



What's On...

Sunday 1st April, 11am-noon
**'The Ant, the Grasshopper,
and why they were Both Right'**
Service led by Caroline Blair

Thursday 4th April, 7.00pm
'Tenebrae Service'
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 8th April, 11am-noon
'Take One Egg' - Easter
service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 8th April, 12.15pm
Small-Group Communion
Led by David Francis Darling

Sunday 8th April, 12.30pm
Congregational Potluck Lunch

Sunday 15th April, 11am-noon
'In Need of a Blessing'
Service led by Jane Blackall

Sunday 15th April, 12.30-1.15pm
'Finding Your Voice'
Singing Workshop with Margaret

Tuesday 17th April, 7-9.00pm
Committee Meeting

Sunday 22nd April, 11am-noon
'Beneath a Tree'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Tuesday 24th April, 7-9.00pm
Reading Group:
'Justice' by Michael Sandel

Sunday 29th April, 11am-noon
**'Non-Conformists
and the Great Ejection'**
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Dates for Your Diary:

Sunday 6th May
**Service led by Jef Jones,
Lay Leader, Brighton Unitarians**

Sunday 20th May
**Membership Service
and Essex Church AGM**

Sunday 27th May
'Life's Ultimate Questions'

A Message from our Minister: Easter in Context

In churches around the world, believers will this month be remembering Jesus' death on the cross and celebrating His rising from the dead. For many people the Easter narrative described in the gospels is factually true. But we Unitarians are more likely to say that we're not really sure what happened some two thousand years ago in a place thousands of miles from here, amongst a people so very different culturally from ourselves. We are not sure what happened. And I suspect that if each of us was put on the spot and asked to tell our version of events and our interpretation of the Easter story, we would have as many viewpoints as there are people reading this newsletter.

So how can we respond creatively to the Easter narrative? One way is to put it in context. Jesus lived in violent and unpredictable times, in an occupied state. People were deeply religious and superstitious, and it was a time of religious ferment and change. Many gods worshipped in those times had dramatic stories told of their births and deaths. The ancient Egyptians thought of the fertile River Nile delta as a woman, the goddess Isis, and of the river itself as the god Osiris, bringing life giving floods each year to nourish the land. Osiris was killed by his jealous brother Set and then brought back to life by Isis. The story was re-enacted in spring ceremonies and Osiris' followers believed that the sins of humanity were wiped clean by the god's sacrifice.

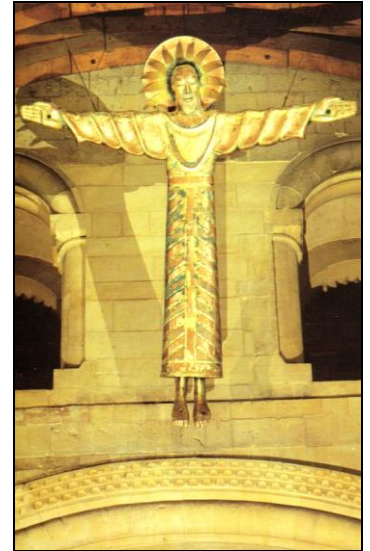
Followers of Mithra believed that baptism with holy water would bring in the holy spirit of god. Followers of Adonis believed that the sign of the cross was protection against disease and injury. Followers of Attis believed that their god had died painfully by being fastened to a tree. Followers of Dionysus believed that divinity could be shared in a meal of bread and wine. The most interesting parallels that I have found with Jesus, concern the peasant demi-god Herakles of Tarsus. Herakles was conceived by a virgin, was born in a strange town, he was said to have inherited a royal lineage, he escaped death in infancy, he was tempted in the wilderness, he received a commission to rule the world, he performed extraordinary miracles, he was the victim of a cruel death, his body disappeared from the burial vault, he appeared after death to the women members of his group, he ascended to heaven in a cloud and his followers awaited his triumphant return.

When I have told some Christians about Herakles they have been shocked and have thought that my aim must be to discredit their belief in Jesus. But for me these stories don't undermine the power of Jesus' teachings in the slightest – they do however put the Easter narrative in a context, a context that allows us to return to the position that says 'we are not sure what happened'.

But we can perhaps be more sure that the powerful imagery of Easter has shaped our culture and affected our ways of thinking about life and death. Its message of renewal mirrors the signs of spring and new life all around us. So perhaps we too in the month ahead may find ways in which to feel renewed, ways to bring new life and creativity into being, in ourselves and in our relationships with others and, perhaps most importantly of all, in our world community that is so in need of a return of light and love.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

See page two of the newsletter for details of further resources about Jesus and Herakles of Tarsus.



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



"Worship invites us to focus on the transcendental, the intimate, and the worthy. Worship helps us regain our grip on the fragmented, the obsessive, and the divisive.

Worship reminds us that we – empowered by the love we receive and give – may challenge any idol of greed or violence which pollutes the human condition. We ask that you bring to worship something of what you receive: a capacity to heal, to think both critically and poetically, and to experience a growing sense of belonging, rootedness, and blessing.

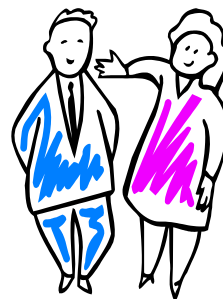
Worship helps us regain a sense of ourselves. The slow dance of our bodily movements in daily life, the timbre of our voices when we sing together, the glint of joy in another's eye...: these return us to our senses in a world that often seems devoid of sensual inspiration. For in worship, the sensual is one with the spiritual, the intellectual, and the emotional. Come, taste and see..."

UU Minister, Rev. Mark Belletini

Useful Resources on Herakles of Tarsus

Some of the information Sarah used for this month's front page of the newsletter came from an article published many years ago by the Church of the Larger Fellowship. This is the largest Unitarian Universalist congregation, a virtual congregation that now exists online as 'Quest for Meaning': www.questformeaning.org. The CLF have a great website packed with resources but Sarah could not find the name of the author who had done research into Herakles of Tarsus. She would be interested to hear if anyone knows more about this demi-god of ancient times.

Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



Stewarding:

1 st April:	Heidi Ferid
8 th April:	Tristan Jovanović
15 th April:	David Darling
22 nd April:	Gina Bayley
29 th April:	Alice Lambert

Coffee:

1 st April:	John Hands
8 th April:	David Talbot
15 th April:	Caroline Blair
22 nd April:	Carol Sheppard
29 th April:	Juliet Edwards

Greeting:

1 st April:	Carol Sheppard
8 th April:	Veronica Needa
15 th April:	Natasha Drennan
22 nd April:	Diana Ward
29 th April:	Jo Ridgers

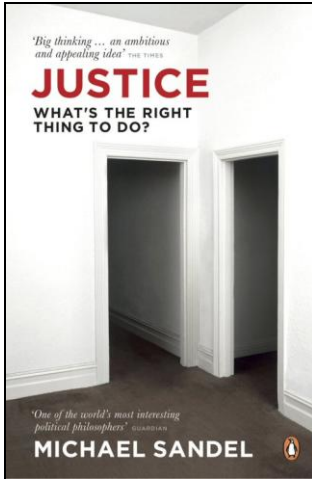
In recent months, we have been circulating the rota list via email, and this seems to be working well.

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

rotas@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Essex Church Reading Group

'Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?' by Michael Sandel



Tuesday 24th April 2012, 7.00-9.00pm

The reading group's April session will be based on 'Justice' by Michael Sandel. This title was suggested by Jane Blackall and will be the 91st title discussed by the reading group. This book is based on Sandel's highly-regarded course at Harvard which is available to view online at www.justiceharvard.org if you would like to engage with the issues without reading the book itself.

From the description on Amazon.co.uk:

"Considering the role of justice in our society and our lives, Michael Sandel reveals how an understanding of philosophy can help to make sense of politics, religion, morality - and our own convictions. Breaking down hotly contested issues, from abortion, euthanasia and same-sex marriage, to patriotism, dissent and affirmative action, Sandel shows how the biggest questions in our civic life can be broken down and illuminated through reasoned debate. Justice promises to take readers - of all ages and political persuasions - on an exhilarating journey to confront today's political and moral controversies in a fresh and enlightening way."

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

Congregational Lunch

Easter Sunday 8th April from 12.30pm



We will be having a congregational potluck lunch after the service on Easter Sunday. Please bring along some food or drink for us all to share – and why not invite a friend?

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

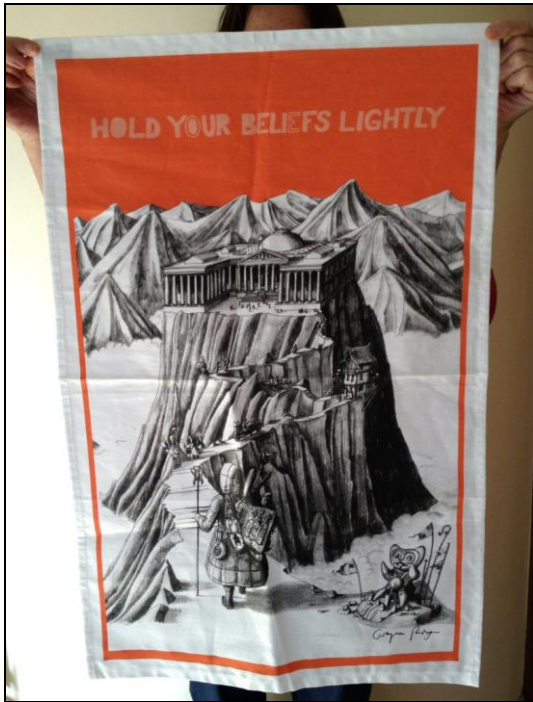
May Newsletter Deadline



The deadline for the next issue is **Sunday 8th April**. Please send your contributions (articles, poems, news, etc...) to Jane Blackall or a committee member by then.

Thank you!!!

Tea Towel Excitement!



Many thanks to Carole Grace for finding this highly appropriate tea towel for us Unitarians at the recent Grayson Perry exhibition at the British Museum. Holding our beliefs lightly whilst drying our crockery firmly sounds just right for Kensington Unitarians.

And in the same month there was further excitement in our yearly 'fair trade draw' when the prize was won for the second year running by Sam Reed. You may recall that Sam was the lucky winner last year of a fairly traded bunch of bananas. What were the odds on him winning the fair trade tea towel this year? Isn't this clear proof of life's injustice and general unfairness? Or does Sam deserve to win? Some are winners and some are losers in the lottery of life it seems. Best put the dates of next year's Fair Trade Fortnight in your diaries now and be sure to come to church and give Sam some competition. In the meantime we have replenished our stocks of fair trade tea, coffee, biscuits and sugar for the church kitchen.

Outing to Maidstone

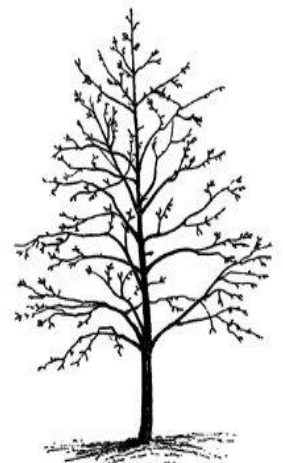


Our minister, Rev Sarah Tinker, will be taking the service at Maidstone Unitarian Church at 6pm on Sunday 24th June.

We thought that it might be nice to organise a group outing from our congregation – an afternoon out in Kent, a tour of the gorgeous and historic Maidstone Chapel, a picnic tea – and perhaps an opportunity to take part in the service.

If you are interested, please put the date in your diary, and look out for further announcements nearer the time.

"Absorb, absorb, absorb. That is the secret of the tree. When human beings egotistically divide themselves from nature, that is a great mistake. When we divide ourselves from Tao, we are committing the greatest crime, and like all criminals, it is we who suffer the most. No, accept what life sends you. Accept how Tao flows through you, just as the tree absorbs and grows, and you will never be without Tao..."



When we see old trees, it is right to think about what is ancient, for what is old has survived many seasons of both hardship and joy. To have survived signifies not simply tenacity and longevity. It also signifies being at one with Tao, for anything that grows old must be in touch with the sustaining Tao."

Deng Ming-Dao

A new adult RE course at Essex Church this May:

Foundations of Our Liberal Faith

Thursday evenings from 10th May, 7-8.45pm



This May, we will offer a three-part study group exploring the origins of our liberal Unitarian and Free Christian faith, from the early Bible translators to Victorian social reformers.

Thursday 10th May - 17th Century

The Great Ejection and other Nonconformist Roots

Thursday 17th May - 18th Century

Religious Radicals

Thursday 24th May - 19th Century

Social & Political Reformers

This course is free but we ask you to book a place on it in good time to ensure a viable sized group. Contact info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk or leave a message on 020 7221 6514 or speak to our minister Sarah Tinker to book your place or to seek more information.

"Move beyond any attachment to names." Every war and every conflict between human beings has happened because of some disagreement about

names. It's such an unnecessary foolishness, because just beyond the arguing there's a long

table of companionship, set and waiting for us to sit down.

What is praised is one, so the praise is one too,
many jugs being poured

into a huge basin. All religions, all this singing,
one song.

The differences are just illusion and vanity. Sunlight
looks slightly different

on this wall than it does on that wall and a lot different
on this other one, but

it is still one light. We have borrowed these clothes, these
time-and-space personalities,

from a light, and when we praise, we pour them back in.

Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi

(sent in by Kathryn Reynolds)

'Life's Ultimate Questions'

A Sunday Afternoon
Workshop at Essex Church



At the first of our 'Life's Ultimate Questions' sessions, held after the service on 4th March, the group spent some time generating some questions of a theological, philosophical, or ethical nature which we care about. Here is a selection of the questions that came up for us:

Why do terrible things happen in the world?

How do we choose one path over another in life?

Is there an afterlife? Or reincarnation?

What is the nature of the soul?

What is true love?

Is war ever right?

Why are some people so nasty?

Why is there not an level playing field?

How do we reconcile differing needs and wants?

How far should we go to accept other cultures in the world when we think they are doing bad things?

What do we mean when we say 'God'?

What is the purpose of life (if there is one)?

We will pick up on some of these questions in future sessions. In the second half we took time to explore one question: 'Is ethical capitalism possible?' This was a most enjoyable afternoon and we will be holding the next one after the service on 27th May, from 12.45-2.30pm. Please put the date in your diary now!



‘We Are How We Move’ with John Stirk

**A Choreographed Movement Workshop in line
with Osteopathic Principles and including
Articulation, Fluidation and Gravitation.**



Sunday 22nd April 2012, 2–7.00pm at Essex Church
(space open for moving/dancing till 8.30 pm)

John Stirk has been a teacher and practitioner of Movement, Yoga, and Osteopathy for more than 35 years. He taught remedial classes at the Royal Academy of Dance in London and conducted Body-Mind workshops with R.D.Laing in the 1970's with whom he studied for many years. He graduated as an Osteopath in London in 1983 and lectured in bio-mechanics and practical osteopathy at the College of Osteopaths for several years. He is the Author of two books and numerous articles and currently teaches in the U.K. and Internationally. John's grounding in Movement, Osteopathy, Yoga and Psychology has stimulated a continually evolving practice and style of teaching that acknowledges Eastern and Western approaches to personal growth while giving space for insight to emerge.

When we move in a certain way we feel better and behave differently – our body sense gives us our sense of self and the quality of our movements directly influences how we feel on all levels. We only have one nervous system, each part knowing what every other part is up to – the nervous system that thinks, feels and acts also integrates and refines our movements and determines their quality. Even the smallest refinements can affect us in a positive and enlightening way. When we are more graceful, in accord with the space around us, and in tune with the pull of gravity we are quieter, more relaxed, have more clarity and are emotionally more intelligent. Effortless and smooth motion is a primary factor in a more effortless and smoother way of being.

Cost of workshop: £25/£20

**For more information visit: www.johnstirk.com
or write to john.stirk@tiscali.co.uk**

Jenny, our warden, says: ‘John is an internationally respected teacher and it's a privilege to have him at the church. Sarah and I go to John's classes regularly, he works with gentle, repetitive movements that everyone can do in their own way (no extreme stretches or holding painful positions) and this workshop is a very good value way to experience his work.’

‘Finding Our Voice’

Singing Workshops with Margaret Marshall

**Sunday 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.

Spring Conference of the Guild of Pastoral Psychology:

‘Digging in Dark Matter’

**Saturday 19th May, 2-4.30pm
Here at Essex Church**

Rev. Josephine Evetts-Secker: Jungian analyst and Anglican priest will explore assent and resistance:
“Their hands push open the closed doors that God holds open.”

Rabbi David Freeman: Jungian analyst and rabbi will present a personal perspective.
“My G-d the soul You have given me is pure...”

Exploring Psyche and Soul in the dark matter of the Gnostics, in the psychology of C.G.Jung and in selected Jewish texts. Is there learning and consciousness in such comparisons?

Tickets: £30 to guild members, £35 to non-members, £12 to students (discounts for advanced bookings – see guildofpastoralpsychology.org.uk). The guild offers a meeting place for those wishing to explore a religious or spiritual quest enhanced by the insights of depth psychology, especially the work of Jung.



"Some time ago a neighbour, upon learning that I was a humanist, asked me what that meant. I replied that humanism refers to the affirmation of the worth and dignity of every person, a commitment to human betterment, and the necessity for human beings to take responsibility for themselves and the world. "Sounds like I'm a humanist, too," he replied, seeming surprised. I explained to my neighbour that there are many kinds of humanism and that some are theistic, whereas religious humanism and secular humanism, are nontheistic.

Religious humanism is a life stance that exults in being alive in this unimaginably vast and breathtakingly beautiful universe and that finds joy and satisfaction in contributing to human betterment. Without a creed but with an emphasis on reason, compassion, community, nature, and social responsibility, it is a way of living that answers the religious and spiritual needs of people today.

In her spiritual autobiography, *The Spiral Staircase*, Karen Armstrong writes:

'In the course of my studies, I have discovered that the religious quest is not about discovering "the truth" or "the meaning of life," but about living as intensely as possible here and now. The idea is not to latch onto some superhuman personality or to "get to heaven" but to discover how to be fully human.'

This is precisely what humanistic religious naturalism is all about. Becoming more fully human involves the transformation of the mind and heart from self-centeredness to a sense of one's self as part of a larger sacred whole and a deep commitment to the human and natural worlds. It is about the transformation from a shallow life of fear, greed, hedonism, and materialism to a meaningful life of love and caring, gratitude and generosity, fairness and equity, joy and hope, and a profound respect for others.

Humanistic religious naturalism promotes an ethical life in which one thinks and acts from a larger perspective than one's own egoistic interests, a life that affirms the worth and dignity of each person, a life filled with wonder and reverence for the extraordinary magnificence of the natural world and human creations. It includes gratitude for the gift of life itself and the capacity to enjoy it."

UU Minister, William R. Murry

A radio programme you might be interested in:

'The Public Philosopher'



**9.00am/9.30pm, from Tuesday 3rd April
on BBC Radio 4 and Podcast**

Michael Sandel, philosophy professor from Harvard University, will present this three-part series questioning the thinking behind current controversies. In this first episode he will be asking 'should universities give preference to applicants from poor backgrounds?' He will go on to ask 'should we bribe people to be healthy?' and 'should a banker be paid more than a nurse?'

Thanks to Juliet Edwards for drawing attention to this broadcast which may be of particular interest to those reading Michael Sandel's 'Justice' for the book group.

A London event you might be interested in:



Speakers including Kate Humble and Ellie Harrison will be on hand to answer all your questions on the amazing array of wildlife that is on display throughout the Capital. You can also join our experts on a series of 'How To...' walks covering everything from photography to bird watching. The 'Nature On Your Doorstep' theatre, hosted by Simon King, will be a feast of live, up-close, wildlife highlights from around the nature reserve.

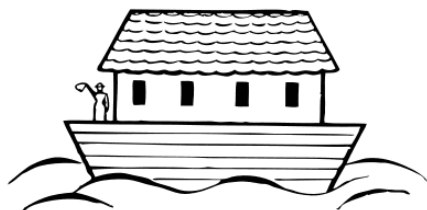
Visitors to London Wild Bird Watch will be able to roam the scenic walkways among the lakes, ponds, meadows and gardens at London Wetland Centre to see the birds and other wildlife – such as water voles, dragonflies, snakes and lizards - that inhabit the 105 acre reserve.

Tickets to London Wild Bird Watch are free for members of the WWT but tickets are limited and **MUST** be booked before Tuesday 17th April 2012. For non-members, tickets are £13 for adults, £5 for children aged 4-16. Unless you have a blue badge please travel by public transport as car parking will cost £15 (£10 if pre-booked).

For more information: www.wwt.org.uk

'Sea of Faith in the Churches'

A report of the conference on 10th March



Travelling to this Sea of Faith conference on 10th March was a little troublesome due to the Central Line not running that day, but it was worth it.

As an atheist I have found a welcome among Unitarians but am sometimes viewed with suspicion by mainstream Christians, who seem not to understand why somebody without faith in God might wish to belong to a church. I don't find this attitude welcoming. So, I was intrigued by this conference topics - Christian Atheist - belonging without believing and 'the church is for sceptics too'.

I found all 3 speakers very interesting but was especially taken with Tony Windross, who is an Anglican priest. His statement that 'God must move from centre stage' was a bit of a spine tingle for me. I seem to have been saying this to my local churches for years and getting nowhere, being regarded as a little strange to even think such a thing.

I discovered that many people attending the conference had difficulty remaining in their churches because of being troubled by the theology. Tony made the point that if all the moderates leave the Church it will open it up for a takeover by the literalists, and this could be quite dangerous for our freedoms.

Being an atheist in some churches is difficult, however - the whole language of the services goes against you. Staying in the church, without any attempt by the ministers to offer a service for those with little belief in the traditional doctrines, is a struggle. As a member of the New Unity Unitarian congregation I have an alternative and better source of spiritual guidance, but I can't help feeling for those who do not, and must stick it out within the Church or just leave and probably go nowhere else. I met a couple from Abingdon who, after chatting to me, decided they must try the Unitarians - Oxford not being far from their home.

I thought Essex Church was a very pleasant venue for the conference, the acoustics seemed good and it is well placed on bus routes (mine stopped right outside) and near shops and cafes. My only regret is that I did not meet any Kensington Unitarians there that day, except Sarah at the beginning before she had to dash off! It was lovely to see Barry Bell from Glasgow, and to sit with him at the front. We both agreed that this was a very stimulating conference.

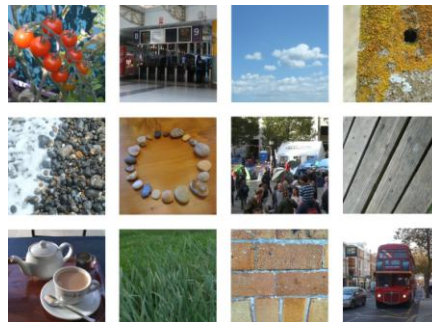
Carol Williams
New Unity Church, Islington

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.



'Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.'
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.'

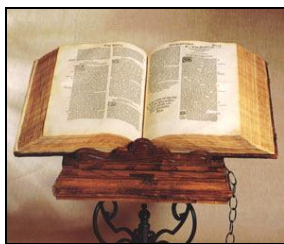
Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)

"A transforming religious community does not ask the question 'What do you believe?' but instead 'How shall we live?' A transforming religious community does not prescribe pat answers to what you should believe but invites your wholehearted participation in discerning what is truly important. The basic problem, it seems to me, is that we tend to think of religion as a set of beliefs. This is a huge mistake... Real religion is much more about what we love than about what we think. If we look at religions historically and across cultures, we discover that in fact belief has very little to do with authentic religion. Ultimately what ties us together, what makes us a religion, a united people, is actively sharing what we love, what binds us together is how we collectively answer the question 'How shall we live?', and answering that question through our example."

UU Minister, Rev. Alan Taylor

New study class in London District for 2012:

'Fresh Approaches to the Bible'



**Continuing Monday 16th April, 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

Cross Street Unitarian Chapel first to be Awarded Civil Partnerships Licence



Cross Street Unitarian Chapel, Manchester has recently been awarded a licence from Manchester City Council to hold civil partnerships on its premises. The General Register Office believe that Cross Street Unitarian Chapel are the first religious premises in England & Wales to be licensed for CP's. This will enable same-sex couples to hold a religious ceremony on religious premises, with a civil ceremony taking place before or afterwards.

Rev. Jane Barraclough, minister of Cross Street Chapel, says:

"We are delighted to be able to offer this service to the LGBT community, which we consider a basic human right. We note with sadness the history of homophobia in many faith traditions as well as the current hateful language from some faith leaders that has received so much coverage in the media. But this is a time of great celebration for us, not sadness. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Manchester Registers' Office who have gone out of their way to help us with the application process. The City of Manchester also has a long and fine tradition of celebrating human diversity in all its glorious manifestations."

Unitarians offer a spiritual community based on common values of mutual respect and spiritual exploration, rather than fixed beliefs and traditions. We have a long history of inclusivity over issues of marriage, as well as many others. We were amongst the earliest to train women clergy. In 1977 it was formally resolved that Unitarian ministry be open to all, regardless of sex, race, colour or sexual orientation, since when there continue to be a number of openly LGBT ministers serving the denomination. Unitarians continue to lobby for full and equal access to marriage.



The Offering

Pathetic our fumbling, friendly intentions, our pottering around for plates
An old tin, something which might do to present our offerings.
Barging around among the remnants of former residents we find only
An old thrown-out bill-board quaintly inscribed
'Sunny Etrurian grapes'. "But where, we mutter, is our traditional offering?
We have no bread." But history prompts us here: 'alors -
No bread? – then let them eat cake.' Thankfully
We scatter it upon the board. Around our maisonette
Chaffinches and sparrows chirp. Cheep, twitter: cheerily
Swee, hop and cluster. Will they accept our incongruous
Offering of poster-fruit grapes, and stale scattered crumbs?

Feeling the futility of their ponderous bulk the human speculators
Peer from behind panels of perspex and steel: their
Threatening shapes oppress the diminutive creatures: startled
They swerve aside in a blur of agitated wings. Some time they need
Before hunger impels more hesitant drawing near.
Finally the huge creatures accepting their ponderous frightfulness
Have turned away. Immersed in new tasks they hear
The tattoo of ravenous beaks and querulous cheeps rewarding
Their ponderous charity. Momentarily the species gulf seems
A little less vacuous, perilous, and wide.



John Hands (1955)

Unitarian Women's Group Autumn Weekend Gathering

'The power of anger in the work of love'



**26th-28th October 2012 at the
Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow**

The theme of the weekend is 'the power of anger in the work of love'. The theme speaker, Bridget Rees, is a Welsh woman who increasingly finds the wilderness more sustaining than the mainstream – theologically, politically, ecologically – for justice and peace, feminism, liberation theology and world development concerns. A former teacher in an Anglican seminary she has also worked in the Bradford Diocese and for Christian Aid and is active with the Quakers.

The cost for the weekend ranges from £107-132 and there are a limited number of grants for women on low incomes.

**For further information contact Sue Cooper:
01482 881765 or suecooper26@aol.com**

One Light Spiritual Gatherings 'Work'



**Friday 13th April 2012
6.30-8.15pm – Here at Essex Church**

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

This month's theme is 'work'. 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

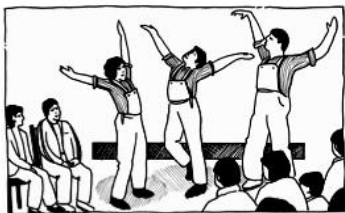
**For further information contact service hosts:
Rev. Pamela Ramsden - 07966 478 980
Rev. Kathryn Reynolds - 07976 739 286**

'In loving connection with Essex Unitarian Church'

Information from our very own Veronica Needs:

‘World Playback Week’

Improvisational Theatre Ensembles
Performing in Many Languages

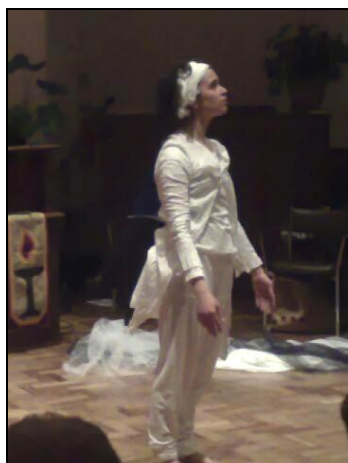


15th – 20th May at the New Diorama Theatre
15-16 Triton Street, Regent’s Place, NW1 3BF

Playback Theatre is an original form of improvisational theatre that invites true stories from the audience, and re-enacts these with artistry and respect as spontaneous improvisation. The performance is co-created with the audience. Since the first Playback Theatre company in 1975 this remarkable form has mushroomed worldwide.

For more information see: www.newdiorama.com
(more details in next month’s newsletter)

Sufi Concert



The photo above conveys something of the beautiful atmosphere that the Ansari Sufi group, that meets each Monday evening here at Essex Church, created at their recent fund raising concert.

The evening was blessed by the presence of their Shaykh Taner, by players of traditional oud and ney instruments, the recitation of Sufi poetry in both Farsi and English and dances commissioned by the British Museum to accompany the current Hajj exhibition. With food provided in the interval and concluding with a zikr meditation and chanting, this was an evening to remember.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

Small Group Communion



Sunday 8th April 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:

8th April – David Francis Darling

13th May – Led by John Hands

10th June – Led by Sarah Tinker and Jo James

8th July – Led by Jane Blackall

12th August – Led by Tristan Jovanović

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

A London event you might be interested in:

‘Mystics: Pioneers of Consciousness’

A talk by Rev. Dr. Matthew Fox

Wednesday 4th April, 7.30pm
The Window, 13 Windsor Street, N1 8QG

What Hildegard, Eckhart and Aquinas can teach us about the mystical prophetic path to higher consciousness and becoming spiritual warriors. The speaker, Matthew Fox, is an internationally acclaimed theologian who was a member of the Dominican Order for 34 years. He is author of 29 books that have been translated into 43 languages Fox believes that by “reinventing work, education and worship we can bring about a non-violent revolution on our planet” and has committed himself to this vision for many years.

Tickets cost £15. For more information: www.scimednet.org
Organised by the Scientific and Medical Network.

April Multifaith Calendar

✠ 1st April – Palm Sunday – Christian

Palm Sunday is the first day of Holy Week, when Christians remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, followed by his arrest and crucifixion. Many churches commemorate Palm Sunday by processions, where the congregation carry symbolic palm crosses, or branches of trees.

✠ 1st - 7th April – Holy Week – Christian

The most solemn week of the Christian year. Christians recall the events of the final week of the earthly human life of Jesus.

🕉 1st April – Rama Navami – Hindu

Rama Navami, the birthday of Rama, the seventh avatar of Vishnu, is celebrated at noon (Rama was born at noon), by arati in front of a picture of Rama swinging in a cradle.

✠ 5th April – Maundy Thursday – Christian

On Maundy Thursday Christians reflect on The Last Supper, when Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples. In blessing the bread and wine he told them to continue to do this to remember him. Known variously as Holy Communion, the Eucharist, the Mass, the Divine Liturgy, or the Breaking of Bread, depending on the church tradition, this is a central act of worship for most Christians. Some churches also remember Jesus washing the feet of the twelve disciples, as the feet of twelve members of the congregation are washed.

🕉 5th April – Mahavira Jayanti – Jain

Festival celebrating the birthday of Mahavira, the last Tirthankara, or great teacher of the Jains. The events surrounding his birth are re-enacted, and if there are monks or nuns present, there will be readings from the scriptures and teaching about the rest of Mahavira's life. Lay people will also celebrate with a special meal at home.

✠ 6th April – Good Friday – Christian

Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Christ - special services are held to mark the time that Jesus spent on the cross. Christians call this 'Good' Friday because of the greatest example of God's sacrificial love, in Jesus giving up his life for the sins of the world.

🕉 6th April – Hanuman Jayanti – Hindu

Hindus celebrate the birth of Hanuman, the monkey-warrior. Hanuman is Lord Rama's supreme devotee, and his story is told in the Ramayana.

✠ 7th April – Holy Saturday (Easter Eve) – Christian

This is the last day of Lent, and in the evening many churches will have special services when the Paschal Candle is lit, and baptismal vows are renewed in preparation for Easter.

✠ 7th - 14th April – Pesach / Passover – Jewish

This Jewish festival lasts eight days and commemorates the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. The Seder meal, which takes place at home, at the beginning of Pesach, is an important highlight. The Haggadah, the story of the deliverance, is recounted, and special food, including matzah (unleavened bread) is eaten throughout the festival.



🌸 8th April – Hanamatsuri – Buddhist

Mahayana Buddhists celebrate the Buddha Sakyamuni's birthday with this flower festival. Tradition has it that the Buddha was born in a garden, so floral shrines are created with an image of the infant Buddha. Theravadins celebrate Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing away all on the same day, at Wesak - at the full moon in May.

✠ 8th April – Easter Day – Christian

Easter Day is the most important festival of the Christian year, when the resurrection of Jesus is celebrated. Many Easter traditions, for example Easter eggs, symbolise new life.

🕉 14th April – Baisakhi (Vaisakhi) – Sikh

The Sikh New Year festival celebrates the founding of the Order of the Khalsa, by the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singhi Ji, in 1699. On this day the 'Five Ks' were instituted and the amrit initiation ceremony was introduced. Sikhs visit the gurdwara and parades are held. Many Sikhs choose to be initiated into the Khalsa order on this day.

✠ 15th April – Easter Day / Pascha – Orthodox Christian

The date of Easter is calculated on a lunar calendar, but as many Eastern Orthodox and Armenian churches still use the Julian rather than the Gregorian calendar the calculation of dates differs from the Western churches, so at present there is no consistent relationship between the dates of the Orthodox and Western Easter.

✠ 19th April – Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Day) – Jewish

Jewish people remember the six million Jews, including one and a half million children who were victims of the Nazi holocaust. Memorial candles are lit and people attend special services.

🕉 21st April - 2nd May – Ridvan – Bahá'í

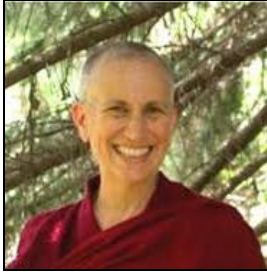
Ridvan is the most important Bahá'í festival. It is named after the garden outside Baghdad, in which Bahá'u'lláh was staying when he declared himself as the Promised One prophesied by the Báb. The first, ninth and twelfth days, being particularly significant are celebrated as holy days, when no work is done. During these twelve days Bahá'ís elect their local, national and international governing bodies.

✠ 23rd April – St George's Day – Christian

Although he lived and died in the Middle East, St George is the patron saint of England. All that is known for certain about St George is that he was martyred for his Christian faith and was a soldier. His red cross on a white background was adopted as a symbol after the Crusades.

✠ 26th April – Yom Ha'atzmaut – Jewish

In the tradition of interpreting significant events in Jewish history as religious occasions, this modern festival celebrates Israel's independence.



"The antidote to speaking of the faults of others is speaking with understanding and compassion. For those engaged in spiritual practice and for those who want to live harmoniously with others, this is essential. Pointing out people's good qualities to them and to others makes our own

mind joyful; it promotes harmony in the environment, and it gives people useful feedback. Praising others should be part of our daily life and a component of our Dharma practice... An interesting experiment is to try to say something nice to or about someone every day for a month. Try it. It makes us much more aware of what we say and why. It encourages us to change our perspective so that we notice others' good qualities. Doing so also improves our relationships tremendously."

Thubten Chödrön

Warden's Column

You might be interested to know that there are often lectures at the Church on Thursday nights. In April these include:

Thursday 19th April 7.30-9pm

'Grieving and the Path of Individuation'

by Penelope Yungblut of the Analytical Psychology Club

How may mourning the 'big griefs' of death and dying and the 'little griefs' of everyday life serve and empower the journey to healing, authenticity and individuation? What are the components of grieving and sorrow? How may we mourn creatively, heal and come to acceptance of loss? If we avoid the pain of mourning, how may this impact and hinder the path to individuation? We will explore images and insights analytical psychology offers us into grieving, healing and the individuation process.

www.jungclub-london.org – cost £10 (£8 concessions)

Thursday 26th April, 3.00-7.00pm

The Alister Hardy Society presents

'Personal Experience and Interpretation:

Working Together for Better Understanding'

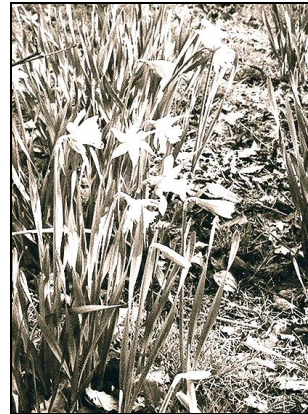
with speakers: Diamuid O'Murchu and David Boulton
(see back page of the newsletter for more details)

www.alisterhardysociety.org – cost £15 (£13 members)

There is also a lecture on Thursday 26th April 8-10pm by the Independent Group of Analytical Psychologists (igap.co.uk) on the use of art materials in clinical practice. IGAP are also running a 2-day course 27-28 April on archetypes in Jung's thought. All of these groups hold public events at Essex Church regularly, so it's worth checking their websites.

Jenny Moy

Daffodils



Full-hearted I feel you flower in every
Fibre of me: incandescent, yellow flame-petals
Flickering from some celestial hearth. I hold myself
Alert, breath –baited ready to steer
Through invisible portals, where you stand
Still sentinels, your trumpets brimming with unearthly music
Which you will not intone until we transmute
Clasped in your sphere, breathless but immune
To unavoidable, withering decay.

John Hands

Photograph by Heidi Ferid-Hands



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

**Second Sunday of the Month from
2-3pm: 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.

'Doom and Gloom'

Sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker – 11th March 2012

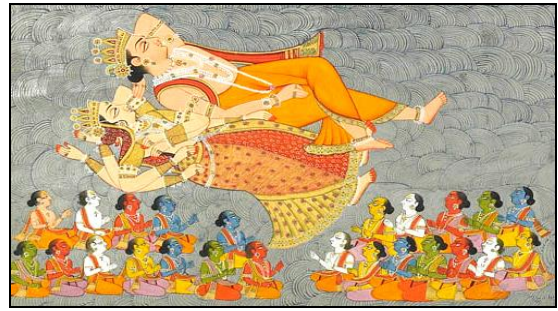
An audio podcast of this sermon is available on our website.

Back in the 1990s I discovered a newspaper that actually brought joy to my heart – it was called Positive News and was jam packed with – surprise, surprise - good news. Mainly, it has to be said, featuring straw bale housing, electric bicycles and communities busily creating their own reed bed sewage systems. I bought subscriptions for friends and family members for some years as it seemed such an original gift idea. One of them eventually begged me to stop the subscription because he found it just too depressing that a newspaper called Positive News was printed only 4 times a year whilst we receive a daily barrage of negative news from so many different newspapers. And these days who can count the ways that news filters through to us: papers still get printed, radios and TVs give us hourly bulletins, we find news websites readily available on our computer and smart phone screens, along with electronic billboards on streets and news screens in shops and banks. And if I had to sum up the main message of the vast majority of this news reporting? Well, it would be something like the title of this address – DOOM AND GLOOM.

I won't even begin to describe the content of this week's news reports for you, for sadly I know that you can all do that yourselves. Suffice to say – this world does not seem a particularly happy or peaceful place. And a conversation I've had several times this week, without reaching a conclusion, goes something like this. "Are things actually getting worse, as they seem to be doing? Or has it often felt like this in the tumultuous course of human history?" The situation humanity is in seems quite grim, if not for us then for far too many of the world's inhabitants, and is unlikely to get any better in the foreseeable future.

If we look back in time it does seem that every age and every culture has created myths of catastrophe and destruction, which leads to the question 'why?' Why do we humans need to explore, often in gory detail, the end of everything that exists? A psychologist might point out to us a link between our attraction to horror films and crime and thriller writing, scary fairground rides and extreme sports like rock climbing and bungee jumping. They all deliver a bit of an adrenalin rush and we humans can find that quite addictive. A Jungian analyst might explain the importance of myth in keeping our inner and outer worlds in balance. We who are conscious of our own mortality, who know we must die, then explore in the mythical realm the death of everything, the end of the world.

No wonder that so many religions deal with the 'end times' as they are called. We heard some verses written by Rabindranath Tagore earlier on in which a god Shiva began his great trance. Hindus believe that the universe has four great ages or Yugas – cycles of creation and destruction, each interspersed with Brahman entering a deep, blissful trance – Brahman the deity that encompasses everything – both animate and inanimate. The three Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam have quite distinctive imagery of the end times, distinctive and shared imagery, which is hardly surprising because the writers of their



scriptures had the texts written by earlier generations before them. No wonder then that the Hebrew and Christian holy texts and the Qur'an seem at times to echo one another – no wonder either that some people reading these texts will regard the repetition as a proof that it must be true – because, for example, some of the language used by the prophet Isaiah in the 6th century BC is similar to that used by John the evangelist or whoever actually wrote the last book of the Bible – the Book of Revelation in perhaps 90AD.

And it is the Book of Revelation that we have to thank for much of the imagery that fuels modern day eschatology – as the musing on the end times is known. The Last Judgement when the righteous and the unrighteous shall reap their just rewards, the four horsemen of the apocalypse, the seven seals opened, the seven trumpets sounded, the seven bowls poured out, the seven headed beast – the anti-Christ, the destruction of Babylon, Armageddon. This is powerful stuff, not for the faint hearted. It's understandable that so much of this imagery has found its way into aspects of our culture, both popular and profound. It is a disturbed and disturbing piece of writing, quite bewildering to read and interpret. Inconsistent, repetitious, with many loose ends – it is supposedly the result of a vision and indeed it has a dreamlike, or nightmare-like quality. Endlessly open to interpretation - and interpreted it has been – pored over by humans who want to prove their own beliefs to be correct. Both Seventh Day Adventists' and Jehovah's Witnesses' faiths are based on this strange biblical text as are the beliefs of many other Christian communities. Yet it is a most unchristlike and unchristian book – none of the gentle 'love your neighbour and turn the other cheek' message here. Indeed D H Lawrence described the Book of Revelation as the 'Judas Iscariot of the New Testament' (*Apocalypse, 1931*) perhaps because we can't help but be fascinated by it yet it sets itself apart, eluding understanding. But what is clear to most Biblical scholars is that the Book of Revelation was written in a specific time for a specific purpose (towards the end of the first century AD and written as a letter to 7 churches in Asia) and that it cannot be regarded as a literal prediction of the future (*Oxford Companion to the Bible, John Sweet, pp 653-655*) or even taken allegorically.

But it has been taken literally and has been interpreted again and again. The latest efforts to make the sums work came from Harold Camping – leader of Radio Family Worldwide who, as we heard earlier on, in that delightful extract from my colleague Art Lester's Coffee Table Book of Doom, (which can be borrowed from our church library) predicted that the world would end last October. We laugh and yet might also feel perturbed that thousands of his followers believed Harold Camper and duly sold their possessions. Bookmakers do well out of such predictions. Bookies William Hill had said it would accept bets of any amount at any odds for those wanting to wager on the end of the world.

'Doom and Gloom'

Sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker *(continued)*

"We often take bets on the end of the world and we always allow customers to choose their own odds - after all, we don't have to worry about paying them out," said Hill's spokesman Graham Sharpe. "Unless it transpires that there are bookies in the hereafter."

And it's perhaps not so surprising that many Christian sects have apocalyptic beliefs because the early Christians gathering together soon after Jesus' death did believe they were living in the end times. They too sold many of their possessions, they lived communally, they expected Jesus to return in their lifetime. Much of the New Testament we have today was written by the next generation – and this 'end times' fervour can still be heard, echoing through the millennia, as they wrote down the words of Jesus' original followers.

And so here we are in 2012, still alive, but perhaps for not much longer if the Mayans are to be believed. You may have heard of the Mayan Long Count Calendar found carved on the wall of an ancient Mayan building in Mexico. The Mayan culture, which spanned from about 250AD to around 900AD, was in many ways a glorious culture as well as a cruel one. They built elaborate stone buildings and had written texts. They also created sophisticated calendars incorporating the movements of the planets – and to cut a long story short – this Mayan calendar seemingly ends on the winter solstice of the year 2012 – so there's 9 months to go.

And who knows? Friends who are more environmentally aware than I am seem to be saying that we have already reached and gone beyond a tipping point – that we cannot recover from the environmental degradation we have already inflicted upon our planet earth home. An article I read this week described our current economic approach as 'disaster capitalism' – obsessed with growth at the cost of sustainability. Others point out that the planet has perhaps far greater capacity for renewal than humanity has as a species.

I'm particularly impressed with the writings of Joanna Macy, environmental campaigner and Buddhist, writer of many important books and courses.

I especially recommend her most recent work on despair and empowerment called *The Work That Reconnects*. Here are some words of Joanna Macy's from an online interview.

*"Yes, it looks bleak. But you are still alive now. You are alive with all the others, in this present moment. And because the truth is speaking in the work, it unlocks the heart. And there's such a feeling and experience of adventure. It's like a trumpet call to a great adventure. In all great adventures there comes a time when the little band of heroes feels totally outnumbered and bleak, like Frodo in *Lord of the Rings* or Pilgrim in *Pilgrim's Progress*. You learn to say "It looks bleak. Big deal, it looks bleak."*

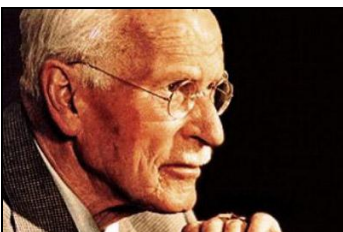
Our little minds think it must be over, but the very fact that we are seeing it is enlivening. And we know we can't possibly see the whole thing, because we are just one part of a vast interdependent whole—one cell in a larger body. So we don't take our own perceptions as the ultimate.

This may be the last gasp of life on Earth, and what a great last gasp, if we realize we have fallen in love with each other. If you are really in the moment of experiencing our reality, you don't say "Oh I won't experience this because it's not going to last forever!" You've got this moment. It's true for now."

So what is a religious liberal to make of all this doom and gloom? Well after a whole week of immersion in this topic this is the best advice I can come up with so far:

- accept that we're powerless and face our despair about the state of our world.
- don't allow that despair to paralyse us into doing nothing. Let's get up and do something, however small, to make this world a better place, every single day.
- let's monitor our news intake and not allow the media giants to bring us down. Let's be informed but not stultified.
- take out a subscription to Positive News and visit their website regularly.
- fall in love again with life, here and now, and remember that nothing, literally nothing, lasts forever.

*Despite everything this is indeed a wonderful world;
despite everything love can warm the coldest of places;
despite everything life goes on – fired by passion, inspired by commitment,
guided by kindness and quirkiness and all that is human and humane – making life worth living in this
sometimes painful, sometimes poignant, sometimes confusing – but still often wonderful world.
Amen, go well and blessed be.*



'Nobody can know what the ultimate things are. We must, therefore, take them as we experience them. And if such experience helps to make your life healthier, more beautiful, more complete and more satisfactory to yourself and to those you love, you may safely say: "This was the grace of God."'

Carl Gustav Jung

Sunday Services at Essex Church

1st April, 11am –

**“The Ant, the Grasshopper, and
why they were Both Right”**

Service led by Caroline Blair

This service will be led by our very own Caroline and will consider Aesop's fable of the ant and the grasshopper.

8th April, 11am –

“Take One Egg”

Easter Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

From ancient fertility rituals to modern cookery programmes, eggs play a crucial part in human life. Join us for this celebration of all that is egg-shaped, alongside deep reflection on Easter's themes of redemption and resurrection. There will be a lunch after this service.

12.15pm - **Small-Group Communion**,
led by David Francis Darling (lasting ~15 minutes)

15th April, 11am –

“In Need of a Blessing”

Service led by Jane Blackall

Religious liberals can be rather hesitant, even squeamish, when it comes to giving and receiving blessings and affirmations. In this service, we will consider what it means to bless, and explore the ways in which we might be able to offer a blessing to others. As Henri Nouwen said 'I am increasingly aware of how much we fearful, anxious, insecure human beings are in need of a blessing.'

22nd April, 11am –

“Beneath a Tree”

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Rabindranath Tagore wrote that “trees are the earth's endless effort to speak to the listening heaven”. As new leaves unfurl and blossom abounds, join us for this celebration of trees and their contribution to our physical and spiritual well being.

29th April, 11am –

**“Non-Conformists
and the Great Ejection”**

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

We Unitarians owe gratitude to the brave and faith filled clergy, who in 1662 lost their livings because they could not conform to the beliefs insisted upon by the Church of England. The 350th anniversary of this important event is being marked this year and today's service will consider the strength of faith that led to this development of new congregations and forms of worship.

“Religious questions, questions about God, cannot truly be addressed by pure science or intellectual pondering; these are not its realms. It is possible to live a life without concern for God, per se. But it is not possible to live life without those things that fall into the purview of religion, that is to say, joy, love, meaning, communion, hope. As Tillich argues, every one of us has something which we consider our Ultimate Concern. And it is in the direction of those thoughts and experiences that any of God might emerge.”

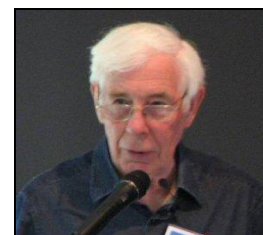
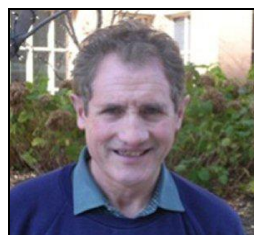
UU Minister, Rev. Audette Fulbright

The Alister Hardy Society

for the study of Religious & Spiritual Experience

**‘Personal Experience and
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. This is a dialogue and shared supper.

‘Evolving Spirituality Taking Shape in Our Time’

Evolution suggests that everything in creation grows, changes and develops, and nothing can escape that dynamic if it wishes to survive and thrive. Religious institutions may be outdated, but a range of spiritual breakthroughs might offer fresh hopes. Diarmuid O'Murchu is a member of the Sacred Heart Missionary Order; a social psychologist most of whose working life has been in social ministry; and a prolific author.

‘Personal Experience & Interpretation: a Quaker Humanist’

Personal experience shapes our lives and makes us what we are. So what is experience, and what tools do we have for interpreting and testing it? David Boulton, former head of news, current affairs, arts and documentaries at Granada Television, is a committed Humanist and convinced Quaker. He writes for a wide range of periodicals and was for many years editor of the Sea of Faith's journal.

3.00pm AHS London Group Dialogue

5.00pm Shared supper (bring finger food, drinks provided)

5.45pm Evening discussion – open contribution to debate.

Entrance £15 (£13 to AHS members, Quakers & Unitarians).
Email johnfranklin35@hotmail.com to register.