



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: February 2018

What's On...

Thursday 1st Feb, 6.45 for 7-8pm

'Heart & Soul:

'Love is Where You Find It'

Led by Jane Blackall

Sunday 4th February, 11am-noon

'Kindness and Wellness'

Led by Jeannene Powell

Wednesday 7th February, 12.30pm

'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Sunday 11th February, 11am-noon

'Love Hurts...'

Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 11th February, 12.30-1pm

Inclusive Communion

Led by Jane Blackall

Sunday 11th February, 2-5pm

Sunday Afternoon Tea Dance

with Rachel Sparks - featuring a beginners' dance lesson at 2.15pm

Wednesday 14th February, 12.30pm

'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Friday 16th February, 7.30pm

London Playback Theatre:

'Love & Kindness'

Sunday 18th February, 11am-noon

'The Love that Dares Speak its Name'

Led by Harold Lorenzelli

Sunday 18th Feb, 12.30-1.15pm

'Finding Your Voice'

Singing Workshop with Margaret

Sunday 18th February, 2-3pm

'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Wednesday 21st February, 12.30pm

'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Thursday 22nd Feb, 7 for 7.15pm

'Singing for the Spirit'

with Corrina Dolso

Sunday 25th February, 11am-noon

'Cultivating Kind Communities'

Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

**Includes a charity collection:
for Kensington and Chelsea MIND**

Sunday 25th February, 12.45-2pm

Sunday Conversation:

On the theme of 'Love and Kindness'.

Wednesday 28th February, 12.30pm

'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Love and Kindness

A Message from our Minister

'Self-care is never a selfish act - it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch.'

Parker J. Palmer



Our ministry theme for February is love and kindness and one thing I've learnt about love and kindness over the years is that we do well to start with ourselves. It's great to care for others; a life lived only for ourselves may be a lonely existence. But if we don't learn the importance of caring for ourselves, our attempts to care for others may founder.

I wonder how you express kindness and love towards yourself? Are you drawn to feed yourself healthy food or take walks in the park perhaps or ensure you spend time with people you can relax and be yourself with? Do you choose to wear clothes and colours that please you or take long baths, or have a special time of the day maybe when you take a rest and have a cup of tea? Some of us choose to come to church every Sunday and give ourselves that time for quiet reflection!

Once we've listed some of the ways we care for ourselves we're ready to explore some more challenging aspects of this topic. Many of us have a critical inner voice, a harsh task master, who sharply reminds us that we 'could do better' in some area of life or another. Getting to know this inner critic a bit better, perhaps identifying where it comes from or who the voice belongs to, is a way to ease its negative messages. Or maybe we *do* want to listen to the criticism and change our ways, but finding a more loving way to speak inwardly to ourselves is probably more likely to be a successful route towards new ways of being. 'How would a loving friend speak to me about this?' can be a helpful question to ask.

Perhaps we have some habitual ways of being that seem like a treat but now aren't really serving our best interests; patterns of behaviour that are harmful to us. Maybe we can find alternatives that will still feed our yearnings but in a healthy form. Some of us spend years hoping that others will understand what we most need in life and that they'll step in to look after us. It can be a relief to realise that we ourselves are most likely to know what we really need and that as adults we can indeed take care of ourselves. I look forward to hearing more about your ways of caring for yourself. Come along to our Sunday conversation on February 25th and let's create together a Kensington Unitarians list of loving self-care.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

'There are days I drop words of comfort on myself like falling leaves and remember that it is enough to be taken care of by myself.' - **Brian Andreas**

In this month's newsletter...

* Farewell to Peggy Dunnett (1925 – 2017) * 'How I Came to Essex Church' by Bobby Rebeiro * 'The Time of Year' by Richard Levy * Essex Church Membership 2018 * Committee Update * 'A Special Journey Home' by Veronica Needa * Playback Theatre: 'Love and Kindness' * Warden's Column: 'Brian and the Chairs...' * Winter Poems by John Hands and Brian Ellis * 'There is No Plan' by Jeannene Powell * 'Finding a Parking Space' by Sarah Tinker * and more...

Kensington Unitarians

At Essex Church (founded 1774), Notting Hill Gate

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

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

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

If you are aware of any member of our community who is unwell or suffering in some way and who would welcome contact from others in the church, please contact our minister.



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

Office Answering Machine: 020 7221 6514

Email: info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Web: www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Jane's Good News: Accepted for Unitarian Ministry Training



I am thrilled to announce that I have been accepted for Unitarian ministry training, having applied last autumn, and gone through a two-day interview process in early January this year. I have been pondering this step for at least fifteen years and am both delighted and relieved that when I finally plucked up the courage to apply the answer was 'yes!' My training will formally start in September under the brand-new 'transitional training programme' and so the fine details are still being worked out though I expect to be able to carry out my existing role here at Essex Church alongside the training.

While I am sharing my good news... please permit me to show off about something else which hasn't yet made it to the newsletter: after six years of part-time study at Heythrop College I was awarded a first class degree (BA in Philosophy, Religion and Ethics) in the autumn. Sadly I wasn't able to make it to the graduation ceremony due to being struck down with a seasonal bug but my dear friend Katie bought me an academic bonnet for Christmas (pictured, with tinsel!) so that I could at least have a little celebration at home.

Jane Blackall

'Heart and Soul'

Midweek Spiritual Gatherings

Thursdays 1st February, 1st March from 7-8pm

*Gathering at 6.45pm downstairs in the library
Followed by social time and refreshments*



Come and join us for our monthly alternative spiritual gathering, with music and silence, words and prayers, and a chance to explore the evening's topic in relation to your own life. February's Heart and Soul will be led by Jane Blackall on the theme of 'Love is Where You Find It'. This will be followed by refreshments (Jane's home-made cake!) and fellowship. All are welcome to join us. If you would like to know more about our 'Heart & Soul' gatherings at Essex Church email jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting

Stewarding:

4th February: Julia Alden
11th February: Carole Grace
18th February: Brian Ellis
25th February: Juliet Edwards

Coffee:

4th February: Liz Tuckwell
11th February: Maureen Cummings
18th February: Richard Levy
25th February: Helena Coope

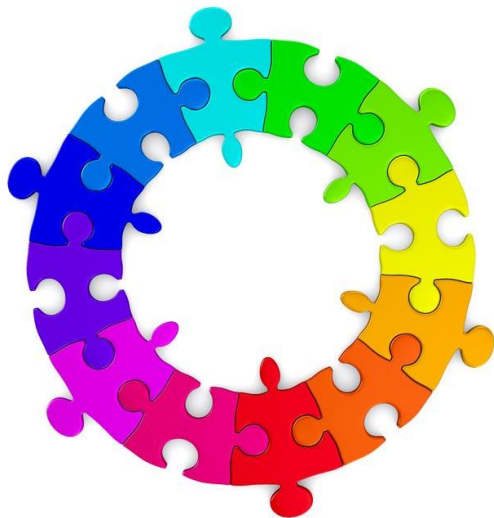
Greeting:

4th February: Maureen Cummings
11th February: Gina Bayley
18th February: Carole Grace
25th February: Roy Clark

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

rotas@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Essex Church Membership & Fundraising Drive



This year we'll be asking everyone to renew their membership of Essex Church by filling out a form that asks you more about you – ways you'd like to be contacted and ways you'd like to be more involved in the work and activities of this congregation. The forms will be available to fill in on Sunday mornings or we'll be in touch by phone or email with you.

If you'd like to become a member or renew your membership and nobody gets in touch with you, then **please let us know**. Your membership matters to us and is a great way to demonstrate your support of our community and all it stands for.

This year we're keeping membership separate from fundraising. It doesn't cost anything to be a member though everybody's financial contributions are very helpful to us. We want to encourage people to think carefully about the financial support they can give our community and if possible to give a bit more.

We've got important projects on the go and are increasing the hours worked by members of staff in order to get more done. Most of our income comes from our lettings but we want to ensure we can afford to continue giving free or reduced price meeting spaces to a range of community groups whose activities we support. We also want to keep our building in tip top condition and that requires lots of maintenance work. This year's two major projects are repairing the garden back wall and having all our electrical wiring checked before installing modern fuse boxes. Not exciting, but very important!

So please look out for our fundraising letter and consider taking out a standing order or making a special donation if you can. Contributing to our Sunday morning collection is also much appreciated. And thank you to everyone for all your financial contributions made in the last year. Your generosity helps to keep our Unitarian flame well and truly alight. (And Juliet our treasurer says: 'Can anyone who's a taxpayer please fill out another Gift Aid form for us this year so we know our records are up to date.')

Rev. Sarah Tinker

How I Came to Essex Church



Raised as a Catholic, I never enjoyed going to mass as a child. Although I've always believed in God, I have found it hard to squeeze 'Him' into all the rules there seem to be about 'Him'. First of all, why is it always a 'He'? Why is 'He' so picky? And why does 'He' seem to have such a fragile ego?

Why does everyone think they know what 'He' likes or dislikes? Why should I listen to what anyone else says anyway? Although that last question may be a common theme in my life anyway.

I slowly came to the conclusion that humans have tried to stuff something infinite and indescribable into terms that are easier to comprehend.

So I stopped going to church. But I didn't stop thinking about (to use Douglas Adams' words) Life, the Universe and Everything. I went to classes on Buddhism, spoke with Muslim and Hindu friends about their beliefs, and even spoke to (and got a little scared by) some born-again. There have been so many enlightened people throughout the ages but as soon as they tried to pass on what they knew, their words are distorted to fit an agenda, until the next enlightened person came along and it all seemingly happened again.

I had never heard of Unitarians before. The only reason I went the first time was because Erica had briefly attended a Unitarian Universalist Church in USA and she noticed Essex Church was just down the road from us.

As soon as I went to my first service at Essex Church I felt at home. I found people talking about emotional and spiritual wellbeing. I didn't feel that anyone was trying to push an agenda. Here, I was freely allowed to find my own path. I saw a community that sits in mindfulness together and who supports each other. I felt, saw and experienced community as lived and I liked it. There was no rigid doctrine to believe without thinking, and yet there was acknowledgement that there may be more to believe than just our thoughts. That's what we found when we started attending a year ago, and that's why we've continued to come back.

We love being part of a community, the opportunities for activism, and that the church is always open to new ideas and striving to make the world a better place. Every time I come to service, I know I will have something new to think about and digest every Sunday!

I think there are still negative connotations associated with the words 'church' and 'God' that stop people from actually coming to explore. We find it very easy to talk to our friends and family about Essex Church and over the year have invited quite a few to check it out. I am surprised that there is not a larger congregation (not a criticism, just an observation) because I feel this is EXACTLY what the world needs, perhaps now more so than ever.

Bobby Rebeiro



Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement Forms

**Third Sunday of the Month from
2-3pm: 18th February, 18th March 2018**

Midweek class on Wednesdays - 12.30-1.30pm

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

Cost £10 for drop-ins (£8 to concessions / church members) or a block of 5 classes for £40 to use within a three month period.

'Finding Our Voice' Monthly Singing Workshops

**Sundays 18th February and 18th March
2018 from 12.30pm to 1.15pm**



Margaret has worked as a professional singer all her adult life and is also a very experienced singing teacher. She is leading monthly sessions to help us all find our voice. These workshops are for anyone who is prepared to open their mouth and make a sound. Margaret will show us how to improve the quality and strength of our voices. Using a few simple exercises we'll gain joy and confidence in singing by learning how to produce and develop the voice, something everyone can do. We'll work with the breath and overcome unconscious blocks that can prevent us singing with our true potential. Fun and achievement are guaranteed and sessions are designed for all, whatever your experience or ability.

Thematic Ministry



Our ministry theme for February is 'love and kindness'. One of the aims of thematic ministry is to encourage people to get involved, to make the theme part of your own focus for the month. Below are some ideas of ways to explore our themes over the next two months. Do get in touch if there's a particular reading or song you'd like to suggest for a Sunday morning gathering or maybe there's a piece you'd like to write for a future newsletter. Let us know. Themes coming up in the near future: March – 'Health and Healing', April – 'Grace', May – 'Natural World / Earth'. Here are some ways you might engage with this month's theme of 'Love and Kindness'.

- Are you familiar with "a love that will not let you go"?
While "God" may be debated among UUs, there is a growing comfort in our movement with the phrase "a love that will not let us go." Does that phrase resonate with you? Is there any way for you to make sense of it? Have you ever had an experience of being "saved by love"? What about the biblical phrase, "God is Love"? How do you make sense of that? An atheist friend says that while she has her doubts about a "God" that loves her, she regularly walks along Lake Ontario and experiences the birds, water and sky "telling her" that she is loved and that everything will be ok. You will never hear the word "God" from her mouth, but she won't hesitate to tell you about "a love that will not let us go." How about you?
- Are you familiar with "a love that calls us to serve needs greater than our own"?
Often we think of *choosing* our social justice commitments. But isn't there also a sense in which *they* choose us? For instance, we're reading the paper and suddenly a story "breaks our heart." We didn't choose that. It happened to us. It called to us. Something clicked and we found ourselves being lured from self-love to love of the other. Somehow we didn't just feel called to serve needs greater than our own, we suddenly experienced the needs and pain of others as our own. Does any of this sound or feel familiar? If so, is this "love"--this experience--leading you still?
- How has 'tough love' shown up in your life? Has someone helped you by calling you to account or have you had to set clear boundaries for another at some point? What did this manifestation of love feel like?
- What has been your 'greatest act of love' in life?

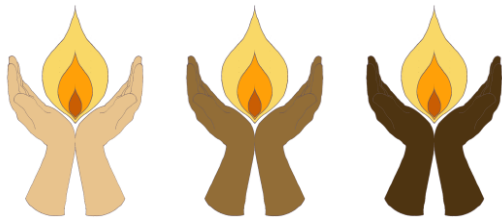
(With thanks to the UUA Soul Matters Sharing Circle for these searching questions.)

Sarah, Jeannene, and Jane

A New Six-Week Course Coming up
at Essex Church this Spring:

'How to be a Unitarian'

led by Jane Blackall and Sarah Tinker



**Tuesday Evenings from 20th March
to 24th April, 7-9pm, in the library**

We're planning a brand-new course at Essex Church this spring on 'How to be a Unitarian'! Of course there are many varied ways to go about it and we'll explore just a few possibilities together over six Tuesday evenings from mid-March to late-April.

Reasons why you might want to come to the course:

- Because you like coming to church... yet you feel a bit hazy about what it means to be Unitarian.
- Because you want to reflect on your own spiritual journey and moral values together with others.
- Because you want to explore the experience of being both spiritual *and* religious in community.
- Because you want to connect more deeply with fellow congregation members in a small group.
- Because you value Unitarianism and you want to play a more active part in helping it to thrive.

Whether you've been coming to church for 3 weeks or 30 years there will be something for you in this course. Even if you don't yet consider yourself a Unitarian, but you appreciate what we do here at Essex Church, and want to come along to the course anyway to find out more, please do sign up – the more the merrier!

We need at least eight people to sign up for this to run (you'd need to be able to commit to at least four of the six sessions) and numbers will be limited to twelve so **please do register for the course ASAP**. Email Jane Blackall (jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) if you would like to sign up or if you have any queries.

'Unitarians are a community of people who take their religion, or their spirituality, liberally. That is to say, we hold that all people have the right to believe what their own life-experience tells them is true; what the prompting of their own conscience tells them is right. We say that each person's spiritual or intuitive experience deserves respect; that everyone's deep reflection and reasoning on religious and ethical questions should be taken seriously. Unitarians form a movement that tries to put these affirmations into practice. Our local religious communities offer a setting where people can worship, explore, and share faith together in an atmosphere of freedom and mutual respect.' – Cliff Reed, in 'Unitarian? What's That?'

Sunday Afternoon Tea Dance at Essex Church on 11th February, 2-5pm



Our tea dances return for 2018 so please save the dates and plan to join us for more tea dances, with social dancing, actual tea and plenty of cake in February when we will be learning some line dances! Enjoy a gentle afternoon learning some basic social dancing steps with Rachel Sparks who can teach even the most left-footed people. These tea-dances are inclusive events for anyone including LGBTQIA+ people and we ask that everyone is respectful to each other. The partnering at these tea dances is gender-neutral, meaning anyone can lead and anyone can follow, and we are completely body positive. We ask you not to wear high heels as we need to protect the floor. You are invited to bring your own home-made cakes (clearly labelled), to raise money for our new nominated charity for 2018: 'Opening Doors London', a charity providing information and support services specifically for older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people over the age of 50.

Tickets: £10 on the door

(free entry to members of Essex Church)

For more information contact: rachel@rachelsparksdance.co.uk /
www.facebook.com/rachelsparksdance

**Save the Dates: Sundays 6th May,
23rd September, 9th December 2018**



Hucklow Summer School

'How, Then, Shall We Live?

Living, Dying, and Considering our Legacy'

18th-25th August 2018, The Nightingale Centre
Great Hucklow in the Peak District



Hucklow Summer School brings fellow Unitarians together and allows them to get to know each other deeply and form lasting connections. The core purpose of summer school week is religious education: we focus on matters of religion and spirituality and intend to draw out and develop the potential of all participants. We aim to provide a carefully balanced programme, offering a rich mix of activities for both the heart and head, and a wide variety of optional sessions including country walks, poetry, discussions and crafts, which participants might 'take home' and try out in their own congregations and communities. We also ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for relaxed fellowship and fun during the week!

Theme Talks: with Jane Blackall, Michael Allured,
Rob Gregson, Helen Simpson, and Bill Darlison.

A Choice of Daily Engagement Groups:

'Crossing and Dwelling: Marking Paths and Making Places'
with Claire MacDonald and Mark Stewart

'The Soulful Road'
with Kate Dean and Elizabeth Harley

'Tell Them Stories and Everything will be Well'
with Dot Hewerdine and Katie McKenna

**'A Journey through the Valley of the Shadow:
Love, Loss & Remembrance'**
with Danny Crosby and Jef Jones

Children and Young People's Programme
with Claire Maddocks and Izzy Rosenberg

Basic Cost for Adults (*shared room*): £520

Please visit our website for further details and an application form:
www.hucklowsummerschool.co.uk

Some bursaries are available to help with the cost of attending and if you are likely to need financial support in order to attend we would appreciate it if you would get in touch ASAP for further funding advice. Please speak to Jane Blackall or email info@hucklowsummerschool.co.uk.

LDPA Autumn Quarterly: Save the Date

'Circles of Connection'

An Introduction to Engagement Group Facilitation Skills

Saturday 15th September 2018 - 11am
arrivals for an 11.30am start until 3pm
(followed by worship and refreshments)



The term 'Engagement Groups' is given to a particular style of Unitarian small-group activity which has the intention to enrich the spiritual life of participants, cultivate right relationship, create community, and deepen participants' connection to each other and to their congregation. In this taster session at Essex Church, led by Jane Blackall, we will introduce some basic principles of Engagement Group facilitation, and give some pointers to further training opportunities and resources, in the hope that participants will be inspired to set up new Engagement Groups in their own congregations.

You'll need to book in advance for this workshop (though the training is free of charge) so the organisers know how many people to prepare for, but you are also welcome to arrive at 3.00pm to attend a special worship service on the day's theme of 'Circles of Connection'. This will be followed by refreshments and time to socialise with everyone. Finish time around 4.30pm.

To book a place on the workshop or find out more, please contact Jane Blackall on jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk or phone the church office and leave a message on 020 7221 6514.

'Kindness is a gentle form of love. When kind to others, we demonstrate the very best of what it means to be human. It takes practice, persistence, patience, and wisdom, and seldom comes without a price. But it has a big payoff. It is truly a full life that kind and caring people live. Kindness nourishes the mind, the body, and the spirit of both the giver and the receiver. It is an opportunity to act in a way that is essentially and ultimately Divine.'

Harold G. Koenig

Committee Update



Our first meeting of 2018 got off to a flying start with new chair Roy Clark keeping us all to task and possibly setting the record for a meeting drawing to a close within the hour. Or it may be that so much work has been going on quietly all the time here at Essex Church.

New (or rather returning) treasurer Juliet Edwards and Jenny Moy are speeding on with the necessary work for the financial year end. The 4% pay increases for staff are about to be implemented. Jenny Moy our warden is returning to a four day week with greater responsibility for building work and Jane Blackall's hours are being increased to three days a week and she will be specifically working on membership and community engagement, along with a shared staff goal for 2018 of improved documentation and ensuring all necessary policies are in place.

The sharp-eyed amongst us will have spotted all the work that Brian Ellis has been doing to clean and renovate our much appreciated brown chairs – all 148 of them! With shiny cleaned chrome and tightened screws, their next improvement may be re-varnishing the wooden armrests. Some trial chairs have been put into circulation to see if their new varnish is sturdy enough for church use. So do have a good look at the chair you're sitting on next time you're in church. Best not ask how many blobs of chewing gum had to be removed from the underside of some chairs. But five blobs was the record number found on one chair. We think they may have been there for many years when the church was used as an examination centre because we know that Unitarians would never leave chewing gum beneath a chair! Thank you, Brian, for all your work in keeping the church shipshape.

The meeting noted with pleasure what a successful series of events we held to celebrate Christmas and the winter solstice and how well decorated the church looked at this dark time of the year. Thanks to Jenny for her decorating skills, to Jane for all the organising and to Arda who stood in for Jenny for a few weeks and quietly got on with lots of little tasks.

Thanks also to our children's group who first noticed that one of the heating pipes in the library was leaking. That is now mended and we do appreciate everyone who tells us when something needs fixing. In a busy building like ours things are bound to need attention. We are at last giving up on trying to mend the old and temperamental dishwasher and are searching for another one to fit into the same space. If you do notice anything that needs action, or if the church cupboard is running short of supplies on Sundays, you can email Jenny on warden@kensington-unitarians.org.uk or push a note under the office door.

We're still looking for volunteers to take on occasionally cleaning our tablecloths and full training can be given on wax removal. Or maybe you would like to provide some new tablecloths, preferably washable.

The committee next meets on **Thursday 15th March at 7.00pm** and we invite everyone to give their suggestions or thoughts to a member of staff or of the committee beforehand.

'Singing for the Spirit'

Thursdays 22nd February and
22nd March from 7.15-8.15pm
Here at Essex Church



I've been using music from the Taizé tradition and other western music prayer chants, some with sacred texts accompanied on keyboard, and other simple acapella chants and rounds. The idea is to create a mild meditative state through the repetition of the songs followed by a short period of silence providing an atmosphere which is both informal but reflective. I provide the sheet music and I aim to keep the melodies simple enough to pick up instantly allowing room for people to add harmonies if they choose. There is no charge to attend, and if you'd like to come next month, and have a favourite chant then please bring it to share with the group! Please email me if you have any specific questions: corrina.dolso@btopenworld.com

Corrina Dolso

Biodanza Bayswater

Dance as if No-One's Watching!

Express, connect, relax with Biodanza, the brand new way to move your body and give your brain a holiday. No steps to learn, no partner needed. For all ages from 19 to 90 – it's like a 'yoga of dance'.

Weekly classes 7.30-9pm on Tuesdays at St. Matthew's Church Hall, 29 St. Petersburg Place, Bayswater, W2 4LA. For more information call Peter on 07951 964 942 or see his website:

www.biodanzabayswater.wordpress.com

Peter has offered to run a session of Biodanza here for us - perhaps one Sunday afternoon - so do let Sarah know if that is something that interests you.

Some Photos of Christmas Festivities at Essex Church



Kensington Unitarians gathered for a group photograph after our Christmas carol service on 17th December 2017.



A quiet moment during our Candlelit Christmas Eve service (we were taken aback by the huge turnout of about 60 people!)



A small group from the congregation went out for dinner at the Mall Tavern across the road after the Christmas Eve service.

David and Ruby's Little BIG Show



*A fun-filled cabaret of song, smiles,
and music that you know and love*

Sunday 11th Feb, 6.30pm

**Essex Church, 112 Palace Gardens Terrace
Notting Hill Gate, W8 4RT**

**Tickets £10/8 on the door, or book online
www.ticketsource.co.uk/davidkent**

Life Lesson

Typical of the period

My mother wore a black and grey-striped
Skirt, green top, and a black basin-hat with a grey goose feather
And I held her hand. We were apparently waiting for
The solid-rubber wheeled bus with outside stairs which
We never climbed together. Then it happened.
The bus came, but before we got on a terrific
Bang and crash as a saloon car tries to nuzzle past it but
For no explicable reason rose up like a camel on its front wheels
Then turned over and over from stem to stern.
Then total silence: as everyone watched and waited

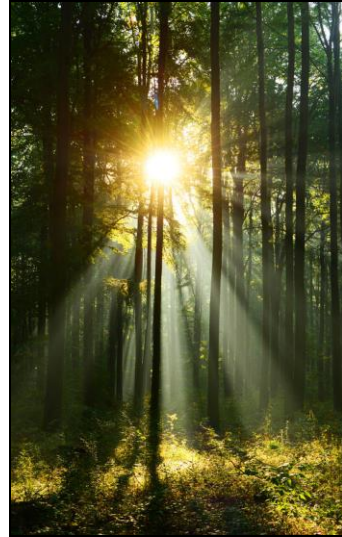
For the occupants to struggle out like beetles
From under a stone; pushing open recalcitrant doors.
A bystander ran over to help them: I think another
Helped a woman crawl out, then, so wonderful for me
To see, two other people hopping like frogs
Round and round picking up scattered coins – mostly
Silver. The woman stopped too, studying the blood streaming
Down her leg. The bus stopped waiting, and with a heavy cough
Of its engine, as if to indicate it needed to move on
Drove haughtily away.

Not yet at school

It was for me a life-long lesson: always remember
Cars are a comfort, and cars can maim, even kill. So
Be ready to sit back, or suddenly take off.

John Hands

Woods at Kew



enter with sunlight
or rain or wind
but do not go in haste
(the spirit of a wood moves slowly)
do not go in disquiet
(the spirit of a wood is at peace)
be silent
(the spirit of a wood is a whisper)
be gentle
(the spirit of a wood is maternal)

you will be welcomed
the spirit of the wood
accepting your presence

enter with night
but with respect
(the spirit of a wood is wise)
be innocent
(the spirit of a wood is your guardian)
be courageous
(the spirit of a wood is passionate)

you will be embraced
the spirit of the wood
nurturing you while
you grow the roots
and unfurl leaves
of understanding
before your dawn

Brian Ellis

'Kindness is found not just in actions and in words,
but also in inaction and silence. We may not often
think about that because it's hard to notice. After all, if
someone bites his tongue and doesn't make a
cutting remark, we will never know we could have
been hurt but were spared by his kindness. But the
Sufi rule of speech is a good one — if we all used
kindness as a "speech barrier", much less negativity
would be verbalized.'

**Will Glennon,
Random Acts of Kindness Foundation**

Farewell to Peggy Dunnett (1925-2017)



At the end of 2017 we were sorry to hear of the death of Peggy Dunnett, Born in 1925 and named Augusta Margaret Diane Fuller, Peggy was the daughter of Irish parents and was, with her mother, a member of the Dublin Unitarian Church, at the same time as our very own Stephanie Saville and her family. Better known by her stage name, which she took in homage to her mother, the actress Margaret Cummins, Peggy Cummins was an actress of enormous talent, who was spotted very early and who began her acting career in the Gate Theatre, Dublin, and attended the Abbey School of Ballet. Her great-grandfather was James Franklin Fuller, an architect who designed such castellated castles as Kylemore Abbey and Ashford Castle, as well as working on many nineteenth-century Church of Ireland churches throughout the country.

In 1938, on her 13th birthday, Peggy Cummins made her West End debut in a children's revue called *Let's Pretend* and began appearing in films during the Second World War. Peggy was given a lead role in a 1947 mystery called *Moss Rose*. During her time in Hollywood, she moved in the same circle as Cary Grant and John F. Kennedy (long before he became President) and acted with Rex Harrison in *Escape* (1948).

Before leaving Hollywood, she made *Gun Crazy* (1949), playing the femme fatale in a noir classic still revered in the history of the cinema. The story of a gun-obsessed boy and girl, who go on a rampage, predating that in the more famous *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), this film, shot on a shoestring, was hugely influential on later film-makers in Hollywood and, in France, on the directors of the *Nouvelle Vague*.

On returning to Britain, Peggy Cummins married Derek Dunnett, a seed merchant, in 1950. She appeared in many films, including *The Love Lottery* (1954), with David Niven, and *Hell Drivers* (1957), with Stanley Baker and Sean Connery. In the early 1960s, she retired from acting and devoted her time to her family and the independent charity, Stars Foundation for Cerebral Palsy. Her later life was shared between the Sussex countryside and a flat in London.

Peggy died after a short illness on 29th December 2017, and is survived by her son David and daughter Diana. David and his family attended our Christmas Eve service and were touched by the warm welcome they received here at Essex Church. After an Anglican funeral service Peggy was interred on 19th January 2018 at Herstmonceux (East Sussex), alongside her husband, who died in 2000. Peggy's love of life and enthusiastic support of many good causes will ensure that she is well remembered by all who knew her.

*With thanks to Barbara Wright of the Dublin congregation
for her words which we have adapted.*

Unitarian General Assembly (GA) Annual Meetings



**4th-7th April 2018 at the DeVere Staverton
Estate, Northampton, NN11 6JT**

The Annual Meetings is a residential conference where over 300 Unitarians come to meet, worship and socialise together over a 3-4 day period. Decisions are made by voting delegates and full members about the direction of the Movement.

The cost of attending the entire meetings is £399 (adult rate) if you book by 14th February. After this date there is a £50 late booking surcharge. There is a special, and very generous, 80% discount for younger people (aged 17-39) who are not attending the meetings as a delegate. There is also a children's programme running alongside the business events.

For more information speak to Sarah, Jane, or a committee member, or see the website for booking:

unitarianmeetings2018.com

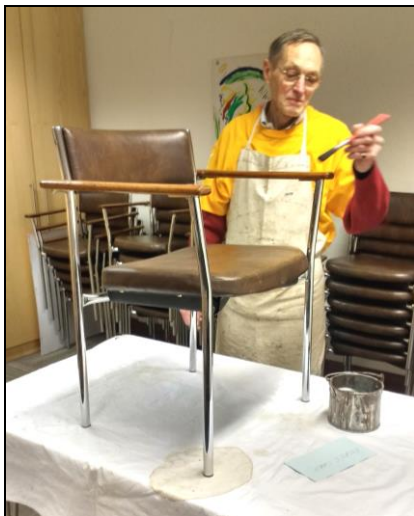
Winter Solstice



summoned by the long dark
into the last dwindling days
we fall with the fading year
but will rise
to saddle again the riding
of another dream
round our allotted time

Brian Ellis

Warden's Column: Brian and the Chairs...



We have approximately 150 chairs in the building and over the Christmas break Brian set himself the heroic task of polishing all their chrome to a radiant shine – something I'm pretty sure has not been done since they were purchased 40 years ago.

He's now embarked on the even more epic project of sanding and re-varnishing all the wooden arms. Brian also managed to source a supplier of the little plastic stoppers that go at the end of each leg and prevent the sharp metal from damaging the floor (or the arms and seats of other chairs).

Over the years many people have asked where we got our chairs, but as the saying goes "They don't make them like that anymore" so it's great to see them finally get the tender loving care they deserve – and hopefully they'll continue to serve us well for many more years.

One of their greatest fans is our neighbour Piero, who practices his tai chi here when we have a room free and sometimes does a night security check for us if me and Sarah are both away. He even asked if he could buy one to have at home. We were reluctant to lose any, but there was one frame where the chrome had actually corroded and Brian had the bright idea of taking some defective parts from others and making a custom chair to give him from parts we wouldn't miss.

So the chair Brian's working on in the photo has

- the tarnished frame
- a chipped arm
- blistered seat back (probably from being pressed against a hot radiator) and
- a small tear in the side of the seat cushion (which Brian has mended with brown tape)

It's a bit reminiscent of Frankenstein's monster aesthetically, but it should be just as comfy to sit in as all our other chairs – which is what Piero wants it for.

Thank you Brian – a real labour of love!

And if anyone else is feeling inspired by Brian's example to give some TLC to part of the church fabric – I know Sarah is always looking for volunteers to iron candlewax out of the church tablecloths . . .

Jenny Moy

'Love and Kindness' A Playback Theatre Performance Friday 16th February, 7.30pm at Essex Church



We invite you to take this opportunity of exploring feelings, memories and stories around LOVE and KINDNESS... or perhaps their absence at times in your life. What happened? And how have we experienced KINDNESS, or its lack, in our everyday lives or on special occasions? February is the month of LOVE and a way to reflect on our wintry thoughts and prepare our spirits for renewal and the blossoms of spring.

It is also the First Day of the First Month of the Year of the DOG in the Chinese Zodiac! So let's together also celebrate Chinese New Year!

London Playback Theatre is also back at Essex Church for performances on third Fridays in April (20) and June (15).

London Playback Theatre Company is a team of internationally experienced professional theatre practitioners, consultants, educators and therapists. We work with audiences in the telling and re-playing of their stories. We offer performances and workshops which provide a safe space for individual voices to be heard and collective themes to emerge. Through the spontaneity and vibrancy of improvisational techniques, we create theatre which engages audiences – body, mind and spirit. Our work offers opportunities for participants to deepen their understanding of each other and to develop authentic ways of communicating. We honour the multiplicity of voices in any group or context.

www.londonplayback.co.uk / londonplayback@gmail.com



The Time of Year



As a Pagan and practitioner of magic the rhythms of nature play an important role in my life; though this is not unique, many faiths and people feel the same in different ways. We recently celebrated the Winter Solstice, a time when we prepare for the winter cold but also the promise of the rising sun; what some pagan faiths call the child of promise: The birth of The God.

In Egypt this was the God Horus, and to the Persians and even Romans this was Mithras and to the Christians it was and remains, Jesus; which why he celebrates his birthday with so many other deities.

With the hope of new light we spend this time wrapping up, drinking hot drinks and creating light. This can be through the flames of candles or the LED Christmas lights we decorate our trees and houses with. If you think about this time of year we see (albeit earlier) the festival of Diwali and then Chanukah, all festivals of light.

We embrace the darker part of the year, bringing in our own light and preparing for new life to come from death. Some people are unfortunate enough to suffer from depression this time of year, as the darkness eclipses their inner light as it does with the outer. It is for this reason bringing in the light means so much, not only bringing in flames and actual lights but of hope and celebration.

We take the time to focus on the hearth and home but also prepare for the next celebration in February: that of Imbolc. Imbolc welcomes the spring that will start in March and is Sacred to the Goddess Brigid, later canonised as a Saint by the Church.

Perhaps the part of this I find the most important is the introspection that darker times bring as well as our own responsibility to bring in the light to our homes, ourselves and others. We cannot rely on the sun so we have to rely on ourselves and others. To take responsibility and to create light makes us truly co-creators and is a simple way to produce magic and to work with divinity. In this way we are all our own Priests and Priestesses, in this way we are all magicians.

Richard Levy

The Winter Face of Trees



The winter face of trees is spare, translucent,
When lovers meet beneath their naked boughs
There is no foliage to foil the pleasure of their greeting.
Stern winter trees have form, have character
Which summer's easy green conceals.
Through the interstices of their twigs new forms
New possibilities emerge we had not seen.
Summer's leafy paradise protects us
With the pleasures and deceptions of the green.

John Hands



'Twilight of the Sphinxes' - mixed-media collage by Eliz Beel

A Special Journey Home

I left London on Christmas Day on a jet plane back to my original home – Hong Kong. It was a journey to Asia which included the wedding of a dear god-nephew in Singapore, some teaching in Shenzhen, and a chance to see old friends in Hong Kong. On the last Sunday of my time there I gathered a motley lot of people together from different periods of my life and treated everyone to a performance of Playback Theatre in the garden of my great friend from primary school days - John Bowden. John made a traditional English High Tea for us all to have after the performance. I invited Encounter Playback Theatre – a group I know well whose original members were trained by me – to perform for us. I would normally have been on the stage as conductor or a performer, but after 27 years of teaching this wonderful performance form, I just wanted to sit back and enjoy it as a regular punter!

John's home is rather unusual in Hong Kong – a house in the New Territories of Hong Kong, which in our youth was deep countryside and farming land with cows and chickens. Now even trees and gardens are rare here with so many buildings mushrooming everywhere. When John came to live here the rent was very low because nobody wanted to be so far away from the city centre! His own design business was on the brink of bankruptcy, so he had to downsize his living costs massively. 17 years later, he is now working for Microsoft and owns this house, which he had initially rented. The original owner lives opposite and liked John's good character so much that he was happy to sell the property to him, to continue having him as a neighbour! And this really is unusual as John is a 'gwailo' – a foreigner. In the performance that afternoon, John came forward to tell the story of the very tall tree in the garden. It is enormous now (you see it behind us in the photograph) and he told us he put it in the ground 15 years ago as a very small plant – about knee high. It is now so big he has been told the roots threaten the house. He wonders if he should be finding a new home soon, or should he seriously contemplate cutting the massive and beautiful tree down? The performers played it all back to us with an actor taking the role of the tree and saying some things from its perspective! We all looked up at the tree with new eyes after this!

Wing Hong Li, my colleague who co-founded True Heart Theatre with me in London 12 years ago, now lives and works in Hong Kong for the Academy of the Performing Arts. He met his wife Cynthia in London when we were all part of the Camden Chinese Community Centre. Now they have a precocious and delightful son Lear Berry Li who came forward to tell the last story that afternoon. He spoke of his hero – Spiderman. He is inspired by Spiderman to do good things in the world. It was the first time he told a story in a Playback Theatre performance. And he thoroughly enjoyed it!

I had several ex-members of True Heart Theatre there that day. Wing Hong and Cynthia were members from the very early days. Paul, Celeste and Chen Yi were performing with me in London just a few years ago when they were living here on Working Holiday Visas. You will have seen them on stage at Essex Church when True Heart had regular performances here. Now my True Heart Theatre group is on a long sabbatical. And London Playback Theatre, my other group, is performing at Essex Church more often now.

When I left Hong Kong so many years ago to train as an actress and then make my home here in London, I vowed quietly in my heart that I wanted to be a cultural bridge between Hong Kong and the UK. In many ways I have fulfilled this dream across the years. It is something sweet to savour when I see these recent photographs.

This coming Friday 16 February is Chinese New Year. We say goodbye to the Rooster and welcome in the Dog. There will be a performance at Essex Church by London Playback Theatre on the theme of Love and Kindness. Come and join us, and also enjoy some treats special to our Chinese New Year celebrations!

Veronica Needa

Playback Theatre is an improvisational performance form first introduced to the world in 1975 by the first Playback Theatre group in upstate New York. By creating an atmosphere of trust, the team invites the sharing of true stories from the audience, enabling deep connection and conversation through the vehicle of this theatre art. Now there are many hundreds of groups around the world performing in a rich variety of contexts – go to www.playbackschooluk.org for more information. True Heart Theatre (with the capacity of performing in three languages – Cantonese, Mandarin and English) has served the London Chinese Community since 2006 – go to www.trueheart.org.uk. London Playback Theatre will be performing here at Essex Church on the third Friday evenings of February, April and June this year.



Encounter Playback Theatre team with Ckan, the conductor, talking to the audience.



I put the audience on the decking, and the performers were on the ground level.



John Bowden, me, my cousin Michael Chow, and Richard Harris – a friend from secondary school - in front of that massive tree.



Ckan, our conductor with Lear Berry Li sitting beside her in the Teller's Chair watching the actors play out his story of wanting to be Spiderman.

'There is No Plan'

by Jeannene Powell

From the service on Sunday 14th January

The service is also available online as a podcast.

This idea of there being or not being a great plan, an ultimate order and grand scheme is something I find intriguing. And I'm going to briefly tell you about a couple of interweaving concepts I've grappled with when it comes to this, starting with a theological one, and then a more down to earth one.

The theological divine plan I was introduced to at a young age, was from Catholicism. That Jesus died for our sins, so that we could have a chance to go to heaven. That if we did all the right things, made amends for our wrongdoing and believed in him, we'd have eternal life. As a child I didn't really grasp the idea that this was a belief about what happened *after* someone died, I just held onto the idea that this gave me a map of my life to follow, that if I could always try to do the right thing, be honest, generous and helpful amongst other things, I'd be in with a chance of living my life forever.

As I grew older I didn't really think about it, but this theology - or at least my understanding of it, shaped and influenced my actions and decisions throughout my younger life. Often filling me with guilt when I didn't live up to fulfilling the idea of a perfectly good life, especially as "Jesus had died for me and my sins!" But in growing into adulthood I started to unconsciously realise that this promise of eternal life, as I'd viewed it, wasn't the case. That when exploring the topic of Death, whether through a Death Cafe event or hearing of older relatives dying, I became aware of an inner sense of pointlessness - "What's the point in being good, in trying to "do the right thing" all the time if I'm just going to die anyway" I'd ask myself?

It actually wasn't until the end of last year, when studying a theology course at Roehampton University, that this penny dropped and I realised that the feelings of pointlessness arose from my childhood interpretation of Catholic theology. It was quite an enlightening realisation, and I'm still uncovering and encountering the impact of letting go of those deeply internalised beliefs.

But a sense of there being a "greater plan" that one puts certainty and faith in, doesn't just have to be tied to religion and religious thinking. Societies and cultures worldwide have their own versions of this. And the one that became illuminated for me a few years back, was from the messages from parents, school, society and media that our lived lives have some kind of defined and definite pattern and order to it. That we grow up, leave school and get a job, marry, buy a house and have children, work until retirement age, enjoy our retirement, and then when we're really, really, really old, at the end of our lives, we die. You may have your own version of this life timetable you were told.



And although my life didn't quite fit into this template, I thought that it worked as a pretty good structure and road map through life. But when a fairly young and healthy close relative died suddenly, it threw my whole sense of life timetabling out. Especially the part that says that only older people die! I realised that people can die at any time - long life's not necessarily granted for anyone, myself included. Up until that point, I'd made personal plans many years ahead, but with his death I realised that nothing was a given. - how was I to live with this reality?

And just as importantly, I wondered how I was going to form a sense of meaning in my life, especially when this truth, that there are so many things about life that I have not one ounce of control over, was really being brought into focus for me.

I concluded that in fact, "Life is just a series of random events". And it was scary.... no, it felt terrifying. The timetabling that western society had handed me about my life, fell away. The overhang of childhood Catholic teaching, of what happens after death fell away. I let go of the plan, the plan that I was going to strive towards a place in heaven (if there was a heaven at all), that good people in life get rewarded, baddies get caught and death only comes at the end of a long and happy life - this isn't the movies after all, this is real life. And the only thing I could be sure about was what was happening in the here and now.

So it's been a journey, and one I continue on. But thankfully a journey I don't travel alone. As a member, here, of Kensington Unitarians, I'm thankful at discovering and finding ways I can bring meaning to my life and the events which happen in it, in the company of others, without it being as a result of some sort of external divine plan. And exploring what it is to truly live, knowing that time is finite and limited. It's a work in progress, not just for me, but in its own way, for us all. So let's continue to help each other on our journeys, as meaning makers, in this "No Plan" life.

'During the season of Lent, you give up things in your regular life in order to make room for something bigger that would otherwise get pressed out. You could be making room for the values that sustain you, the ones that keep you going through busy times and through hard times. You could be making room for that which is most important to you, the foundational, defining things in your life that you may have overlooked the rest of the year. You could be making room just for honesty, honesty about who and what you are, and who and what you owe your allegiance to. You could be making room for possibility, so that the things outside of your regular purview can find a way to enter your life. And – and this is what I most recommend – you could be making room for divine love to enter into your presence, and do its magic work of transforming you and healing you. You could make room for God. In fact, in my theology, making room for God, and making room for love, and making room for that which is most important, and making room for those things of most value, and making room for possibility, and honesty – these are all making room for the same thing. And making room for this conglomerate of things, which seem like they could be separate but really are the same, is the purpose of Lent. It isn't really your job to figure out what you're making room for. It is more your job to just make the room and see what happens.'

UU Minister Rev. Megan Foley (*Lent begins on 14th February*)

'On Finding a Parking Space'

by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Adapted from the service on Sunday 14th January

The service is also available online as a podcast.

Having just sung that altered version of the old Victorian hymn, 'all things bright and beautiful', let's remember the verse we'd not hear sung these days:

*'The rich man in his castle, The poor man at his gate,
God made them, high or lowly, And order'd their estate.'*

Hmmm, all things not quite so beautiful after all. Economic injustice the world over is a mean and ugly aspect of human existence and I hate the thought of it being justified in any way as part of God's plan for humanity. But economic injustice is perhaps too gloomy a topic to tackle this early on a Sunday morning so let's think instead about finding a parking place. Or if you're a sensible Londoner and wouldn't dream of polluting our capital city's air with a combustion engine, this reflection could equally apply to finding a seat on a crowded Tube or bus.

So do you have any secret ways of finding a parking place or getting a seat on a bus? I shall not name them today but various members of this congregation, indeed one time members of our committee, steadfastly believe in the services of the parking fairy who can be activated by drawing circles in the palm of your hand and quietly muttering 'find me a parking space'. Apparently it never fails.

So you can imagine how pleased I was to find the cartoon that we've used on the front of today's order of service from the ever delightful pen of Dave Walker of Cartoon Church. It shows a car park sign telling desperate shoppers that there are spaces still available but they've all been pre-destined to people who prayed for them in advance.

CartoonChurch.com



Pre-destination – the idea that a super-natural, meaning beyond the natural world, entity is watching over us and has already decided what's going to happen next – this is an idea that has long been part of religious thinking. And that's hardly surprising. This world has always been a scary place. Things happen unexpectedly and are clearly often out of human control. It's logical then to imagine that some greater force than us is in charge of events. And even though that isn't how I view the world nowadays, I have at times had a sense of being guided in life, of there being connections between myself and other people beyond my comprehension. I wonder if you have had such feelings of being guided at times in your lives?

To think the opposite – that that there is no plan, that any sense of meaning in life is created by us rather than any higher power, that demands greater responsibility from us poor humans. For me it does not mean that we will all turn into self-seeking brutes who do whatever we choose. It means we have to grapple with complex issues of causation and power. We have to think about free will and what that really means. Yes we may seemingly have free will to choose our next steps but we must never forget that circumstances of birth play such a significant part in shaping most lives. Some people's freedoms are seriously limited by economics, by health, by politics, by gender, by country of birth and so on. Much of life is random I think, chance plays a greater part in all our existences than we probably imagine – and yet, paradoxically, we do have some power over our own situations.

Discoveries in the rapidly developing field of neuroscience have helpfully told us what pattern seeking minds we have. When our computer breaks down or we stub our toe, when we miss an important train ride or we come down with a cold, or we make circles in our hand and soon afterwards find a parking place – we may try to make sense of it by attributing causation to inanimate things – 'oh I wasn't meant to go to that meeting', or 'I need to have a rest and not use the computer so much'. There's nothing wrong with this kind of magical thinking until it starts to rule our lives and disempowers us. And in truth perhaps humanity has always been hedging its bets – just in case God doesn't send a rowing boat to rescue us as we perch on a roof to escape the flood, like the foolish man we heard of in the story earlier on. The quotation from Professor Stephen Hawking found on the front of today's order of service, 'I have noticed even people who claim everything is predestined, and that we can do nothing to change it, look before they cross the road,' reminds me of the delightfully pragmatic Islamic proverb – 'trust in Allah but tie up your camel'.

So I look forward to hearing how you get a parking place or a seat on the bus. Is there a magical incantation you could teach the rest of us?

Some Questions to Ponder...

- What do words like luck, fortune, fate and destiny mean for you?
- Do you consider yourself to be a lucky person?
- Do you think we 'make our own luck'?
- Do you have rituals that you follow and that it's important for you to maintain in order to ensure your good fortune?
- What part does superstition play in the ways you live your life?
- Do you think there is a 'plan' for your life?
- Is anything in life pre-destined do you think?
- How significant do you consider 'chance' is in human existence?
- Have you ever prayed to find a parking space or anything similar? Did it work?

Services at Essex Church in February



Sunday 4th February, 11am – ‘Kindness and Wellness’

Service led by Jeannene Powell

Drawing on the findings of Dr David Hamilton, we'll be starting this month's theme of "Love and Kindness" by looking at some of the effects kindness has on ourselves, not just emotionally, but on our physical health too.

Sunday 11th February, 11am – ‘Love Hurts...’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Love hurts... and heals, is hard work and also effortless. Join us for an 'Anti-Valentine's Day' celebration of love in all its contradictory forms. And why not plan to stay at church all day! This service will be followed by a small-group communion led by Jane at 12.30pm, an inclusive tea dance led by Rachel Sparks from 2-5pm, and 'David and Ruby's Little BIG Show' cabaret from 6.30pm.

Sunday 18th February, 11am ‘The Love that Dares Speak its Name’

Service led by Harold Lorenzelli

Harold says: 'In this morning's service I will be looking at aspects of love and how the paradox of vulnerability can help us become richer, stronger human beings.' This will be followed by Margaret's 'Finding Our Voice' singing lesson at 12.30, and Nia Dance at 2pm.

Sunday 25th February, 11am – ‘Cultivating Kind Communities’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Let's consider what we can do next to create kindness in community here at Essex Church. This service will include a charity collection for the local mental health charity Kensington and Chelsea Mind. The service will be followed at 12.45pm by our regular 'Sunday Conversation' on this month's theme of 'Love and Kindness'.

Inclusive Communion

Sunday 11th February at 12.30pm



Once a month we hold a small-group communion, after the main morning service, downstairs in the library. A team of volunteers take turns in leading the services so we experience a variety of approaches. Jane Blackall will lead in February. All are welcome to participate. If you would like to find out more about these services then please feel free to speak to Jane or Tristan.

Good Cause Collection of the Month Kensington and Chelsea



Collection on Sunday 25th February

Mind, the mental health charity, works to improve the lives of people suffering from mental health problems. Their website states: 'We are here to make sure anyone with a mental health problem has somewhere to turn for advice and support. Our vision is that of a society that promotes and protects good mental health for all and that treats people with experience of mental distress fairly, positively and with respect. Social inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. Our mission is to provide information and support to empower people experiencing mental health problems. We campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote a better understanding of mental health problems. Our network values underpin all that we do: Together we are open, responsive, independent and unstoppable.'

For more information see: www.kcmind.org.uk

Recent Charity Collections:

October – London Air Ambulance – £91.03

November – Red Cross: Rohingya – £176.76

December – Glass Door (Local Homeless) – £575
(including £175 donated by the One Light Gathering)