



Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: November 2018

What's On...

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

Sunday 4th November, 11am-noon
'Pathways of Peace'
Led by Jeannene Powell

Wednesday 7th November, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Wednesday 7th November (time TBC)
Cultural Outing to see 'Peterloo' the New Film by Mike Leigh

Sunday 11th November, 11am-noon
'We Remember Them'
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 11th November, 12.30-1pm
Inclusive Communion
Led by Sue Smith

Monday 12th November, 1pm (TBC)
'They Shall Not Grow Old'
Viewing of BBC WWI Footage

Wednesday 14th November, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Sunday 18th November, 11am-noon
'Building Bridges'
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 18th November, 12.30-1.15pm
'Finding Your Voice'
Singing Class with Margaret

Sunday 18th November, 2-3pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Wednesday 21st November, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Sunday 25th November, 11am-noon
'Roads to Peace'
Led by Sarah Tinker & Lynda Kane

Sunday 25th November, 12.30-2.00pm
Sunday Collage
On the theme of 'Peace'

Wednesday 28th November, 12.30pm
'Nia Dance' with Sonya Leite

Thursday 29th November, 7-9pm
Management Committee Meeting

Sunday 2nd December, 11am-noon
Service led by Jeannene Powell

Give Peas a Chance

A Message from our Minister

We have John Lennon to thank for the song 'Give peace a chance', with its repeated chorus, sung on anti-war marches the world over, 'All we are saying...is give peace a chance'. But nobody's sure who daubed a bridge over the M25 motorway with a similar message of 'Give peas a chance'. That graffiti has only recently been painted over, after twenty years of cheering, or confusing, passing motorists.



The 2017 Reith lectures can still be heard on the BBC's I-Player service for Radio Four: five challenging lectures by renowned Oxford historian Margaret MacMillan on humanity's multi-faceted relationship with warfare. You can also download the transcripts of these talks, collectively entitled *The Mark of Cain*, a reference to the Book of Genesis in which Cain kills his brother Abel, enraged by his father Adam's favouritism. Macmillan's arguments and evidence are fascinatingly varied, as befits a highly regarded academic and a highly complex aspect of human behaviour. The lectures are not comforting, nor do they have one clear message. Warfare is a complicated feature of human societies, which are also marked by remarkable social cohesion and co-operation. In one lecture she suggests that it was only with a settled agricultural existence that human beings became warlike, as only then did they have possessions to fight about. I wish we could find out if that is true.

It's certainly true that warfare is now big business. The UK is the world's second largest arms dealing nation and the majority of our arms exports are sold to countries on the Foreign Office's own 'human rights priorities' watch list. In the month in which we mark the 100th anniversary of the Armistice which brought to an end the ghastly slaughter of the First World War, it is sobering to watch the on-going destruction being wrought upon civilians in Syria and Yemen, with British made weapons playing their part.

Those who actively work for peace have always impressed me. It takes such bravery, and patience, to establish peace talks between warring parties, or to campaign against the arms trade and risk being taken to court for passively resisting.

Perhaps for us lesser mortals the task is to work on the perennial spiritual teaching that 'peace begins within'. If aspects of ourselves are at war with one another, if we find it hard to communicate clearly and lovingly when we disagree with someone, if we cannot imagine ever being at peace with the truly diverse nature of human beings, let's start with us.

In the month ahead, let's engage in some deep conversations about the possibilities of peace and inspire one another with shared delight, or commiserate with one another in shared despair, at all the inconsistencies and incongruities of being human.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

In this month's newsletter...

* Festive Afternoon Tea Dance in aid of Stonewall Housing * 'The Call' by Carolyn Appleby *
New Book Group Proposal from Liz Tuckwell * American Thanksgiving Service with Mark Bowen
* Feedback from our recent 'How to be a Unitarian' Workshop * Congratulations Corrina! *
Film Outing & Screening * 'Active Retirees' Offer from Jonathan Crawford * New Mailing List
* 'Why Are We Here?' by Jeannene Powell * 'Our Unitarian Faith' by Sarah T * 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 Collage

Sunday 25th November: 12.30-2.00pm



Instead of our usual Sunday Conversation about our ministry theme we'll be holding a Sunday Collage session instead from 12.30 to 2pm, with gentle music and chance to create a collage that expresses what peace means to you. All welcome. We'll have art materials and pictures for you to use but do bring any particular images you would like to incorporate into your collage.

Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



Stewarding:

4th November: Estelle Pataki
11th November: Heidi Ferid
18th November: Julia Alden
25th November: Brian Ellis

Coffee:

4th November: Nadia, Enea and Greta
11th November: Maureen Cummings
18th November: Helena Coope
25th November: Liz Tuckwell

Greeting:

4th November: Brian Ellis
11th November: Estelle Pataki
18th November: Juliet Edwards
25th November: John Newton

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

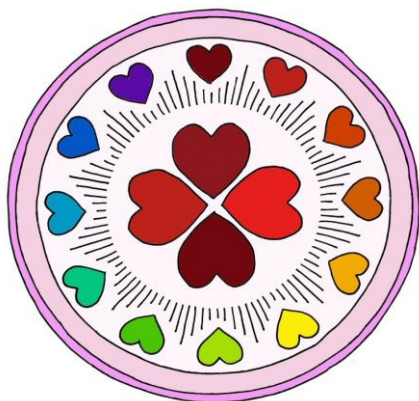
rotas@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

'Heart and Soul'

Midweek Spiritual Gatherings

Thursdays 1st November and
6th December 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 November we will be exploring our monthly theme of 'Everyday Peace' with Jane Blackall. The contemplative hour will be followed by time for tasty refreshments (home-made cake) and fellowship. All are welcome to join us. If you'd like to have a go at co-leading a Heart and Soul session, or doing a reading, please get in touch with Sarah to have a chat and find out more.

'The Call'



TALK TO US
If things are getting to you

Talk to us any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you.

116 123 FREE
This number is FREE to call

jo@samaritans.org
samaritans.org

SAMARITANS

A registered charity

On Sunday 21st October our minister, Sarah, Tinker led a Service titled: 'The Call'. You could listen to the podcast via our church website. It resonated with me because I feel I had had such a call in the middle of July. I got out of bed one morning and my first thought was, 'I'm going to apply to be a Samaritan Listening volunteer again.' I was previously one for a year nearly 40 years ago.

I was surprised to be making this decision but I know what led up to it. And I have not veered away from the idea since. For many months, or maybe longer, beforehand I was feeling I wanted to do something to help those who are struggling financially and full of fear and desperation about it. Those in chronic ill health and losing their Benefits are of particular concern to me because of my own history of health problems. I know some people in this situation and many are people I don't know. The night before I had the inspiration to work with Samaritans a friend, who is always in pain told me that her disability benefit has been cut and it has halved her already limited income. She went on to tell me that she had been to a friend's funeral. He had cut his throat and how sad he had not told anyone how he was feeling. Sadly, such an incidence is not unique. As has been said at Church by others and on the radio (my knowledge source) the number of people committing suicide has increased. This also resonates with me as I have known personally or by association, 10 people who have killed themselves. Sorry, this part doesn't make cheerful reading. But do read on.

If you are in difficult circumstances and need someone to listen there are a number of ways you can make contact for some emotional support. You can ring up any time of day or night on this number from any phone for free: 116 123. It is occasionally engaged but do ring again. Or if you would prefer, you can email jo@samaritans.org . An alternative means of communication is texting. The number for this is 07725 90 90 90. Texts and emails are answered by trained volunteers. The fourth possible way is to visit a branch and talk to a trained volunteer face to face. You can look up a convenient branch to visit on www.samaritans.org Not all branches are open all the time, so you need to check before visiting. With all these ways of getting in touch please be assured that Samaritans are available to listen to you, whatever you are going through. We don't give advice.

Perhaps you feel moved to volunteer in some way? Roles in this charity that I know of so far are to apply to train to be a listener, as I am currently doing, do admin or be a fundraiser or you could help maintain the premises. It can be a useful career move and show up well on your CV, if you get through and stay long enough.

'Samaritans' is a Registered Charity, which was founded in London in 1953 by Rev. Chad Varah. Everyone in the branch where I volunteer offers their services voluntarily and presumably this is the case elsewhere. But the premises of the 201 branches in the UK and Ireland plus the free national phone line needs to be funded so if you would like to donate please look up the charity and do so.

Carolyn Appleby

Festive Afternoon Tea Dance In aid of Stonewall Housing Sunday 9th December, 2-5pm with a lesson for beginners at 2.15pm



Latin, Ballroom and Line Dances for All!

We invite you to a special Sunday Afternoon Tea Dance on 9th December in aid of Stonewall Housing. There will be tea, cake, partner dancing and a few line dances from 2-5pm. All are welcome - complete beginners to life-long dancers alike - and even if you think you have two left feet this will be a relaxed and welcoming space for all to enjoy. The afternoon will begin with a festive-themed partner dance lesson led by Rachel Sparks.

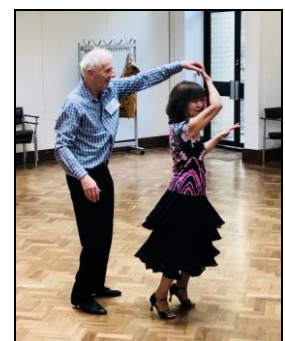
Book now to come to this festive event in aid of a good cause - half of the ticket price will go to Stonewall Housing, a charity providing safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people fleeing violence, harassment and abuse. There's no need to bring a partner so just come as you are - do tell your friends though - the more the merrier! We encourage gender neutral partnering which means anyone can lead/follow during the partner dances. The venue is accessible and has gender-neutral toilet facilities. Tickets are strictly limited and cost £12 in advance (£15 on the door). **Members of Kensington Unitarians get free admission.** You are invited to bring your own home-made cakes (clearly labelled), to raise money for our nominated charity and of course donations to this good cause are very welcome. If you have any questions do email Rachel on hello@rachelsparksdance.co.uk

Book online: www.rachelsparksdance.co.uk/book-online

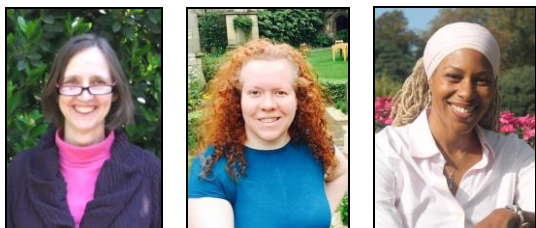
Tickets: £12 in advance, £15 on the door
(free entry to members of Essex Church)

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**



Thematic Ministry



Our ministry theme for November is 'Peace'. 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. 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: 'Birth' in December, 'Choices, Decisions & Risk' in January and 'Stories & Imagination' in February - the start of a new year of thematic ministry here at Essex Church. Below you'll find some suggestions of ways to engage with this month's theme of 'Peace' - with thanks to the Unitarian Day of Peace Worship Pack creators John Carter & Sue Woolley and the Peace One Day organisers for various resources we'll be using this month.

- The Dalai Lama writes that "We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves." Spend time this month observing what feels unpeaceful in your relationship with yourself, if anything. What would it mean for you to be at peace within yourself? What would need to change for that to happen?
- Franciscan priest Richard Rohr writes "You can't start building a bridge in the middle and if you want someone else to take the first step, YOU need to start building it from THEIR side." What individuals and groups do you need to build bridges towards?
- Ask yourself 'What does peace mean to me?' Spend time being creative with this question – express yourself through poetry, art, song.
- Visit the Imperial War Museum and consider the cycles of peace and war in human societies.

Sarah, Jeannene, and Jane

Thanksgiving Service

Sunday 18th November, 5pm
Here at Essex Church with Mark Bowen



Our very own Mark Bowen will be leading an American-style Thanksgiving service here at Essex Church on Sunday 18th November at 5pm. It will be a typical American communion service filled with traditional Thanksgiving hymns and focus on family and friends. In contrast to the American Thanksgiving service at St. Paul's last year, he notes, it is guaranteed to be politics-free! And there is rumour of pumpkin pie in the coffee hour following!

"You don't have to be an American to come along and enjoy the service," Mark wanted everyone to know. "All Kensington Unitarians are invited to join in and experience a different type of service!" As background, the Thanksgiving service is very similar to Harvest Sundays in the UK.

Communion will be open to anyone who wishes to partake and will include both gluten-free bread and non-alcoholic wine available for those who need it.

New Book Group Proposal

Get Involved and Help to Shape this New
Engagement Group at Essex Church



Is anyone interested in starting a book group at church? We would take it in turns to choose a book, fiction or non-fiction and meet to discuss it. The church did have one previously, which ran for a very long time but stopped a few years ago. Having talked to Jane who ran it before, I'd be happy to organise it but we'd need another co-ordinator and at least four people to commit to coming to the first few sessions.

If you are interested: How often would you want to meet? Monthly, or once every two months? The advantage of every two months is that it gives people more time to read the book. Options for meeting would be either on a Thursday evening or on a Sunday afternoon, after church. Which would people prefer? I'd be looking to start the group in the New Year. If anyone is interested, please drop me an email at liz.tuckwell01@gmail.com.

At the recent London District training on running Engagement Groups we heard that it's good to have ideas for groups come from people who'd like to be involved and help run things, so do let Jane, Sarah or me know if you have an idea for a group you'd like to be involved with here at Essex Church.

Liz Tuckwell

'How to be a Unitarian' – Responses to Our Recent Workshop

On 14th October, eighteen people gathered after the service for an abridged workshop version of our recent 'How to be a Unitarian' course – condensed from 12 hours over six weeks to 4 hours in a single afternoon – it was truly a whistle-stop tour of Unitarianism!



I am a bit of a religion geek and just the idea of a 4-hour discussion on the nuances and subtleties of religion makes me jump for joy. There was so much to love about the workshop, it is hard to pick just one thing to emphasise. I loved being surrounded by the friendly, thoughtful, and generous people present in the workshop. I also loved learning that this is just one congregation amongst many with a wide variety of practices that might on casual glance appear contradictory, but when examined closely, parallel the complexity and vastness that is the balance of seemingly contradictory elements that combine to make the person that each of us is, and reflects the very fabric of humanity. And there was cake!

Marc Viera

This was an excellent workshop, genuinely democratic in the way the discussion was allowed to develop from the ideas of the participants themselves. It left me with little doubt that I am at heart 'a Unitarian'. However, one of the main things I took away from the day was the importance of sharing with others as the basis for exploring ideas, values and beliefs, and as a source of encouragement in an often discouraging world. When I arrived I was sceptical as to whether an actual Unitarian 'church' was important or even desirable. Religious institutions do seem to have a habit of becoming rigid and hierarchical, of stifling rather than encouraging personal growth. Yet the very nature of Unitarianism requires the continual exploration of ideas in response to a changing world, something that seems so much more fruitful in the company of others. I am now more than half convinced that belonging to a supportive and stimulating community is an essential part of 'being a Unitarian'.

Anne Spurgeon

The workshop dealt with matters both theoretical and practical. The two aspects of Unitarianism were sometimes shown to be at odds with each other – at other times there was an attempt to create what Marxists call a praxis between the two – a synthesis of theology and action. For me, in a religion which has no creeds the outstanding notion was that the only Unitarian dogma was process – that is a constantly involving change and the fact that Unitarianism is derived from aspects of the Western Enlightenment.

John Newton

Such an excellent and thought provoking afternoon. I came away with a vast number of thoughts to ponder on and information to dig into. Good cake too! My first impression was what a thoughtful and constructive group of people came together and actively participated in the workshop. My second was related - what a great world this could be if everyone was as friendly and tolerant as those present. I found the presentations and discussions on how the common bonds in 'Unitarianism' are about process rather than belief very useful. Whether or not this is 'religious' depends on how the term is defined ... I remain unsure whether I am a Unitarian or a person who goes to a Unitarian church from time to time. I suspect that, were I able to be a more active participant at a place that shared the approaches [fostered at Essex Church], then I would move from attending to belonging. The thin spread on Unitarian groups around the country makes this impractical from our home in Malvern. It was a great experience.

Tim Carter

I found it thought provoking and challenging. My aim is to say with confidence that I am a Unitarian, not just that I attend a Unitarian church. I hope to read more widely to develop my 'Spiritual Literacy' and attend some Unitarian courses to further that aim.

Maureen Cummings

I want to thank Jane and Sarah for such a stimulating and thought provoking course, which clearly involved an incredible amount of work to prepare. I think it was the wrong title! Very much an under-sell with the title 'How to be a Unitarian' – perhaps 'Everything you always wanted to know about Unitarianism' – and/or 'Personal Challenges for your Unitarian Faith' instead!!! We were told this had previously been a 12 hour course – quite some feat and a great idea to reduce it down to a 4 hour Sunday afternoon sitting – but, personally, I think this didn't do the content service. Of course it is difficult to know how something like this would pan out, but maybe next time reducing it to six hours might do this great course justice. If and when the course runs again, whether it's as a 4-hour session, 12-hour course, or anything in between, I recommend signing up. It is thought-provoking, informative, challenging and also provides a great forum to connect with others over meaningful debate.

Claire Djali

Playback Theatre at Essex Church

London Playback Theatre was at Essex Unitarian Church on Friday 19th October with another event connected to the ministry theme of the month. This October it is 'Living Our Faith', and asking how 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. So London Playback Theatre used the metaphor of 'Another Piece of the Puzzle' as the title for the performance and asked questions of the audience...



- how do we find the next piece of the puzzle of our lives?
- how do we know when there is a 'right fit'?
- what's a story when that did happen?
- and what stories can we tell of those times when we were not in alignment, when it just didn't feel right, when we kept trying to fit that piece into the puzzle and it was just wrong?

A warm atmosphere was created especially for those who had never seen Playback Theatre before. There is no script. The entire evening is co-created with the audience in so far as (some) audience members volunteer true stories from their lives, and the performance team responds to this sharing by making moments of theatre with artistry, deep listening and respect. And so it goes, one sharing after another, with moments of theatre reflecting back each story.

We warmed up with short stories from the audience - which many of us could identify with. How we are so often beset with conflictual internal thoughts and feelings; or just noticing how our lives are going at a very fast pace, and how we need to catch ourselves to slow down to a healthier rhythm. Then we invited people, one at a time, to come to our Teller's Chair to share a longer story. The first story was from a psychotherapist who is stuck about finding the right name to describe the work that she and her partner does.... "supervision" is insufficient as a descriptive for what they do as they are now writing a book about this work. At the end of the enactment for her, she came up with her own phrase... "someone's got your back". That felt just right as a metaphor for what they teach and what they do.

Our next story was about the Gestalt notion of 'negative space'... A woman felt she was the negative space and not the subject. She felt locked, trapped, into parts of life that she wants to break loose from. And she admitted that this was her own perception of her situation, acknowledging that other people saw her as a free spirit. The enactment gave her a chance to reflect on this, and also laugh at the situation that she experiences in herself, and also a sense of what it might feel like when she is free of those ties and ropes that bind us.

Then someone told of how some times he feels like he had a missing piece from his brain. He described himself as chaotic & unorganised. Particularly with administrative duties. These he managed quite well when he had had a family and the children were young. But now.... Ugh! However the insight he had was to recognise that when connected to, and this work shared with, other people, he is perfectly able to be focused, organised and much happier!

A young woman from Turkey then told her story. She had had it all – the whole puzzle of life fitting together perfectly – at home and at work. And how this was all shattered by lies from someone senior to her at work, which brought everything down. Even though she has had help and support from colleagues and friends to find new work and make a new life in London, it doesn't feel right yet. It's not as senior as her previous job, she misses her friends in Turkey, and feels very low in London. It's difficult to find hope. And while it was a big challenge for her to share this story in public, there is some relief that she is not alone here now. There are people who are championing her and wishing her well here from this experience of telling her story. And many who might also feel like her - that their lives are also still very mixed up.

One last story came from a woman who has just left her job. It was a means to an end for many years, the puzzle not quite fitting. Now she feels somewhat overwhelmed by all the possible directions she could go in! But something became clearer to her. There was a power and potential inside her which she recognised she was afraid of allowing. And through the enactment she also recognized her natural creativity; and that by trusting this, she would have the support and direction she was looking for.

Everyone stayed for tea, coffee, biscuits and much convivial conversations with old and new friends. A full evening was had by all.

Veronica Needsa

London Playback Theatre is back here in 2019 on the third Fridays of January on "Choices and Decisions", March on "Forgiveness and Redemption", May on "Relating and Relationships", and June on "Coping and Flourishing"

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

Some words from Brian Ellis on this event: *'London Playback Theatre's recent performance, 'Living our Faith' allowed members of the audience to express their feeling and concerns about faith and meaning in their lives. The actors' spontaneous and improvised acting out of each participant's story enabled it to be seen more objectively and cathartically, while being shared and accepted by the rest of the audience. The stories varied widely with such an encompassing subject, with the actors giving the audience much to reflect on in their own lives. Not always an easy evening, but always provocative and rewarding.'*

Good Cause Collection of the Month:

Toilet Twinning

‘Flushing Away Poverty, One Toilet at a Time’

Collection on Sunday 25th November



Photograph shows some twinned toilets in Afghanistan.

Toilet twinning is such a great idea. For every £60 you raise, a toilet can be built for a community that needs one. In return you get a lovely certificate with a picture of a toilet you have been twinned with – to put on your toilet door.

I'd like each of our four church toilets to be 'twinned' with a toilet in another part of the world. But I'm not stopping there. I'm going to twin every toilet for my immediate family and we could twin yours too.

Here are two ways we hope to raise the money. On November 19th I'm taking part in a Marathon Swim at the Queen Elizabeth Pool in the Olympic Park. My personal 'marathon' will be rather short at just 1km long, but that's 20 lengths in a 50 metre pool – quite enough for me. My aim is to complete the distance in under 45 minutes and I'm on a training programme to try and speed up a bit. If you donate some money I will try harder! So do think of sponsoring me – even a £ or two will encourage me as I battle that 19th length. But if you are feeling prosperous, do consider donating a whole £60 and you can have your own framed twinned toilet certificate for your door. Cheques payable to Essex Church please and marked toilets, or cash donations can be handed to Sarah, Jenny or Juliet.

Our charity collection in the November 25th service will also be going to this toilet twinning project so do give generously that day and let's see how much better we can make life for someone else. I don't even want to think what life is like without a toilet and this is such a simple and effective way to improve people's quality of life, especially for young women, who already have quite enough to deal with.

Sarah Tinker



Recent Charity Collections:

August 26th – Animal Free Research UK – £136.96

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

September 30th – Chatham Unitarians – £290.59

Autumn Retreat

!Rejoice!
yet
another dawn
sees you
still colourful still staid
although your
thinned out
unequal ranks and squadrons so grievously displayed
and your
deeply entrenched
winter foes still blithe still alert still waiting for
their
wind-whistle signals for assault. Next time each
trembling piece
part of you fears you will be stripped and levelled
sear crumpled
spread out on the stolchy plaid.
But now
you
stand
erect and sorrowful pending your fall
longing
to
murmur
'Sarge
is
this
the end?
or
will we 'have a new life to
grow up in?
start a
family
find another job
or
swot for
a
new career
somewhere
we
don't know much about
not
blood-letting
nor fleshful but
somewhere
blithe and colourful
we could
give an arm and
a leg for
with
nothing ever to hinder our
retreat retreat retreat
our
joyful
'spectacular retreat!'

John Hands

'Peace begins within each of us. It is a process of repeatedly showing mercy to ourselves, forgiving ourselves, befriending ourselves, accepting ourselves, and loving ourselves. As we learn to appreciate ourselves, and accept God's gift of peace, we begin to radiate peace and love to others.'

John Dear

'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

Warden's Column: Busy Half Term



Traditionally, school holidays have been a quiet time here at the church, but this summer we had several enquiries for children's holiday camps. We accepted a booking from Cypher Coders who teach computer programming to 5-14 year olds: www.cyphercoders.com. They were very happy with the premises and have now booked for the whole of next summer as well as all the school holidays in between - including three weeks this October half term.

As an experiment, we've also taken a booking of the Church for half term week from a local tutor - so instead of being a quiet time, this year it will be an unusually busy one. Even the morning yoga class has decided to keep running. It may be that having two camps at once proves to be too much - either because of noise issues, or the stress placed on the toilets - we'll have to wait and see. I'm writing this the day before it all kicks off and even though I put both groups in touch beforehand to co-ordinate staggered breaks etc. I must admit I'm still pretty nervous how it will all go.

In any case, it looks like Cypher Coders will be with us for the foreseeable future - so we're looking into how we can improve the Wi-Fi reception they need to run effectively. We've already changed the office to a faster broadband connection - but unfortunately the Wi-Fi signal transmits poorly through the concrete floor. In the longer term, we may need to look into drilling through somewhere - perhaps in the curvy corner where there are already holes for the radiator pipes.

On the plus side, this beautiful autumn weather looks set to continue through most of next week - with no rain forecast at all. The downside of that is that it's autumn leaf season. We have two beautiful trees in our front garden, but I must admit they're a huge nuisance this time of year. I'm very lucky that Brian and Jackie the gardener take on a lot of the sweeping. Our neighbour also has a huge Plane tree that sheds all over our roof - and that is still my job. On the plus side we do now have proper safety wires and a harness with which to do it. If the leaves aren't regularly collected and disposed of, the blocked gutters lead to water penetration through the walls of the church - the last thing we want now we've finally redecorated the worship space.

It feels a little sad to be turning to the colder, darker part of the year now - but another part of me will be glad when both the leaves and the holidays are over and we can settle into the relative peace of winter.

Jenny Moy



Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement Forms

Third Sunday of the Month from
2-3pm: 18th November, 16th Dec 2018

Midweek class - 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 3-month period.

The Soveida Ensemble



**Fundraising Concert on Sunday 25th November
Here at Essex Church (details TBC)**

The Soveida Ensemble have played for us several times now and hope to return for a concert on November 25th with their hauntingly beautiful, traditional Middle Eastern instruments. This will be a fundraiser for Sufi minorities facing suppression. Make a note of the date and we'll confirm nearer the time.

Congratulations Corrina! Unitarian Studies Course Success



I recently completed the Unitarian Studies Course and thought it might be worth sharing my experience of this with the congregation following on from the recent monthly theme of 'Living Our Faith'.

The Unitarian Studies Course is an engaging way to find out more about the Unitarian movement and how to apply it to our lives. It also gave me new insights in the history and theology of Unitarians. The course takes one year to complete and consists of four questions which are answered in essay form. The topics are: History, Theology, The Bible and Earth Centred Spirituality.

Each essay is marked by a different Unitarian Minister and returned with feedback and comments, which I found very positive and encouraging. Each of the topics proved to be quite enlightening for me and I thoroughly enjoyed the process. There is a suggested reading list with each topic which is extremely useful too.

The course has a flexible structure and plenty of support from the tutors. It has been personally worthwhile and I'd say it is achievable for anyone. I highly recommend this course for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the Unitarian journey alongside a deeper personal understanding of what it means to be a Unitarian.

More information about this course and others can be found at:
www.unitarian-worship-studies-course.org.uk/courses/intermediate-step/

Corrina Dolso

IARF and WCF Lectures



International Association for Religious Fellowship (IARF) Annual Lecture

**Monday 26th November 2018, 6.30pm
at Essex Hall, 1-6 Essex St, London WC2R 3HY**

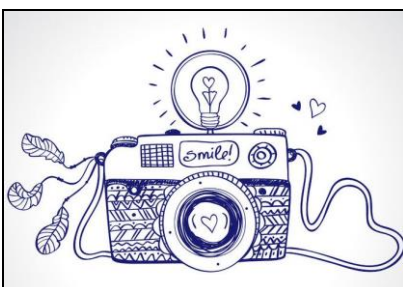
This year's lecture will be given by Rev. Chris Hudson MBE, minister of All Souls Belfast, part of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland (closely linked to Unitarians). If you are coming, please inform Pejman Khojasteh, secretary of the British Chapter: pejman_khojasteh@btinternet.com

World Congress of Faiths: Youngusband Lecture 'People in Pigeonholes'

**Tuesday 13th November 2018, 6.30-8.30pm
at Montagu Centre, 21 Maple Street, London W1T 4BE.**

Dr Chetna Kang MB BS MRCPsych will explore how identities and belonging can bring people together or keep them apart. The event is free, with a retiring collection for the work of the World Congress of Faiths. To register your place, please go to wcf-yhi2018.eventbrite.co.uk. If you have any queries, do please contact Jenny Kartupellis: jenny@worldfaiths.org.

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 newcomers but also for any of us who struggle with remembering names! So even if you are quite new to the congregation and/or only a very occasional attender we would love to have your picture on the board to help us remember! 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 by 18th November.

'Why Are We Here?'

Address by Jeannene Powell
From the service on 7th October 2018

The service is also available online as a podcast.

Why are you here? Why are you here at church today? You could have so easily have stayed in bed for an extra hour, had a leisurely breakfast, potted about, or made other plans. But instead, you chose, we all chose, to take the 10 minute walk, half an hour drive, hour long tube ride, or maybe longer bus journey to come here, to this church, for at least an hour today. Why?

Perhaps you're here because it's part of your weekly routine. Maybe you're here, because you like visiting familiar friends. Possibly you're here because you've stepped into this building for different events and were curious about what we do on Sundays. Or, maybe it so happened that this week, you're visiting the area away from you usual place of worship, so found out we were here. All perfectly valid reasons.

And maybe there are deeper and more personal reasons for you being here too. Not just today, but any and every time you attend.

I've been thinking about why we're here a fair bit, as we kick off this month's theme of 'Living our Faith'. And forming some thoughts to share with you. Part of living our faith is yes, being here, showing up. And in this age of technology showing up, can even mean listening to a podcast of our services too.

But what do we get from 'Showing Up'? As noted by another congregation member when we were discussing this upcoming service, our Kensington Unitarian mugs, which we use for tea and coffee, proudly displays our slogan - 'Community, Spirituality, Conscience'. This was a slogan which was agreed on after some deliberation a few years ago, and succinctly encapsulates, not just what Kensington Unitarians is about, but I think, also why we come here.

While the specifics of why each and every one of you come here, are a myriad of reasons, I think that broadly speaking they'll connect to at least one or more of the words in the slogan. Community. Spirituality. Conscience. I'll briefly address each one.

Reverend Sarah Millspough's reading, reminds us that religion, at its best, connects with our conscience, inviting us to live and act in ways which are compassionate and justice enabling. She writes: *'It's all too easy for us to devalue some humans' lives, and feel, somehow, like we're still good upstanding moral people. Religion at its best asks us to do better than this: to rise above the selfishness and status-seeking, the othering and xenophobia that come so easily to us. Religion at its best calls us to honour that which is sacred in each person.'*

She so clearly points out that in the humdrum of everyday living, we can find ourselves being swept along by the values and ideals of popular culture, of mainstream society, which don't always echo our own deeply held values. When here, at church, we find ourselves reconnecting to our internal conscience, through something we hear in the service, a conversation with someone afterwards, or something else which reminds us of our own ethical codes. They're brought to the forefront of our minds and thus, once again to the forefront of our living.

Our responsive reading highlighted reasons why what we believe matters. But didn't dictate to us what those beliefs should be. This is very much our Unitarian way. A way in which we get to define our beliefs for ourselves, to discover and search out our



own truths. To name our own spirituality, be it theistic or not, a path shared by few or many, have an ancient tradition or be relatively new. Our spirituality is our own for us to decide and practice in a way which is congruent for us, connecting us to what holds most meaning, both internally and externally. Connecting us to what is ultimate, divine, sacred and worthy on the ongoing journey of spiritual growth.

The responsive reading's author, Sophia Lyon Fahs, has been stated as noting that, *'Beliefs are important in our lives. The kinds of beliefs we have influence how we behave. Knowing what is true is important. But having true beliefs is not the most important thing in our lives, and having true beliefs about God is not the most important thing in religion. The most important thing in religion is being committed to furthering goodness. Promoting goodness includes finding out what is true and helping others to acquire such knowledge, but it also includes furthering love and compassion and justice. And it involves doing this whether or not there is a God helping us to accomplish it.'* And one of the ways we promote goodness is through community.

Our meditation words invited us to consider our first experiences here, the people we met, the important events in our lives that have happened, our sense of connection to this place, to this community. The community we find here can and does provide different things for different people. A place where we connect with others, experiencing care and loving deeds which are life affirming. The friendships we make can last one Sunday, or a lifetime. The need for a place we belong, a place where we know we'll feel welcomed is vitally fulfilled. And the growth we receive, from being with others of diverse beliefs, nudge us further along our own paths of wholeness and spiritual discovery, and can be so rewarding. There's so much more besides, which we gain from our faith community, no matter how little or often we participate.

Our community itself is a valuable resource in our lives. One which aids us in taking the best of ourselves out into the world to transform it for the better, in a multitude of ways.

And our community is here because of the custodians from the past. Those pioneers of Essex Church who came before us. And in turn, we are stewards of this place. Not just the physical building, but the ethos, values and fellowship we encounter here, so it can be discovered and enjoyed by those who seek to attend in generations to come, long after we're gone.

This echoes the quote on the order of service, which is an extract taken from a longer version written by Rev Peter Raible. Our quote reads, *'We sit in the shade of trees we did not plant, This is as it should be. Together we can build across the generations. Together we can heed the call to a ministry of care and justice. We are ever bound in community.'*

Whatever your reason for being here, I'm so glad that you are. And I hope you are too, because each and every one of us contributes to this, our spiritually diverse, conscience-driven, and dearly beloved, community. May it always be so. Amen.

Why Are We Here? Some Congregational Responses

In the service on 7th October, Jeanenne invited those present to answer the question posed by the service theme, and write their responses on post-it notes. Here are the reasons people gave as to why they come to Essex Church:

To recognise a greater power. An expression of faith and friendship. A time of guided reflection. Commune with like-minded people.

For spiritual support and comfort. For the assurance that I shall be among people whose values I trust I can share.

To be encouraged to make more effort to live up to the values I know I should live by.

A place of quiet reflection in the company of a community of diverse good folk. A place to honour the sacred and to remember and be guided in what is of true value in our lives on this precious Earth. Stimulation. Consolation.

Education. Offering. Sharing. Celebration. Joy.

Spiritual path. Fellowship. Peace.

Fellowship. Spiritual communion.
Transcending selfish concerns.

Enjoy the service. Meet people.
Makes me want to try to be a better person.

Habit. Friendships. I like singing. Worship/Thankfulness.

For an earthed faith in others and the spirit,
unconstrained by any historical creed.

To be reminded of what matters.

My Sunday doesn't feel right when I don't come here.
I like the warmth from members of the congregation.
I enjoy the food for thought.

To keep on wrestling with life's ultimate questions.
To dive deeper with others who (more-or-less) share
my values. To join with others in focusing on how we can
make the world a better place.

To feel good because I like singing.

I love the community in the church and the friendship
and the silence in the garden. I am safe here.

I attend this church because of my need for community
and sharing of happy and sad feelings.

To catch up with friends. To reflect on life's meaning.
I get to stop and think about the society we're in.

A sense of community. People with a diversity of experiences.
I feel connected to my family back home who
also go to a Unitarian church.

My Sunday routine. One hour for my spiritual self.

I attend church because I want to affirm my beliefs. Having a
'system' of beliefs gives something for me to focus on that is
more than 'me'. It gives me 'backup' in tough times and
support in good times as well as bad. It keeps me resilient.

The need to worship in a place of inclusivity. Time given to
reflect and be still in an ever moving and changing world.

Hope, Fellowship, Community, Love.

One hour of peace, community and reflection with supportive
and open-minded people from all walks of life.
Also, conversation over tea and biscuits!

Looking Ahead to Christmas and New Year



Sunday 16th December, 11am-noon Christmas Carol Service and Lunch

Why not invite your friends to join us for a good sing-along of traditional Christmas carols with a Unitarian twist? The service will be followed by a bring-and-share lunch. Look out for a sign-up sheet nearer the time where you can tell us what you'll bring.

Monday 24th December, 5pm-6pm Candlelit Christmas Eve Service

We will be holding our traditional candlelit service on Christmas Eve. This will be followed by time for mince pies and fellowship.

A small group from church will be going out for a meal afterwards at a local pub – please contact Jane if you want to join us – you must book in advance as space is limited (first come, first served).

Sunday 30th December, 1-4pm 'The Year Compass' Workshop

For the third year running we will be holding a space at the turn of the year for people to use the 'Year Compass' booklet to look back reflectively on the past year and set intentions for the year ahead. Please email Jane by Christmas to book as we need to know how many booklets to print: jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk

Two People

Gazing out of my high window I perceive two people
A man and a woman slowly walking along the roadside path
Side by side, he with a stick, she gently
Supporting his arm. Both, as it seems
Earnestly in conversation.

Whatever the subject of their talk
Whatever, his head half turned towards her, he is earnestly saying
As they walk, 'Yes', she seems to be responding
'Yes I understand how it is with you – yes I do feel it,
Yes I will help you in any way I can'. And he by such
Heart-felt responses seems held and comforted
As only another can.

John Hands

'Finding Our Voice' Monthly Singing Workshops

Sunday 18th November
from 12.30pm to 1.15pm

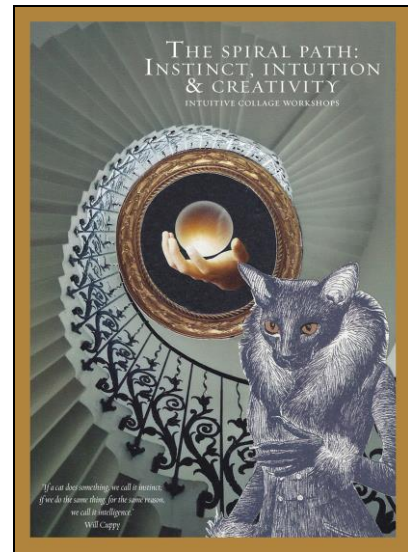


Margaret has worked as a professional singer all her adult life and is also a very experienced singing teacher. She is leading monthly sessions to help us all find our voice. These workshops are for anyone who is prepared to open their mouth and make a sound.

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

Stirrings: Prophetic Visions Call for Submissions



Submissions are invited for this year's Stirrings anthology, on the theme of 'Prophetic Visions'. Stirrings is a collection of writings issued each year by the Past and Present Students Union of Unitarian College Manchester, and sold at the Annual Meetings of the General Assembly to raise money to support future training and ministry. This year, in celebration of the launch of the new non-geographic Unitarian College, the call for submissions is open to Ministers, Lay Leaders, and members of our congregations.

The anthology aims to provide material for use in worship and small group gatherings, in a variety of formats. Prayer, reflection, meditation, addresses, poetry, personal testimonies, and stories (especially for children), on the theme of prophetic visions, are welcome. Copies of the anthology will be on sale at the General Assembly meetings in April. The new editorial team also commits to making the material available in an online form after the meetings. The team for Stirrings 2019 consists of Rev Mark Hutchinson (Cotswold Group), Stephanie Bisby (ministry student) and Natasha Stanley (administrator). Send submissions to Mark Hutchinson at reverendhutch@gmail.com by Monday 21st January 2019.

OneLight Gathering:

Fridays 9th November and 14th December
6.45 for 7pm-8.30pm 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

FUSE

FESTIVAL of UNITARIANS in the SOUTHEAST

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).**

Film Outing and Screening



Mike Leigh's 'Peterloo' on Wednesday 7th November

On Wednesday afternoon 7th November we plan to see Mike Leigh's new film *Peterloo*. The Peterloo Massacre in Manchester in 1819 is credited as inspiring the establishment of The Manchester Guardian newspaper, when other papers of the day refused to report accurately on the cavalry charge into a demonstration, which killed 15 people and injured 100s more. Get in touch if you would like to join us for this outing as we'll only know nearer the day where it's being shown locally.

'They Shall Not Grow Old' on Monday 12th November (TBC)

Monday afternoon 12th November *They Shall Not Grow Old* – a 'colourised' collection of original black and white footage from the First World War with what has been described as a 'stunning soundscape'. We hope to show this at 1pm in the library on but get in touch to confirm as it depends when the BBC screens the film.

'Peace is the everyday practical matter of how we can live together harmoniously, dealing creatively and effectively with the inevitable differences, hurts and fears that arise in human relationships. It is also a spiritual ideal that has inspired human beings throughout times and across cultures. On a larger scale, peace is a political goal of nations and peoples; on a smaller scale, inner peace is a personal goal for those of us who are trying to live more consciously within this frenzied world. Spiritual, political, practical, and personal – peace is important in all these dimensions, and affects us all.'

Louise Diamond

Jubilation

Oh, trumpets clamouring on high!
 Gusty forests ablaze
 Forever before my gaze!
 Fetch me a bellhorn
 That blares a way before the traffic
 Going up the hills of sanctification!
 Roaring a passage -----
 Delivering a message -----
 Hurrah, the world is coming!

Eliz Beel

Michaelmas Daisies



Buds a trillion, on just one stem,
 like the million thoughts in this one body.
 Faces yellow and brown
 in different stages of life
 your slender purple petals radiate
 and reach for the sun.

We quiver and shudder in life's strong breezes.
 The bees come, the hornets and the wasps.
 We are mutually dependent,
 every living being.

Carolyn Appleby

'Our Unitarian Faith'

Address by Rev. Sarah Tinker
From the service on 14th October 2018

The service is also available online as a podcast.

In October we enjoyed a visit from the Rev Ant Howe, minister with the Kingswood congregation in Warwickshire. You can listen to Ant's contribution to this service in our podcast, accessible via our Kensington Unitarians website. This was our minister's address that day.



Ant Howe and I have known each other for over 14 years now. We first met when our training for ministry overlapped at the Unitarian College in Manchester. I mentioned at the start of the service that Ant is minister with the congregation of Kingswood in Warwickshire. He has also just been appointed as tutor to our new Unitarian College, with responsibility for accompanying our ministry students on their paths to ministry. Ant and I have stayed firm friends since our training. We respect each other's work, though we do joke that if we swapped congregations we could probably close each other's churches within a year. That's because our particular versions of Unitarianism differ quite a bit - and yet there are elements we both hold dear. I wonder if any of these elements are what brought you to this faith, and to this church?

We're both proud of our Unitarian history – of the fact that brave individuals lost their livelihoods and even their lives to win the right for others to worship as their faith led them and for the right to hold their own beliefs. Because we have no set creed, we Unitarians have always asserted that each person must believe only what our hearts and consciences tells us is true. There are values we hold in common, but your beliefs must be your own. It delights me that this Kensington Unitarians congregation holds such a richness, such a variety of beliefs. It also delights me that we're articulate about matters of faith and are prepared to talk about deep matters.

The post-war Unitarian Universalist theologian James Luther Adams who wrote about the five smooth stones of liberal religion we heard earlier on in our responsive reading, Adams developed the idea that people come to churches for "ultimacy and intimacy." 'Ultimacy' is a term coined originally I think by the Christian theologian Paul Tillich to express our ultimate commitments, our ultimate values, our ultimate concerns. There's a human urge to want to explore such ultimate issues and we can do this so much more fully in the company of one another. Any of us who have experienced being in small groups perhaps here at Essex Church, or in other settings, will know how special it can be to hear other people expressing something from deep within and how moving it is to be listened to in this way.

We Unitarians have a rich and varied view of what God is and can be..... We don't limit our awareness of the ultimate to a particular book or a creed, because Unitarians value the individual's own experiences of faith. Sitting together here now on this Sunday morning there are probably atheists, agnostics, theists, mystics, pantheists – and no doubt a load of other 'ists' and 'isms' – all worshipping together in one Unitarian congregation. The very name Unitarian appeals greatly to some of us – and to others not at all. We encourage each person to experience the Divine for themselves and to continue the lifelong search for that which we each hold to be of ultimate worth. Our quest for religious truth may take us on a fascinating journey of faith and most of us do not think there is one truth that we must all arrive at.

We are aware of the origins of our faith from our childhood and in our prevailing culture. And we are fortunate to have access to all the world's scriptures, poetry, and music, and scientific study to aid us in our on-going religious quest as well as in our worship.

Another important element of our faith is our quest for civil and religious liberty; Unitarians say that everyone should be free to love who they want, marry who they want, believe what they must, be able to practice their religion, and have freedom of speech. And the rights we would claim for ourselves are the same rights we would want others to have. Our support for the cause of liberty is balanced by responsibility to not harm others – we recognise that freedom must go hand in hand with respect for others and for the rule of law, so long as laws are not themselves being misused to harm others.

We also include respect for all creation - - for many Unitarians our faith leads us to make ethical choices about what we buy and what we eat and how we live our lives and deal with finance, the support we give to other organisations committed to building a fairer world.

An important aspect of liberal religion for me is the holding of humanity itself in high regard and searching for the good in all. That's not to say that humans don't do bad things – because we do – but Unitarians keep working towards the creation of a more just and loving world. I don't think humans are born bad. I don't accept the doctrine of original sin. This belief in goodness leads me to seek ways to celebrate life – and that's what we Unitarians are doing when we offer people the chance to create unique and meaningful ceremonies marking life's turning points.

As a minister I'm very aware of Unitarian structures of governance. Each congregation is independent and self-governing. We value our autonomy, but at the same time we are part of the wider Unitarian movement which supports our congregations, trains Ministers, and links Unitarians across the world.

And at the core of our faith is our worship here in community, one with another. I sometimes think of Sunday mornings as a chance to recharge our batteries – through song and silence, words and music and prayer, we reflect on life and we strengthen ourselves for the living of our lives and for the work of building a better world for all. It's quite a task – this way of living our faith as a process, as an active verb rather than a static noun – it's a task best done in community with others – and I give thanks for being in community with all of you. Together we can do so much more than we'll ever achieve alone. And may that be for the greater good of all, amen.

'Compassion does not mean simply being "nice". Nor does it mean "letting people off the hook," as if one would say in every situation, "I understand," and never hold anybody accountable. The strength of compassion as a value can be seen by looking at its opposites: hatred, abuse, brutality, injustice; indifference, selfishness, self-righteousness (in religious or secular form), hardness of heart; racism, sexism, classism, militant nationalism, and so forth. To advocate compassion is to stand against these. Thus it is not a "weak" value that tolerates everything.'

Marcus J. Borg

London Squares



strewn within the city's definition
imposed names defied
by reserves of ambiguity
to enchant the unbounded
where

in unseen silence
we find a strength that binds
a green and tree high calm
to stay surprised
mannered in enclosing disarray

there is serenity
imposed on play and pleasure
among the gardened spaces
giving life a realm
adrift in dreams of peace

patience gathers
transparencies of our presence
into the corners
hidden in sanctuary
unseen by the careless world

in their quiet
history can escape
the consequence of its passing
but drapes the air
with an infused memory

when we leave
the filigree of our visiting souls
misted with the breath of time
is left to slowly fade
into the day's end

Brian Ellis

Unitarians At Home and Abroad

I've just returned from a few days working in the Czech Republic with the Czech Unitarian Academy students and I met some of the Prague Unitarians who stayed here at Essex Church last year on their grand tour of England & Wales. They send their greetings and an open invitation to visit them when any of us go to Prague.

Carole Grace went up to our conference centre in Great Hucklow for the Unitarian Women's Group weekend in October. Carole writes, "The serious topic, on the ways in which austerity has disproportionately affected women, was balanced by warmth and fun. It was a group that walked its talk and really was inclusive and caring, with a meeting of minds that made space for healthy disagreement and challenge. We realised that as a church organisation, both locally and nationally, we need to look at our practices and our financial investments carefully."

We've had lots of visitors here at church this summer but an especial welcome to Romanian student Kinsco Kelemen who is visiting London for a conference in October and to Jim Tuttle and Ruth Mikels who are members of the Tahoma Unitarian Universalist congregation in Washington State, where our friend Linda Hart is minister. Some of you will fondly remember Linda's ministry in Richmond here in London some years ago. Jim and Ruth were especially impressed with our enthusiastic singing in services and enjoyed taking part in Margaret Marshall's Finding Your Voice class, an idea they may adapt for their congregation. We welcome returning members and friends Lee and Julian Minghi here in London for the autumn. If you're in London on November 25th do come along to our service and meet Lynda Kane who will tell us about our sister organisation in Ireland - the NSPCI - for which she works as a lay preacher and as their denominational social media officer. Do let us know if you are travelling at home and abroad and meeting up with other Unitarians and Universalists.

Sarah Tinker

'Active Retirees' with Jonathan



'Active Retirees' is a service that I am offering free to any Unitarians who are no longer in full-time work. With no set routine or program, you are simply welcome to contact me to accompany you or organise a physical group activity of your choice. Suggestions have varied from walks or jogs in the park, to tennis and badminton lessons. Activities are most likely to be in the mornings prior to 12pm. If you are interested, please email me on info@sportsintelligenceuk.com or call me on 0230 284 1922.

Jonathan Crawford

Services at Essex Church in November



Sunday 4th November, 11am 'Pathways of Peace'

Service led by Jeannene Powell

In times of conflict and injustice, we humans often resort to violence in an attempt to resist oppression and create change, but is there another way? In this service we'll look at some alternative possibilities which represent a more peaceful approach to resolving issues.

Sunday 11th November, 11am 'We Remember Them'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

A Remembrance Day service, marking the 100th anniversary of the 1918 armistice with a quartet and opportunity to light candles of peace and reconciliation.

Sunday 18th November, 11am 'Bridge Building'

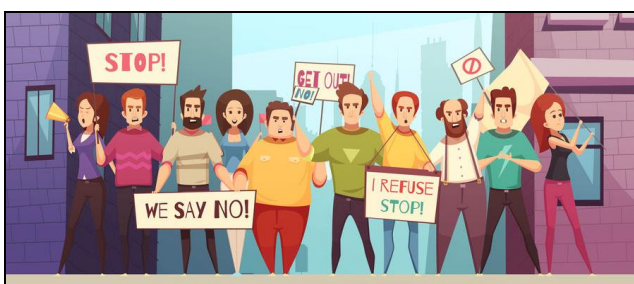
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

How might the building of bridges help us transform our interpersonal conflicts? Get in touch if you would like to tell a personal story in this service.

Sunday 25th November, 11am 'Roads to Peace'

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker and Lynda Kane

Lynda Kane is from a NSPCI church in Northern Ireland, a movement with many Unitarian connections. In this service there will be a charity collection for our Toilet Twinning project. Instead of our regular Sunday conversation about this month's theme, you are welcome to stay for a collage session from 12.45pm, creating pictures of what peace means to us.



New Church Mailing List

We are about to switch over to a new church mailing list system, using MailChimp, to send out regular emails about events and activities at Essex Church and to call out for volunteers and newsletter submissions. This should make it much easier to administer our email announcements (and makes it less likely that people will accidentally drop off my email circulation list and miss out on any key messages). We anticipate we will typically send out 3-4 such emails per month. If you have not already given me your email address and you would like to be added to the list please email me to opt in (jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk).

Jane Blackall

Escalator Works at Notting Hill Gate Station

From 11th November to 20th December 2018 TfL will be refurbishing one of the two escalators at Notting Hill Gate station. This work is part of a wider escalator maintenance programme, and it will extend the life of the escalator and support the safe and reliable operation of the station. During this time the remaining operating escalator will run in the up direction from the lower concourse to mid-concourse. Customers requiring the Central Line will have to walk down fixed stairs (47 steps) to access platforms. To maintain safe customer flow, the station will operate as normal, and the flow will be monitored. Staff will be available at the station to assist customers. If stairs are a problem it may be easier to catch a bus or walk to Queensway station, and then use the lift there.

Leaves



into the dignity of autumn
each leaf drops
in the lightness of its death

wind torn broom harried
wanting only to lie
gently on a deserved grave

Brian Ellis