



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: October 2018

What's On...

Wednesday 3rd October, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Thursday 4th October, 6.45 for 7-8pm
'Heart & Soul: Faith'
Led by Brian Ellis

Sunday 7th October, 11am-noon
'Why are we Here?'
Led by Jeannene Powell

Wednesday 10th October, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Sunday 14th October, 11am-noon
'Our Unitarian Faith'
Led by Sarah Tinker & Jane Blackall

Sunday 14th October, 1.00-5.00pm
**'How to be a Unitarian'
Afternoon Workshop**
Led by Sarah Tinker & Jane Blackall

Wednesday 17th October, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Friday 19th October, 7.30pm
**London Playback Theatre:
'Living Our Faith'**

Sunday 21st October, 11am-noon
'The Call'
Led by Sarah Tinker

Sunday 21st October, 12.30-1.15pm
**'Finding Your Voice'
Singing Class with Margaret**

Sunday 21st October, 2-3pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Wednesday 24th October, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Thursday 25th October, 7-9pm
Management Committee Meeting

Sunday 28th October, 11am-noon
'Celebrating Life'
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 28th October, 12.45-1.45pm
Sunday Conversation
on 'Living Our Faith'

Wednesday 31st October, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Thursday 1st November, 6.45 for 7-8pm
'Heart & Soul: Peace'
Led by Jane Blackall

Living Our Faith

A Message from our Minister



If someone was watching our daily living, would they recognise our faith? I reckon they would. But it's worthwhile doing an audit of how we are putting our faith into action from time to time, both individually and as a congregation.

From the moment I first met the Kensington Unitarians trustees I recognised the choice they'd made to have our building be USED. With some 40 different groups using our building for their activities each month, and hundreds of people walking through our doors every week, this choice has consequences. We need our staff to keep the whole place running, some of whom really need to live on site to ensure nobody gets locked in the loos overnight. We need volunteers to help us keep the place shipshape, as well as professional builders to maintain the fabric of the building. Caring for our building and making sure it's run efficiently are ways we put faith into action as we care as best we can for our earth's finite resources.

Buying fairly traded biscuits, tea and coffee are a tiny step towards awareness-raising in our economically unjust world. Jenny our warden and I quietly vet the groups who ask to use our building. They need to comply with regulations on safeguarding and the like. They also need to be in accord with our values, especially in recognising the inherent worth and dignity of all people. We try to be good neighbours and support local people, businesses and other churches. Recognising something of God in everyone we meet is a daily challenge in crowded central London but we try not to curse the litter droppers and misusers of our limited car parking spaces too harshly. 'It could have been us.' How is your faith revealed in your daily living? Here are some answers from a Unitarian group:

- I volunteer in a local charity shop and seeing all that clutter has made me much more thoughtful before I buy anything new.
- I call in on a housebound neighbour each week just to check if they need any shopping doing. It's good to have a chat over a cup of tea.
- We've started lending out garden equipment in our street and it's great to have the lawnmower and the shears used more often. Now we chat to people more than we used to.
- I'm doing all I can to avoid single use plastic, but it's a lot harder than becoming a vegetarian.
- Starting the day by sitting quietly for 15 minutes has made a big difference to how I deal with stressful work situations.
- I'm trying to monitor how quickly I jump to conclusions about people I've only just met.
- On Sundays I try and talk to new people even though I'm quite shy.
- Rescuing spiders and asking people not to kill them has become very important to me. They are living creatures, just like us.

I'll look forward to hearing more this month about ways we each put our faith into action.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

In this month's newsletter...

- * Report from LDPA Quarterly: 'Circles of Connection' * Memorial Booklet for Stephanie * 'Egyptimisms' Artwork by Eliz Beel * Book Now for 'How to be a Unitarian' Workshop
- * Ministry Training Update by Jane Blackall * 'Justice Like Water' by Sarah and Enea * Photos from Our Sunday Afternoon Tea Dance * 'My Source of Delight' by Liz Tuckwell
- * London Playback Theatre Return * 'Living Invisibly' by Jeannene Powell * 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

Sunday Conversation

Sunday 28th October: 12.45-1.45pm



On the last Sunday in the month we will have our regular conversation on the monthly theme which in October is 'Living Our Faith'. Please bring lunch and stay behind after the service.

Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



Stewarding:

7 th October:	Rebecca Hope
14 th October:	Gabby Chanteloup
21 st October:	Julia Alden
28 th October:	Brian Ellis

Coffee:

7 th October:	Juliet Edwards
14 th October:	Sue Smith
21 st October:	John Hands
28 th October:	Helena Coope

Greeting:

7 th October:	Estelle Pataki
14 th October:	Maureen Cummings
21 st October:	Abby Lorimier
28 th October:	Juliet Edwards

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

'Heart and Soul'

Midweek Spiritual Gatherings

Thursdays 4th October and
1st November 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. In October, with the help of Brian Ellis, we will be exploring 'Faith: One syllable, Five letters, Big subject'. The contemplative hour will be followed by time for refreshments (home-made cake) and fellowship. All are welcome to join us. If you would like to know more please email jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

'How to be a Unitarian'

Sunday Afternoon Workshop led by
Jane Blackall and Sarah Tinker



Sunday 14th October 2018 from 1.00-5.00pm
Here at Essex Church – BOOK NOW

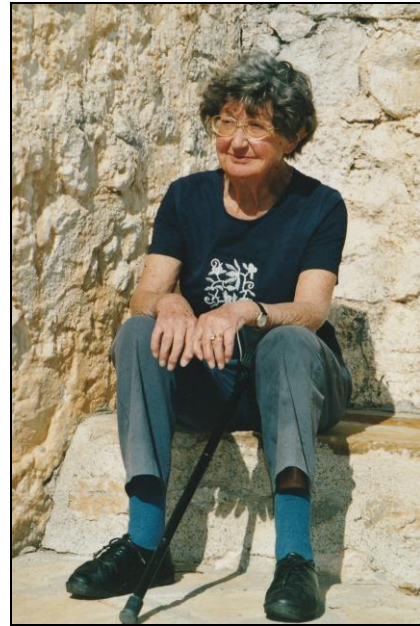
For those who missed our recent course we're offering another (somewhat abridged) opportunity to find out 'How to be a Unitarian'! Of course there are many varied ways to go about it and we'll explore just a few of the possibilities together in this Sunday afternoon 'taster' workshop.

Reasons why you might want to come to the workshop:

- 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. 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 anyway to find out more, please do sign up – the more the merrier! Numbers will be limited so **please do register for the workshop ASAP**. Email Jane (jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) if you would like to sign up or if you have any queries.

Memorial Booklet for Stephanie Saville



We have put together a small booklet containing memories of Stephanie Saville to distribute at Stephanie's memorial service. If you were unable to attend, but would like a copy, get in touch. Here are a few brief excerpts from the memorial booklet:

'Stephanie was certainly a force to be reckoned with within the church community... she became one of the staunchest supporters [of Jill's social work project] as well as an ever-encouraging and warmly-appreciated friend to me personally.'
– Jill Inskip

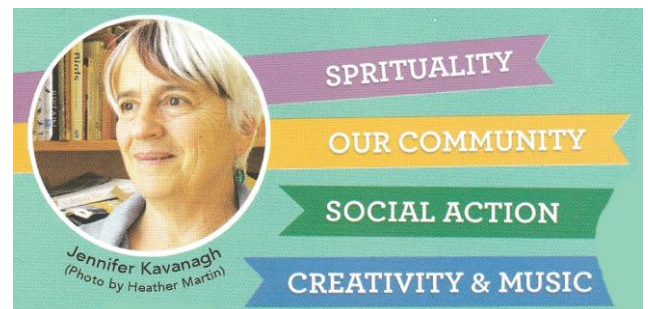
'Stephanie was a hugely intelligent person, but she didn't approach every problem in life through her intellect. She was equally open to signs and portents and intuition – to trusting the fundamental mysteries of life.' – Jenny Moy

'Stephanie's presence at church was a reassuring affirmation of permanence amidst change... We miss her commitment and presence during our times of worship.' – Harold Lorenzelli



15th-17th February 2019 by the Seaside
Chatsworth Hotel, 17-23 The Steyne, Worthing, BN11 3DU

find time for your soul – experience inspiring worship
explore, discuss, create – meet lots of new people
enjoy some good food and relax by the sea



The Theme Speaker is Quaker author Jennifer Kavanagh: who will be sharing thoughts on 'Sustaining the Beloved Community'. Basic cost per adult is £275 (single occupancy full board). There are some bursaries available and reduced rates for double occupancy. Children under 12 cost just £64 in a shared room. It is possible to come as a day delegate. **To register see: www.fusefest.org.uk (deadline 31st January).**

Thematic Ministry



Our ministry theme for October is 'Living Our Faith'. 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 theme over the next month. 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: 'Peace' in November, 'Birth' in December and 'Risk' in January, when we start a new year of thematic ministry here at Essex Church. Here are some ways you might engage with this month's theme of 'Living our Faith':

1. What does faith mean to you? How has the meaning changed for you over time?
2. How does your faith show up in your life? In your thoughts? In your actions?
3. Think of a time when you lost your faith. What did that look and feel like? Have you told that story to other people? If you regained your faith how did that come about?
4. What is the difference for you between faith and optimism? Faith and hope? Faith and belief? Faith and trust?
5. Psychoanalyst and social philosopher Erich Fromm wrote, "To have faith requires courage, the ability to take a risk, the readiness even to accept pain and disappointment. Whoever insists on safety and security as primary conditions of life cannot have faith." Does that have some relevance for your life at this time?

With thanks to the UUA Soul Matters sharing circle for some of these ideas.

Sarah, Jeannene, and Jane



We Are All One

Towards Universal Spirituality: Journeying with Christianity

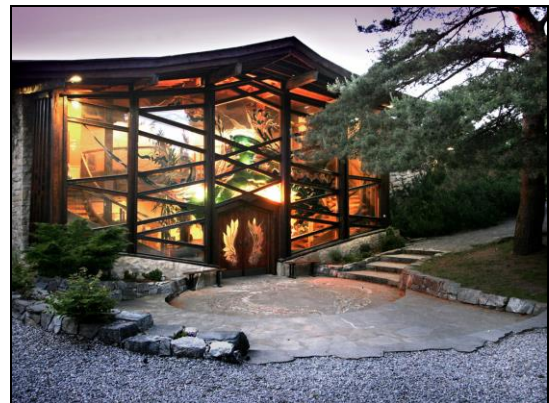
Saturday 3rd November, 10.30-5.00pm
Christians Awakening to New Awareness
(CANA) Conference - Here at Essex Church

'For those who are awake the cosmos is one' – Heraclitus
'That all of them may be one, Father, just as you
are in me and I am in you.' – John 17.21

Leading-edge science now confirms what the mystics have said. The world and its diversity emanates from an underlying one intelligent consciousness. How does science show this? What does this mean for my spiritual beliefs and practices? Can we now come together for a future that provides for the flourishing of all life? We will explore this quest together, to include speakers Jude Currivan, Don MacGregor, Diarmuid O'Murchu and Marianne Rankin.

Cost: £40 (concessions by arrangement)
For details see: www.cana.org.uk

Findhorn Unitarian Network (F.U.N.) Experience Week



'Come and Find the Quiet Centre' Northwest Scotland, 11th-18th May 2019

What: The Findhorn Foundation is an independent community whose members aim to live sustainably and to develop spiritually as individuals. The F.U.N. Experience Week is your chance to participate in this unique experiment in alternative living with fellow Unitarians from across the UK.

Where: The Findhorn Foundation is located outside the town of Forres, on the Moray Firth in picturesque Northwest Scotland.

Who: For information please contact Jo O'Sullivan (convenor) on 07780676212 or findhornunitariannetwork@gmail.com

'Our learning with other Unitarians provided an especially supportive and fun time resulting in life-changing insights through Love in Action, Inner Listening, and Co-Creation with Nature... a truly heart-opening experience.' - Judy Senior Whitehead

LDPA Autumn Quarterly: 'Circles of Connection'

An Introduction to Engagement Group Facilitation Skills

The title for this autumn quarterly meeting of our London and South East District (LDPA) congregations could not have been more apt: Circles of Connection. These quarterly meetings are open to all and are a pleasing opportunity to meet old friends and new. Jane and Sheena did a brilliant job in making facilitation skills easily understandable for everyone and in helping us see that any small group activity in a congregation can be structured in such a way to deepen connection - with ourselves, with one another and with that which we hold to be of ultimate worth. Book groups, walking groups, groups enjoying cultural outings, as well as the more traditional Unitarian groups designed to explore our faith, all groups can be run using these engagement group principles. The simple guidelines and principles of forming a covenant together ensure that a group feels safe to participants and does what it's intended to do, rather than being hijacked by the loudest voice or the person who thinks they're right. We use these simple structures for staff meetings here at Essex Church - with time to check in and check out with each other - and it really does help to deepen relatedness between us. Thanks to Jane and Sheena for running such a professional and accessible workshop and sending us all home inspired with ideas for groups we could organise in our communities. Do come and join us at the next London District quarterly meeting.

Sarah Tinker



Some Encouraging Feedback from Participants in the Training Day:

'I found the workshop extremely interesting and informative. Jane and Sheena were excellent facilitators. Thank you for giving us a chance to try an engagement group out. I found that extremely beneficial. I've attended engagement groups before at Summer School and at Kensington. What was so good about having a taster, in the midst of a workshop, was that I was able to see the whole process, that is from both the facilitator's side and the participant's. I came away from the workshop with an eagerness to run one. I particularly liked the ground rules. I've attended many self-help, spiritual and therapy groups where ground rules are used and yours are undoubtedly the best. Thank you so much for an exceptionally good day.' – Kassandra Britton, Golders Green Unitarians

'Thank you both for the Engagement Groups Course on Saturday. I really enjoyed being there and I would argue that even a short engagement group can have quite an impact! I learned that there is a significant difference in the role of facilitator in Unitarian Engagement groups rather than therapy-style groups where the facilitators 'hold themselves back' and are not part of the group process but 'holding' it. So that was insightful at a number of levels for me. It was also nice to be at Essex Church for a 'Unitarian' event instead of only OneSpirit events which have been the reasons for me being there a few times in the past.' – Jenny Miller, Godalming Unitarians



London Playback Theatre



London Playback Theatre came to Essex Church this year with three performances on the congregational themes for that month: 'Love and Kindness' in February, 'Grace' in April, and 'Creativity and the Arts' in June. It's been a privilege for myself and my London Playback Theatre team to come to Essex Church with these performances. We have offered several in past years too ("Let's Talk About Refugees" on 29th October 2015, and on 13th September 2012 as part of The Forgiveness Project). And then my other Playback Theatre team – True Heart Theatre – came here for regular performances until I retired the True Heart team in June 2016.

The original purpose of Playback Theatre is in direct service to the community, and many of my Playback Theatre colleagues in the USA are Unitarians too. So creating these opportunities here feels in absolute alignment with our mutual commitment to taking practical action for generating personal/social/political transformation in this troubled world we live in. We do this by inviting us all to remember our own selves – in our wholeness: our experiences in everyday life as well as our special moments never to be forgotten or even memories hidden until that time with us. And by listening deeply as a performing team, we use the power of theatre art as a way to mirror back – and honour – those stories which have been shared in the public space. So as an audience member you are not in the spotlight unless you choose to put up your hand to share something. And if you just come to watch you will anyway be engaged in the whole experience as friendly witness. Oh... and there is always the lovely tea/coffee and yum yums (biscuits and savouries tidbits) that is available after the performance to encourage everyone to stay and have on-going friendly conversations!

London Playback Theatre returns to Essex Church from the Autumn, and in 2019, January, April, May & June. We offer our performances free of charge and welcome donations.

London Playback Theatre Return: 'Living Our Faith' on Friday 19th October, from 7.30pm - here at Essex Church

In October we'll explore 'Living Our Faith': 'How do we choose to live in alignment with our values and beliefs... especially in those times when we are not living the life which feels right for us?'

Web: www.londonplayback.co.uk/
Email: londonplayback@gmail.com

'One of the blessings of growing older is the discovery that many of the things I once believed to be my shortcomings have turned out in the long run to be my strengths, and other things of which I was unduly proud have revealed themselves in the end to be among my shortcomings. Things that I have hidden from others for years turn out to be the anchor and enrichment of my middle age. What a blessing it is to outlive your self-judgments and harvest your failures.'

Rachel Naomi Remen

Good Cause Collection of the Month:

Glass Door: London Homeless Charity



Collection on Sunday 28th October

As London's largest emergency winter night shelter, Glass Door provides a safe, warm place to sleep for about 120 men and women every night in winter -- from November to early April. We are able to do this thanks to partnerships with churches across the boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Wandsworth and Richmond. Guests of our emergency shelters also receive a hot supper and breakfast in the morning, cooked and served by volunteers. These free services are a life-line to those who would otherwise be sleeping on the street. Our dedicated caseworkers also offer year-round advice, advocacy and practical support to help find solutions and get people back on their feet. Thanks to our partnerships with Chelsea Methodist Church, Ace of Clubs and the Vineyard Community Centre, guests of these drop-in centres can have lunch, do laundry, take a shower, and speak to a Glass Door caseworker. Glass Door not only saves lives by providing refuge from the cold, we also help our guests build more stable futures. Our annual Sleep Out in the Square fundraiser is happening on October 5th but we are also more than happy to receive donations throughout the year.

For more details see: www.glassdoor.org.uk

Recent Charity Collections:

June 24th – Unitarian General Assembly – £137.62

July 29th – Artspace (Mental Health) – £93.61

August 26th – Animal Free Research UK – £136.96

Sept 15th (LDPA) – Red Cross Syria - over £165

Sunday Afternoon Tea Dance – Festive Special

Sunday 9th December from 2-5pm – Here at Essex Church

with a dance lesson for beginners at 2.15pm led by Rachel Sparks



Photographs from our recent tea dance on Sunday 23rd September when Rachel taught everybody the rumba.

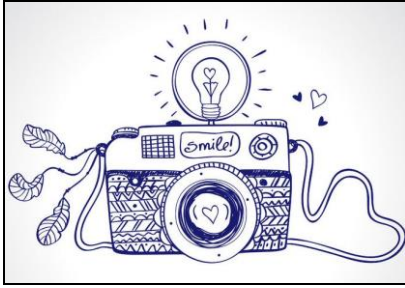
Rachel Sparks returns once more this year so please save the date and plan to join us for another tea dance, with social dancing, actual tea and plenty of cake! Enjoy a gentle afternoon learning some basic social dancing steps with Rachel who can teach even the most left-footed people. These tea-dances are inclusive events with a particular emphasis on welcoming 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 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: £12 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: 10th February, 5th May, 22nd September and 1st December 2019





Updating Our Photo-Board in the Church Foyer

You may be aware that we have a photo board in the church foyer with pictures and names of congregation members and regular attenders. This is particularly helpful for new people but also for any of us who struggle with remembering names! If you are willing to have your photo taken please find Jane after a service and she will do her best to take a picture you approve of. Alternatively you can email a favourite head-and-shoulders photo to jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk. We are also hoping to take a group photo of the whole congregation after the service on Sunday 15th October (the same day as our 'How to be a Unitarian' workshop).

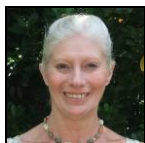
'Egyptimisms' – Artwork by Eliz Beel

It has been discerned by arts researchers that the ancient Egyptians had been one of the great originators of the effective use of Silhouette in their Arts practice. In this selection of repeated profile heads re-created as from these eras I have shown here against a background of enlarged scarab wings how a more modern black and white silhouette can be a great contrast in terms of being cool, outright... Appearing even to highlight up the almost surrealist vision that Egyptians sought to achieve in their mask creations. However, the pigments that the Egyptians were able to command were fairly limited as the boiling powers of the Amun sun tended to prevent more subtle colours being created that were strong enough for large scale work. Nevertheless, architecturally, this was an advantage to the Egyptians as even here they were able to use such a limited palette to their advantage. As can be seen once again, this method was fairly effective in the rendering of patterns in their paintings thus giving some sensation of movement going through them, as exemplified in their immense tomb interiors that were often created to be found deep beneath their Pyramids.

Eliz Beel



Committee Update



Gina



Roy



Juliet



Bobby



Brian



Heidi



Harold

Our trustees met on September 13th, with a next meeting scheduled for October 25th. The September meeting completed all its business within an hour, which is possibly a record.

Trustees were glad to receive staff reports as usual and were impressed to hear that Jane, Jeannene and Sarah have planned service themes throughout 2019 and worship leaders for the entire year. This may be a record for Unitarian congregations nationally but it's best not to boast.

We approved donations to Lewisham Unitarians of £100 towards the costs of replacing their vandalised rainbow flag and holder, and £200 towards the fundraising efforts of Brighton Unitarians, whose building requires at least £70,000 worth of repairs.

Membership forms will be available throughout October and we invite any new attenders to consider joining our congregation. Have a chat with one of our trustees or members of staff when you're next at church to find out more.



Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement Forms

**Third Sunday of the Month from
2-3pm: 21st October, 18th November 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.

Warden's Column:

Q: How Many Unitarians Does it Take to Change a Lightbulb?



A: Five (or, to be more precise, 2 Unitarians, a Quaker, a Lithuanian and a pianist!)

A few times a year - and generally in the run-up to Christmas - Sarah and I replace any burnt out lightbulbs in the church. Due to the height of the ceiling, this is quite a palaver - involving an especially tall ladder which we store in the garden shed. More recently, Brian has started helping manhandle the ladder into position (pun intended :-)) while I do the bulb swapping and Sarah works the switches.

On this occasion, Gitana was also around (she cleans on Tuesday afternoon as well as Saturday night) to offer her invaluable supervision and we also had the benefit of a live soundtrack from the professional musician who lives opposite and pops in to practice on our Bechstein. Moreover, I was trialling a new pair of shoes with thin rubber soles and separated toes, which seem ideally suited to running up and down ladders (Vibram FiveFingers VI-B Fitness Shoes if you'd like a pair).

I cannot say which of these factors made the difference, but when I optimistically tried replacing the bulb in the socket that's been dead for several years now (2nd row from the garden door, third light down) low and behold it lit! Sarah broke into spontaneous song ('Magic Moments' by Burt Bacharach) and I came down the ladder to join her and Brian in a little dance, while our neighbour improvised an accompaniment on the piano. Gitana smiled on us benignly.

Even at the time, I felt we would have been wiser to also change the last remaining bulb before celebrating - so we could enjoy the unique experience of having all the lights in the church lit simultaneously - and sadly my misgivings proved correct, as by the time we'd put the large ladder back in the shed and got a smaller one out to change a blown bulb at the partition end, the one in the dodgy socket had gone out again.

So as sadly you won't now experience the excitement of seeing all the bulbs in the main church roof lit for Christmas, I thought I would use this column to share that 'Magic Moment' in another way...

Jenny Moy

'Living Invisibly'

Address by Jeannene Powell

From the service on 23rd September 2018

The service is also available online as a podcast.

I'm going to start sharing my thoughts on living invisibly, by briefly touching on the stories of three people from the past:

I'll start with Dr James Barry, an army surgeon who served in India and South Africa, in the late 1800's. He rose in rank to Inspector General in charge of military hospitals, which was the second highest medical office in the British Army. He was trained at the all-male Edinburgh University, and spent time as a student at Guys and St Thomas's hospital in London, showing great talent. During more than 50 years of service, not only did he improve conditions for wounded soldiers, but he performed the first caesarean section in Africa, in which both mother and child survived. Being described as man who was short in stature, being just over 5ft tall, there was a lot more to Dr James Barry than met the eye.

Next is Helena. Just as she had, many times before in 1940's Warsaw, Polish Helena Czechowicz popped across the yard from her apartment to buy some food from her neighbour's husband, who'd occasionally have meat and cheese to sell. But on this night, within minutes of her arrival, Nazi soldiers arrived, beating and arresting all those they found and took them to the Gestapo headquarters. The neighbour and her husband were suspected to be Jewish. Two other women were quickly questioned and sent home. Helena was interrogated, asked over and over again about her identity, why she'd been at the apartment, taken to the roof with threats of being thrown off it, and eventually being measured by doctors from head to toe, it was concluded that she was Aryan and released. It was a truly terrifying experience for her, but not only was she thankful at not being found out to be assisting the Polish Underground in relaying information to the British, she was thankful for so much more.

And lastly, Famously known in 1950's America, and considered to be the godfather of exotic music, Korla Pandit, was an early television celebrity who enchanted a nation. This Indian man, with his jewelled white turban, played the most amazing music, simultaneously playing the organ and piano whilst looking wistfully into the camera. It was something the nation hadn't seen before and they were captivated. For over two decades, his regular television show, and numerous albums would gain him fans from coast to coast. What added to the popularity of this musical genius was that he never spoke during his show. And this increased a sense of mystery surrounding him. But this wasn't the only reason he chose not to speak, Korla Pandit also had a tightly held secret.

You might have heard of one or more of these people and their stories before. What you might not know is that what all three of them did was something called, "Passing".

James Barry, was in fact born Margaret Ann Bulkley. As a child in Ireland Margaret had an interest in biology - much to her parents' dismay - as girls weren't meant to like those things. However, it was partly due to her mother that the idea was developed for Margaret to live as a man and train in medicine. At that time women weren't allowed to. So Margaret lived privately and publically as a man for over 50 years. This is how the story is usually told but debate about how Margaret/James would have self-identified is ongoing.

Helena Czechowicz, was actually the identity of a former nurse who had given her Jewish friend Helen Mahat, all her birth and christening certificates, her nursing certificate and other papers that were impossible to buy, so Helen could hide her Jewish identity, be regarded as Christian and not be killed during the holocaust.



And Korla Pandit was born John Roland and was African-American. At a time when segregation was law and all other races had more physical, financial and social freedom than black people, he had to "pass" as a different race in order to bring his gift of music to everyone.

What they did is not unique to these three people. And not to their particular circumstances either. The need to "Pass" as it's known, of hiding part of one's identity, could only have arisen in a society or system which saw some people as less valuable, and others as more privileged.

One definition of passing is: "A person being regarded, as being a member of an identity group, different from their own as a survival strategy. And this often results in privileges which wouldn't be open to them if they were their authentic identity."

And although these stories are about people from the past, unfortunately, we still live in a world, where many need to keep part of their identity invisible, for fear to their safety. Or if visible, they are viewed as invisible by the societies in which they live. This can be due to their racial identity, gender, religion, sexuality or relationship diversity, social class, age, having a disability, being non-neurotypical, or because they're homeless, to name but a few.

The stories I started off with may, seem extreme in their example, but even if not in the same way as them, we've all experienced, I'm sure, at some period in our lives the pain of having to hide something about ourselves, or being treated as if we don't exist.

You might have been left out a social or family gathering, been ignored when you've spoken in meetings, had your opinions discounted. As a child, you might have been left out of teen gamed. You might feel isolated because of your age, as an older person not able to get about as much as you used to, or excluded by your married or partnered friends because you're single?

Or it could be that you've hidden something about yourself, maybe something about your upbringing - that the class you were raised in is different to those whose circles you spend time in now. It could be a physical thing, maybe you have a hidden disability or illness, or even something about your financial status, which you choose to keep to yourself, for fear of the reactions from others.

Whilst there can be benefits to "passing", as exemplified in Margaret, Helen and John's stories, there can be many disadvantages, some of which I'm sure all three of them felt too. Having to conceal one's identity, or parts of it, or not having your identity acknowledged by others can lead to feeling lonely from not connecting with others "like yourself". Or having a deep seated sense of self-loathing. Needing to leave family and friends in order to maintain your secret can be isolating. And continually living with the anxiety of being "found out" and in fear of the ostracism, physical harm or even death, being found out could lead to, can be really stressful and have a negative impact on one's mental health.

'Living Invisibly' (continued)



Hiding part of one's identity also means something else. It means that it's more difficult to openly advocate and give support of others who have the identity you're hiding.

Today, 23rd September, is Bi Visibility Day, a day for the bisexual community, their friends and supporters to recognize and celebrate bisexual history, community, culture and the bisexual people in their lives.

Bi Visibility Day, and other national days, weeks, and months like it, help to bring awareness to groups of people who have had their identities and contributions to wider society, overlooked, ignored and erased from history. And it's one way that the voices of those whose lives and experiences have been discounted, are seen, celebrated, heard and included in society.

In the earlier reading, Omid Safi recalled that there wasn't a category for those who were Muslim, when he enrolled at Duke University. But he was fortunate enough to have felt seen by two teachers in particular. And that made a real difference to his experience of his time there, and his view of himself. He wrote of being taken out for Ramadan breakfast, "It wasn't about the food. And it wasn't about the car ride. It was that Shawkat saw me. He saw me and let me remember that I was somebody." Not everyone is so fortunate.

An "inclusive" society or institution is about more than having a box to tick though, a truly inclusive society is one where all people are brought to the table to have their views heard, considered and incorporated, otherwise, we get what we have, policies enshrined in laws which serve only a few and leave out those who need it most. Or private organisations, carrying out government work, which fail to observe the basic needs of those accessing their services. You may have heard of the disability assessment centres across the country, many of which have been found to be inaccessible to wheelchair users.

A quote also by Omid Safi says, "Institutions are made of people, and sometimes there are those who make the bold decision to see others, to make sure that we are all seen. We have to see all of each other, and we have to see all of us."

We have to see each other. The story from the start of the service, about the old woman whose deed of giving a carrot to someone who was begging, raised her towards heaven and others with her, contained the message that when we see and respond to those who might ordinarily be overlooked, we lift up more than just their lives, we lift up our own and our wider communities too

And there are simple ways in which we can do this. For example when in our places of worship, social institutions and places of work, we can ask ourselves, "Who's not in the room?", "Who's views and opinions aren't being represented?" - possibly people who are homeless, or refugees.

We can ask, "Who's physically here, but their perspectives are ignored?" - such as those who are seen as less well educated than those in charge, maybe.

Ask, "Who's present but whose identity isn't seen in its fullness?" - such as people with hidden disabilities, or bisexual people who are often viewed as gay or heterosexual instead.

And then once answered, endeavour to find ways, of including or acknowledging the missing identities in some form in future.

An example is our hymn books, which only used to reference men, but hymns now read, "Sister and brother", "Woman and man". And our LGBTQ+ training workshop suggested ways we can make hymns also relevant for those who identify as "Non-binary" in terms of gender.

We can't be expected to know, and may never know all the complex identities of our colleagues and neighbours. But what we do know, is that every human being has the right to live in a society where they can be free to show all of their identity without fear of controversy or aggression.

That society doesn't yet fully exist, we still have a way to go. But we've also come a long way too. So let's each do what we can, in our own way, and play our part, so that everyone is safe to be seen.

So may it be.

You can read Omid Safi's full reading, 'The Power of Being Seen for Who We Are' at the On Being blog:
www.onbeing.org/blog



'The body has edges that mark its limits in stretch, strength, endurance, and balance. The flexibility edge can be used to illustrate this. In each posture, at any given time, there is a limit to stretch that I call the final or "maximum edge." This edge has a feeling of intensity, and is right before pain, but it is not pain itself. The edge moves from day to day and from breath to breath. It does not always move forward; sometimes it retreats. Part of learning how to do yoga is learning how to surrender to this edge, so that when it changes you move with the change. It is psychologically easier to move forward than to back off. But it's as important to learn to move back if your edge closes, as it is to learn to move forward slowly as the body opens.'

Joel Kramer

OneLight Gathering: 'Making Meaning'



**Fridays 12th October and 9th November
6.45 for 7pm-8.30pm here at Essex Church**

Led by Interfaith Ministers Rev Alison Trower and Rev Amy Firth this service will include music, prayer, reflection, silence, community connection and the beautiful Threshold Choir. Suggested donation: £5. You are welcome to arrive from 6:45pm and the gathering will be completed by 8:30pm with tea and treats. For more information see the OneLight website which helpfully includes all the resources they use in their gatherings:

www.onelightgathering.co.uk

'Finding Our Voice' Monthly Singing Workshops

**Sundays 21st October, 18th November
from 12.30pm to 1.15pm**

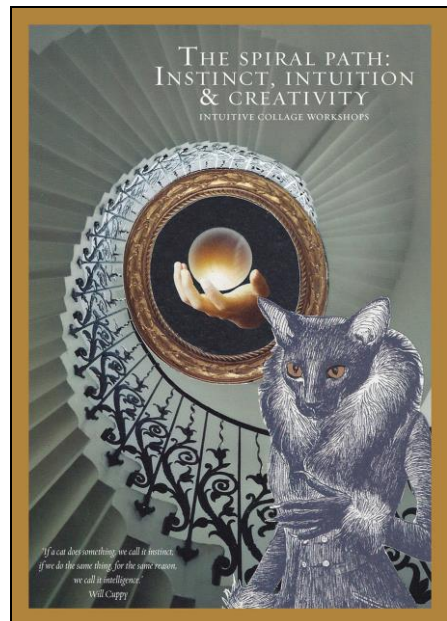


Margaret has worked as a professional singer all her adult life and is also a very experienced singing teacher. She is leading monthly sessions to help us all find our voice. These workshops are for anyone who is prepared to open their mouth and make a sound.

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.

'The Spiral Path: Instinct, Intuition and Creativity' Intuitive Collage Workshop facilitated by Sandra Vigon



**Saturday 17th November, 9.30-4.30pm
Taking place Here at Essex Church**

Using the SoulCollage process; this hands-on workshop will begin/continue (for those returning) to create individual collaged cards that depict, symbolise and honour aspects of the personal, transpersonal and archetypal images that we are drawn to or are called by. By trusting our instincts and following the scent of our intuition, we connect with inner resources. We will also deepen the experience by engaging the images with active imagination. This is both a meditative and playful way of following the spiral path to the interior. No prior skills are necessary.

For more information or to book contact Sandra Vigon, Jungian Psychotherapist and Certified SoulCollage Facilitator: 07913821626 / svigon@sandravigon.com

Cost: £125 per workshop (materials included)

Website: www.sandravigon.com

'If there is a major problem in spirituality today, it may be that we do not do enough to form Christians for resistance to evil. We form them for patient endurance and for civil conformity. We form them to be "good" but not necessarily to be "holy." In the doing of it, we make compliant Christians rather than courageous ones, as if bearing evil were more important than confronting it.'

Joan Chittister

Charity Runners Seek Funding



We as a family (Mike, Yasmin, Monty, Mia and Natalie) want to give back to both the wonderful charities below, who have brought Hugh so much joy whilst growing up. To do this, we have signed up to run the Oxford Half Marathon on the Sunday 7th October. We'd be so grateful for your support to help us exceed our fundraising goal and give something back to these two wonderful charities. You can donate via our VirginGiving page link:

uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Team/TeamHughiePritchard

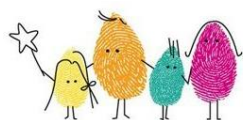
Our son Hugh is lucky to attend the Jack Tizard special school in Shepherds Bush, where the Big Splash Trust provides swimming to all the schools pupils and their siblings. Their priority is to secure funding so that all local children and young people with special needs and their families can also enjoy their state-of-the-art hydrotherapy pool, other play facilities, and arts based activities after school, at weekends and in the holidays.

Hugh is also lucky to go to Shooting Star Chase in Hampton, which is a leading children's hospice charity caring for babies, children and young people with life-limiting conditions, and their families. Not only does Shooting Star Chase offer respite care to families, but they work tirelessly to raise funds to provide once in a lifetime trips and events for children and their families creating wonderful memories.

We would be touched if you could give a donation that will make a positive difference to the lives of all the children and future children whose lives are and will be touched by both these wonderful charities.

Donations can still be made after the Marathon. We'll let you know if we all reach the finish line. Thank you!

Mike, Yasmin, Monty, Mia, Natalie, Hugh and Martha



**Shooting
Star Chase**
Children's Hospice Care



Hucklow Summer School Theme Talks Available Online: 'How, Then, Shall We Live?'



This August about sixty-five people gathered in Great Hucklow for summer school to spend a week exploring the question 'How, Then, Shall We Live?' In a series of four, hour-long, talks a team of Unitarian speakers – our very own Jane Blackall, Michael Allured, Helen Simpson and Rob Gregson – offered a range of perspectives on the question of how we should live in light of the knowledge that we, just like all those who have ever lived, will ultimately die. What does a 'good life' look like? And how can we live a good and faithful life in practice, especially when we find ourselves in challenging personal circumstances, and as troubling world events unfold around us? What constitutes a 'good death' – and how can we best prepare ourselves for dying? And how might it prove fruitful to reflect on our own legacy – individually and collectively – while we are still in the midst of life, or even as we begin to sense that our lives are drawing to a close?

These talks are now freely available online, for you to download and listen to at your leisure, via the Hucklow Summer School website:

www.hucklowsummerschool.co.uk/talks

Church Newsletter Envelope Controversy

Those of you who receive our newsletter by post may have noticed our new envelopes, one side of which is made of transparent plastic. They have some advantages, but several loyal newsletter readers have expressed concern at the use of single use plastic. The advantages? They were VERY cheap. The fact that they are see-through means that some bored postal worker's life may be transformed by the opportunity to read our front page. Sarah optimistically thought they were made of cellophane which is slightly less environmentally harmful, but that's doubtful. We still have about 450 envelopes left to use and that will take us through most of next year. But please be assured this is just a temporary aberration and we'll be generally maintaining Kensington Unitarians' usual vigilance on environmental matters. Let Jane Blackall know if you'd rather not receive a postal copy anymore and she'll send you a monthly email instead to let you know when the next newsletter appears online.

Sarah Tinker

'Justice Like Water'



This is part of a service led by our minister in September as we considered Advantage and Disadvantage as our monthly theme.

There's many an economist and social scientist now warning us that water justice could well be the major issue of this century. As our climate warms and population numbers increase – how shall we distribute a limited resource fairly? I used to teach some geography lessons – not very well I suspect – but I did get the hang of the water cycle and the fact that the water we drink now was once drunk by dinosaurs. There is only so much water to go round.

There's a concept used in systems thinking called the Tragedy of the Commons, which is appropriate here. It's used to describe situations – like a village common in days gone by – where people are sharing a resource. Everyone in the village can graze their cows on the common land and there's enough grass to go round, but if one person decides to increase their herd out of their own self-interest – and someone else does the same – then before too long they will over-graze the common land and eventually may destroy the land that once fed them all. In order to resolve this dilemma of the Tragedy of the Commons people have to be persuaded to go beyond their own individual self-interest and work towards the greater good. To avoid the Tragedy of the Commons requires us to work at the level of morality and values – to find ways to regulate and share resources. When it comes to water as it does to fishing and the emission of greenhouse gases, we have a lot of work to do as a species.

This is economic work, political work; it's also spiritual for me. Because – we are in this thing called life together. The story we heard earlier on of two competing rivers finding themselves merging into one great ocean – that's us. We think we're separate beings, we sometimes feel terribly alone. But in truth are lives are inextricably connected and if one of us thirsts, all of us thirst. This is the spiritual task – to overcome our sense of isolation, our self-focus, and find ways to share our experiences and our resources – whilst we still can.

Sarah Tinker

The 'Justice Like Water' service began with Sarah asking us if we had ever been thirsty, really thirsty, with no chance of finding clean water to drink. Her question reminded Enea of his practice expedition for the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.

'The hardest thing I've ever done'

Five Days, Four Nights: walking about 20 kilometres per day.

That was it. Hard, long, painful, tiring and difficult.

Essentials weren't just 'there'. Clean water, easy comfy food and warmth were a luxury, not an essential. Every time we wanted to drink water it took about 20 minutes to make it potable. It really makes you think how easy is to open a tap and 'voila': 100% filtered water flows into your glass.

By the end of the 3rd day we had all realised that we just needed food. It didn't have to be good; it didn't have to be fresh, it just needed to be edible in order to have energy to carry on our mission. Energy. To have energy. That was the most important thing in order to be able to survive there. In addition to low energy we had 2° Celsius temperatures which didn't help. At 7pm, feeling half dead, we would go into our tents sit next to each other inside our sleeping bags and there it was some fun playing card games before falling into a deep sleep.

Luckily in the morning the temperatures would rise by 5-7 degrees, allowing our hands to thaw out. Unfortunately, for the majority of our expedition it was raining. These wet and cold conditions didn't allow us to dry our clothes and we were all constantly drenched carrying 400-500g of rainwater in our wet clothes in addition to all the food and equipment attached to our heavy backpack.

At the start of this practice weekend I felt anxious. Once we started hiking everything went well, apart from few exceptions, especially when I felt scared that I could've fallen off the mountain cliff. Luckily, everything turned out well and overall I would say that it was one of the best experiences I have had in my life so far. It really showed me how tough it would be to live in those conditions and how, without even realizing, we all live an "easy and cushy life".

I had a fantastic time on this expedition and for sure I would re-do this great experience, especially as friends and I had the pleasure of seeing amazing panoramas up in the mountains. DofE really made me value a lot more all the things I have, like clean water that comes out of a tap whenever it's needed and radiators to dry my wet clothes.

Enea



WATERLOO EAST THEATRE
**LIBERTY
RIDES FORTH!**
COMING OCTOBER 2018

'Liberty Rides Forth!'

2nd-21st October at the Waterloo East Theatre

'Liberty Rides Forth!' is a new musical comedy by David Kent (Leicester Unitarian and composer of the Chalice Meditations). Liberty, a mischievous drag queen, unexpectedly springs to life from the pages of Trevor's new novel. The hapless author is attempting to write a best-seller to win over Susie, the woman he loves from afar; but now suddenly he and the three apprentice Muses sent to inspire him are fighting for Susie's very survival! Visit www.waterlooeast.co.uk for tickets (£20)

My Source of Delight: Writing Fiction



Sarah asked people to write a piece about something they have a passion for or a source of delight. Mine is writing fiction. By fiction, I mean short stories, novellas and novels. I now call myself a writer although I'm still a little hesitant to call myself that when people ask what I do. I'm trying to get over that. I feel more confident about calling myself a writer since I've had two short stories accepted for publication this year. That makes me feel validated.

I went to two friends' sixtieth birthday party the other week and was surprised to find they had a bowl for people to put suggestions in for what they should do with their time, now that they were retiring. I don't need any suggestions on how to spend my time. I know what I want to do most of all and that's write. I have lots of ideas for stories and I want to get as many as possible written. There's kind of a conflict between producing well-written works of fiction but I'm hoping I'm learning how to be both productive and a good writer.

I've been writing seriously now for the last six years. I've been on a fair few writing courses and made some writer friends who share my passion. I want to write every day although I don't always manage it.

I've written since I was a teenager (I wrote a whole children's book when I was thirteen but sadly my dad threw it out when I went to university). I was gutted about that although I'm sure it wasn't very good. I stopped writing when I went to university and started a career. I started again because I went to a talk at the Ideal Home Show by a woman, talking about doing what you really want to in life. Her passion was smoking kippers, by the way. But it made me think about what I really loved doing. So, I started writing again.

I would be very unhappy if I thought I could never write again. It gives me pleasure every day (and I hope other people pleasure when they read one of my stories).

Liz Tuckwell

'The Sea Monster and Its Mate' by Liz Tuckwell

Down in the depths, the ancient sea monster heard the faint mating call. He had thought himself the only one left. Now, hope unfurled his massive coils and made him begin the journey up. Across the oceans he travelled, occasionally catching the call. At last, he reached the south west coast of the British Isles. He boomed out his mating call repeatedly but there was never any reply. At last, sadly, he swam away, and back down to his distant home. He never knew that the foghorn of the lighthouse at Bull Point had been switched off in 1988.

Unitarian Women's Group Conference: 'Empty Pockets'



**19th-21st October 2018 at the
Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow**

Join us for another weekend of friendship and feminism. We'll consider how the negative impacts of austerity measures have fallen disproportionately on women and how we can respond to it. This is a weekend where women learn from each other, share with each other, and nurture each other – and we would love you to be there with us. The programme will be led by Jo O'Sullivan, Sue MacFarlane and Kate Dean. The basic cost for the weekend (accommodation and meals included) is £124. Contact Margaret Robinson to book: margaretrobinson81@gmail.com

A Trip to the Seaside



are we nearly there?

not long now

how long is that?

we'll see it soon

look, the sea! light dancing
on the myriad greens
and silent blues moving
in its eternal rhythms

how long is the sea?

it's more than long

why?

it has width, depth and soul

why?

it's always been so

why?

do you want an ice cream?

Brian Ellis

Services at Essex Church in October



Sunday 7th October, 11am 'Why Are We Here?'

Service led by Jeannene Powell

In the service, Jeannene will be asking, "Why are we here?" Not as a deep theological question, but as a more practical one: why are we here at church today?

Sunday 14th October, 11am 'Our Unitarian Faith'

Service led by Sarah Tinker & Jane Blackall

Linking in with our afternoon workshop ('How to be a Unitarian') this will delve into what Unitarianism means to us and to others.

Sunday 21st October, 11am 'The Call'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Frederick Buechner writes: "Where God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." What is the call now for us, as individuals and as a community?

Sunday 28th October, 11am 'Celebrating Life'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Unitarians are pioneers in creating meaningful ceremonies for life's key stages. Do join us for our All Souls Ceremony of honouring those who have died.



Ministry Training Update



My Unitarian ministry training has now officially started – I went on my first residential weekend with fellow Unitarian students at the start of September – and my first external course (studying alongside Anglicans at the Church Mission Society in Oxford) has just begun. Next week I will have my first session of a three-year course to train in Spiritual Direction. During 2019 I will also have to fit in a part-time placement with another congregation and visits to preach in other churches around the district and beyond. As you can probably gather from this, my life is going to be very busy indeed for the foreseeable future as I juggle these varied and demanding commitments, so you may notice that I'm away from church more often on Sundays. However, I'm still here, and still doing my usual work as Outreach Officer (three days a week), so please do email me whenever you need to, and I'll respond ASAP!

Jane Blackall

Heron by the Thames



still, silently dusk defined
watching the sombre river;
hunched feather ragged old,
wrapped in battled armour greys.

mannered in stillness,
an eye seeing through time
images of her ancestors
fading into their past.

unmoved while I watched,
until a gentle shrug eased
her wings and a dip of head
accepted my presence.

'good evening', I said.
'I'm waiting', she replied
turning back to her vigil,
'for the end of the world'.

Brian Ellis