



# Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: October 2016

## What's On...

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 11am-noon  
**'Self-Care and Self-Compassion'**  
Led by Jane Blackall

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October, 7-8pm  
**'Heart and Soul'**  
'Containing Multitudes'  
Led by Jane Blackall

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 11am-noon  
**'Accepting Impermanence'**  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 12.30pm  
**Inclusive Communion**  
Led by Sarah Tinker

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October, 11am-noon  
**'Searching for Utopia'**  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October, 12.30-1.15pm  
**'Finding Your Voice'**  
Singing workshop with Margaret

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 11am-noon  
**'Living with Darkness'**  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker  
*This service will include a charity collection for the Prison Phoenix Trust*

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1.30-4.30pm  
**A Workshop for Women**  
*with Nicole Schnackenberg:*  
**'False Bodies, True Selves: Exploring Body Image through a Spiritual Lens'**

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October, 11am-noon  
**'All Souls'**  
Led by Jeannene Powell  
*...don't forget the clocks go back!!!*

## Dates for Your Diary:

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 7pm**  
London Playback Theatre  
Ageing: Combatting Loneliness

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 11am**  
Christmas Carol Service and Lunch

## Move Your Feet

### A Message from our Minister

They say that our brains can sometimes erase difficult memories, that we may forget experiences that it's perhaps better not to dwell upon. That probably explains why I had not thought about my one and only experience of abseiling for well over twenty years. It's not a happy memory. I'd never been easy with heights and I'd hoped to be left alone, quietly holding everybody else's jackets

whilst they dangled at the end of a rope, making their way down the cliff face. But I allowed myself to be cajoled into giving it a go. I trusted the people in charge, everyone was gently supportive, and in the end I did reach the bottom of the cliff in a reasonably gracious manner. But at the top of the cliff I'd frozen. They'd persuaded me to clamber over the edge and there I was, with my feet on the cliff, my back to the drop, clutching the rope far more tightly than it needed to be clutched. And I froze. I could not move an inch. I could not imagine ever getting out of the situation I was in. To walk down the cliff in the way I was being told to seemed quite impossible and yet I could not imagine ever climbing back up either. It was one of the young students I was paid to teach who helped me out. 'Move your feet' she shouted. 'Just walk one step at a time backwards and you'll get to the bottom'. And that's what I did and it worked.

I recently read Elias Amidon's description of feeling similarly stuck on a rock face. His climbing companion's advice to 'move your feet' helped him see the climb from a slightly different perspective and he found the next hold. Life's stuck places don't just happen when you're climbing. Don't most of us experience times when we haven't a clue what to do next? What then? Perhaps making some small shift to change our perspective, finding an action that helps to ease the feeling of being stuck, seeking the views of others so we don't just listen to our own version of reality – taking small steps, one at a time, helping each other to climb up or down life's cliff faces.

**Rev. Sarah Tinker**

With thanks to Elias Amidon who wrote about his own 'move your feet!' experience in a recent email from *Notes from the Open Path*. These are short contemplations on living whole-heartedly and in clear awareness. If you would like to receive *Notes from the Open Path* directly, send an email to [openpath@sufiway.org](mailto:openpath@sufiway.org) with that request. Elias Amidon is the *Pir* (spiritual director) of the Sufi Way, a non-sectarian inner school in the lineage of the Indian Sufi Inayat Khan. Elias visited us here at Essex Church in 2014 and has an open invitation to come and teach here again when life next brings him to London.



## In this month's newsletter...

\* Theme Based Ministry \* 'What Next?' – Update on the Building Works \* 'Rumi Night' Concert \* 'Heart and Soul' and other Alternative Services around the District \* Inclusive Communion \* 'False Bodies, True Selves' Workshop for Women \* 'My Narcissism' by Jonathan Crawford \* Responses to Hucklow Summer School \* Sponsored Walk for Children in Need with Carole \* 'Transcendental Streams' by Niall Doherty \* 'Summer Pavilions' by Roy Clark 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.



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Notting Hill Gate  
London W8 4RT

Office Telephone: 020 7221 6514

Email: [info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk](mailto:info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk)

Web: [www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk](http://www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk)

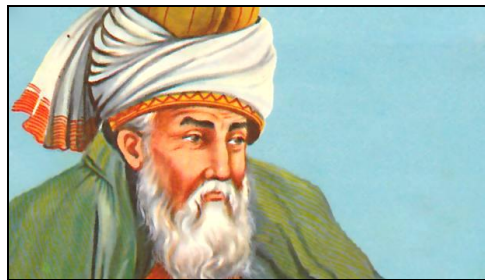
'When I follow the Buddha's example, I remember that being compassionate includes setting limits, like just saying no. Although it seems like a contradiction, saying no is actually an act of compassion for others, because when we do things that aren't appropriate or we're just too damn tired to fully participate in, they only get a piece of us — a small, crabby piece, if you are anything like me. And it shows compassion for ourselves, a reminder that we're just as precious as everyone else and sometimes we need to be nurtured as well.'

Gerri Larkin



Photograph from the 'Summer Pavilions' outing in August taken by Helena Coope (see full report on page 11).

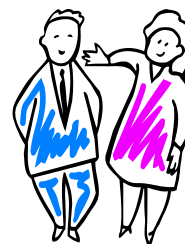
# 'Rumi Night'



Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 7-9pm, here at Essex Church

A musical concert inspired by the mystical poetry of Rumi, performed by the Caravan of Love Ensemble - a group of young musicians who for the first time in the West have rejuvenated the ancient sacred art of playing the mystical rhythms infused in mystical poetry. Tickets for this event are £10 per person and all proceeds will go to charity. To book: [www.icc\\_uk.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.icc_uk.eventbrite.co.uk) or talk to Sarah.

## Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



### Stewarding:

2 <sup>nd</sup> October:	Melody Chapman
9 <sup>th</sup> October:	Juliet Edwards
16 <sup>th</sup> October:	Heidi Ferid
23 <sup>rd</sup> October:	Brian Ellis
30 <sup>th</sup> October:	Melody Chapman

### Coffee:

2 <sup>nd</sup> October:	Kate Brown
9 <sup>th</sup> October:	Kate Brown
16 <sup>th</sup> October:	Melody Chapman
23 <sup>rd</sup> October:	Jane Blackall
30 <sup>th</sup> October:	Liz Tuckwell

### Greeting:

2 <sup>nd</sup> October:	Brian Ellis
9 <sup>th</sup> October:	Niall Doherty
16 <sup>th</sup> October:	Roy Clark
23 <sup>rd</sup> October:	Jo Tye
30 <sup>th</sup> October:	Carole Grace

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](mailto:rotas@kensington-unitarians.org.uk)

## ‘What Next?’

### Update on the Building Works



We promised ourselves that mending the church roof and having a new heating system fitted would be the last of the building tasks we'd tackle for quite a while. But now that everywhere looks so fresh and clean it's inspired us to consider tackling a few more outstanding tasks. Harry the electrician will soon be fitting new spotlights on the church 'stage' area, which will probably only be noticeable at an evening service, when they'll help to create more of an atmosphere. We're seeking a new home for the organ as its wiring at the back of the church has been removed and so it can't be played here anymore.

We were so impressed with the joiner who boxed in the new pipework that we've asked him to quote for building various new cupboards in the church. Storage space is so in demand from all our user groups that any more cupboards we can create will be really useful. We're going to try and get the wheeled frame, which the piano sits on, mended so it doesn't mark the floor. Once all that is done, we'll have the parquet floors in the church and hall sanded and re-finished. That's such a dusty and then sticky job it can only be done between Christmas and New Year when all is quiet here. In the meantime Jenny has returned to Spain for the last month of her sabbatical with her dance community, where she'll still be working on our lettings and invoicing, raising lots of money for us to spend ... on the building! And when all these tasks are completed we wonder what we'll turn our attention to next. But in the meantime you can still have a guess at our final expenditure on building renovation for 2016, estimated at £100,000 earlier in the year. Will we have gone over budget and, if so, by how much?

And a new competition for those of you who've been watching Brian's dedicated progress in painting our front railings: how long will it be before the first bit of new paint is chipped off? Will the railings remain perfect at least until the start of 2017? Watch this space (or the railings) for further updates. And thank you to Brian for tackling such a mammoth task and really smartening up the front of the church.

**Sarah Tinker and Jenny Moy**

## Theme Based Ministry



Starting in December this year we're going to be experimenting with a new way of approaching planning our worship and other activities here at Essex Church. Called 'theme based ministry', this involves choosing a broad theme for each month well ahead of time and choosing service topics, workshop topics, activities for the children's programme, music and so forth to tie in with the theme. This way of organising congregational life seems to be working well for UUA groups and I'm grateful to Jane and Jeannene for agreeing to get involved in the planning process and to lead and co-lead more services in the year ahead.

This way of working encourages greater involvement from everybody. We'll be listing all the themes in next month's newsletter and our hope is that this will spark ideas off for you all. Is there a poem or a piece of music that you think would work well in a particular month or a linked outing you'd like to organise? Do you know someone we could invite to talk about their special interest in a topic? Each month's newsletter will contain ideas for further exploration of a particular theme and you might want to write something.

Congregations that are involved with theme based ministry report these positive experiences:

- A deeper worship experience.
- Greater theological and religious literacy.
- A more rigorous and challenging approach to issues and social action.
- People connecting theology to the issues of their everyday life.
- Strengthening community connections as people explore these issues together each month.
- Giving people a greater sense of ownership of the congregation and ability to 'speak their faith'.
- A joined-up programme: services, workshops, children's programme, newsletter articles etc.
- Staff and congregation members working together, sharing ideas, supporting and enthusing each other.

December's theme will be 'Tradition' and we've already had an offer of a poetry workshop exploring winter traditions. If anyone would like to write and / or talk about Christmas traditions from their childhood, do get in touch.

**Rev. Sarah Tinker**

## 'Heart and Soul'

### Midweek Spiritual Gatherings

Thursdays 6<sup>th</sup> October and  
3<sup>rd</sup> November from 7-8pm

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



Come and join us for our monthly alternative spiritual gathering, with music and silence, words and prayers, and a chance to explore the evening's topic in relation to your own life. This will be followed by refreshments (cake!) and fellowship. All are welcome to join us. Jane will be leading the October session on the theme of 'containing multitudes'.

If you would like to know more about 'Heart and Soul' gatherings email [jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk](mailto:jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk)

## Alternative Services Around the District

As well as our monthly 'Heart and Soul' gatherings at Essex Church, some other London Unitarian chapels are offering alternative opportunities for spiritual nourishment.

**Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel**  
Hampstead, London, NW3 1NG  
Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm  
(and every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month)

'Heart and Soul' – 'A gentle, informal and interactive service with a mix of readings, meditation and sharing.' October's theme will be 'The Dance of Life'.

**Effra Road Chapel, Brixton**  
63 Effra Road, London, SW2 1BZ  
Weekly from Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November at 1pm

'Soul Space' – 'A midweek service, which is a spiritually inclusive service focused on mindfulness, meditation and fellowship, and which will serve those taking a break from work as well as those with a little more time'.

Please contact them if you'd like more information.

Jeannene Powell



## World Congress of Faiths Younghusband Lecture

'The Riddle of the One and the Many:  
Reflections on Spirituality and the Brain'

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November, 6.30-9.00pm  
Heythrop College, 23 Kensington Square, London W8 5HN

As part of its 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations, the World Congress of Faiths is delighted to welcome Dr Iain McGilchrist to present its annual lecture, honouring the founder Sir Francis Younghusband. Dr McGilchrist has published original articles and research papers in a wide range of publications on topics in literature, philosophy, medicine and psychiatry. He is the author of the groundbreaking *The Master and his Emissary: The Divided Brain and The Making of the Western World* (Yale 2009), acclaimed as 'a dazzling masterpiece' and 'splendidly thought-provoking'. He is a former Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and former Consultant Psychiatrist and Clinical Director at the Bethlem Royal & Maudsley Hospital, London.

Tickets are £20 including buffet reception after lecture.  
See: [www.worldfaiths.org/younghusband-lecture-2016](http://www.worldfaiths.org/younghusband-lecture-2016)  
or email [jenny@worldfaiths.org](mailto:jenny@worldfaiths.org) for more information

## Inclusive Communion

Sundays 9<sup>th</sup> October, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2016  
at 12.30pm Down in the Church Library



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

9<sup>th</sup> October – led by Sarah Tinker  
13<sup>th</sup> November – led by Jane Blackall



## Sponsored Walk with Carole Grace

11am, Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October  
Meeting at Richmond Station

I am going to lead a walk in Richmond Park in aid of Children in Need on 8<sup>th</sup> October. I would love to be walking with others, as it is another way we can learn about each other, deepen our relationships and have fun. You can come for the walk or to clock up some sponsorship money for 'Children in Need'.

I am expecting a mixture of abilities so I suggest we aim to walk to Ham House along the Thames starting at Richmond Station. We can then divide and one group can walk up to the Park. I will have a sponsorship form for anyone who might be able to collect money and I suggest sponsors sign up for a lump sum rather than paying per mile.

I think it is important that I know in advance how many people will be coming so please speak to me after church or email [caroleg2001@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:caroleg2001@yahoo.co.uk). I hope we all enjoy this time being together and collecting funds for a good cause.

Carole Grace

I'm trying to raise as much money as I can for BBC Children in Need. Your support will make a real difference to the lives of disadvantaged children and young people right across the UK.



**£20** provides a counselling session for a 16-year-old girl who lost her dad, helping her feel stronger and able to cope with everyday life.

**£30** means disabled children can do an indoor surfing session, where they can have fun while improving their balance and coordination.

## False Bodies, True Selves:

Exploring Body Image through a Spiritual Lens



## A Workshop for Women

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October - 1.30 to 4.30pm

Hosted by Kensington Unitarians at Essex Church

Facilitated by Nicole Schnackenberg, author of 'False Bodies, True Selves: Moving Beyond Appearance-Focused Identity Struggles and Returning to the True Self', published by Karnac. In this workshop we will take a meditative and conscious approach to engaging with the body. We will explore how to form a deeper sense of connection between our spiritual and physical being and think about how and why our identities get tangled up in our appearance. We will look at how we can return to an understanding of ourselves as spiritual beings inhabiting the body as opposed to identifying the body with who we intrinsically are. The workshop aims to facilitate a renewed connection to our true nature and innate goodness. We will be able to participate at a level that feels comfortable for each of us.

**Places are limited so participants must book in advance, or make further enquiries, with Sarah Tinker on [info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk](mailto:info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) or phone 07960 057567.**

Pay what you can afford: suggested payments £3/6/9/12 on the day.

## Greetings from Billy in LA



Members of the congregation will be glad to know that over the summer we heard from our friend Billy, who sent this photo back in early August, along with this brief message: 'Just wanted to let you know everything is well here in Los Angeles. Making progress in my film and music endeavours, and have settled in Long Beach as the attached picture will attest to, have found the local Unitarian Church.'



## 'My Narcissism'

As a child I thrived on adoration and compliments. I cannot speak for anyone else, but for me, praise was like a powerful drug that motivated almost everything I did outside of keeping myself alive. Luckily for me, I was labelled as a Gifted and Talented child in Sports, Art, Music and Dance - subjects that, because of their entertainment value, tend to attract a

lot of attention and admiration. Ironically, this attention was a catalyst for my underachievement; nevertheless, this did not concern me at the time, as I was relishing the plaudits. That said, the word that most frequently appeared in my school reports was 'Potential' - a positive adjective, which for me smacked a little condescending: "Never mind my potential, where is my praise and outstanding grades?" Praise and grades I hadn't actually worked for. At the time I wasn't aware that my teachers were politely expressing concern that I was not achieving anything with my talent. I also wish they were honest about my narcissistic traits.

Narcissism is often confused with confidence because externally they can appear the same; however, internally, they couldn't be farther apart. You see, I needed praise for reassurance and validation. When I received positive feedback, I felt valued and appreciated, but when the feedback wasn't complimentary, I would develop a low sense of self-worth, a pessimistic outlook on life, and disdain for the person who issued the feedback. Bouncing back from negative feedback was just not in me; therefore, the stakes were too high for me to deliberately subject myself to it. So, just as children without mentors tend to do, I pursued the path of least resistance:

*"Better to convince the world that I am excellent at something, rather than actually pursue the path of excellence."*

With this internal monologue one takes exception to anything said about you that does not compliment the self-image we wish to project. So despite my macho, confident exterior - internally, I was as sensitive as a kitten.

*"The first principle is that you must not fool yourself, as YOU are the easiest to fool"*

**Richard Feynman** (*Ego is the Enemy*)

Now let's look at delivering feedback from the perspective of a teacher who is employed by the taxpayer to prepare children with essential life-skills. She is appreciated as a "good teacher" when she tells a child like me everything he wants to hear, thus feeding my delusion of self. However, if she dares to give corrective feedback, she is labelled as a "mean teacher." Damned if she does; damned if she doesn't.

A 2015 study was published by Brad Bushman and Eddie Brummelman that surveyed 565 children age 7-11 and their parents. It revealed that narcissistic traits can be nurtured in children when they are over-evaluated (made to believe that they are superior and entitled to success). As a sports coach I have found far better intrinsic results when we let children become aware of their potential, but encourage them to stay focused and reach for the proverbial bar of success, than to lead them to believe that the bar can come down to them.

**Jonathan Crawford**

## One Light Spiritual Gathering



### 'Between the Light and the Dark'

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October - 6.45 for 7pm start  
Here at Essex Church, Notting Hill Gate**

A OneSpirit Interfaith Service for people of all faiths and none. This One Light Spiritual Gathering is offered by Christopher, Bernd and Alison. For further information contact: [admin@osif.co.uk](mailto:admin@osif.co.uk)

## Good Cause Collection of the Month Prison Phoenix Trust



### Collection on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October

The Prison Phoenix Trust encourages prisoners in the development of their spiritual welfare, through the practices of meditation and yoga, working with silence and the breath. The PPT offers personal support to prisoners around the UK and the Republic of Ireland through teaching, workshops, correspondence, books and newsletters - and to prison staff too. They work with people of any faith, or of none, and honour all religions.

**For more information see:** [www.theppt.org.uk](http://www.theppt.org.uk)

## Previous Charity Collections:

Thank you for your generosity in contributing to recent charity collections. I am pleased to let you know that we will be sending the following donations to good causes:

**June – Unitarian GA - £141 + Gift Aid**

**July – Koestler Trust – £136 + Gift Aid**

**August – Mayhew Animal Home - £61 + Gift Aid**

## 'Finding Our Voice' Monthly Singing Workshops



**Sundays 16<sup>th</sup> October and 20<sup>th</sup> November  
after the service from 12.30 to 1.15pm**

Margaret Marshall 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 our 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 these sessions are designed for everyone, whatever your experience or ability. All are welcome.

## London Playback Theatre and GlobalNet21 Present:

### Ageing: Combatting Loneliness



**7pm, Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November, at Essex Church**

London Playback Theatre is collaborating with GlobalNet21 to open dialogue about ageing, the problems of isolation, and loneliness. At this event, we will share feelings, exchange experiences and stories on this growing problem. London Playback Theatre is a company of internationally experienced professional theatre practitioners, consultants, educators and therapists, creating instant theatre from real life stories. GlobalNet21 is a forum for education, social engagement and change, discussing the great issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to develop a new form of democracy, where people can again be involved.

## Warden's Report: A Postcard from Spain



I arrived back in Spain yesterday for the final month of the arts project I helped set up in my sabbatical leave earlier this year. I'd taken a special interest in the garden, so one of the first things I did was run down there to see how everything was growing. It was hugely exciting to see that the tiny plants I'd left behind in June had sprawled all over the place laying melons like giant eggs and that the aubergines were dripping with shiny black jewels.

My sunflower circle has gone to seed now - but I saw photos of it in its glory - and it's great to see the cabbages so hearty and the roots (carrots, beetroot and sweet potato) so deep :-). For dinner we had lusciously ripe tomatoes from our own vines and more courgettes than we could eat - moral: even a community of 15 people holding regular arts events doesn't need 20+ courgette plants!

This morning, I joined the mediators in the chapel - a beautiful space, where I'm now typing this - and this afternoon I hope to swim in the pool I helped clean on my first visit. Here's a link to a short video of that project <https://vimeo.com/170941463>

It's funny, when I was in London, this place seemed like a dream, but now I'm back, London seems like a dream - maybe partly because I spent such a high proportion of my two months there in the church and its immediate surroundings, rather than engaging with the rest of the city. Also because the church itself was in flux around me: pipes running along walls and through floors and up into ceilings; furniture draped with plastic sheeting; church roof opening to the sky; metal being sawed in the Hall; wood being sawed in the garden; skirting bulging into three dimensions - and then finally the whole space turning white like some heavenly vision!

I'm returning home on 15<sup>th</sup> October, but it now seems possible this project may continue - an intrepid band want to spend the winter here, despite the monastery having no heating or insulation and many broken panes of glass. I partly envy them that adventure - but it will also feel good to come back to the land of central heating when the weather starts getting colder.

Speaking of central heating, I'm most amused that thanks to our new smart thermostat system, I can now tell you from 700 miles away that the temperature in the church is currently 20.5 degrees, in the Hall 18 degrees, and in the Library 19.9 degrees. I can also programme the radiators to come on in each room only when needed for bookings - and in fact I'm going to do that now for the coming week. Then I'll go gloat over my melons again . . .

Much love from sunny Spain.

**Jenny Moy**

# Unitarian Christian Association

## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1pm  
Essex Hall, 1-6 Essex Street, London WC2R 3HY

This gathering will begin with lunch at 1pm, followed by worship at 2pm, including addresses given by Dr. Tony Cross (founding member of the UCA) and Derek McAuley (Chief Officer of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches). If you are planning to attend please let Jeff Gould know (for catering purposes): email [jeffreylanegould1959@talktalk.net](mailto:jeffreylanegould1959@talktalk.net)

## Hymn to Emancipation

What do I find  
in the wardrobe  
of my mind  
but rubbish,  
clutter  
and rancour.

my father lies  
between the carpet  
and floorboard.....

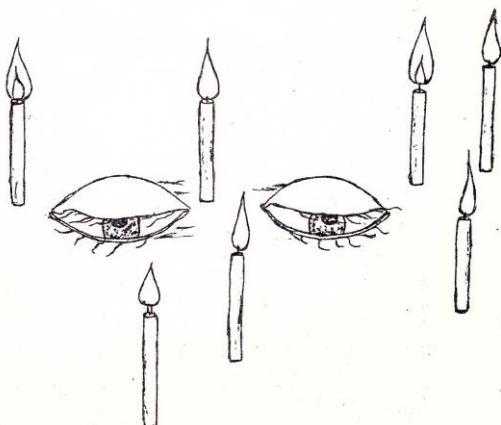
baby  
bye bye.....

my mother cries  
in the distance  
and sighs.....

but round me  
sisters move  
candles held  
soothing my  
poor eyes

oh, bye bye  
baby,  
bye bye.

Eliz Beel (words and picture)



## Massage at the Church



Hello! You've probably seen me helping with the children's group on a Sunday morning, as my wife Nadia is your children's leader. Our children Greta and Enea are doing really well in English schools but I've arrived here in London more recently and I'm still struggling to learn this new language. In Italy I worked for many years as a quantity surveyor but until I can speak English proficiently I need to earn a living using other skills. I'm a good decorator and hope to be helping the church with some smaller decorating jobs now the main building is completed.

I'm also a qualified masseur and I'm offering massages in the library on Tuesdays this autumn between 10am and 2pm, starting on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October. Alternatively I can visit you at home with a portable massage table if that is more convenient. I usually offer classic Swedish massage, adjusted to your body's needs, and could include deep tissue work, sports massage, Ayurvedic massage, anticellulite massage and lymphatic drainage massage. We could also do clothed massage for head, back and shoulders, hands and feet, if you'd prefer that.

You'll be helping me by encouraging me to speak English and I hope you'll benefit from high quality bodywork. Touch is so important. I charge £45 an hour but I am offering a **special introductory rate of £30** to church friends and members. And please do not let the cost put you off as a discount may always be possible. And there will be extra-special reductions offered for Italian speakers!

You can get in touch with me on a Sunday morning in person or email [healthymassagewestlondon@gmail.com](mailto:healthymassagewestlondon@gmail.com) or by phone to Nadia 07448 411429 or Julian 07589 458614 to make an appointment.

Giuliano

"Human being" is more a verb than a noun. Each of us is unfinished, a work in progress. Perhaps it would be most accurate to add the word "yet" to all our assessments of ourselves and each other. Jon has not learned compassion... yet. I have not developed courage... yet. It changes everything. I have seen the "yet" become real even at the very edge of life. If life is process, all judgments are provisional. We can't judge something until it is finished. No one has won or lost until the race is over.'

Rachel Naomi Remen



# Hucklow Summer School



This was the first time that I had attended the Hucklow Summer School and I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I had been told that people either loved or hated the experience. The summer school is at the Nightingale Centre in the small village of Great Hucklow (not even a shop there – that was a shock to a townie like me!) in the beautiful Derbyshire countryside. The centre accommodation was fine and I was impressed how accommodating they were about special dietary needs. I know that a couple of attendees commented on how nice it was not having to worry about finding something suitable to eat including desserts!

This year's theme was 'This Changes Everything'. Everyone was expected to attend the engagement group based on this year's theme, that they had chosen (I chose 'All Change') but apart from that, you were free to go to as much or as little on the itinerary as you wanted. There was a themed talk every morning on the subject of 'This Changes Everything' and every speaker was completely different and very interesting. The Transylvanian minister Maria's talk was especially compelling as she spoke about problems in challenging prejudice that the Transylvanian Unitarian church is facing at the moment. For example, that Romanians will shortly be voting in a referendum to change the national constitution so that only men and women will be able to get married. People speaking out against this are in a minority including inside the Transylvanian Unitarian Church.

There was a wide range of optional activities and I think the organisers must have worked hard to make sure that there would be something to suit everybody – it ranged from decoupage to 'Wild' swimming to a poetry appreciation session to walks. In fact, there were so many things going on, it was impossible to attend everything that you fancied. Also, as I was warned in the first couple of days, it can be quite overwhelming and tiring, both adjusting to being with so many people for so much of the time and working hard in your engagement group. When I was asked in my first couple of days if I would come again, I wasn't sure, but by the end of the week, I had decided that I would definitely come again. I found it a very rewarding experience.

**Liz Tuckwell**



It feels as though Hucklow starts before you get there. Even the bus driver was good humoured and made jokes and appeared to be used to being central to the experience. I still needed to go for a walk though, to settle down and leave London behind me. I was prepared for the week in that I expected to be surprised, energized and supported. I would be happy, supported, cared for and fed well! I hope I was able to give as well as receive.

The standards of Summer School are very high. It is incredible that most people running the event were volunteers, yet safety is built into the whole week, and everyone was aware of the level of thought which had gone into the occasion. There was a wide choice of workshops using a number of ways of self-examination. The work was compassionate and fun.

I kept on using the expression 'carry Hucklow home' and came home with many things to do and think about which, I guess, is the intention. It is so good to feel inspired. 'What I would like to do with this energy?' I ask myself. I cannot ignore the inspiration I feel. So here is my wish list.

First, a walk. We used to go on walks together, which was fun, and a chance to meet at a deeper level (which I find difficult because I am going deaf and any ambient noise means I do not hear conversations properly). I thought we could start by doing a sponsored walk in Richmond for 'Children in Need' (see page 5 for more details of this plan). What else can we do? Well Michael Allured (from the Golders Green congregation) has said he will help start circle dancing with us. I thought I could lead a group on poetry about Christmas. These are just a few of the ways I will be 'carrying Hucklow home'.

**Carole Grace**

With attending the Universal Universalist Summer School at Great Hucklow for the first time, already, it was a satisfying experience for me. It was a very flexible programme offered, with many Unitarians coming in from different parts of the country to be participants like myself; but also bringing in some to coach, and others to demonstrate their beliefs and skills to us all.

As well as amazing excursions into the surrounding 'Babes in the Wood' countryside, there were also heartening slow-time (meditational) sing-songs, such as those held in the yurt. All these groups would culminate each day into a lantern-carrying procession going into a nearby Unitarian Chapel for an end-of-day Epilogue service.

The most rewarding workshops for me to participate in personally had been, I think, in creative writing and poetry discussion, although I also enjoyed taking part in the spiritual photography afternoon. A particular highlight of the week came when I was requested to perform a more humorous poem I'd created, together with a presentation of its accompanying illustration (see opposite page), at the summer school 'performance circle' concert.

**Eliz Beel**



# 'Summer Pavilions'

Address by Roy Clark from 21<sup>st</sup> August 2016

This sermon is also available online as a podcast.

According to Pablo Picasso who knew a thing or two about its power to surprise and challenge, the purpose of art is to wash the dust of daily life off our souls.

If this is true ... and I believe it is one of arts possibilities, then nowhere is it more true than in the domain of public art. Some of you may remember that a few months ago as part of a service entitled *Reverence for Beauty*, Sarah asked if anyone would like to share their views on a piece of public art that they enjoyed. Several people spoke about their personal favourites whilst others added their contributions to the newsletter. My choice was *The Burghers of Calais* by Rodin which is situated in gardens adjacent to the Houses of Parliament.

During the weeks that followed, several people asked me more about the Burghers sculpture and then discussed it with me having made a pilgrimage to Westminster to see it. Other people spoke with me about other public artworks they enjoyed and admired. These included The Tower of London's *Blood Swept Lands and Seas* (the red poppy installation), and the regularly changing installation on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square. Wendy Taylor's giant tortoises and sundial around the corner from here in Holland Park also got a mention and Brian reminded me of a sculpture which also features in my own personal "greatest hits" list, Richard Serra's *Fulcrum*, a 17m steel edifice situated behind Liverpool Street Station in Broadgate. From these conversations it was evident that art in public spaces matters to people and is important to their pleasures and sense of wellbeing.

Public art in one form or another has been around since the time of the Pharaohs, and as in Coleridge's vivid imaginings of Kubla Khan's Pleasure Domes we heard about earlier pavilions and arenas for the use of the elite and sometime the wider public were a feature of all major ancient civilisations.

However grand public buildings and of course statuary were constructed and erected mainly for propaganda value. It was after all a useful way of consolidating and demonstrating prestige and power ... and a good way to show off to the neighbours ... in the case of the rulers of Egypt the troublemaking Kingdom of Nubia next door.

Thus it was for millennia thereafter. If you wanted to know who and what a society celebrated, look at its public squares. Here in London, the innumerable statues of heroically posed white men (equestrian or otherwise) aren't an accident. Power and wealth got to frame the discussion, the privileged and the powerful become the decorative frieze of national history because they were the ones with the means. A major example of this and a pavilion in its design is the Albert Memorial which we will pass on our way to see the Kensington Garden Pavilions after today's service.

However, something of a sea change happened in post-war World War 2 Europe and America. New funding organisations sprung up and existing ones widened their remit. In Britain this took the form the establishment of the Arts Council and other government and non-government arts agencies and was further fuelled in aspiration by the introduction of the welfare state. New commissioning criteria and a move towards the democratisation of art have... unsurprisingly resulted in artists, designers and architects,, broadening their canvas to include the marginalised and downtrodden as well as the rich and powerful.



And what's the best thing about public art? It's free! There are no tickets. You don't have to dress up to see it. You can view it alone or in groups. It's open to everyone and can be interacted with.

As well as satisfying in terms of visual beauty, you might also find something which has soul or is stimulating to the spirit in unexplainable ways. I believe that public art is not only a simple decoration of a public space, but also reflects the human search for meaning not available through the intellect and the written word.

A chance conversation with Sarah about this year's Summer Pavilion at the Serpentine Gallery wherein I mentioned its cathedral like qualities sparked a discussion on the communal and indeed the spiritual value of Public Art in general and pavilions, and other temporary buildings and edifices in particular.

Each year since 2000 the Serpentine Gallery has commissioned a temporary summer pavilion by a leading architect. The series presents the work of an international architect or design team who has not completed a building in England at the time of the Gallery's invitation. Each Pavilion is completed within six months and is situated on the Gallery's lawn for three months for the public to explore. This year's pavilion is by Danish Architect Bjarke Ingels.

The idea of a temporary public art space with walls (and sometimes a roof) perhaps encapsulate all that is best about Public Art in that it embodies the spirit of openness, democracy, exchangeability and sharing. The geographical features of the space around it and within it can be viewed in new and imaginative ways and as is often the case it is something of an enjoyable communal experience.

The celebrated American sculptor and installation artist Agnes Denes picks up on this theme when talking about her own work in public spaces "I like to make people feel better about themselves, and that means an awful lot to me. I make them feel good, getting above the humdrum of their lives, their dissatisfaction with their lives, looking for deeper elements and understandings. That is what is related to spirituality. It's not a church or a temple with a high ceiling. It's inside yourself, what you find."

She is convinced that an installation (or pavilion's) spiritual impact can be experienced without engaging their intellectual infrastructure. "I love that kids love my work," she says. "They say that my work is so highly philosophical that it's difficult to understand—it's not true. A child of five or seven can understand it and feel good, just as well as grownups can. I think that all good art [is like] that to a certain extent, even if it's not spiritual. You get into another realm. You see people searching for something when they look at a great work of art: they're looking for themselves, in order to understand it."

## 'Summer Pavilions' (continued) Address by Roy Clark

It is a fine line to walk – to create public art ... in the form of a summer house for example, that operates spiritually while transcending religious or secular affiliation, all while functioning within the dialogue of the contemporary. Of course it would be churlish to deny that it is still the so called great and the good that get to decide what gets built ...yes it's those upper middle class white men again! This demographic incidentally includes only 10% of the population. Why not give more of the commissioning decision to artists themselves and more of a voice to the wider public especially user groups, interested parties and local residents?

Whatever you do and whoever gets to do the choosing you can't please all of the people all of the time of course but then again liking, disliking, discussing or even arguing the merits or otherwise of art is after all part of the experience of looking and part of the fun. Sadly in these times of austerity art's regenerative potential is too often measured purely in economic terms, as if art can only be justified in the credit column of the balance sheet. This is pretty standard practice and promotes in my view an impoverished narrow interpretation of public arts pleasures and possibilities.

Pleasures and possibilities ...What do I mean by this? Well a recent survey on the value of public art carried out by the city of Philadelphia in the United States found somewhat surprisingly that "social offerings, openness and welcome-ness," and, importantly, the "aesthetics of a place – its art, parks, and green spaces," ranked higher than education, safety, and the local economy in terms of importance. I am not sure that the same result would emerge in a survey here but food for thought. In London we're spoilt with how much public art we have on display. We have the Broadgate art trail, The Line which is a walk between the O2 and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park where you can see sculpture by Anish Kapoor, Martin Creed and Eduardo Paolozzi among others... and the annual *Sculpture in the City* festival. Not to mention the many solo sculptures structures and edifices in squares and parks.

I hope some of you join us after the service for our excursion to the Pavilions and summer Houses of Kensington Gardens. When you have time, you might also like to check out the Elytra Filament Pavilion inspired by beetles and fabricated by a robot, this striking garden pavilion is situated in the courtyard of the V&A in South Kensington. In any case, my recommendation to you is to take Pablo's advice and wash off the dust of everyday life once in a while and immerse yourself in open air art. You may feel spiritually moved... or you may not, but you will definitely feel refreshed and revived.

## 'Summer Pavilions' Outing



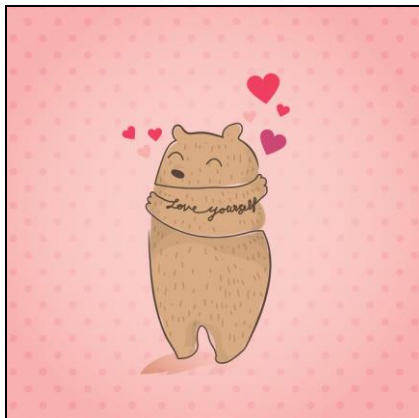
As part of the service on 21st of August Roy Clark gave us a very illuminating overview of the history of public art and also its spiritual dimensions, beginning by reading the wonderful first verse of S.T. Coleridge's poem 'Kublai Khan'; "In Xanadu did Kublai Khan a stately pleasure dome decree...it was a miracle of rare device". Don't miss the full text of his talk in this newsletter or on podcast. When the service was over Roy led a party of eleven from Essex Church on an outing to Hyde Park to look at the Serpentine Pavilion and Summer Houses set up there as seasonal installations. One group walked, the other went in our minister Sarah's car, and luckily the two groups managed to rendezvous in the park where we began our tour with Roy's perceptive comments to guide our thoughts.

The present 2016 installation comprises a main pavilion and four smaller structures with a brief to reference Queen Caroline's Temple nearby, designed by William Kent the famous early eighteenth century architect. Nigerian Kunlé Adeyemi's summer house is an inverse replica of the temple, a tribute to its robust form, space and material recomposed into a new structural object which visitors have easily made into a place to sit and relax whilst evidently appreciating the comparison with the actual temple nearby. Barlow Liebing of Germany's offering is conceived as a series of four undulating structural loops, beginning with a bench level attached to the ground and a fourth level which forms a cantilevered roof. The pavilion is constructed from plywood and timber and its beguiling interweaving loops are redolent of curvaceous Baroque forms. Paris-based Yona Friedman's summer house takes the form of a modular structure that can be assembled and reassembled in different architectural formations, allowing residents to create homes tailored to their own needs (this pavilion can be seen in the background of our group photo).

Our group really appreciated London-based architect Asif Khan's contribution. A hundred wooden staves, seemingly growing from the ground, create a wonderfully peaceful environment, with several visitors, not least from our own group, inspired to go into Yoga Lotus position on the internal disc shaped structures. At the same time, the soaring staves reference many a Gothic cathedral. The star attraction among the pavilions is the lofty "Unzipped Wall" by Danish Beyerke Ingels Group (BIG). The pavilion's form is inspired by a brick wall made from fibreglass frames stacked on top of each other. At the top of the wall is a straight line which is 'pulled apart' at the bottom to create a cavity within, transforming the wall into a space where a café is situated. The structure offers many different perspectives from outside and inside; for example looking out from within, the trees and greenery of the park could be glimpsed. We could also appreciate the sheer work of construction, as we gazed with amazement at the number of rivets connecting the fibreglass frames. The pavilions stay in situ until the 9<sup>th</sup> of October and are well worth a visit in all their diversity.

Helena Coope

## Services at Essex Church in October



### Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 11am – ‘Self-Care and Self-Compassion’

Service led by Jane Blackall

How can we best care for ourselves, when faced with life's inevitable challenges, or on those days when we wake up feeling that 'everything is awful and I'm not OK'? In this service we will look at some of the basics of self-compassion.

### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 11am – ‘Accepting Impermanence’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

How can an understanding of the temporary nature of all that exists help us to love life?

### Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October, 11am – ‘Searching for Utopia’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

2016 marks the 500th anniversary of Thomas More's work Utopia, an exploration of the possibility of a better world. Today we'll consider our own yearnings for perfection.

### Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 11am – ‘Living with Darkness’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

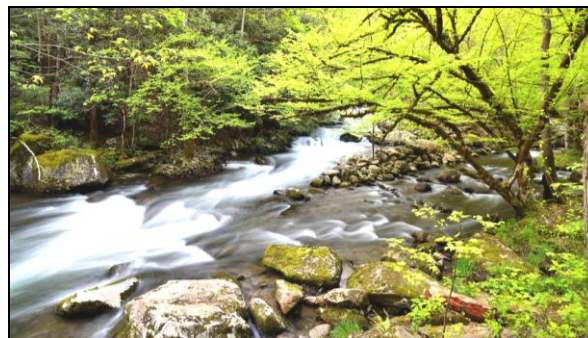
As we move towards the darker time of the year, let's explore how best to live with darkness in its many forms.

### Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October, 11am – ‘All Souls’

Service led by Jeannene Powell

A service honouring those who've passed. With different celebrations and observances acknowledging those who've passed, happening over the next few days, this service will include a simple candle lighting ritual to honour our departed loved ones. *Please note that the clocks go back this weekend!!*

## Transcendental Streams



This summer I was fortunate enough to be in a position to travel to America and tour New England—part spiritual pilgrimage, part rustic retreat, part vision quest. My first stop was The Thoreau Society Annual Gathering which took place in Concord, Massachusetts, the birthplace of Transcendentalism. The Gathering was peopled by friendly folk with enquiring minds, and Concord is a smart, small town with a rich literary heritage. The first morning of the symposium began with readings from Thoreau's Journals, a call to wake to our own lives which became the keynote of the Gathering. Presentations ranged from Haiku moments in Thoreau, rhythms in Nature and consciousness, to Transcendental tattoo art and photography. My time in Concord culminated in a trip to Walden Pond, a glacial kettle pond encircled by woodland, the rippling surface of which induced a reflective calm. I felt the spirit of the place then immersed myself in the waters of Walden. As I floated on my back gazing up at the treeline against the sky, the following words of Thoreau sprang to mind, 'The grass flames up on the hillsides like a spring fire...not yellow but green is the colour of its flame; the symbol of perpetual youth, the grass-blade, like a long green ribbon, streams from the sod into the summer, checked indeed by the frost, but anon pushing on again.'

Following the Gathering, I drove to a log cabin high in the White Mountains of New Hampshire in search of a Thoreauvian experience of my own. Time in the wilderness afforded an opportunity to put Transcendentalism to the test through observing the effect of Nature on the mind. The apogee of the trip occurred early one morning whilst sitting by a sunlit stream that ran behind my cabin. The sight and sound of flowing water had a subtle yet profound effect, slowly but surely inducing a trancelike state. The stream bypassed the well-worn lines of thought and began to carve a channel into my landlocked interior. It coursed through abandoned passageways and sealed chambers, surging and pooling with a life of its own. It wound through uncharted regions, flowing deeper and deeper into my being, past obstacles and limits, finally irrigating the stone dry core. The life-giving waters flowed through the karst of my psyche and permeated my igneous heart before tumbling into a gorge of fissured rock. The result was an inner flow, synchronous with water in flux, dislodging thought and freeing feeling. This episode was nothing less than experiential affirmation of a key principle of Transcendentalism: the 'perfect parallelism between the laws of Nature and the laws of thought' (Emerson); Nature mirrored in the Soul. The purl and splash of the clear mountain stream was cleansing and enlivening, even now I feel it flowing through me and know it will always be there to draw on as it ever flows from the Source of phenomena and consciousness. Whether torrent or trickle, water has the power to turn jagged rock into smooth flowstone in a perpetual re-sculpturing shaped by the hand of Nature and the unseen Source.

Niall Doherty