



# Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: August / September 2015

## What's On...

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 11am-noon  
**'Pick a Card, Any Card'**  
Led by Jeannene Powell

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> August, 12.30-1.30pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August, 7-8pm  
**'Heart and Soul' Spiritual Gathering**  
'(in)dependence' led by Jane Blackall  
*N.B. will be cancelled if there is a tube strike*

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August, 11am-noon  
**'Flower Communion'**  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August, 12.30pm  
**Small-Group Communion**  
Led by Elisa Melgosa & Mike Eichler

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2-3pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August, 12.30-1.30pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August, 7-9.00pm  
**Creativity Group: Bring Your Own**

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August, 11am-noon  
**'Something Understood'**  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August, 12.30-1.30pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August, 6.45-9pm  
**Men's Group** with Jim Blair

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 11am-noon  
**'Thomas, a Liberating Gospel'**  
Led by Tristan Jovanović

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 12.30-1.15pm  
**'Finding Your Voice'**  
Singing Workshop with Margaret

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August, 12.30-1.30pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August, 11am-noon  
**'Record Breakers'**  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

(see inside for September events)

## Right and Wrong

### A Message from our Minister



I spent an afternoon with 90 eleven year olds last month, as part of their primary school's 'Faith in Action' religious education course. Having studied some famous people of faith, their task was to interview me and find out

what I do all day, as a not-at-all-famous minister of religion. They were taken aback to hear how much time I spend typing on a computer and moving chairs from one place to another. But they guessed correctly that much of a minister's working life involves listening to people. We made lists of all the topics that people might want to talk to a minister about. Top of their lists were 'what to do about unwanted spirits in your bedroom' and 'knowing what's the right and wrong thing to do in life'. I had to admit a lack of expertise on both these topics.

For 11 year olds, the whole idea of right and wrong can seem quite straightforward. By that age most of us have learnt the rules and know what's expected of us, even if we don't always choose that path. But in adult life I've found right and wrong to be far more complex and nuanced. I had another of those scam phone calls the other day – the one where they tell you they've had reports that your computer is running slowly and that they can help you fix it. The scam works because most of us think there is something wrong with our computer and are all too willing to hand responsibility over to an expert. They then will charge you a sum of money to mend something that doesn't in truth need mending at all and certainly won't get mended by them down a phone line. But such calls can be compellingly convincing.

If you get one I suggest you just put the phone down. But having spotted it as a scam I proceeded to engage the unfortunate young man at the other end of the line in a lengthy, mostly one-way conversation, about how wrong it is to attempt to make money by frightening people in this way. I ended the call by suggesting that he found a better way to make a living. Only having put the phone down did I ponder what his life circumstances might be and whether engaging in this relatively low level criminal activity of making phone calls might be a much better path than any other that might be available to him.

Can we ever know what is right or wrong for another human being?

Sufi mystic Jellaludin Rumi wrote that *"Out beyond ideas of wrong-doing and right-doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about. Ideas, language, even the phrase 'each other' doesn't make any sense."*

Maybe I'll read that to the next trickster who tells me they've had reports that my computer is running slow.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

## In this month's newsletter...

\* A Message from Harold \* 'The Pursuit of Confidence' by Jonathan Crawford \* 'Reflections on our Men's Group' by Jim Blair \* 'My War' by Barbara Ballantyne \* Spiritual Bookshelf: 'If Grace Is True' chosen by Tristan Jovanović \* Flower Communion \* 'Food for... Action' by Melody \* News from Swaziland \* Warden's Column \* LDPA Quarterly \* Women's Group \* 'Mission Possible' sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker and much 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.



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Notting Hill Gate  
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*Email: [info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk](mailto:info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk)*

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

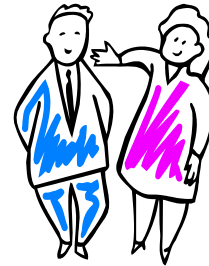
## Children's Leader Needed



Kensington Unitarians have a new children's leader and are looking for someone to work alongside her or to cover occasional Sundays. Our children's leaders lead inspiring and fun sessions for our children's group on Sunday mornings, 11am to noon. Would suit a parent or someone with childcare or teaching experience. Good pay. Starting soon. We can give full support with ideas for activities.

**For more information contact our minister Sarah Tinker on 07960 057567 or [info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk](mailto:info@kensington-unitarians.org.uk)**

## Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



### Stewarding:

**2<sup>nd</sup> August:** Carole Grace  
**9<sup>th</sup> August:** Carole Grace  
**16<sup>th</sup> August:** Natasha Drennan  
**23<sup>rd</sup> August:** Melody  
**30<sup>th</sup> August:** Michaela von Britzke

**6<sup>th</sup> September:** Alice Lambert  
**13<sup>th</sup> September:** Julia Alden  
**20<sup>th</sup> September:** Veronica Needa  
**27<sup>th</sup> September:** Juliet Edwards

### Coffee:

**2<sup>nd</sup> August:** Sue Smith  
**9<sup>th</sup> August:** Liz Tuckwell  
**16<sup>th</sup> August:** Veronica Needa  
**23<sup>rd</sup> August:** Sue Smith  
**30<sup>th</sup> August:** Melody

**6<sup>th</sup> September:** Kate Brown  
**13<sup>th</sup> September:** Eliz Beel  
**20<sup>th</sup> September:** Sue Smith  
**27<sup>th</sup> September:** Jane Blackall

### Greeting:

**2<sup>nd</sup> August:** Melody  
**9<sup>th</sup> August:** Billy Jackson  
**16<sup>th</sup> August:** Elisa Melgosa  
**23<sup>rd</sup> August:** Elisa Melgosa  
**30<sup>th</sup> August:** Gina Bayley

**6<sup>th</sup> September:** Annette Percy  
**13<sup>th</sup> September:** Jonathan Crawford  
**20<sup>th</sup> September:** ??? (can you help?)  
**27<sup>th</sup> September:** Liz Tuckwell

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)**

'When we allow ourselves to be open, to feel our vulnerability, to be affected by others and reality itself, and when we can know deeply what is real in our feelings, we realize that our capacities for kindness, gentleness, and loving are endless. We have, and are, what the Tibetans call the "good heart," a centre of intention, openness, virtue, and compassion, all of which have taken root in our being, motivation, attitudes, and behaviour. The spiritual life has a lot to do with getting in touch with this capacity. Like the blue sky, sometimes the focus of Tibetan meditation, the mind and heart are endless in their ability to know or be aware and to feel, especially care, concern, loving-kindness, and compassion. Are you in touch with your heart's vast nature? If not, find the way there. You are not far from yourself.'

**Wayne Teasdale**

## A Message from Harold



I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those at Kensington Unitarian Church who sent me their good wishes on hearing of my recent operation. If the whole episode took you by surprise then I can only say that my own reaction to being told I needed a double by pass was muted astonishment, having thought that I was to be fitted with some clever little things called stents which keep the blood flowing through obstructed arteries. Admittedly it was only a double by pass. Initially I'd been promised a triple if not quadruple job. But one mustn't be greedy. I'm now very much on the road to recovery. This involves short walks and long rests, something I'm quite getting used to. As it all happened so quickly it's only now that I've begun processing the whole business. My approach has been, I suppose, conditioned by my classes in Philosophy which I have been attending for several years. These have often involved hypothetical cases of moral dilemmas so that when you are confronted with a real life situation you wonder where to place your money. I tend to favour the pragmatic approach. Hopefully my problem has been solved by surgery which raises few eyebrows in this age of advanced medicine. Along the way I have met some eminent experts in their field, from nurses to surgeons whose quiet, confident counsel faced with an anxious patient confronted by the unknown has shown me the value of experience in confounding ungrounded fears. I've also learnt again the inestimable value of friendship which is something that money cannot buy. My lung capacity is still increasing so I may not be giving my full-throated contribution to the singing at Church for a little while longer but be reassured, I will be back! With best wishes to you all.

**Harold Lorenzelli**

## 'Heart and Soul'

### Midweek Spiritual Gatherings

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August, 3<sup>rd</sup> September,  
1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 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 and fellowship.

Our August gathering will be led by Jane Blackall on the theme of '(in)dependence'. PLEASE NOTE – at the time of writing there is a tube strike scheduled for this date – if the strike goes ahead then 'Heart and Soul' will be cancelled. Our September gathering will be led by Teresa Baldwin and Sarah Tinker on the theme of 'atonement' and will feature stories, readings, music and sharing about ways we make peace with ourselves and with our world.

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

## Flower Communion

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August at 11am**



We will be having a flower communion in the service on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August. Do bring a flower if you can and in a simple ritual you will receive another flower to take home.



# Congregational Activists' Day

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 11am-4pm  
Here at Essex Church



Throughout 2015 we have been making an effort to help people get more actively involved in congregational life here at Essex Church. The life of our congregation depends on us all participating and contributing to the life of this community, and our denomination, in whatever ways we feel able to (and perhaps stretching ourselves a little bit and doing new things we didn't know we could!)

We would like to encourage anyone in the congregation who can make it to set aside a day this autumn – Saturday 12th September to be precise – to come and spend the day together, for a mixture of worshipful moments, exploratory conversations about what we each might like to do for the good of our community, some practical training, and a shared meal. People will be able to share ideas, offer their services, highlight any training needs, make practical plans of action, and find mutual support.

It would be very helpful to know in advance if you are intending to come. Email [jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk](mailto:jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk) to let us know that we can count you in for the day.

Sarah says: 'bring your questions, your ideas, your dreams and offerings for the work of our congregation.'

**Jane Blackall**



# Reflections on our Men's Group



*I wish to learn what life has to teach, and not, when I come to die, discover that I had not lived.* - Henry David Thoreau

We recently had the third meeting of the Men's Group, which was a joy, we have created a safe place for sharing issues often suppressed by men. Using the twin lenses of Competition and Friendship, we shared different experiences, interpretations, but also a shared framework and way of being. There was some sadness, lots of laughter and a kitchen discussion afterwards. I was personally attracted to a quote by Philip Caputo, which helped to generate discussion on the capacity of men for intimacy, feelings and relationships.

"I have also attempted to describe the intimacy of life in infantry battalions, where the communion between men is as profound as any between lovers. Actually it is more so.... It is, unlike marriage, a bond that cannot be broken by a word, by boredom or divorce, or by anything other than death. Sometimes, even that is not enough."

Someone questioned whether these military experiences, with no immediate fear of death could they be replicated in normal civilian life. I wonder, what is normal civilian life. I sense that the disconnection and isolation of many men, which results in high levels of mental illness, high suicide rates, loneliness and poor health may actually feel like a day to day battle.

The journey so far has been joyful and liberating. As if some locked away energy had been unlocked. I left the meeting lighter, more connected and feeling more valued. There was no hierarchy, no competition - but only friendship.

The next sessions (for continuing participants only) are:

Session 5 Passion (18.08.2015)  
Session 6 Making Amends (29.09.2015)  
Session 7 Loving Relationships (27.10.2015)

**Jim Blair**

Email: [jim\\_blair\\_rhino@hotmail.com](mailto:jim_blair_rhino@hotmail.com) / Mobile: 07734511921

## Good Cause Collection of the Month Dr Hadwen Trust



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

At this year's Unitarian Annual Meetings a resolution to encourage support of the Dr Hadwen Trust was passed: "That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, recognising the universal kinship of all sentient beings affirmed by the world's great religions, philosophers and sages, encourages fellow Unitarians and all people of goodwill to support the Universal Kinship Fund of the Dr Hadwen Trust and other humane research charities in order to advance non-animal medical research and in so doing help save human and animal lives" The Dr Hadwen Trust (DHT) is the UK's leading non-animal medical research charity. They fund and promote the development of techniques and procedures to replace the use of animals in biomedical research. The DHT supports and assists scientists to implement existing techniques and develop new ones which are more human-relevant and will replace animal experiments.

For more information see: [www.drhadwentrust.org](http://www.drhadwentrust.org)



### Collection on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September

Mind say: 'Every year, 1 in 4 of us will experience a mental health problem. But hundreds of thousands of people are still struggling. We believe no-one should have to face a mental health problem alone. We'll listen, give you support and advice, and fight your corner. We campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets support and respect'

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

## Previous Charity Collections:

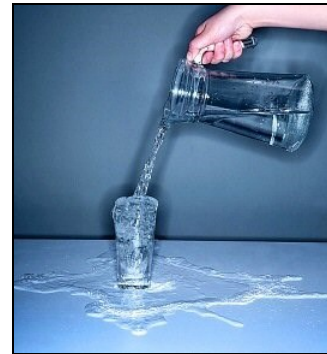
Thank you for your generosity in contributing to recent charity collections. I am pleased to let you know that we will be sending the following donations to good causes:

**Emergency collection for Nepal – £285.50**

**May – Acid Survivors Trust – £125.60**

## Gathering of the Waters

A Special Ceremony in our Service on  
Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September at 11am



We will be holding our traditional 'Gathering of the Waters' ceremony during our service on 13th September. Please do bring a little water from your summer travels, or your home or garden, to symbolize the gathering of our community

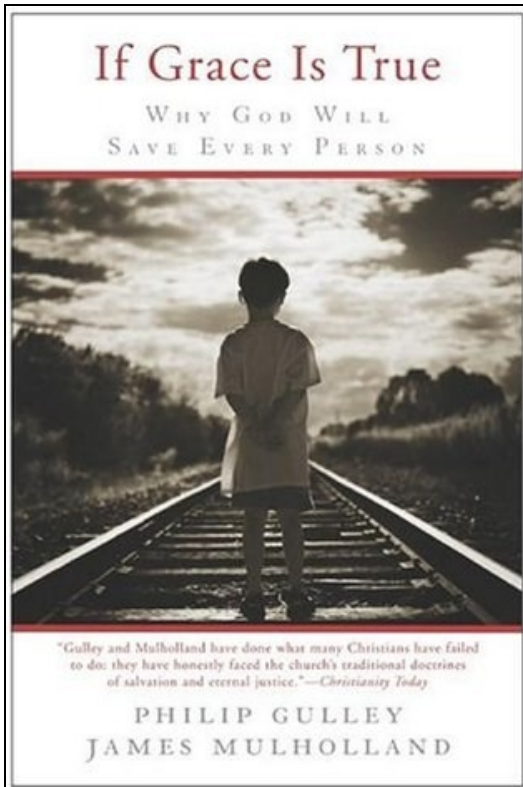
## Harvest Festival and Congregational Lunch

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2015



On 20<sup>th</sup> September we will be holding a traditional harvest festival, with a ritual to mark the autumn equinox, followed by a congregational lunch. Do bring something seasonal to add to our harvest display and some food to share. There will be a sign-up sheet for the lunch nearer the time so please keep an eye out and let us know what you're planning to bring. Why not invite a friend along too?





## My Spiritual Bookshelf:

### 'If Grace is True'

by Philip Gulley and James Mulholland

'I believe that God will save every person.' That is the refrain in *If Grace is True* and the authors, two Quaker pastors, set out to explain how they have reached the conclusion. They wade through the predestination set out in Calvinist doctrine and the horrors that many people (including me) were made to believe as children, namely that without accepting Jesus Christ as one's personal Lord and Saviour, salvation is not an option. *Extra Christum nulla salus*. Except in the American Baptist church of my childhood, Jesus spoke Jacobean English not Aramaic—and definitely not Latin.

Even as a child, I had the questions that Gulley and Mulholland explore: what about people who never heard the Gospel? What about 'evil' people? Will (insert the name of a generally—or personally—despised individual) be in heaven? How can I be taught that one sin is equal to another but then that some sins are so bad they can never be forgiven? I was never satisfied with the answers I was given and so I decided even before I was a teenager that if God loves everyone, he must love equally. I decided this even before I became aware of my sexuality and so did not fear that God would abandon me or damn me because of who I love. I am a life-long Universalist.

The authors are keen to point out that for many, Universalism is a frightening concept. It asks the Christian to throw away much traditional doctrine about judgment, not just God's judgment but their own personal judgments too. They root their argument firmly in the Bible. Perhaps you are familiar with one of the texts they draw on, in which Jesus happens upon a woman about to be stoned for adultery. He doesn't damn her, he saves her: 'Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.'

The final substantive chapter talks about God's persistence. It is a reminder that no matter how much we turn away, God never does. Like the father of the prodigal son, he is waiting on the porch, watching the road. At the first sight of an opening heart and mind, s/he comes running, arms outstretched. There is a second reminder in the story, in the person of the brother: grace is not to be worked for or hoped for. Yes, we do good works to live our faith fully but we do them with love, not to be saved.

There is a lot of judgment in the Bible and in many churches sin gets preached up to the grave, to quote George Fox. In one of my favourite passages from Revelation, John writes that God now dwells with us, in us. In the Kingdom of God, every tear will be wiped from our eyes and there will be no more death or pain or destruction. I have read that passage hundreds of times and still feel tears at its message. If grace is true, then it is true for everyone and that is as beautiful as it is liberating.

Tristan Jovanović

## Royal Borough News

I attended an interesting meeting recently which gave members of our local Forum of Faiths chance to meet local council officials, who told us more about their work and especially some new initiatives. People know our church because we host so many meetings here and it's good to hear that our availability as a venue is appreciated. The meeting's clear message was that the council wanted to reach out to people in the borough and saw faith communities as one way of achieving that. Particular projects of interest were their work with adult learners which aims to improve chances of finding employment; the community gardens scheme which might be something for us to consider; and the health champions programme in which volunteers work with individuals and groups to achieve health goals. The Sing To Live, Live to Sing initiative aims to support people with respiratory concerns through finding their voice and there are now classes available every day of the week for anyone who wants to join in.

Another interesting initiative and dates for your diary is the Nour Festival from 20th October to 30th November – a celebration of contemporary Middle Eastern and North African arts and culture. This year's programme is out now.

We heard more about People First. People First is the core Information and Advice web service for residents, staff and fellow professionals, run by the Adult Social Care departments of Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster. Our aim is to provide easy-to-use, jargon free and engaging information in a bright visual way that will help keep people stay safe, well and independent. They have an excellent new website containing clear information about many care issues.

Sarah Tinker



## Women's Group



Liz and I have been talking about the next Women's Group. We have had an inspiring experience as we have got to know each other better through the thoughts and feelings about our childhood, sexuality, age, and societies affect.

We are thinking about the next group and, as yet, have no idea what it might be like. People have suggested fortnightly meetings or every two months, structured/or not, open/closed, led/or not. Let us know what you would want please and we will see if we can attempt it.

We have had a nurturing and trusting relationship which has helped us to be open and honest within the group.

**Carole Grace**

## News from Swaziland



Through our Swaziland Education Project here at Essex Church, for the last few years we have been supporting two girls living in an SOS Children's Village. Our aim is to raise £1,000 a year through donations. This sum covers all the living and education costs for the two girls, Patience and Fortunate. They are 15 year old twins and from recent reports we have received both are clearly enjoying life and doing well in their studies. They have reached grade 7, which marks the completion of their primary education. Secondary education generally takes another five years to complete. They both wrote in their reports of their wish to continue to higher education. Fortunate's teacher writes that she is "committed and self-driven. She is always busy with her books while other pupils make noise. Her best subjects are mathematics and science." She herself explains that she spends "a lot of time with my books because I want to be a doctor. My friends Lenhle and Noxolo also aspire to be doctors." Such aspirations are perhaps not surprising in a country where life expectancy is 50 years and where HIV/AIDS and TB are prevalent. Patience explains that she wants to be a nurse and she also enjoys being part of the drama group and the African Dance Group, which performed during the recent King's birthday celebrations.

The church committee would be glad to receive any donations large or small towards this project. Cheques can be made payable to Essex Church and marked on the back Swaziland Education Project. If we raise over our target amount we'll give the rest to SOS for their general funds. Their website tells many stories, both sobering and inspiring. You might want to read about their developing work in Greece, where more families are struggling to feed their children. Or find out about a new project in Gambia, offering young adults training opportunities with the hope that this will lessen their vulnerability to people traffickers offering them a 'better life' in Europe – but at what price?

**Sarah and Caroline**



### Fitness Fusion of 9 Movement Forms

**Second Sunday of the Month from 2-3pm:  
9<sup>th</sup> August, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**Midweek classes on TUESDAYS - 12.30-1.30pm**

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

Cost £10 (£7 to concessions / church members).

**Contact: Sonya Leite on 0207 371 1674.**

'Life is as complex as we are. Sometimes our vulnerability is our strength, our fear develops our courage, and our woundedness is the road to our integrity. It is not an either/or world.'



**Rachel Naomi Remen**

# The Pursuit of Confidence

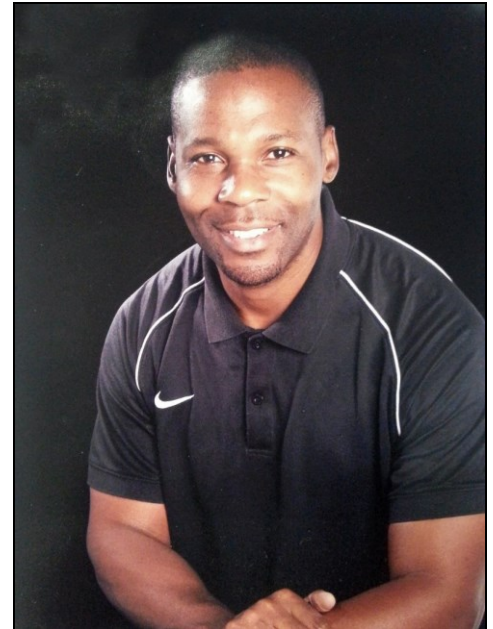
As humans we are motivated by only two types of rewards: Extrinsic Rewards, which provide validation in relation to society's perception of us, and Intrinsic Rewards (personal pleasure). Although the latter may initially sound self-centred, when we dig a little deeper, we find that the pursuit of an extrinsic reward is often an attempt to mask our insecurities.

When expectations are high but our self-belief is low, the need to paint the perception of brilliance to the world can take priority over our personal enjoyment of participating in that very task. As a result, we act, pursue, or flaunt tokens of achievement and success to convince others that we are worthy or valuable. This, however, does not mean we should abandon that powerful job title, flashy car or nice apartment for a true sense of personal value. The unfortunate truth is that as self-conscious beings, we will always be burdened with a need to manicure our egos (our self-image). However, in our quest to perfect our self-image, we can become so obsessed with how the public perceives us that we lose connection with our first love for what we do. Many wonder how and why they committed themselves to a certain lifestyle, and even grow to detest their commitment to it. We can also become very protective of our self-image, by reacting aggressively or defensively when others express that they perceive us differently. When our pursuits are motivated by nothing other than public approval, stress (over analysing) and anxiety (fear of failing) will hijack the pleasure of participation. For instance, I have learnt to rediscover my first love for playing soccer by comparing myself with only myself (process focus). Where previously, I had been obsessed with how I others see me play (outcome focus). I now challenge myself with questions such as - am I reading the game better than I did last week? Did I use my weaker foot when under-pressure to do so? Has my fitness improved? This new focus allows me to feel comfortable with making mistakes and learning from them. I liken this to an individual investing their time and energy into improving the performance of their own vehicle - then driving it. Just imagine how rewarding it would be, if as a result of days of mechanical work and testing, the vehicle drives better than ever. How it performs in comparison to other vehicles on the road is now irrelevant.

There is no denying that public adoration makes us feel great about ourselves, but this is not a boost to our confidence, but our egos. It is also a feeling that will abandon us when no one is in the mood to praise us. To build true confidence we must first cease seeking character validation from others. Whether comments are good or bad, no one has the authority to stick a label on you unless you grant that authority to them. The second step is to embark on your personal journey to self-efficacy through learning, experimenting, refining and applying your skills. This is the true essence of intrinsic motivation, where instead of desiring the qualities of others, you discover the genius in you.

Coincidentally, I no longer get stressed or anxious when playing soccer, and I am also enjoying playing better than ever before. Too bad that I have learnt this now rather than 20 years ago.

**Jonathan Crawford**



# Food For... Action

I just returned from the 28th Annual Conference of Sea of Faith Network UK, held in Leicester. The theme 'OUT OF OUR MINDS - What can we offer towards a healthier world?' prompted me to attend; I have nothing but praise for this conference which continually encouraged us to think outside the box.

In addition to the challenging workshops, I appreciated being assigned to 'Base Groups' of six to ten participants each, with the purpose of coming up, forty eight hours hence, with one thing we can do to make ours a healthier world... Hmm...

From the two main speakers, namely David Boulton - author, journalist, broadcaster - and Andy Pakula - non-theistic Unitarian Minister - I harvested a deeper understanding of the power of community.

If I were to focus on one trigger-motivator when I feel somewhat helpless in the face of some of our world's issues, it is the Dalai Lama's saying (quoted during the conference): "If you think you're too small to make a difference, you've never had a mosquito in your bed".

**Melody**





# A Retreat Invitation to Individuals



Would you like a day's break from your busy life and busy mind? Do you need time to take stock of an aspect of your life? Come to my quiet bungalow and lush secluded garden in Hayes, West London\* and experience a Retreat tailored to your requirements.

## The Choices on Offer Are:

- Quiet, rest, guided meditation and relaxation; Mindfulness.
- Gentle exercises, a meadow walk alone or accompanied.
- Lunch, herb teas, coffee etc
- Writing, drawing, poetry, looking at other books; music.
- Reiki healing.
- A confidential listening ear.
- Self-help techniques.
- Help to appreciate what you have.
- Discussing what next for you.
- Or use my space in your own way, as we would discuss.

**About Me:** My name is Carolyn Appleby, In my working life I was first a nurse, then a counsellor, then retrained as a social worker until I retired early. The reasons I'm offering retreats are to connect and to share what I have and what I've learnt through recovering from severe M.E some years ago. I'm a member of Essex Church.

If you would like to come telephone this mobile number: 07821671187 or email: [daybreakhayes@sky.com](mailto:daybreakhayes@sky.com) and give your phone numbers.

**I'm sorry I'm unable to offer this retreat to people with mental illness, nor to those with addiction issues.**

*\*Buses 140, E6, E9, 90. Nearest stations: Northolt (Central Line) Hayes and Harlington (Paddington mainline). Free car parking.*

**Whatever money you choose to donate will go to the month's current collection (charity or in aid of Essex Church funds)**



# Small Group Communion



**9<sup>th</sup> August, 13<sup>th</sup> September  
at 12.30pm Down in the Church Library**

On the second Sunday of each month we hold a small-group communion, after the main morning service, downstairs in the library. These services are led by different members of the congregation. A team of volunteers take turns in leading the services so we can experience a variety of different approaches. The line-up for the next couple of months is as follows:

**9<sup>th</sup> August** – Led by Mike Eichler and Elisa Melgosa  
**13<sup>th</sup> September** – Led by Jane Blackall

If you would like to find out more then please feel free to speak to Jane Blackall or Tristan Jovanović. All are welcome.

# Creativity Group: Bring Your Own Crafts

**Thursdays 13<sup>th</sup> August and 10<sup>th</sup> September, 7-9pm**



Our creativity group meets once a month and is open to all. You are welcome to bring along whatever art or craft project you're working on and do your own thing whilst enjoying the good company of the group. Participants are often happy to share their skills and recently we have been helping each other learn to knit, to make lino prints, and to do crewel embroidery.

One of the particularly enjoyable features of this group is the space it offers for fellowship and conversation while we are each working on our individual projects alongside one another. Alternatively we have some basic art materials available if you would just like to play with pens, pencils, and paints during the evening. If you know anyone who might enjoy coming along to these sociable evenings then please do help us spread the word.

**Jane Blackall**

# Warden's Column

From time to time I amuse myself by analysing how much income we made last year from each group that meets here. I sometimes even go out on a limb & predict the top 10 earners for the coming year in my column. Last year, I don't seem to have done an article on this: probably because the pattern in 2013 was very similar to 2012 – only one new entrant into the top 10 although the overall income from high-paying groups did rise from 56,000 to 66,000. I've just crunched the figures for 2014 though & they're much more interesting. Here's a table for groups paying more than £2,000 any year since 2012

The amount paid by the highest paying groups has actually decreased – this is because Seicho no Ie, the Brazilian worship group who hire both ground floor rooms every Saturday night, stopped running their Friday study class in 2013 and the Associated Music Board, who hold exams here 3 times a year, have opened more rooms in their own building & so book fewer days. Ashtanga yoga and IGAP & APC psychologists also booked less space here in 2014 and there are a couple of groups – Interfaith Seminary & Pregnancy yoga – whose overall payments dipped below £2,000. However, this was counterbalanced by increased income from other groups: notably John Stirk, who ran a monthly yoga teacher training as well as his usual weekly class & Little Foxes – a new entry to the top 10 in 2013, who rose to 2nd place in 2014.

The other significant change in the last two years is the increase in groups paying between £1,000 and £2,000 pa. In 2010, 2011 & 2012 there were 6 such groups, in 2013 there were 10 and 12 in 2014. This is mainly because we've started taking bookings in an "after school" slot before evening bookings start – we currently have 6 bookings a week in this slot: ballet (3 days a week), maths (2 days a week) and Chinese. We also hosted significantly more birthday parties for local parents in 2014 – after checking the church committee were open to this kind of booking.

It's been satisfying to watch our lettings income grow year by year since I started this job in 2006. However, I think we may now be reaching a natural plateau, as it's becoming physically impossible to squeeze any more groups into the building.

My prediction for the top 10 high paying groups of 2015 is therefore that it will be the same as 2014: with the Associated Music Board and Little Foxes sliding down the ranking and Ashtanga yoga & John Stirk yoga moving up – John may even manage to overtake Seicho no Ie in pole position!

	2012	2013	2014
<b>Seicho no Ie</b>	9,195	8,620	7,350
<b>AMB - exams</b>	6,800	4,180	3,740
<b>Tse Qi Gong</b>	4,800	5,280	5,030
<b>IGAP</b>	4,330	3,960	3,460
<b>APC</b>	4,210	4,405	3,600
<b>Beit Klal</b>	4,065	5,065	4,705
<b>Yoga – John Stirk</b>	3,800	3,520	5,420
<b>Yoga - Ashtanga</b>	3,770	2,555	2,200
<b>Meditation</b>	3,590	3,625	3,900
<b>Interfaith Seminary</b>	2,045	1,180	1,800
<b>Little Foxes</b>	-	4,085	6,120
<b>Monkey Music</b>	-	1,900	2,200
<b>BabyBop</b>	-	1,080	2,200
<b>Yoga – Lolly</b>	1,735	2,118	1,800
<b>GPP psychology</b>	1,550	2,075	2,060
<b>K&amp;C council</b>	700	1,470	2,140
<b>Pilates</b>	-	-	2,050
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50,590</b>	<b>55,118</b>	<b>59,775</b>

**Jenny Moy**



'Our souls are the cores of ourselves that exist and have worth regardless of anything that we do. They do need time to reconnect with our hard-working bodies. It is when we lose track of our souls that we forget about inherent worth and begin to think that our work, our doing, can help us regain that basic sense of who we are. We need to schedule periodic times of rest and renewal, times when we can experience what it is just to be—by ourselves, with friends and family, in community. It's not easy to set aside this kind of time on a regular basis. Ritual and repetition help. Even if the deep soul connection doesn't happen on every occasion, the regular practice of spending time "just being" can remind us that we value ourselves.'

**Cathy Bowers**

## Barbara Ballantyne: 'My War'



Barbara Ballantyne turns 93 on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

Nobody wanted war, and we all hoped it wouldn't happen, but preparations were already being made in early 1939 for the air-raids which would be inevitable. I played a part in those early years preparations. As a 17-year-old, I was enrolled in the A.R.P. in Bristol to assist a Mr Drummond in organising the rescue services. As it turned out I had to be rescued myself before too long, having been trapped in the vaults of a bombed-out bank for several hours. To have witnessed the horrors of an all-out war at first hand is an experience you can never forget – even 70 years later. The incendiary bombings, the blackened corpses, and the poor epileptic trapped with me in the bank vault. I had never seen an epileptic fit before but, fortunately, had had some training in first-aid.

The attacks on Bristol were fewer by 1941 and, thinking I might be of more use elsewhere, I joined the W.R.N.S. as a telegraphist. I was stationed in the Citadel in Whitehall – working for the High-Command under the direction of Winston Churchill. We had more than our share of bombings in London, but the walls of the Citadel were 16 feet thick.

In 1942, I volunteered for service abroad, and after initial training, joined a group of 12 Wrens on board a ship called the "Ulster Monarch". We had no idea where we were going, but were a part of a convoy. The "Ulster Monarch" had been a fast passenger ferry between Liverpool and Belfast before the war and could easily outpace the rest of the convoy. This allowed us to zig-zag back and forth whilst the other ships stayed in line. We wondered if it was because the father of one of our group was an Admiral, but later I found out the real reason. The previous group of 45 Wrens had been killed in a torpedo attack so the navy decided to keep future groups of Wrens small and send them on faster ships that could follow a more erratic course, making them a much more difficult target.

After the war, I discovered that my brother Ronnie had been in the same convoy on board the H.M.S. Teazer – en route to the Far East. It took us 10 days to get to Gibraltar, where I was to spend the rest of the war. By this time, Gibraltar was occupied almost exclusively by military personnel. Apart from a few essential workers the population had been evacuated to England.

There were only a few of us Wrens on the Rock – or rather in it, since we worked in a labyrinth of tunnels which sappers had been burrowing out since hostilities began. Some of the tunnels were much older, dating back to the eighteenth century, but these were mostly for cannon emplacements, quite narrow and running close to the surface of the cliffs. The new tunnels were bored right through the centre of the Rock, and were much larger; they had

to be wide enough for a lorry, and with wider sections for passing places. The chambers, which housed our working accommodation, the hospital and the Naafi as well as the armouries, fuel stores, food stores, etc, were even bigger. Each one had to be big enough to house a standard Nissen-hut with room enough to walk around the outside. Fresh water was rationed, and we had to bathe in salt water with a special soap. It was very humid down there but we got used to that – although two of the girls contracted tuberculosis as a result.

Buona Vista, the "Wrenery" where we lived, was outside the tunnels and segregated from the men, and we had the privilege of being able to walk to our own beach, Sandy Bay. If any of the men wanted to meet girls there, they had to walk half way round the Rock to do so. Needless to say, we were in great demand, but our C.O. kept a close eye on us. If we wanted to go on a date or to a dance at the Rock Hotel, we had to get written permission. Heaven help us if we were caught without one. All the same, we found we could sneak in and out via the chicken-run – much to the consternation of the chickens.

In Gibraltar, there was always the threat of invasion, but Spain remained neutral. Fortunately, Hitler and Franco couldn't come to an agreement to allow German forces to attack across the peninsula. An attack by sea and air would have proved more or less impossible as we were well defended and could have held out for more than a year under siege. However, Hitler had a battle-plan ready, and sent in his spies, posing as Spanish day-labourers. Some of them were caught, to our delight, but many more got away with it. We were also under constant observation from the balconies of the Rema Cristina hotel in Algeciras across the bay and from villas on "Spy Row", the road between Algeciras and La Linea. We were watching them as well, of course. But we were attacked by two-manned Italian submarines – read Commander Crabbe! (Another story).

Gibraltar was of enormous strategic importance, not only as a port controlling the passage into the Mediterranean and as a base for big shore-based guns, but also thanks to the sappers and the rock mined out when they bored out the tunnels. It had a substantial airfield, the runway built partly over what had been a racecourse before the war, and partly projected out into the bay. The Rock was also a commando training ground, and before my time there, had been the base from which the North African campaign had been conducted. Hitler's ambitions would have proved much more difficult to check without our presence there, but thanks to Franco's reluctance to get involved, his invasion plan, "Operation Felix", never got off the ground. Nevertheless, the Italians were finally able to sink ships in the harbour using midget submarines. Had they not malfunctioned on earlier missions they would have accounted for more than the 14 ships they sank or disabled in five separate attacks. I was there for all but the first of these, working under Lt. Frank Goldsworthy, a naval Intelligence Officer. Neutralising this threat was his first priority.

I feel a great affection for Gibraltar, not least because I met my darling husband there. He was a doctor working at the Bastion Hospital. We were engaged in early 1945 and lucky enough to be shipped back to England in time to enjoy the V.E. Day celebrations at Piccadilly Circus. We were married in September that year at the Essex Unitarian Church in Notting Hill Gate by his father, who was the minister. Kensington has been my home ever since. My husband was to become a top ear, nose and throat specialist and an accomplished pianist himself; he founded the Kensington and Chelsea Music Society in the 1960s, which still stages performances at Leighton House.

**Barbara Ballantyne**

*This article was first published in Kensington and Chelsea Magazine back in 2013 and is reprinted with permission.*



## Essex Church Committee News



A key message from the committee meeting in July was a reminder that our congregation wants to encourage members to attend national Unitarian events and so has a budget to help pay for the costs of attending. There's an interesting list of events coming up in the months ahead so do have a think if any of these appeal to you. Have a chat with our minister, treasurer or another member of the committee if you would like help with funding or would like more information.

### **Unitarian Women's Group (UWG) at Great Hucklow: 'In, Out, Shake It All About' 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

A good opportunity to meet up with women from around the country. This weekend will explore what is inside and outside.

### **National Unitarian Vision Day in Sheffield Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2015**

A special day in Sheffield, gathering with Unitarians around the country to consider the recently published Vision Document and to explore our ideas of next steps for our movement. We hope a group of us from Kensington Unitarians will attend this event.

### **FUSE: a Festival of Unitarianism in the South East - February 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>**

A fun weekend in Worthing with workshops, worship and inspiring activities.

## **'Finding Our Voice' Singing Workshops with Margaret Marshall**

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2015,  
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.

## One Light Spiritual Gathering 'Risk' with Fay Barratt



**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September, 7pm to 9pm  
Here at Essex Church**

The greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing  
To laugh is to risk appearing foolish.  
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.  
To reach out to another is to risk involvement.  
To express feelings is to risk exposing your true self.  
To place your ideas, your dreams, before a crowd, is to  
risk their loss.  
To love is to risk not being loved in return.  
To live is to risk dying.  
To hope is to risk disappointment.  
To try is to risk failure.  
But risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in  
life is to risk nothing.  
The person who risks nothing  
has nothing, knows nothing and is nothing.  
They may avoid suffering and sorrow, they cannot learn,  
feel, change, grow, love or live. Chained by their  
certitudes, they are slaves;  
they have forfeited their freedom.  
Only a person who risks is free.

*Leo Buscalia*

One Light Spiritual Gatherings are offered by Joanna Ryam and Suzanne Cohen. We are open hearted One Spirit Interfaith Ministers offering blessings, celebrations, services and spiritual counselling to people of all faiths and none. Members of the Association of Interfaith Ministers - trained and ordained by the Interfaith Foundation. In response to requests, we're are going to start 30 minutes later than usual at 7pm to allow more time to get to gatherings from work. This means that the service part of the gathering will finish at 8.30pm and because of the lateness, we won't be sharing a pot-luck supper. However, you are most welcome to join us for tea and cake until 9pm if you wish.

For further information contact:  
onelightlondon@gmail.com

# Hiroshima Remembered



*There are a number of events coming up this August:*

## Hiroshima Day at Tavistock Square

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August, 12 noon to 1 pm**

Organised by London Region CND  
Tel: 020 7607 2302 for further details.

## IARF Peace Commission At Unitarian Headquarters

**“The Oneness of All of Us”**

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2-4pm**

Essex Hall, 1-6 Essex St, London WC2R 3HY  
Tel: 01403 257 801 for further details.

## Hiroshima and Nagasaki Interfaith Commemoration

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2015 - 12:00 - 21:00**

**Friends House London NW1 2BJ**

There will be a programme of events as follows:

2:30pm Interfaith Service of Commemoration & Commitment

3:30pm: Nuclear Risk Hibakusha Worldwide exhibition.

This exhibition is dedicated to the millions of people whose lives have been affected by the nuclear industry: indigenous people whose homes were turned into nuclear wastelands by uranium mining, the Downwinders of more than 2,000 nuclear weapons tests, the survivors of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the people affected by radioactive fallout from civil and military nuclear accidents.

Tea and light refreshments

4–5:30pm: workshops and stalls: numbers are limited so booking is essential. For further information on the workshops and to book: <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/hiroshima-workshop>.

6pm: Screening of *The War Game*, produced and then withdrawn by the BBC. Followed by speakers and discussion. Further information from CND.

**Open to all but registration is requested at  
<https://forms.quaker.org.uk/hiroshima>**



May your dreams constantly be  
interrupted by children,  
and may your dog keep you  
from doing anything too important

May your life be filled with the triumphs  
of fixing all the household objects  
that weren't supposed to be broken.  
May the gab of neighbourhood mouths  
arrest your way to work.

May the plans for your life rest peacefully  
in their drawer, underneath  
the motor oil receipts and the plastic umbrellas,  
the wine stains slowly returning the paper to the earth.

May you be too poor for a castle,  
so that you are unprotected  
from the travellers and beggars  
who decide to pitch camp on your lawn,  
bringing only the eternal wisdom  
that this world will never be fully saved,  
only savoured.

*Blessing by Bob Janis-Dillon,  
a UU Minister, who will soon be starting work here  
in the UK as one of two new Merseyside District Ministers.*

## LDPA Quarterly Meeting Gathering of the Unitarian District Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September, at Essex Church



We are hosting the next quarterly district meeting here at Essex Church on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September. This will be a celebration of Rev. Martin Whittell's arrival as District Minister, Rev. Patrick O'Neill's retirement from Hampstead and new ministries of Rev. Kate Dean at Lewisham, Rev. Simon Ramsey at Richmond and Rev. Daniel Costley in Kent and Sussex. There will be further announcements about timings and further details in due course.

Please get in touch with Sarah or a member of the committee if you are willing to help with serving refreshments on the day.

# 'Mission Possible'

Sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker – adapted from service given on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June

An audio podcast of this sermon is available on our website.

Here is the story, prayer and address from June's Mission Possible service. Does it spark off your own thoughts of the possibilities of our Kensington Unitarians community? Do write your own ideas about our mission here, your imaginings of how best to use this community's assets and resources.

**To What End** – a story is told of the holy fool of Sufism who was approached for assistance by the board of a large company who were working on their mission statement.

"What is your fundamental purpose?" asked Nasrudin.

"Our mission is to create constantly increasing dividends for our shareholders," they declared.

"To what end?" asked Nasrudin.

"So they make increased profits which they will want to reinvest in our company," they said.

"To what end?" asked Nasrudin.

"So they make more profits," they said, becoming somewhat irritated.

"To what end?" asked Nasrudin nonchalantly.

"So they re-invest and make more profits."

Nasrudin pondered this for a while and thanked them for their explanations.

Later that week they had arranged to visit Nasrudin's house to work further on the Mission Statement. They found him in his garden stuffing oats into his donkey.

"What are you doing?" they asked. "You are giving that poor beast so much food that it will not be able to go anywhere."

"But it is not meant to go anywhere," Nasrudin replied. "Its purpose is to produce manure."

"To what end?" they asked.

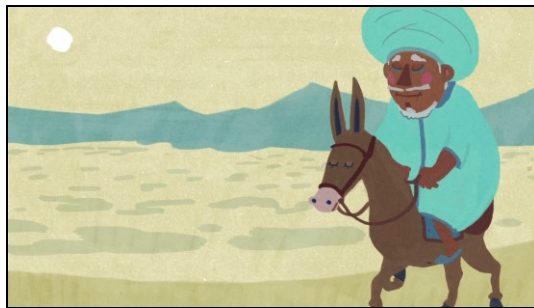
"Because without it I can not grow enough oats in my small allotment to feed this greedy beast."

*(with thanks to Peter Hawkins for this and many other Mulla Nasrudin stories)*

I called this part of the service *'felt annoyed recently? Oh good,'* as much of a reminder to myself as to anyone else. Nasrudin's story of feeding a donkey in order to produce manure in order to fertilise the ground in order to grow more oats in order to feed the donkey in order to produce manure is a useful reminder about all human activity – it's worth reviewing what we're doing and why from time to time.

As a church we are something other than a social club or a group of friends. A healthy church community is going to be filled with all sorts of people. One of my delights in being a church member is that I get to meet different people who are not just like me or my friends or my family or my work colleagues. But if we are successful in truly opening our doors to all people who feel they are in accord with our particular spiritual and social ethos, - well sooner or later someone or something is going to annoy us. And when that happens let's be pleased, let's note the moment as a sign of our success – it means this is a real community not some cosy little club where we get to be friends with people who are carbon copies of ourselves.

And let's remember Nasrudin's donkey and ask ourselves from time to time – 'to what end?' What is our purpose?



**Time of prayer and reflection:** Let us pray to the god of our hearts and our understanding for this community and for all communities of the spirit that they and we might be true expressions of something greater than ourselves. May we look beyond the superficial to something greater that calls us, that reminds us we too can be greater than we sometimes are.

Let us be inspired to use the resources of this people and this church in ways that help and inspire others and so to build a real community of the spirit here and now.

As we survey our own lives and the life of the world it can be only too easy to feel despair and yet by accepting that and moving onwards we may find new reserves of strength and possibility through our vulnerability and uncertainty.

Let us not strive for perfection but rather to be real and true.

Let's rest in stillness and silence for a few moments now – a chance to send our thoughts and prayers to the broken places – in ourselves, in those we love and in the world around us.

And may all this be so for the greater good of all concerned, amen.

## Some Thoughts on 'Mission Possible'

We're said to be shaped by our early experiences and those of us who've spent our childhoods glued to TV sets and radios will forever feel a connection to programmes we enjoyed as children. Back in the 60s there was an exciting TV programme called Mission Impossible, where a group of spies were given an impossible mission each week, to right the wrongs committed by a group of evil people employed by the mysterious Scorpio. Deeply satisfying as a viewing experience with marvellously tense theme music – and the goodies always won in the end.

If only real life was as straightforward. But real life is messy and tends towards complexity and confusion and all human endeavour has a tendency to fizzle out in confusion or disappear up its own proverbial backside. That's why we need to stop and review what we're doing from time to time and then re-set the course we're travelling. Otherwise we end up with our own version of Nasrudin busily stuffing oats into his poor donkey's mouth.

Our work here at the church is carried out by four paid members of staff – Gitana our cleaner, Jenny our warden, Jane our outreach officer and me as minister, plus a host of volunteers, including our management committee and trustees and an assortment of professionals – from window cleaners to roofing contractors, plumbers and electricians. It's easy to get lost in all of this busyness. Today we're holding this congregation's AGM. An annual general meeting is required of any charity as part of its transparency – and we must by law publish our annual report. Tedious though it is to compile such a report it's essential – not just to keep the charity commissioners happy – but because it marks a pause point, a chance to review where we've been and re-assess where we want to go.



## 'Mission Possible' (continued)

Now it's completed it can act as a reminder of our potential as a community of the spirit, to consider our possible mission. This report summarises our assets – not just a building in central London with a leaky roof, not just money wisely invested and donations gratefully received, but volunteers, staff, and a willingness to reach out to the world. It also reminds us that we here at Essex Unitarian Church are part of a national and international movement of liberal religious people.

In the last year our General Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches has been reviewing its own sense of mission and vision for its work. A group of us met up for a day last September and shared our ideas for the future. Out of that day came this booklet *A Vision for the Future*, which you are welcome to borrow, we'll make sure there's a copy in the library soon. Twenty four people have written about different aspects of our work as a religious organization in 21st century Britain. They are as diverse as you'd expect a group of Unitarians to be but there is also a cohesion to much of the imagery used.

Two images stayed with me from that day of conversation – the image of a Unitarian community as a complex Oriental carpet as a 'reflection of the world's complexity bound together by our many different views'. A second image was of our communities as a wonderfully full bowl of fruit, offering a spiritual feast for all to enjoy. Both images remind us of an aspect of Unitarian communities that is what attracted me in the first place and perhaps you too. I appreciated then as I appreciate now our absence of fixed creed or dogma. To be a Unitarian is to accept life as a glorious mystery, as a great unknown, as a personal search for meaning and purpose – and to support and encourage one another on the path of exploration. We reach out and invite others to join in a spiritual feast that is at its best truly diverse, we welcome in all who wish to join in such explorations of the spirit.

On the back of your hymn sheet today you'll find a sunflower petal with a statement for you to complete if you wish. It asks: What is your vision for our Kensington Unitarians community. Jeannene has spoken of extending our welcome to people who identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender. I was really touched by her image of couples holding hands in our services and I'm delighted that we'll be holding our first same sex marriage ceremony here in August. My vision for our community would be to let the world know that we have a wonderful venue for ceremonies here and that we can work with people to create unique events marking key life moments. I also want to extend the welcome we give to families and ensure that we are as child friendly and parent friendly as we can possibly be. Do have a think of your vision for this community's next steps and don't be constrained by what seems now to be possible. Let us hear your ideas. Who knows what we might be and what we might become.

## What's On...

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September, 12.30-1.30pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 7-8pm  
**'Heart and Soul' Spiritual Gathering**  
'Atonement'  
Led by Teresa Baldwin & Sarah Tinker

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September, 11am-noon  
**'Let your Yeah be Yeah'**  
Led by Jane Blackall

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 12.30-1.30pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September, 7-9.00pm  
**Creativity Group: Bring Your Own**

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 11-4pm  
**Congregational Activists' Day**

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 11am-noon  
**'Only Connect'** (including  
'Gathering the Waters' ceremony)  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 12.30pm  
**Small-Group Communion**  
Led by Jane Blackall

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2-3pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> Sept, 12.30-1.30pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September  
**Management Committee Meeting**

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September, 11am-noon  
**'Harvest Festival'**  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September, 12.30pm  
**Congregational Lunch**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept, 12.30-1.30pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September, 11am-noon  
**'The Chalice of Our Being'**  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> Sept, 12.30-1.15pm  
**'Finding Your Voice'**  
Singing Workshop with Margaret

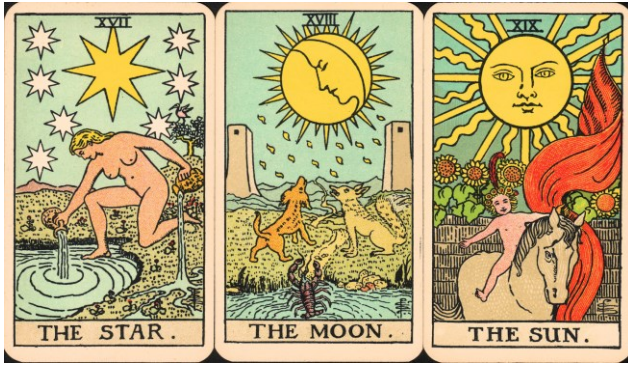
Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> Sept, 12.30-1.30pm  
**Nia Technique** with Sonya Leite

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September, 6.45-9pm  
**Men's Group** with Jim Blair

## HOW TO MAKE CHURCH BRILLIANT



# Services at Essex Church this Summer



## **2<sup>nd</sup> August, 11am** – ‘Pick a Card, Any Card’

Service led by Jeannene Powell

Jeannene will consider how insights with the Tarot can help us connect with the Divine and what it means to be human.

## **9<sup>th</sup> August, 11am** – ‘Flower Communion’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

A celebration of flowers and bees and each unique member of our community. Do bring a flower if you can and in a simple ritual you will receive another flower to take home.

## **16<sup>th</sup> August, 11am** – ‘Something Understood’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

A line from metaphysical poet George Herbert reminds us of the precious gift that comes from being understood by another.

## **23<sup>rd</sup> August, 11am** – ‘Thomas, a Liberating Gospel’

Service led by Tristan Jovanović

The Gospel of Thomas offers a radical insight into the teachings of Jesus. A book of wisdom sayings, it is a text that reminds us of the heart of liberal faith: the continual search for a radical transformation of the self.



## **30<sup>th</sup> August, 11am** – ‘Record Breakers’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

As Notting Hill prepares for the first day of its annual (probably largest ever) carnival, we will explore our human urge to break records and be the very best we can be. N.B. Public transport works well on this day but take care if you park a car as extra restrictions apply.

## **6<sup>th</sup> September, 11am** – ‘Let Your Yeah be Yeah’

Service led by Jane Blackall

In this service we will be looking at communication and commitment – saying what we mean and meaning what we say.

## **13<sup>th</sup> September, 11am** – ‘Only Connect’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

A celebration of our human ability to make connections in so many ways. With our annual ‘gathering the waters’ ceremony to mark our connectedness. Do bring some waters from your summer travels or your home of garden.

## **20<sup>th</sup> September, 11am** – ‘Harvest Festival’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

A traditional harvest festival, with a ritual to mark the autumn equinox, followed by a congregational lunch. Do bring something seasonal to add to our harvest display and some food to share.

## **27<sup>th</sup> September, 11am** – ‘The Chalice of Our Being’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Each week our service begins with a chalice lighting. Let’s find out more about its history and symbolism and celebrate the light within us.