



*Kensington Unitarians*

# *The Newsletter*

*June 2008*

## **What's On at Essex Church**

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June, 11.00am  
"Honesty"

*Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm  
Adult RE with Rev. Sarah Tinker:  
"Believing and Belonging" (2/3)

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June, 11.00am  
"Environmental Imperatives"  
*Led by Victor Anderson  
and Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2.00-3.00pm  
Nia Technique with Sonia Leite  
*Holistic Movement Class*

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June, 3.30-5.00pm  
"Songs and Silence for the Soul"

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm  
Creativity Engagement Group:  
"Glass Painting with Caroline"

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June, 11.00am  
"Coping with Loss" *led by  
Sarah Tinker and the Congregation*

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm  
Adult RE with Rev. Sarah Tinker:  
"Believing and Belonging" (3/3)

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 11.00am  
"Buddhist Practices"  
*Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 12.30pm  
Essex Church Summer Picnic

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm  
Management Committee Meeting

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm  
Reading Engagement Group:  
"The Diving Bell and the Butterfly"

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June, 11.00am  
"Articulating Our Faith"  
*Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers

## **A Message from Our Minister...**

### **"Who Owns This Place?"**

This was the question asked by a passer-by when I was doing some weeding at the front of our church a few weeks ago. I launched into a lively yet concise explanation of Unitarianism only to be stopped mid flow by a further query. "No," he said, "I mean who owns this building?"



No expert in charity law, trust deeds or the role of charitable trustees, I mumbled an answer about our building belonging to our congregation. The passer-by moved on, and I kept weeding and thinking about what ownership means. Individual ownership of an item usually means you have the right to use it or sell it but if we "own" a church building as a group of people selling is not an option. Even our use of the building is more complex than that. Our congregation has sole use of our church on Sundays and we have a regular booking on Thursday evenings for one room in which to run small group activities such as our RE courses and engagement groups. At most other times the building is used by other groups. A quick look at our Annual Accounts shows that most of our income comes from letting our building to other organisations and that without these lettings we could not survive. We are wealthy in having a building in central London yet poor in having few financial reserves to fall back upon.

So we own our church building but we do not have sole use of it. Yet ownership holds other meanings – caring for, knowing about, committed to. Our latest membership figures have risen to 48 – that's 48 people who "own" our church. Our task now I think is to ensure that all our members have a sense of ownership, not just of our building but also of the less tangible community that is Kensington Unitarians. But getting to own the building is a good place to start and to make that start here are three random questions:

- Which religious group (other than us Unitarians) has been meeting in this building almost since it opened back in 1978?
- Where are the spare toilet rolls to be found?
- Where is the church library and how do you borrow a book from it?

I wonder what other questions it would be helpful to ask about our church.

**Rev. Sarah Tinker**

## **In this Month's Newsletter...**

*\* Preview of what's coming up this autumn at Essex Church \* "Believing and Belonging" Adult RE Sessions \* Feedback from Participants in "The Quest" \* "How I Came to Essex Church" – Article by Louisa Bird \* Response to "Spiritual Speedbumps" by Will Lyons \* Article on "Walktalk" by John Marrow and Jo Tye \* "Listening to Radio 4 With a Broken Foot" by Howard Hague \* Details of the Essex Church Summer Picnic \* Westminster Interfaith's "Pilgrimage for Peace" comes to Notting Hill \* Poems by John Hands \* and 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.



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

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

# Stewarding and Coffee



## Stewarding:

1 <sup>st</sup> June:	Devika Joshi
8 <sup>th</sup> June:	David Darling
15 <sup>th</sup> June:	Doris Campbell
22 <sup>nd</sup> June:	Devika Joshi
29 <sup>th</sup> June:	Angela Gasparetto

## Coffee:

1 <sup>st</sup> June:	Christine Joshi
8 <sup>th</sup> June:	The Darlings
15 <sup>th</sup> June:	Jo Tye
22 <sup>nd</sup> June:	Christine Joshi
29 <sup>th</sup> June:	Albert Dolan

*Please speak to Christine Joshi if you would be willing to help out with stewarding or coffee duties. This is a really easy way to get involved and help to support the life and work of our community.*

## A "Choir-for-All" at Essex Church

# Kensington Community Singers



## Monday Evenings from 7.00-9.00pm

Our community choir was launched at Essex Church last autumn and the third term started on 21<sup>st</sup> April. 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. Donations to cover the cost of running the choir are invited (£3/£6/£9 per session – a sliding scale according to income). Contact Jen or Sarah to find out more.

*...a forthcoming event you might wish to book tickets for...*

## Thich Nhat Hanh: UK Visit 2008

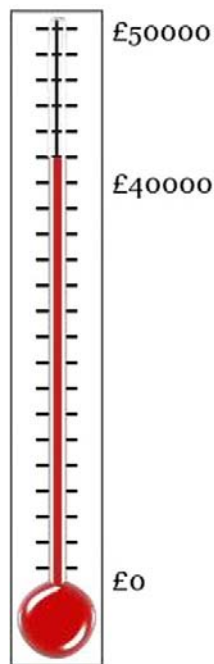
# Touching Peace in Daily Life

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 7.15pm  
at Friends House, Euston Road

Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh was born in Vietnam in 1926 and ordained as a Buddhist monk at the age of 16. He worked vigorously for peace throughout the Vietnam war and was nominated by Martin Luther King for the Nobel Peace Prize. He is the author of many inspiring and practical books including 'The Miracle of Mindfulness'.

Tickets for this talk cost £20 (£12 concessions) and are available via [www.interbeing.org.uk](http://www.interbeing.org.uk) or by sending a cheque made payable to the 'Community of Interbeing UK' at this address: 19 Rothesay Avenue, London SW20 8JU.

## Accessible Building Project



Late last year we set ourselves a fundraising target of £50,000 for our accessible building fund, needed for the renovation of our kitchen and toilets. We won't know if this is enough until the work actually goes out to building firms for tender and we're hoping that our architect Michael Foster will get us to that stage in the next week or two.

Our wardens Jenny and David identified late July and August as the time when our bookings are at their lowest and so building work could be carried out then without reducing our lettings income too much or inconveniencing our user groups. If we cannot get the work done then we will have to aim for early January next year, which is not quite so ideal.

The good news is that our fundraising total has now nearly reached £41,000. But our treasurer Juliet Edwards reminds us all to keep up our efforts, particularly as the final cost of building work often seems to increase unexpectedly.

Sarah Tinker

## How I Came to Essex Church



I didn't know anything about Unitarianism until I visited the United States in April 2003. I went to Chicago to see Frank Lloyd Wright's home and studio, in Oak Park. As an architecture fan, particularly of the Arts & Crafts Movement, I visited the famous architect's museum only to find out that Lloyd Wright was brought up

as a Unitarian. The Unitarians' reverence for nature was an important influence in his architecture and interior design. After a tour of the suburb where he had designed a number of houses, I found myself sitting in a pew in Unity Temple, a beautiful religious building which he had also designed in Oak Park. It was whilst sitting and marvelling at the interior details that I picked up a Unitarian hymn book in front of me. I was immediately intrigued by the references to nature, earth, the universe, humanity, community, and spirit. I looked at a recent service sheet and noted that the minister was female and that there had been a naming ceremony for a child. From Chicago, I went to stay with friends in Bloomington, Indiana, who told me that they had been on an anti-Iraq war march, organised by the local Unitarians! My curiosity was starting to grow.

I was brought up as an Anglican in East Anglia and my grandfather was a Canon of the Church of England. By the age of sixteen I had become disenchanted with Christianity and rebelled by becoming an atheist. I travelled widely through my twenties and had dabbled in yoga, Hinduism and Buddhism. However none of these particularly satisfied me. By my thirties, I was starting to explore my spirituality and joined a group discussing the work of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme (*The Dream of the Earth and The Universe Story*) and exploring Creation Spirituality. This group came to a natural end after two years, however, I realised that I needed community to nurture my spirituality – that I couldn't do it alone. At the end of 2005, I started looking up Unitarians in the UK and found the Rosslyn Hill Chapel website on which I found the Belief-O-Matic test. I was intrigued to find that my beliefs and life philosophy were almost 100% Unitarian and I visited the chapel one cold December evening and was pleasantly surprised. In the spring of the year 2006, I decided to visit Essex Church as it was closer to me and was immediately impressed by Sarah Tinker and the format of the service and the words that were spoken. I felt a sense of surprise as well as relief that I had finally found my spiritual home. I've been coming to Essex Church for the last 2 years and it plays a very important part in my life.

Louisa Bird

...a local event you might be interested in...

## Secularism and Shared Values

Forum for European Philosophy Lecture Series

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2008, 6:30-8.00pm

London School of Economics, WC2A 2AE

The recent revival of religion around the globe has raised fundamental questions not only about its role in both national and international politics, but also concerning its claim to serve as a principle of identity indispensable to the continuing survival of communities and peoples across the generations. There are many who would argue strenuously that the sense of belonging to a community is seriously weakened in the absence of a shared religious commitment. Others would insist just as strenuously that social and public life should be both conceived and organised in essentially secular terms. This lecture series aims to bring together leading thinkers and scholars to encourage discussion and debate on this crucial contemporary theme

This event is free and open to all, without registration

For more information: [www.philosophy-forum.org](http://www.philosophy-forum.org)



## Believing and Belonging



I am starting work on the dissertation for my Masters Degree in Contextual Theology. Its working title is 'Believing and Belonging' and it is a study of our congregation here at Essex Church. I want to research people's religious beliefs and reasons for belonging to our faith community in the context of 21st century Britain with its declining involvement in religious organisations yet increasing interest in what might be described as 'spirituality'. How do we fit into this picture?

I am hoping that as many congregation members and friends of Essex Church as possible will take part in this research, which will involve a short questionnaire and three evening sessions, with a few follow up interviews.

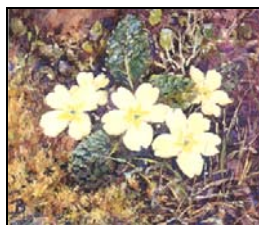
So do put the remaining dates in your diaries:

**Thursdays 5th and 19th June**

from 7.00 to 8.45pm here at Essex Church. Thank you.

**Sarah Tinker**

## Primroses



Huddled together on a twilight bank  
Accompanied, yet all alone each pale  
Lemon trumpet brays out –“Spring! –Look!  
Spring! Among dense, unflowering weeds.  
These no eye discerns  
No tongue exclaims –“See! See!  
Just look at this miracle!  
In this rare season only pale  
Pretty miracles are observed and praised.

**John Hands**

## 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. Groundworks (the group who terraced the front garden) have made care suggestions for the plants. Extra planting has been done by members of the congregation, and the garden now looks more welcoming.
2. The wardens have got quotes for mending the church and hall doors, so they open and close better. As you may have noticed, one of the hall doors has been broken for quite a while, and if it is used slams shut with a loud crash.
3. We have looked at plans for a new Church kitchen. Apologies to all tall coffee-makers, but enlarging the hatch was too difficult and expensive as it would mean cutting a big chunk out of a main supporting wall. There are big debates about buying a dishwasher, which would be very pleasant for the valiant coffee-makers, but there is a danger that it would just become a dumping ground for all the crockery in the church. We may be able to get one solely for the use of the congregation.
4. Jane has been liaising with the local council for an arts grant, in the hope that she can organise a major community arts project. We feel that this would be an exciting idea, so we are keeping our fingers crossed.
5. Juliet, as treasurer, is doing conjuring tricks with the bank accounts to try to get us to a position where we can start the major building work (toilets and kitchen) without endangering any other aspect of the church. Thanks to everyone who has helped with fund-raising and donations so far – still space for more!
6. Many thanks to all the kind people who have donated money towards Iona's Swaziland trip. She flies out on 5th June and returns on 9th September.
7. Sarah and Jane have been putting together the autumn programme for the church. They are always happy to hear suggestions re courses or visiting preachers.

**Caroline Blair**

*The next meeting of the Essex Church Management Committee will take place at 7pm on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June.*

## Creativity Engagement Group

# Glass Painting

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm



This month's session will be led by Caroline Blair who says:

“Glass painting is an ideal craft activity for the not-very-confident, as it involves the twin skills of tracing a pattern and then colouring it in. Though of course, people who are confident are more than welcome to do their own designs. At this workshop everyone will be provided with a flat-sided glass vessel (much easier for beginners than a curved shape) and plenty of patterns to trace, outliner and paint. Just bring yourself and some enthusiasm, and perhaps some old clothes just in case. There will be a charge of £4.00 per person to cover all costs. Do feel free just to turn up, but if anyone does know in advance that they will be there, perhaps they could let me know so I have some idea of how many vessels to buy.”

As usual, if this particular activity doesn't take your fancy, you are most welcome to bring your own crafts along, and simply sit with us in good company for the evening. There are usually biscuits and 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-Hesson about our activities. Photographs of work from several of the projects we've worked on over the last few years can be found on our church website.*



# Autumn Programme at Essex Church



It's never too soon to blow one's own trumpet and I think we can be proud of the exciting autumn programme here at Essex Church. As ever, an eclectic list of activities and groups awaits us. First, some dates for your diaries...

In November it will be the bi-centenary of the death of Theophilus Lindsey, famous for founding the first Unitarian congregation in England, which is our very own Essex Church. Various events have been planned to mark this. On **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November** we will be led by Unitarian historian Alan Ruston on a pilgrimage to Lindsey's grave at Bunhill Fields. The following day, on **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November**, members of the Unitarian Christian Association (UCA) will be joining us for worship and a shared lunch and in the afternoon the UCA will be hosting a lecture here at Essex Church about Lindsey, delivered by Grayson Ditchfield who has done much research on Lindsey's life and work.

Autumn plans also include a series of regular Sunday sessions on Taoist healing chants, an evening course on 'Death and Dying', and another 'Evensong' series later in the year, which is designed to support our individual spiritual growth within a supportive small group.

There is always room for more activities here at Essex Church and the management committee is keen to encourage people to suggest events and groups that they would like to have happen and to take on the necessary organisation, perhaps with support from our minister or other members. In particular it would be good to have some more social activities planned – meals, outings, perhaps a fundraising concert or entertainments evening? Let us know your ideas and what you could offer.

**Sarah Tinker**

# Nia Technique



## Holistic Movement Sessions:

Sessions led by Sonya Leite

Sundays 8<sup>th</sup> June - 2.00-3.00pm

Following the success of the introductory session back in January, a regular Nia class is continuing here at Essex Church, on the second Sunday of every month from 2-3pm (usually the same day as "Songs and Silence for the Soul"). The cost to take part will be £7.00 per session (£5.00 concessions).

Nia is holistic movement for body and soul. It is an expressive movement practice promoting fitness, creativity and wellbeing. Fusing dance, yoga, tai chi and martial arts, Nia provides a holistic workout and leaves you feeling energised, relaxed and centred. It suits any level of fitness, age and experience, working from where you are now.

Nia's barefoot, grounded approach maximizes body efficiency and teaches you to move consciously in a gentler way. Dance movements are mixed with subtle therapeutic suggestions and visualization techniques that help you develop awareness and heighten sensation. The result is a fusion of movement styles that is incredibly free and liberating. Moving between simple choreography (form) and freedom of movement (freedance), Nia classes combine the grace and expressiveness of dance, the power and explosiveness of martial arts, and the wisdom and stillness of yoga and tai chi.



"As we journey through life, discarding baggage along the way, we should keep an iron grip, to the very end, on the capacity for silliness. It preserves the soul from desiccation."

Humphrey Lyttleton

...information from the Unitarian Conference Centre...

## The Nightingale Centre



### Great Hucklow in the Peak District Dates for Your Diary in 2008

8-10<sup>th</sup> June: "Wildflowers and Landscape"

19<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> July: "Over Sixties Week"

26<sup>th</sup> July – 2<sup>nd</sup> August: "Unitarian Experience Week"

11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> August: "Five Days Away" (for 12-17 year olds)

16<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> August: "Hucklow Summer School"

23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> August: "Small Groups Weekend"

26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> August: "Mid-Week Break"

27<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> October: "Autumn Break"

### New for Christmas 2008:

12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> December: A full weekend of Christmas activities including the Hucklow Christmas lights, a Christmas Fayre, winter walking, carols by the fire, and an evening of stories and songs with 'One Accord'.

For prices and more information contact Julie Dadson on 01298 871218 or [info@great-hucklow.org.uk](mailto:info@great-hucklow.org.uk)

Website: [www.great-hucklow-org.uk](http://www.great-hucklow-org.uk)



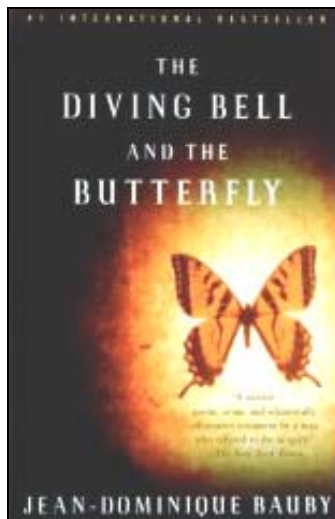


## Reading Engagement Group

### “The Diving Bell and the Butterfly”

by Jean-Dominique Bauby

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-9.00pm



The reading engagement group's next topic of discussion will be “The Diving Bell and the Butterfly” by Jean-Dominique Bauby. This book was chosen by Sarah Tinker and will be the focus of our next reading engagement group meeting on **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June**.

Information from Amazon USA:

*“On December 8, 1995, Jean-Dominique Bauby's life was forever altered when a part of his body he'd never heard of--his brain stem--was rendered inactive. The Diving Bell and the Butterfly, his exquisitely painful memoir, is neither a triumphant account of recovery nor a journey into the abyss of self-pity. Instead, it is a tender testament to the power of language and love. At 43, Bauby was defined by success, wit and charisma. But in the course of a few bewildering minutes, the editor-in-chief of French Elle became a victim of the rare locked-in syndrome. The only way he could express his frustration, however, was by blinking his left eye. The rest of his body could no longer respond. Bauby was determined to escape the paralysis of his diving bell and free the butterflies of his imagination. And with the help of ESA, "a bit parade in which each letter is placed according to the frequency of its use in the French language," Bauby did so. Visitors, and eventually his editor, would read each letter aloud and he would blink at the right one. Slowly--painstakingly-- words, sentences, paragraphs and even this graceful book emerged.”*

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.

## Essex Church Summer Picnic

After the service on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June  
The Kyoto Peace Garden in Holland Park



Bring a sandwich or food to share and join us for a church outing to nearby Holland Park. The Kyoto Garden in the midst of the park is an oasis of peace and a perfect place for a picnic. Everyone is welcome to join us. We'll have our usual tea and biscuits after the service and then set off after that. We can arrange transport for everyone but it would help to have a rough idea of likely numbers so let Sarah our minister know if you are planning to come.

...a local event you might be interested in...

## ‘Trust in Me?’

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June, 7.00-8.30pm

Royal Institution, Albermarle St, W1S 4BS

In a harsh and selfish world, why is it that humans co-operate and trust one another? How did this evolve, and what does it mean for our society? This is one of the biggest puzzles for scientists studying human evolution, since you might think that the race to pass on our genes would have us constantly competing and double crossing one another. Instead, trust and co-operation lie at the heart of our daily lives.

Evolutionary biologist Dominic Johnson and science writer Marek Kohn ask why humans live together the way we do, and what it means for our society. Would we design better institutions if we knew the scientific basis of co-operation? Could we live happier with one another if we knew how to maximise trust?

**Tickets cost £8 (£6 concessions).**

For more information: [www.rigb.org](http://www.rigb.org)  
or call 020 7409 2992 for tickets.





## Listening to Radio 4 with a Broken Foot

One of the few advantages of having broken a bone in my foot and being off work is that I have been able to listen to various things on the radio that I wouldn't normally hear. From 21 to 25 April there was a fascinating afternoon series of programmes called *Hunting the Beagle*. This was not about what happened to Colin Pillinger's missing spacecraft on Mars (*Beagle 2*) – interesting though that would have been – but about what happened to 'Beagle 1', the ship on which Charles Darwin travelled round the world as the onboard naturalist from 1831 to 1836. This was the voyage that provided so many of the ideas that went into his later theory of evolution. HMS *Beagle*, a ninety foot ten gun brig, was de-commissioned by the navy in 1843 at Woolwich and subsequently became a Customs and Excise patrol ship around the coast of Essex, trying to keep in check the considerable amount of smuggling that went on in that part of the world. However it was not known what had happened to her after she was sold in 1870, which is odd when you think how significant the vessel's role has been in the history of science. A team led by Dr Robert Prescott, a maritime historian at the University of St Andrews, believes they have traced the ship to a site near Paglesham on the River Roach, north-east of Southend and west of Foulness Island. Although the ship's superstructure was sold off for scrap, they believe the hull lies embedded in five metres of mud on the Essex marshes, near Potton Island (see [news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3490564.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3490564.stm)). Interestingly Professor Colin Pillinger has been involved in this project as well, perhaps because he named his ill-fated spacecraft in homage to Darwin's ship. It seems unlikely that the money will ever be found to raise the hull, but it's worth noting that February 2009 will mark the bicentenary of Darwin's birth in Shrewsbury (see [www.darwin200.org](http://www.darwin200.org)). Perhaps on some other occasion we can look at Darwin's Unitarian connections!



Radio 4's 'Book of the Week' from 5-9 May was *The Morville Hours* by Katherine Swift, just published by Bloomsbury at £17.99. This was an unexpected pleasure. The book is primarily about the formation and development of the author's garden at the Dower House, Morville near Bridgnorth in Shropshire over the last twenty years. Perhaps because the site has monastic connections (the church was built in the early twelfth century by the monks of the Benedictine Abbey of Shrewsbury for any Brother Cadfael fans!), the author has arranged the book in the form of a medieval Book of Hours. On the Wednesday broadcast my ears pricked up when I heard the word 'Unitarian' mentioned on a couple of occasions, including a reference to the fact that the author's father was a Unitarian minister. I have been in touch with the author by email, and it turns out that her father was the Rev John Unsworth, who died in hospital in Ludlow in January 2002. John had been minister in Taunton, in Leicester and in the Cotswold Group, and he had also served as secretary of our Social Responsibility Department at Essex Hall from 1970 to 1977, with a particular interest in penal reform. He had also worked as a probation officer in Lincolnshire during a period away from ministry. In the book Katherine mentions her father's interest in gardening, and describes how he took cuttings of lavender as he moved from house to house. He also loved to plant trees. The garden at Morville is open to the public (see [www.shropshiretourism.co.uk/attractiondetails.php?estid=1444](http://www.shropshiretourism.co.uk/attractiondetails.php?estid=1444)) on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons from April to September. It will certainly be on our list of places to visit when we are next in that lovely county.

Howard Hague



“As in all the mature mystical traditions, the aim of the quest for the Sufi is not to live in a trance of bliss in God, but to live as a part of God on earth and in time, loving and serving all beings with some small power of God's selfless humility.

Many of the greatest Sufi masters have not been recluses or hermits, but tailors or potters or small town businessmen, men and women, who live their supreme realization realistically and humbly at the centre of ordinary life. As Abu Sa'id wrote in the eighth century, 'The perfect mystic is not an ecstatic devotee lost in contemplation of Oneness, nor a saintly recluse shunning all commerce with mankind; but the true saint goes in and out amongst the people and eats and sleeps with them and

buys and sells in the market and takes part in social intercourse and never forgets God for a single moment.'

Such 'true saints' become to Love what a hand is to a person; they become efficient instruments in Reality of the will of God, servants of God and servants of all beings in and for God. Wherever they are, a light of God is; whatever they do, God does in them; their words inspire divine love and their actions radiate the clarity of divine justice and the generosity of divine mercy. What is remarkable about those who reach this glory is that they are always humble and integrated. As Junayd said of the realized Sufi, 'She is one whose heart keeps pace with her foot. She is entirely present; her soul is where her body is, and her body where her soul is, and her soul where her foot is.'”

Andrew Harvey

# June Multifaith Calendar

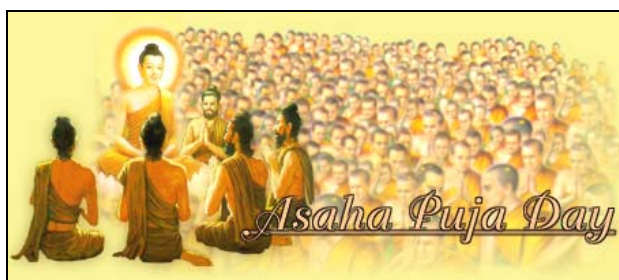


★ **9<sup>th</sup> June – Shavuot / Festival of Weeks – Jewish**  
 Shavuot, also known as Pentecost or the Festival of Weeks, comes seven weeks after Pesach. The festival celebrates the revelation of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai and the early harvest season in Israel. Synagogues are decorated with flowers, and dairy foods are traditionally eaten.

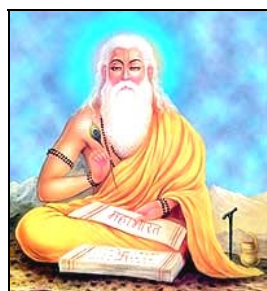
☞ **16<sup>th</sup> June – Martyrdom of Guru Arjan (1606) – Sikh**  
 This festival commemorates the fifth Guru who made the first compilation of the Sikh Scriptures, the Adi Granth, and supervised the completion of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Guru Arjan was executed on the orders of the Moghul Emperor for refusing to pay a fine arising from a charge of treason. Sikhs hold a gurburb on this day, including an akhand path, a non-stop cover to cover reading of the Guru Granth Sahib.

⊗ **21st June – Summer Solstice – Pagan/Wiccan**  
 On this longest day of the year, light and life are abundant. At mid-summer, the Sun God has reached the moment of his greatest strength. Seated on his greenwood throne, he is also lord of the forests, and his face is seen in church architecture peering from countless foliate masks.

✿ **30<sup>th</sup> June – Asalha Puja - Dhammacakka Day - Turning of the Wheel of Teaching – Buddhist**  
 This is a Theravada Buddhist celebration of the First Proclamation by Gautama to five ascetics in the Deer Park near Benares. He taught about the Middle Way, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths.



☞ **30<sup>th</sup> June – Guru Purnima – Hindu**  
 Hindu celebration of the ancient Gurus, in particular Sage Ved Vyas. A Guru is seen as a remover of darkness, a teacher. The date is the full moon of the month Asadha.



## On Gardens:



“The real point is the place and what it does to you as a person and how, having drained and smoothed the mind, so that all the worries evaporate, it leaves you free to walk or sit so that your head can be filled with something calmer than the trivia which we all collect in our brains ... such gardens have no rival. Imagine shade when you are hot, and space when you feel crowded; add to that a sense that nothing else matters except what is here and now, that time has stopped, and all is well with the world and will be so forever.”

Mary Keen

...a forthcoming event which you might be interested in...

## Creativity and Relaxation in Turkey



With Rev. John Harley and Caroline Clipson  
 13<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> October 2008

On this holiday, participants will be using art, movement and meditation to help reconnect themselves with their creativity. Workshops using art, storytelling, visualisation and drama will help to restore participants' sense of inner balance and provide opportunities for companionship and fun. There will also be a regular morning stretch and breathing session as well as a free complementary therapy treatment and a guided walk or two.

The location is “Yuva”, an eco holiday centre set in a pine forest on the banks of the Mediterranean. It is a family run centre providing traditionally built en-suite accommodation and home-made vegetarian food. For information see: [www.yuvaholidays.com](http://www.yuvaholidays.com). There will also be a poster on our foyer noticeboard.

The cost of the week's holiday is £375 which is based on full board and sharing a twin room or in a single log cabin. This excludes flights and transfers. For more information contact John Harley: 0208 670 9280 or [john.harley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:john.harley@hotmail.co.uk).



“If love is our Ultimate Concern, then we are called to a very challenging, but also profoundly rewarding way of life. We are called to make Love manifest in a manner unconfined by any single set of beliefs. That's really hard!

Here we're being invited to do a very difficult task. Not to ossify the self and its opinions and assertions, but to ever expand the self, and to constantly test our opinions and assertions in the purifying fire of Love. Unitarian Universalism is not the easiest religion in the world; it might be one of the hardest.”

UUA Minister, Rev. Chris Bell

*The Youth Programme of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches invites you to:*

**A brand new event for teenagers in the South...**

## “London Calling”

**Come along to a brand new monthly YOUTH GROUP for 13-17 year olds**



**On Sundays from 5.00-7.30pm:  
1<sup>st</sup> June and 6<sup>th</sup> July**

Time to make friends, be creative and have fun.

At Unity Church, accessed through the gate entrance located between 277 and 278 Upper Street, Islington, London N1 2TZ, next to the Islington Fire Station.

Map available at: [www.new-unity.org](http://www.new-unity.org)

If you want to join in please send your details (*name, age, contact details, parent or guardian's name, and congregation if you have one*) to John Harley, Unitarian Headquarters, Essex Hall, 1-6 Essex St, London WC2R 3HY.

For further information ring John on 020 8670 9280.

*...a (very) local event you might be interested in...*

## The 23<sup>rd</sup> London Multifaith Pilgrimage for Peace

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June, 9.00am-7.00pm**



This year's multifaith pilgrimage is right on our doorstep in Bayswater, Notting Hill and Shepherd's Bush. The route and approximate timings are as follows:

- 9.00am** – St. Mary of the Angels RC Church  
Moorehouse Road, W2 5DJ
- 10.15am** – St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
Moscow Road, W2 4QL
- 12.30pm** – Second Church of Christ Scientist (*next door!*)  
104 Palace Gardens Terrace, W8 4RT  
(*lunch will be provided at this point*)
- 3.00pm** – Muslim Cultural and Heritage Centre  
244 Acklam Road, W10 5YG
- 4.30pm** – Notting Hill Methodist Church  
240 Lancaster Road, W11 4AH
- 5.30pm** – The Central Gurdwara (Khalsa Jatha)  
62 Queensdale Road, W11 4SG

You are likely to need public transport between some of the stops. All the venues are within zones 1 and 2.

Please let the organiser of the pilgrimage, Alfred Agius, know if you are intending to come along. This will be very helpful for the people who are intending to offer refreshments along the route. Tel: 020 8570 8639 or email [alfredagius@hotmail.com](mailto:alfredagius@hotmail.com).



“Spiritual sensitivity heightens when we know how to see, touch, and taste the physical world with exquisite reverence and contemplative discipline.”

**Tessa Bielecki**



# Spiritual Speedbumps: A Response from Will Lyons



As usual, an address by Sarah set me off musing through the week about what she said, and I quote:-

*If 'suffering and adversity' are inevitable in life then people who are living spiritually reflective lives may choose to find sources of growth and development in the midst of life's challenges rather than putting most of their energy into efforts to avoid the pain. This doesn't mean that we can't do all that we can to alleviate suffering - be it taking painkillers or finding comfort in many other ways.*

This spoke to me because (and not uniquely in the Essex Church community) I have survived ill-health in recent years. I have had a diagnosis of diabetes and suffered two minor strokes which have left me somewhat unsteady on my feet.

Spirituality is difficult to define but has been suggested as *'an individual's sense of peace, purpose, and connection to others, and beliefs about the meaning of life'*. As a humanist this is the definition which appeals to me. My experience in handling these various events in relation with Kensington Unitarians and a consequent change in my worldview has been markedly different.

When I had the first stroke (which has left me with permanent hemiparesis) I was a member of the C of E, a lay minister and was fully involved in the PCC, the choir and even was part of a liturgical dance group and as such took part in special services in various parts of London.

What was my reaction to experiencing the first stroke?

It occurred a few days after my return from a walking holiday in the Taygetos Mountains in Greece and I fell to pieces. I kept saying to myself -'Why me – I'm an active God-fearing person who does all the right things – socially and theologically.' My reaction was to be very bitter about it and to blame God.

I was churned up inside and it was a very long time before I accepted the idea that I would never be the same again physically. It put an end to my driving and made me reliant on taxis and public transport at a time when my job entailed covering 38 health care premises from Highgate to Covent Garden and it severely curtailed my much-enjoyed country walking.

As a result I became disillusioned with religion; with the ill-health and other events happening in the world, I ceased to believe in a deity. Strangely, I felt a sense of relief that I was answerable only to myself and more self-reliant.

I was a member of Kensington Unitarians at the time of the second stroke and, although this event was more severe than the first, I took with more equanimity – no more of the 'Why Me?' Syndrome. This time, because I didn't use some irrational belief as a crutch or something (someone?) to blame it on, I accepted it as part of the ageing process and was buoyed up considerably by the enormous companionship in the Unitarian community. One of the great things about Unitarianism is its emphasis on creativity and its organisation of engagement groups, opportunity for involvement and freedom to be oneself without the straitjacket of dogma.

I now have that 'sense of peace, purpose, and connection to others, and beliefs about the meaning of life'. It really does make one feel stronger and more self-reliant if you think like me this is the only life we've got and we should enjoy it as much as we are able - despite some physical limitations.

**Will Lyons**

## 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.



## Dances of Universal Peace

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June and 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2-5.00pm



at Richmond Unitarian Church  
Ormond Road, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6TH

The Dances of Universal Peace are inspired by the wisdom and sacred phrases of the world's authentic spiritual traditions, which are sung while dancing. The words along with the movement engender a mood of joy, peace, liberation, contemplation and presence.

There is no need for any previous experience of this, or any other form of dance. Please bring snacks to share during the break. The sessions will run on the first Sunday of every month from 2.00pm - 5.00pm. Admission will be a sliding scale of £5 (concession) to £10. For more information, please contact Lindsay (telephone 020 8891 5825 or email [lindsaystevens@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:lindsaystevens@blueyonder.co.uk)).

... an event organised by MSLA who meet in our church building...

### 'Spiritual Warriors' Film Screenings

20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June, 8.30pm, Prince Charles Cinema

There will be two screenings of a new film called 'Spiritual Warriors' and Q&A with producer and star Jsu Garcia on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June at 8.30pm at the Prince Charles Cinema just off Leicester Square. Tickets are £10 (*on the door*) and will include a free copy of the book 'Spiritual Warrior'. More info can be found at: [www.spiritualwarriors.com](http://www.spiritualwarriors.com).

#### Information from MSIA:

*Spiritual Warriors is an exciting, suspenseful yet heartfelt film that delivers the message, "Every life has a purpose." These simple yet powerful words come from the book that inspired the film, Spiritual Warrior: The Art of Spiritual Living by author John-Roger. In 'Spiritual Warriors', we are awakened to the truth of our eternally loving souls. Through a dynamic journey into the spiritual battlegrounds within ourselves, John-Roger's timely message for living a spiritual life comes brilliantly alive on the big screen. Spiritual Warriors takes us from a heart-pounding opening scene to a surprising, provocative ending.*

## Refugee Week: 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June

Refugee Week is a UK-wide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages better understanding between communities. One event in London is the...

### 'Celebrating Sanctuary' Festival

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June, Bernie Spain Gardens, South Bank

Celebrating Sanctuary is a day long festival which gathers together established and emerging refugee musicians, dancers and artists to celebrate the positive cultural contribution of refugees to the UK. Stalls selling mouth-watering dishes and thirst quenching drinks from all over the world will be available in the festival marketplace alongside information stalls from Refugee Week, its partner agencies and others.

Website: [www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk)

... a local Unitarian event which you might be interested in...

## Build Your Own Theology with Golders Green Unitarians

A Build Your Own Theology (BYOT) study and discussion group organised by Golders Green Unitarians, will start in May/June. It is a structured course of reading and discussion in a supportive environment concerning issues of spirituality and ethics. There will be blocks of 10 sessions of about 2 hours in length, held at 5 or 6 weekly intervals on a Sunday. Dates are decided convenient to participants. The meetings are held in Hendon, London NW4 (near Golders Green).

There are three members of the group so far. The past experience of the group included lively, passionate discussions (over tea and cake), reflecting upon experiences and expanding awareness about spiritual dimension. This provided both serious thought and lively, even humorous, interactions and an opportunity to establish friendships.

Please see below for a testimonial and please contact:

Anne Bodman

01753 889431 / [bodmana@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bodmana@hotmail.co.uk)

Pejman Khojasteh

07929 853449 / [pejman\\_khojasteh@btinternet.com](mailto:pejman_khojasteh@btinternet.com)

Irene Kloepfer

0208 203 4584 / [irene.kloepfer@homecall.co.uk](mailto:irene.kloepfer@homecall.co.uk)

Pejman Khojasteh  
Golders Green Unitarians

...the Unitarian General Assembly invites you to...

## “On Yer Bike!”

A Blah Weekend for the 7-14 Age Group



Friday 13<sup>th</sup>-Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2008  
at Alfriston Youth Hostel, East Sussex

Join us for a fun-packed weekend of mountain biking on the south downs, games, beach art and all sorts of stuff... leaders are John Harley, Liz Hills, Peter Teets.

**Cost:** £45 (thanks to generous donations from Unitarian grant bodies) includes all activities, accommodation and meals. If money is an issue a further discount is available – contact John.

Arrivals: 5.30pm Friday / Departures: 2.00pm Sunday

**Travel:** The nearest station is Seaford (3 miles away). It is likely that John and Liz will be able to take children from London on Friday afternoon in a mini-bus or on the train. Let John know if this would help.

For further info contact John on: 020 8670 9280



“We really are all in this together. There are times when the fact that we are in different bodies, or have lived in different centuries, or that some of us have died while others live on or are yet to be born, seems a trivial difference compared to what unites us and abides. Our journey takes us to suffering and sorrow, but there is a way through suffering to something like redemption, something like joy, to that larger version of ourselves that lives outside of time.”

**Philip Simmons**  
in *‘Learning to Fall’*

“To grow and thrive a church must see itself as a redemptive force in the community, that its presence makes a difference. It cannot see itself as a reclusive retreat for free thinkers and rebels. Ministers need to project this vision for their congregations and members need to share in it. Even more, from individual congregations and from our denominational leadership, we need to see ourselves as the religion of the future. We cannot live in the past or find our importance in the past. As we continue to celebrate our religion through our historical leaders, and find validity by pointing to past heroes, we come to look like trust fund babies, living indolently off of past greatness. It is up to us to create our own history by being great and by being bold in our vision.”



UUA Minister, Rev. Dennis Hamilton

...a local Unitarian event which you may be interested in...

## Newington Green Unitarians: Tercentenary Celebrations



Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2008, 2.30pm

The Newington Green Unitarians will hold a celebratory service to mark the 300th anniversary of the construction of the Newington Green Unitarian Church - the oldest operating dissenting place of worship in London. The service will be followed by a celebratory tea at the nearby Mildmay Club. All are welcome to come and celebrate this very special birthday. There will also be a series of events throughout the year to mark the tercentenary. A listing may be found online by clicking on 'tercentenary' at [www.new-unity.org](http://www.new-unity.org).

Please note that this would have been the date for the District Summer Quarterly. However, in order to support Newington Green, and encourage the maximum possible attendance by other PULSE Unitarians, District Council has decided not to hold a Quarterly in the summer.



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



**Sundays 8<sup>th</sup> June, 12<sup>th</sup> July,  
10<sup>th</sup> August - 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)

## Heidi Ferid Art: New Website



Our own Heidi Ferid has recently refurbished her personal website, which showcases her artworks, and would like to invite everybody to take a look. The picture shown above is entitled "Mandala Mask" and comes from her recent "West Meets East" collection.

**Website:** [www.heidiferidart.co.uk](http://www.heidiferidart.co.uk)

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

After a quiet Spring, June is a busy month for the building, with another round of Associated Board Music exams. There are also lots of annual events, fitted in before the summer, such as the AGM of our neighbours at Boardwalk Court and the Lloyd Williamson School's annual concert. We also have an ongoing songwriting workshop, lead by Julian Marshall – some of you will have attended his improvised piano concerts last year – who will be having their next meeting this month.

Two of our newish bookings are now firmly established – the various Qigong groups of a Wednesday evening, and the Bhakti Margi healing chanting group on a Thursday. Both are open to new members, details available on church noticeboards or from the office.

The Temenos academy will be running a new group on "Themes in Ficino", lead by Clement Salaman, on five Wednesdays from 4th June to 2nd July 7-8.30. Cost £25/ £21 conc. Contact [temenosacademy@myfastmail.com](mailto:temenosacademy@myfastmail.com) for more information.

Other events include The Guild of Pastoral Psychology lecture on 5th June will be given by Diana Grace-Jones and is entitled "Vengeance not Justice." For further information see the website: [www.guildofpastoralpsychology.org.uk](http://www.guildofpastoralpsychology.org.uk).

This month's Interfaith Ministers service will be on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June

Outside, of course, the garden will be continuing to develop. Stephen from Groundworks has given us a planting plan so we have a good idea of what should be appearing. The church gardening group have also been adding various plants.

**David Berridge and Jenny Moy**



## “The Quest”: A Roundup of our 10-Session Adult RE Course



Our ten session course based on *The Quest*, a book of spiritual exploration exercises developed originally at Findhorn, has now come to an end and a copy of it is available to borrow from our church library. But it's not so much a book to read from cover to cover as something to work through slowly and return to again and again. In our 10-session course we worked through all the chapters in *The Quest* but covered only a few of its suggested activities.

Here is one activity the Quest authors include in a section on “Living Lovingly with Others”. It's called ‘whose business is it anyway?’ and is based on Byron Katie's *The Work* (see worship list for June). Katie writes that she “*can find only three kinds of business in the universe ~ mine, yours and God's. For me, the word 'God' means 'reality'. Reality is God, because it rules. Anything that's out of my control, your control, and everyone else's control – I call that God's business.*”

We suggest letting go of your attachment through the following exercise:

When you find yourself experiencing distress in a situation, ask yourself:

- Is this my business? Then focus on being present and seeking a positive resolution to my concern.
- Is this your business? Then resist the desire to become involved in someone else's business or imagine that we know best. Leave it to them.
- Is this God's business? Then the way forward is to hand the matter over to the God of your understanding.

Followers of Byron Katie describe this system as hugely compassionate. To outsiders it can seem uncaring. Why not give it a go next time life troubles you and see what you think.

**Sarah Tinker**

### Responses to “The Quest” from Participants:

“After ten sessions of *The Quest*, I'm not near the end of my spiritual journey at all. In fact the journey is now looking like a much bigger task than I initially anticipated. But I feel that I got to know much more about myself: why I do what I do, how I react to the outside world, what makes me unique, what makes me tick. These are tools of utmost importance for my future steps. And above all, I realised I am not alone. The spiritual quest might be an individual journey, but it doesn't have to be a lonely one. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to have shared this process with my fellow seekers.”

**Camila Gough**

“Visitors to my house look politely puzzled at the very inartistic picture of the stick men and the unicorn on my kitchen wall. I can't quite bring myself to tell them that it is an allegorical picture of my journey through life, as I see it. It is a tribute to the *Quest* course that I felt comfortable producing such a picture and then putting it on public view; normally I am allergic to both art and thinking. What the course did do is provide a safe space for confronting difficult ideas about ourselves – sometimes painful, sometimes sustaining, and sometimes funny. Of course for those of us who didn't manage to fit in much of the homework there was too much material to take on all at once, but I know that more will sink in over the next few months. I was grateful, as I am sure we all were, that Sarah and Jane had taken so much trouble over the course, so that the rest of us didn't need to. Sometimes security in a group exercise is nothing more than knowing that someone else has taken on all the responsibility and work, so the rest of us can just sit back and let it work.”

**Caroline Blair**

“I was encouraged by a friend to contact Sarah, our Minister, to sign up for the course she was planning called the *Quest*. I was already doing a Practical Philosophy course, which seems similar in its purpose to that of the 8-week *Quest* programme Sarah had planned to do. As I previously attended a number of Self Development and Spirituality education courses over the years, and already had a commitment for Thursdays, I was not particularly keen on committing myself for such a long time. I am delighted, however, that I made the effort as this was a most rewarding and purposeful experience for me. The process of exploring my spiritual journey and sense of purpose, has provided me ideas and practical tools - such as the Mind-Map, which I hope will enable me to live a more fully conscious life – being in the present and enjoy all of the simple pleasures of life such as the beauty of a rose, a walk along the Southbank and saying thanks for all the blessings in my life. Many thanks to Sarah and to Jane for the lovely prepared sheets each session.”

**Doris Campbell**

“The *Quest*, as delivered by Jane and Sarah, provided a vehicle for spiritual self discovery and valuing of self and others. The structure, group management and interactive listening felt holding and deeply supportive. The journey allowed space for a non-judgemental enquiry into self and others. I enjoyed the tranquillity and warmth of the experience and sensed it as place of being and less doing. An excellent programme well delivered.”

**Jim Blair**



## Further Reflections on “The Quest”

“I felt so blessed to have Jane and Sarah guiding me through this fantastic course. I was very impressed by the turnout and the commitment of us all and of the hard work put in by Jane and Sarah as I know how much energy and commitment it takes to run any course let alone one of this stature. They have clearly done a lot of their own 'inner work' and they complement each other in the way that they work. I think only 2 people out of the original 14 decided not to continue which is brilliant. The rest of us attended as consistently as we were able. I had a trip to America in the middle of it so I didn't do the work and the homework as diligently as I had intended but I still got such a lot out of it.

I'd love to do it again...and again...and again. It's one of those courses where you can get something new each time however many times you do it because it's so far-reaching and comprehensive....perhaps a bit like ‘The Artist’s Way’ by Julia Cameron. It's the kind of thing you can dip into, just read for pleasure or study in very great and detailed depth depending on interest and time.

When I first started to do it I felt quite despondent because I could feel myself falling into some of my old patterns of procrastination and then the beating-up of myself that usually follows but I decided to use the experience to try to understand and change the habit. The idea is that you keep a journal and write down your process with it all as well as answering and practising the questions and suggestions.

There are no right or wrong answers because it all comes from within anyway. No-one is looking to catch you out AND it's fun too! I really enjoyed doing the collages and life-mapping AND the wonderful music and the guided meditations lying on the lovely comfy carpet below the beautiful wall-hangings in the main space of the church with someone... whose name I won't mention... gently snoring beside me! Aww! It was hard not to laugh out loud!

In each fortnightly session we did exercises by ourselves, in pairs and in small groups as well as having homework to do in preparation for the following session but I'm relieved to report that no-one checked up to make sure I had done it!

I found the content very validating because I have done quite a lot of reading and soul-searching already so seeing books, ideas and people who I have read and liked (or not!) makes me know I am going in the direction I want to be going. Included also were people and ideas I haven't come across too so it keeps me alert and interested without getting overwhelmed with too much new information.

I LOVE being in groups with other ‘seekers’, people with open minds and hearts so it was delightful to be in this group of people from Kensington Unitarians and also new people because it was advertised on the London Spirituality Network.

One of the beauties of this course for me at this particular time in my life is that it was free. What a gift! It's the kind of course where elsewhere I would have had to pay a very large amount of money which would have precluded my attendance so I am extremely grateful to Jane, Sarah and this community of people. Thankyou!”

Jo Ridgers

...a new online publicity initiative for you to take part in...

## Essex Church Facebook Group



As reported in last month's newsletter, we have set up an Essex Church Group on Facebook (a social networking site on the internet) as a means of publicity and of reminding members about events, and we have already got eleven people signed up to the group... but of course we'd love to get many more people on board so please do join in!

If you are already a member of Facebook, simply search the site for “Essex Church” or “Kensington Unitarians”, and our group should come up as the top result. Somewhere on the page you will find an option to join the group if you should wish to do so.

Jane Blackall



# WALKTALK™

taking the first step

## Creating a Lasting Footprint...



WALKTALK is an ambitious and challenging initiative offering a wide variety of people of all ages – representing a broad spectrum of opinions and ideas – new opportunities to meet, walk and talk with each other about matters of belief and conscience, especially those that are most challenging and divisive.

The original idea was jointly conceived by Gill Hicks, a survivor of the 7 July 2005 London bombings who lost both her legs that day, and her husband Joe Kerr. It was then developed further in conjunction with Zulfi Hussain of Global Promise, and Together for Peace, Leeds. The WALKTALKERS start in Beeston, Leeds on 19th July and finish in central London on Sunday, 17th August.

The provisional itinerary is available, together with information on how people can support and become involved, at [www.walktalk.org.uk](http://www.walktalk.org.uk). WALKTALK will also be featured on “Sunday Life”, 10 a.m., BBC1 on 1st June.

We have volunteered to fund-raise and help/steward over the final week because we believe that their all-embracing approach to the challenge of social fragmentation, whether fuelled by fundamentalism or not, is similar to our own Unitarian ideals. As Joe Kerr says, “We are all absolutely committed to not letting the events of 7 July 2005 happen again, to building bridges between communities and to be unified in that voice. By listening, talking and perhaps understanding, we really feel we can begin to build a society where it’s fine to have differences – of background or faith – but where we all subscribe to common civic values, and to a shared sense of national identity.”

Jo is reminded of the North American Indian saying Art Lester quoted back on 20th July 1997, “You can’t judge a man until you’ve walked a mile in his moccasins.” This initiative brings the opportunity to walk and talk along a common path.

John Marrow and Jo Tye

## Sunday Services at Essex Church

### 1<sup>st</sup> June – “Honesty”

*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Clearly regarded as ‘a good thing’ honesty is remarkably difficult to define or achieve. In this service we will be looking at the message of Byron Katie who has developed a process known as The Work. The Work asks people to consider four simple questions, one of which is ‘can you know that this is true?’ How can this process of inquiry assist us on our journey through life?

### 8<sup>th</sup> June – “Environmental Imperatives”

*Service led by Victor Anderson and Rev. Sarah Tinker*

In recognition of World Environment Day this service will focus on the key issues we face in creating a sustainable future for the world. How do these issues relate to our religion and to our community here at Essex Church.

### 15<sup>th</sup> June – “Coping With Loss”

*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker and the Congregation*

A congregational service in which people are invited to take part. If you have a reading or prayer to contribute or would like to speak about your experiences of loss, get in touch with our minister.

### 22<sup>nd</sup> June – “Buddhist Practices”

*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Buddhism emphasises practical issues on the spiritual path – how to live compassionately, how to calm the mind, how to respond to suffering. In this service there will be an opportunity to explore Buddhist practices and consider what they have to offer modern western society.

### 29<sup>th</sup> June – “Articulating Our Faith”

*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

As questionnaires go out to all our members asking them to write about their religious and spiritual beliefs and their sense of belonging here at Essex Church, in this service I shall be exploring why we religious liberals find it hard sometimes to articulate our faith. What are the stumbling blocks and how shall we steer round them?

## July Newsletter Deadline



The deadline for submitting items for the next issue is **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June**. Please send items (such as poems, artwork, quotes, articles, notices, etc...) to Jane Blackall or any committee member before this date.

Thank you!!!