



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: November 2009

What's on this month:

Sunday 1st November, 11am
"Ritual and Meaning"
Led by Louisa Bird

Thursday 5th Nov, 2-5.00pm
"Wearable Textile Art" (6/9)

Thursday 5th Nov, 7.15-9pm
Adult RE: "Building Your Own Theology" (5/8)

Saturday 7th Nov, 10am
Walking Group:
Epping Forest
Meeting at Chingford Station

Sunday 8th November, 11am
"Remembrance Sunday"
Led by Rev. Sarah
Tinker and Peter Teets

Sunday 8th November, 1-2pm
"The Joy of Drawing"
with Heidi Ferid (2/3)

Sunday 8th November, 2-3pm
Nia Dance

Sunday 8th Nov, 3.30-5pm
"Songs and Silence for the Soul"

Wednesday 11th Nov, 7-9pm
Creativity Group:
'Autumn Leaves' with Juliet

Thursday 12th Nov, 2-5.00pm
"Wearable Textile Art" (7/9)

Thursday 12th Nov, 7.15-9pm
Adult RE: "Building Your Own Theology" (6/8)

Sunday 15th Nov, 11am
"Living in a Material World"
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Wednesday 18th Nov, 7-9pm
Reading Group:
'The Other Hand'

Thursday 19th Nov, 2-5.00pm
"Wearable Textile Art" (8/9)

Thursday 19th Nov, 7.15-9pm
Adult RE: "Building Your Own Theology" (7/8)

Sunday 22nd Nov, 11am
"Symptoms of Inner Peace"
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

More listings inside cover...

A Message from our Minister

Unblocking the Pipes

One of the unexpected aspects of being a minister is the deep interest I have developed in buildings, or rather specifically our building. The present Essex Church is an interesting place – built in the 1970s, on top of the site of the Victorian church it replaced. And that's where the pipes come in. Like much of London we have Victorian pipes beneath us – cast iron and sturdy, but ageing. Ever so often the pipes get blocked and we have to call in a well known firm that promises to unblock pipes, fast.



We'd been aware for a while that one pipe was leaking. At first I thought we could sort it out ourselves and it was only when Frazer, our regular maintenance man, said that even he couldn't sort it out that we knew it was time to consult an expert. It surely must be one of life's great pleasures to watch an expert doing their job. There was a steady determination in the way he tackled that blockage. It was a case of 'if at first you don't succeed' as he tried various methods, using a veritable arsenal of equipment. The job took a while but at last he got everything flowing once more and left with a cheery 'that might last for a year or two'.

It left me thinking about determination and commitment and the way in which some tasks in life require of us that kind of response. Some things just will not get done unless we push ourselves. Yet there are other areas of life where to push would be a mistake, where a more gentle responsiveness is asked of us, perhaps some kind of letting go. As I consider the 101 things to do on my assorted 'things to do' lists perhaps it would help to look at them in this light and asking these questions:

What is the nature of the blockage that is stopping me get this done?
What sort of response does this type of blockage require?
What would happen if I just let go in relation to this task?

These are the sort of questions we will be considering in our service on November 15th. Spiritual explorers still need to grapple with the demands of the material world – come and explore with us how unblocking drains and clearing cupboards can be part of your spiritual development this autumn.

Rev Sarah Tinker

We are very sorry to announce the deaths of two congregation members – Betty Allen at the end of August, and Patricia Walker in October. Our thoughts are with their family members and friends and we will be writing more about Betty and Patricia in our next newsletter.

In this month's newsletter...

* "Patricia Walker – A Tribute" by Sarah Tinker * Two poems by John Hands * 'Autumn Leaves' with Juliet Edwards * "Pennies in Trafalgar Square" by Mary Spurr * "How I Came to Essex Church" by Robert Osgood * RE Training at Great Hucklow * Walking Group: Epping Forest * "Spiritual Bookshelf: 'Love is Letting Go of Fear'" * News of the next 'Youngsters' Social' from Natasha Drennan * and much more...

Kensington Unitarians

At Essex Church (founded 1774), Notting Hill Gate

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

The community meets for a service each Sunday at 11.00am. The format varies, and usually includes music, singing, meditation, an address, an opportunity to share joys and concerns, and a children's group. Our wide range of activities includes religious education courses and spirituality workshops, meeting for fellowship, engagement groups on a variety of themes, community arts projects, regular chanting and dance sessions, and opportunities for quiet meditation. All are welcome to come and join us.

Many other groups share our church building. If you are interested in hiring one of our rooms for your own organisation or event please contact our warden by telephone or email.



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Notting Hill Gate
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Remembrance Service with the Unitarian GA President Rev Bob Wightman

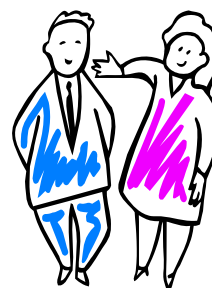


Sunday 8th November, 7.00-8.00pm
Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, Hampstead

Our GA President Rev Bob Wightman will be preaching at Rosslyn Hill Chapel on Sunday 8th November. The service is at 7pm. There will be reception time both before and after the service (from 6pm to 7pm, and 8pm to 9pm).

The nearest station is Hampstead (Northern Line, Edgware Branch) and the chapel is a short walk from the station.

Stewarding and Coffee



What's on this month:

(listings continued from front page)

Wednesday 25th November, 7-9.00pm

Essex Church Committee Meeting

Thursday 26th November, 2-5.00pm

'Wearable Textile Art' (9/9)

Thursday 26th November, 7.15-9pm

Adult RE: 'Building Your Own Theology' (8/8)

Sunday 29th November, 11am

"Advent Sunday"

Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Coming up in December...

Sunday 13th December, 11.00am

Christmas Carol Service

Followed by Congregational Christmas Lunch

Thursday 24th December, 5.00pm

Candlelit Christmas Eve Service

Followed by a festive meal at a local restaurant

Stewarding:

1 st November:	Devika Joshi
8 th November:	Heidi Ferid
15 th November:	Alice Lambert
22 nd November:	Howard Hague
29 th November:	Julia Alden

Coffee:

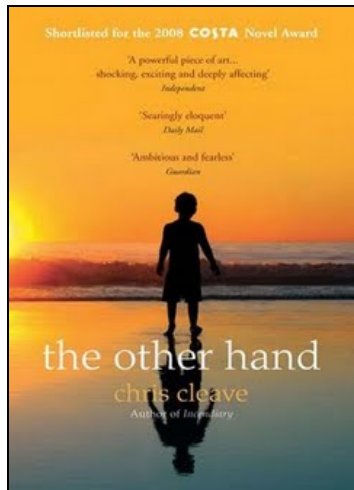
1 st November:	Christine Joshi
8 th November:	John Hands
15 th November:	Jo Ridgers
22 nd November:	Caroline Blair
29 th November:	Margaret Darling

Please speak to Christine Joshi if you are willing to help with stewarding or making coffee. Thanks!

Reading Engagement Group

“The Other Hand” by Chris Cleave

Wednesday 18th November, 7.00-9.00pm



The reading engagement group's next conversation will be about “The Other Hand” by Chris Cleave. This book was chosen by Patricia Walker and will be the focus of our next group on **Wednesday 18th November**.

Information from the Guardian:

“The Other Hand’ is an ambitious and fearless gallop from the jungles of Africa via a shocking encounter on a Nigerian beach to the media offices of London and domesticity in leafy suburbia. Part-thriller, part-multicultural Aga saga, the book enmeshes its characters in the issues of immigration, globalisation, political violence and personal accountability. Lists of themes are often review-speak for “worthy but dull”, but not in this case. Cleave immerses the reader in the worlds of his characters with an unshakable confidence that we will find them as gripping and vital as he does. Mostly, that confidence is justified. The book begins in an immigration detention centre where Little Bee, a 16-year-old Ibo girl from Nigeria, has spent the last two years honing skills that point back to horrific past events and forward to a hoped-for future...”

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. Regular members of the reading group take turns in choosing books so we read a wide variety of material. We have recently altered some of our plans for the New Year so please check the church website for dates and book choices.

How I Came to Essex Church



An idea can incubate in a back corner of the mind for a long time. The thought of finding a spiritual home in London lingered in mine for years. I had walked through a few high wooden church doors on Sunday mornings in London, sat in the wooden pews, sang the hymns, listened to the sermon and appreciated the choir. At the end of each service I walked out thinking it was a bit stale for my taste. A predictable religiosity was not for me. I had grown up in that regime and it no longer resonated with me. I was looking for something less traditional, which is often difficult to find in this city.

The search continued, until one sunny afternoon I discovered Essex Church in the back of a black taxi. No, the Church was not in the cab, I was. As we veered around the corner at full speed, I looked out the window and caught a glimpse of Unitarian Church. It was a eureka moment. I knew I had found what I was looking for. Fear for my life in the hands of the driver may have been part of the motivation to develop my spirituality. Actually, that glimpse immediately brought to mind the Unitarian church I happily attended at Lexington and 89th Street in Manhattan in the late 1980s.

It was not long before my wife Janice, daughter Antonia and I gave this place a test run. We felt at home immediately. We found a friendly congregation that greeted us warmly, full of interesting and talented people, an exceptional minister in Sarah Tinker who can be both profound and warm at once, an atmosphere of respect for all and ample food for the soul. We are pleased and privileged to be part of this special gathering.

Robert M. Osgood

My Personal Ideas on Religion

I have my own personal ideas on religion; I am an atheist so visiting Unitarian church was unusual for me. I got to experience a different concept of life which opened my ideas towards spirituality. I felt so welcomed and thought how good that everyone could meet and share there personal joys and concerns together.

My views are that in life I do not try to figure out the purpose for our being, but live in the moment and not spend time trying to find the answer. I believe that we should just accept our existence and try to preserve the beauty of it. I do not try to figure out who created the earth or who is controlling it; I just simply do not dwell on it because you will never discover who created it.

Antonia

Pennies in Trafalgar Square

Mary lit a candle in church one Sunday morning back in September and told us how she had been out early the previous morning to mark a dear friend's death. This is the story she told us.

I heard that a friend back home in Nova Scotia had passed away. I'd known Tom for ten years, initially through church, and he was very much woven into the fabric of my life in Canada. I knew Tom hadn't been well this past year. His fitness was taken away by Parkinson's and he had deteriorated rapidly. When I visited him in the summer, his balance was poor, he needed to use a walking frame, and his imagination was interpreting 'reality' in some strange ways, and he realized this.



I remembered bumping into Tom some years before whilst walking in the Public Gardens where he visited every day. He told me of his fondness for one particular goose that he would look for every time he passed through, just to say hello. My father was very ill and I had been doing all I could to care for him but was exhausted. The park offered some much needed respite and there, as if on subtle cue, was Tom to walk and talk with me for a while. That turned out to be the day my father died.

When I visited Tom this summer it was a beautiful August day. He was doubtful at first about leaving his apartment, but we managed not only a meal out but also a visit to the park. I kept one hand on his walking frame as we crossed the busy street and went through the tall wrought iron gates, into the sanctuary of the garden. He chose his route and we did the full circuit of the garden, although we didn't see his friend the goose. It could not have been a better outing. That was the last visit Tom and I had; a gift for us both.

Now, receiving news of his death, I was so glad I'd suggested the walk to the Gardens, and that he had agreed. That, like my father's last day, is something I can hold onto with real comfort. But how to deal with this death when I cannot be there to share with others who knew him?

Another friend died, years ago, very unexpectedly when she was only in her thirties. I couldn't make it to her funeral and it left a sad feeling that stayed with me, something unresolved. It had needed expression and I'd not found an avenue for it at that time. Perhaps Virginia's death, long ago, was what encouraged me to find a way to mark Tom's? All I knew was that I needed to 'walk with Tom' and note the passing of his life, honour our friendship, our history, my memories of him, somehow.

Tom always walked with his eyes cast downward, scanning the sidewalk. Indeed, he couldn't walk down the street without looking for coins. It was a compulsion, though not out of need. I'd teased him, once, that I KNEW how his 'end' would come... he would spot a coin in the *middle of the street*!!

One year, when we gathered at Tom's place to celebrate his birthday, while he was busy with his guests, with a friend, Laura, to help me, we hid pennies discreetly throughout his apartment (on a bookshelf, behind a recipe book, in the cutlery tray, on his bathroom scales, in a plant pot, etc). Much amused by my idea I soon forgot all about it until, some months later, Tom commented that he was *still discovering pennies* in his apartment! It was a good joke, and well shared.

So I decided to complete my 'remembering Tom' by going down to Trafalgar Square with a large bag of mixed coins that I'd accumulated over the past year. The best time, I decided, would be before sunrise on the Saturday morning that would be the day of his memorial service. Church friends would later be gathering together, an ocean away.

I strolled about trying to quietly scatter the coins... like sowing seeds... around the circumference of Trafalgar Square, Canada House, the National Gallery and the church of St Martin-in-the-Field. It took time. I was trying to be discreet.

I wasn't certain if anyone noticed me, though when one coin 'pinged' on the pavement of the square, an older man with a backpack on turned his head. Otherwise I thought I'd succeeded. But as I walked round the area and returned to Trafalgar Square, placing some coins on the stone seats, bollards and ledges, one woman turned and asked, 'Are you the money lady?' Surprised and a little embarrassed, I said 'yes.' She asked why I was doing this. I explained. "Oh," she said, "I thought it was performance art!"

In St Martin's, the two stands of votive candles were empty, so I deposited my few remaining coins and took candles to light. Striking the match reminded me of the Unitarian chalice that we light each Sunday. And I recalled a favourite chalice lighting meditation by Albert Schweitzer... about remembering with gratitude those who have inspired us when our own energy seems to have gone out. Going to Trafalgar Square that morning to scatter coins felt just the right way to honour a friend who had inspired me in dark times. If Tom was 'out there' somewhere, looking down, I think he would have been laughing, enjoying watching what I was up to, sharing this private joke, accepting this tribute.

Mary Spurr

Pennies in Trafalgar Square

by Mary Spurr (continued)



I recently found these readings helpful.

"When the signs of age begin to mark my body (and more when they touch my mind); when the illness that is to diminish me or carry me off, strikes from without or is born within me; when the painful moment comes in which I suddenly awaken to the fact that I am ill or growing old; and above all, at that last moment when I feel I am losing hold of myself and am absolutely passive within the hands of the great unknown forces that have formed me; in all those dark moments, O God, grant that I may understand that it is you (if my faith is strong enough) who are painfully parting the fibres of my being in order to penetrate to the very marrow of my substance, and bear me away within yourself."

Teilhard de Chardin

...and lastly, by another we claim as our (Unitarian) own:

"I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge,
that myths more potent than history,
I believe that dreams are more powerful than facts,
that hope always triumphs over experience,
that laughter is the only cure for grief,
and that love is stronger than death."

Robert Fulghum

Essex Church Walking Group: Epping Forest



Saturday 7th November, 10am
Meeting at Loughton Station (Central Line)

The next outing for our walking group will be to Epping Forest, on the first Saturday of the month as usual, where we hope to see the best of the autumn colours and fungi.

We usually walk at a rather leisurely pace, chatting as we go, and stopping to admire the scenery and take photos. The route should not be too strenuous and is likely to be no more than 5 miles in length. It is worth wearing sturdy footwear as it is possible that some paths will be muddy.

If you are intending to come please let Jane or Caroline know or email walks@kensington-unitarians.org.uk to let us have your mobile phone number so that we can let you know if there is any last-minute change of plan.

Forthcoming Walks

We have made provisional plans for the next few months, concentrating on shorter routes in town over the winter, so please put the dates in your diary and plan to come along:

Saturday 5th December – Hammersmith to Barnes
Saturday 2nd January – Isle of Dogs
Saturday 6th February – Route TBA

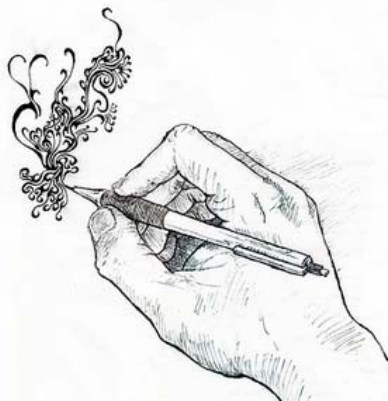
Suggestions for future walking routes are always welcome.



"A healthy community is central to joy. Community is a place to call home, a safe haven where people reach out their arms, drawn you in, comfort you, cheer for your awakening power, and cherish you just the way you are – fears, tears, humour, and all. Community is a group of people committed to individuals and to the whole, a place where your voice is heard and valued, a place where you can drop the mask... Our concept of community expands as we grow. When we are very young, it includes our family and then includes our neighbours, our religious institutions, our schools, our workplace and the town we live in. For many, it stops there. But on the path toward joy there is a constant expansion of community until it includes all the people on the planet, as well as the planet itself. We internalise the awareness that we come from one and the same Creator – we live on one earth, in one ecosystem, with one people, who are on one journey."

Charlotte Kasl

'The Joy of Drawing'



**Sundays 8th November and
6th December 2009, 1.00-2.00pm**

This short series of community arts workshops (the first of three took place back at the start of October) will be led by Heidi Ferid at Essex Church this autumn.

Heidi says: "So many of us have been told that we 'can not draw', but this is just not true. Drawing is not only about observing and reproducing reality, it can be just as much about personal expression and mark making. We all can do it and find it enjoyable and interesting. Lines and marks will be our starting point and we will continue our exploration from there, above all I hope we will find out that drawing can be very enjoyable. We shall be using pencils, felt pens, and crayons. Some materials will be provided, but do bring your own if you want to."

Contact arts@kensington-unitarians.org.uk to register your interest and for more information.



"It takes a lot of goodness just to maintain the status quo. One act of violence or evil can undermine so much goodness. Sometimes it feels like all the good deeds we do are just fingers and toes in the dike, stopping the leaks from becoming a flood threatening to overcome and wipe us all out.

Despite our best efforts, it seems we make no progress on making the world the better place it is supposed to be. But without each of those fingers and toes, the world would be even worse. Every time we resist the urge to hurt another human being, or an animal, or, our planet, we have patched another hole. And that is good."

Rabbi Terry Bookman

Songs and Silence for the Soul

Chanting and Stillness at Essex Church



**Sundays 8th November, 13th December,
10th January, from 3.30 to 5.00pm**

Suggested Donation: £2.00

We've been running this monthly Songs and Silence group here at Essex Church for over two years now and one of its delightful features is how the group varies from month to month, depending on who comes along.

We always meet on the second Sunday of each month from 3.30 to 5pm. We sing a wide range of chants from the world's faith traditions and sit together in candlelit silence. It's a gentle and healing, group-led space in which everyone is welcome to join. No particular singing skills are needed.

Phone Sarah via the church office on 0207 221 6514 or email sarah@kensington-unitarians.org.uk if you would like more information.



"Dana and I were talking after church not too long ago, reflecting on the service and religion in general. I told her that what I liked about Unitarian Universalism is that you are not presumed guilty when you walk in the door. God isn't a warrior or a terrifying father figure who will embrace you in his arms

but take you out to the woodshed in an instant if you misbehave. This God understands that many of us don't know where He lives or even how to spell his name. He knows that it isn't easy for us to love ourselves, our families, or even our neighbours, let alone the rest of humanity. Instead He asks us just to do our best, trusting our innate ability to discern the truth. As Abraham Lincoln said, 'When I do good I feel good. When I do bad I feel bad. And that's my religion.'"

Christopher Reeve

Warden's Column

What's on in our Busy Building...

I always seem to leave writing this to the last minute, but this month is a particularly extreme example. This afternoon is the funeral of Patricia Walker-Hesson, a much loved member of this congregation who died unexpectedly a few weeks ago – and although I'm very confident that everything will be ready in time and we will do her justice, it still feels like there's a lot left to do and no time to think about what to say here.



Yesterday, Sarah and I went and bought flowers. We focused on purple (one of Patricia's favourite colours) with yellow as a contrast. We had a generous budget and bought everything in those colours that caught our eye. We were aiming for two large arrangements in the Church, but ended up with enough flowers for beautiful displays in the Hall and Foyer as well.

Arranging the flowers took me about four hours. I've never spent half as long as that on arrangements for Sunday, but on this occasion it felt wrong to rush. Patricia gave so much to so many people, and this felt like one of the few ways I could still give back to her, so even though I was quite tired, I wanted to take my time with it – it almost felt like a kind of prayer.

I'd never had so much material to work with: flowers and foliage completely filled the kitchen sink. I realised that whereas usually the issue is "How little can I get away with here?" this time my constant question was "Can I make this any better? Is there anything I can add that will be even a tiny improvement?"

When I eventually finished, the end result seemed on a different level from anything I've produced before. Admittedly I had more exciting flowers to work with, but also the way they came together seemed to show a taste and skill I didn't recognise as my own. I'm generally very sceptical about whether friends who have moved on can still communicate with or help us (other than through our memories of them) so I'm not going to claim Patricia was directly assisting me, but I will say that as I worked I thought about her and the quality she brought to everything she did – and I achieved more than I thought I was capable of.

This may seem a strange subject for the Warden's column – especially as by the time you read this, the funeral will probably be several weeks in the past and even the most tenacious of the flowers long gone – but as I refused to be hurried last night, I thought about all the things I therefore might not have time for, including writing this column, and it suddenly seemed that if nothing else, I could at least write down what I'd been doing when I could have been working on this.

Patricia has made such an amazing contribution to maintaining and improving this building over the many, many years of her service here – and to the atmosphere within it. I hope and I trust that in a lesser way, our memories of her and the impact she had on us will continue to have a positive effect on how we care for and experience this place.

Jenny Moy

Carol Service and Congregational Lunch



Sunday 13th December, 11am and 12.30pm

We will be having our traditional Christmas Carol service and congregational lunch on Sunday 13th December.

Please put the date in your diary now. There will be a sign-up sheet circulated in late November and it would be great if you could offer to bring some food or drink to share.

Candlelit Christmas Eve Service and Dinner



Thursday 24th December, 5pm and 7pm

There will be a special candlelit service at teatime on Christmas Eve. This will be followed by tea at the church. We are in the process of organising an evening meal to follow the service. It is quite likely that we will need people to sign up in advance so that we can make a booking. Listen out for further announcements as plans are finalised.



Patricia Walker

The following text is taken from a tribute given by our minister Rev Sarah Tinker at Patricia's funeral, held at Essex Church, on Thursday 22nd October.

Ever since Patricia died, nearly three weeks ago now, people have been talking to me about her and about the many ways that her life touched theirs. Her family and the congregation here at Essex Church, have received so many cards and emails – and they all bear witness to the fact that Patricia was somebody who was thoroughly involved in living and in relating with others and with the world around her. Some of our memories of her we share – the family get togethers for birthdays and Christmas perhaps, the groups that we took part in with her both here at Essex Church and around the country – but many memories will be special to us as individuals and they may be of times when we felt a particular connection with Patricia, those unique moments that together constitute a human life.

I think you'd agree with me when I say that Patricia's has been a life well lived, not least because she was someone who liked an outing, an activity, an event. And that sense of her as someone who loved an adventure recurs many times in people's testaments to her life. From those earliest days living by the sea with her parents and her sister Marion I've heard of trips in

a rowing dinghy across to the cockle sheds and that theme of journeying recurs again and again in Patricia's life. She travelled widely, throughout her life – really enjoying trips with her husband Donald across to visit his family and friends in the States and after Donald's death she had some wonderful trips abroad – to China where she saw the Yangtze river before the area was flooded and dammed. She came back from a trip to Australia wondering if she might move there to live but instead chose to stay here in London, a city she loved, and in Chiswick where she was so happy. Other journeys with friends included an archaeological tour of Libya and visiting Morocco and Turkey.

Patricia was a very good linguist and in her early twenties set off intrepidly to work first in Brussels and then Geneva to work for a trade union organisation the ICFTU. She herself remarked that this was one of the highlights of her life – working abroad in exciting big cities. Her work with trade unions also reflected her political beliefs – she was true socialist and really believed that we should make every effort to improve people's lives. When we took collections for assorted charities here at church, Patricia was always the first to get out her cheque book and that generosity of spirit and strong social conscience played a part in her relationships with others.

She enjoyed helping others and as I look round this church today I know I am not alone in having benefited from her very practical support and good advice. She took a real interest in younger people – having younger friends was one of her secret ways she used to say for keeping herself feeling young. Perhaps because she did not have children of her own she took special interest in the next generation – her nephew and nieces – Buzz, Jacky and Sue and the generation after them – Amberlie, Isabel and Lizzie. I know how much you have all enjoyed her company over the years as a family and what a gap her death will leave.

Patricia had keen interests in life and these sparked off an interest in others. Her niece Jacky told me that all of you have fossils and crystals in your homes – an interest sparked off by Aunty Pat. She was a member of the Institute of Gemmology – an involvement encouraged by husband Donald and this led to many different jewellery classes over the years – learning to make silver jewellery, her intricate bead work which people so admire and then on to her time at Antiquarius in the Kings Road, where she restored old lights and beautiful light shades. She was a fine craftswoman and built up a wide range of skills over the years. And she had a keen sense of beauty didn't she. We could always rely on her to comment favourable on new clothes or jewellery or hair cuts – she had a fine eye for small details that make a difference and it was this keen discernment that led to another aspect of Patricia that some of us know well – her sometimes blunt way of speaking and determination that she was right. Woe betide anyone who thought they knew a better route to avoid London's traffic jams!



This determination in Patricia went through a change in these last few years. She had been dealing with the pain of arthritis on and off for many years and recently I think she was dealing with more physical pain than she probably let on to any of us - I watched her having to accept that she did not have the strength to be quite so much in charge. She let go graciously and there was a softening in her approach to life that was very touching.

She took time to look back and reflect on what she had achieved and regularly mentioned how proud she was that she had studied for her degree and gained a first for her studies on ground water. She felt fortunate to have had such a good family and so many friends from all around the world – not least of which from her great commitment to Unitarianism which she served in so many different ways. It is rare in any voluntary organisation to find someone willing to take minutes of committee meetings – Patricia was not only willing but also very able – her minutes were clear and concise – all part of her organisational skills. She took on challenges in life right up to the end – running with the Rev Linda Hart a course at our Hucklow Summer School which she was nervous about and of course did her characteristically excellent job. She credited Unitarianism with making her life quite special – she so valued the friendships she made through the Unitarian Women’s Group, the Meditational Fellowship and Summer School – to mention but a few. The Nightingale Centre, where so many of these activities took place, was an important part of her life, a place she really appreciated. That was partly about people and partly about the land itself – because Patricia was a geographer and felt a real connection with landscapes.



In finding out more about her life these last few weeks I am left with a sense of Patricia the explorer – because that is what she was doing – exploring life and love and delighting in the ultimate mystery of it all. Here in this church where so much of her spiritual exploring was done, where she contributed so much to the sense of community – it is fitting that we gather and give thanks for the life of Patricia Walker, treasuring our own personal memories of her in our hearts. Thank you Patricia for being part of all our lives. Amen.

Rev Sarah Tinker

It is hoped that we will assemble a collection of memories of Patricia, from her friends in the congregation, for the next newsletter.

A Poem to Remember Patricia Walker

Death Be Not Proud



DEATH be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so,
For, those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and souls delivery.
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, Kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then;
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

John Donne (1572-1631)

Submitted by Will Lyons and Carole Grace

Creativity Engagement Group 'Autumn Leaves'

Wednesday 11th November, 7.00-9.00pm



In November, the creativity group will be attempting a seasonal art activity, themed around autumn leaves. Juliet Edwards will be guiding us this month and she requests everyone to bring dried leaves and also watercolour paints if you have them (we should have some spares). This month we will also start making plans for our creativity group activities in early 2010.

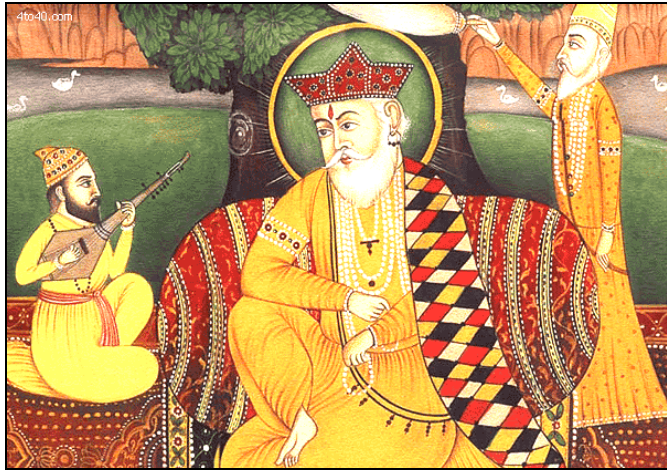
As usual you are welcome to come along to the group even if you are not particularly interested in the activity on offer – bring along your own craftwork – or simply come along to relax and enjoy the good company.

Winter Newsletter Deadline



The deadline for submitting items for the next issue is **Sunday 15th November**. Please send items (such as poems, quotes, articles, notices, rotas, etc...) to Jane Blackall or any of the committee members before this date.

Thank you!!!



An artwork depicting Guru Nanak (born 2nd November 1469)

A forthcoming Unitarian Youth event in the District

Rumble in the Jungle (for 7-11 year olds)

Saturday 12th December 2009



A day of fun, games, creativity at Richmond and Putney Unitarian Church (RPUC) and Kew Gardens led by John Harley, Liz Hills and Peter Teets.

Arrivals from 9.45am at RPUC.
10am-12 noon: indoor fun activities.
12 noon: lunch - please bring sandwiches - leave church and catch bus to Kew Gardens.
1pm-3pm: Fun and creativity with photography.
3pm: bus back to RPUC.
3.30pm-4.30pm: final activity and ritual.

For information please contact the GA Youth Coordinator, Rev John Harley: 07985 900 935 or jharley@unitarian.org.uk

Multifaith Calendar

✠ 1st November - All Saints' Day - Christian

All Saints' Day was originally known as All Martyrs' Day, and is also called All Hallows'. The work and witness of all Christian saints is remembered with thanksgiving, recognising that not all are known or specially celebrated. Many churches stress All Saints' Day rather than Hallowe'en, which falls the day before, by holding events for children.

✠ 2nd November - All Souls' Day - Christian

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

☪ 2nd November - Birthday of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru (1469) - Sikh

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

✿ 5th November - Kathina Day - Buddhist

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

8th November - Remembrance Sunday

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

☪ 24th November - Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (1675) - Sikh

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

☪ 27th November - Eid-ul-Adha / The Festival of Sacrifice - Muslim

This major Muslim festival marks the end of the Hajj (the pilgrimage to Makkah). Animals are sacrificed by pilgrims at Mina, on the way back to Makkah from Mount Arafat, in commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. Muslims around the world share in the celebrations, sacrificing an animal if they can afford it, the meat being distributed to the poor and shared with family and friends.

Daffodils in Autumn



Daffodils in autumn

The anomaly feels disturbing: like seeing
 An old woman pregnant, or like an ageing man
 With the cherubic face of a smiling child. Such aberrations
 Are better unconceived – and yet I pine for such egregious
 Enantiosis; to see smug prosperity
 Unseated, fresh possibilities unfurl
 Hope blossoming, new prospects scampering in; and so
 Especially at this conclusive time of year
 When death drives drunk along autumnal highways
 And the sharp-fanged world of winter worry
 Slopes along the bleak horizon, I long for
 The renewed hope, the inspiration, the jubilation
 Of daffodils.

John Hands

Latest News from the Church Committee



1. The timetable for letting the three rooms in the church is almost completely full in the evenings now. These lettings are essential for funding the running of the church, and we are grateful to Jenny Moy for organising them, and for presiding over such a welcome increase in the lettings.
2. Various projects relating to the building are being assessed. The main one is the re-wiring, which will eventually, we hope, give us less eccentric lighting in the Lindsay Hall. In addition the heaters in the Church which keep noisily switching themselves on and off will be replaced, and we are gradually improving the security of the building in various ways.
3. After complaints from members of the congregation that they are unable to hear properly, the least effective microphone has been retired. We are aware that the candles of joy and concern are an issue as at present the speakers are not amplified at all. We are inviting an expert in sound systems to assess the situation and advise us as to the best solution.
4. The church organ has not been used for some years, and is not in good order. We are attempting to get advice as to what it might be worth if someone wants to buy it.

Caroline Blair

The next meeting of the management committee will take place on Wednesday 25th November at 7.00pm.



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

**Second Sunday of the Month from 2-3.00pm
 (8th November, 13th December)**

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 the dance arts.

Cost £7 (£5 to Essex Church members)
Contact: Sonya Leite on 0207 371 1674



“Consider hope to be the one disposition for which there is no acceptable alternative. Be patient, and remember how often things work out according to a wisdom that is beyond understanding. Along the way, don't ever give up the joy of looking forward to things that give you pleasure.”

Robin R. Meyers

'Christmas at Hucklow'

18th – 20th December 2009



We have recently received the following information about the special Christmas events at the Nightingale Centre – a conference centre owned by the Unitarian Denomination – and set in beautiful Peak District surroundings. If you are looking for a winter break you might consider visiting Great Hucklow and supporting this much-loved Unitarian venue.

A full weekend of Christmas 'Hucklow Style'
Village Christmas lights ~ Carols by Lantern Light
Saturday Christmas Fayre
Saturday evening Christmas Concert
Book early for this very popular weekend event!

All-inclusive price including Christmas Lunch from £110.

Email stella@thenightingalecentre.org.uk
or telephone 01298 871 218 for more information.

Our very own Michaela von Britzke will be taking part in this concert as part of the Watford Philharmonic Society choir:

'An English Celebration'

Elgar – Delius – Holst

Conducted by Terry Edwards



Wednesday 11th November, 7.30pm
Watford Colosseum

The Music Makers
Pomp and Circumstance March No 1
Sea Drift – The Planets (selection)

Tickets cost £12.50 and £14.00.

Please let Michaela know if you would like to come as there may be one or two cars going from the church.

For more information: www.watfordphilharmonic.co.uk

A London exhibition which you might be interested in:

'Hard Rain'

Exhibition by Mark Edwards



25th October – 31st December 2009
in the Courtyard of St. Martin-in-the-Fields

Climate change, poverty, habitat loss, human rights... Hard Rain explores the issues that are defining the 21st century. In the lead up to the Climate Change summit in Copenhagen St Martin-in-the-Fields is hosting the acclaimed outside exhibition Hard Rain. Based on Bob Dylan's prophetic song 'A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall', it portrays with incredible power the effects of climate change through photographs from around the world.

This exhibition was first launched at the Eden Project in 2006 and since then it has been seen by an estimated 12 million people worldwide. This is the first time it will be shown in London.

An Event organised by the Art and Spirituality Network:

'Reflecting on Climate Change'

Led by Linda Murgatroyd

Saturday 28th November, 2.30-5pm
St .Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square

Come and respond creatively to the 'Hard Rain' photographic exhibition by Mark Edwards at St. Martin-in-the-Fields (on climate change - see above), using art materials. This event will be an opportunity to bring some of the challenges of the 21st century to a spiritual space, with the option to share our reactions.

Advance booking is essential.

Email artandspirituality@gmail.com
or ASN, 48 Kenilworth Avenue, London SW19 7LW

There is no charge for this workshop
but donations will be invited.

Our Temple and Home

We would make of this place a temple of the heart's desire:
built from the hewn rocks of our individuality
and from the sure mortar of our shared understandings
an unwall'd, unbounded temple
wherein all people may praise in tones of joy
the Highest Things that give life meaning and worth,
and draw us ever onward beyond our known selves.
We would make of this place a centre of meeting for the lost and uncertain,
that we may gain renewed hope to face life's joys and sorrows
with enterprise and forbearance,
that we may know also deep gratitude for all the opportunities of growing.
We would make of this place a home in which dwell Love, Peace and Honour:
In this deep covenant let us join, now, and for evermore.

Frank Claburn

Reproduced from 'Reflections: an anthology of prayers, meditations and poems by contemporary Unitarians'. Unitarian Worship Sub-committee, 1979 (still available from Essex Hall, Unitarian Headquarters, price £3).

These words were read at the October committee meeting by Howard Hague as a tribute to Patricia. The Rev Frank Claburn was the minister at Essex Church when Patricia first joined the congregation in about 1978.



Spirit of Life, Source of Beauty, Great Mystery... Help us meet this day with reverence, with joy, with intention. Help us use it to its fullest, to meet whatever life has brought our way.

If life has brought grief, help us grieve well. Help us acknowledge the depth of our sorrow and not hide from its tenderness. For we know that we grieve when we have loved. We grieve when we have allowed ourselves to hope. We grieve when something precious has been lost to us. Help us grieve honestly, moving through our sorrow to healing.

If life has brought us joy, help us celebrate well. Help us stop and notice the blessings we have been given and acknowledge all those who have helped make them possible. Help gratitude grow our spirits and teach us to be generous in return. Help us celebrate honestly and graciously, knowing that joy is a gift.

If life has brought us confusion, help us learn well. Help us sort through the tangled threads that seem an unfathomable knot. Help us make peace with mystery, while seeking wisdom. Help us let go of fear, nurturing the seeds of faith that lie in every confusing time. Help us remember that seeking can, in itself, be an answer.

If life has brought us boredom, help us break out of the illusion of smallness. Expand our minds and spirits until we can imagine a thousand ways to be kind, a thousand things we can do to make life better, for ourselves or someone else. Help us be daring as we decide what to do with this day.

If life has brought us too much to do, too much to hold, too much to manage, help us find a spirit of calm amidst it all. Help us remember to nurture peace of mind as well as peace in our homes and in the world. Remind us to slow down, centre ourselves, and be present to what really matters.

UU Minister, Rev Sean Dennison

Refugee Children at Liverpool Street Railway Station



In the first place we didn't ask to come here
But no doubt you will tell us
We should be glad we've arrived. And then
There was the journey itself, a dismal succession
Of stations and junctions, and walks through the rain.
And now there are your gleaming faces
Nodding around us like flashlights; so intently speaking
Words we cannot understand. We peer through
Your solemn smiles and wonder at their meaning,
Noting the way you point, taking the tickets
You press into our hands – but where
Will they take us? With no way of knowing we
Pick up our parcels and follow the man who has
Peered at our labels. Always we follow: but if only
Someone would tell us why we must keep moving;
And among all these perplexing ways point out
One sure pathway home.

March, 1966.

John Hands

Universal Spiritual Gatherings

at Essex Church



Friday 13th November, 6.30-8.15pm
'Honouring the Ancestors'

The ancient Gaelic peoples celebrated the month of November as their New Year and honoured their ancestors in a festival called Samhain. Join us in sacred communion with our loved ones - standing heart to heart and hand in hand, entering the light of the Divine Source. This month our service will include a beautiful ritual of honouring the ancestors drawing on the Druidic tradition as well as inspiration and eternal wisdom from many faiths and none.

Friday 11th December, 5.15-9.00pm
'Gifts of Light'

We warmly invite you to join with people of all ages and many faiths/spiritual traditions in joyous Celebration of the One Light at the Heart of All. With candle-lighting, meditation, song, readings, music, prayer. Beginning with Seasonal Refreshments, and Supper after. Bring yourself, your children and friends - All are welcome.

Seasonal Refreshments/ Lantern Making: 5.15 – 6.30pm
Spiritual Gathering at 6.30 – 8.15pm.
Vegetarian Supper served at 8.15pm.

Donations Accepted

Contact: Rev Danielle Wilson - 07802 898 252

**In loving connection with Essex Unitarian Church
and the Interfaith Foundation.**

Rev. Sarah Tinker, minister with Kensington Unitarians, says: "Run by graduates of the Interfaith Seminary, these monthly Spiritual Gatherings are worship with a difference, and this year feature guests from particular faiths. Hosted here at Essex Church, it is lovely to see our beautiful worship space put to such good use, with chanting, silence, music, prayer and inspiration."

RE Training Conference

Friday 20th- Sunday 22nd November 2009
Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow



The Religious Education Coordinators Panel of the ETC has organised a Religious Education Training Conference at the Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow. All District RE Coordinators, ministerial students, District Youth Officers and anyone involved in adult, children or young people's religious education are invited to attend.

Booking forms and further information are available from margaret.robison15@btinternet.com or 01642 762219.

Youngsters' Social

After the service on Sunday 6th December



The second meeting of the pub lunch social group was held on Sunday 4th October 2009. We had a lovely roast dinner at the nearby Windsor Castle on Campden Hill Road which is one of London's most historic pubs. It used to have a clear view of the far off Windsor Castle from the upper windows, hence its name. We took full advantage of the garden on the fantastic sunny autumn day.

This meeting of 20s and 30s professionals and students will meet on the first Sunday every other month at a location within walking distance of the church. Please contact Natasha Drennan at tash_drennan@hotmail.com if you would like to join the group at our next event. Also, check out the Kensington Unitarians group page on Facebook for updates.

The next social on will be held on Sunday 6th December 2009 at the 'Sun in Splendour' pub on Portobello Road following tea and coffee after service.

Natasha Drennan

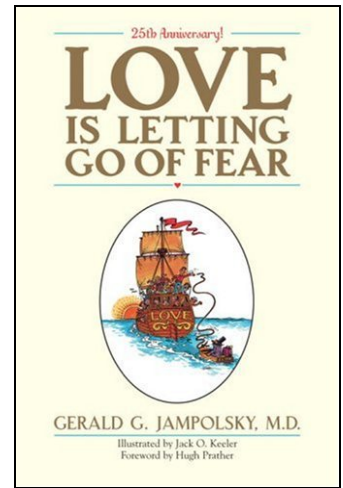
The Spiritual Bookshelf

#9: 'Love Is Letting Go Of Fear' by Gerald Jampolsky

This is the ninth of a series of articles where members and friends of the congregation tell us about a spiritual or religious book which has special meaning or value for them...

There are some books that I would recommend whole-heartedly to everyone I meet – some of the gems of English literature perhaps. But there are other books that will only speak to certain people and I think that's the case with Gerry Jampolsky's 'Love Is Letting Go of Fear'. It's a book I first met about thirty years ago now whilst lying lazily next to a friend's bookcase. Mustn't that be one of life's great treats – having the time to browse through someone else's library, knowing that you can borrow whatever takes your fancy?

That's when I spotted this slim little volume with the intriguing title. On opening it up and reading the preface I discovered that Jampolsky had taken the ideas contained in 'A Course in Miracles' and simplified them considerably. 'A Course in Miracles' deserves a whole review just for itself; suffice to say it is not a book / programme for the faint hearted or weak of will. It requires stamina, determination, and a tolerance for its irritating use of language, in order to work through its demanding programme – all qualities I lacked. How grateful I felt then to someone who had distilled its rigorous teachings into 12 simple lessons and provided cartoon illustrations to go alongside them.



Here are the titles of those lessons:

- All that I give I give to myself.
- Forgiveness is the key to happiness.
- I am never upset for the reason I think.
- I am determined to see things differently.
- I can escape from the world I see by giving up attack thoughts.
- I am not the victim of the world I see.
- Today I will judge nothing that occurs.
- This instant is the only time there is.
- The past is over – it can touch me not.
- I could see peace instead of this.
- I can elect to change all thoughts that hurt.
- I am responsible for what I see.

The over-riding teaching of this book is in its title - love is letting go of fear.

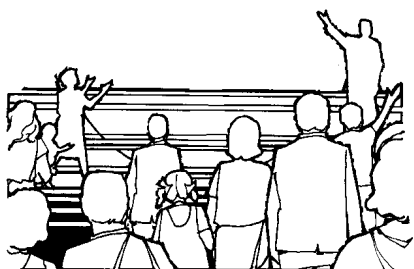
"The mind can be thought of as containing reels and reels of motion picture film about our past experiences. These images are superimposed not only on each other but also on the lens through which we experience the present. Consequently we are never really seeing or hearing it as it is; we are just seeing fragments of the present through the tons of distorted old memories that we layer over it."

What we need to do, says Jampolsky, is to recognise when we are reacting from a place of fear and replace that with love. Fear, according to A Course in Miracles, is the emotion that contains all other negative experiences – be that rage or guilt or jealousy, or any other label that we give to unpleasant emotional states. We are either experiencing love or fear and we have the power within us, in whatever difficult circumstances we find ourselves, to change from one to the other. This might all be sounding tediously 'new age' to you but Jampolsky manages, for me anyway, to ground his ideas in the sometimes painful reality of everyday life. He worked for many years as a psychiatrist and specialised in working with terminally ill children and their families. He gives examples from real people's tough lives - inspiring accounts of the way a change in someone's attitude and thinking can turn a life around, both for themselves and for those around them. I met him years ago at a conference at Findhorn and was impressed by the way he was living a life of service and commitment. Along with the Californian suntan, inspiring partner and well tailored suit, he really was a genuinely lovely person!

'Love Is Letting Go of Fear' is perhaps a deceptively simple looking book, with its cartoons and large print. But thirty years on I can still pick it up and be reminded of some very useful truth. I'll have my copy in church during November so you can have a look at it and decide if you want a copy of your own.

Sarah Tinker

District Course in Congregational Leadership



This is a second opportunity for London & South East Unitarians interested in assuming a more active leadership role in congregational life. Reports from those who went on the course last time around were very positive. It is a great opportunity to make connections with other Unitarians from the region. The course has four sessions which will cover:

January 30th	Worship
February 20th	Building the Community
March 13th	Rites of passage
March 27th	Leading Groups

Each session will be held from 11:00am to 4:00pm.
Venues and session leaders still to be announced.
Attendance at all four sessions is encouraged.

**The course is sponsored by PULSE
(The London & South East District)
and is free of charge to participants.**

Please contact the District Minister, Rev David Usher,
for more information or to register for the course:
davidusher@ldpa.org.uk.



"Compassion has been advocated by all the great faiths because it has been found to be the safest and surest means of attaining enlightenment. It dethrones the ego from the centre of our lives and puts others there, breaking down the carapace of

selfishness that holds us back from an experience of the sacred. And it gives us ecstasy, broadening our perspectives and giving us a larger, enhanced vision. As a very early Buddhist poem puts it: 'May our loving thoughts fill the whole world; above, below, across — without limit; a boundless goodwill toward the whole world, unrestricted, free of hatred and enmity.' We are liberated from personal likes and dislikes that limit our vision, and are able to go beyond ourselves."

Karen Armstrong

Sunday Services at Essex Church

1st November – "Ritual and Meaning"

Service led by Louisa Bird

"Anthropologists tell us that ritual is a mode of behaviour exhibited by all known societies; because of this universality, it is actually a way of defining humans. We are beings who create ritual. Without it, we are less than human, condemned to the prosaic half-life of literalism. With ritual, we appreciate the poetry of the world around us and the world within us." Patricia Montley

8th November – Remembrance Service

– Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker and Peter Teets

Historian and member of Richmond and Putney Unitarian Church, Peter has a great interest in the history of the two world wars fought in Europe, and will be sharing with us his insights.

15th November – "Living in a Material World"

– Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Dealing with the physical demands of living in a material world can be a challenge. In this service we will be considering the teachings of various world religions which can help us to grapple with the demands of everyday life.

22nd November – "Symptoms of Inner Peace"

– Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Some years ago now a list of the symptoms of inner peace appeared on the Internet. We will be looking at this list and asking how best we can achieve a sense of inner peace in life, however turbulent our lives may at times feel.

29th November – "Advent Sunday"

– Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

How can we best prepare ourselves at this time of year? What does Advent mean for religious liberals? What would it be like to get ready for religious and spiritual change in our lives? Just some of the questions we will be thinking about on the first Sunday in Advent. Come and light with us a literal and symbolic Advent candle.

