



Kensington Unitarians

The Newsletter

June/July 2007

What's on in June/July

- Sunday 3rd June, 11.00am
Service led by Rev. Jopie Boeke
- Thursday 7th June, 7.00-9.00pm
RE: "Tread Gently on the Earth" (1/4)
Screening of "An Inconvenient Truth"
- Sunday 10th June, 11.00am
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker
- Sunday 10th June, 3.30-5.00pm
"Songs and Silence for the Soul"
- Thursday 14th June, 7.00-9.00pm
Creativity Engagement Group
"Photography Show-and-Tell"
- Sunday 17th June, 11.00am
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker
- Sunday 17th June, 12.30pm
Adult RE: "A Sharing Circle"
- Thursday 21st June, 7.00-9.00pm
RE: "Tread Gently on the Earth" (2/4)
"Welcoming the Summer Solstice"
- Sunday 24th June, 11.00am
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker
Followed by a Fundraising Concert
- Thursday 28th June, 7.00-9.00pm
Reading Group: "Saturday"
- Sunday 1st July, 11.00am
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker
Followed by Gardening Group at 12.30
- Thursday 5th July, 7.00-9.00pm
RE: "Tread Gently on the Earth" (3/4)
"Our Ecological Footprints"
- Sunday 8th July, 11.00am
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker
- Sunday 8th July, 3.30-5.00pm
"Songs and Silence for the Soul"
- Thursday 12th July, 7.00-9.00pm
Creativity Engagement Group
"Soul Dolls (part 1): Fimo Faces"
- Sunday 15th July, 11.00am
Service led by Mrs Heidi Ferid
- Thursday 19th July, 7.00-9.00pm
RE: "Tread Gently on the Earth" (4/4)
"Exploring Earth Spirit in the Park"
- Sunday 22nd July, 11.00am
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker
Followed by launch of Photo Exhibition
- Thursday 26th July, 7.00-9.00pm
Reading Group: "My Sister's Keeper"
- Friday 27th July, 7.00-10.00pm
30th Anniversary Essex Church Party
- Sunday 29th July, 11.00am
Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker
Followed by a Special Summer Concert

A Message from Our Minister...

Happy Birthday to Us!

It's time to celebrate a special birthday. On July 24th our building here at Essex Church will be 30 years old and this event gives our community an opportunity to reflect. We are looking to the future and considering how we want to progress. We are reflecting on the past and the journey that has brought us to where we are today. We are appreciating and celebrating all that we have in the present.



Celebrations I have been reading recently about endorphins, the biochemicals which our bodies naturally produce. They give us the physical experience of pleasure and they are produced when we feel happy. The process works both ways. Endorphins are apparently released when we just think about things that make us feel happy. If you would like to brighten your day right now, why not make a list of 10 great pleasures in your life – activities, people, places, sensations – anything that brings you a warm glow, an inner smile, a heightened sense of joy. Simply making such a list will have your body rushing to create and release endorphins, which will swiftly flow through you, creating physical and emotional well-being.

No wonder then that celebrations have always been a crucial part of human social life. Celebrating is good for us and good for our communities. All the more reason to put **Friday 27th July** into your diaries, the date when we here at Essex Church will be inviting our friends and families to join us for an evening of fun and entertainment to celebrate the 30th anniversary of our church building's opening service. With professional musicians, comedy, excellent food – this promises to be a great evening out (*see page 3 inside for more information*). It will also mark the start of our two year fund-raising campaign, raising the money we need to update our building's facilities. And fund-raising too has been shown to improve your health! Getting involved in a social cause, working as a team, caring deeply about a particular issue – they too help us to produce those feel-good endorphins. I look forward to celebrating (and fund-raising!) with you all.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

P.S. If you want to know more about the science of well-being two books worth reading are William Bloom's 'The Endorphin Effect' and Candace Pert's 'Molecules of Emotion'.

In this Month's Newsletter...

** Essex Church 30th Anniversary Celebrations * Creativity Group Photo Exhibition: "Doors and Windows" * LDPA Meeting in Brighton * "Choir-for-All": Kensington Community Singers * Adult RE: Eco-Spirituality * Creativity Group: "Photography Show-and-Tell" and "Soul Dolls" * Reflections on "Evensong"* ...and more!*

Kensington Unitarians

At Essex Church (founded 1774), Notting Hill Gate

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

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

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



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Summer Service Themes

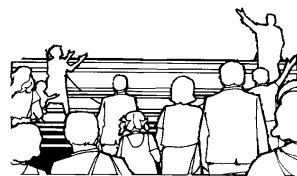
We've got so much going on at Essex Church this summer that there wasn't quite enough room to list our service themes on the front page as usual... here's what you can look forward to in June/July:

- 10th June 'Ch... Changes' - Rev. Sarah Tinker
- 17th June 'Wounded Healers' - Rev. Sarah Tinker
- 24th June 'Visiting Sacred Texts' - Rev. Sarah Tinker
- 1st July 'Images of Forgiveness' - Rev. Sarah Tinker
- 8th July 'Sustainable Living' - Rev. Sarah Tinker
- 15th July 'Healing Energy of Colours' - Heidi Ferid
- 22nd July 'Closed or Open?' - Rev. Sarah Tinker
- 29th July '30 Years On' - Rev. Sarah Tinker
Celebrating our Building's 30th Anniversary

The latest information about services can be found on our website.

*An Event of the London District and South Eastern Provincial
Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches*

LDPA Summer Meeting



Saturday 16th June from 1.30pm
Brighton Unitarian Church, New Road, BN1 1UF

1.30pm – Service led by the Rev. Art Lester

2.15pm – Refreshments and Fellowship

3.00pm – Excerpts of "Sacred Music"
Introduced by Kate Whyman
(Director of the Brighton Festival of Sacred Music)

Those who have not visited Brighton recently will be amazed to discover the changes that are taking place in New Road. The Church's position as an Arts and Community Centre is being strengthened by the developments which are taking place outside the front door. New Road is being transformed into an elegant thoroughfare with the Unitarian church at its heart.

A project of the Creativity Engagement Group...

Photography Exhibition

Doors and Windows:

Boundaries, Gateways and Openings



Launched on Sunday 22nd July
From 12.30 – 2.30pm at Essex Church

All are welcome to join us for the launch of our creativity group's photography exhibition on Sunday 22nd July.

Please come along to this event and bring your friends to admire our artwork. Light refreshments will be provided.

This event marks the start of our 30th Anniversary week and the launch of our building fundraising programme. Our church needs work to make it fully accessible and we also hope to carry out improvements to our front garden.

Donations will be invited for our church building fund.

A New "Choir-for-All" Initiative at Essex Church

Kensington Community Singers

Tuesdays: 10th, 17th, 24th July, 7.00-9.00pm



We are planning to start a new community choir here at Essex Church. This choir will be open to all – you don't need any qualifications except enthusiasm – and we're actively striving to welcome in local people alongside members of the congregation.

Jen Hazel will be leading us in three "taster" sessions during the summer which will act as something of a trial run for an ongoing choir which we plan to launch as a regular Monday evening fixture this September.

Donations to cover the cost of running the choir are invited (£3/£6/£9 per session – a sliding scale according to your income). Contact Jen or Sarah T to find out more...

Summer Celebration!

A Party to Mark 30 Years of
Our Essex Church Building

Friday 27th July, 7.30-10.00pm



This summer party promises to be a celebratory evening of delightful entertainment, food, drink, fellowship and fun.

This party is the centrepiece of our week of celebrations. Join us to socialise and reminisce about the good times we've shared here. Entrance by donation (£10 suggested) which will go towards our Essex Church building fund. Our church needs work to make it fully accessible and we also hope to carry out improvements to our front garden.

Volunteers will be needed to help with the catering. Please contact Caroline Blair or Sarah Tinker with enthusiastic offers of assistance to make this event a roaring success.

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



10th June, 8th July and 12th August
from 3.30 to 5.00pm

Suggested Donation: £2.00

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

Phone 020 7221 6514 for more information
or email sarahtinker@unitarian.org.uk

A forthcoming event which you may be interested in...

Westminster Interfaith Peace Pilgrimage



11am – 6pm, 3rd June 2007 in North London

This year the pilgrimage will take place in the Golders Green/Finchley area of London. The peace pilgrimage is due to start at 11am at the Swaminarayan Temple in Golders Green and finish at about 6pm at the Muslim Centre in North Finchley. The pilgrimage will stop at two synagogues and two Christian churches.

Several members of our congregation have attended and enjoyed this event in previous years. If you go along, why not take your camera, and send in an account of the day for our next newsletter...



London Sustainability Weeks 3rd – 17th June 2007

Love London / London Sustainability Weeks is a two week programme celebrating local action for sustainability in Greater London, coinciding with World Environment Day on 5th June.

This year is the London Sustainability Weeks' fifth anniversary, and the dates are the 3rd to 17th of June. The theme of this year's Sustainability Weeks will be Climate Change and London will be teaming up with Amsterdam, who'll be running their first Sustainability Weeks simultaneously, so that action for sustainability will be spreading across the globe.

Events are organised by community groups, charities, multi-faith groups, local authorities, NGOs and local sustainable businesses, in fact anyone can organise an event so long as it focuses in some way on green and sustainable issues and involves the community. The programme is unique in its commitment to promote and assist small, community based initiatives - with a particular emphasis on those which are run by and for residents in areas of high social and economic deprivation. Nevertheless, it also links with local authorities, and larger organisations.

Events this June include:

- Camden Green Fair (3rd at Regents Park)
- Cruising Away From Climate Change (9th from Westminster Pier)
- London CRN and Acorn Houses' Sustainable Auction (10th at Acorn House, Central London)
- Kensington and Chelsea Environment Day (12th at Kensington Hall)
- The West London Festival (17th at Farnival Gardens)
- The World Naked Bike Ride (details to be confirmed!)

For more information, see: www.lsw2007.org

August Newsletter Deadline



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

Thank you!!!

A Forthcoming Adult RE Course at Essex Church

'Tread Gently On The Earth'

A 4-Session Evening Course on Eco-Spirituality

Thursdays 7th, 21st June, 5th, 19th July
From 7.00-9.00pm downstairs in the Library



This new adult RE course will run on Thursday evenings here at Essex Church from 7 to 9pm. Admission is free but do book a place in advance so we know who to expect. There's no need to attend all four sessions so do join us for the ones you are able to make it to.

Thursday 7th June:

A chance to watch Al Gore's Oscar winning documentary, 'An Inconvenient Truth'. Not to be missed.

Thursday 21st June:

Come and create a Summer Solstice Welcoming Ceremony with chance to reflect on the meaning of the solstice for people in ancient times and today. Led by Sarah Tinker

Thursday 5th July:

Measure your ecological footprint ~ find out how much of the earth's resources are required to maintain your present lifestyle and explore ways to reduce the effect your way of life has on our planet. Led by Caroline Blair

Thursday 19th July:

Come on a visit to a local park and get in touch with the spirit of the earth. Meet at the church at 7pm.

Phone Sarah Tinker on 020 7221 6514 to let us know you will be joining us for these evening sessions.

Reflections on Our Evensong Course

"At first the experience of being listened to in silence is rather odd - where are the nods and affirmative noises? Perhaps no one is interested in what is being said? But after a short time I began to appreciate the benefits. No one is going to interrupt me or talk across me with their better and more interesting thoughts on the same subject. In the end the quality of active listening was almost tangible in the room. The time we spent at the Evensong group became a soothing oasis in the day where we could have a long cool drink of quietness and calm, and just build up a feeling of being a community."

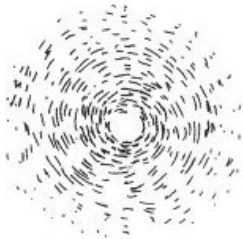
Caroline Blair



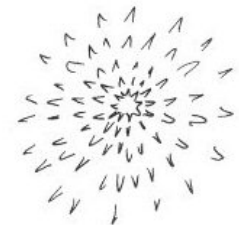
"When the Evensong course was discussed at Management Committee, concern was expressed about the Christian connotations of the name. I know that for a long time to come, when I hear the word Evensong, I will think first of the library at Essex Church, a lighted candle, a circle of chairs and a deep attentive silence. Members of the Society of Friends are asked to "seek to know each other in that which is eternal" and that is the kind of connection I feel to the other regular Evensong participants. Even though it's been nearly a month since the last meeting, I still find myself thinking of things I would like to share in that space, and wondering about how things are working out for others."

Jenny Moy

Two accounts of what it was like to be part of the Evensong group that ran for eight sessions here at Essex Church between January and April this year. The congregation at Essex Church is well known in Unitarian circles for its commitment to running a wide range of small group activities and such groups have been happening here for many years. Evensong was a bit different because it was a closed group; we asked people to commit themselves to attending as many of the eight sessions as they could and once the group began no-one else could join. Participants agreed that this did help to create a safe space in which to be together. Evensong was also different from most of our groups because we were following a published course, written by Unitarian Universalist minister Barbara Hamilton-Holway. Barbara describes the sessions as 'gatherings' which have listening at their core and with the aim of creating a sacred space in which to spend time together. The course included some beautiful readings such as this piece from Buddhist Jack Kornfield who writes:



*"The things that matter most in our lives are not fantastic or grand.
They are the moments when we touch one other,
when we are there in the most attentive or caring way.
This simple and profound intimacy is the love that we all long for,
these moments of touching and being touched
can become a foundation for a path with a heart,
and they take place in the most immediate and direct way."*



Mother Theresa put it like this: *"In this life most of us cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love."*

Another enjoyable aspect of Evensong was the collection of different readings that were picked out and read from a common bowl. Here are just a few favourites:

"Spiritual love is a position of standing with one hand extended into the world, letting ourselves be a conduit for passing energy."

Christina Baldwin

"In laughter we confess that true living, true compassion, is not about control but about realizing the inherent humour of the universe. We recognize how we are both angels and animals, divine and human ..."

Matthew Fox

"Church is wherever in relationships we are encouraged to be more fully, more courageously our unique individual selves."

From a leaflet about Ministry

"It takes a long time and a lot of practice to become a human being."

John Leonard

There is a second Evensong course book which we will use at some point with another group so if spending time with others in deep and caring listening appeals to you, look out for information about that.

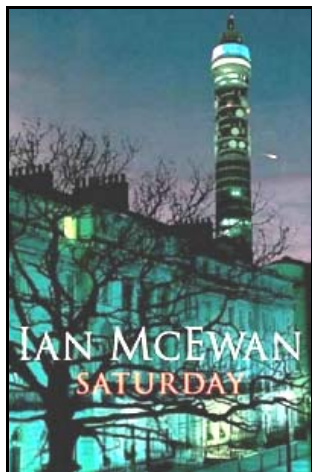
Rev. Sarah Tinker

Reading Engagement Group – The Books we’ll be Exploring this Summer at Essex Church...

“Saturday”

by Ian McEwan

Thursday 28th June, 7.00-9.00pm



The reading engagement group’s next topic of discussion will be “Saturday” by Ian McEwan. This book was chosen by Juliet Edwards and will be the focus of our next reading meeting on **Thursday 28th June**.

Information from Amazon UK:

“Saturday, February 15, 2003. Henry Perowne is a contented man - a successful neurosurgeon, the devoted husband of Rosalind and proud father of two grown-up children. Unusually, he wakes before dawn, drawn to the window of his bedroom and filled with a growing unease. What troubles him as he looks out at the night sky is the state of the world - the impending war against Iraq, a gathering pessimism since 9/11, and a fear that his city and his happy family life are under threat. Later, Perowne makes his way to his weekly squash game through London streets filled with hundreds of thousands of anti-war protestors. A minor car accident brings him into a confrontation with Baxter, a fidgety, aggressive, young man, on the edge of violence. To Perowne's professional eye, there appears to be something profoundly wrong with him. Towards the end of a day rich in incident and filled with Perowne's celebrations of life's pleasures, his family gathers for a reunion. But with the sudden appearance of Baxter, Perowne's earlier fears seem about to be realised.”

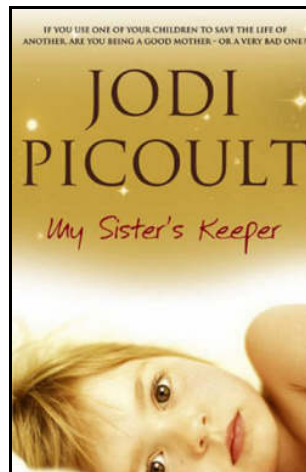
All are welcome to join the book group. Please do try to read the books before the meeting if you’re planning to come along. It would also aid discussion if you pick out favourite passages from the book to share. Members of the group take turns in choosing books so we read a wide variety of material.

The reading group will be taking a break in August before tackling Philip Pullman’s “His Dark Materials” in September.

“My Sister’s Keeper”

by Jodi Picoult

Thursday 26th July, 7.00-9.00pm



The reading engagement group’s next topic of discussion will be “My Sister’s Keeper” by Jodi Picoult. This book was chosen by Mary Roots and will be the focus of our next reading meeting on **Thursday 26th July**.

Information from Amazon UK:

““A major decision about me is being made, and no one's bothered to ask the one person who most deserves it to speak her opinion.” The only reason Anna was born was to donate her cord blood cells to her older sister. And though Anna is not sick, she might as well be. By age thirteen, she has undergone countless surgeries, transfusions, and shots so that her sister, Kate, can somehow fight the leukaemia that has plagued her since she was a child. Anna was born for this purpose, her parents tell her, which is why they love her even more. But now that she has reached an age of physical awareness, she can't help but long for control over her own body and respite from the constant flow of her own blood seeping into her sister's veins. And so she makes a decision that for most would be too difficult to bear, at any time and at any age. She decides to sue her parents for the rights to her own body.”

“This astonishing novel is beautifully and thoughtfully written and focuses on difficult moral choices”

Social Lending: Kiva

Microfinance in Developing Countries



I came across this initiative whilst reading a blog last month. After checking out recent articles about Kiva on the BBC, New York Times, and various other credible sources I was sufficiently convinced of the merits of the idea to get involved myself. I got together with a friend to lend to four different projects (a Samoan vegetable grower who we've lent to is shown above) and thought the scheme may also be of interest to the readers of the newsletter.

Jane Blackall

Information from a BBC report:

For a minimum loan of \$25 (£13) Kiva allows people to sponsor a business by choosing from thousands of cases detailed online. One lender says: "There are certainly occasions when I am looking to see who I am going loan money to and I would like to loan to them all because it is just amazing to see the stories of these people and how they are getting on with their lives. You do feel a connection to the people you are loaning to and I think it is because you see a picture of them and find out a bit about their life." This sort of scheme is generally called Microfinance. It is not new, but the web's ability to allow anyone to become a banker to the world's poor certainly is.

Information from Kiva:

On the Kiva website you can lend money to someone in the developing world who needs a loan for their business - like raising goats, selling vegetables at market or making bricks. Each loan has a picture of the entrepreneur, a description of their business and how they plan to use the loan so you know exactly how your money is being spent - and you get updates letting you know how the business is going. When the entrepreneur pays back their loan you get your money back - and Kiva's loans are managed by microfinance institutions on the ground who have a lot of experience doing this, so you can trust that your money is being handled responsibly.

For more information see: www.kiva.org

Adult RE: A Sharing Circle

Sunday 17th June, 12.45-2.00pm



Come and join us after the service for a sharing circle and lunch. Bring a sandwich to eat and something for us to enjoy together ~ some favourite music perhaps on tape or CD, a poem, a picture, a photograph, or a beautiful object ~ something that you would like to tell others more about. All are welcome.

'Sacred: Discover What We Share'



Our worship theme on June 24th, 'Visiting Sacred Texts', links in with an exhibition now showing at the British Library, entitled 'Sacred'.

This exhibition brings together a remarkable collection of sacred texts from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions with an aim of showing the many links that exist between the three religions and celebrating the beauty of the ancient texts on display, gathered from around the world.

The exhibition will be open every day until 23rd September, entrance is free, and advance booking is highly recommended as it is very popular.

For more information see: www.bl.uk/sacred



"Sometimes the most urgent thing you can possibly do is take a complete rest."

Ashleigh Brilliant

“How to Convert To ...”

I think last month’s article by Daniel O’Connell on how to convert to Unitarian Universalism may have tapped into something universal about the conversion process. At any rate I found it very easy to translate his three of his four steps into their Quaker equivalents.

2. Articulate Your Theology – What Canst Thou Say?

George Fox, the founder of the Quaker movement, had a habit of standing up on a pew to reply after the Priest had finished his sermon. On one occasion, he asked this question

“You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light and hast walked in the Light, and what thou speakest is it inwardly from God?”

which so powerfully effected one of his hearers that she instantly converted to Quakerism, made her house its base for the next 40 years and eventually married him (the Priest was less impressed and became their lifelong enemy).



3. Take Some Spiritual Risks – Live Adventurously

Perhaps the most obvious parallel here is one of the 42 “Advices & Queries” Quaker Meetings are encouraged to read together over the course of the year.

“27. Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God’s guidance and offering counsel to one another?”

4. Become an Elder – Ministry and Concerns

Fox’s breakthrough spiritual experience was realising he had an inner guide, or light, which gave him direct access to Truth, unmediated by Priests or scriptures.

Listening to this inner guide = articulating your theology.

Letting it show you the dark places in your own life and lead you into them = taking spiritual risks.

Letting it lead you to service, either in your church (ministry) or to the world (Concern) = becoming an Elder.

However, I couldn’t think of any direct Quaker parallels to Step 1 – Identify your History. I can see that it’s important to try to be aware of one’s cultural biases in order not to be trapped by them, but I think Friends primarily address this by testing individual discernment against corporate discernment (if necessary in larger and larger groups).

I wonder if conversion processes in other faith communities could also be mapped onto this four-step model?

Jenny Moy

Worship Group: Planning Meeting After the service on Sunday 8th July



We are currently experimenting with holding regular meetings for anyone in the congregation who would like to get more involved in the conduct and planning of worship at Essex Church.

Please come along to the next one on Sunday 8th July and help us come up with service themes and worship materials for our forthcoming congregational services or volunteer as a “reader” to take on readings in regular services.

Church Gardening Group After the service on Sunday 1st July



The gardening group will continue improving the back garden after the service on Sunday 1st July. Please wear your old clothes and bring along tools if you have any. All are welcome to join in and help out.

Our Wardens' Column

What's On in Our Busy Building...

The Asthanga Yoga Self-Practice Group is now running on Monday-Wednesday mornings from 9-11am, and a beginners class is starting on Thursday at the same time. As the group is mainly aimed at mothers of young children, they will take a summer break from 12th July to 10th September, after which the beginners group will be accepting new members. For further information call Lynne on 020 7286 7201.



The Temenos Academy have a busy month with a series of three lectures on Providence, Natural Law and Virtue by Dr. Joseph Milne, on Tuesday 12th, 19th, and 26th June at 7pm. These explore the contemporary relevance of the intuitive sense of the divine amongst ancient philosophers and Christian theologians. On 29th June at 7pm they have a poetry reading by Peter Abbs, who will be launching his new book *The Flower of Flint: New and Selected Poems*. Finally, on July 3rd, in a talk entitled "Eternal Lines to Time" Jill Line will talk about Shakespeare's fascination with Time and Eternity and their relationship to Mankind and the Cosmos. Her talk will also involve readings from Shakespeare's poetry and plays by John Line. Lectures cost £5/3.50 concessions, whilst the reading on the 29th is £3.

Beit Klal Yisrael, the liberal synagogue that has been meeting here for many years, are having a party in June to celebrate the retirement of their Rabbi Sheila, and a concert in July. In June, a Jewish couple, one of whom is also a Rabbi will be celebrating their civil partnership here. NB These events are not open to the general public.

There are Interfaith Seminary Services on Friday 8th June and 13th July at 7pm, and on the 14th July there's another Open Day for anyone interested in training to be an Interfaith Minister. For more information contact Barbara on (01277) 212788.

Richard Sylvester is holding more of his question and answer meetings on Non-duality on Saturday 23rd June and 21st July from 2-4pm (admission £10).

On Thursday 28th June, the Lucy Williamson School will be here rehearsing and performing their annual concert (hosting this is part of our arrangement with their nursery which rents part of the church basement). Last year they filled the building with song and laughter for the entire day and late into the night.

We also expect to host Associated Music Board exams here at the end of June/beginning of July. These exams happen three times a year, and in a couple of weeks literally hundreds of young instrumentalists pass through. Sadly the majority seem to be taking Grade 1 or 2 piano, but we've also had brass, singers, all sorts of strings (including a harpist), and several wind instruments.

On 5th July, from 6-10pm there will be an evening of SRBY Meditation, information available at www.shivarudrabalayogi.com.

On July 15th from 6-7pm Julian Marshall has the last in his series of improvised piano concerts, admission by donation.

And, of course, at the end of July on Friday 27th the building will be given over to the 30th Anniversary Celebrations and launch of the building appeal.

David Berridge and Jenny Moy

"Art in the Park": Saturday 7th July, 11.30 – 4pm, in Dulwich Park



The Art and Spirituality Network are organising an all-age 'Art in the Park' picnic in Dulwich Park, on Saturday 7th July, from 11.30 till 4 pm. This will be a chance to enjoy the summer together with an art activity for all to join in, organised by Tomo Aoshima and our very own Rev. John Harley. Put the date in your diary, and bring your children, and friends of all ages.



Money, Money, Money



There are few certainties about the spiritual path except perhaps that it will involve finance amongst its inevitable material concerns! The truth of this was demonstrated for our community here at Essex Church when Howard Hague, our chair of trustees, revealed at our recent AGM that he had a calculator and had recently used it. Howard's calculator showed that it costs £1,859 a week to run Essex Church.



CHURCH SHOCKER - £1,859 a week!

This may be as shocking to some of our readers as it was to those of us who attended the AGM. But fear not. Although this seems a scarily large amount of money, like anything to do with money it needs to be put into context. This weekly sum covers everything that we spend, including staffing costs for me as your minister and Jenny and David who job-share a full time post as wardens.

The good news is that our expenditure is balanced by our income – our finances are in the black not the red. We make money by letting our basement to the Lloyd Williamson School nursery and by letting the rest of our building to a wide range of community groups. We are also increasing the levels of congregational giving and are grateful to everyone who has taken out a standing order or increased their weekly collection money. Juliet our treasurer explained at the AGM that we do need to continue our efforts to build up healthy financial reserves to cover us in case of a rainy day and that we are also committed to raising money to fund our key development projects – fully accessible new toilets and improved gardens at the front of the church. July sees the start of several years of fundraising for our community. If you have good ideas of ways to raise money and want to take an active part in our projects do get in touch.

Thanks go to Gill Hague who made the lovely new collection bags for us that have recently appeared in our Sunday services. Gill is renowned for her beautiful handiwork and we are especially grateful that she found us some particularly beautiful fabric to use – left over apparently from costumes made for an American TV series. Our collection bag fabric will also be used for the American President's coat! Thanks too to Margaret's husband who carved the collection bag handles and ensured that the bags now have a wider aperture so that people can easily fit in more money.

As Unitarians we cannot perhaps promise that generous givers will be rewarded in heaven but we can assure ourselves that keeping our building in good shape will help to advertise to the world that we are a caring community with a great deal to offer the world. Your generosity will help to maintain a liberal religious voice and a peaceful spiritual haven here in the centre of London.

Rev. Sarah Tinker



New Collection Bags for the Church

Those attending services recently will have noticed that we now have two very attractive new collection bags for receiving the offertory. These replace the old blue bags which were rather showing their age (presumably they came from the old church). The wooden holders for the new bags were made from English oak by Ian Marshall, husband of our long-serving choir member Margaret Marshall, and the bags themselves were made by Gill Hague. Rather fittingly the material for the bags consisted of offcuts from a coat made recently for an actor playing the part of Benjamin Franklin in a forthcoming film. Those with a historic bent may recall that the real Benjamin Franklin attended the first service held in the original Essex Street Chapel on 17 April 1774 and conducted by Rev Theophilus Lindsey.

Howard Hague

Creativity Engagement Group: Projects for the Summer Months at Essex Church...

Photography “Show-and-Tell”

Thursday 14th June, 7.00-9.00pm



You may already be aware that creativity group have been working on a themed photography project throughout the spring of this year. The official title is “doors and windows” but it is open to wide interpretation (“openings”, “entrances and exits”, “boundaries”, “thresholds” – be creative!)

You are invited to bring your photographs (print or digital) to a special “show-and-tell” session of the creativity group in June. The aim of this session will be preparation for an exhibition of our favourites to be launched after the service on Sunday 22nd July (further details elsewhere in newsletter).

Please contact Jane Blackall or Caroline Blair for more information about the project. All are welcome to take part.

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



Seasonal Wall-Hanging: It's nearly time to change our wall-hanging panels once again and put up those which are intended to symbolise high summer. Panels should be 150cm long and can be up to a maximum of 30cm wide. If you have made any panels please bring them in and give them to Jane Blackall so that they can be included in the next phase of the wall-hanging.

If you would like to know more about the creativity engagement group please do talk to Jane Blackall or Patricia Walker-Hesson. Photographs of work from several of the projects we've worked on over the last few years can be found on our website: www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk/creativity.html

Soul Dolls: Fimo Faces

Thursday 12th July, 7.00-9.00pm



In July, we will be starting a project to work on “soul dolls”, inspired by a book on this craft by Noreen Crone-Findlay. These eccentric dolls may be made using all manner of scraps of paper, card, and fabric and are intended to “open doors to creativity, healing, and wholeness” as the dolls “express your feelings, desires, and ideas”.

In this session we will begin to think about what our dolls might represent and will work on making faces and various embellishments for our dolls using polymer clay. A £2 donation towards the cost of the materials will be requested. There will then be time for us all to collect fancy fabrics and papers for use in creating the rest of our dolls together at a future session. We'll bring some books along for inspiration.

“I love summer because summer has a certain natural and reckless hospitality that uniquely invites us to ‘get barefoot’ with the world. Summer begs us to ‘reduce the barriers’ that we have allowed to be erected between ourselves and all those charming life forms that live and dance around us. In summer, we peel off layers of clothing...open windows and doors...sit and sleep outside...spend languid hours under the trees with family and friends...skinny dip in cool waters...eat sweet corn and watermelon while listening to the cicadas...feel the sunlight, wind and rain directly upon our faces - in summer we dive deliciously into so many pleasing pools of simple, direct living. Summer entices us to know and touch (without complication or caveat) sky and sea...sunrise and sunset...forest and field...beast and bird...family and friends...food and fun. Summer is the time which welcomes us to re-connect with life in all its deep and holy simplicity.”

Rev. Scott W. Alexander on Summer



Our Essex Church Building – A Celebration of 30 Years



In July 2007 we will be celebrating thirty years of our much loved building at 112 Palace Gardens Terrace. The first service in the new church took place on 24 July 1977, and was lead by the Rev Robert C. Palmer (from the UUA), who was coming to the end of his six-month interim ministry with the congregation. We reproduce below some excerpts from his address given during that first service, which was entitled ‘A Day to Rejoice and Reflect’. The background is that the old Victorian church building on our present site had been demolished in 1973, and for four years the congregation met in temporary premises in Kensington.

We begin today, in a sense, the third century of Essex Church. Now I realise that the actual date of the founding was in 1774, but since the church of the second century which stood here from 1887 to 1973 had already been demolished at that time, it was not really a proper beginning for the third. Last Tuesday, after attending an LDPA meeting at Essex Hall, I noticed a plaque near the door, which surprisingly I do not remember having seen before. It commemorates the building destroyed by enemy action in July 1944, and the first Unitarian service held on that site by the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey just 170 years before [on 17 April 1774]. In my Encyclopedia of Religion, in an article by Earle Morse Wilbur, the prime historian of our movement, it is written: ‘Doctrinal unrest meanwhile persisted among the Anglican clergy and led to an appeal to Parliament for relief from subscription to the Articles and liturgy; it was rejected by a large majority. A single one of the petitioners (followed later by a few others) then withdrew from the Church. Theophilus Lindsey gave up his living and going to London opened in 1774 the first Unitarian chapel in England, which attracted numerous adherents and survives to this day’.

Yes, it survives, and not only that, on this day it takes a new lease of life. It may not have the numerous adherents as in days of yore, but as I said last Sunday to a considerably smaller congregation in the final service at the British Humanist Association headquarters where we have been meeting, it is quality that counts for more than quantity in the great issues of life. And who knows, it may be that the third century will prove to be the best in terms of the numbers of adherents as well! At any rate, you have here a building which should certainly be of service for a century, and in which origins should never be forgotten, for they spring from the deep yearnings of the human soul in every age for release from intellectual and spiritual bondage. It took a good deal of courage for Lindsey, alone among his fellow priests of the established Church, to leave behind all the familiar scenes and the security it offered him and venture where no one in his day had dared to go. Not to be obsessed by our past, but to honour it and to be grateful for those who laboured in it, that we might enjoy the fruits of their labours, is certainly a continuing function of this brand new, but at the same time historic church. The freedom to worship that we enjoy here was purchased over many long and tortured centuries at great cost; it is a priceless inheritance which is ours to commemorate thankfully ...

The church is here to remind us of our responsibility to the future; to cherish in our hearts that it shall be safe, humane and abundant in material and spiritual things, for those who follow us. When people walk past here, or turn in here, one hundred years from now, I would like to think that they will be thankful that this third building of Essex Church has stood here on this spot for a century. Let us therefore rejoice and reflect upon this church which has come into our possession, a church ‘to open our hearts and minds to the mysteries of the past, the needs of the present, and the challenges of the future’.

Robert C. Palmer

The above excerpts are taken from the church newsletter for August 1977, which was issued with a special cover in colour to celebrate the first service in the new building. Further details about the history of the ‘second century’ of Essex Church and the move to the new building will be found in Raymond Williams’s book *Essex Church in Kensington 1887-1987*, of which only a few copies now remain (at £1). Sadly the Rev Robert Palmer died in September 1997. Although his interim ministry lasted only six months, he and Peggy endeared themselves to the members of the congregation at the time. I remember visiting them in their Boston (USA) home in August 1980 and enjoying their hospitality there. Bob had retired from the UUA ministry in 1975 but he continued as a dedicated volunteer at Boston City Hospital for many years afterwards. He was designated Minister Emeritus at his former Nashville, Tennessee, church in 1979.

Howard Hague



The Quiet Cars



We are the quiet cars: in sunlight we love to rest
 Lolling at east against curbs, or squatting
 Like hens on someone's drive where
 There used to be a flower garden.
 Don't disturb us! – how we hate it when in daylight
 Drivers come, rev up our dormant engines and
 Wrenching out our quiescent gears roar off with us
 Down wet or sticky streets, or
 Sun-baked motorways – Ugh!

But at night it's another matter. At night like cats
 We come alive, and when most of the world
 Is sleeping, we slip our brakes and tear off
 Down slumbering streets and shadowy avenues.
 We seldom meet more than a solitary suburbo
 Fumbling his way home after a night
 with his girl; or a few tired taxiists wishing
 They'd kept to the day-shift. Naturally they assume
 We're out with our owners, but if they
 Just happen to look at us – you should see their faces!
 Written all over their resolution 'Must take
 More water with it next time... must take more...'

But what fun we have cutting 'em up:
 Driving straight through traffic lights, not stopping at junctions,
 Helter-skelter over sleeping-policemen: accelerating
 At every speed camera as we rocket past.
 But back in the driveway by five or
 Five-thirty at the latest. They hardly ever
 Notice: perhaps just 'Christ! This ole buggy's started usin'
 So much petrol now'. Or: 'who put that bloody dent
 In the wing? Must have been Mabel, but
 If I say a word I'll just get a mouthful and
 No more friskies for a month'.

Hearing all this we quiet cars struggle together.
 Waiting for yet another joyous night to fall when we
 Zoom off through open parks and parkless places innocently
 Enjoying ourselves. By early light we'll be back with
 Just a few deep scratches, a dent or two, or a
 Battered bonnet. If in their still sleepy state they notice they'll
 Simply blame a neighbour's kid, or a mythical
 Hit-an'-run merchant. But of course that doesn't stop us.
 They'll never have the slightest suspicion and just go on
 Cursing their neighbour's sons and daughters and
 Meekly paying their garage bills.

John Hands

June/July Multifaith Calendar

✠ 7th June – Corpus Christi – Catholic/ Day of Thanksgiving for Holy Communion – Anglican

The festival of Corpus Christi in the Roman Catholic Church, or the Day of Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion in the Anglican Church, occurs 60 days after Easter and celebrates the Eucharist. In the ancient world it was customary to scatter flowers in the path of important people as a sign of respect and reverence. This custom was adopted by the Church to honour the Blessed Sacrament, carried in procession on the festival of Corpus Christi.



16th June – Martyrdom of Guru Arjan (1606) – Sikh

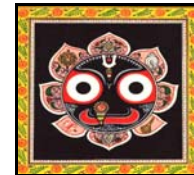
This festival commemorates the fifth Guru who made the first compilation of the Sikh Scriptures, the Adi Granth, and supervised the completion of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Guru Arjan was executed on the orders of the Moghul Emperor for refusing to pay a fine arising from a charge of treason. Sikhs hold a gurburb on this day, including an akband path, a non-stop cover to cover reading of the Guru Granth Sahib.

✠ 30th June – Asalha Puja/Dhammacakka Day / Turning of the Wheel of Teaching – Buddhist

This is a Theravada Buddhist celebration of the First Proclamation by Gautama to five ascetics in the Deer Park near Benares. He taught about the Middle Way, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths.

☪ 16th July – Ratha Yatra – “Chariot journey”

– Hindu

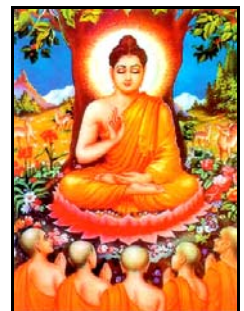


This festival is most notably celebrated at Puri in Orissa, India, where thousands of people push huge wagons (rathas) with images of Krishna, known as 'Jagannath' (Lord of the Universe), from which the term 'juggernaut' comes in English. Ratha Yatra is celebrated by Hindus in Britain with processions through some cities.

✠ 18th July – Chokhor (Chokor Duchon)

– Buddhist

A Tibetan and Nepalese summer festival that commemorates the Buddha's first Turning of the Wheel, the first teaching concerning the Four Truths. Statues of the Buddha and copies of the scriptures are carried around with music and festivities, to symbolise the spreading of the Buddha's teaching. The whole community joins in the processions and picnics that follow.



✠ 24th July – Tisha B'Av – Jewish

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

Stewarding/Coffee Rotas



Stewarding:

3 rd June:	Jo Tye
10 th June:	Christine Joshi
17 th June:	Angela Gasparetto
24 th June:	Heidi Ferid
1 st July:	Will Lyons
8 th July:	Jim Blair
15 th July:	?????
22 nd July:	Will Lyons
29 th July:	Howard Hague

Coffee:

3 rd June:	John Marrow
10 th June:	David Darling
17 th June:	Albert Dolan
24 th June:	John Hands
1 st July:	Howard Hague
8 th July:	Caroline Blair
15 th July:	Juliet Edwards
22 nd July:	?????
29 th July:	Jane Blackall

Please speak to Christine Joshi if you would be willing to help out with stewarding or coffee duties at Essex Church – it's really not that hard – we still have a few slots to fill this summer so please do volunteer! Your help is much appreciated...

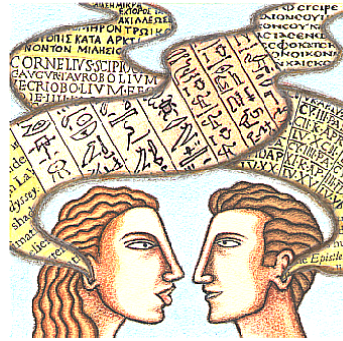
“The F Word”: Images of Forgiveness

An Exhibition at St Ethelburga's
Monday 2nd July – Friday 13th July

This new exhibition comprises a thought-provoking collection of personal stories and arresting images exploring forgiveness and reconciliation in the face of atrocity. Presented by “The Forgiveness Project”. The exhibition will be open on Fridays 11am-3pm and prior to events starting. To view the exhibition at other times please call us on 020 7496 1610.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace
78 Bishopsgate, London, EC2N 4AG

Language of Poetry...



Is closest to the human heart: all other sounds
Shapes or images are something abstract, almost
Set apart; but the quick release of sense and sound with which
We struggle to infuse heart and intellect are nearest to
The universal force which thrusts through dormant nature;
As Springtime sap through trees and flowers.
The Highest Potency which some call “Source” and others “God”
Shows varied aspects of Herself in art and music, but
In poetry alone personifies. In poetry is felt and held
In other arts revealed then distanced. In no more delightful sheen
Is Source revealed than music's rapturous tones; but
Poetry plays her out: and as light replenishes each day
Enlightens and reveals our understanding.

John Hands

...part of our 30th Anniversary Celebrations at Essex Church...

Summer Concert

Sunday 29th July, 1.15-2.00pm at Essex Church



A selection of familiar faces from our choir have generously offered to put on a summer concert to round off our week of 30th Anniversary Celebrations. Harold Lorenzelli, Margaret Marshall, Sandra Smith and others will entertain us on 29th July.

Entry to this concert will be free but your donations are invited and will go towards our Essex Church building fund. Our church needs work to make it fully accessible and we also hope to carry out improvements to our front garden.

A Musical Tribute to Kathleen Ferrier

With Songs and Anecdotes



Sunday 24th June, 1.15 – 2.00pm
at Essex Church

All are invited to stay behind after the service at Essex Church on Sunday 24th June for this concert featuring:

Shirley Mason (*singer*)

Sandra Smith (*piano*)

Entry to the concert is free but donations are invited and will go towards our building fund for much-needed work to improve the accessibility of our church facilities.



Colouring picture for the Jewish festival of Tisha B'Av (24th July).

GA Resolutions 2007



At this year's General Assembly meetings in Hatfield this April, delegates from congregations and societies in our denomination took time to consider a number of important issues, and voted to pass resolutions on these matters. Over the next few months, we hope to highlight a number of these resolutions in our newsletter, and bring these matters (mostly relating to social justice) to a wider audience.

Resolution 4:

From Westgate Chapel (Unitarian), Wakefield

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports the "Strangers into Citizens" Campaign.



– call for a pathway to legal status for long-term migrants –

"Strangers into Citizens" is a campaign by the Citizen Organising Foundation (COF), an alliance of faith and community organizations across London and Birmingham.

This campaign proposes that irregular migrants who have lived and worked in the UK for four or more years should be granted a two-year work permit. At the end of those two years, subject to employer and character references, they should be given leave to remain. Such regularisations have been successfully carried out by other European nations, and "Strangers into Citizens" is campaigning for a one-off regularisation measure to be introduced in the UK, as part of the Government's reform of immigration.

From the campaign website: "The case for a one-off "earned amnesty" for migrants is overwhelming. It recognises the dignity of human beings who have made new lives in Britain; recognises the role that migrants already play in society; ensures that tens of thousands of British workers receive the protection of the law; solves the expensive, inhuman delay in processing old asylum claims; builds a more cohesive British society; and turns outlaws into neighbours - "strangers into citizens" - in the best British tradition of pragmatism and justice."

For information see: www.strangersintocitizens.org.uk

Creativity Group City Photography Walk



On the last Sunday in April the Creativity Group decided on an outing to take more photos for this year's topic of "Doors and Windows". We took the tube to Monument and were led by Caroline through a maze of streets – streets along which I had either never walked or usually only drive. It was a joy on a Sunday afternoon – almost no people. We remembered to look upwards to see the tops of the original buildings and not just the modern shop fronts.

We dived into the occasional church. In one we arrived as the afternoon congregation of Koreans was just leaving. This was a church which had once been burnt to the ground and has been rebuilt in the original style. It appears that several of the city churches rent out their buildings to groups who do not have their own. Some we couldn't get into but outside one we did find a small courtyard with a tiny garden – such a treat in the city. Here we found a minute doorway – only big enough for the very smallest of people. Beside it was a huge piece of timber from a Roman wharf – a reminder of London's very long history. We had started at Monument and passed Pudding Lane where the Great Fire of London started – another major historical reminder.

Then we walked along the north bank of the Thames with a view of the South Bank buildings – just as fascinating as the other side but with not so many people. We ignored some 'No Entry' signs and it paid off. The tide was high and the light on the river flickered and gleamed. Along the river here we had a lot of fun trying to get a photograph of all of us together – or rather a photograph of our reflections in some of the huge modern glass windows.

Having walked under the original Temple Bar, re-erected near St. Paul's Cathedral, we ended up in Paternoster Square. We thought we would sit down for a 'nice quiet cup of tea' but the bells of St. Paul's thought differently. We had to shout at each other to converse. But when I thought about it, I had never heard the bells of St. Paul's before so maybe we did arrive at the right time after all. Halfway down Cheapside, our group separated, one to visit the Guildhall, some to shop in a convenient supermarket and others to go home. Walking in the city is a real joy. Thank you, Caroline, for taking so much care with the route.

Patricia Walker

