



Open Mind

The Bulletin of Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel

February 2013

*"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream."
- Barbara Winkler*



February Services

Sunday 3 February (11.00am)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
"Soul-Types"

A few years ago, two American researchers suggested there are four basic identifiable "Soul-Types" that characterize our spiritual personalities and which partly explain why no one approach will ever completely serve the needs of everyone on their spiritual journeys. Discerning which type of spirit you are personally will partly help you determine how you can deepen as a spiritual person. It might be fun to see if you recognize yourself or anyone you know in these four types. Come join us for worship today!

Sunday 3 February (7.00pm)

"Celebration of Imbolc"

This is one of the eight Celtic holy days of the year. It is dedicated to the goddess Brigid and celebrates mid-winter with fire, water, and ritual. Led by members of our 'Wheel of the Year' Group

Sunday 10 February (11.00am)

Guest Preacher Rev. Feargus O'Connor
"Saving the Planet: Our Greatest Challenge?"

Do Unitarians and all morally responsible people have an ethical obligation to care for our planetary home and the eco-system on which all life depends? How can we do this?

Sunday 10 February (7.00pm)

"Saving the Planet: Our Greatest Challenge?"

We will be drawing on Rev Feargus O'Connor's sermon from the morning, reflecting and sharing our thoughts. Led by Margaret Perry.

Sunday 17 February (11.00am & 7.00pm)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
"The Full Catastrophe of Living"

In Nikos Kazantzakis's novel "Zorba The Greek", Zorba's young companion turns to him at a certain point and inquires, "Zorba, have you ever been married?" to which Zorba replies....*"Of course I've been married. Wife, house, kids, everything...the full catastrophe!"* As commentator Jon Kabat-Zinn points out, "catastrophe" in this sense does not mean disaster. Rather, it means "the poignant enormity of our life experience.... The phrase reminds us that life is always in flux, that everything we think is permanent is actually only temporary and constantly changing..." Come join us for worship today as we empathize with the 'full catastrophe.'

Sunday 24 February (11.00am)

Rev Rob Gregson preaching
*"Lonely Hearts Club:
Why Spirituality Alone is Often Not Enough"*

In a splintered world too often divided by labels and labelling, why do some of us still choose to join something as "tribal" (some would even say "as analog") as a religious organization—even one as loosely organised as a Unitarian congregation? A defence of, and paean to, the "open-minded" tribe and gathered community of faith, doubt and comforted hearts that progressive religion offers to a cynical, searching age.

Sunday 24 February (7.00pm)

"One Billion Rising"

'One Billion Rising' is a global activist movement aimed at raising awareness that *'one billion women and girls on the planet will be beaten or raped during their lifetimes'* - and invites one billion women and those who love them to rise up, dance and demand an end to this violence.

We are dedicating the evening service to this event and inviting you to dance with us. Why dance? Because it is empowering! So please come along to support this event which aims to raise funds for Crossroad Women's Centre. Light Supper is included! Led by Zoe Gerrard

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, civil partnerships and other ceremonies.

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

Publisher's Statement:

"Open Mind" is a tool of outreach for 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.

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 March issue of 'Open Mind' is **Monday 16 February 18 January 2013**.

From the Editor

On Sunday 3 March 2013, our AGM will be held after the morning service, and I hope some Chapel members will be inspired to serve on the Board. The continuity of our Chapel community depends on its members - our votes count, our voices count, our presence counts.

In February 2012, I shared words - compiled by Rev Qiyamah Rahman - about the 'signs of a healthy congregation' - and I like to repeat these words in the hope that we may aspire to be a healthy congregation by focusing on:

- Providing quality Sunday service experience that bonds people to one another and to the greater whole.
- Being enriched, not imprisoned by the past, and open to possibility.
- Caring for the 'corporate soul' of the congregation as well as individuals
- Being committed to a shared vision from which it prioritizes and uses its energies and resources.
- Being committed to an effective process of welcoming and integrating newcomers to the congregation.
- Demonstrating healthy leadership: a positive dynamic between minister and congregants, a Board with a clear sense of vision and values as it cares for the congregation and a staff with a high level of trust and motivation.
- Being committed to growth, realizing that growth brings change.
- Being able to face and deal constructively with conflict.
- Placing a high priority on the application of faith and values to daily life.
- Being committed to thinking globally while acting locally.

I believe a Chapel filled with energy and commitment, and running smoothly, can enhance our community and help it to grow and flourish.

Ingrid Tavkar

*Stand by this faith.
Work for it and sacrifice for it.
There is nothing in all the world
so important
as to be loyal to this faith
which has place before us
the loftiest ideals.*

Olympia Brown



PO'Nderings

From our Minister
Rev Patrick T. O'Neill

How You Can Help Our Chapel

As our Annual General Meeting approaches on Sunday 3 March, I reflect that it has been quite a good year for our chapel, in many ways. We've had some wonderful celebratory events marking the 150th Anniversary of our Sanctuary building, including a glorious original Choir concert, a Victorian evening soiree, and a fine Anniversary Sunday welcoming guests from other London-area Unitarian congregations. Our hard-working Management Board has done very well at managing our stretched finances, paying off a new roof for the Hall and ongoing structural repairs to our flooded Cottages building, commissioning a committee to design a much improved website, hiring a new Children's Programme Coordinator, seeing us through the process of hiring a new Organist/Music Director, enlivening a new, active Membership Group. Sunday worship has been well attended with our Worship Group supporting the minister in bringing a varied and interesting schedule of Sunday services year-round, and this week we begin Questing Groups, a new adult religious education program led by the minister. And, as supported by the overwhelming vote of the congregation, our chapel is now duly licensed to perform same-sex Civil Partnerships. Our Social Action Group under Leighton Cole's able leadership again provided winter evening homeless shelter weekends. All in all, a good year for our chapel. We have reason to be proud.

When members ask me what they personally can do to help our chapel achieve its goals and live out its values, here is what I tell them in three simple words:

Time, Talent, and Treasure.

1) **You can give of your Time.** We are delighted if you have made regular attendance at Sunday worship a habit for yourself and your household. Worship is our primary communal gathering for expressing what is most dear and essential to our Unitarian way of the spirit. But more, we are dependent on all our members contributing their time to the wider activities that empower this place. We need good people on our Board of Trustees, our Worship Group, our Membership Group, our Communications Committee, our Newsletter team, our Social Action Group, our Homeless Shelter team. We have at least five or six openings to fill on the Board at this coming AGM on 3 March. Can you give us some of your time this year?

2) **You can give of your Talent.** Do you have talents or expertise that can help us improve our management, communications, music, social action programs, children's programs, worship programming, aesthetics, fundraising, caring and community outreach? Can you lend us some of your talent this year?

3) **You can give of your Treasure.** At our SGM this autumn we voted as a congregation to ask all of our members to give by Standing Order to the Chapel. Only a few faithfuls have so far done so. Please, the financial health of our Chapel is at a point where we need your support more than ever. Can we ask you to consider your ability to support the Chapel with some of your Treasure this year?

I'm always happy to discuss with any of you how you might become better connected with the work of our Chapel community. My email is revponeill@aol.com. My home phone is 020-7435-3506. See you in Chapel! ..po'n

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 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.

February Activities and Meetings

QUESTING GROUPS – a new Religious Education programme for adults, led by our Minister Rev Patrick O'Neill. Meeting at alternative Thursday evenings – Thursday 7 February and Thursday 21 February at 7.00pm, in the Chapel.

12 February - Social Action Committee meets

14 February - Management Board meets at 7.00pm in the cottage basement science room at the Chapel. Members of the Chapel are welcome to attend but contact one of the co-Chairs, James Chiriyankandath or Jane Crispin, ahead of time as a courtesy.

22 February - The Book Group will meet at 7.30pm at the Magdala at 2a South Hill Park in Hampstead. Please note that this is a change from our usual Thursday meeting night. We will be discussing 'Middlesex' by the contemporary American novelist, Jeffrey Eugenides. For further information, please contact Bill Ellington at ellingtonbill@aol.com

24 February - Potluck Lunch in the Hall at 12.30pm (after the morning service). This is an informal, friendly occasions - all are welcome and the request is to bring some food to share, maybe homemade or cheese/fruit/salad. We look forward to seeing you there.

19 February - the Chapel Poetry Group will meet at 7.00pm. For more information contact George Appleby (Tel: 020 7424 9733 email: gappleby@talktalk.net)

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY



Questing Groups

A New Religious Education Programme for adults
Led by our Minister, Rev Patrick O'Neill

Began on Thursday 24 January (7.00pm). Meeting at alternate Thursday evenings -
next meetings Thursday 7 and Thursday 21 February (7.00pm) in the Chapel.
Free and open to all, call the Chapel office to pre-register 020-7433-3267

Unitarianism sees the human spirit as a pilgrim spirit, a soul in motion. A religious spirit is a spirit in search of a way to live that is authentic and true to itself, called to some serious engagement with the world. It is not about standing still or status quo. Spiritual living is about movement. It's about journey. A religious spirit is by nature a questing spirit.

For most of us, that questing takes the form of primary questions: questions of meaning and purpose; questions sacred and secular; questions of destiny and destination; questions of how and why and whence and whither we are to live and die.

What time is it in your life? Where are you this day on your journey? What has changed for you and about you since last we met? How is it with your spirit these days? How is it with your love these days? What are you working on changing for yourself? What do you still dream of doing or becoming in the time that life gives you? Who do you most appreciate in your life today? And when did you last tell them so? What would it mean for you to become more active in your spiritual life?

“Questing Groups” is a programme designed around small groups of six or seven people exploring questions of meaning, value, and purpose. In each session participants are invited to reflect on a short theme piece introducing a “focus question” i.e. What is God? What is Death? What does it mean to be human? What are our obligations in life? What do we wish to accomplish with our lives? What do you hold to be “Sacred”?

The aim is not to debate these questions, but rather to share from our personal experience what we understand, what we intuit, what we believe, and to discover what we can learn from each other's experience.

Do something good for yourself – come join us, and bring a friend!

*"I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us
with sense, reason and intellect has intended us to forgo their use"*

– Galileo Galilei



STOP PRESS:

Members will be pleased to know that Paul ver Bruggen, who has been handling the sale of the Willoughby Road site, has confirmed that the sale was completed on Friday 25 January 2013.

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY



FINAL COLD WEATHER SHELTER

The last time our guests stayed overnight in the Hall was a memorable one. Susan Lawrence made a delicious ham roast. The guests were just delighted and were still talking about how tasty the dinner was while they ate breakfast. We had a good number of volunteers and everyone settled down for an evening of chat before clearing up. Jenny Noe-Nordberg took the leftover roast home and made sandwiches. She came back at 8am with ham sandwiches, cheese sandwiches for the vegetarians, lots of fruit and cereal bars that the guests could take away for lunch. The guests were really thrilled.

In the morning we had three families and a total of 5 kids to help with breakfast. Everyone was a great help and there was a lovely atmosphere.

Many of the guests who started with us on 2 November have now been found housing (with others taking their place). This is a very exciting project, and the Social Action Committee would like to thank all those who volunteered over our season. You have helped to change people's lives. **Social Action Committee**

VALUES IN ACTION



Do you feel passionate about a cause, project or issue that demonstrates your Unitarian values?
Are you involved in working, volunteering or campaigning for change and want to tell your chapel friends about it?

The Social Action Committee is delighted to invite you to do so: Rev O'Neill has offered a three-minute slot in which members of the congregation may share news of **VALUES IN ACTION** during morning service on the fourth Sunday in the month.

If you would like to take part, please send details of what you would like to talk about to Social Action Committee member, Claire Julian [claire.marley@mac.com] so that the Committee can co-ordinate these brief contributions to our morning services. Thank you.

Claire Julian (On behalf of Social Action Committee)



SECOND-HAND BOOKSALE

**DO YOU HAVE GOOD QUALITY SECOND-HAND BOOKS
TO DONATE FOR THE RHUC BOOK SALE?**

**PLEASE BRING TO THE CHAPEL
AS SOON AS YOU CAN!**

The sale is on **SATURDAY 11 May 2013**

All proceed will be donated to charity projects.

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

Annual General Meeting

Sunday 3 March 2013
12.30pm



Make a note in your diary now!

The AGM is the time to review the past year, discuss the report and accounts, hear from the Chapel groups and committees and appoint members to the 2012/13 Board. Co-Chairs, James Chiryankandath (email: James_chiryankandath@hotmail.co.uk) and Jane Crispin (email: jane.crispin@blueyonder.co.uk) would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in joining the Board.

The Agenda for the AGM is as follows:

1. Devotional
2. Welcome and introduction to the meeting
3. Establish a Quorum for AGM
4. Approval of minutes of February 2012 AGM and September 2012 SGM
5. Minister's report
6. Questions from members to the Board and Activity Leaders on annual reports
7. Presentation of annual report and financial accounts and approval by Chapel members
8. Reports on 2013-14 plans to implement strategy for growth endorsed at September 2012 SGM
9. Election of Board members
10. Election of Elders
11. Endorsement of delegates to the AGM of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
12. Appointment of a representative to the London District & South Eastern Provincial Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches Incorporated ("LDPA")
13. Close of meeting

There will be a light lunch of soup, bread and cheese provided in the chapel between the end of Sunday service and the beginning of the AGM. Childcare will be available.

The continuity of the Chapel depends on its members. Your vote counts, your voice counts, your presence counts.

"Being a Trustee"

At the Chapel AGM on Sunday 3 March we will elect new members to our Board to replace those standing down and join the continuing members. After serving for over three years (as co-chair for the past year), I'll be among those leaving the Board and wanted to share with you my experience and hopes for the future.

I'll begin with what might seem a pedantic point – why I prefer the term 'trustee' to member of the management committee. After all the term 'trustee' does not occur in our Articles of Association or Standing Orders, which refer to the 'Board of Directors' or, secondarily, to the management committee. I think the word 'trustee', with its derivation from 'trust' - "a firm belief in the reliability or truth or strength of a person or thing" and "the resulting obligation or responsibility" (OED) - conveys much better our role in a moral or religious community. To serve on the Board of the chapel entails a responsibility to the community that goes far beyond responsible business management. It should be guided by a spiritual and ethical sensibility based on shared values and a corporate sense of moral and social responsibility for the well being and development of the chapel. This is what ought to distinguish our Board and it is why I joined it in 2009.

I found that the most important, challenging and rewarding aspect of being on the board dealing with the people with whom you share the task of maintaining and building up the life of our chapel community. It has been a privilege to get to know them better as we worked together on both the day-to-day and longer-term issues that we faced. It was especially encouraging to see how, unlike in many religious communities, no one did what they did owing to a sense of imperious divine obligation or for eternal reward but because each in their distinctively individual ways derived satisfaction from their service. Each one made a difference and, collectively, it was a good one. If you think you can help make a good difference, please take the opportunity of becoming a trustee on 3rd March.

(If you would like to know more about being a Trustee please contact either of the Co-Chairs of the Board: James Chiryankandath (james_chiryankandath@hotmail.co.uk) or Jane Crispin (jane.crispin@blueyonder.co.uk).)

James Chiryankandath

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 James Chiriyankandath or Jane Crispin (co-Chairs) in advance. The next meeting will be on Thursday 14 February 2013 at 7.00pm in the Chapel (in the Cottage basement Science room).

Meeting held on Thursday 10 January 2012 James Chiriyankandath in the chair

Minister's Report: Rev O'Neill told the Board that the Christmas Eve service had gone very well, with a capacity attendance. He thanked all those who had been involved. The Carol Service (led by the Choir) had drawn in many people. The Flower Group and helpers had decorated the Chapel so it looked beautiful over the whole Christmas season. The Minister's report, which had been circulated, detailed the meetings he had attended and noted that there was often a need for pastoral counselling in December.

The Minister reminded the Board that his 'Questing Groups' programme would begin 24 January (see p.4). He was encouraging members to go to the FUSE conference in Worthing 8-10 February, which he plans to attend.

Gordon Jackson, leader of the Worship Group, had written to the Board, giving details of the Worship Leaders who would be taking services on Sundays when the Minister would be absent. The Worship Assistant rota had been agreed up to the end of March.

Resignation of WG Chair: Gordon announced that he would be standing down as Chair of the Group. Speaking of the 'time, energy, vision and commitment' the Worship Assistants contribute, he said he was, 'totally convinced the Chapel would not function as effectively' without them. The Board expressed its whole-hearted appreciation of the work Gordon has done, as leader of the Group, for the morning and the evening services.

WG representation on the Board: The WG has, every year since its inception in 2009, been represented on the Board. The Board strongly recommended that this should always be the case (James Chiriyankandath has been a member of both bodies this year).

Stewards: Christopher Mason had circulated the Board with his proposals regarding stewarding arrangements, and planned to pass these on to Jim and Britta Burtles who have kindly agreed to take on the co-ordination of the stewards. The Board thanked Christopher for his observations and proposals, and for the work he has done for Stewarding.

Property Sale Group: Paul ver Bruggen had informed the Board that the completion of the sale of the Willoughby Road site was expected by the end of January.

Administrator's Report: Sharron Conduit's report had been circulated. Damp: The cast iron guttering had been replaced and the wet wall of the Chapel would be replastered when it had dried out. Work on the basement of Cottage 3 was proceeding. It had been agreed that the Academy School would plan the refurbished kitchen, and Sharron and Jane Crispin would work on the design of the office/meeting room area. The cost of the extensive work that had been necessary had so far been borne by the Chapel but the Academy School had undertaken to shoulder much of the expense.

Heating: It was agreed a defunct gas heater in the Hall should be replaced. Sharron was asked to look into having a gas heater installed in the Committee room.

Caretaker: The Board agreed that the acting caretaker, Hugh Leaver's temporary contract should be extended for a further three months. The permanent post would be advertised during that period.

Chair's Report (including AGM plans): James Chiriyankandath had circulated to the Board the draft formal notice of the AGM, a draft Agenda, and a list of reports to be presented at the AGM. It was agreed a soup, bread and cheese lunch should be offered, and child-care provided.

Hall fund-raising: Stella Fakiyesi would give a report on the option of increasing the income from our property by refurbishing the Hall up to a standard when it could be used as a venue. She was aware of the various issues which had to be considered. She also noted that only with a good-sized group of volunteers could progress on fund-raising be achieved. She hoped the 'Your Chapel in 2013' meeting would bring in offers of help.

Nominations for the Board: Members who were interested in supporting the Chapel by being on the Board should be encouraged to stand. There were an unusual number of vacancies this year. It was hoped that the groups and committees of the Chapel would put forward candidates, so Chapel activities were represented on the Board.

'Your Chapel in 2013': This meeting, to be held after the service on 12 January, would discuss how the recommendations of the Long Term Finance Group (at the SGM in September) for putting the Chapel on a sound, long term footing, could be implemented. John Lawrence would open the meeting with a recap of the objectives, which would be discussed by breakout groups, and the Minister would address members. Child care, and some refreshment would be provided.

Treasurer's Report: Jane Crispin reported on the pressure on cash flow created by the works on the Cottage 3 basement. She noted that the new Finance Group was drawing up a constitution which would be presented to the Board at the February meeting.

Elders' Report: George Appleby, the representative of the Elders at the meeting, reported that the Elders planned to meet the Minister to review their collective role. George was asked by the Board to discuss with the Elders a suggestion made by the Minister, that the Chapel should have a Nominating Committee. At the forthcoming AGM, Shirley Malin will, with regret, stand down, for health considerations.

Communications Team: Ingrid Tavkar, leader of the Communications Team had circulated the quarterly report. Stella Fakiyesi reported to the meeting that she was working with Luc Hudson on the logo and branding, taking into account all the feedback noted, She would pass the final designs onto James Barry, to be used on the website. The next step would be to review the content (text and images) of the website. The Board thanked Ingrid and Stella and the Comms Team for their work.

Membership: Kate Buchanan, Chair of the Membership Group, had submitted a full report.

The Membership Group had been busy. A pathway to membership for prospective members, with two classes led by the Minister had been agreed, and there would be a Membership service on 21st April. 'Membership' would be highlighted in the revised website. The Group were concerned that members had not been reminded to set up payment for membership by standing order (as agreed at the February 2012 SGM). It was agreed the new arrangement would be emphasised in the Treasurer's report to the AGM. The Board thanked Kate for the report and the Group for all their work.

OUR CHAPEL IN 2013

A meeting was held after Chapel on Sunday 13 January to explore ways of implementing the resolutions agreed at the SGM of 19 September 2012. John Lawrence, Chair of the Finance Group, reminded the meeting it had been agreed that to ensure a sound financial footing for the Chapel, ways should be explored to increase membership, increase contributions from members and visitors and increase revenue from events and ceremonies. Three break out groups discussed these aims and reported as follows:

Membership Contributions

Jane Crispin's group was concerned with invigorating membership contributions. As our minister has described in his PO'Nderings (p3) these can take the form of time, talent, and treasure .

Currently, the fixed charged for family membership of this Chapel stands at £150 pa, individual members pay £100. If an individual or a family cannot pay their membership, they are welcome to ask for dispensation from the minister. It was agreed at the SGM in September, that membership is due from 1st October, and should be paid by standing order on a monthly or quarterly or yearly basis as the member chooses. This amount raised by membership fees does not begin to cover the cost of running the Chapel so we encourage everyone to consider giving more, while bearing in mind that this is an inclusive community and we would not wish to exclude anyone who cannot pay. We know our members have a willing attitude towards giving. Members might, when deciding on their standing order commitment, take into account the amount they give for membership along with their contribution to the weekly plate collection. As a guideline, we encourage all members to give 1% of their income. (On an average salary of £30,000/year, this would be £300/year.) Some may be able to give more.

We are interested in finding ways to encourage members to ensure they are up-to-date in their payments and their financial giving over the year is covered by standing order, and to reward generosity. Some of the ideas we had for this were:

Step one: Member can put a piece of paper into the collection plate which says, 'I give by standing order'.

Step two: Weekly reminders by the minister and a notice in 'Open Mind' that joining the Chapel is welcomed and that membership is an important part of Chapel life, with details about payment /the offertory etc

Step three: Reconsider the collection plate. If we wish to continue the practice of an offertory, it can be (in whole or part) donated to a charity and visitors invited to put donations (in a gift aid envelope) into a well-marked box at the back of the church.

Step four: Recognise those who give (time talent or treasure) beyond what is required e.g. a Founder's day dinner.

Step five: 'Stand up and be counted Sunday' where people privately write what they intend to give for the year on a piece of paper dropped into a box as a way of making a non-binding commitment to the Chapel for the year.

'Growing Membership'

Kate Buchanan's large group discussing how to increase the number of members was brimming with ideas! The Membership Group is already developing some of these ideas, so it was great to see the group were enthusiastic by similar initiatives. All the extra ideas have now been circulated to the discussion group so that people can sign up to the activities they think are most important.

The group agreed that the process of attracting and encouraging members begins beyond the chapel and runs all the way through to supporting people once they have become members:

Some ideas can be immediately implemented – such as having an extra person to chat to newcomers after the service and greater use of social media. Others are more likely to be medium or long-term goals, e.g. the return of the monthly information desk about chapel activities, and the introduction of circle suppers for new members.

If anyone is interested in helping with the smaller changes that this wider discussion group are involved with, please contact Kate Buchanan: kateboo@gmail.com

'Weddings and Events'

Stella Fakiyesi led the 'Weddings and Events' group with seven participants willing to help in some way. From their discussion she notes:

There is no intention of letting go of tenants or groups that currently use the hall. The proposed weddings and events usage would be limited to summer holidays and other school breaks when the Hall is not in use.

Four things that were identified are:

1. The Hall desperately needs refurbishment.
2. Funds need to be raised for refurbishment project.
3. A viable business plan needs to be created and investment justified.
4. Wedding reception would be the way to go, as it would enhance a service we already provide, create revenue, more presence in the community and possibly grow membership.

Issues that may arise:

- Noise.
- Complaints from neighbours.
- Loud and intoxicated patrons
- Rubbish left behind.
- Amount of cost that will be needed to renovate is high.

Some ideas to avoid these issues:

- Apply for a venue licence.
- Hire a part-time events planner who will take bookings and will be present during all events.
- Add cleaning costs into venue hire fee.
- Make Hall an acoustic only venue. Which might actually be quite nice.
- Soundproof hall.

Our Chapel Community

We celebrate our Chapel

Walls and pillars are soaked with years of prayers and petitions,
this place embraces us, nurtures our wounds –
We are re-arranged, sorted through, made whole.
We honour our ancestors who prayed and worshipped
in this sacred space,
who struggled with their lives,
laid bare their fractured hearts.
Like us they found a sense of peace in this place
as it nurtured and nourished their soul's deep needs.

Standing here in the centre
I marvel at translucent patterns of gold,
green, azure and amber flooding the Chapel floor.
Reflections from windows of stained glass
that illuminate and protect this sacred space –
the prodigal son, good Samaritan, simplicity and purity.
Stories of sorrow, frailty, compassion and healing –
stories that mirror our own wounded lives.

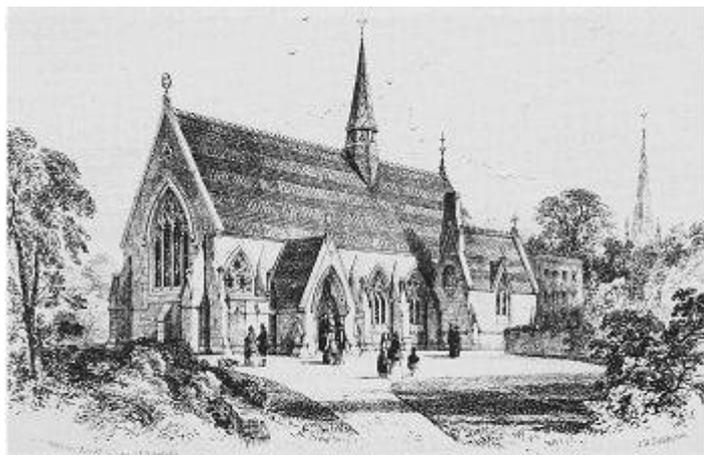
They challenge us,
Give us hope, renewed spirit...

I breathe deeply
inhale these colours.
Like notes in a scale that explore new tunes of harmony
my brain looks at itself and new life decisions are made,
different melodies composed.

Our choir brings renewed life,
Bach, Mozart, Rossini, Puccini –
Music which spirals, reaches for the rafters..
I feel tingles in my spine as it echoes round the walls.
Each week we meet, practise our parts,
struggle with the notes, sing with our hearts.
Like chords of harmony we support each other,
sing as one unit to celebrate our Chapel.

With gratitude I bow my head
And breathe in the live force of this sacred space..

(Rosalind Beeton 2012)



Other events in the Chapel

Saturday 9 February (7.30pm) -
Hampstead Chamber Players - programme to include Piano Quintet in f minor (Brahms) and music by Mozart, Bach, Vivaldi and Telemann.
Tickets: Adult £10 Children/Seniors £5

Saturday 16 February (7.30pm) - Concert
by Santiago Mantas (no further details at this moment in time)

Saturday 23 February (10.30am to 4.30pm) - 'Ikebana' Japanese floral art exhibition. Free Admission

Saturday 23 February (7.30pm) - Recital in Chapel (please contact Christopher Mason for further details)

Helping Hands

Worship Assistants

3 February	Leighton Cole
10 February	Julia Reid
17 February	Zoe Gerrard
24 February	Tony Garrick

Stewards

3 February	Will Hopper & Tanya Morrison
10 February	Ken Levy & Jane Crispin
17 February	Jim & Britta Burtles
24 February	Sally Somerville & Janna Williams



OUR LARGER UNITARIAN MOVEMENT



The staff and volunteers at SimpleGifts: Unitarian Centre for Social Action wish a very 'Happy New Year' to our supporters, current and potential, within the LDPA. SimpleGifts is a year-old social action initiative created, run and funded by UK Unitarians and Free Christians. Our office is located at the historic Mansford St. Chapel and Mission in East London. Every Tuesday afternoon between 3-5:30 we open the SimpleGifts Café--part literacy/skill development programme and part community centre. We offer a free, nutritious tea, homework help, interesting crafts and high-energy games for 30-40 local primary school children and their carers.

We are actively seeking Unitarians and our friends from across greater London to come see what we are about and, hopefully, to make a little time each week or month to volunteer. We need help with set up, making and serving tea, working one-on-one in the 'Homework Help' corner, lending a hand at the Craft Table—there are many ways to participate. We encourage visitors and can easily find a place for all talents and abilities.

As a new charity we eagerly seek and need your donation to help keep this initiative going. As a recipient of Bowland Trust funds, every £1 you donate is DOUBLED—so PLEASE consider adding us to the list of charities you believe in and support.

Looking ahead we are already organizing future events with the London District Unitarian Youth Group and their advisor, Rev. John Harley (our first youth dinner at Mansford St. is scheduled for Friday Jan. 18--if you know a youth who might be interested please put him/her in contact with John or one of us), investigating a table tennis league based at the chapel for youth, adults and elders, starting an emergency food bank and developing dynamic new social action resources for Unitarian congregations. There is a LOT on the table. So much we Unitarians can do—and we are excited to do it.

To learn more about SimpleGifts: Unitarian Centre for Social Action and how you and your chapel might get involved please visit our website: www.simplegiftsucsa.org.uk. You are also welcome to contact us directly: Rev. Rob Gregson, Programme Director (07411280667 or rob@simplegiftsucsa.org.uk) or Ann Howell, Programme Coordinator (07400873541 or ann@simplegiftsucsa.org.uk).

Please remember: SimpleGifts is run and funded by Unitarians and inspired by our shared liberal religious values. We hope you will consider supporting us!



Leighton Cole serving some teen guests

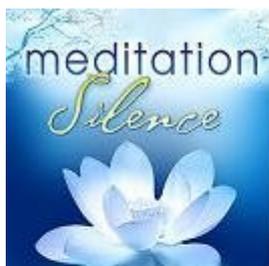
*“This is the mission of our faith:
To teach the fragile art of hospitality;
To revere both the critical mind and the
generous heart;
To prove that diversity need not mean
divisiveness;
And to witness to all
That we must hold the whole world in our
hands.”*

William F Schulz



Our Larger Unitarian Movement

MEDITATION WORKSHOP



Learn Meditation

Golders Green Unitarians host the Meditation Fellowship

Saturday 23 February 2013 (2.00pm-4.30pm)

Doors open from 1.30pm

You are warmly invited to come, bring your neighbours, friends, and family.

Costs: £10 / tea and light refreshments

For more information please contact Richard Bober
richiebober@yahoo.co.uk



National Youth Programme

1-3 March – Junior Weekend

Calling all 7 – 11 year olds!

Why not come along to our next fun filled junior weekend? We always love to see new faces, as well as those who've been before. Over the weekend you'll meet lots of new friendly people, play games, make craft activities and all sorts of other things.

15-17 March – Inter Weekend (11-14 year olds)

15-17 March - Senior Weekend (14-17 year olds)

Contact: John Harley - Tel: 07985 900 935

Venue: The Nightingale Centre
Great Hucklow, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 8RH
Tel: 01298 871218;

www.thenightingalecentre.org.uk

Faith, Fun and Future - at the 2013 Annual Meetings

At the Jubilee Campus, Nottingham University

Thursday 11th to Sunday 14th April 2013.

Every year, around Easter time, the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (GA) holds its Annual Meetings to which delegates from congregations, fellowships, district associations and affiliated societies are invited, along with individual Unitarians. These meetings are commonly known as "The G.A." within Unitarian circles.

Basically, it's a mixture of FAITH, FUN and FUTURE – an opportunity to influence decisions on the future of our Unitarian movement, and a chance to get together with lots of Unitarians to worship and sing together, exchange views, share delicious meals, learn something new, be inspired by quality lectures from guest speakers and fellow Unitarians, and enjoy being immersed in a convivial atmosphere.

For more information contact: Andrew Mason – Tel: 020 7240 2384

Come along and take part in the decisions on our Unitarian future!

**BE INSPIRED!
BE MOTIVATED!
BE THERE!**

FEBRUARY DIARY

(* = further details elsewhere in Bulletin)

Sunday 3 February

11.00am – Morning service -
"Soul-Types"*

Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill

7.00pm – Evening service -
"Celebration of Imbolc"*

Led by members of the "Wheel of the Year" group.

Wednesday 6 February

5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*

7.30pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel*

Thursday 7 February

7.00pm – 'Questing Groups' meet in the Chapel*

Sunday 10 February

11.00am – Morning service – "Saving the Planet: Our Greatest Challenge?"*
Led by Rev Feargus O'Connor

7.00pm – Evening service - "Saving the Planet: Our Greatest Challenge?"*
Led by Margaret Perry

Tuesday 12 February

7.30pm – Social Action Committee meets

Wednesday 13 February

5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*

7.30pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel*

Thursday 14 February

7.00pm – Management Committee meets*

Sunday 17 February

11.00am - Morning service – "The Full Catastrophe of Living" *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill

7.00pm – Evening service - "The Full Catastrophe of Living" *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill

Tuesday 19 February

7.00pm – Poetry group meets*

Thursday 21 February

7.00pm – 'Questing Groups' meet in the Chapel*

Friday 22 February

7.30pm – Book Group meets*

Sunday 24 February

11.00am - Morning service – "Lonely Hearts Club: Why Spirituality Alone is Often Not Enough" *
Led by Rev Rob Gregson

7.00pm – Evening service – "One Billion Rising" *
Led by Zoe Gerrard (Chapel member)

Wednesday 27 February

5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*

7.30pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel*

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Registered Charity 1131346

Registered Co. No. 05992717

*"Our religion is a spiritual journey and each one of us is an explorer.
Reason is our map and conscience is our compass.
Loving kindness is our way in the world"*