



*Kensington Unitarians*

# *The Newsletter*

*August/September 2008*

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

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 11.00am

"From Self-Help to  
the Religious Life"

*Led by Daniel Hughes*

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> August, 11.00am

"New Vistas, Strange Shapes"

*Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2.00-3.00pm

Nia Technique

– Holistic Movement

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> August, 3.30-5.00pm

"Songs and Silence for the Soul"

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August, 7.00-9.00pm

Creativity Engagement Group:

*"Art Inspirations: Show and Tell"*

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August, 11.00am

*Led by David Francis Darling*

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August, 11.00am

"Carnival"

*Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August, 11.00am

"Music of the Proms"

*Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker  
and Rev. Joy Croft*

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August, 12.45pm

Taoist Healing Sounds

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September, 11.00am

"Gathering of the Waters"

*Led by the Congregation*

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September, 12.45pm

Adult RE: "A Sharing Circle"

*Led by Jo Ridgers*

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 7-9.00pm

Kensington Community Singers

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September, 7-9.00pm

Creativity Engagement Group:

*"Making Mandalas"*

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 11.00am

"Casting Stones:

Restorative Justice"

*Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2.00-3.00pm

"Nia Technique:

Holistic Movement"

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 3.30-5.00pm

"Songs and Silence for the Soul"

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2.00pm

"God in Daily Life"

Closed Engagement Group (1/6)

## **A Message from Daniel**

It all went wrong around age seven for many of us! This was the observation I came away with after recently visiting an exhibition exploring artistic expression during and after childhood. It is around the age of seven that as children we are more fully brought into a process of socialisation that begins to conflict with the expression and creativity of our child self. When children, our society as a whole and especially the adults we are around will influence how comfortable or uncomfortable we become around expressing our need for play and creativity.



Before occasionally conducting worship, I had previously performed (to name only a few) as a nativity play lamb, a friendly giant and presented an 'in house' production of Blind Date, dressed as Cilla Black. I sometimes look back and think when I went wrong - I only dress as Cilla now in my fantasy life. At what point did I come to believe that being expressive, emotional, and playful or even a little silly was inappropriate behaviour? Probably around age seven.

A considerable amount of adult life can be taken up by blaming all the people who have made us think that we have something wrong with us. The 'blame game' really needs to give way to the 'well, that was how it was' game. Our parents did it to us because their parents probably did it to them. Acceptance equals freedom. From this point of acceptance, we can stop blaming our parents and see the beautifully creative person we are NOW.

The danger of actually believing this stuff about becoming respectable and having control over our lives is that it could make us actually believe life is simply about these concerns. We look forward to becoming an adult only in order to realise that we would benefit from rediscovering the child. When fear, control and self-judgement are laid to one side, creativity begins to emerge. This creativity will transform our lives, as it will open our heart/mind/body to our true (child) nature and our creative gifts. This will in turn lead us to be more forgiving and compassionate people. This month I invite you to put to one side the voice that tells you that you cannot be trusted to let yourself go. Who cares what your parents or teachers might have said - if you do not.

**Daniel Hughes**

*...you can read more from Daniel Hughes inside this month's newsletter...*

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

\* "Diversity, Commitment and the Spiritual Supermarket" by Stephen Woditsch-Ogle \* News from Daniel \* "Snippets from Swaziland" by Iona Blair \* Welcome to Lark \* Further Sightings of the Notting Hill Owl \* "Reflections on the LDPA Congregational Leadership Course" by David Francis Darling \* Picnic Photos \* Poems by John Hands and Bert Clough \* "Reflections on the Old Manse" by Iain Henderson \* Adult RE: \* "Death and Dying" course \* "David Usber's Address" – a response from Will Lyons \* and much more...

# Kensington Unitarians

At Essex Church (founded 1774), Notting Hill Gate

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

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

Contact our minister to discuss our unique ceremonies, including child naming services, weddings, blessings, and memorials, which are available to all. Many other groups share our church building. If you are interested in hiring one of our rooms for your own organisation or event please contact our wardens by telephone or email.



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# “The World’s Biggest Coffee Morning”

## for Macmillan Cancer Support

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September, 11am

We will be taking part in the "World's Biggest Coffee Morning" event this autumn. This is the flagship fundraising event for the charity Macmillan Cancer Support which last year saw over 50,000 people hold a coffee morning to help improve the lives of people living with cancer.

Please put the date in your diary and plan to come along. We will also need help with serving drinks and possibly making cakes and other goodies to offer so do listen out nearer the time for information about how to get involved.

# Stewarding and Coffee



### Stewarding:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> August:** Rita Woditsch-Ogle
- 10<sup>th</sup> August:** Howard Hague
- 17<sup>th</sup> August:** Margaret Darling
- 24<sup>th</sup> August:** Lucky Dolan
- 31<sup>st</sup> August:** Devika Joshi
- 7<sup>th</sup> September:** Caroline Blair
- 14<sup>th</sup> September:** Louisa Bird
- 21<sup>st</sup> September:** Angela Gasparetto
- 28<sup>th</sup> September:** Doris Campbell

### Coffee:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> August:** Caroline Blair
- 10<sup>th</sup> August:** Gill Hague
- 17<sup>th</sup> August:** Juliet Edwards
- 24<sup>th</sup> August:** Albert Dolan
- 31<sup>st</sup> August:** Christine Joshi
- 7<sup>th</sup> September:** David Darling
- 14<sup>th</sup> September:** Margaret Darling
- 21<sup>st</sup> September:** Michaela von Britzke
- 28<sup>th</sup> September:** Jo Ridgers

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

# Congregational Potluck Lunch

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September, 12.30pm



We will be having a congregational potluck lunch after the Harvest Festival service on Sunday 21st September.

Doris Campbell will be coordinating the lunch and wielding a sign-up sheet nearer the time so please think about what food or drink you can offer to provide.



...a date for your diary: don't forget to prepare for our...

## Gathering of the Waters

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2008



We will be holding a congregational "Gathering of the Waters" service, led by Patricia Walker-Hesson, on the first Sunday in September to welcome everybody back from their summer travels. Wherever you go over the summer, remember Essex Church, and collect a small amount of water in a bottle to be saved for a lovely ritual in this service to gather us all in after the summer break.

...a forthcoming district event – put the date in your diaries...

## Growing in Hospitality and Passion

Second London District Growth Day  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September at Essex Church

Following the success of the first Growth Day in February, the District Growth Group is planning a second Workshop for Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September, to be held here at Essex Church, Kensington.

The day will be divided into two parts. The morning will examine the concept of Radical Hospitality, based on the book of the same name, an open-hearted outlook of welcoming and inclusiveness for people of any faith by Lonni Collins Benedictine Fr. Daniel Homan.

The afternoon will look at how each congregation can identify and build on its particular strengths and passions. Not all congregations are the same, and although there are general good practices which all congregations can adopt, each has its own character and is more likely to be energised by its own particular passion than by trying to conform to external standards. We will share success stories and look at ways to discover our own passion.

Listen out nearer the time for more detailed information.

## New Look for Essex Church Website



At long last our Essex Church website has been updated and expanded. The new site came into being at the end of July and includes a number of new features:

- An at-a-glance events calendar
- Improved navigation
- Downloadable membership form
- An archive of reports from past events
- A selection of sermons to re-read at your leisure
- Links to our new church photo archive on Flickr
- A link to our Essex Church Facebook Group

We plan to add more in the weeks and months to come. Take a look at [www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk](http://www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk).

Jane Blackall

## "Freedom Road"

Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August at Rosslyn Hill Chapel



The Freedom Road youth music and drama group from Hull were set up to mark the bi-centenary of the Abolition of Slavery. Their performances and CD have been highly praised and they are now coming to London. Make a note in your diaries for Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August and come along if you can to Rosslyn Hill Chapel. For times and more information see Sarah or the notice board.



## Snippets from Swaziland



*Iona Blair set off for Swaziland last month.  
Here are some excerpts from a recent email detailing her progress.*

I'm sitting on the verandah of the lodge and the sun is shining. I think you'd love the countryside and the lizards basking on rocks but the khombi experience might be a bit disorientating- regular mode of transport here are minibus/vans with folding seats that 15 or so people squeeze into, sitting on top of each other with loud Anglophone pop music blaring out like a coolio version of an icecream van riding up and down cratered tracks, attracting children.

I'm working the mornings on weekdays at a NCP (neighbourhood care point) called mlindazwe with about 30 children of all ages - and one 'classroom' - I've tried to do counting and plussing/minussing and basic multiplication on pencils but its difficult to hold the attention of more than 2 or three kids at once while the younger ones run about screaming (endearingly most of the time).. but just spending time playing with them seems worthwhile. Many seem really keen to learn but we are not teachers (though that's what they call us) and we have no structured lesson plans or curriculum- the kids at the project are too poor to afford the local schools.

I've also been helping with building/painting a house intended for the mother of 2 or three of the mlindazwe kids - its great fun working with the Swazis who are very friendly and easy going- though all seem to want to come to the U.K. as if it's some wonderland - I was trying to convince them that our government is not so friendly to foreign people and the weather and people are much friendlier and generous here. It surprised me on my first few days - you can give the kids your camera and clothes and they will use them for a while and then give them straight back - they share spontaneously and are just not possessive or particularly clingy - they've had fun trying to teach me some Siswati words - there are 3 clicks in Siswati which cause amusement when we try to imitate them. The older kids are great at looking after the younger ones and when the cooks don't turn up they make their own food on the stove. it just shows - kids will be as old as you treat them.

**Iona Blair**

## News from Daniel Hughes

I began my Ministry training placement with you by saying that I was so pleased we would be part of one another's journey – how true that has been for me, as I hope it has for you. Everyone I have encountered during my time at Essex Church has shown loving interest, encouragement and support. Thank you for making this part of my journey an enriching experience.

Ministry training on one level is concerned with equipping student Ministers with the professional skills useful for contemporary Ministry, things such as communication, outreach and interpersonal skills. However, on another level the training should be an intense period of reflection. I have given much of my time to considering what I understand the role of a Minister to be and how the Unitarian approach provides something special to the world. To engage in this process always invites the possibility that you may feel your journey is actually taking you in a different direction. This has happened in my case and as many of you know, I have withdrawn from the training. This has of course been a painful and difficult decision but one of the joys of this religious community is our willingness to embrace the reality of change.

So many parts of our world still need to hear the Unitarian message and see how it is possible to be in community with others. What Essex Church does week on week is nothing to be quiet about; I am confident that this meeting space for the human spirit will thrive into the future. It is wonderful to be able to say that my decision to leave has come from an existential point rather than negative feelings towards the Unitarian movement.

I am uncertain to what place I will travel next but for now I am comfortable encouraging my true nature to unfold, sitting in stillness, being in the world, tending my garden and trying to love more. I am confident that my new ministry will unfold naturally, as I hope yours will. It is amazing what can happen when we begin to let go.

**Truly, Daniel.**

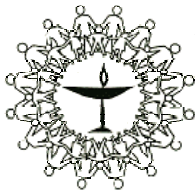
## Sponsor a Hymn Book

A reminder about our new "sponsor a hymn book" scheme:

For only £20, you can dedicate one of the new 'Singing the Living Tradition' hymn books to a person or cause that is dear to you. An inscribed bookplate will record your dedication. Make cheques payable to Essex Church and hand them with a note of your chosen dedication either to Sarah, our minister, or a committee member.

## Sharing Circle

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September, 12.45-1.45pm



Come and join us after the service, on the 1st Sunday of each month, for a sharing circle facilitated by Jo Ridgers. Bring a sandwich to eat and something for us to enjoy together - some music, a poem, a picture, a photograph, or a beautiful object - something that you would like to tell others more about. All are welcome.

## Kensington Community Singers

A Friendly Choir-for-All



Monday Evenings from 7.00-9.00pm

8<sup>th</sup> September – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008 (not 27<sup>th</sup> October)

We launched a new community choir here at Essex Church in the autumn of 2007. This choir is open to all - you don't need any qualifications except enthusiasm - and we're actively striving to welcome in local people alongside members of the congregation.

Kensington Community Singers meet on Monday evenings from 7pm to 9pm. The new term starts on 8th September 2008. The sessions are great fun. Jen Hazel, our choir leader, has been teaching us a wide selection of songs from diverse sources. Donations to cover the cost of running the choir are invited (£3/£6/£9 per session - a sliding scale according to income).

If you know anyone who might be interested – or can think of anywhere to pin up one of our advertisements – please do pick up a few flyers from the church foyer. Thank you.

## Welcoming Lark on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2008



It was delightful to conduct a naming and welcoming ceremony in July for Denis Thompson and Katie Brown's daughter Lark, who was only 6 days old when this picture was taken. They were joined by godparents Miguel and Judit and their youngest daughter Olivia, who took part in the ceremony by blessing Lark with water.

Here are some words of blessing that Katie adapted for her daughter's ceremony

*May the sun shine upon you and warm your heart  
and may others be touched by the warmth that  
radiates from you.*

*May the gentle rains restore you and may your  
countenance soothe and restore others.*

*May the storms always leave you stronger and more  
beautiful and may your understanding of the joys and  
sorrows in the world show others that you can  
contribute to improving the quality of life on this earth  
in whatever path you choose to take.*

The morning was made even more celebratory by the kind donation of large trays of delicious cookies and brownies from the nearby Whole Foods Market and by some lovely and very appropriate music from our quartet of singers.

Harold Lorenzelli added a lovely and Lark-specific extra verse to his rendition of 'Oh What A Beautiful Morning'.

Welcome to the world Lark and congratulations from everyone here at Essex Church to Katie and Denis on their new arrival.

Sarah Tinker

## Summer Picnic Photos

*Snapshots from the Essex Church Outing  
to Holland Park courtesy of Jim and Caroline Blair*



## Nia Technique



### Holistic Movement Sessions:

Sessions led by Sonya Leite

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September - 2.00-3.00pm**

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

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

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

## Universal Worship Gatherings



The Inter-Faith Seminary have had a long connection with us here at Essex Church and we are glad to host their monthly Universal Worship Gatherings on Friday evenings. If you have never been to one of these evenings, they are well worth attending. Here are their dates for the coming year and the evenings start at 6.30 and usually last for a couple of hours.

#### Dates in 2008:

12<sup>th</sup> September  
10<sup>th</sup> October  
21<sup>st</sup> November  
12<sup>th</sup> December

#### Dates in 2009:

9<sup>th</sup> January  
13<sup>th</sup> February  
13<sup>th</sup> March  
10<sup>th</sup> April  
8<sup>th</sup> May  
12<sup>th</sup> June  
10<sup>th</sup> July

If you would like to know more do contact Danielle Wilson, Inter-Faith Minister, labyrinth walk leader and member of our Rosslyn Hill Chapel in Hampstead:

[danielle.wilson1@btinternet.com](mailto:danielle.wilson1@btinternet.com)

*...a date for your diary: forthcoming event at Essex Church...*

## “Some Trees... and a Few Flowers”

**Poetry Book Launch and Fundraiser**

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October, 7pm**

This will be the launch of a new book of poems and photographs by our very own John Hands and Heidi Ferid. The event will also include music from Norma Fender on the celtic harp. This evening's event will raise funds for the church. Please put the date in your diary and plan to come along this October.



Community Arts Project at Essex Church:  
**“The Fabric of Diversity”**  
Now Starting in October 2008



Our new community arts project, supported by Kensington and Chelsea Council through their arts grant scheme, is entitled “The Fabric of Diversity”. Here is a description of the project from our arts grant proposal:

“The proposed activity is a community art project where a diverse group of local people will develop their creative potential, working together on a large-scale textile artwork, expressing aspects of their own personal life experiences and also exploring themes of interdependence and their connections to others in the local and global community. The predominant craft techniques will be feltmaking and hand embroidery and there will be scope for participants to introduce other mixed-media methods to the project as they see fit. The activity will be accessible to people of all levels of experience as no prior skills will be assumed.”

The provisional plan is that we will hold 15 drop-in sessions over the course of the autumn (mostly on Thursday afternoons with a few Sundays so that is accessible to people who work during the week). We would love to involve members of the groups who share our Essex Church building and will be attempting to make contact with their representatives over the summer.

We still need to raise another £1450 to run the project as originally proposed, and are actively seeking to top up our funding from other sources, but are confident that it will go ahead come what may.

**PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGES:**

The first session is now due to take place on the afternoon of Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October and the project will then run on Thursday afternoons from 16<sup>th</sup> October.

Jane Blackall

## Diversity, Commitment, and The Spiritual Supermarket



As a teenager, entirely dissatisfied with the religious Orthodoxies on offer, I was very preoccupied with esoteric questions. Deeply influenced by Buddhism, I was at the same time very unhappy. Later I imagined, perhaps with some grandiosity, that I had gone through the Buddhist Trance of Sorrow. Perhaps I did. Well if I did, I emerged from it an even more restless soul.

I continued to walk through the spiritual supermarket for many years, emerging for the last time, or so I thought, with a trolley full of Krishnamurti in 1991. But something tested my faith as a Krishnamurtian. A key part of his message was that authority, especially in spiritual matters, was an anathema. That was music to my ears, and as a result I never sought spiritual guidance from another human being. However, when crisis came knocking at my door a few years ago, it was only through the spiritual help of another person, and the support of my wife, that I was able to move forward. I also found God, as I understand God. I still think Krishnamurti is a great guy by the way.

For what I truly believe to be the last time, I returned to the spiritual supermarket in 2008. This time the trolley had the Unitarians in it, but it was mainly filled with Sufism. So I celebrate diversity, but have committed myself to a particular religious path – that of mystical Islam. It is there that I feel at home. So that's my choice. A saying goes that there are many paths to God as there are souls.

What do Sufis do? Well, I can't tell you that in 350 words, but I can tell you in one sentence what I do. I try to stay out of the way and let God fill the space. Incidentally, you can always pick and mix if you wish, but be careful! In Australia there's a big movement of Buddhists and Sufis working together: they call them the Bufis. And I'll leave you with this thought: if I were still a Buddhist, a Sufi and a Unitarian, I might be in danger of being called a Bufooney!

Stephen Woditsch-Ogle

...some forthcoming events – dates for your diary this autumn...

## A London Weekend of Theophilus Lindsey Commemorations



REV. THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, M.A.

Two major events are to be held in London in November to commemorate the bicentenary of the death of Theophilus Lindsey, the former Church of England vicar who founded the first avowedly Unitarian congregation in Britain in 1774 at Essex Street Chapel in London (site of our present-day Unitarian headquarters).

The first event, on **Saturday 15th November**, is described as a ‘pilgrimage’ to Lindsey’s grave at Bunhill Fields, organised by Kensington Unitarians. The plan is for ‘pilgrims’ to gather at Bunhill Fields Cemetery, City Road, London EC1, at midday or early afternoon (time to be finalised). They will walk through the cemetery with Unitarian historian Alan Ruston as guide, viewing graves of other famous dissenters (including the Rev Richard Price) before ending at Lindsey’s tomb, where a brief ceremony will take place. (For further information, call Howard Hague on 020 8864 9084).

Then on **Sunday 16th November**, the Unitarian Christian Association is holding its annual Lance Garrard Memorial Lecture on Lindsey at Essex Unitarian Church, Kensington. It will be given by the leading Lindsey scholar, Professor Grayson Ditchfield of the University of Kent (who is also a trustee of Dr Williams’s Library in London)\*. The title will be: ‘From Prayerbook to Personal Piety: the contribution of Theophilus Lindsey to the emergence of a Unitarian Identity.’ The Lecture is advertised as a 2 for 2.30 pm start, and Kensington Unitarians are offering lunch beforehand for those attending. Their morning service will focus on Lindsey too, as other Unitarian services throughout Britain are likely to do during November.

*(\*Prof Ditchfield has been working for some years on an edition of the letters of Theophilus Lindsey; the first volume was published last November in the Church of England Record Society series.)*

Jim Corrigan

## Creativity Engagement Groups Art Inspirations: Show and Tell

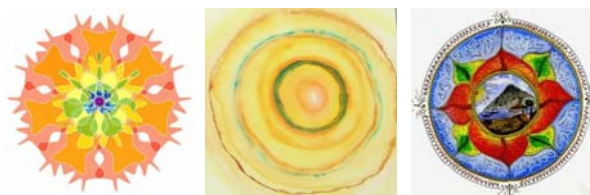
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August , 7.00-9.00pm



We will be having a relaxed creativity group session in August. You are invited to bring along your favourite art (postcards, books, photographs, artworks you have made or bought - anything you like!) for a “show and tell”.

## Making Mandalas

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September , 7.00-9.00pm



In September, Patricia Walker-Hesson will be leading a session on making mandalas, so do watch out for further details about what equipment or materials you might need to collect and bring along nearer to the time.

As usual, if these particular activities don’t take your fancy, you are most welcome to bring your own crafts along, and simply sit with us in good company for the evening. There are usually biscuits and other goodies to be eaten too...

*If you would like to know more about the creativity engagement group please do talk to Jane Blackall or Patricia Walker-Hesson about our activities. Photographs of work from several of the projects we’ve worked on over the last few years can be found on our church website.*

## October Newsletter Deadline



The deadline for submitting items for the October issue is **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September**. Please send items (such as poems, artwork, quotes, articles, notices, etc...) to Jane Blackall or any committee member before this date.

Thank you!!!

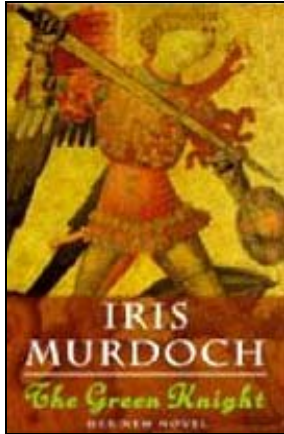


## Reading Engagement Group

# “The Green Knight”

by Iris Murdoch

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 7.00-9.00pm



The reading engagement group’s next topic of discussion will be “The Green Knight” by Iris Murdoch. This book was chosen by Rita Woditsch-Ogle and will be the focus of our next reading group meeting on **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September**.

**Please note that this book is currently out of print.** However there are a number of quite inexpensive second-hand copies available online via Amazon UK. If you would like someone to order a copy for you then please get in touch with a member of the reading group and we will try to arrange it.

Information from Amazon US:

*“Though it starts slowly, this philosophical novel soon envelops the reader in a Byzantine plot that weaves around nine characters. Peter Mir, the “Green Knight” of the title, is nearly killed when he intervenes to protect Clement Graffe from being murdered by Graffe’s half-brother, Lucas. Mir mysteriously reappears and demands reparation from Lucas, provoking various responses from the two brothers and their circle of friends: Harvey Blacket; Bellamy Jones; the three Anderson sisters, Aleph, Sefton, and Moy; and their mother, Louise. As in other Murdoch novels, part of the exposition is a religious quest. Murdoch is skilled at keeping the reader turning the pages while allowing the characters to discuss and experience such weighty issues as guilt and redemption, revenge and transformation, and virtue and moral perfection. This is a superb novel, with great depth of plot and characterization as well as riveting suspense.”*

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



## Moonshine

You are still the same sulky  
Staring moon I gazed at  
Seventy years ago. How fearful  
Never, never to change.

## Summer

Arrayed around us  
The plenitude of nature  
Abundant and fruitful  
Complete without us –  
Not needing  
harvest or harvesters.

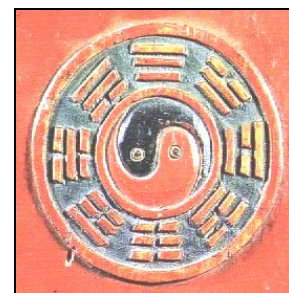
Ah Lord, say  
Is this true?

John Hands

...a new monthly activity at Essex Church later this summer...

## Taoist Healing Sounds

Sundays 31<sup>st</sup> August, 28<sup>th</sup> September,  
26<sup>th</sup> October, 30<sup>th</sup> November at Essex Church



Something to look forward to in the autumn: once a month after worship there’ll be chance to learn a Taoist system of healing sounds with accompanying movements and self-massage techniques.

No particular skill or fitness is needed – just the willingness to have a go at something different and to make some unusual sounds.

Sarah Tinker



# Multifaith Calendar



## ✠ 6th August – The Transfiguration – Christian

The Transfiguration commemorates Jesus being transformed in the presence of three of his disciples, Peter, James and John, on a mountain top. The disciples saw Jesus with Moses and Elijah and heard a voice saying, 'This is my own dear Son with whom I am pleased - listen to him'. The Transfiguration is a major festival for Orthodox Christians.

## ★ 10th August – Tisha B'Av – Jewish

Tisha B'Av is the saddest day of the Jewish calendar. A full day fast is held at the conclusion of three weeks of mourning and reflection, focusing on the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem, and other tragedies in Jewish history.

## ✠ 15th August – Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Christian

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary celebrates Mary being 'taken up', body and soul to heaven. Catholic communities often mark the festival with processions. Orthodox Christians celebrate the Dormition, Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary, meaning her death, on this day.

## ☸ 16th August – Raksha Bandhan – Hindu

Raksha Bandhan is about brotherly protection ('raksha' means 'protection', and 'bandhan' means to 'tie'). On this Hindu festival, traditionally, sisters tie amulets of coloured thread, symbolising protection from evil, around their brothers' wrists and give them an Indian sweet. In return brothers give their sisters gifts.

## ☾ 16th August – The Night of Forgiveness (Lailat-ul-Bara'h) – Muslim

The Night of Forgiveness (Lailat-ul-Bara'h) takes place two weeks before Ramadan. Muslims spend the night in prayer seeking God's guidance and forgiveness for their sins. Many Muslims believe that a person's destiny is fixed for the coming year by God, on this night. In some parts of the world Muslims visit the graves of relatives, and the giving of charity is also traditional.



## ☸ 24th August – Janamashtami / Krishna Jayanti – Hindu

The birthday of Krishna is widely celebrated by Hindus. Many will fast till midnight, the time of Krishna's birth, when he is welcomed with singing, dancing and sweets. In some homes and temples an image of the baby Krishna is put in a cradle and special sweets are offered and distributed.

## ✠ September / October – Harvest Festival

Special services are held around this time of year to thank God for his goodness, in providing a harvest of crops along with all the other fruits of society. Displays of produce are often made, usually distributed afterwards to those in need. Increasingly the emphasis is on a wider interpretation than just the harvest of the fields.



## 2nd September – 1st October – Ramadan – Muslim

During Ramadan Muslims fast from dawn to sunset. The Muslim year is a lunar year, so Ramadan moves forward by ten or eleven days each year. Fasting (sawm) is one of the five pillars of Islam, requiring self-discipline and giving everyone some experience of deprivation. Those who are not able to fast give charity to compensate for the lost days. While children may be encouraged to fast, the full fast is not compulsory until maturity. The fast is traditionally broken each evening by taking dates and water after the custom of the Prophet.

## ☸ 3rd September – Ganesh Chaturthi – Hindu

The birthday of Ganesha (also Ganupati), the elephant-headed deity, seen as the remover of obstacles, is especially observed by Maharashtrians. Ganesha is worshipped by Hindus at the beginning of something new, for example taking exams, moving house or getting married.

## ☾ 28th September – Lailat-ul-Qadr – Muslim

The 'Night of Power' when Muslims commemorate the Prophet Muhammad receiving the first revelation of the Qur'an. Many Muslims will spend the night praying and studying the Qur'an at their local mosque. Lailat-ul-Qadr is usually celebrated on the 27th day (the night of the 26th) of Ramadan.

## ☸ 30th September – Navaratri / Durga Puja / Dusserah – Hindu

This Hindu festival, known by different names, is one of the few celebrated across India. Navaratri means 'nine nights', the length of the festival - the final three days being the most important. In the north of India, particularly in Bengal, the goddess Durga is worshipped on the eighth day.

## ★ 30th September – Rosh Hashanah / New Year's Day 5769 – Jewish

Rosh Hashana marks the beginning of ten days of repentance and self-examination during which God sits in judgement on every individual. The shofar (ram's horn) is blown in the synagogue as a reminder of Abraham's sacrifice of a ram instead of his son, Isaac.

## Reflections on the LDPA Course in Congregational Leadership



On four Saturdays, over the last couple of months, around 20 Unitarians from London and the South East have met in different chapels, churches and meeting houses to take part in the Course in Congregational Leadership. The course was inspired by our District Minister, Revd David Usher, and was funded by the LDPA as part of the district's renewal and outreach programme.

The course was aimed at anyone who wanted to take part. Some of us were already leading worship and at least one was a lay leader of a congregation, some were having to get more involved in congregational leadership because the minister was retiring, others simply wanted to learn more about how Unitarians "do" worship and the issues that arise in helping to run a congregation. There was no "qualification" at the end of the course and it doesn't authorise us to do anything but as one member of the course said "it is good to have some training for what we are already doing."

The first day was held at Bessels Green Meeting House in Sevenoaks. Most of us had expected about 10 people to attend but there were 24 people making us feel that there is a renewed spirit of enthusiasm and optimism in the district. Revd David Usher led the first day and explored "Leading Worship". In the morning we looked at the theory of worship and shared experiences of the different forms and styles of worship. In the afternoon we had to put the theory into practice and were given 10 minutes to create a "mini service" lasting 3 minutes on the theme "it's three o'clock on a Saturday afternoon". Although our hearts sank when given the task, what was produced was an amazing array of profound and deeply moving pieces of worship.

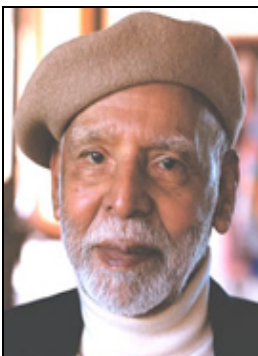
On the second day we met at Meadow Chapel, Godalming, when David helped us to look at Leadership, Governance, Pastoral Care and Conflict Resolution, in essence at the structures which enable congregational life to happen. My favourite quote from the day was "the good leaders enable people to do it themselves" – advice I need to take into my working life!

On the third day we had a trip to the seaside when we met with Revd Jane Barton at Brighton Unitarian Church to look at Rites of Passage with an afternoon on Funerals – her big passion. This was a very useful day, not only for those who might be leading such services, but for all of us so that we can encourage people to ask for them and help them plan them.

The final day was held at Rosslyn Hill Chapel in Hampstead and was led by the minister Revd Jim Robinson on the theme of "Small Group Ministry". Jim showed how this term covers a wide range of activities, from a Sunday morning service in congregations that may only have 7 or 8 people attending, to discussion groups, book groups or creativity groups. He suggested that all of these groups should be about, at least at some level, deepening the spiritual life of participants, creating community, opportunities to practice improving our ways of relating to people and occasions to deepen our connection to the congregational life of the church.

All four days were stimulating, thought provoking, and I learned a lot. The best part, however, was getting to know the participants at a deeper level, gaining an insight into the joys and concerns of different congregations and visiting some amazing buildings. If the course is run again, as we hope it will be, I would thoroughly recommend it to anyone who wants to deepen their knowledge of congregational life.

**David Francis Darling**



"Every negative quality, Sri Ramakrishna says, can be turned into positive. "You say you're greedy?" he asks. "Why not be really greedy? Instead of wanting things just for yourself, want them for everybody. Don't settle for anything less."

We should not be content with getting the best just for ourselves. Why not go after the best for everybody? If we give it the same time and energy we give to our personal interests, we can make a real difference in people's lives. So if you meet a greedy person, congratulate him. If he can turn his greed to human welfare, it will be a tremendous motivating force. The greed will still be there, but harnessed and mastered. The same is true of anger and fear; they are power that can be transformed. When Mahatma Gandhi's secretary, Mahadev Desai, was asked where Gandhi got all his power, Desai replied in effect, "He has forged all human passions — fear, anger, lust, greed — into one selfless, irresistible passion for the welfare of all."

**Eknath Easwaran**



## Recollections of the Old Manse



*Following the piece on Iain Henderson in the last newsletter we received this from his cousin who found it amongst his papers.*

In the beginning was the cathedral sized brick gothic church with its carved angels and stained glass windows. I loved it.

Next to the church, and standing well back from the road, at the end of the garden was the tall, narrow manse. The minister was the Rev Eirion Phillips, a charming good-humoured dark Welshman, with the face of a Greek icon. He occupied the ground floor, and part of the second, with his wife and two little girls. He offered me accommodation, and being new to London and a mere child, I gladly accepted.

Outlandish as it may seem, the layout of the building and its interior seemed exactly the same as the Bates' house in that terrifying film 'Psycho'. Those steps, and the staircase going up to the landing ... however, that added a touch of sinister glamour. I chose the sunny attic room, furnished with faded Victorian stuff and a heavy round table in the bay window overlooking the street. I really liked that room. My next door neighbour was Mohammed, a law student, and next door to him there was a vegetarian Christian Scientist. His room was later in the summer occupied by Gilles Carnot, a Parisian with an infectious sense of humour, mispronouncing words intentionally and misplacing them. He was particularly amused by the phrase "two to Tooting". He turned somersaults in Kensington Gardens and introduced me to Boursin cheese and rosé wine.

**Iain Henderson**

## Sarah's Stone Owl



I'm the stone owl perched up on high  
Watching you worriers hurrying by,  
Says now and again my stony brain  
'Look! – they're at it there again'  
Scurryin' and hurryin'  
Flurryin' and worryin'  
Up avenues, down streets  
Criss-crossing always, but seldom meet.  
Up terraces, down cul-de-sacs  
Don't show their faces, always backs.  
From my perch below the sky  
I see these beetles on the ground  
Rarely look up, always down:  
What could be the big ideas  
Makes 'em act so very queer?

I'm the wise owl they seldom mention  
But I'm the one who pays attention  
To all the things they never see  
Higher than the highest tree. I  
Ruminate and ruminate – but can't find a clue  
To what these ant-like creatures really do.

I'm the wise owl what's supposed to know  
What agitates these shiners down below.  
To tell the truth I 'ave'nt a clue. But  
Someone, somewhere must surely know  
What all their worryin's s'posed to do:  
I wonder – could that one be you?

**John Hands**



## Further Sightings

All has been revealed. The watchful Notting Hill owl mentioned in last month's newsletter is sitting high up above W.H.Smith's on the main road, where he has recently been joined by two frolicking figures, again of uncertain origin. Will Lyons suggests that such owls are intended to frighten off other birds, especially pigeons. Apparently, at the National Archives at Kew they employ a falconer to walk round every few weeks with his magnificent (and alive) creature and furthermore Will is prepared to tell us where there's a bright red evil-looking imp near Portobello Road.

In the last newsletter I also mentioned Anthony Gormley's statues which appeared last year on the tops of buildings around the South Bank. Meadow Church member Bert Clough grew up in Crosby, Liverpool where the same sculptures are to be found straggling the shore. He wrote a poem about them. "When I saw them on the tops of the South Bank buildings they looked almost suicidal to me. When they were being covered by the sea in Crosby they looked helpless. Wherever they were situated they looked so vulnerable".

Other people found the figures in London to be 'watchful', 'menacing', 'unnerving' or 'self-obsessed', the latter comment referring to the fact that all the figures are identical and are casts of Gormley himself. What did you think of them? And where might you choose to place multiple sculptures of your naked self?!

Sarah Tinker



## Tide and Time

A hundred men.  
Naked. Anchored  
In the deep damp sand.

Iron statues  
Cast in single mould.  
Solitary  
In uniformity.

Riveted eyes  
Staring blankly  
At the surging sea.

Blackened figures  
Against the blood  
Streaked setting sun.

Then merciless tide  
Immerses them  
One by one  
By one.

And the rest look on.  
Transfixed. Helpless.  
Their fate foretold.

Then crimson sun arises.  
Grey sea subsides.  
The men rise up again.

Burnished. Baptised.  
Resurrected  
By tide  
And time.

Bert Clough

# David Usher's Address: A Comment – by Will Lyons



As a recent 'convert' to Unitarianism (at least the brand celebrated at Essex Church), I thoroughly enjoyed District Minister David Usher's recent address to our community and his forthright exposition of Unitarianism vis-a-vis the main world religions. He said that he was often asked the curious question of what Unitarians believe and confessed himself non-plussed when it came to answering. As Unitarianism claims to be non-credal and non-dogmatic, it is no wonder.

To believe something requires that, logically, we believe that 'something' to be true. The Unitarian, Henry David Thoreau said: "Any Truth is better than make-believe ... rather than love, than money, than fame, give me Truth." But what is truth? The word truth has no single definition about which philosophers and thinkers agree and various theories of truth continue to be debated. How do we define and identify truth? A dictionary definition is given as:-

1. Conformity to fact or actuality
2. A statement proven to be or accepted as true.
3. Sincerity; integrity.
4. Fidelity to an original or standard.
5. Reality; actuality.
6. That which is considered to be the supreme reality and to have the ultimate meaning and value of existence.

David Usher referred to the Christian 'ritual' of weekly (or more often) reciting the Nicene Creed. In my 'spiritual' life at one of the Anglican churches I used to attend, this was not done automatically and there was often a debate at that point in the service as to whether or not we should recite the Anglican Church's 'Clause 4'. It usually went ahead with the proviso that you were individually free to leave out the bits you didn't want to sign up to.

Personally I believe in reason and science and I am profoundly sceptical about many beliefs and ideas that others hold sincerely and passionately. I am doubtful of anything contrary to reason or lacking in evidence but I think I have an open mind - ready to contemplate new ideas backed by persuasive evidence.

Having said that, in science there has been a debate as to whether the results of experiments, although reproducible, reveal a truth about nature. Albert Einstein is quoted as saying 'No amount of experimentation can ever prove me right; a single experiment can prove me wrong.' Again, it all depends what we mean. Euclid's (flat) geometry (300 BC) was taken as being absolutely correct and represented 'truth' until the development by Beltrami (1868) and others of 'non-Euclidean (spherical) geometry', Newton's laws of mechanics (17th Century) held sway until the development of quantum mechanics in the twentieth century. Quantum mechanics work on the level of very small objects – but if you want to do space travel, Newton's laws will suffice. So, in these fields, whether it's flat geometry or spherical geometry or you want to fly to the moon (and come back) or you want to develop a new microchip, you use the 'laws' that fit and prove 'true' for that application.

David's address was excellent in the way it dealt with the 'curious question' and my advice would be, when we are asked by people 'What do Unitarians believe?', after quoting the Unitarian principles we should go on to say:

'I don't believe in anything else – but I'm trying to find out!' Happy Exploring!!

**Will Lyons**



"Happiness comes, not by helplessly wishing for it, but by dreaming, thinking, and living it in all circumstances. No matter what you are doing, keep the undercurrent of happiness, the secret river of joy, flowing beneath the sands of your thoughts and the rocky soils of hard trials. Some people smile most of the time while they hide a sorrow-corroded heart. Such people slowly pine away beneath the shadows of meaningless smiles. There are other people who smile once in a while, yet have beneath the surface a million fountains of laughing peace."

**Paramhansa Yogananda**



## Engagement Groups and Small Group Ministry Conference

1<sup>st</sup> November, 11am-1pm, at Essex Church



There will be a conference on Engagement Groups and Small Group Ministry this autumn. This event is due to be held on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November here at Essex Church and will be organised by Rev. Jim Robinson and Jane Blackall.

The event will feature a brief introduction to Engagement Groups and Small Group Ministry, followed by a selection of short presentations about small group success stories from six different congregations across London and the South, along with opportunities to share your own experiences.

Please put the date in your diary if you are already involved with small groups or are interested in finding out more about facilitating them. Do contact Jane or Jim if you are planning to come as this will help with the planning. Thank you.

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



Sundays 10<sup>th</sup> August, 14<sup>th</sup> September  
from 3.30 to 5.00pm

Suggested Donation: £2.00

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

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

*...a forthcoming adult RE course at Essex Church...*

## Death and Dying

Thursday Evenings from 7-9pm  
18<sup>th</sup> September, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> October



This adult RE course will be led by Michaela von Britzke and Sarah Tinker. All are welcome. You can attend one or more sessions and it is fine just to turn up although it's always helpful to have an idea of numbers so let us know if you are thinking of attending.

### Thursday 18th September, 7pm

We will start with a gentle evening of conversation, in pairs, small groups and the whole group, about our experiences of death, our hopes and fears, the aspects of death we want to explore or have more information about.

### Thursday 2nd October, 7pm

In this second evening we will consider our legacies, what it is we bring to the world and leave here when we are no more. How can 'clearing the decks' and sorting our affairs help us to face death in peace and live life more fully now?

### Thursday 16th October, 7pm

This evening we will explore the ending of life and useful preparations and decisions we can make. Living wills, care preferences, favourite readings, and hymns we never want to have sung at our funeral - just some of the issues we will explore together.

In each of these three evenings we will end with a process called 'Live Now', which encourages us to consider what we want to do with our lives now, whether we think we may have hours or decades to live.

Look out in the new year for a Saturday workshop about death and dying here at Essex Church.

# Our Wardens' Column

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

August is traditionally a very quiet month at the church, but we do have a few interesting bookings. The Interfaith Seminary are holding their ordination at the Christian Science church next door on Saturday 2 August and using Essex Church for changing, photographs and quiet space. This event always has a wonderful energy, and it's nice to be part of it – if only peripherally. They're also holding an open day here on Friday 29th August to recruit their next intake of ministry students.



We also have a couple of new groups starting – Bruno Groening, Circle of Friends will be doing healing meditation in the Hall once every 3 weeks on Saturday 12-5 starting on 9th August and Anne de Lepine will be teaching French in the library on Saturday 16th August from 1-6. A couple of different groups from Kensington & Chelsea council will also be visiting us later in the month to consult with users of their services.

On Sunday afternoons (3rd, 17th and 31st) Jenny is organising some Contact Improvisation jams. This is a dance form she has been studying for 18 months now and it's become an important part of her spiritual life. If anyone is interested in coming to one of the jams – as a participant not an observer! – the 17th would probably be the best. Please contact her in advance so she can let you know what to expect. 020 7221 6514 or wardens@kensington-unitarians.org.uk.

In September, our regular groups return. Some noteworthy events are: an Interfaith service on Friday 12th September at 6.45; a visit from the guru of the Bhakti Marga chanting group on Thursday 25th; another concert by Ivor Flynt on Friday 26th; an all day meeting of CANA (Christians Awakening to a New Awareness) on the theme of 'living in a now consciousness' 10.30-4pm Saturday 27th September and Rosh Hashanah 29th-30th - so as you can see, by the end of the month things will be getting pretty hectic again.

We were hoping to take advantage of the quiet period over the summer to have some building work done – renewing our 30 year old kitchen and creating a new disabled toilet. Disappointingly, the builders our architect hoped would be able to start work at the end of July have not come through for us, so at the time of writing we are trying to find alternatives. If all goes well, you'll find that access to the ground floor toilets is blocked off one day and you'll have to use the downstairs loo until our magnificent new facilities are unveiled a few weeks later. So please keep thinking of us - we need your prayers (and your pennies! Fundraising has been going well, but we still have a way to go to meet our target).

Jenny Moy

## “Plan Ahead and Solve Your Gift Problems...”



**Stephanie Saville** reminds us that Hyacinths to flower at Christmas need to be planted in August and she is offering to plant them for you as she did last year. You need to:

Provide a pot/container with your name on.

Say what colour bulbs you would like (*white, blue or pink*)

Collect them from Stephanie at Christmas and make a donation of around £5.

## Poetry and Music at Meadow Chapel

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September 4:30pm



This evening of poetry and music, at the Unitarian Chapel in Godalming, will include guest artists from Richmond Unitarians. There will also be a time for refreshments and fellowship.

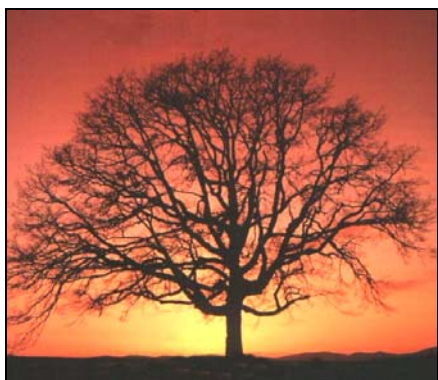
For more information contact Nick Morrice:  
01483 4219005 or nickmorrice@gmail.com

...a forthcoming event at Essex Church...

## “God in Daily Life”

A new Engagement Group at Essex Church

...sign up NOW to express your interest...



We are currently planning a new engagement group to take place this autumn. “God in Daily Life” will be held weekly on six consecutive Monday afternoons, from 2-4pm, starting on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

The group will be based on creative listening and draw on ideas from the book ‘Reflecting with God’ by Abigail Johnson. Members of this group will be asked to make a commitment to attend all six of the sessions and to give a 15-minute presentation at one of them on the theme “How is ‘God’ present in my daily life?” (*please feel free to interpret the word ‘God’ in any way that is meaningful to you*). We also ask that all participants commit to offering other members of the group respectful attention and confidentiality.

We think the group would be enriched by diversity (in terms of age, gender, theology etc.) and we hope to include some participants from outside this church. We also think it will be very helpful if people are able to come to all the sessions. So if we are oversubscribed we will bear these factors in mind rather than just take the first six people. However, we hope to offer the course again next year if there is sufficient interest. If you'd like to know more please speak to Jenny or Jane – Jenny can be reached on the church office phone – 020 7221 6514.

**Jenny Moy and Jane Blackall**

*“We may have good intentions to reflect on the many layers of our lives, but the busyness of our existence tends to take priority over quiet time. Typically we reflect on issues by letting them rattle around in our heads... We reflect theologically when we pray, and in the midst of crisis when we ask, “Why me, God?” We do it when we ask, “Is that all there is?” We do it when we try to bring justice into the decisions we make. Although such theological reflection takes place, it can often be random and unstructured. In this group, we will offer a structured process for engaging in theological reflection by looking at real-life events through a series of questions, which are designed to help individuals to think through situations with the eyes of faith.”*

**Abigail Johnson, in “Reflecting with God”**

## Invitation to Dover

Dover Unitarians offer hospitality to District Churches, Fellowships, Friends and Family on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> August, from 10:30 to 4:00pm

Visitors will be free to explore the nearby town and seafront, to socialise in the hall, listen to music, and gather together for a closing service of worship.

<b>10:30am</b>	Hall opens to welcome visitors
<b>3:00 - 3:45pm</b>	Service of Worship
<b>4:00pm</b>	Tidy-up and departures

Dover Unitarian Church is an easy 8 minute walk from Dover Priory Station, which is approx. 1 hour 45 minute journey from Charing Cross. The handsome and distinctive church has disabled access (through the Hall) and plenty of on-street parking.

Bring your own packed lunch, or buy something from a variety of places nearby. Tea and coffee will be provided (donation 50p).

...a request – and ‘competition’ – from the Unitarian GA...

## Unitarian FAQ



Do Unitarians have six toes? (*or should it be a single toe*)

Can you believe whatever you want?

Is Unitarianism one of those new age religions?

**FAQ** stands for **Frequently Asked Questions**. What are the questions you are asked most frequently about Unitarianism? And what answers you do offer in response (*in 50 words or less*)? Please send FAQs/answers to [info@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:info@unitarian.org.uk) by Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August.....

If one of your Questions and the associated Answer (remember, answers should be 50 words or less) are chosen to be included in the GA FAQ, your name and congregation will appear on the website under your answer, and you will receive a prize and personal acknowledgment from the chief executive.

**info@unitarian.org.uk is awaiting your emails!**



## What's On at Essex Church

(...continued from front page...)

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September, 7-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September, 7-9.00pm  
Adult RE: "Death and Dying" (1/4)

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September, 11am  
District Growth Day at Essex Church  
"Growing in Hospitality and Passion"

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September, 11.00am  
"Harvest Festival"  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September, 12.30pm  
Congregational Lunch

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2.00pm  
"God in Daily Life"  
Closed Engagement Group (2/6)

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 7-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 7-9.00pm  
Reading Engagement Group:  
"The Green Knight"

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September, 11.00am  
Macmillan Coffee Morning

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September, 11.00am  
"Rosh Hashanah"  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September, 12.45pm  
Taoist Healing Sounds

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2.00pm  
"God in Daily Life"  
Closed Engagement Group (3/6)

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September, 7-9.00pm  
Kensington Community Singers

## Dates for Your Diary:

*Future events of note at Essex Church...*

Starting Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2pm  
Community Arts Project:  
"The Fabric of Diversity"  
PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November,  
Visit from Rev. Jane Dwinell,  
UUA Minister and Consultant  
MORE DETAILS NEXT MONTH

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November, 7pm  
'Evensong II' Engagement Group  
MORE DETAILS NEXT MONTH

*Please pick up one of our new – green! –  
flyers in the church foyer for the full listings of  
events at Essex Church this autumn.*

## Sunday Services at Essex Church

### 3<sup>rd</sup> August – "From Self-Help to the Religious Life"

*Service led by Daniel Hughes*

Exploring through devotion and reflection how as members of a religious community we differ from commercial self-help approaches. Is not the maintenance of the 'self' only the beginning for a religious life of self-transcendence?

### 10<sup>th</sup> August – "New Vistas, Strange Shapes"

*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

As the new pavilion next to the Serpentine Gallery in nearby Kensington Gardens attracts visitors from far and wide, in this service I shall explore what such interesting designs can tell us about life and how we might best live it.

### 17<sup>th</sup> August – Service led by David Francis Darling

### 24<sup>th</sup> August – "Carnival"

*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

The famous Notting Hill carnival starts this afternoon and in this service there will be chance to learn more about the religious origins of such events and the valuable part they can play in a community.

### 31<sup>st</sup> August – "Music of the Proms"

*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker and Rev. Joy Croft*

As the Proms concerts continue across the park in the Royal Albert Hall we will be considering the inherent links between music and spirituality. Is there a particular type of music or composer that you think of as 'spiritual'?

### 7<sup>th</sup> September – "Gathering of the Waters"

*Service led by Patricia Walker-Hesson and Members of the Congregation*

### 14<sup>th</sup> September – "Casting Stones: Restorative Justice"

*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

The importance of finding alternatives to prison was discussed at our Annual Meetings back in the spring. Today we will hear more about some pioneering schemes and will consider what justice means to us.

### 21<sup>st</sup> September – "Harvest Festival"

*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

From ancient times people have celebrated the harvest time and today we will be joining in a celebration of nature's bounty at the time of the autumn Equinox. Do bring something to adorn our nature table.

### 28<sup>th</sup> September – "Rosh Hashanah"

*Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker*

The Jewish New Year festival will take place in a few days and in today's service we will be hearing more about Rosh Hashanah and its message of the value of starting afresh. It is traditional to eat sweet foods such as honey cake at this time to symbolise sweetness in the year ahead. What are the sources of sweetness in our lives?