



Open Mind

The Bulletin of the Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel

December 2011

December Services

Sunday 4 December (11.00am and 7.00pm)

Rev. Dr Patrick T. O'Neill

“Theodiversity:

Is Too Much Religion A Good Thing?”

Those who have predicted that organized religion was being overtaken by the relentless onslaught of Secularism in the 21st Century may need to think again. New Religions, new understandings of the divine, and new incarnations of traditional religions are popping up at an amazing rate everywhere, it seems. An Oxford University Press study identifies 9,900 distinct and separate religions in the world today, increasing by two or three new religions every day! Is this a good thing? Dr. O'Neill's sermon invites us to ponder the pros and cons of “Theodiversity” today.

Sunday 11 December (11.00am and 7.00pm)

Rev. Dr Patrick T. O'Neill

“Gifts and Givers”

Something to bear in mind this holiday season: Giving and receiving gifts is how we survive. It's how we stay alive. It's how we tell each other that we are loved, that we are important, that we are connected, that our existence is tied together. That isn't some social nicety – that's redemption, that's blessing, that's empowerment. Come join us this Sunday!

Sunday 18 December (11.00am only)

“Carols With The Choir”

Our annual holiday Sunday of Carols with the Choir!

Come join us and have your spirit lifted! All ages welcome!

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Fill your heart like a vessel with the Christmas spirit. Take the time to let your vision clear and your concern deepen. Allow your heart to overflow with all the authentic gifts that this season has to offer.

The blessings and the wealth of Christmas can overflow from each of our hearts, if we take the time to fill our hearts first. We are a world of materially rich men and rich women who are spiritually impoverished by our very wealth. The signs of that impoverishment are all around us. They push and shove to get our attention, especially at this time of year.

But let us stop the rush and allow the spirit of the season to enter our being. Let us clear our vision and deepen our concern. Let it move us away from an isolating concern for self to a relationship of love and care and wonder and joy with all of life around us.

(by: Donna Morrison Reed) Source: 1997 UUMA Worship Materials Collection

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The Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel
The Unitarian Chapel in the Heart of Hampstead



Unitarianism is spirituality without dogma and welcomes people of all religious faiths as well as those who are humanistic. Unitarians cherish and live by the values of love, compassion, a free mind, service to others, human dignity, and other similar values. It encourages each person to deepen their relationship with God, yet allows each person to understand God in their own unique way.

**The Chapel holds two services on Sundays,
at 11.00am and 7.00pm**

The morning service is more family-oriented, including activities for children led by professionally trained leaders, and a Children's Chapel is offered for children of all ages. The evening service is more intimate for those who prefer a more meditative tone.

Visitors and guests are always welcome!

The Chapel also offers a rich programme of social activities, covering a wide range of interests such as literature and poetry, Tai Chi, choir singing, monthly lectures, and a variety of monthly events for all age groups.

The Chapel is licensed for marriages and other ceremonies.

**For more information, visit our website at
www.rosslynhillchapel.com**

From the Editor

*Again did the earth shift
Again did the nights grow short,
And the days grow long.*

*And the people of the earth were glad
And celebrated each in their own ways.*
Dian Lee Moomey

For longer than recorded history, people have gathered at the darkest time of the year to bring back the light.

What winter holidays (if any) do you celebrate? What traditions define the season for you? In this month's issue you'll find 'Memories, reflections, thoughts, and poems about some seasonal festivals – Christmas, Hanukkah, and Winter Solstice'. We hope these will inspire you.

I appreciate being part of a community where we have the opportunity to come together in celebration. I love the way that the darkest time of the year gives us a reason to come together and honour the mystery of the dark, to light the solstice candle, to sing Christmas carols, and to listen to exhilarating music.

May we seek deeper meaning within the stories and the myths, within the symbols and rituals of the season. May we remember and cherish the gifts that really matter – the gift of time, the gift of love, the gift of compassion, and the gift of companionship.

"May you have the gladness of Christmas which is hope, the spirit of Christmas which is peace, the heart of Christmas which is love." (Ada V. Hendricks)
Ingrid Tavkar (Editor)

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PO'Nderings: "The Rules of the Game"

From our new Minister
Rev. Patrick T. O'Neill

Almost every household has its own unspoken secret ritual manual for this time of year. Sacred cookie recipes, usually handed down through the Secret Sisterhood of Chosen Aunties, are brought forth from special hiding places so that the young may be initiated into the finer "traditions of our family." Whether these include Hanukkah candles or Santa Lucia crowns, wooden shoes or the holy box of family tree ornaments, or the red felt stockings with the fur all rubbed off over the years, the complete blessing and bane of family traditions - all laden with expectations - are passed along to the young during this season. Whether these are bestowed on children as a blessing or laid upon them as a burden depends, of course, on the spirit in which they are given.

A wiser man than I once summed it up as follows: there are only three main rules of life that you must remember. The first is be kind. The second is be kind. And the third is be kind.

I think surely he must have had the month of December squarely in mind when the rulebook was written. The season, with its thousand obligations impossible to fulfill, is most certainly a test of our best intentions. December is bound to disappoint. First, we load up the month with conflicting expectations of each other, and then we dance to duelling datebooks through New Year. Parents early on teach their children an ancient game of push-me-pull-you, trying to create perfect, memorable holidays, a game that often continues long after the children are grown.

Emotions lie close to the surface this time of year. The ache and joy of childhood memory pulls at us, and the ghosts of December can be vivid. But we can ease each other's passage, it seems to me. We can hold each other to the rules this time of year, especially. In all our dealings with each other through a hectic, cold, crowded, and stressful month, we can resolve to be kind. Sitting in the traffic jam at the mall, at the market check-out counter, at Uncle Henry's mandatory family party, at the office, with our young children bouncing with impatience, with our grown children who often disappoint us - we can be kind. It seems a small thing. But it isn't. It's the best we have to offer one another, in December or any other month. See you in Chapel... po'n

Publisher's Statement: "Open Mind" is a tool of outreach for the Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel. The views expressed in this publication reflect the spirit and substance of Unitarian values, as well as matters of concern to Unitarians, but are not necessarily shared by all members.

Chapel Activities



Weekly Activities

Children's Chapel meets every Sunday at the 11.00am service. New children of all ages are always welcome. Infants are welcome in the creche.

Chapel Youth Group will be continuing with Lizzy Lawrence as the adult advisor. Please contact Lizzy at 020 7328 2251 for details.

Chapel Choir rehearses each Wednesday at 7.30pm in the chapel. New voices are always welcomed into the choir. No audition necessary.

A Tai Chi class is held each Wednesday at 5.45pm in the Chapel.

December Activities and Meetings

6 December and 20 December at 630pm- "Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life" by Karen Armstrong at the Chapel. Come and discuss this book. Contact: Leighton Cole (email: leightoncole90@hotmail.com)

8 Dec. - Management Committee meets at 7.00pm in the Committee Room in the Chapel. Members of the Chapel are welcome to attend but contact the Chair, John Lawrence, ahead of time as a courtesy.

12 Dec. - If you like to read and /or write poetry, the Chapel Poetry Group will meet at 7.30pm in the Chapel. For more information contact George Appleby (Tel: 020 7424 9733, email: gappleby@talktalk.net)

13 Dec. - Social Action Committee will meet at 7.30pm

15 Dec. - The Book Group will meet at 7.30pm at the Magdala at 2a South Hill Park in Hampstead, to discuss "The Feast" by Margaret Kennedy. Contact: Bill Ellington (Tel: 020 7354 0397, email: Ellingtonbill@aol.com)

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

Mark Your Diaries

On Saturday 7 January at 3.00pm
Please join us at Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel for
a special celebration service of induction
for our new minister,
the Rev. Dr Patrick T.A. O'Neill
as the 37th Minister of the Chapel.
Visiting Clergy invited to robe and process.



Chapel Calendars: On Sale Now!

The beautiful chapel calendars have arrived and will be on sale after the Sunday morning services. Thanks to those Chapel members who provided photos and quotations. For just £5, you will be supporting the Chapel and getting a great gift idea; all proceeds will go to the Chapel hall renovations and there are a limited number available. If you would like to order one (or two, or three!) and can't get to Chapel, please contact Kate Buchanan at kateboo@gmail.com



The Communications Team would like to thank Patricia Williams for creating and maintaining an attractive, eye-catching and informative display on the Chapel notice board.

Sermons

Sound clips of some recent sermons are now available to listen to on the chapel website (on the second page of "Sunday Services").

In Memoriam

Ann Finer writes: The funeral service of Lena Bolton, at Golders Green Crematorium, was fairly simple (Humanist?) and we sang her favourite hymn "All things bright and beautiful". Lena was obviously much loved, I always remember her as a kind and sprightly person. She loved dancing and continued this until late in life. Lena's last two weeks were in the Royal Free, and prior to that she had lived for some years at Henderson Court.

Shirley King writes: "Lena had a long connection with Rosslyn Hill Chapel and knew the Rev. Tony Cross well. Later she became a close friend of the Rev. David Usher and his family. I knew Lena when she lived in South End Green some years ago. We sometimes chatted over a cup of tea in her flat, when she was always optimistic, amusing, generous and full of sound advice. Life must have been hard for her as she was widowed and brought up a family on her own. She was devastated at the death of her daughter but was determined to maintain her zest for life after the event - a tough lady and a lovely person."

Submitting copy:

Unsolicited copy is welcomed and should be emailed to: RHUCbulletin@yahoo.com. All submissions may be edited for content and length (200 words) at the discretion of the Communications Team, who also reserves the right to reject unsuitable material. **Deadline** for submitting items for the January issue of 'Open Mind' is **Monday 19 December**.

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

The Keeping Faith Initiative at RHUC

In the wake of last summer's urban unrest, a small group of us got together to think about ways we could help, as religious liberals, to make a positive difference here in London.

From those deliberations came the formation of a new Unitarian social justice initiative based here at the Chapel, Keeping Faith. We are focusing our efforts on aiding Kids Company, a charity with special emphasis on helping disadvantaged urban children and youth.

Our first group project, to finance and help run a pantomime performance at the 'Sir Thomas Abney' School in Hackney, takes place on Monday 5 December.

To that end, 'Keeping Faithers' have pledged to raise £350 to pay the theatre group performing at in this inner city school. So far we have raised £190 towards the cost of the programme. Special thanks to the members of the Lectures Committee who donated £100 from their programme to help support this event.

We now have a full group – eight of us will be attending. Deborah Burnstone, a member of the New Unity/Newington Green chapels, will be joining which makes this not only our first action but our first collaborative Unitarian event. We also welcome two new members to the group from RHUC, Shirley King and Luise Deol. Welcome all three.

As important as money is your own interest and enthusiasm. Want to learn more? Ready to help out? Subscribe to our email list, "Keeping Faith" by contacting Rob Gregson at mattorobg@gmail.com or calling 074 1128 0667. Many thanks! Rob Gregson

Chapel Flower Rota



4 December 2011 – 29 January 2011

Sunday, 4 December Camino

Sunday, 11 December Deborah and Christopher

Saturday, 17 December 10.00am – 1.00pm
Christmas Decorating with Helene, Ann, Ethaar, Helene (Altar), Ethaar (Windowledges), Ann (Chapel Decorations and tree), Wendy, Charlotte, Sophie, Janna, Deborah, Patricia, Anthea, Carina and we hope that all the lovely ladies and gentlemen in the Chapel Flower Team will help also as well as other Chapel members. Tea/coffee and mince pies will be provided (homemade if I get time!!)

Saturday, 24 December Helene

Sunday, 1 January 2012 Helene

Friday, 6 January
Christmas Clear-up – 10.00am–2.00pm
We need everyone's help with packing the decorations away in boxes, clearing the window ledges and saying a fond goodbye to Christmas. Also to decorate the Chapel for Rev. Patrick's induction on the Saturday 7 January. Helene, Ann, Wendy, Deborah, Christina, Janna, Camino? Please help us to make it special for Rev. Patrick's induction.

Sunday, 15 January Ethaar

Sunday, 22 January Janna

Sunday, 29 January Charlotte

New dates available for Sundays in February are: 5, 19 and 26. Please let me know if you would like to do the flowers on any of these dates and we need more help on 6 January. Thanks. Helene, Tel: 077 7817 6425,

Helping Hands at Services

Stewards

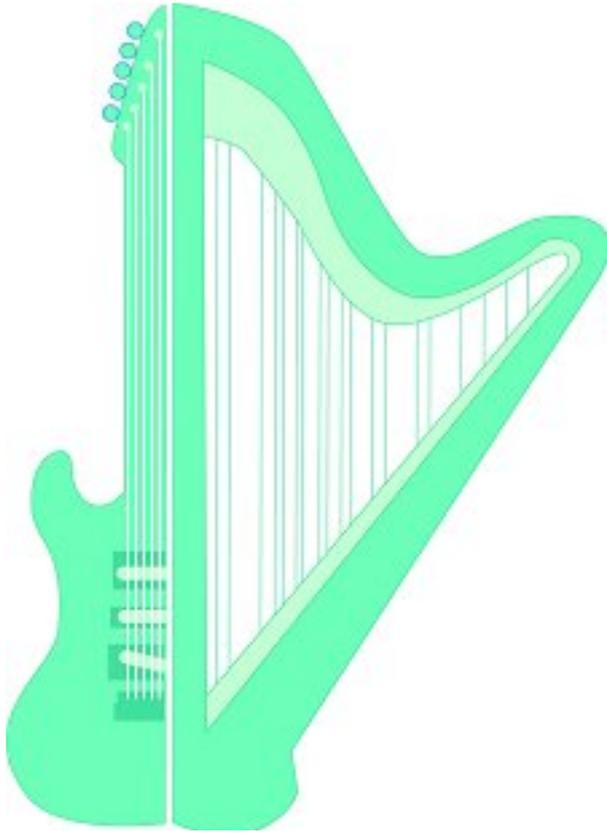
4 Dec. Rachel Wingfield & Shirley King
11 Dec. Holly Van der Mole & Judy Harris
18 Dec. Judy Harris, Shirley Malin & Louise Hepburn
24 Dec. TBA
25 Dec.

Worship Group Reps

4 Dec. Julia Reid (am) & Gordon Jackson (pm)
11 Dec. Janna Williams (am) & Margaret Perry (pm)
18 Dec. James Chiriyankandath (am)
& Gordon Jackson (pm)
24 Dec. Kate Buchanan & Leighton Cole (5.00pm)
24 Dec. Kate Buchanan & TBA (8.00pm)
25 Dec. TBA

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

'Requiem in Blue' by Harvey Brough



I went to the first performance of this work in Eye, Suffolk, in 1998. I loved it and was particularly struck by the words of the last movement. When it came to finding a requiem for our Remembrance Sunday service this year, I remembered that those words would be particularly appropriate in a Unitarian setting. I also really loved the way that so many areas of community could be involved in the performance - adult choir, children's choirs, professional jazz soloists. So I contacted Harvey Brough, and he and his wife Clara, came round to lunch and we set about planning a performance.

I knew that it would be hard work for us all as there is so much going on in the piece, and it is easy to get lost, but felt that the RHUC choir would rise to the occasion. Having been impressed with the Camden Youth Choir when I heard them earlier in the year, at the MFVT concert, I arranged for them to be involved, and slightly older children from Moss Hall Junior School choir joined us too.

Harvey helped to coach these groups of young singers in the weeks leading up to the concert, and twice came to play at our rehearsals. I needed to find a voice for Spoonface Steinberg, so asked my piano pupils who liked speaking in front of an audience, and watched to see whose eyes lit up! I think that Caitlin did a wonderful job on the night.

I was delighted to see how the choir responded to Harvey's conducting during the performance, and felt that all our hard work was rewarded by being involved with such accomplished musicians. Georgina Drewe

Although we have been attending events at RHUC, including many concerts, for over twenty years, we have rarely experienced such an air of expectation and excitement as we found when we walked in on the evening of Remembrance Sunday. Quite apart from the fact that the Chapel was so full it seemed as if it had elastic walls, there was also the sight of the considerable forces assembled to perform this work, written by Harvey Brough in memory of his late brother. These consisted of various instrumental and vocal soloists, our organ, two children's choirs and our own Rosslyn Hill Chapel Choir.

The work itself combines movements from the Latin Mass with English folksong, in settings which frequently employ elements from jazz, blues and even waltz time. From the first note, we were swept up in the sound and emotion of the work, given full rein by the brilliance of the superb soloists and the choirs, with the enthusiastic children's voices adding an even more ethereal quality in the Chapel's great acoustics.

It would be invidious to single out any one soloist as they were all, without exception, quite outstanding but, having said that, mention must be made of young Caitlin Napleton, whose recitation of lines from Spoonface Steinberg by Lee Hall in the Lux Aeterna added a seemingly Unitarian slant to the work. Mention too must be made of our own Chapel choir, which rose quite splendidly to the challenge of this extraordinary work. They gave great credit to Georgina Drewe and the rehearsal time she had obviously put in with them.

All in all, this was a wonderful performance of a fascinating and uplifting work and an evening that all of us who were privileged to be in the Chapel will not easily forget.

News from the Management Committee

Any member of the Chapel is welcome to attend the Management Committee meetings as an observer. If you would like to attend, as a courtesy please contact either John Lawrence or Tanya Morrison (co-Chairs) in advance. The next meeting will be on Thursday 8 December, 2011 at 7.00pm in the Chapel (in the Committee Room).

Meeting on Thursday 10 November 2011, chaired by John Lawrence (co-Chair)

Property Sales Group: Paul ver Bruggen reported that further negotiations are taking place with the prospective purchaser of the Willoughby Road site. It is hoped these will be concluded shortly and the exchange of contracts take place.

Hall Roof Works: The work on replacing the Hall roof is due to be finished in late November. The kitchen roof will also be repaired. Heavy expenses will have to be met in December. However, the Chair reported that prospects are quite good for the Chapel in the coming year.

A considerable fund raising drive is necessary to raise the money needed for the planned refurbishment of the Hall. Help with fundraising from members of the congregation with a background in business would be invaluable. The Chair and members of the MC will discuss the question of the Chapel's reserves and the fund raising initiative at a meeting with the congregation after the morning service on 20 November.

Minister's Report: Some of Rev. O'Neill's ministerial activities during the month had been attending 10 or more meetings,

officiating at a Child naming ceremony and meeting with a number of members on an individual basis for pastoral counselling. He visited the first Cold Weather Shelter night being hosted by the Chapel (under the leadership of Leighton Cole) and was running a day's Worship Workshop for anyone interested in the many aspects of worship in a Unitarian chapel. At his suggestion, a retreat for members of the Management Committee and Elders would be held on 27 November. Rev. O'Neill's Induction as the Chapel's settled minister is fixed for Saturday 7 January.

Worship Group Report: Kate Buchanan reported that the Worship Group had met with Rev. O'Neill and it was felt that the arrangements for Sunday services were working well. The intention was to expand the Worship Group.

Administrator's Report: Sharron Conduit, who sent apologies, had tabled a report. She is much involved with overseeing the work on the Hall roof, and many other matters affecting the fabric of the Chapel and its other buildings.

Computer: A problem with the office computer meant that no emails were received or sent for four days, creating many difficulties. In the end, she had called on Erich Wagner, Chapel member and part-time Administrator, and he had resolved the problem. The MC expressed its serious concern at this long breakdown. The Chapel was now changing its server arrangements and a problem like this should not recur.

Sound System: James Chiriyankandath had reported in

October on two quotations for installing a major new sound system in the Chapel and an alternative proposal from Erich Wagner to improve the existing system, for a much lower cost. A professional had evaluated these quotations and recommended one of the large scale schemes, on the grounds that there would be long-term benefit. However, given the calls on Chapel funds at present, the MC chose the plan proposed by Erich as this would make an appreciable difference and could be paid for by the generous donation towards improving the Chapel's sound system made by the Lecture Group when it closed down earlier this year.

Chair's Report: It was agreed the AGM would be held on 26 February 2012.

Any Other Business: Rev. Danielle Wilson told the MC that this might be her last MC meeting as she was moving to the South Coast. Danielle, in addition to many other posts, has sat on two Search Committees, and was chair of the Committee which selected Rev. O'Neill as candidate for the post of settled minister for the Chapel. The members of the MC expressed their warm thanks to Danielle.

New Light School in Uganda: James Chiriyankandath reminded the MC that money had been raised by the Social Action Committee for Rev. Mark Kiyambe's school in Masaka, Uganda. The plan is to send this donation to the school via the UUA Partner Council. However, Leighton Cole, chair of the SAC, had told him this arrangement was not yet in place.

Seasonal Festivals



Many of my childhood memories of growing up in Germany are related to Christmas, which reflects the fact that Christmas is a huge thing in Germany. From the first Advent Sunday onwards, Christmas well and truly became the focus of life in my family. The Christmas decorations were being put up, anything from scented candles to door wreaths, to window stickers. An advent wreath took centre stage on the dining table, on which one additional candle was lit every Sunday leading up to Christmas. Every weekend the kitchen was turned into a bakery, mass producing vast amounts of different varieties of traditional Christmas cookies, biscuits and gingerbreads, which were kept in metal tins until we managed to get through them all – which was usually by early February!

My mother always made an Advent calendar for us, for which she hand-wrapped 24 little gifts such as sweets, nuts, small games and other items. On the evening of 5th December, we put a boot out at the front door to find it magically filled the next morning with chocolates, fruit and nuts – a reward from St Nicholas for being ‘good children’! In many families, a relative dresses up as St Nicholas on the day and ‘visits’ the family to give them gifts in person. As my mother was a single mum, one year she hired a student to play that role, and I remember wondering who he was, as I had stopped believing in St Nicholas for some time!

Christmas Eve is the main Christmas event in Germany – this is when people go to church for special evening services, family and friends give presents and share a special meal. Traditionally, children believe that the gifts are being brought by the Christ Child and not Father Christmas, and I remember writing a letter with my wish list every year to tell the Christ Child what gifts I wanted. Even if I never sent these letters off, Christ Child somehow always knew what I had wished for!

--Melanie Haberstroh

Christmas always seems to come at a very unfortunate time of year for me financially: payments for business rent, employment taxes and VAT and rates all become due as well as all the end of year accounting preparations. All this happens just when working hours are restricted because my family not unreasonably expect me to spend more time with them. However much I try to plan ahead each year the build-up is invariably hectic, buying gifts on credit cards so they can be paid for in the flusher times to come, billing for everything possible, calling in debts, juggling creditors and debtors, scrounging around for enough money to keep the bank account out of the red until January, setting up online bank payments so bills get paid just before they become overdue and so on. So I sometimes feel a bit like Dickens' Scrooge locking up his counting house for the journey home from work on Christmas Eve; the walk home has a very distinctive feel to it: satisfied relief at the hurriedly completed essentials, mild anxiety about the myriad unfinished trivia but also a pleasurable expectation for the next few days. Spending a lot of time indoors, eating well, watching hours of DVDs or television, switching lights and heating on without regard for the bills. It is a time to savour warmth, light and plenty in the middle of darkness, cold and scarcity: an island of gratitude in the diary's relentless ocean. And then it's time to pick up the tangled day-to-day threads all over again!

--Erich Wagner



Seasonal Festivals

In my house, different religious backgrounds have merged into one large experience without specific boundaries as to where one background ends and the other one begins. My upbringing was Spanish Catholic. My husband's was Jewish. While we were without children, there was no special celebration at this time of the year but that changed with the arrival of our son. Gradually, without any specific intention, we had in our house a small Christmas tree, surrounded by pretty wrapped presents, as well as the Hanukkah candlestick. My best memories about this time of the year are the ones which include my son as a small boy. We would bring the Christmas tree, ribbons, ornaments and lights out of the boxes. My job was to join the pieces of the Lego-like tree first of all to make it look as a real pine tree! Then my son would put the colourful ribbons and small shiny balls on it. To this, we added his school-made decorations, largely put together using green and red paper covered with glitter, before adding the final touches of white cotton wool (a real pine tree should have snow around it!), the lights and the shiny star right at the top of it. However, I also wanted to celebrate Hanukkah and so I soon learned that we needed doughnuts, a spinning top to be played while singing a traditional song, some presents and, of course, the colourful candles, one on the first night up to eight on the last. And so we had all those things at this time of the year.

And now that my son is already 18 (my goodness!), we will not sing songs while playing with a top or prepare complex decorations for the Christmas tree, but our December is still a blend of backgrounds. We have our Christmas dinner in Spain on the 24 December, with my brother, in the same way I did with my parents in South America, and we will also invite my husband's close relations and children to eat, chat and exchange a few presents. All that, again, with our special Hanukkah candlestick and any Christmas cards, red candles, etc that may be around in the house. Some may say these things are incompatible. My husband and I say they have made our lives richer.

--Mercedes Freedman



There are very few Christmas rituals that are held in common by Unitarian Universalist churches in the USA, but a reading by Sophia Lyon Fahs, the Unitarian religious educator, is often shared. It ends, "Each night a child is born is a holy night. A time for singing, a time for wondering, a time for worshipping."

This reading has contained the meaning of Christmas for me ever since I heard it as a child myself, in my Unitarian church in Colorado, and felt its welcome. Years later, I was just three months pregnant with my first son when I was privileged to read Fahs' words to my own congregation: holding my private baby dreams secretly inside, yet speaking of them at the same time. Abe's arrival the following summer was, indeed, a holy night for me and my husband, Adam.

It is with a deepened sense of wonder since the arrival of my own boys that I see babies and children being welcomed into our Unitarian communities. And each year I look forward to hearing Fahs' words celebrating all of our children at Christmas, just as those words once welcomed me.

--Emily Manvel Leite

Our Larger Unitarian Movement

Your Help Is Needed!

The Festival of Unitarians in the South East (FUSE)

Friday 3 – Sunday 5 February 2012

The FUSE is being lit.... A full programme is being planned, featuring:

- A keynote presentation by Robin Ince, TV presenter, comedian and scientist;
- A major worship service, led by Rev. Patrick O'Neill, minister at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead;
- More than twenty workshops on church life, personal spirituality, music and art;
- Networking and fun;

The Weekend Festival will be held in Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing (www.chatsworthworthing.co.uk). Single rooms will be £195. Shared rooms will be £145. Day delegate rate is £47 (plus £19 for dinner).

Bursaries will be available on the basis of need. Registration and the website are open now. Check out the full programme and book soon. www.fusefest.org.uk

Contact: Rev. David Usher
E-mail: davidusher@ldpa.org.uk



Events in the Chapel

Friday 2 Dec (10.00am-12.00pm) - Raga in the Chapel, please contact Susan Ann Jones for more information – Tel: 020 7794 4836

Saturday 3 Dec (7.30pm) - Classical Guitar Duo Recital 'Entente' with Steve Smith & João Loureiro music will include George Gershwin, Steve Smith, Scott Joplin, JS Bach and more. Tickets: £10 & £7 concessions

Friday 9 Dec (7.30pm) - 'Music For a Winter's Night' by University of Warwick Chamber Choir, Whitacre – Lux Aurumque, Rachmaninov – Bogoroditse Dyevo, Peacock – Venite, Gaudete! Chilcott – 12 Days of Christmas, and many more. Tickets: £10, £8 concession & £5 Student – Available from Warwick Arts Centre Box Office 024 7652 4524

Monday 12 Dec (7.30pm) - Carol Concert by 'The Camden Choir' in aid of Royal Free Charity, Friends' Fund. Tickets: £10 (adults) & £5 (children); This includes wine and mince pies after the concert

Saturday 17 Dec (7.30pm) - Handel's celebrated oratorio 'The Messiah' will be presented by Hampstead Chamber Choir with soloists, organ and orchestra, conducted by Iestyn Evans. A convivial evening with mince pies and mulled wine and, after the performance, carols for all around the Christmas tree. Tickets at door £10, £9 concessions, £5 students.



District Hosts Free Neighbourhood Dinner

Calling all volunteers

Your help is needed for a new venture being launched by the London District. In response to the summer riots which tore apart local communities, the London District, in conjunction with the Trustees of The Chalice Foundation, is hosting a series of Neighbourhood Dinners for the community in the immediate vicinity of Mansford Street Church & Mission, Bethnal Green. The first will be held on:

Saturday, 10 December 6.00 – 8.00pm
117 Mansford St, Bethnal Green E2 6LX

Occupy LSX



On Saturday 22 October I attended the inaugural Channing Lecture. Alan Ruston, the lecturer, gave verbal portraits of at least eight Unitarians from the last three centuries. All of those portrayed had in common that they stood out as individuals for what they believed by how they presented themselves. Alan raised the question, 'Who amongst the Unitarians and Free Christians of today would be remembered?'

A week later I was in central London and decided to visit the Occupy LSX albeit at St Paul's cathedral. Amongst the ordered tents, there was a small platform and the Saturday sermon was taking place. I noticed a collared vicar giving an address as I entered into a dialogue with a legal advisor, then I heard Rev. Julian Meek of Stratford Unitarians being introduced. Not wishing to be rude to the guy to my side informing me of his reasons for coming here to make good of his recently acquired LLB, I cocked my other ear to hear Julian, though without much success. I did catch up with him afterward and he informed me that he has always been a supporter of grass root movements so was happy to fill a slot in the Saturday sermon. I understand Rev. Linda Hart has also filled an earlier slot.

In the space of a week, I found a Unitarian or two who were taking part in dissent that continues to be an unfolding story. I would encourage anyone to visit the site as only in the experience will one really understand what is happening on the steps of St Paul. Gordon Jackson

Tea with Camila Batmanghelidjh

On Wednesday 16 November, Rev. Rob Gregson and George Appleby Had heard Camila, met the Fundraising and Volunteering teams and found out how important our support is to Kid;s Company over the festive period.

The astonishing Camila Batmanghelidjh started Kid's Company 15 years ago in a disused warehouse. They now have 600 staff, 11,000 volunteers and street centres all over London, coping with some 70 kids a week who 'self-refer', suffering from parents who (themselves so treated) have no grasp on how to raise – let alone love – children.

KC's mission is to intervene in this appalling cycle by providing each child with what every child must have: at least ONE significant attachment. Because UK Social Services are hopelessly under-staffed/funded, KC's work is desperately needed for those 1.5 million children abused in the UK with whom they are in touch.

ALL contributions to help KC give a good Christmas to 3,500 London children are very, very welcome - if even only to provide a child with a pair of warm socks. And of course we can do so much more! George Appleby

Shortest Day

And so the Shortest Day came
and the year died
And everywhere down the
centuries of the snow-white
world
Came people singing, dancing,
to drive the dark away.
They lighted candles in the
winter trees;
They hung their homes with
evergreen;
They burned beseeching fires
all night long
To keep the year alive.
And when the new year's
sunshine blazed awake
They shouted, revelling.
Through all the frosty ages you
can hear them
Echoing behind us – listen!
All the long echoes sing the
same delight,
This Shortest Day,
As promise wakens in the
sleeping land:
They carol, feast, give thanks,
And dearly love their friends.
And now so do we, here, now,
This year and every year.
(Susan Cooper)

December Diary

Sunday 4 December

11.00am – Morning service –
Theodiversity: Is too much Religion a
good thing?)*

Led by Rev. Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

7.00pm – Evening service -
“Theodiversity: Is too much Religion a
good thing?)*

Led by Rev. Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

Tuesday 6 December

7.00pm - ”Twelve Steps to a
Compassionate Life” in the Chapel*

Wednesday 7 December

5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*

7.00pm – Choir rehearsal in the
Chapel*

Thursday 8 December

7.00pm – Management Committee
meets*

Sunday 11 December

11.00am – Morning service – “Gifts
and Givers”)*

Led by Rev. Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

7.00pm – Evening service – “Gifts and
Givers”)*

Led by Rev. Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

Monday 12 December

7.00pm – Poetry group meets in the
chapel*

Tuesday 13 December

7.30pm – Social Action Committee
meet

Wednesday 14 December

5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*

7.00pm – Choir rehearsal in the
Chapel*

Thursday 15 December

7.30pm – Chapel Book Club*

Saturday 17 December

10.00am-1.00pm – Christmas
decorating in the Chapel*

Sunday 18 December

11.00am - Morning service – “Carols
with the Choir”)*

Led by Rev. Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

7.00pm – Evening service – “Winter
Solstice Celebration”)*

Led by members of the “Wheel of the
year” group

Tuesday 20 December

7.00pm - ”Twelve Steps to a
Compassionate Life” in the Chapel*

Saturday 24 December

5.00pm – “Family/Children’s
Christmas Eve service”)*

Led by Rev. Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

8.00pm – “Candle Light service”)*

Rev. Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

Sunday 25 December

11.00am – “A Christmas Morning
Service”

Led by Rev. Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

NO EVENING SERVICE

[* refers to further information
elsewhere in the Bulletin]



December Services, cont'd from front page

Sunday 18 December (7.00pm)

“Winter Solstice Celebration”

Drawing from Celtic and other traditions we will celebrate the darkest time of the year and the return of the Light. Led by members of our “Wheel of the Year” group

Saturday 24 December

Two Christmas Eve Services:

5.00pm - Family Service

A Service of festive Carols, Readings, and Musical Celebration for children and adults of all ages. As we expect this service to be crowded, we encourage you to come early!

8.00pm - Candlelight Service

“What Child Is This?”

A Service of Lessons and Carols

This later service is more directed at an adult congregation. Includes special Music and a Homily by Rev. Dr O’Neill. Come early and bring a friend!

Sunday 25 December (11.00 only)

A Christmas Morning Service

Led by Rev. Dr O’Neill