaitra, the first month of the Hindu lunar year, is regarded as an auspicious day for starting anything new. (Divali, in the autumn, is also a new year festival.)

✝ 25th March – Passion Sunday – Christian

The 5th Sunday in Lent, when Christians begin to concentrate their thoughts on the Passion or suffering of Jesus.

✝ 25th March – The Annunciation of the Lord / Blessed Virgin (Lady Day) – Christian

Lady Day celebrates the angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she is to bear a child, and Mary's response in the Magnificat. The day gives opportunity to focus on the doctrine of the incarnation.

✿ 25th March – Khordad Sal – Zoroastrian

The birthday of Zarathustra is celebrated on this day. The date is symbolic as the actual date of his birth cannot be accurately identified. It is one of the most important Zoroastrian festivals - people gather in fire temples for prayers and then celebrate with feasting.

The Meditational Fellowship
Invites you to its 2012

Meditation Weekends

At Ivy House, Warminster, Wiltshire
11-13th May and 9-11th November 2012



'To Refresh the Spirit'

Meditations and More:
Walking, Silence, Music, Poetry, Sharing

Cost: £108 all in - information and booking: Brenda Knopf,
4 Church Lane, Highfield, Southampton, SO17 1SZ
02380 555 333 / bredna.knopf@btinternet.com

www.ukunitarians.org.uk/tmf

Charles Lamb and his Aunt Hetty



Charles Lamb (1775-1834) was one of the most eminent essayists and critics of his day, and a friend of Hazlitt, Coleridge and Wordsworth. He was born in Crown Office Row in the Inner Temple, not far from Essex Street, and there is still a plaque on the wall there marking his "kindly engendure". He was one of many nineteenth century figures who had strong Unitarian connections or sympathies but weren't necessarily card-carrying members. It is possible that it was his aunt who first introduced him to Unitarianism. The following account is taken from the deliciously named *London for Heretics* by William Kent (Watts & Co., 1932):

"The second avowedly Unitarian congregation formed in London was collected by the Rev Theophilus Lindsey, a former clergyman of the Church of England... Lindsey acquired a room in Essex House in 1774, and in 1778 a chapel was built.

"It was into his chapel that Charles Lamb's Aunt Hetty wandered. 'Finding the door of the chapel in Essex Street open one day – it was in the infancy of that heresy – she went in, liked the sermon and the manner of worship, and frequented it at intervals for some time after. She came not for doctrinal points, and never missed them'."

The inner quotation is from Charles Lamb's work *The Essays of Elia*, which originally appeared in the *London Magazine* and which were first published in collected form in 1823. It is from an essay entitled 'My Relations', which contains quite a bit more about his rather eccentric aunt, including her fondness for splitting French beans. Usually Lindsey's Essex Street Chapel is regarded as the first Unitarian congregation in Britain, so it is intriguing that William Kent refers to it as the second. Perhaps I may explore his explanation (which has some plausibility) on another occasion!

Howard Hague



A Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement Forms led by Sonya Leite

Second Sunday of the Month from
2-3pm: 11th March, 13th May, 10th June
(note: there will be no class in April)

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.

"God has to undo our illusions secretly, as it were, when we are not watching and not in perfect control, say the mystics. That is perhaps why the best word for God is actually *Mystery*. We move forward in ways that we do not even understand and through the quiet workings of time and grace. When we get there, we are never sure just how it happened, and God does not seem to care who gets the credit, as long as our growth continues."

Richard Rohr

'Carpe Diem'

Sermon by Harold Lorenzelli – 5th February 2012

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

I know it's not a very British thing to exhort someone to grab hold of the day... it smacks of the over-eager. I remember asking a friend once how his day was going... 'oh, fumbling along', he replied, And he was one of my more lively acquaintances. We don't do enthusiasm very well. I was in my Oxfam bookshop the other day and came across a volume entitled '60 Ways to Feel Amazing'. I was instantly repelled... thankfully it was a very slender volume. Be reassured... I'm not talking of trying to induce a facile high in you all. I'm not expecting you to rush out into the High Street and proclaim the New Jerusalem. It's simply a call to realise the promise of the day at hand.

Carpe diem... make the most of today, for tomorrow is uncertain and yesterday is gone. The injunction is to grasp the potential of the day at hand and to make the most of it. Antiquity recognised that life was uncertain, often perilous and that Dame Fortune's favour was often to reward the fickle and punish the brave. The only certainty we have is that of the present moment. It may be fleeting but at least we are in it. Despite what contemporary philosophers may tell you about the reliability of sense data, consciousness is the unique quality we share with no other species. We live as sentient beings and our perception of the world shapes and informs our personality. We are our feelings and our thoughts and our actions spring from that pool of consciousness. And it is that unique awareness of the present moment that provides the springboard for our involvement in the world around us and within us. We are or we become literally what we see, feel, hear, taste and touch. It follows that the more we open ourselves to the possibilities of the world around us the more we assume our full humanity. That reading about the butterflies was all about that essential connection with the natural world. It had an immediacy, a sense of exhilaration. You could really feel the writer's engagement with the world around. And it is by such engagement that we become fully ourselves. All we have is that sense of the present moment and we should learn to make the most of it. The extract from Henry Miller at 80 (*heard earlier in the service – see opposite*) emphasised the quality of curiosity essential to living life in the present moment which signals our involvement in the world.

This engagement has both an aesthetic and a moral dimension, I think, In the aesthetic sphere it means allowing the work of art, or piece of music or poem or whatever to inhabit us as much as we inhabit it. To fully enter into that representation of the world through another's perceptions. Art can sometimes waken our senses and provide unexpected insights into the world. I well remember the first time I saw a David Hockney painting of a swimming pool and ever after my perception of the effect of light on water was changed, It is in contemplation often that insights are born and we become aware of the eternal. And like a piece of poetic advice I once learnt as a child I DO believe we have time to stand and stare. It is not an escape from the world but living in the moment at its most intense, There may be infinitely more to be got out of star-gazing, my friends, than any amount of navel-gazing!



In the moral sphere I believe this quality of being in the moment has its role to play. To be aware of the infinity of moral choices open to us is to pay heed to the multiple dimensions of the human condition. To make moral choices requires us to be as conscious as we possibly can of alternative paths. The philosopher John Stuart Mill saw it as his duty to be able to argue the case of his opponent as equally as his own. Our moral choices help define the moment we inhabit, they connect the inner to the outer world. They define us in our humanity.

So we must pluck the day as it comes, or perhaps embrace it would be a better way of putting it. Don't look back and indulge in vain nostalgia which can deprive the moment of its intrinsic value nor anticipate tomorrow's pleasures and rob today of its glory, Be conscious of the here and now. Remember what the French philosopher Descartes said... I think, or if you prefer, I am conscious, therefore I am.

The line Carpe diem comes from a line in a poem by Horace. *'Don't ask what end the gods have granted to me or to you. Don't play with fortune telling. How much better to endure what will be. Whether Jupiter has allotted to you many more winters or this final one, be wise, strain the wine and scale back your long hopes to a short period. While we speak envious Time will have already fled. Seize the day, trusting as little as possible in the future.'* Horace says we must endure what will be... a hint of philosophical resignation but still he says that we must seize the day.

John Keating, a character in *The Dead Poets Society* says: *'Carpe Diem. Seize the day, boys. Make your lives extraordinary'*. For Horace mindfulness of one's mortality is part of the key to realizing the importance of the moment. Others might say it is god's way of focussing our mind on the essentials in life. Time is running away from us and we must not be fooled by the calendar. There are only as many days in the year as we make use of. And though it is true that every man dies, it is not equally true that every man lives. As Abraham Lincoln once said. *'It's not the years in your life that count but the life in your years....To misquote a common warning....'we must spend our time for we cannot take it with us when we die.'....'and do not spend it as if you had another in the bank'. The flowers in Spring do not say....'not yet'*

'Carpe Diem'

Sermon by Harold Lorenzelli (continued)

I was reading an article the other day about a nurse in Australia who helped care for the dying and she has written a book about the most common deathbed regrets amongst her patients. When questioned about any regrets they had or anything they would do differently, common themes surfaced: A wish to have had the courage to live a life true to themselves, to express their feelings and become the person they were truly capable of becoming, to have kept in touch with friends... and a really interesting one... a wish that they had let themselves be happier. So, you see, we have a choice even to be happy and avoid being stuck in old habits and customs. That I think is at the heart of Horace's lines.

Let's face it, there is no cure for birth or death so we must endeavour to make the most of the interval in between. It may not be necessary to ask WHY we are, let us instead devote ourselves to the WHILE we are. You may delay but Time will not and this life is not, I fear a rehearsal for the next.

'I held a moment in my hand, brilliant as a star, fragile as a flower, a tiny sliver of one hour. I dropped it carelessly. Ah I did not know I held opportunity...' Hazel Lee.

*'Catch oh catch the transient hour
Improve each moment as it flies
Life's a short Summer, man a flower
He dies alas - how soon he dies...'* Samuel Johnson

It follows that if we live life to the full then death will hold no sting. As Horace says: *'Remember you must die whether you sit about moping all day long or whether on feast days you stretch out in a green field with a good bottle of wine...'* I must say I do like the way Horace always includes a bottle of wine in his hamper!!!

Edith Piaf sang: *'Non, je ne regrette rien...'* for her along with a life full lived comes the recognition of personal responsibility. To deny a single day its worth is only to regret the occasions and possibilities we did not embrace.

'Now is the time to get drunk. To stop being the martyred slaves of time, to get absolutely drunk on wine, poetry or on virtue, as you please...' Ch Baudelaire.

Life, if well lived, is plenty long enough. Let the moment you wake up in the morning be the most astonishing. No matter how weary or dreary you feel, you possess the certainty that during the day that lies before you absolutely anything may happen. And the fact that it practically always doesn't matters not a jot. The possibility is always there,

So let's embrace the day and all it has to offer, make the most of it. As Mark Twain put it so succinctly: *'Let us endeavour to live life so that when we come to die, even the undertaker will be sorry!'*

Henry Miller at 80

Harold Lorenzelli says: "My Carpe Diem sermon the other Sunday included some extracts from Henry Miller at 80. If you missed the talk, members of the congregation might be interested in one or two of his musings."

If at 80 you're not a cripple or an invalid, if you have your health, if you still enjoy a good walk, a good meal, if you can sleep without first taking a pill, if birds and flowers, mountains and sea still inspire you, you are a most fortunate individual and you should get down on your knees morning and night and thank the good Lord for his savin' and keepin' power. If you can fall in love again and again, if you can forgive your parents for the crime of bringing you into the world, if you are content to get nowhere, just take each day as it comes, if you can forgive as well as forget, if you can keep from growing sour, surly, bitter and cynical, man you've got it half licked.

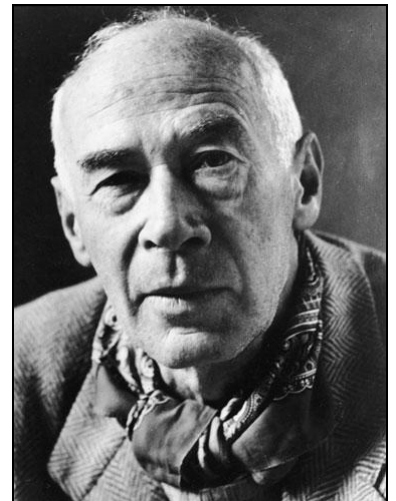
I do not concern myself with the future. As for the past, whether good or bad, I have made the most of it. What future remains to me was made by my past. All we ever really have is the present, but very few of us ever live it. I am neither a pessimist or an optimist. To me the world is neither this nor that but all things at once, and to each according to his vision.

I have lost many illusions but fortunately not my enthusiasm, nor the joy of living, nor my unquenchable curiosity, nor my sense of wonder. In a sense it might be called my religion.

With advancing age my ideals, which I usually deny possessing, have definitely altered. My ideal is to be free of ideals, free of principles, free of isms and ideologies. I want to take to the ocean of life like a fish takes to the sea.

A short life and a merry one is far better than a long life sustained by fear, caution and perpetual medical surveillance.

What is so woefully missing in our world of today are grandeur, beauty, love, compassion - and freedom.



Sunday Services at Essex Church

**4th March, 11am –
“Big Questions”**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

As a Fair Trade Church we'll be marking Fair Trade fortnight and invite you to bring in any unusual fair trade items for display in this service. How to live an ethical life is just one of the big questions we'll consider as a lead in to our conversation group in the afternoon.

**11th March, 11am –
“Doom and Gloom”**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

We humans have always had an apocalyptic tendency of fearing the worst so that they we can be fully prepared. Much is being made of the Mayan prophecy of changes to come in December 2012; how might religious liberals respond to 'doom and gloom'?

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

**18th March, 11am –
“Half the World”**

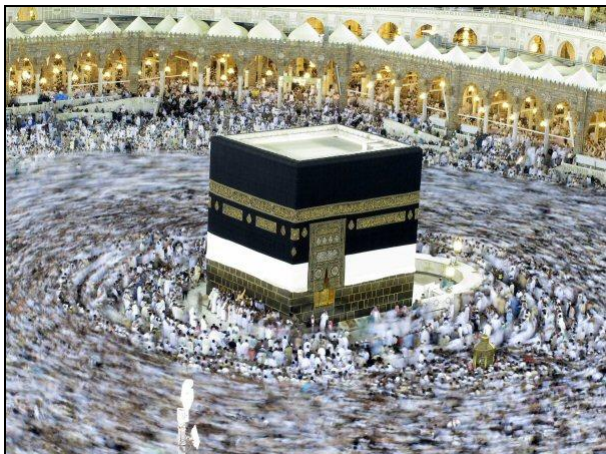
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

As we mark Mothering Sunday and also International Women's Day (which was earlier in March), this service will honour the role of women in our world and recognise the importance of pursuing equality of opportunity for all.

**25th March, 11am –
“Hajj and Other Spiritual Disciplines”**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

The highly regarded exhibition on the Islamic Hajj continues at the British Museum and this service will consider the message that such a spiritual discipline can hold for Unitarians.



April Newsletter Deadline



The deadline for the next issue is **Sunday 11th March**. Please send your contributions (articles, poems, news, etc...) to Jane Blackall or a committee member by then.

Thank you!!!

Warden's Column



I was picking up litter outside the church on Sunday morning - not my favourite part of the job generally, but this morning was warm and sunny and I started to notice the many bulbs pushing through and it felt like time for me to devote my column to celebrating the garden again: snowdrops and crocuses are out already, with daffodils well on their way - the forsythia will soon burst into bloom again too.

Some of the front garden planting dates back to when it was terraced by the Groundworks charity - the dramatic crocosmia and red tulips for example - and more has been added piecemeal since. I remember Caroline planting sedums in hopes they'd be drought tolerant enough to thrive in beds that get very dry (which they have been) and Howard adding colour to the bed by the side of the car park. There are some irises donated by Stephanie from her garden in Arundel which are flowering now. Michaela has looked after the back-garden for many years, including the new planters, and the nursery recently took over the beds by the side of their stairs.

The planting I'm proudest of personally is probably the wisteria in the middle of the rose-bed along the sidewall. I love wisteria and have tried to grow them in many places I've lived with little success - but that wall gets a lot of sun and so far it's doing well. It would be wonderful if someday it covered the whole wall with its grey twisted branches and sweet-scented purple flowers.

Most of the work in the garden isn't planting though, but steady ongoing maintenance. Sarah's son Daniel regularly sweeps the front paving for us and Sue Smith often comes round to weed and sweep dead leaves. We also have a new gardener - a relative of David Darling. So 2012 should be a great garden year - come on spring, we're ready for you!

Jenny Moy