



*Kensington Unitarians*

# *The Newsletter*

*November 2007*

## What's On at Essex Church

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm  
"Conversations with the Bible (4/6)"  
*Adult RE led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 11am-4pm  
RE: "Dark Spirits, Shadow Dancers"  
*Led by Sarah Tinker & Katharine Cable*

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November, 11.00am  
"Embracing the Dark"  
*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers (7/12)

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm  
Creativity Engagement Group  
*"Felt Flower Jewellery" (part 2/2)*

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November, 11.00am  
"Remembrance Sunday"  
*Led by Daniel Hughes & Sarah Tinker*

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November, 3.30-5.00pm  
"Songs and Silence for the Soul"

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers (8/12)

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm  
Science & Religion Engagement Group  
*"The Nature of Consciousness"*

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm  
"Conversations with the Bible (5/6)"  
*Adult RE led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 11.00am  
"Emperor Ashoka's Edicts"  
*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 12.30pm  
Adult RE: "Images of the Divine"  
*Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers (9/12)

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm  
Reading Engagement Group:  
*"Bee Season" by Myla Goldberg*

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November, 11.00am  
"Images of the Divine"  
*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers (10/12)

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm  
"Conversations with the Bible (6/6)"  
*Adult RE led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

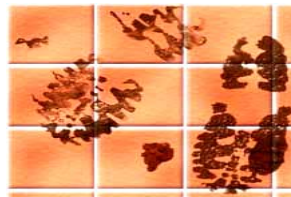
## A Message from Our Minister...

### Getting the Jobs Done...

The story of Adam and Eve is one of many creation myths from around the world. It seems that ancient peoples wanted to make sense of their world and their place within it, to understand their origins. There is a delightful myth from West Africa that involves their god making a superior type of mud pie and eventually coming up with a recipe for humans. God blew breath into these damp and sticky clay figures and they lived. That was humanity's beginnings and it is proved because life has continued to be damp and sticky and messy ever since.



It might be a bit irritating at times to be told that you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs but it is a helpful message and it's one I hope to remember throughout the month of November as we embark on our new, improved front garden project. You can't re-design a garden without moving some earth and you can't move some earth without getting muddy.



### ...Often Involves Mud

If you visit the church on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays or Fridays during the day in November you will no doubt meet Stephen from Groundworks and his team of seven young people, all of whom are being trained in landscape gardening. We Unitarians don't often pray for much but it might be worth a few bended knees in order to request that the weather be kind to our gardeners. And like many prayers this would not be entirely altruistic. The more it rains the muddier the front will become and the more muck will be walked into the building, which will mean more work for Gitana our cleaner and for Jenny and David our wardens.

There are plenty of other activities happening here at Essex Church in the next month or so that will involve, if not mud, then at least some determined effort on our part to achieve. Work has started for our Advent Art and Craft Fair (see page 2 for more information) and we are keen to find more people to make things, sell things, advertise the event, and encourage their friends and families to come along on the day. These kinds of activities help to breathe life into our congregation as we work together towards shared goals. Yes, we want to raise money but we also like having shared tasks. So do let us know if you can help in any way and experience the pleasure first hand of being involved in metaphorical omelette making and the breaking of eggs.

*Rev. Sarah Tinker*

## In this Month's Newsletter...

*\* Advent Art and Craft Fair – 2<sup>nd</sup> December \* BUYAN's Autumn Conference – Report by Jen Hazel \* "Images of the Divine" Adult RE Workshop and Service \* Essex Church Winter Silent Auction \* Christmas with Kensington Unitarians – Potluck Lunch and Restaurant Dinner \* Creativity Group: "Felt Flower Brooches" \* Reading Group: "Bee Season" \* From the Archive – Essex Church Sunday School in the 1880s \* Adult RE: "Conversations with the Bible" – the story so far... \* Items to order for Christmas: Cakes and T-Shirts \* British Unitarian Shares Nobel Peace Prize! \* LDPA News: "PULSE" \* Christmas RE with Daniel Hughes \* Science and Religion: Themes for the Next Few Months \* Adult RE: "Dark Spirits, Shadow Dancers" \* Training for Engagement Group Facilitators in Hampstead \* Multifaith Calendar \* Heidi Ferid's Exhibition: "Chinese Circles" \* Preview of RE Programmes for 2008: "Writing for Our Lives" & "The Quest" \* and much more!...*

# Kensington Unitarians

At Essex Church (founded 1774), Notting Hill Gate

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

We meet for worship each Sunday at 11.00am. The format of the service varies, and usually includes music, singing, meditation, an address, an opportunity to share joys and concerns, and a programme for children. Our activities also include religious education and spirituality workshops, engagement groups on a variety of themes, meeting for fellowship, a regular chanting session, and quiet meditation. All are welcome to come and join us.

Contact our minister to discuss our unique ceremonies, including child naming services, weddings, blessings, and memorials, which are available to all. 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 wardens by telephone or email.



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Notting Hill Gate  
London W8 4RT

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Email: [info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk](mailto:info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk)

Web: [www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk](http://www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk)

## Stewarding/Coffee Rotas



### Stewarding:

4 <sup>th</sup> November:	Will Lyons
11 <sup>th</sup> November:	The Darlings
18 <sup>th</sup> November:	Lucky Dolan
25 <sup>th</sup> November:	Angela Gasparetto

### Coffee:

4 <sup>th</sup> November:	The Joshis
11 <sup>th</sup> November:	Caroline Blair
18 <sup>th</sup> November:	Albert Dolan
25 <sup>th</sup> November:	Albert Dolan

Please speak to Christine in November if you would be willing to help out with stewarding or coffee duties.

## Advent Art and Craft Fair

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 12.30pm – 3.30pm



We have set the date for our third Annual Art and Craft Fair so please do tell your friends and family about it NOW and encourage them to put Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December in their diaries.

There will be lots of high-quality hand-made goodies to buy: jewellery, toys, scarves, bags, cakes, greetings cards and more! We will also have refreshments throughout the afternoon.

All the funds raised will go to the building accessibility fund to enable renovation of our church toilets in summer 2008.

## Sunday Services in November

*Services led by Rev. Sarah Tinker except where otherwise stated.*

### 4<sup>th</sup> November - Embracing the Dark

The dark autumnal evenings encourage us to reflect upon the darkness and its message for us. What does the dark mean for us? Do we hold it at a distance or can we be open to its message and sink into its embrace? What happens to a society that prefers things to be light and shiny? How can darkness support us on the journeys of our lives?

### 11<sup>th</sup> November - Remembrance Sunday

An opportunity to focus not only on those who have lost their lives in protecting our freedoms but also all those people who, in our own lives and the lives of our communities, have gone before us and have left us a great legacy. With Sarah Tinker and Daniel Hughes

### 18<sup>th</sup> November - Emperor Ashoka's Edicts

An exploration of the life of the 3rd century Emperor Ashoka from the Indian sub-continent, who established numerous edicts throughout his empire, promoting equality and religious tolerance for all. What might we learn from Ashoka's life and work, 1700 years later?

### 25<sup>th</sup> November - Images of the Divine

This service will be led by Sarah Tinker and the congregation following the RE session held after worship on the 18th. From the most ancient of times, human beings have attempted to create images of that which they hold to be divine. The goddess of Willendorf figurine, the Sistine Chapel, the Buddha reclining, dancing Shiva, the 99 names of Allah inscribed in exquisite tile work – do these or other such images speak to you? Can divinity ever be expressed in human creations?

A New "Choir-for-All" Initiative at Essex Church

## Kensington Community Singers

Mondays: 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 7-9pm



We have recently launched a new community choir here at Essex Church. This choir is open to all – you don't need any qualifications except enthusiasm – and we're actively striving to welcome in local people alongside members of the congregation.

The sessions are great fun. Jen Hazel, our choir leader, has been teaching us a wide selection of songs from diverse sources. We are looking forward to a choir performance in December at the church carol service.

Donations to cover the cost of running the choir are invited (£3/£6/£9 per session – a sliding scale according to your income). Contact Jen or Sarah T to find out more...

## Songs and Silence for the Soul: Chanting and Singing at Essex Church



11<sup>th</sup> November, 9<sup>th</sup> December, 13<sup>th</sup> January,  
10<sup>th</sup> February, 9<sup>th</sup> March, 13<sup>th</sup> April  
from 3.30 to 5.00pm

**Suggested Donation: £2.00**

An opportunity to sing chants from the world's faith traditions and to sit together in candlelit silence. All are welcome, no experience is necessary. A space in which to re-connect with yourself, one another and with whatever you hold to be divine.

Phone 020 7221 6514 for more information  
or email [sarah@kensington-unitarians.org.uk](mailto:sarah@kensington-unitarians.org.uk)

An Adult RE Workshop at Essex Church this Month:

## "Images of the Divine"

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 12.30 to 2.00pm



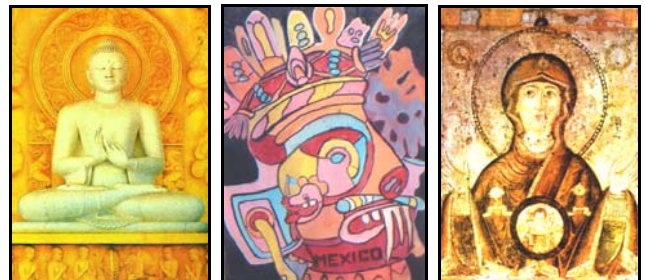
In this session we will have the chance to look at some of the most exquisite images of divinity from around the world, spanning from ancient times to the present day. We will listen to one another's responses to these images and explore how these responses reflect our own beliefs and what they tell us about the beliefs of the artists who created them.

Whatever your own religious standpoint – atheist, theist, pantheist or just downright uncertain – the artwork of the world is there to challenge, intrigue and inspire us.

In the second half of the workshop we will widen our consideration of what is divine and what that might look like.

Bring your lunch and any pictures or figures that you would like to show us.

*Rev. Sarah Tinker*



## Used Postage Stamps for Meningitis Research

Many thanks to all the folk who have saved their used postage stamps and foreign coins and notes.



Please continue to save them for me, especially as you receive Christmas cards and parcels.

*Juliet Edwards*

*Advance notice of events for the Festive Season*

## Christmas with Kensington Unitarians



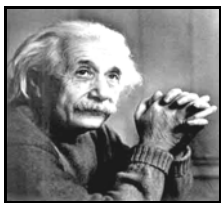
### Carol Service & Christmas Potluck Lunch Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December

We will be having our traditional Christmas potluck lunch after the carol service on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December. Please put the date in your diary and plan to come along! Patricia Walker-Hesson will be coordinating the lunch arrangements – and wielding a sign-up sheet – so please think about what food or drink you can offer to provide.



### Christmas Eve Service & Restaurant Dinner Monday 24<sup>th</sup> December

After our congregational service on Christmas Eve there will be an opportunity for those of us who are in London for the festive season to go for dinner together. We have a tradition of going to the Mediterranean Kitchen on Kensington Church Street. Juliet Edwards will be booking our table (for about 7pm) so please contact her soon so we can count you in.



*“The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science... To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most elementary forms - this knowledge, this feeling, is at the centre of true religiousness. What is the meaning of human life, or of organic life altogether? To answer this question at all implies a religion. Is there any sense then, you ask, in putting it? I answer, the man who regards his own life, and that of his fellow-creatures, as meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life.”*

*Albert Einstein*

## Unitarian Youth Programme



The Unitarian General Assembly organises a wide range of youth activities in store up and down the country for 3 main age groups: Junior Weekends (ages 7-11), Inter Weekends (ages 11-14), Senior Weekends (ages 14-17).

Most youth events take place at the Nightingale Centre, an inspiring and very comfortable Unitarian-run venue in the heart of the Derbyshire Peak District. The popular weekends offer a huge range of activities including art and craft, walking, drama, discussion, free time to meet others and explore, and circle time - when we share how we are feeling and light a candle of friendship.

### Here are the dates for the next few months:

**2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

Senior Weekend (ages 14-17) - Nightingale Centre

**16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

Inter Weekend (ages 11-14) - Nightingale Centre

**1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2008**

Junior Weekend (ages 7-11) - Nightingale Centre

**For information contact the Youth Coordinator,  
John Harley: 020 8670 6350 / [jharley@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:jharley@unitarian.org.uk)**



## Dec/Jan Newsletter Deadline



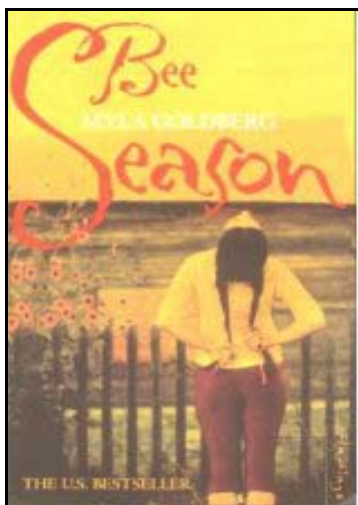
The deadline for submitting items for the next double-issue is **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November**. Please send items (such as poems, artwork, quotes, articles, notices, etc...) to Jane Blackall or any committee member before this date.

**Thank you!!!**

## Reading Engagement Group

### “Bee Season” by Myla Goldberg

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm



The reading engagement group's next topic of discussion will be “Bee Season” by Myla Goldberg. This book will be introduced by Michaela von Britzke as the focus of our next reading group meeting on **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November**.

Information from Amazon UK:

*“In Myla Goldberg's outstanding first novel, a family is shaken apart by a small but unexpected shift in the prospects of one of its members. When nine-year-old Eliza Naumann, an otherwise indifferent student, takes first prize in her school spelling bee, it is as if rays of light have begun to emanate from her head. Eliza's father, Saul, a scholar and cantor, had long since given up expecting sparks of brilliance on her part but once she wins the state-wide bee, he begins tutoring her for the national competition, devoting to Eliza the hours he once spent with her brother Aaron. When Saul sees the state of transcendence that she effortlessly achieves in competition, he encourages his daughter to explore the mystical states that have eluded him - the influx of God-knowledge described by the Kabbalist Abraham Abulafia. Meanwhile, stunned by his father's defection, Aaron begins his own religious quest. Eliza's brainy, compulsive mother is also unmoored by her success. A poignant and exceptionally well crafted tale, Bee Season has a slow beginning but a tour-de-force conclusion.”*

All are welcome to join the book group. Please do try to read the books before the meeting if you're planning to come along. It would also aid discussion if you pick out favourite passages to share. Members of the group take turns in choosing books so we read a wide variety of material.

**The book group will be having a break in December.**

If you want to read ahead... January's book choice is “Waterlog: A Swimmer's Journey Through Britain” by Roger Deakin.

## Creativity Engagement Group

### “Felt Flower Brooches”

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00-9.00pm



In the October creativity group we started work on hand-made felt flower brooches. If you made some felt at last month's session, or in your own time, do bring it along this month. This time we will be cutting out our shapes and forming the brooches.

We hope that some people will be willing to sell their brooches at the art and craft fair this December... but this is not obligatory! If you didn't come last time it's not a problem as we will have some spare felt fabric on hand at the session for you to use.

As usual, if this particular craft doesn't take your fancy, you are most welcome to bring your own craftwork along, and simply sit with us in good company for the evening. There are usually biscuits and various other goodies to be eaten too...

If you would like to know more about the creativity engagement group please do talk to Jane Blackall or Patricia Walker. Photographs of work from several of the projects we've worked on over the last few years can be found on our website: [www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk/creativity.html](http://www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk/creativity.html)



*“None of the means employed to acquire religious merit has a sixteenth part of the value of loving-kindness. Loving-kindness, which is freedom of heart, absorbs them all; it glows, it shines, it blazes forth.”*

**The Buddha**

# Our Wardens' Column

## What's On in Our Busy Building...

The first week of the month should see Groundwork West London complete their landscaping of the front garden. For the first few days of the month they will be repaving the drawbridge, so entrance to the building will be by the side door. Arrangements have been made for evening groups, but if you're coming to the church during the day do phone first to let us know so we can be sure to let you in as there are no doorbells on the side door.



The rest of the month will see the building full during the day with Associated Music Board exams. The Temenos Academy will also be holding several poetry events. On Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm India Russell will lecture on "Frederich Holderlin - Lightning Conductor of the Divine." Commencing on Tuesday November 6<sup>th</sup>, Jack Herbert will lead four weekly seminars on "Poems by Rainer Maria Rilke: From Neue Gedichte to Duineser Elegien." This costs £25/£20 concessions. For further information on both events contact (01233) 813663 or e-mail [temenosacademy@myfastmail.com](mailto:temenosacademy@myfastmail.com).

November also sees a number of new workshops and classes. On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November Jungian analyst Julia Pikal will lead a workshop on "The Eternal Child." For more information contact her on 07711 039705 or at [julia@blass.f9.co.uk](mailto:julia@blass.f9.co.uk).

Bruno Groening circle of friends will be meeting on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> as part of a once a month meeting to tune into healing energy. Contact Heike Beck [h.beck@beck-makler.de](mailto:h.beck@beck-makler.de) for more information. Bhakti Marga ([www.bhaktimarga.org](http://www.bhaktimarga.org)) will be meeting every Thursday evening from 6.30 to 8.30pm. This group draws on both Hindu and Christian traditions, they will be practicing Om chanting and silent meditation. On Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>, is one of the regular talks by Richard Sylvester on non-duality (2-5pm, charge £10).

Other events this month include an AGM for Broadwalk Court, one of several local residents associations that meet in the church. The Interfaith Ministers service is on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm. Information on these and other events can be found on the foyer noticeboards or by calling the office.

*David Berridge and Jenny Moy*

*Information from Danielle Wilson of the Interfaith Seminary*

## Universal Worship Gatherings

Conducted by the Interfaith Seminary



**Services at Essex Church on Fridays**  
16<sup>th</sup> November, 14<sup>th</sup> December 6.45-8.15pm

The Interfaith Seminary invite you to join their "monthly celebration of dialogue with the Divine" at Essex Church.

The Interfaith Seminary Graduate Ministers, students and friends offer inspirational evenings of music, meditation, insight, story and prayer drawing on the universal themes at the heart of all great spiritual teachings.

Website: [www.theinterfaithseminary.com](http://www.theinterfaithseminary.com)

## Unitarian Renewal Group Day Gathering: Building Spiritual Community



**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November, 12-5.00pm**  
Unity Church, Islington N1 2DU

Special Speakers at this Event:  
**Jim Robinson, Joyce Ashworth, Don Phillips**

*What builds spiritual community?*  
*What is spiritual? What is community?*

**Cost: £8 waged/£6 concessions**  
Bring a packed lunch (tea/coffee provided)

**Bookings by 31<sup>st</sup> October to:**  
**Ann Peart, 34 Old Broadway, Manchester M20 3DF**  
Cheques to "Unitarian Renewal Group"

*A forthcoming Unitarian Youth Event in our District*

## **BLAH Unitarian Fun Day** for 7-14 year olds



**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 10.30-4.00pm**  
at Meadow Chapel, Godalming

This will be a day of Fun, Friendship, Art and Drama for 7-14 year olds, led by the denomination's Youth Officer, Rev. John Harley.

*Arrivals: 10:30 for 11:00 am. Finish 4:00 pm.*

*Drinks and biscuits provided;  
please bring a packed lunch.*

The day will include an opportunity to participate in creating shared worship for the Family Service at 11am on 9<sup>th</sup> December at Meadow.

Contact John on 020 867 09280 or email [jharley@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:jharley@unitarian.org.uk) to reserve a place, or speak to Louise Baumberg (01483 537 206).

*A forthcoming lecture which you may be interested in...*

### **Nature and Nurture in Brain Function: Clues from Synaesthesia and Phantom Limbs**

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November at 6:30pm**  
Royal Society, Carlton House Terrace, SW1Y 5AG

In this public lecture, Professor V S Ramachandran of the University of California will examine problems that lie at the interface between neurology and psychiatry. He will explain how phantom limbs may be used as a probe for understanding brain functions and shows that far from having fixed connections, even the basic 'wiring' of the brain is constantly being modified in response to changing sensory inputs. He will also discuss synaesthesia, an inherited condition in which sounds and printed numbers are seen as coloured. He will suggest it might provide clues to understanding high level brain functions such as metaphor and abstraction.

*This lecture is FREE and no advance registration is required.*

It will be webcast live at: [www.royalsoc.ac.uk/live/](http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/live/)

## **Come Join the Winter Silent Auction!!**



This winter, we will be holding a silent auction here at Essex Church, to raise money for the building accessibility fund. Not sure what a silent auction is? Well read on with these FAQ's!

### **So, what is a silent auction?**

A silent auction is a place where people can bid donated goods and services in a written book. You can always revisit the book anytime before the auction closes to bid higher if someone else has outbid you.

### **What kind of items can be donated?**

Well, you can donate anything you think would sell in an auction. You can donate things such as handmade items, baked goods, or items of value that you have that might be searching for a better home, such as a picture or set of books. Also, if you have a special skill you could donate that.

### **Services? Such as what? I don't really have any professional skills to donate.**

Oh, you'd be surprised what kinds of services people would like to have! Here are some examples of services you could donate:

- Cooking a dinner for somebody
- Being a chauffeur for an evening
- An evening of babysitting
- A day of garden work
- Computer advice or repair

Those are just some examples of what you could donate.

So keep an eye out for the auction and be ready to donate and bid when it opens! Donations and bidding will be opening on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October and will close on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December (the day of the Christmas Carol Service).

Happy bidding all!

*Jen Hazel*

## British Unitarian Shares Nobel Peace Prize

A British Unitarian is the shared winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace, along with his colleagues on the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (the IPCC) and Al Gore, in the awards announced on 12 October 2007.



The British man is Geoff Levermore, a UK-nominated Lead Author on the IPCC Working Group that deals with mitigating the effects of climate change. He is Professor of the Built Environment at the University of Manchester, and he helped write and edit a chapter on 'Residential and commercial buildings' in the IPCC's 'Fourth Assessment Report', due to be published later this year. Geoff Levermore and his colleagues around the world have received a letter of congratulation from the chairman of the IPCC, Rachendra Pachauri, saying the award "makes each one of us a Nobel laureate".

Geoff said he was delighted that the Intergovernmental Panel had achieved "the recognition it deserves", explaining that its research had provided the basis on which governments took their decisions on limiting greenhouse gas emissions and protecting the environment, including through international agreements like the Kyoto Protocol. The Nobel citation says that the award made to the IPCC and Al Gore is "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change".

Geoff Levermore is a member of Norcliffe Unitarian Chapel at Styal in Cheshire, where both he and his wife Carolyn serve on the governing Council, and he is also a member of the Manchester District Association of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. Unitarianism had its origins in the European Reformation. It initially questioned the doctrine of the Trinity and ideas concerning the nature of Jesus, while emphasising an open and non-dogmatic approach to truth. Today, Unitarians have become more universalist and humanist in their understanding of faith and philosophy.

Geoff Levermore says he sees close parallels between his work on climate change and the philosophy and practice of Unitarianism. He said the studies he and his colleagues undertook on climate change went beyond academic discourse. "These are concerned with ethical questions, how we share the earth's resources, how we live together." He said the IPCC's investigations were carried out "in a free and open spirit, accepting that there is no final answer, that there will always be new interpretations based on new evidence. Our conclusions can only be about probabilities".

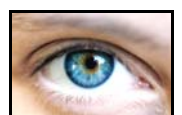
Geoff said this had been the approach of the great eighteenth century Unitarian scientist, Joseph Priestley, the man who discovered oxygen. "This to my mind has been and remains the Unitarian approach to truth, both religious and scientific, that in your explorations you are on an open search," Geoff said. He also compared the strong democratic element in the Unitarian denomination with the way the IPCC worked, which he said was "open, democratic and transparent". Geoff contrasted this with fundamentalism in both science and in religion, saying because it clung to dogma, fundamentalism was unable to respect democracy or transparency.



The Nobel Prize for Peace is to be awarded in Oslo, Norway, on 10 December 2007. Geoff said he would be keen to go, although there were more senior people than himself in the IPCC. He said he would "love to be there in Oslo out of interest". On a personal note, Geoff said he had discovered the Unitarian movement just three years ago, after becoming increasingly disillusioned with the dogmatism he found in the Anglican Church. After reading a report that the Unitarian denomination might be extinct in 10 years (a report in *The Times*), Geoff and Carolyn Levermore decided to give their local Unitarian chapel a try. They say they have increasingly warmed to the spiritual home they have found. Geoff has already been interviewed by the local Cheshire press and BBC Radio Five Live and other radio programmes about his award. Details of the award can be found on the IPCC web page at: [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch).

*"The eye that sees nobility and beauty in what another would regard as ordinary is the eye of prayer."*

**Wendy Beckett**





*An event which may be of particular interest to those who were at our Science and Religion: "Medical Ethics" Group in September...*

## A Moral Maze: Babies or Geriatrics?

Thursday 15 November 2007

7.30 – 9.30 p.m. (doors open at 7 p.m.)

Interfaith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, NW6 6RG



How should scarce medical resources be allocated - should we spend money on premature babies, or finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease?

**Cost: £5.00 for World Congress of Faith members;  
£7.00 for non-members**

Come and listen to:

- a panel comprised of members of different faiths to ask the questions and reflect on their religion's teachings;
- experts with understanding and insight of the medical and ethical issues involved.
- participate in: an interactive activity to highlight some of the situations confronted on a daily basis as a consequence of the scarcity of medical resources.

For further details see: [www.worldfaiths.org](http://www.worldfaiths.org)



*"What we love becomes our language. The things we love hold our experience of grace. They give voice to our heart and spirit. They provide tangible shapes for those things that, deep inside, are formless.... Any language - whether it be spiritual, emotional, artistic, or political - forms a paradigm that shows us where to look, teaches us what to listen for, helps us to decide what is most important. Our language affects our orientation, our alliances and our assumptions. It directs all our senses to watch especially carefully for those things that our language holds dear..."*

**Wayne Muller**



*"Let everything you touch be treated as if it were as precious as the altar vessels. Whenever you handle any equipment or any person, be reverent. Be full of care with everything entrusted to you. Everything you touch or see, everyone for whom you have responsibility, is to be viewed as something cherished by God, and thus to be cherished by you."*

**Norvene Vest**

## National Tree Week



**21<sup>st</sup> November – 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

The Tree Council's tree planting celebration, National Tree Week, began in 1975 and has seen over 20 million trees planted since. It's the ideal opportunity to do one great thing for the environment – plant a tree – and bring about a myriad of benefits, many of which will have long term impact in times of climate uncertainty.

'The early summer floods that devastated many parts of the UK were a real wake up call to how vulnerable we are to the elements', said Pauline Buchanan Black, director-general of The Tree Council. 'But trees provide an effective flood break and improve water absorption, offering an excellent defence we shouldn't ignore'.

'Planting trees is great fun too - even on a wet blustery day, the thrill of going out and getting your hands dirty, something many of us don't do often enough, is really rewarding when you stand back and see the benefits of your hard work.' continues Pauline.

Whilst tree planting is a global issue we should not forget how important trees are to our immediate environment. Recent concerns over the 'chainsaw massacre' which has seen many urban trees being cut down but not replaced, means that more than ever, we need to take action to replenish our tree stock and truly benefit from trees.

For more info see: [www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)

# Extracts from the Sunday School Minutes Book, 1888 – 1891

An Insight into Days Gone By at Essex Church – Discovered in a Trawl through our Archive

**1888:** “The Sunday School Committee have much pleasure in reporting that the school which had been satisfactorily carried on for twelve years in the Mall Church, and which was discontinued during the building of Essex Church, was successfully re-opened on Sunday, January 29th, 1888... when seven teachers and 56 scholars were present. The number on the book has now risen to 95, and the attendance has been over 70 on each succeeding Sunday.”

“That the following books be bought: 50 Bibles at 10d, 12 Essex Hall registers at 2d, 24 Essex Hall Hymn Tune books, 6 Brown’s Life of Jesus, 1 Gift of Life, 6 Early Hebrew Stories and 6 Bible Stories for little folks.”

“The 4th class of girls and the 3rd class of boys are invited to come at 7 o’clock on the 26th to see the magic lantern entertainment...”

“The Summer Excursion took place on July 26th when 75 of the elder Scholars were taken to Cheam Park. 30 of the younger children were kindly entertained by Mr and Mrs Edwin Lawrence.”

“That certificates be given instead of prizes for regular attendance when conduct has been unsatisfactory. Carried.”

**1889:** “The average attendance during 1889 has been 119 scholars and 10 teachers.”

“During the winter months sewing, drilling and other afternoon meetings have been arranged for the girls.”

“During the year the superintendent has been obliged to refuse to admit several boys who, he believes, would derive great benefit from attending the school, as there was no gentleman to teach them.”

“That Mrs Webb’s generous gift of a piano be accepted with hearty and grateful thanks. Carried.”

**1890:** “The object of the Children’s Guild shall be: to teach and encourage self control and thrift; obedience to parents and teachers; kindness to all God’s creatures; helpfulness towards others; reverence for God and sacred things.”

“That scholars applying for admission to the school be admitted as probationers, and after attending regularly for 4 Sundays be enrolled. Carried.”

“Work of various kinds has been done for sick children, hospitals &c., including the making of garments, scrap-books, illuminations, dressing dolls, &c. A cricket club was formed for the recreation of the elder boys.”

“Sermons on behalf of the School funds were preached on 11th May by Rev. C Walters, when a sum of £35 was collected.”

**1891:** “It was resolved that, subject to permission being obtained from Lord Ebury, the school should go to Moor Park, Rickmansworth, and the secretary was asked to write to Lord Ebury to obtain his permission for any day in the second or third week in July, whichever date would suit his Lordship best.”

“The Secretary reported that as certain difficulties stood in the way of the scholars going to Moor Park, negotiations were opened with the Golden Bells Catering Co, which resulted in the scholars being taken to Southall on July 15th...The weather was beautifully fine and all seemed to have spent a very pleasant day.”

“On June 13th there was an exhibition of scrap-books, illuminated texts and garments made by the children. During the afternoon 50 of the most regular and best-behaved of the members had tea, and were afterwards entertained by a conjuror kindly provided by Mr G G Pearson. The articles made by the children were sent to the Guild Cot in the North-West London Hospital, Winifred’s Home, and the Kensington Infirmary.”

*Selection compiled by Caroline Blair*

## Bodywork Sessions:

Available on Mondays here at Essex Church between 10.00am - 4.00pm

Using a combination of massage, aromatherapy and craniosacral therapy, Fiona Watson (ITEC dip.) can provide individual sessions to meet each client's unique requirements. For full details please phone Fiona on 07960 758068.



# “Conversations with the Bible”

## A Fortnightly Adult RE Group

Continues 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm



This course is an introduction to an interactive method of Bible study and is based on a course designed by Stephen Washburn. “Conversations with the Bible” provides an opportunity to explore Hebrew and Christian scriptures from a liberal religious perspective. Participants will read selected texts and explore biblical scripture through discussion, dialogue, guided meditation, small-group work, and creative exercises. All are welcome to join any of these sessions

In previous sessions here are some of the activities we have explored:

The prophet Ezekiel was told to prophesy to the dry bones in the desert – he of the song ‘dem bones, dem bones dem dry bones’ – and to bring them back to life. We heard some of the historical background to Ezekiel’s prophecies and we then considered our society and our own lives to identify areas that are alive and vital and areas that need fresh life breathing into them.

We read the Book of Jonah (he of swallowed-by-the-big-fish fame) and asked what type of writing this might be and what message it held for us today. Would you feel sorry for poor Jonah or regard him as an insufferable goody goody?! Opinion in the group here was surprisingly divided.

The prophet Micah is credited with having written some of the most famous Old Testament verses including the oft-repeated chapter 6, verse 8:

**‘And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly,  
and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?’**

*(from the King James’ translation)*

We wrote our modern versions of this verse:

And God said, ‘Stop being separate from Me. I am you, you are Me.’

What does the spirit of life and love want of us, we people of the earth? Do we need to give up all that we have or change our ways completely? Shall we join monasteries or go on long pilgrimages? Or fast or wear out our knees in prayer or meditation? None of this is necessary unless we choose it of our own free will. Rather, choose a path that makes your heart sing, a journey that calls to you. Be kind and loving to yourself and others; seek the divine spirit in the touch of others, find it in the sparkle of their eyes and in the laughter as well as the tears of your togetherness.

How can I acknowledge properly that there is more to life than meets my small ego - recognise that there truly are limits to my power - and embrace this insight humbly? I realise that big and ostentatious gifts and sacrifices are not what is required of me to regain a proper balance between myself and life. Attunement to life is an ongoing gentle process of longing and listening. I understand again and again that life itself requires me to act justly, to love and never to forget that I am a small part of life’s wonder and complexity.

Future sessions will include reading The Book of Ruth, a Psalm or two and highlights from Exodus. Bible Studies have never been quite so random or variable before but the intention is to create sessions that are interesting and informative and that encourage us to take an interest in a Book that has played such a part in the shaping of our western culture. Feel free to come along and find out more.

*Rev. Sarah Tinker*

## Christmas Cakes to Order

Profits to the Church Building Accessibility Fund



If you would like a homemade Christmas Cake please order by **Sunday 11th November 2007**.

### Prices:

#### Christmas Cake Only:-

Round 8" = £14                      Square 6" = £10

#### With Marzipan and Icing:-

Round 8" = £22                      Square 6" = £16

Contact **Juliet Edwards** on **020 8752 1591** to order.

## Dark Spirits, Shadow Dancers

A Workshop at Essex Church  
Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 11am – 4pm



Through myth, art work, movement, creative writing and sound we will explore the shadow archetype and the creativity, power and richness contained within those aspects of ourselves that we often keep hidden from others and sometimes from ourselves.

**Group led by Sarah Tinker and Katharine Cable**  
**Bring lunch to share, drinks provided.**

**Cost: £5 to £15, pay what you can afford**

Booking essential – phone 020 7221 6514 to book.

*An Exhibition which you may be Interested In...*

## “Painted Prayers”



**24<sup>th</sup> November to Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January**  
**10.00am to 5.00pm (not Wednesdays and Sundays)**  
**Kingston Museum, Wheatfield Way, KT1 2PS**

Caroline Jariwala's vibrant, large-scale paintings explore the fusion of two very different cultures; that of her Gujarati heritage and her experience of being born and raised in Britain. The paintings, predominantly of women, combine Hindu symbolism and Christian spirituality in action. They depict women working, cooking, dancing or praying--all rituals and practices that cross boundaries of culture and religion.

## Autumn



*Autumn is where things start.  
About the equinox  
a balance shifts: the unsettled land  
tousled by rain and gales,  
the trees shouldering off summer and the birds agitated,  
everything moving. A time  
for cardgames, portents,  
turning over the accounts, taking  
augury as the birds migrate.  
Do not mistake the season's tang  
for death's: even now  
like some demotic emblem  
dropped from the zodiac,  
husband and midwife on the one horse  
gallop ungainly  
towards a birth, though perspectives  
change at once and a whirling leaf  
swallows them. Now choose  
your talisman for the dark months:  
that which survives the snow will rule next year.*

**Grevel Lindop**

# November Multifaith Calendar

## ✠ 1<sup>st</sup> November – All Saints' Day – Christian

*All Saints' Day was originally known as All Martyrs' Day, and is also called All Hallows'. The work and witness of Christian saints is remembered with thanksgiving, recognising that not all are known or specially celebrated.*

## ✠ 2<sup>nd</sup> November – All Souls' Day – Christian

*On All Souls' Day those who have departed this life are remembered and prayers offered on their behalf. From the beginning Christians have prayed for the dead. In the year 998, All Souls 'the faithful departed' began to be remembered in the Church calendar on this day.*

## 🌀 5<sup>th</sup> November – Kathina Day – Buddhist

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

## 🕉 9<sup>th</sup> November – Divali (Deepavali) – Hindu/Sikh/Jain

*Divali (Deepavali) is the Hindu New Year celebration lasting from one to five days. A festival of light, celebrated with fireworks, Divali is generally associated with Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and prosperity, or with the victorious return of Rama and Sita after their exile. Sikhs also celebrate Divali, as the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind, was released from prison on this day. He refused to accept release unless fifty-two imprisoned Hindu princes were also released. The Emperor set a condition that only those who could hold on to his cloak could leave prison, so the Guru had a special coat with long tassels made. Divali is a time for presents, sweets and new clothes. The Golden Temple in Amritsar is illuminated and firework displays take place.*

## 🕒 11<sup>th</sup> November – Remembrance Sunday

*The Sunday nearest to Armistice Day (11th November), when those who died in the two World Wars and subsequent wars are remembered.*

## 🌀 12<sup>th</sup> November – Birth of Bahauallah – Bahai

*Babaullah was the founder of the Bahai faith and was born in Persia in 1817. His birthday is one of nine holy days in the year. Bahais do not work on holy days and celebrations are generally quiet observances. Babaullahs birthday may be celebrated by a picnic, or a gathering at which prayers are said or songs are sung from his writings.*

## 🕒 24<sup>th</sup> November –

### Birth of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru (1469) - Sikh

*Important anniversaries associated with the lives of the Gurus are referred to as Gurburbs. They are marked with an akhand path, an uninterrupted reading of the Guru Granth Sahib, completed on the morning of the festival, kirtan (musical recitation of hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib) and katha (lectures on Sikhism). The congregation will share a meal (langar) from the free kitchen, and the celebrations often include firework displays and illumination of the gurdwara.*

## 🕒 24<sup>th</sup> November –

### Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (1675) – Sikh

*In 1675, the ninth Guru was executed in public, in Delhi for upholding an individual's right to worship in the manner of his or her choice.*

## ✠ 30<sup>th</sup> November – St Andrew's Day – Christian

*Andrew was the first disciple to follow Jesus. He was present on the day of Pentecost, but little is known of his life afterwards, until he was crucified at Patras, in Greece. St Andrew is the Patron Saint of Scotland, and his day is celebrated by Scots around the world.*



*A tiny colouring picture for All Saints' Day – 1<sup>st</sup> November.*

*A local art exhibition which you might be interested in...*

## Multi-Faith Art Exhibition: “Images of the Divine”

6<sup>th</sup> October – 18<sup>th</sup> November

Tues - Sat: 1pm-4:30pm; Sun: 2pm-4:30pm

Orleans House Gallery, Twickenham TW1 3DJ

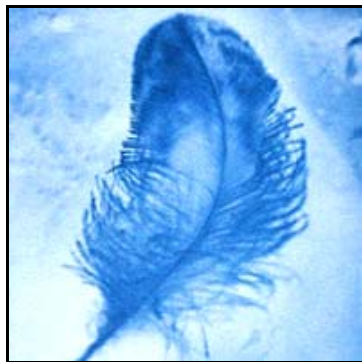
This multi-faith open exhibition brings together a variety of contemporary UK-based artists who directly explore the religious and spiritual in their work. Religious and spiritual subjects have been central to western and non-western art since art began. Although marginalised by many formal 20th century modernist movements, the depiction of the sacred in secular and non-secular art has endured.

This exhibition, “Images of the Divine,” juxtaposes traditional works, such as Christian religious icons, carving and mosaic, alongside abstract and contemporary work in media as diverse as painting, drawing, prints, photography, book art, comics, sculpture, installation and animation. Practitioners include established artists alongside emerging new talent. Work by artists under the broad umbrella term of ‘outsider’ artist will also be on display.

Website: [www.richmond.gov.uk/exhibitions](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/exhibitions)

*A local event promoted by the Art and Spirituality Network*

## “The Art of Mindfulness”



**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 10am to 4.30pm**

**At Kingston Friends Meeting House, 78 Eden Street  
Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 1DJ**

This workshop will explore concepts and practices of mindfulness, which are present in a number of religious traditions. Many spiritual traditions have developed practices of mindfulness for deepening the life of the spirit, including a variety of art. Through talks, silence, and simple hands-on activities you will have the opportunity to learn about and explore some of these. All materials are provided and no prior experience is needed. There will be opportunities to work privately and to share with others.

### Programme:

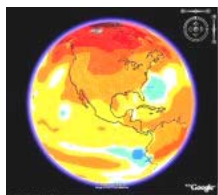
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| 9.45am  | Arrivals, registration, coffee  |
| 10.15am | ‘Symbols and Icons’   |
| 12.30pm | Lunch   |
| 1.30pm  | <i>Choice of workshops:</i><br><i>either</i> ‘The Message from your Soul’<br><i>or</i> ‘Mindful Making’ |
| 3.30pm  | Tea   |
| 4.00pm  | Shared Reflections (close at 4.45pm)  |

**Cost:** £25 including all materials and drinks.

### Enquiries and bookings:

email [artandspirituality@gmail.com](mailto:artandspirituality@gmail.com) or ring 020 8946 8365

*Please bring some simple vegetarian food to share for lunch.  
Please wear old clothes or bring an apron.*



*“These days of challenge call us to put aside our pettiness and our little quarrels, our theological differences, and to focus on the larger issues. You don’t talk about the colour of the drapes when the house is burning down.”*

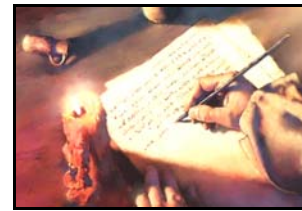
**UU Minister Rev. Marilyn Sewell  
on “The Moral Dimensions of Global Warming”**

*Exciting New Year Activities to make a note of in your diaries:*

## Adult RE at Essex Church in 2008

### “Writing for Our Lives”

Thursdays 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January, 7-9pm



A 2 session workshop in which we will look at some popular readings used recently in worship here at Essex Church and then have a go at writing short passages about our own experiences that may form useful readings or meditations to be used in the future here and elsewhere. These workshops will be ideal for anyone who has ever had anything happen to them and then reflected upon it. No writing skill or experience is needed - just a willingness to tell your story.

## Adult RE: “The Quest”

7<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> Feb, 6<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> Mar, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1<sup>st</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> May



Some years back when our old friend Simon John Barlow and I were visiting the spiritual community in Findhorn we met some people who were about to publish a course called The Quest, which they described as:

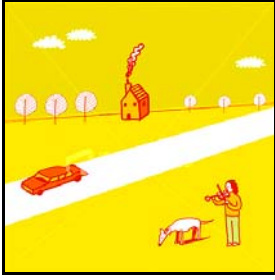
*“A unique guide to the spiritual journey  
designed to help you find your own answers”*

I have used many of its exercises in my own life as well as in other workshops and indeed worship, but this is the first time that we will have run this course in its original format here at Essex Church.

Our plan is to hold 6 Thursday evening sessions with 2 Saturday afternoons, starting in February and running through to May. In order to deepen the process we will make this a closed group so have a look at your diaries now and see if you can commit to attending at least three-quarters of the sessions. If so, book your place and we will let you know how to order the accompanying book (cost around £10). The Quest involves regular spiritual practice and self-reflection and is a great way to deepen your exploration of your life.

**Rev. Sarah Tinker**

## Utopia



*There's only the slightest chance I shall faint in my chair  
or when I get up fail to rise to the occasion, or bump my head  
on the ceiling: if I should bother to swing my arms I am sure to find  
room enough for my body and my ambition.  
In the room next to this there is just one bed,  
and the one next to that is only shared  
by two children: moreover there are stairs  
and other rooms, a garden, and garage  
below. When I wish I can get in my car and drive  
a considerable distance without undue let or hinderance,  
with only a one-in-a-thousand chance of an accident.  
I can eat whenever I want, buy cream and chocolate: though my wife  
eats frugally, and worries about her weight. Naturally  
we have a few problems we could only discuss in confidence.  
But the one which disturbs me most even in public  
when I'm laughing with friends at the dinner table  
is that this prim paradise will be all we shall ever have:  
In a hundred years time they will envy and curse  
our dyspeptic and golden age.*

*John Hands*

## Poetry with Temenos

There are a number of poetry events which you might be interested in, organised by the Temenos Academy, going on this autumn at Essex Church.

**Friedrich Hölderlin:  
Lightning Conductor of the Divine  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November, 7pm**

**Leader:** India Russell

**Admission:** £5 or £3.50 *Temenos members*  
Please book in advance for this lecture.

**Poems by Rainer Maria Rilke:  
From Neue Gedichte to Duineser Elegien  
Tuesdays 6<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> November, 7-8.30pm**

**Leader:** Jack Herbert

**Course cost:** £25, or £20 *Temenos members*  
Please reserve your place in advance  
and pay the course fee at the first meeting

For more info/booking: [www.temenosacademy.org](http://www.temenosacademy.org)

## Chinese Circles

**An Art Exhibition by Heidi Ferid**

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November, 6.30-9.00pm  
Continues until 10<sup>th</sup> November**



This painting is one of the Chinese Circles series by Heidi. It will be part of Heidi's next exhibition at the Rivington Gallery, 69 Rivington Street, London EC2A 3AY (in Shoreditch, Old Street tube exit 3).

Heidi says: "The private view will be on Tuesday 6th November from 6.30pm to 9.00pm, and it would be great to see you there. Please let me know if you can make it - by email, or ring me on 020 7794 9130. Hope to see you."

**For more information:** [www.heidiferidart.co.uk](http://www.heidiferidart.co.uk)

## Firework Displays in London



If you fancy going to see a fireworks display this November, here are details of a number of organised displays in the London area which you might enjoy...

### **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November:**

**Alexandra Palace** – fireworks at 7.30pm

**Battersea Park** – bonfire at 7.30pm, fireworks at 8pm.

**Blackheath** – fireworks from 7.30pm.

**Ravenscourt Park** – gates open 6.30pm, fireworks at 8pm.

### **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November:**

**Lord Mayor's Show** – fireworks over the Thames at 5pm  
best viewed from Victoria Embankment or South Bank.

## Multi-Faith Service of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

St. James' Church, Piccadilly  
Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November at 3pm



*"Remember and reflect, remember and respond"*

This service is one of many events held throughout the UK and worldwide to mark this UN-recognised day and remember the millions of people killed and injured in road crashes, all those who grieve, and those who help in the aftermath of a crash.

For more information see: [www.roadpeace.org](http://www.roadpeace.org)

## Christmas with Daniel

Thursdays 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> December, 7-9.00pm



Christmas is the one traditional festival none of us can avoid. Are you a lover or a loather of Christmas? Would you welcome the chance to expand or renew your understanding of the festival? Can Christmas be more than biblical literalism on one hand and soulless consumerism on the other?

These are just some of the questions we shall explore together during our two gatherings. To aid us we shall reflect upon personal experience, diverse philosophical interpretations, the contemporary role of myth and native folk customs. By creating a safe and warm community we should come to discover what the Christmas session can contribute to our spiritual quest.

Sharing and learning together to make Christmas a truly insightful festival for Unitarians. Expect to eat one (or two) mince pies or other Christmassy treats as we relax together.

*Daniel Hughes*

## Backroom Bits and Pieces

News from the Church Trustees and Committee



*Every month about 10 of the church trustees and management committee meet to discuss issues regarding the running of the church. Here are some issues that have been discussed in the last month.*

1. Albert Dolan was welcomed as a new member of the Management Committee. We are all very pleased to have him there.
2. We are hoping to install a safety harness on the Church roof shortly so the leaves can be cleared and everything checked safely. Much as we enjoy our big trees, they are responsible for a big volume of fallen leaves in the autumn.
3. The castors on the grand piano are too small and have become misshapen, making it difficult to wheel the piano. We are hoping to order some larger castors, then have a community piano lifting session after the service one Sunday to fit them, rather in the spirit of an Amish barn-raising.
4. Sarah has donated the nicer furniture you now see in the foyer from her flat, as she had more furniture than she really needed.
5. Jenny (one of our wardens) and Juliet have put in a lot of work drawing up a professional-looking budget for the year. We are grateful for all their hard work.
6. Jane is planning to re-design the Church website and business stationary to give us a more consistent and professional image.
7. We really need someone to volunteer to organise the membership list for next year. It is not a huge task, but needs someone who doesn't mind putting in a bit of time and chasing the slow. Any noble volunteers, please speak to any member of the Church Committee.
8. Will Lyons has found someone to look at the sound system, and see if there is any way of tweaking it to improve the range.
9. We have set ourselves the target of re-building the toilets and kitchen next August, but this is rather an act of faith as we have a huge amount of money to raise first. Any ideas gratefully received.

*Caroline Blair*



## BUYAN's Autumn Conference: A Young Adult Event at Great Hucklow



Last weekend, fifteen young adults gathered at the Nightingale Centre for a weekend of community, fun, and worship. Combining with people from Senior Plus, we explored the ways that we express ourselves. As young adults, we've been working to create a community that speaks to the spiritual needs of people in our age bracket, since many young adults find it difficult to find a place in churches.

We ranged in age from 18 to 34, and many of us began the weekend as strangers to each other. But after a weekend of worship, small groups, and workshops on the Meisner technique, we all learned to appreciate the different perspectives and views we all came with. In our worships, we explored meditation, spiral danced in the field, sang hymns, and learned how to connect as a spiritual community.

BUYAN (British Isles Unitarian Young Adult Network) is a growing network of Unitarian young adults who are seeking and building spiritual community. We'll be meeting again in February in Hinckley for our church invasion (similar to how we invaded Essex Church last winter!) and will be working some advocacy for young adults at the GA Annual Meeting.

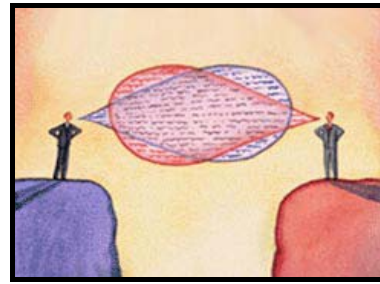
Watch this space for more young adult activities!

*Jen Hazel*  
**Facilitator, BUYAN**



## Science and Religion

A Continuing Engagement Group at Essex Church



A new engagement group has started here at Essex Church this autumn. Each month we will explore a key contemporary issue in which science and religion are actively engaged.

The sessions will be led by different facilitators who will present the issues for further exploration by the group. Through study, listening and speaking we will consider some of the challenges that science and religion bring to our society and its varied responses to the rapid developments we are living through. The autumn's remaining sessions will be:

### **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00-9pm: "The Nature of Consciousness"**

*Led by Michaela von Britzke*

For our series on Science and Spirituality, we will attempt to initiate a conversation on the seemingly simple question of "What is consciousness?". Perhaps no aspect of mind is more familiar or more puzzling than consciousness and our conscious experience of self and world.

We hope we will be able to consider some aspects of what 'conscious experience' might mean, even while the current state of theorizing has not generated any consensus between philosophers, psychologists, and neuroscientists who are exploring the issues involved – so prepare to be puzzled, rather than expecting "answers". In preparation ask yourself as often as possible: "What am I conscious of now?" – and pay attention to the process...

### **8<sup>th</sup> January: "Religion and the Dawkins Factor"**

*Led by Howard Hague*

### **5<sup>th</sup> February: "Cosmology"**

*Led by Will Lyons*

### **4<sup>th</sup> March: "The Psychology of Prejudice"**

*Led by Caroline Blair*

Albert Einstein: *"Science without religion is lame.  
Religion without science is blind."*

**What do you think?**



*A picture of Guru Nanak for the Sikh celebration on 24<sup>th</sup> November*

## Renaissance

*On that day, long ago, when you came  
looking for me – probing, peering, calling, I  
fled from the world, left it behind  
forgot it, had no more dealings with it – yet  
stunningly first knew it. Forgot all names – my own  
the first, of town or trees, river or wall, even  
the sea I saw, yet did not know it – but how I  
hung, balanced, swam above, beneath within it! –  
then swallow-like swooped, duck-like dived, deer-like ran!  
leapt over, through such things you still call “walls”  
“windows”, “fences”, “flesh”: I revelled in, adored  
became all things once named, then blissfully forgotten: I wept  
(with joy) sighed (with pleasure) drank in (with no  
sense of rank satiety). If you had met me then  
you would have seen no thing you could have summoned.  
I was as I had been so long before – unnamed, unborn  
intact and undivided.*

*On that day, long, long ago when you came  
weeping, searching, praying for some insight, some  
solace or understanding of where I was, I was  
no longer here – nor there – nor anywhere. I was, I am  
out of the world – yet well within it,  
beyond this life, yet for the first time  
completely part of it. If you could meet me  
you could not know me.  
The names I bore through everything are  
forgot, completed, finished, done.*

**John Hands**

## Training for Engagement Group Facilitators



**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 11am to 4pm**  
**Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead**

*The chapel is about half a mile from Hampstead station  
(Northern Line, Edgware branch).*

If you are interested in finding out more about Engagement Groups – particularly if you would like to set up a small group, or are already facilitating one, in your own congregation or fellowship – you are most welcome to come along to one of the forthcoming training days, organised by the Engagement Support Panel, to be held in London and York this autumn.

The training day will begin by covering the basic principles of Engagement Groups in some detail. We will discuss best practice for group facilitation, share our varied experiences of small group work, and address some of the challenges that facilitators might anticipate or encounter in congregations.

This event will also provide an opportunity to connect with the regional engagement support network.

**The training day will be facilitated by  
Rev. Jim Robinson and Dr. Jane Blackall**

Please contact Jim to let us know that you are planning to attend or for more information:

Telephone: 020 7435 3506

or email: [maryjimrobinson@btconnect.com](mailto:maryjimrobinson@btconnect.com)

There will be no cost to attend these training sessions but places will be limited, so please register in advance.

Reasonable travel expenses will be covered by the Engagement Support Panel.

Please bring a packed lunch – drinks will be provided.

**Engagement Support is a Panel of the  
GA's Education and Training Commission (ETC)**

*Current members are: Joyce Ashworth, Jane Blackall,  
Margaret Kirk, Lindy Latham and Jim Robinson.*

## Essex Church T-Shirts



You may remember that we were selling Essex Church T-shirts (logo shown above) at last year's craft fair. This year we have decided to make them to order – this means that you can have a larger choice of colours and sizes – and that we won't be stuck with lots of unsold leftovers in odd sizes.

**Cost: T-shirts £10 / Sweatshirts £20 each**

**Unisex T-Shirt: S (35/37") to XXL (47/49")**

Ash, Black, Bottle Green, Burgundy, Deep Navy, Heather Grey, Khaki, Light Graphite, Navy, Orange, Red, Royal Blue, Sky Blue, Sunflower, White, Zinc.

**Ladies Fit T-Shirt: XS (8) to XL (16)**

Black, Deep Navy, Khaki, Light Pink, Lilac, Red, Sky Blue, White.

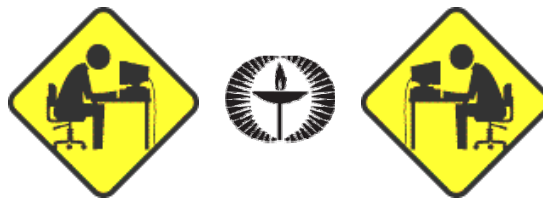
**Unisex Sweatshirts: S (36/38") to XXL (50/52")**

Black, Bottle Green, Burgundy, Deep Navy, Heather Grey, Khaki, Navy, Red, Royal Blue, Sky Blue, Sunflower Yellow, White.

If you want an unusual colour or something else that isn't listed then do get in touch as we might be able to get it as a special order.

**Please contact Jane Blackall before 11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER to place your order.**

## “Transatlantic Dialogue”



*Will Lyons has been keeping in touch with recent UU visitors to our church: Francis and Nancy Coleman from Rochester, NY. Here are a few snippets from their recent correspondence:*

**Francis, 5<sup>th</sup> October:** Nancy and I enjoyed meeting you and joining in your church service. It's always interesting to meet new people and to see how Unitarians conduct their church services in different ways. We both felt very welcomed. Thank you. We walked the Camino from St Jean Pied de Port to Santiago de Compostela - 464 miles in 37 days - with no major mishaps other than sore knees and one blister. All in all, a marvellous adventure.

**Will, 6<sup>th</sup> October:** It's great news. I'll light a candle of joy for you and let everyone know of your achievement. Well done!! I'll certainly keep in touch. I delivered the address a couple of weeks ago on 'Our Unitarian Tradition' - my first and it was well received.

**Francis, 8<sup>th</sup> October:** Congratulations of the warm reception to your talk at church on the Unitarian Tradition. It's a tradition that I wish more people knew about. And thank you so much for lighting a candle for Nancy's and my completion of the Camino Trail.

**Will, 8<sup>th</sup> October:** Like you, I'm amazed that our congregation is so small. It's the same all over the UK - it's a church that's so all-embracing. I have it said to me that most people go to churches where they're handed some sort of certainty - however spurious that might be - and they won't find that in Unitarianism.

**Francis, 9<sup>th</sup> October:** I have some thoughts on why Unitarianism is not as prevalent as it could be. Herewith an excerpt from a recent email from me to a friend:

*Since it is impossible to prove that there is, or is not, a God, despite a cosmos full of evidence of something, I think there is wisdom in distinguishing the knowable from the unknowable. Science helps us to know things. But it does not, and cannot, help us with the "why" questions - e.g. the purpose of existence, the purpose of consciousness, etc. It seems to me quite reasonable to say "render unto science that which is knowable, and unto to religion that which is unknowable". I suspect that, at some level, we all need a purpose in life, and some values to guide us along the way...*

*I think that Unitarianism too often gets bogged down in projects and positions that are more emotional than rational. The result is that, despite our belief that we are inclusive, by our conduct (as opposed to our principles which are very inclusive) we exclude far too many.*

**Will, 14<sup>th</sup> October:** I told the congregation today of your successful pilgrimage and lit a candle for you both. Thank you for your message which I found thought-provoking. I'll let you have my considered reply in due course...



*“Kindness trumps greed:  
it asks for sharing.  
Kindness trumps fear:  
it calls forth gratefulness and love.  
Kindness trumps even stupidity,  
for with sharing and love,  
one learns.”*

**Marc Estrin**

*An important denominational event this winter...*

## Meet and Question the GA's Executive Committee

London Road Show at Essex Hall  
Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December, 12 - 4pm



All Unitarians are invited to attend a series of regional 'Road Shows' in the coming weeks and months.

These open forums have been organised by our General Assembly to give the membership a chance to come and hear - and question - the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive are expected to briefly outline what's been achieved since the new structures were introduced in April 2006, and to explain their priorities. Members will be encouraged to raise concerns and questions about all matters affecting our denomination and its work.

The General Assembly hopes this will not only provide lively debate, but will lead to greater clarity and a stronger sense of purpose at all levels of our Unitarian and Free Christian movement, so that the ambitious goals set by our Annual Meetings can be achieved.

Please put this event in your diary and come along to get more involved in our Unitarian denomination.



## The LDPA PULSE:

**Promoting Philosophy, Places, Programmes and People of Unitarianism in London and the South East**

On 20<sup>th</sup> October, seven of us from Essex Church went to the London District quarterly meeting, to help welcome the new district minister Rev. David Usher to the job and hear more about plans for the future of the LDPA. There was a very good turnout overall with about 70 people from all over the district (as widespread as Dover, Brighton, and Watford) all collected at Unitarian Headquarters, Essex Hall.

The new district minister introduced us to the acronym "PULSE" (or possibly P.. P.. P.. PULSE!) which stands for "Promoting Philosophy, Places, Programmes and People of Unitarianism in London in the South East".

David took the opportunity to let us know what had been discussed in recent LDPA council meetings where the future direction of the district had been considered. Some ambitious ideas have been floated – setting a goal to increase the number of Unitarians within the district, to establish new congregations and fellowships, to create "affinity groups" (possibly like engagement groups which attract people from multiple congregations and beyond), to get more ministers in the district, and possibly even set up a retreat centre – but now the hard work will begin as the council and district minister move towards some firm proposals. We should hear more about this at the next LDPA meeting in the New Year.

*Jane Blackall*

## Festival of Light Weekend at the Victoria and Albert Museum - 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> November



Experience the cultural and spiritual significance of light in world festivals and cultures. This weekend will enlighten the public with events including gospel workshops, Jewish choir performances, sitar performances, Buddhist meditation, story telling, lantern and window making family workshops and a tour of the symbols of light within the V&A collections. Key details are listed below but you can visit [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk) for more information.

### Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November:

Paper Lantern Workshop - 11.00-13.00 and 14.00-16.30  
Secret Light Buddhist Meditation - 11.00 and 15.00  
Buddhist storytelling - 11.00-11.30, 12.30-13.00  
Diwali Story telling - 11.30-12.15; 13.00-13.45; 15.00-15.45  
Light in the Darkness (*Morley College Chamber Choir*) - 13.00  
Buddhist Choir and Dance - 14.15-14.45  
Performance inspired by Muslim Cultures - 16.00-16.30

### Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November:

Festive Light Windows/Cards - 11.00-13.00 and 14.00-16.30  
Hannukah Storytelling - 11.00-11.30; 12-12.30; 13-13.30  
Sitar and Tabla Recital - 11-11.40 and 15.00-15.40  
Gospel Singing Workshop/Performance - 11.00-13.00  
The Alyth Chamber Choir - 13.00-14.00  
Performance inspired by Muslim Cultures - 14.00-14.30  
Jewish Youth Choir: Songs of Light and Joy - 16.00-17.00  
Symbols of Light - 15.00