



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: April 2013

What's On...

Tuesday 2nd April, 12.30-1.30pm
Nia Technique with Sonya Leite

Thursday 4th April, 7.00-8.00pm
'Heart and Soul' Spiritual Gathering
'The Elements' – led by Jane Blackall

Friday 5th April, 6.00-9.00pm
Cultural Outing: 'Light Show'

Sunday 7th April, 11am-noon
'Becoming More Like God'
Service led by Jane Blackall

Monday 8th April, 7.00-9.00pm
'Rediscovering the Bible'
Bible-reading with David and Jane

Tuesday 9th April, 12.30-1.30pm
Nia Technique with Sonya Leite

Sunday 14th April, 11am-noon
'A Spring Celebration'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 14th April, 12.30pm
Small-Group Communion
Led by Tristan Jovanović

Sunday 14th April, 2.00-3.00pm
Nia Technique with Sonya Leite

Tuesday 16th April, 12.30-1.30pm
Nia Technique with Sonya Leite

Sunday 21st April, 11am-noon
'Tie Up Your Camel...'
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 21st April, 12.30-1.15pm
'Finding Our Voice'
Singing Workshop with Margaret

Sunday 21st April, 12.30– 4pm
True Heart Theatre:
'Our Living Stories'

Monday 22nd April, 7.00-9.00pm
Management Committee Meeting

Tuesday 23rd April, 12.30-1.30pm
Nia Technique with Sonya Leite

Tuesday 23rd April, 7.00-9.00pm
Reading Group: 'Ways of Seeing'

Sunday 28th April, 11am-noon
'Death and Appreciation'
Led by Kate Hill and Sarah Tinker

Sunday 28th April, 12.30-2.30pm
'Painting the Spring' with Heidi Ferid

Tuesday 30th April, 12.30-1.30pm
Nia Technique with Sonya Leite

A Message from our Minister:

Spotting Our Mistakes... Before We Make Them



On our recent trip to Avebury, with its many megalithic standing stones and circles, (*more photos inside on page 13*) I heard a story that I'd never heard before. I was vaguely aware of the reality that in times gone by local people had destroyed standing stones for assorted reasons. Occasionally it was because they were seen as pagan, and therefore potentially malign, influences by the local churches. But far more often it was simply to do with the practicalities of life. They were in the way and so they buried them, to make farming crops easier. Or they needed stones for building work and so they broke them up. But to break a 40 ton stone is no easy task and I had never known how it was done. On our visit to Avebury we heard an account written by the antiquarian Dr. William Stukeley. He personally witnessed the destruction of many stones in the 1720s. Estimates suggest that perhaps up to 600 stones were originally used in the three stone circles and two long avenues that make up the 30 acre site at Avebury. John Aubrey had studied Avebury in the 17th century and in 1663 he visited the stone circles with Charles 2nd. Aubrey recorded 73 stones standing at that time. When Stukeley began his studies of Avebury, just 60 years later, only 29 remained standing.

So how do you break a sarsen stone? Stukeley poignantly describes a huge fallen stone in the centre of one of the smaller circles. He watched the local people digging a ditch beneath it, lighting a fire with straw and then once the stone was hot, running cold water over it to make cracks and breaking it apart with sledgehammers to make building materials. He wrote in despair at what he witnessed:

And this stupendous fabric, which for some thousands of years, had brav'd the continual assaults of weather, and by the nature of it, when left to itself, like the pyramids of Egypt, would have lasted as long as the globe, hath fallen a sacrifice to the wretched ignorance and avarice of a little village unluckily plac'd within it.

With the benefits of hindsight we can know that the villagers were making a mistake in destroying those ancient stones. But their error is understandable. They needed land and they needed stone and they had no idea of the historic value of what they possessed in their quite unique village. For Avebury in the 21st century has been voted the second most popular site to visit of all UNESCO's World Heritage Sites, second only to Machu Picchu, high in the mountains of Peru. The people of Avebury must have thought they had more than enough ancient stones cluttering their fields and could never have imagined their little Wiltshire village becoming such a tourist attraction nor such a site of archaeological study, carefully watched over by the National Trust. Our visit left me wondering about the many mistakes we humans make and which, if any, we might avoid. What do they say about history, that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (George Santayana)? I wonder what we in our modern era are busy destroying, without understanding its potential significance for future generations. Any thoughts?

Rev. Sarah Tinker

In this month's newsletter...

* 'What I Mean When I Say I'm a Unitarian' – Sarah, Howard, Tristan and John *
Worship Studies Course Here at Essex Church * 'SimpleGifts' by Gisela Boehnisch
* Summer School - Book Now * 'Avebury – An Enjoyable Outing' by Jeannene Powell *
'Our Living Stories' – Playback Theatre Event * SOS Children's Villages Sponsorship
* 'Painting the Spring' with Heidi Ferid * 'Writing it Down' by Sarah Tinker * and more...

Kensington Unitarians

At Essex Church (founded 1774), Notting Hill Gate

Kensington Unitarians are a community of kindred souls who meet each week at Essex Church in Notting Hill Gate to explore, reflect, converse, be still, share joys and sorrows, and support one another on life's journey. We are proud to be part of a worldwide and historic liberal religious tradition.

Our main activity is Sunday worship and we hold a service each week at 11am. All are welcome. Services are usually themed and include readings from a variety of sources, prayers, music, singing, stillness, and a short sermon. Our children's leaders provide an alternative programme of activities for younger people.

Small-group activities are another key part of our programme. We offer courses and one-off workshops exploring spiritual and religious matters and considering life's meaning together with others on the spiritual journey.



Kensington Unitarians at Essex Church
112 Palace Gardens Terrace
Notting Hill Gate
London W8 4RT

Office Telephone: 020 7221 6514
Email: info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk
Web: www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk

'The great religious prophets have all recognized that beyond the intellectual realm lies a numinous oneness that transcends all differences, call it the Holy, the divine Spirit, God — it doesn't matter. This kinship extends to the Heavens.

The mystic oneness of person to person, which we may capture in lovemaking or deep listening or true empathy is but a simple expression of the greater mystical oneness of all existence. The great prophets have preached cosmic oneness not only because it makes good metaphysical sense, but also because it answers a profound human need — to be one within ourselves, reconciled to our neighbours, and at home in the cosmos. Human feelings of friendship and empathy are but a faint reminder of the essential mystical oneness of all creation.

Theologians may reason their way to oneness, but mystics experience it — as we all do in magical moments of connection — when we set aside the intellect and connect our souls to the great chain of being. The goal is not to get lost there, but found.'

Rev. Forrest Church

Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



Stewarding:

7 th April:	Gina Bayley
14 th April:	Annie Fowler
21 st April:	Ruth Okine
28 th April:	?

Coffee:

7 th April:	Sue Smith
14 th April:	Juliet Edwards
21 st April:	David Darling
28 th April:	Ruth Okine

Greeting:

7 th April:	Niall Doherty
14 th April:	Gina Bayley
21 st April:	Carol Sheppard
28 th April:	Jo Ridgers

We circulate the rota list each month by email.
Please contact Jane with your email address
if you are willing to be on the rota mailing list.

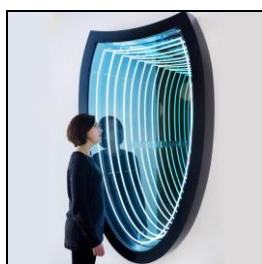
rotas@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

A Kensington Unitarians Cultural Outing:

'Light Show'

Friday 5th April, 6.00-9.00pm

Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London SE1 8XX

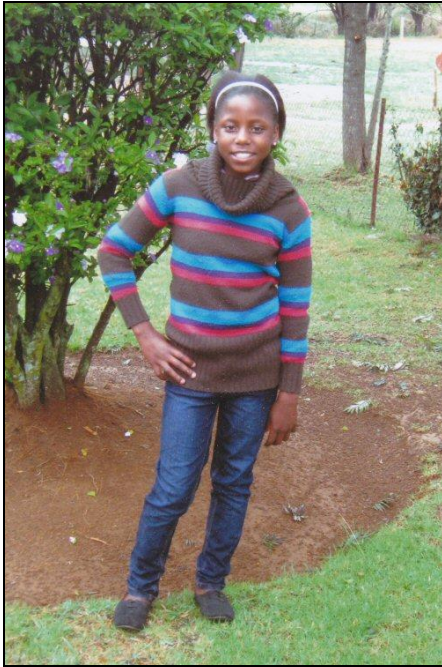


Natasha Drennan is organising an outing to this popular exhibition at the Hayward Gallery. Please get in touch with her if you plan to come along or would like to know more: tash_drennan@hotmail.com / 07551 250 049.

It is essential to book in advance as the exhibition is very popular and selling out each day. It would be advisable to get tickets (£11) for the slot between 6-7pm if you want to come along and then we can all go round together.

To find out more visit the Hayward Gallery website:
www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whatson/light-show-69759

SOS Children's Villages Sponsorship Project



Our congregation sponsors twins at the Mbabane SOS Children's Village: Fortunate Qiniso and Patience Qinisile. We have recently received the following information about their progress. We would be glad from anyone who would like to contribute towards their continued sponsorship. Please contact Sarah Tinker or Caroline Blair to find out more.

Qiniso's love for singing gospel songs is increasing – the other children now call her an artist – she has good interpersonal skills and is always eager to learn new things. Qinisile likes dancing and is now an active member of the village African Dance group. When she is indoors she spends most of her time reading and playing puzzles. The children experienced some disruption in their studies last year due to a teachers' strike which lasted for eight weeks. However, activities within the village programme continued, and village staff have been supporting the children as they study for their end-of-year exams.

The Mbabane SOS Children's Village sends its warmest greetings to all friends, sponsors, and supporters. The programme currently provides support to 1204 children. In the last year there have been a number of big events including the Umhlanga Reed Dance, a cultural event which encourages chastity among young girls, in a bid to reduce the high rates of HIV and AIDS infections in the country.

A number of developmental workshops were held for children and youth in the programme. These included a programme on reproductive health which enabled the young adults to better understand their own development and be able to make informed decisions. There was also a workshop intended to help teenagers choose the right friends.

For more information: www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk

A New Venture Here at Essex Church for 2013...

'Heart and Soul' Midweek Spiritual Gatherings



Thursday 4th April 2013 from 7-8pm

Gathering at 6.45pm downstairs in the library

Followed by social time and refreshments

'Each of the elements offers us a unique energy or way of understanding the sacred: water flows and cleanses; the earth roots us and nourishes us; fire represents the burning of love and passion; and wind expresses freedom, breath, and unpredictability.' - Christine Valters Paintner

In January 2013 we held the first of our 'Heart and Soul' spiritual gatherings, which will take place on the first Thursday evening of each month, for new and alternative forms of Unitarian worship. They have been going well so far and we are looking forward to the next one!

The impetus to hold midweek worship came, in part, from a recent inquiry from someone who always works at the weekends and is therefore unable to attend Unitarian worship anywhere in London. This seemed a real shame so we decided to try and rectify the situation... and it all came together remarkably quickly!

These services will be led by members of the newly-formed Worship Leaders' Practice Group. If you feel enthusiastic about the prospect of midweek services and experimenting with different forms of worship then please do come along and support us or get involved. The service on 4th April will be coordinated by Jane Blackall and has the theme 'The Spirituality of the Elements'. All are welcome!



Come to Church! A Date for Your Diaries

We are always keen to encourage people to come to church but do make a date in your diaries for April 21st, as on that Sunday morning we are going to be visited by the UKUnitarian TV crew.

This perhaps sounds more grand, and maybe more intimidating, than it needs to. James Barry, member of our national Executive Committee, is experimenting with ways to film the occasional service so that someone browsing the Internet could get a sense of what Unitarian worship is all about. The film will be edited, rather than going out live, so it will not include any of the more personal moments such as times of prayer or our candles of joy and concern. On 21st April James will just bring one camera and will be experimenting with the whole process of filming. It's unlikely that the film made that day will be shown but it will give James helpful information for future filming, perhaps in the autumn.

He will also seek out some people to give him brief interviews where he will ask us about why we are part of Kensington Unitarians and why we come to church on a Sunday morning. These interviews are a useful way of letting the world know a bit more about us Unitarians, so do be brave and offer to be interviewed. Let me know if you would like to hear more about James' plans.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

Spiritual Crisis Network From Breakdown to Breakthrough

Promoting understanding and support for those going through profound personal transformation

The Spiritual Crisis Network acts as a resource for those going through or recovering from spiritual crisis, and for professionals, carers and supporters. From their leaflet:

A spiritual crisis is a turbulent period of spiritual opening or transformation. Spiritual crisis is also known as spiritual emergency, where a process of spiritual emergence, or awakening, becomes unmanageable for the individual. Psychological or mental health difficulties may be experienced: if understood and supported appropriately, these experiences can be deeply transformative, offering the possibility of breakthrough rather than breakdown.

Spiritual crisis and mental health difficulties often overlap.

People need information and support in their local area when in crisis.

The relationship between spirituality and mental health is complex.

For more information: www.spiritualcrisisnetwork.org.uk

Essex Church AGM

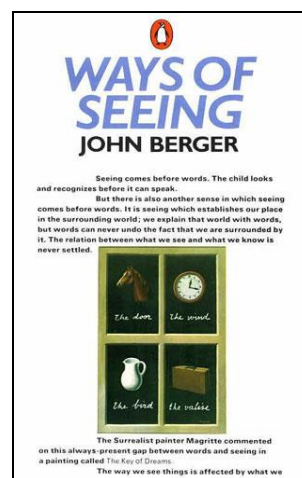
After the service on Sunday 19th May, 12.30pm

We encourage all members and friends of the congregation to put this date in their diary and be sure to come along to the membership service and church AGM. Your attendance and participation in the life of our community is much appreciated! Members will receive a copy of the annual report in early May.

Essex Church Reading Group

'Ways of Seeing'

by John Berger



Tuesday 23rd April 2013, 7.00-9.00pm

The reading group's April session will be based on 'Ways of Seeing' by John Berger which was suggested by Sarah Tinker. This will be the 101st title discussed by the reading group since it started up nearly ten years ago.

More information from BrainPickings:

"Forty years ago, BBC premiered a series of four 30-minute films written and anchored by art critic and author John Berger. Soon adapted into a book, Ways of Seeing went on to become a landmark postmodernist critique of Western cultural aesthetics, exploring not only how visual culture came to dominate society but also how ideologies are created and transmitted via images — a subject of pressing timeliness in that golden age of photography."

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

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

Worship Studies Course at Essex Church in 2013



Nobody can quite remember when, or *if*, the Worship Studies Course (WSC) has been run here in the London District. It used to be called the Course in Lay Preaching and the Conduct of Worship (CLPCW) some years ago, when I worked for the Unitarian General Assembly as their national Religious Education & Youth Officer.

As a movement, Unitarians have always held a commitment to lay preaching alongside professional ministry and a number of our Districts have active lay preachers' groups that arrange trainings. Add to that UALM, the Unitarian Association of Lay Ministry, which holds an annual conference at our holiday and conference centre in Great Hucklow in the Peak District each autumn, and you get a sense of how important it is that we have enthusiastic lay people involved in Unitarian worship. You might hear this described as the 'priesthood of all believers' - the idea that all of us can make a connection with that which we hold to be divine and each of us can convey that to others.

It's one of the things I am proud of about our congregation of Kensington Unitarians that we already have about 10 people who are happy to lead our Sunday worship. And so Jane and I are delighted that 30 people have signed up for this course, from all around the District and beyond. I regularly mention a teaching from *The Course in Miracles* which speaks to me: 'we teach what we most need to learn'. And that is certainly true for me. In teaching this Worship Studies Course I am being reminded once again what it is I so appreciate about our liberal faith, what attracted me all those years ago, and of all the ways that we can deepen our connections – with ourselves, with one another and with God.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

We can all learn so much from each other. I lead worship on a fairly regular basis at Golders Green Unitarians on Sundays. I also lead a monthly meditation. I signed up for the Worship Studies Course to learn from others, to keep my approach to what I offer fresh. I was not disappointed. It was a delight to consolidate the things I instinctively know about leading worship and at the same time learn new insights, look at things in new ways. I found the discussion in small groups affirming and nurturing. As worship leaders what we say and do are so important for creating the space for others. Elizabeth Birtles really helped me appreciate that in the way she instinctively demonstrated 'holding the space'. The magic was to share a sense as worship leaders of dealing with the necessary practicalities at the same time as we are unlocking what I understand to be 'the mystery within and the mystery beyond'. I can't wait until July. In the meantime I will do my homework.

Michael Allured

The first instalment of the Worship Studies Course was excellent! First and foremost, I was impressed that thirty-odd participants managed to arrive early so we could start on time! I was also very impressed with the open and caring attitudes we were all wearing. Everyone was honoured when they had a contribution and that made the day even more valuable. We covered everything from the nature of Unitarianism (in a record time of 30 minutes!), to how to use a hymn book, to a beautifully run session on creating and holding sacred space, led by Rev. Elizabeth Birtles. Some of the questions we were asked elicited purely emotional responses. By the end of the day, I was worn out but still energised and ready to carry the message of our liberal faith into the outside world. I'm looking forward to part 2!

Tristan Jovanović



*An afternoon of delight & surprise!
A performance of improvisational theatre on the theme of*

Our Living Stories

Sunday 21st April here at Essex Church



Programme:

12.30pm Bring Lunch to Share
2pm Welcome to the Performance
4pm Tea Time! And then goodbyes...

Since its beginnings in 2006, London's own Chinese-led True Heart Theatre has been regularly performing Playback Theatre on the third Sunday of each month in a variety of venues as our service to the community. Our events have created an opportunity for people from all cultures, across generations and languages, to meet each other through a heart-full exchange of real-life stories and experiences.

Today we invite you to join us here at Essex Church for another afternoon of surprise and delight! You are welcome to come for lunch from 12.30pm... or come just for the performance from 2pm. And of course, stay for tea!

Cost: By Donation. Email: truehearttheatre@gmail.com for more info and to let us know to expect you.

Veronica Needa

'One of my favourite quotes from Ralph Waldo Emerson is his proclamation: "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know!"

This captures beautifully an essential spirit of our Unitarian Universalist tradition, and one of the core sources of our way of being religious: a confidence that each human individual has the capacity to know truth, directly. Not *all truth*, but enough to be worthy of making a contribution to the wisdom of the whole, enough to be worthy of shaping his or her own philosophy of living, and enough to contribute a voice in community decisions.'

Unitarian Universalist Minister, Rev. Lilli Nye

The Alister Hardy Society for the Study
of Spiritual Experience Present

'New Religious Movements and the New Spirituality'

Wednesday 17th April 2013, 3.00pm
Here at Essex Church, London W8 4RT

Eileen Barker is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at LSE and founder of INFORM (*Information Network Focus on Religious Movements*). Her interests are the social reactions which arise to new religious movements. Her talk will look at contemporary developments in the wide range of new expressions of religion that have emerged since the Second World War; these including new religious movements, manifestations of the New Age movement, and what has come to be known as 'the new spirituality', which is to be found not only within, but also outside organised religion.

Cost: £7 at the door

Website: www.alisterhardysociety.org

'Rediscovering the Bible'

A monthly bible-reading group at Essex Church



Meeting on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7pm:
8th April, 13th May, 10th June 2013

We started a monthly bible-reading group back in late 2012. In the sessions we simply read through the bible together, pausing to reflect, and share our own thoughts and feelings on what we read. We started with the Acts of the Apostles and we have now gone back to the beginning to tackle Genesis. We were very pleased to welcome eleven people to the first session and a core group have continued to gather each month since then. There has been a lot of laughter and fun in these sessions as well as exploration, discovery and learning.

Do contact us (email jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) if you have any questions or just to let us know you're planning to come along. The bible-reading group is open to all who share a spirit of goodwill and curiosity about discovering the text anew – no particular theology will be presumed – please bring along a bible (any translation you like) if you have one. This group is offered in conjunction with the Liberal Christian affinity group of the district association (LDPA) and we hope to see friends from throughout the region at these meetings.

David Darling and Jane Blackall

‘SimpleGifts’



Living Unitarian Values through Social Change and Community Empowerment

One of the best things about working freelance is to be relatively flexible with how I spend my time. This is an essential freedom which I highly treasure. It not only allows me to focus on studying, reading or recharging my batteries on extended lunchtime walks, it also gives me time to volunteer for projects I care about. So I was excited to come across SimpleGifts, a Unitarian initiative which has been around since 2012 and is based at the Mansford Street Unitarian Chapel in Bethnal Green. Rev. Rob Gregson and Ann Howell from the Rosslyn Hill congregation and a number of dedicated volunteers also set up the SimpleGifts cafe. It is a welcoming space for children and their parents to gather after school, enjoy a snack, get some homework help and work on fun crafts and games. I helped out one Tuesday afternoon and was impressed by the enthusiasm of the staff and volunteers, all from different Unitarian congregations around London and beyond.

There are also further projects in the pipeline, such as a food bank, a youth training programme and an English conversation group. "Rev. Rob Gregson and Ann Howell, staff members on the project, are excited about the next steps for SimpleGifts and hope to soon be able to offer "a hot meal for recent immigrants/asylum seekers, a table tennis league for youth from the estate, and a video project at the upcoming Unitarian General Assembly in Nottingham, "What's Best about Social Action in Your Chapel? What Could Be Even Better?".

SimpleGifts Cafe is currently looking for additional volunteers and contributors and there are many ways of helping out. Come along to the cafe on Tuesday afternoons from 2.30-5pm, help setting up or doing dishes, prepare snacks (or bring along some homemade goodies if you enjoy baking!) and interact with the children and their parents. Besides hands-on help, donations are also greatly appreciated in order to buy two table tennis tables, to pay for extra hours for staff and to upgrade the physical space to make it safer for the children and mums who use it. Any help would be gratefully received and is eligible for matching funding, so your money goes twice as far.

You can contact Rob and Ann at rob@simplegiftsucsa.org.uk and ann@simplegiftsucsa.org.uk for more details on any of the above. Their website is www.simplegiftsucsa.org.uk

Gisela Boehnisch

‘Finding Our Voice’

Singing Workshops
with Margaret Marshall

Sundays 21st April, 16th June
12.30 to 1.15pm, at Essex Church



Margaret Marshall has worked as a professional singer all her adult life and is also a very experienced singing teacher. Along with Harold Lorenzelli she has been singing in our choir here at Essex Church for over thirty years now and we're delighted that she is leading monthly sessions to help us all find our voice.

These workshops are for anyone who is prepared to open their mouth and make a sound and Margaret will show us how to improve the quality and strength of our voices. Using a few simple exercises we'll gain joy and confidence in our singing by learning how to produce and develop the voice, something everyone can do. We'll work with the breath and overcome unconscious blocks that can prevent us singing with our true potential.

Fun and achievement are guaranteed and these sessions are designed for everyone, whatever your experience or ability. All are welcome.

New Date Set For District AGM

Saturday 20th April 2013 from 1.30pm
Croydon Unitarians, CR0 1ER

A combination of the closure of the Central Line east of Liverpool Street and a forecast of dire weather prompted the District Executive Officers to postpone the District AGM scheduled for Bethnal Green on Saturday 23rd March.

The AGM will now be held on Saturday 20th April at Croydon Unitarian Church, 1 The Flyover, Croydon CR0 1ER. There is limited off-street parking at the church, but good public transport by bus, train and tram.

The programme for the day will be the same as before:

1.30 – 2.00	Worship, led by Rev. David Usher
2.00 – 2.10	Break
2.10 – 3.45	Annual General Meeting
3.45 –	Afternoon Tea

Warden's Column

Mmm . . . it's that time of year again when I can either write a column about the spring bulbs I can see out of the window, or settle down to some serious analysis of last year's lettings income - and tempted as I am just to rhapsodise about our lovely daffodils, I'm even more curious to know which groups gave us most money last year and how that compared to my predictions. I'm not going to print my actual predictions this year, because I was comprehensively wrong apart from the top two positions. Having said that, I did correctly guess 9 out of the top 10 payers – but I got the order all wrong. This was mainly because there's a large cluster of groups in the £3,500 to £4,500 pa zone. To illustrate this, I'm instead printing a comparison of the top-paying groups from 2011 and 2012. As you can see, they're largely the same. The main changes are that:



- Lolly went down from teaching yoga here two days a week to only teaching one day
- Katrina stopped teaching yoga here
- Planet Theatre booked the main church hall for three weeks of rehearsals
- Monkey Music, children's music classes started on Monday morning

I confidently expect the chart to look much the same next year – with the addition of Little Foxes (another children's group who are meeting here on Tuesdays and Fridays) and a self-development group that now meets in the library on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Planet Theatre should be booking in for rehearsals again in April, and with the exception of Zumba, all the other groups mentioned are ongoing. We're very lucky to be blessed with so many loyal hirers who keep coming back to us year after year and really regard the Church as their home. Long may it continue so! Spring wishes,

Jenny Moy

Top-Paying Groups 2011	Top-Paying Groups 2012
Associated Music Board	Seicho no Ie
Seicho no Ie	Associated Music Board
Beit Klal Synagogue	All the above over £5,000 per annum in 2012
Yoga – Lolly Stirk	Tse Qi Gong
All the above over £5,000 per annum in 2011	Independent Psychologists
Tse Qi Gong	Analytical Psychologists
Yoga – John Stirk	Beit Klal Synagogue
Independent Psychologists	All the above over £4,000 per annum in 2012
Meditation	Yoga – John Stirk
Yoga - Katrina	Ashtanga Yoga
Analytical Psychologists	Meditation
Ashtanga Yoga	Interfaith Seminary
All the above over £2,000 per annum in 2011	Planet Theatre
Pastoral Psychologists	All the above over £2,000 per annum in 2012
Sufis	Yoga – Lolly Stirk
Yoga – Catherine James	Pastoral Psychologists
Westminster Psychologists	Monkey Music
Michal Levin	Sufis
All the above over £1,000 per annum in 2011	Yoga – Catherine James
	All the above over £1,000 per annum in 2012
	Westminster Psychologists
	Unitarian Ceremonies
	Zumba
	And the above more than £900



'Does God have a set way of prayer, a way that He expects each of us to follow? I doubt it. I believe some people — lots of people — pray through the witness of their lives, through the work they do, the friendships they have, the love they offer people and receive from people. Since when are words the only acceptable form of prayer?'

Dorothy Day

One Light Spiritual Gatherings 'Gaia - Great Mother - Earth Goddess'

Friday 12th April 2013
6.30-8.15pm – Here at Essex Church



The gatherings are led by graduates of the Interfaith Seminary.

Join with us in healing connection to Spirit.

You are invited to commune with The Great Mother, Goddess of the Earth, known as Gaia. She will greet us in a transformation journey through nature where we celebrate and experience our oneness and interconnectedness in the great web of life, through sound, sight, taste, smell and feel. Allow yourself to be held in her loving arms, protected by her awesome power, inspired by her exquisite beauty. Move to your true self at One with Her.

Come and enjoy as we gather in healing and loving connection to Spirit. Come help us create a sacred space, bringing in the One Light, One Love for which we all long - with silence, music, spiritual transformation journey, and eternal inspiration from all faiths and none. Bring your beloved eternal self, your family and friends.

Forthcoming Gatherings:

10th May - Fr/Enemies; 14th June – Symbolism;
12th July – Mothering/Fathering; 9th August - Health

*These events are free. Donations for expenses are welcome.
Any surplus will go to Essex Unitarian Church*

The Inquirer and Unitarian Please Take a FREE Copy!

As a congregation we have a subscription for the fortnightly Inquirer newspaper and the monthly Unitarian newsletter and are happy for members, friends and visitors to take a copy for free from the table in the foyer. These publications are a good way to keep in touch with our national movement and to find out more about Unitarian activities and issues.



A Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement Forms

Second Sunday of the Month from 2-3pm:
14th April, 12th May, 9th June 2013

Also a weekly class each Tuesday
lunchtime from 12.30-1.30pm

An hour of whole-body conditioning, done barefoot to diverse music. Delivering a cardiovascular workout for any level of fitness. Specific routines allow you to experience - the power of the martial arts, the stillness of the healing arts and the joy of movement through dance.

Cost £10 (£5 to members of church congregation).

Contact: Sonya Leite on 0207 371 1674.

Small Group Communion



**Sunday 14th April, 12th May, 9th June
at 12.30pm Down in the Church Library**

On the second Sunday of each month we hold a small-group communion, after the main morning service, downstairs in the library. These services are led by different members of the congregation. A team of volunteers take turns in leading the services so we can experience a variety of different approaches. The line-up for the next couple of months is as follows:

14th April – Led by Tristan Jovanović
12th May – Led by David Francis Darling

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

‘What I Mean When I Say I’m a Unitarian...’

Over recent months I have had some fascinating conversations with members of the congregation about what they mean when they say they are a Unitarian. The freedom of our denomination allows us to hold a wide range of individual understandings. I would be delighted to include more responses to this question in future newsletters – why not write your own? – Jane Blackall



What I mean when I say I'm a Unitarian has developed over the years and continues to do so. It used to mean primarily that I was a member of a Unitarian chapel, where I felt proud of our 300 year history of Christian nonconformity and our commitment to freedom in all matters religious. As time went by I became more involved with Unitarianism nationally and internationally and that brought a greater sense of our wider community, with all its fascinating diversity as well as its many connections.

Nowadays, I actually feel more free to create new meaning from our label, which came from centuries past and theological concerns that seem less relevant in this 21st century world. Being a Unitarian means that I can explore matters of religion, spirituality and social justice as an on-going process and I am proud that we encourage one another in this process. Being a Unitarian means that the oneness of all existence both excites and challenges me. And being a Unitarian means that I am part of a community of faith, where we can support one another in making the best of our lives and work together to make this a better world for all.

Sarah Tinker

For me, being a Unitarian means freedom from the dogma and creed of traditional religion. It does not mean that you can believe anything – as our critics sometimes argue – but that our beliefs are subject to the light of experience, reason and conscience. As Unitarians we are not asked to believe the unbelievable, and in the memorable words of one of our ministers, we are not expected to 'leave our brains at the door'. I struggle with many if not most of the concepts of traditional Christianity – the virgin birth, the resurrection, the miracles, a literal interpretation of the creation story. You might say that many churchgoers probably don't accept these literally any more either, but if you listen to the services broadcast on both radio and television, these are the beliefs that are still taken as gospel. I delight in the fact that our Unitarian ethos does not expect me to believe such things, so that my religion can be honest as to what I can or cannot accept.

It seems to me that if we are to survive as a movement today, we must stress our differences from other religious traditions, not our similarities to them. Indeed I would like us nationally to use a strapline such as 'The Unitarians – Religion with a Difference'. Of course, at the same time we should engage in dialogue with other faith traditions, because another part of being Unitarian is that we are tolerant of other points of view.

Howard Hague

When I say I'm a Unitarian, I mean that I am a Unitarian Universalist. It was in the United States in 1961 where the two faiths merged and where my first contact with the Unitarian (Universalist) faith happened as a happy accident.

I have always attached to the idea that being a Unitarian means that one rejects the doctrine of the Trinity. God is one. It never made much sense to me to have a doctrine that can barely be explained, usually tipped into the cop-out box of 'mysteries' with other theological quandaries such as the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection and transubstantiation. But we no longer live in the times of the Reformation. Today, our religious view is a world view and we are all influenced by faiths from around the world who call their gods by different names. In my sense of 21st century Unitarianism, we not only see the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit of Christianity but accept that Allah, the Hindu gods and goddesses, the Norse gods, the Tao are one... we are allowed to worship God (or not) in the name I borrow from the First Nations: The Great Spirit.

If I had to make an advertisement for Universalism, it would say, 'God loves U...and U...and U!' The kernel of the Universalist faith is universal salvation. In other words, we all go to Heaven. I'm not sure what I think about Heaven (although I'm pretty sure there is no Hell) so I have reinterpreted this principle to mean that interdependent web of life of which we are all part. To riff on the UUA's Seven Principles, by recognising the inherent worth and dignity of every human being, and of all life, we are recognising our Universalism.

When I say I'm a Unitarian, it's because my church welcomes everyone, wherever they are in life, whatever their baggage is, whether or not they believe in the same things I do. When I say I'm a Unitarian, it's because it's tidier than saying I'm a spiritual, Christo-Buddhist, Buddho-Christian with a dash of scepticism and a penchant for the Bible. When I say I'm a Unitarian, I'm saying that none of that matters because I can reinterpret it. Life is bigger than labels. In the end, I'm a Unitarian because it gives me hope in the future, hope in God, hope in humanity. It also gives me a little hope in myself.

Harvey Milk, a beacon of the American Gay rights movement, had a slogan: *You've gotta give 'em hope*. Unitarianism gives me hope because it gives me permission to look for it, wherever it may be. There is no doctrinal or dogmatic guilt for exploring something new or finding hope in the words of an American Gay rights activist. I'm a Unitarian because I am required to keep my brain engaged when I walk through our doors. I'm a Unitarian because I choose to be and in that choice there is hope, unity and love.

Tristan Jovanović

'What I mean when I say I'm a Unitarian...' (continued)

I mean that I belong to a religious group which holds the following principles as vital and (to us at least) self-evident.

1. That people should feel free to hold opinions on philosophy and personal conduct which they and we can communicate to each other, and practise separately or together without censure in an atmosphere of kindness and generosity. This does not mean we think alike on all fundamental questions of conduct and belief. On the contrary we welcome diversity of attitudes and variations of principles and personal belief, even when these may meet with the disapproval of some of our fellows. But, unless these views appear to threaten the lives and well-being of other people, I personally, and I believe we Unitarians generally, try to prevent disapproval deepening into censure. Nor do we let it hinder our fundamental desire to join in fellowship with others, both within and outside our liberal form of religion. Thus:--

2. What is of prime importance in our lives are the values of community and friendship. These values I personally, and my fellow Unitarians so far as I understand them, believe are fundamental in all questions of personal morals, and social ethics. So I would say that the principle of toleration in these matters is vital: since without active toleration personal moral growth is hindered or prevented.

3. To conclude with one or two examples of how we practise toleration. I personally believe in a Supreme Being which and who is both the originator of our universe, and who may, at times and in circumstances largely unknown to us, intervene in the regular processes of Nature. But never, I believe, in any way which violates his-her central dispensation to us of our freedom and capacity to love other people, including his-her divine Being. That is, I believe we are free at all times and in all possible circumstances to love both the Divine Source and each other. Without this central dispensation of freedom to us as personal beings love would be impossible. But from our own experience, personally and culturally, we know that love is indeed possible; even though we recognise that the emotional obstacles within ourselves and in our relationships with others may seem sometimes – even often – to make it impossible. So, arising from this, I believe that personal emotional and intellectual growth are vital factors in our personal development; so that we are able to become more loving beings, trying in our relationships with other people, and with other creatures and with Nature, to practice belief in personal growth. However, I know that there are several, perhaps many, of my fellow Unitarians who do not share my belief in a personal and divine Being, or in the possibility of personal emotional growth. Nevertheless none of us hold to any form of creed or doctrine which is opposed to me either believing or practising my beliefs, or them theirs. But what for me, and I believe all of my fellow Unitarians is vital, is our practise and belief in community and friendship. From this Ground all love and human continuity is rendered possible, and all things good for ourselves and other people and Nature can and I believe will flow. This is my faith, and my belief.

John Hands

Borough-Wide Mental Health Meeting

Here at Essex Unitarian Church
Thursday 11th April 2013, 9.45am - 3.45pm

This important twice yearly partnership event attracts a large attendance including people eligible to use mental health services in Kensington and Chelsea and providers of these services. The theme is: 'user involvement: one step beyond'. The focus is on what real communication and involvement looks like and exploring ways of taking this agenda forward locally.

The event will be led by 'expertise by experience' with speakers and workshops drawing on people's perceptions and concepts of what real and meaningful involvement / communication / consultation involves. This is a real sharing and learning opportunity for all with an interest in mental health services in the borough.

Contact Aidan at SUN on 020 8964 1333 extension 8

The Three-Wheel Delivery Van

(A Photograph by Robert Doisneau)

Yes! Yes!

Whatever you say it's perfect now
Don't try to disparage
Any of it. The three-wheel
Pedal-van, the girl in her apron sitting in it,
The boy on its saddle leaning forward
To kiss her; the nosey or envious
Middle-aged motorist poking his head
Out of his window, perhaps
Calling out something idiotic which happily
Was never heard, will never be remembered.

Yes! Yes!

It's all just in front of them:
The Occupation, the betrayals, the
Hair-shaving of women who slept
With the Wehrmacht: the heroic resistance
The bombings, the desperate acts of sabotage
Just two or three years ahead. But now
It's just perfect. History hasn't yet happened: there
Seem to be years ahead of domestic happiness.

Don't knock any of it: it might have been perfect
Everything they ever hoped for: in a
Three-wheel van: in the second or third arrondissement
The armoured, cat-calling world roaring past them:
The way it was, the way it may always be:
But these two poised on the cusp of their kiss – forever.

John Hands
February 1st 2013



'Painting the Spring'

An Art Workshop with Heidi Ferid
Sunday 28th April, 12.30-2.30pm

This will be a fun workshop. No previous experience or special skills are required. As a source of inspiration I will bring spring flowers and some paintings by different artists. You will be encouraged to paint or draw your own personal impressions of spring. Painting and drawing materials will be provided. All are welcome – speak to Heidi Ferid for more information.



Spirituality for a World in Crisis

Working Towards a Spiritual Alliance



A Gathering to Seek a Co-Creative Approach to a New Era

Saturday 8th June 2013, 10am-4.30pm
Here at Essex Church, London W8 4RT

"The fundamental problem, I believe, is that at every level we are giving too much attention to the external, material aspects of life while neglecting moral ethics and inner values." HH Dalai Lama

What are the key issues at stake?

How might we co-operate?

Can we bring our various spiritual visions together to inspire a change in the way we live?

Existing institutions are not rising to the challenges we face in today's world. So an emerging alliance of spiritual and religious groupings is coming together to explore what each might contribute to a coherent vision and set of actions for the future. The gathering will include opportunities for all to share their own perspectives on the theme and to contribute to future initiatives.

Keynote talks during the day gathering:

'Towards a Culture of Love and Wisdom' - David Lorimer
'Spirituality for a World in Crisis' - Dr Greg Barker
Opening/Closing Meditation - Sr Maureen, Brahma Kumaris

Cost: £25 (concessions available)

Register online via www.wrekintrust.org
Or email book@wrekintrust.org

Good Cause Collection of the Month:

Peace Fellowship Appeal



Collection on Sunday 28th April



For our next fourth-Sunday charity collection we will be supporting the Clara Barton Disasters Emergency Appeal of the British Red Cross for its life saving work of mercy.

For well over a century the International Red Cross has been dedicated to saving lives worldwide: not only succouring the victims of war but all those suffering from 'man made' and natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, cyclones and tsunamis. Wherever its humanitarian aid is needed the Red Cross is always ready to respond.

During the course of 2013 all donations to the Clara Barton Appeal will be sent to the Red Cross Syria Crisis Appeal and future appeals as and when they are launched.

For more information: www.redcross.org.uk

Previous Charity Collections:

Thank you for your generosity in contributing to recent charity collections. I am pleased to let you know that we will be sending the following donations to good causes:

January 2013 – 'Trinity Hospice' – £117.14
February – 'Azafady' (Madagascan Charity) – £157.36
March – 'Send a Child to Hucklow' – £199.16

Avebury: An Enjoyable Outing



What a great day out! 13 of us left Essex Church early on the Friday morning, on a minibus bound for Avebury. The journey, which took us 2 hours, went relatively quickly with all the chitter-chatter going on and people having the odd snooze, due to the early morning start.

Rain had been forecast for the afternoon, so we decided to make sure we had the outdoor things done first. A few of us went off to explore the stones and the henge on our own, whilst others signed up for the tour.

The site was very big. We walked around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the henge and came to what's called "The Avenue", an impressive double row of stones, which had originally stretched for over a mile. It was very windy, but we were determined to walk the length of what had been re-erected. We also explored one of the Southern inner circle, which originally contained a huge obelisk, now marked by a large pyramid shaped stone marker.

It was then that we felt a couple of drops of rain, and after about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours walking found ourselves not only hungry, but also a stone's throw away from the Red Lion Pub. So, off we went for lunch, sitting in the room which contained the original 86ft deep village well which is meant to be haunted!

The rest of the group came in soon afterwards, having had the tour around the site, which they'd found very interesting, but by then the rain was beginning to come down quite hard. Fortunately for us, all that was left to do was eat and visit the souvenir shops, before meeting the minibus for our journey home.

The minibus drove us past Silbury Hill, so that we could glimpse the site, before heading towards London. We made good time on the way back, arriving back to the church late afternoon. It really was a thoroughly enjoyable day and a site that I'd definitely like to visit again.

Jeannene Powell

Photographs by Jeannene Powell, Caroline/Jim Blair and Gisela Boehnisch.



'Bless strangers quietly, secretly. Offer it to people you notice on the street, in the market, on the bus. "May you be happy. May you be at peace." Feel the blessing move through your body as you offer it. Notice how you both receive some benefit from the blessing.'

Wayne Muller

'Writing it Down'

Sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker – 17th March 2013

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



I wonder how many of us can remember learning to read and to write? They are apparently very different learning processes and our individual experiences of learning these processes are shaped by our brains as much as by our teachers. For all our brains learn in subtly different ways as they forge the essential neural pathways, linking the many parts of the brains that are connected with the skills of reading and writing. I loved learning to read – my memories are of a dawning realisation of just how liberating reading could be. Learning to write felt a far more laborious and painstaking process, because simply holding a pencil firmly enough can be a challenge for a young child's hand. And I was luckier than my two left handed brothers, who struggled with teachers who thought that being left handed was not acceptable. Our relationship with reading and writing will have been shaped by our early experiences – be that for good or for ill. And as I've crafted this service around the theme of 'writing it down' it felt important to acknowledge the pain as well as the pleasure of the process of writing. If you are someone who has struggled with dyslexia, for example, my hope is that in adult life you have found ways to access the pleasure of the written world, ways to express yourself that work for you.

Because writing is a way to express ourselves, to let the world know something of who we are. And this is well described in a story of the Sufi Holy Fool, Mulla Nasrudin who had, it is said, one day invited a well-known philosopher round to his house for conversation of an intellectual nature. The philosopher arrived at Nasrudin's house at the time they had agreed only to find that no-one was at home to greet him. Nasrudin had forgotten their appointment and was in the local tea house, playing games and telling stories with his friends. After waiting some time the philosopher grew angry. Picking up a piece of chalk he wrote 'Stupid oaf!' on Nasrudin's door and left in a huff.

As soon as he got home and saw this, Nasrudin rushed round to the philosopher's house.

'I had completely forgotten our appointment' he said, 'and I do apologise for not being at home. Of course, I remembered the appointment as soon as I saw that you had left your name on my door.'

(from a version in Elisa Pearmain's 'Doorways to the Soul'.)

A couple of years ago there was a series on Radio 4 called *The History of the World in 100 Objects*. Written and narrated by Neil MacGregor, director of the British Museum, this was a sweeping tour through world history, told through the stories of 100 carefully chosen objects from their collection. So enjoyable were these programmes that I went out and bought the book – it's weighty and wonderful and in it you can find, amongst so much else, the history of writing. It's intriguing to think of a time when nothing was written down, pre-history as it's known because it was before the time when human beings were able

to write their historical records. Elsewhere in the newsletter you will find photos of our recent trip to the stone circles of Avebury – a trip I think we'd all recommend, despite the icy winds that day. As we stood by the ancient stones, our guide reminded us that most of what she was about to tell us was mere conjecture – because the people who first erected the hundreds of stones at Avebury, both in circles and in long avenues, had no writing, they left no written records. We have to piece together an idea of who they were and what was important to them from what they have left behind. And much of what they left behind has vanished in the mists of time – what remains are the items that do not rot - stones, flint axe heads, bones, and bits of pottery.

Some of the early work at Avebury was happening around 3,500BCE. Around that time, in at least four distinct parts of the world, a few people were starting to write – in Mesopotamia (now Iraq), China, Egypt and Central America. The earliest forms of writing were pictograms – where a shape reflects what it is meant to represent – and as Neil MacGregor explains – earliest writing was not literary, it was bureaucratic, for record keeping and administration. This was a time before money and these early pieces of writing were all about keeping a society functioning efficiently. One of the earliest stone tablets kept by the British Museum, for example, is a record of the amount of beer given to workers as wages.

The next stage in the development of writing was to move from pictograms to phonetic symbols, with signs to represent sounds. Just imagine how exciting that process of creating written language must have been for scribes. Little wonder that for thousands of years scribes were people with great power and prestige. And when writing becomes part of human culture, it gradually enables us to deepen our creativity and to deepen the complexity of our thinking. Without writing we would not have been able to develop complex societies and governments, or money and higher mathematics, or philosophy and theology.

Our order of service mentions the removing of clothes in the British Museum, so let me tell you that story. We humans didn't need writing to develop storytelling for that was an ancient oral tradition but around 3000BCE scribes started to write these ancient stories down and literature began. The very first written story is now generally considered to be The Epic of Gilgamesh, a mythic tale which includes reference to a great flood. A clay tablet which has this story written on it is in the British Museum and in the Victorian era nobody was able to read it, nobody that is until one George Smith took an interest in the clay tablets. So intrigued was he by them that he eventually managed to decipher their cuneiform script, made by a reed wedge pressed into damp clay. That a Hebrew Biblical story of The Flood should already have been told on a Mesopotamian clay tablet was an astounding discovery, as Smith knew. For it meant that the Bible's place as the Word of God, or the only word of God, had been compromised.

'Writing it Down' *(continued)*

Listen to this contemporary account of Smith's moment of discovery;

"Smith took the tablet and began to read over the lines which the conservator who had cleaned the tablet had brought to light, and when he saw that they contained the portion of the legend he had hoped to find there, he said 'I am the first man to read that after 2000 years of oblivion.' Setting the tablet on the table, he jumped up and rushed about the room in a great state of excitement, and, to the astonishment of those present, began to undress himself!"

A remarkable thing to do but it marked a truly remarkable discovery – one that was to disturb contemporary society just as much as Darwin's work on evolution contained in his book *On the Origin of Species*.

This service is being held to honour our congregation's book group which has its 100th meeting in late March. If you've not yet had chance to read last month's newsletter (March 2013) I recommend the sections where people choose their favourite books. This morning we've thought about the history of writing – spanning back 5,000 years to those early beginnings when *The Epic of Gilgamesh* was at last written down to become the first literary work. The British Library now holds about 14 million books – and that's just books and that's primarily just books published in the UK. That is an overwhelming number – and I haven't even managed to read all of the 100 book group titles yet, which you can find listed on our website.

And writing of course is not just about books - for most of us use writing all the time – in our shopping lists and other lists of things to do; some people still write letters and cards – and some of us really appreciate receiving them; we write text messages and emails; some people write diaries and journals to record their lives and their thoughts; many of us write little notes to ourselves and to others, so we don't forget something vital. We use writing to help shape our relationship with ourselves and with the world around us. For writing allows us to make sense of our world – be that through a simple list of what to buy when next we go to the shops, or through a deep process of writing of our inner world, our dreams, our spiritual musings perhaps.

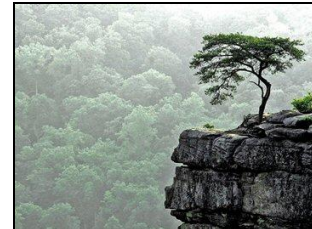
Writing, however, isn't always a positive thing. Nasrudin's philosopher friend writing 'stupid oaf' on his door is a mild example of the hurt that writing can cause us. Anyone who has ever received a wounding email or letter will know that the old adage of 'sticks and stones breaking bones but words never hurting us' is far from the truth. Words can bring great pain and when the words are written down there is such a temptation, isn't there, to keep returning to them – to read them once more, to mull over them.

Perhaps that's why I find a particular line in John's Gospel so very intriguing. You may recognise it: *'Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground'*. Older translations describe him as 'writing in the sand'. The implication is that whatever he has written can be wiped away and yet the message, whatever the message was, has been delivered to those who need to hear it. This is the story of the woman about to be stoned for adultery. The scribes and the Pharisees are testing Jesus, trying to trick him, to force him to say 'yea' or 'nay' to the teachings of Mosaic law, which would condemn a woman caught in the act of adultery to be stoned to death. Jesus leans down and writes something in the sand and then invites anyone who is without sin to cast the first stone – and then once again he writes in the sand and the crowd melts away one by one, leaving Jesus alone with the woman whose life he had saved that day. We will never know what he wrote in the sand and, with that unknowing, let us leave this celebration of the gift that is writing. And I wonder what private message you might write to yourself in the sand?

Hucklow Summer School

For Personal and Leadership Development

'Living At the Edge' How do we find meaning in the margins where we find ourselves?



17th to 24th August 2013
Great Hucklow, Derbyshire

Theme Talks by a Team of Speakers:

Kate Buchanan, Jim Corrigan,
Winnie Gordon, Rob Gregson, John Naish.

A Choice of 4 Engagement Groups:

'On the Edge of Nature'

with Nancy Crumbine and Julie Dadson

'Postcards from the Edge'

with Sheena Gabriel and Stephen Crowther

'Recovering Who You Are'

with Michael Dadson and Alison Thursfield

'An Odyssey for the Soul'

with Jim Blair and John Harley

The cost for an adult in a shared room is £465.

However, please do not let a shortage of money prevent you from attending summer school, as bursaries are available to help with the cost.
Contact: info@hucklowsummerschool.org.uk

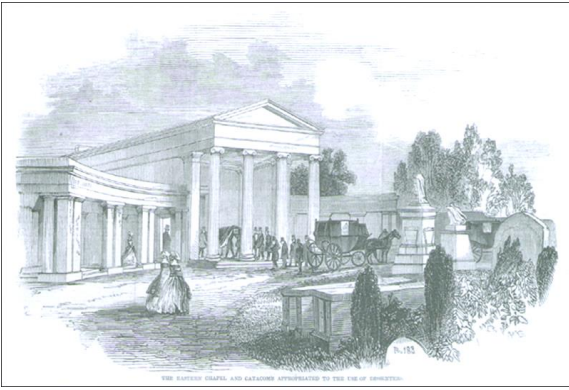
Applications are due by 15th April 2013.

For more information and an application form:
www.hucklowsummerschool.org.uk

'Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, falling in love in a quite absolute final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.'

Fr. Pedro Arrupe

Goodbye Gordon



In early March, on a rare sunny day, we gathered with members of Gordon Deaville's family and with his Unitarian friends from around the District at Kensal Green cemetery for his funeral and interment.

Gordon had specified a wish to be buried in a dissenters' grave and although such distinctions no longer exist it seemed highly appropriate that his family managed to arrange a funeral in the restored Dissenters' Chapel. For Gordon was a true liberal Christian Unitarian, finding much comfort in his faith and always willing to defend other people's right to believe as they saw fit. The funeral was conducted by the Rev Alex Bradley who travelled down from Knutsford. He had known Gordon for many years, first meeting when he was minister in east London, with our Bethnal Green and Stratford congregations. Gordon had been the chairman at Mansford Street Chapel. We spoke of Gordon's loyal connections with, and support of, so many different congregations including Kensington, Lewes, Hastings and Southend, as well as his commitment to our General Assembly, whose Annual Meetings he attended whenever possible.

It was moving to hear of Gordon's many varied interests in life from his brother John and friend Judith. We have copies of their descriptions for people to read. Highlights include his lifelong interest in puppetry and theatre, his pleasure in travel, an early involvement with scouting and membership of the George Eliot Society. Born in 1937 in south London, Gordon's early life was much affected by the war and perhaps that led him to work with young people through the Kensal Youth Club, to ensure a better childhood for a later generation. It was through this project that he met friends Davvyd and Jackie Young-Finch.

His later years were much affected by health problems, but all agreed that he had made good use of these years and continued to show so much interest in life and particularly in his family and friends. His annual newsletters were always full of interesting information and showed his particular care for, and interest in, his nephews and nieces. We have sent our condolences to them and to all his family and friends and we shall certainly miss Gordon here at Essex Church.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday Services in April

7th April, 11am – 'Becoming More Like God'

Service led by Jane Blackall

According to Irenaeus, the early church father, the task of humanity is to complete the process of creation by developing and growing into the 'Likeness of God', perfecting their moral character through their responses to life's many difficulties. Philosophers and spiritual leaders have regarded the cultivation of virtue as a path to human flourishing and self-realisation. In this service we will consider the possibility of more consciously cultivating virtue in our own lives and in today's society.

14th April, 11am – 'A Spring Celebration'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

A Spring Celebration, with music and readings, flowers and possibly even a lamb or two; whatever the weather, we will belatedly herald springtime today.

21st April, 11am – 'Tie Up Your Camel... and Other Good Advice'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

In this service we will explore some of the best advice on how to live life, gathered from assorted sources – the world's religions, historical and literary characters and various family relations.



28th April, 11am – 'Death and Appreciation'

Service led by Kate Hill and Sarah Tinker

This service includes reflections on death and becoming more organised and aware around our own death. It explores how understanding our mortality can enhance our lives, give more meaning enriched with a sense of appreciation and awareness of the transitions of day to day life.

May Newsletter Deadline



The deadline for the May issue is **Sunday 14th April**. Please send your church newsletter contributions to Jane Blackall or any committee member by then. Thank you!!!

Email your articles to:
jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk