



Open Mind

The Bulletin of Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel

November 2012

*“Love is the doctrine of this church,
The quest of truth is its sacrament,
And service is its prayer.
To dwell together in peace,
To seek knowledge in freedom,
To serve humanity in harmony with the earth,
Thus do we covenant together”*



November Services

Sunday 4 November (11.00am & 7.00pm)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching

“Rule No. 1: Integrity”

Stephen Carter writes, "Integrity is that stuff we always say we want more of.... We want our political representatives to have it, and political challengers always insist that their opponents lack it. We want it in our spouses, our children, our friends. We want (integrity) in our schools, and our houses of worship. And in our corporations and the products they manufacture.... Everybody agrees that the nation needs more of it.... We hardly stop to explain exactly what we mean by it - or how we know it is even a good thing, or why everybody needs to have the same amount of it." Come join us for worship this Sunday!

Sunday 11 November (11.00 & 7.00pm)

Remembrance Sunday

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching

“Amazing Stuff: A Sermon on Grace”

An old saying has it that, “the winds of grace blow constantly around us; we have only to lift our sails.” Let’s talk about “Grace” this morning: what it is, what it does, where it comes from, who possesses it, who loses it, when and why. Why not bring a friend and join us for worship today!

Sunday 18 November (11.00am)

Rev Rob Gregson preaching

“Simple gifts” at the heart of our shared faith”

Broadminded in matters of belief and independent in worship and church governance--such are often considered the basic tenets of Unitarianism. Heady stuff but largely empty, soulless phrases without the balancing influence of loving deeds and an inward eye.

Sunday 18 November (7.00pm)

“Simple gifts” at the heart of our shared faith”

We will be drawing on Rev Rob Gregson’s sermon from the morning, reflecting on it and sharing our thoughts. Led by Gordon Jackson.

Sunday 25 November (11.00 & 7.00pm)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching

“Whistling In The Dark: On Courage”

Psychologist Rollo May wrote that courage is not a virtue or value among other personal values like love or fidelity. Rather, says May, "courage is the foundation that underlies and gives reality to all other virtues and values. Without courage our love pales into mere dependency. Without courage our fidelity becomes conformism." Dr. O'Neill’s sermon today examines three types of courage we all need in this life: physical, moral, and social courage. Come join us!

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**

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

From the Editor

*"Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received.
Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling.
Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse".
(-Henry Van Dyke)*

Gratitude means thankfulness, counting our blessings, noticing simple pleasures, and acknowledging everything that we receive.

As I stated before, *"We have cause to be grateful for many things in our Chapel community – and must give thanks to everyone who offers 'helping hands' when called upon"*.

We say especial "Thank You" to:

- Claire Julian, who liaised with our minister and produced a press release on the vote 'to be licensed to perform civil partnership ceremonies'. Claire sent the release to the Ham and High, Camden New Journal, The Inquirer, LDPA Pulse, with and to Derek McAuley, chief officer of the GA. This communications success really brought the Chapel to the attention of the wider community as well as large numbers of Unitarians.

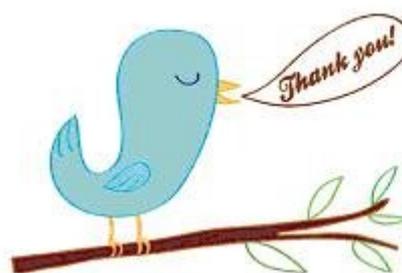
- Erich Wagner, who introduced the GA policy to the congregation, when he took a service earlier in the year, brought it to the attention of the Board and then continued to move the matter forward.

- all those individuals (around forty people) who offered their helping hands in one way or another to ensure a wonderful 150th Anniversary Service Celebration including, of course, all the members and friends who attended the service.

- Margaret Perry, who organised the 'Victorian Soiree' - a special occasion, full of relevance to the 150th anniversary, and, again, like the service, involving lots of people of talent and goodwill.

May we continue to count our blessings and make showing our gratitude a part of our daily lives by offering our 'helping hands' to continue to grow and flourish as a liberal community. Let us show our expression of 'gratitude' and say 'thank you'. - **Ingrid Tavkar**

"If the only prayer you ever say in your life is 'thank you' it will be enough". (Meister Eckhart)



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 December issue of 'Open Mind' is **Wednesday 21 November 2012**.



PO'Nderings

From our Minister
Rev Patrick T. O'Neill

Since we released news of our Congregational vote to apply for a licence to hold same-sex Civil Partnership ceremonies here at our Chapel, it has been rather amazing to see how the public press has run with the story. There are lessons to be learned here about publicity and how it all happens.

Let me be clear: we've submitted our application for the licence to Camden Council. When the Council will get around to approving it depends entirely on the bureaucratic process. We hope it will be soon. We expect it will be approved. When it is, we will welcome same-sex couples who wish to have their partnerships registered and blessed on church grounds. But in the meantime the story is out there, and it is quite interesting to see how the mixed media handles it and which angles of the story get emphasized by different reports.

The original story in the 'Ham & High' emphasized that Rosslyn Hill Chapel was the first in London to apply for such a licence. Not exactly correct: the Quakers also applied. (Their first same-sex civil partnership took place in September.) The 'Evening Standard' picked up the story next, changing the wording ever-so-slightly with the headline, "Church applies to be first in London to hold gay 'weddings.'" That word "weddings" in quotation marks is the provocative word. The law is clear that "civil partnerships" and "marriages" are not the same. But clearly the 'Evening Standard' story was bigger news across London, with a much larger readership.

The 'Camden New Journal' was next to call me for an interview. Their headline read, "Church where gay couples may soon walk down aisle." Their article reported, "after all, the Unitarians have always been renegades." BBC radio was next. I was invited on the BBC London "Inspirit" Sunday morning talk show to be interviewed by Jumoke Fashola. Turned out to be about a three-minute segment, but it was fine, no pressing questions at all, just a short discussion. But lots of folks tune in around London, and the story spreads.

I quoted one national statistic that the Gay and Lesbian population may number as high as 10-15%. Other internet commentators take issue with this statistic, holding up a fairly recent BBC census figure that fewer than 5% of the population actually self-define as being Gay or Lesbian or Bi-sexual. Of course, this seems to disregard any personal reluctance to "self-define" in societies where discrimination against the LGBT community is common. Or where do we suppose the term "in the closet" comes from? I suggest that there is no reliable accurate count of how many LGBT folks are out there. But, does that really matter? Discrimination and the withholding of equal rights for all are still the issues, are they not?

Other media continue to show interest in our story, and I suspect when we actually hold our first civil partnership ceremony in our chapel there will be another burst of media coverage, a French television crew has already asked if they can film the ceremony if the couple is willing.

I'll say again that I am proud of our congregation for taking this stand. Whether we are the first or the tenth or the twentieth church in London to host civil partnerships, the principle on which we stand remains the right one in my opinion.
See you in church!po'n

Chapel Activities



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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.

November Activities and Meetings

8 Novemberr - **Management Committee** 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.

13 Novemberr - **Social Action Committee** meets

19 November - If you like to read and /or write poetry, the **Chapel Poetry Group** will meet at 7.00pm. For more information contact George Appleby (Tel: 020 7424 9733 email: gappleby@talktalk.net)

22 November - **The Book Group** will meet at 7.30pm at the Magdala at 2a South Hill Park in Hampstead, to read 'The Double Helix: The Discovery of the Structure of DNA' by James Watson. For further information contact: Bill Ellington (Tel: 020 7354 0397, email: Ellingtonbill@aol.com)

25 November - **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.

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY



150th Anniversary - A Year of Celebration

In 1862 the first service was held in Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel's new building. Rev Thomas Sadler, who was minister for 45 years, conducted it.



Wednesday 7 November (pm) – Joint concert by Rosslyn Hill Chapel Choir and Channing School Chamber Choir performing 'Jubilate Deo', composed by James Drew-Edwards to mark the 150th anniversary.

Jubilate Deo

A new Jazz composition for choir and orchestra by
James Drew-Edwards
In celebration of the

150th Anniversary of Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel

Celestial Cellos

Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel Choir
Channing School Choir
Organist and Jazz Musicians

Wednesday November 7th at 7:00 pm

Admission £15/£10 conces,

or advance booking from admin@rosslynhillchapel.com

Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, Rosslyn Hill, London, NW3. (set back from
the road between Willoughby Road and Downshire Hill)

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY



An Introduction to Unitarianism for Newcomers

“Our Unitarian Way”

An introduction to Unitarian principles and practice
A discussion group for newcomers and others wishing to add to their Unitarian understanding

Led by our Minister Rev Patrick O’Neill

Sunday 25 November 12.30 to 2.00pm

Cold Weather Shelter



WHAT IT’S ALL ABOUT

For the fifth year, we are working with six other churches in Camden, to run a Cold Weather Shelter for up to fifteen homeless people. Our guests will come to the Chapel Hall for dinner, conversation, entertainment, a safe place to sleep, and breakfast.

This year we have committed to Friday nights and Saturday mornings from 2 November to 11 January (excl. Christmas week).

The scheme is run by the Community of Camden Churches Cold Weather Shelter (C4WS), which supports the guests to find a permanent home, offers welfare advice, and also supports our chapel’s efforts. Last year 85 guests visited the C4W Shelters.

Please visit the C4SW website: <http://www.coldweathershelter.org>

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can contribute in lots of ways. Could you:

Help to supervise/co-ordinate the volunteer teams some evenings?

Donate or raise money for the food (each evening costs about £100 feeding 25 guests and volunteers per evening and morning)?

Cook and bring supper - savoury and sweet dishes to feed 25 people?

Cook and serve breakfast on Saturday morning? Food will be provided.

This is a small thing for us volunteers - But it could change our guests’ lives...

So when the chill winds start to blow and you are cosy and warm in your home, please spare a thought for those less fortunate and consider how you might help

To find out more or to offer to help, please contact Social Action Committee member Stephanie Heynderickx – Tel: 020 7419 4271 or email: bear33@mac.com

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

Meet the Membership Group!



"A warm, thought-provoking place with an open mind." This was one of the comments from the recent Members Survey that asked 'What was your first impression of Rosslyn Hill Chapel?'. The Membership Group has been set up and will address some of the concerns in the survey and take action on the many wonderful suggestions so that we can ensure the chapel is always a warm and thought-provoking sanctuary.

Members Kate Buchanan, Deborah Frankel, Leighton Cole and Dominic Williams are working with Rev Patrick O'Neill and administrator Sharron Conduit, as well as the other chapel committees, to develop the membership process and improve the way we welcome visitors to the chapel. We will keep you informed of our plans over the coming months, including special Unitarian sessions and membership worship services.

You can help us by gently making visitors feel welcome and steering them in our direction if they seem interested in learning more about the chapel!

If you have any questions or further suggestions, please contact
Kate Buchanan kateboo@gmail.com (07870 322 519) or
Deborah Frankel debfrankel@totalise.co.uk (020 8209 1000).



The Choir/Chapel Clean-Up

The "Chapel Choir Clean Up" scheduled to take place on the afternoon of Sunday 14 October was postponed in view of the 150th Anniversary celebrations. A new date is to be arranged. The purpose of the "Clean Up" was to cheer up the look of the chapel and to raise some funds for choir expenses. Our new caretaker is doing such a good job that the Chapel is already much cleaner, brighter and more welcoming. We feel that by liaising with him we will bring about a very positive result. We ask that 'would be sponsors' of choir members, (for their cleaning hours), should hold themselves in readiness to contribute on the new date. Sally Somerville (email: songspots@gmail.com)

Helping Hands

Worship Assistant

4 November	Leighton Cole
11 November	Leighton Cole
18 November	Julia Reid
25 November	James



Other events in the Chapel

Monday 5 November (8.00pm) - Musicians and dancers from UK, Portugal, Sweden, Romania and Cyprus performing an exciting, unique programme created from folk tunes with a contemporary twist. Ocarina is funded by the European Union. Free entrance

Saturday 17 November (7.30pm) – Concert by Alkionides

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 8 November 2012 at 7.00pm in the Chapel (in the Cottage Basement Science room).

Meeting held on Thursday 4 October 2012 James Chiriyankandath in the chair.

Minister's Report: 'We are most certainly in the news!' are the words which Rev O'Neill begins his report, referring to the response to the press release which announced the decision taken at the SGM to seek permission from Camden council for civil partnerships between same sex couples to be registered in the Chapel. News items, each with a photo of the Chapel and the Minister have appeared in the Ham and High, Camden New Journal and Evening Standard and Patrick was interviewed on BBC London's 'InSpirit' programme on 14 October

Children's Chapel: The Minister had had a good meeting with the Children's Programme Committee. They are working together to look after Children's Chapel on Sunday mornings until a replacement for Charlotte Illingworth has been found.

Organist: With Sholto Kynoch leaving in December, discussions about recruiting a new organist were planned.

Evening service: The Minister and Gordon Jackson (leader of the Worship Group) would lead a discussion about the Sunday evening services on Sunday 21 October. Patrick affirmed his commitment to the 'evening gatherings'. This review by those who led and those who attended would be helpful to all.

Payment of worship leaders: Gordon Jackson had asked the Board for clarification regarding payment of worship leaders who are Chapel members and also ordained ministers. In that situation it was agreed that an exception to the Chapel's policy that members are not paid for leading services was to be made - members who are ministers would be paid the same as visiting ministers.

150th Anniversary: Plans were in hand for a very special service to celebrate the Anniversary Thanksgiving service on Sunday 7 October. Forthcoming events were the Victorian Soiree arranged by Margaret Perry on 12 October, and the 'Jubilate Deo' concert with the Chapel choir and the Chamber choir of Channing School, on 7 November. A Valentine's event was being planned for Friday, 15 February, 2013. The need to keep within the Chapel's capacity limit (150 people) by ticketing large events was noted.

Property Sale Group: Paul ver Bruggen sent better news of the negotiations but no date had been fixed for completion of the sale of the Willoughby road site.

Administrator's report: Sharron Conduit's report updated the Board regarding the problems with damp in the Chapel and the Basement Cottage office.

Chapel (south wall): to prevent more damp coming through this wall, the guttering has to be replaced. As the Chapel is in a conservation area, Camden Council have had to be asked what material can be used for the replacement guttering. A decision about the work will be taken when Camden's reply is received.

Basement of Cottage 3: Quotes have been sought from damp proofing firms. It appears the work which has to be done is more extensive than at first thought. It will take several months and the timetable will have to be worked out carefully with the Academy school

Long term maintenance: it was suggested that a quinquennial review of the Chapel properties and grounds should be instituted as this would help to identify problems at an early stage. Further discussion to take place.

Treasurer's report: Jane Crispin, the Treasurer, had circulated her report and the cash flow figures for September. Chapel finances are in good shape because of the income from the Schools, with the start of the new term. The Academy School have offered to contribute to the cost of the works arising from the damp in the basement of Cottage 3.

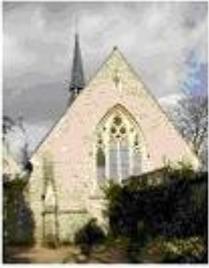
Membership: The Treasurer had written to members asking them to review what they pay in membership (1% of income had been suggested at the SGM) and reminded members to arrange payment by standing order.

Follow up to SGM: John Lawrence had written to the Board suggesting how the proposals regarding the financing of the Chapel agreed at the SGM might be progressed. Ideas and hands-on help from members were needed. It was agreed that an after Chapel meeting/workshop should take place so that members could identify practical ways to a) increase contributions from members b) bring in more funds from events and c) 'grow' the membership.

Reports from Activities' Groups:

Communications Team: Ingrid Tavkar (chair) reported on progress with remodelling the Chapel website. The Team were grateful to Claire Julian for dealing with the press release. The Board thanked Ingrid and were pleased to hear about the website.

Flower Group: In her report, Patricia Williams (chair) noted that in addition to the Sunday flowers, the Group had decorated the Chapel for other events. They felt privileged to have been asked to decorate the Chapel for Ann Finer's funeral as Ann had done so much for the Chapel flowers over the years. Patricia noted that the Group relied for funding on members' sponsoring a decoration and on collections made before major festivals. The Board thanked Patricia for her report.



OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

150th Anniversary Service – 7 October 2012
Reflections of Members – “How I came to join the Chapel”

Mine is not a unique story. Earlier in life I was looking for spiritual balm. I did not grow up as a Unitarian. I experienced a church-going childhood in a Scottish Presbyterian church in Liverpool where there was quite a lot of heavy finger wagging. Yet there were enough friendly opportunities for children to encourage commitment and enjoyment for many years. I had, on balance, happy memories of church life. But in adulthood, I had convinced myself that I was busy enough and could do without that sort of commitment anymore.

It is so, isn't it, that when you are there, feeling completely on your own, one can believe, as I did, that no one else has experienced that grey, lonely, unfamiliar place which I had suddenly entered. Now I know that feeling of disorientation is familiar to many. Early memories prompted me. I started to look for a church.

Amnesty International held a book fair here at RHUC, and... the beautiful building beckoned to me to return. There are clear memories of my first morning. A small group of people on the pathway smiled warmly and chatted in a simple way as we left the church. The minister had spoken words especially written for me! “It's not the ending of a beautiful vision that we should lament, rather rejoice that we ever saw it”. So I returned for more smiles and balanced expressions of wisdom. Because I was rebuilding a career, weekly attendance at first was enough. Later came the chance to succeed and feel that I was contributing to the everyday life of this lovely Chapel. Pain receded: familiar sigh-posts reappeared: colours returned.

An abbot of a monastery spoke about the importance of the spiritual community, where in the first place spiritual values can be lived day by day. Forgiveness, Tolerance, Kindness, Understanding, Justice can, similarly, be expressed here. I value that, and for the effect of that on my wider life.

I hope that in 150 years, people will look back in gratitude to 2012, in the same way that I return to 1862 with thanks to that generation of Hampstead Unitarians. **Margaret Perry**



Like many of you here I was not born a Unitarian. I found my way to a Unitarian Church in 1960 and like many others felt that I had found my Spiritual home. So I stayed in Unitarianism, married into it and continued to attend Unitarian Services wherever we were living. It was quite natural for us to come to Rosslyn Hill when we moved to London in 1994.

So what keeps me coming here? Well - apart from what brought me to Unitarianism in the first place - a lack of a creed, an encouragement to think for myself, an awareness of the value of other religions, there were other values in this congregation. We have made very good friends here -- and it was a particular pleasure for me to be greeted by Ann Finer on our first visit as we had been friends in Manchester years before. Ann was part of the community here - a community which has remained strong despite upheavals and vicissitudes.

What else do I value here? - I welcome the stimulus of a good thought-provoking sermon set in a context of material drawn from many sources, sacred and secular. I delight in seeing our families - we are not a one-generation congregation. I try to be involved in social action where possible - I see us as a beacon in the community and ‘Unitarianism’ as a denomination giving equal value to people regardless of creed, gender, race sexual orientation and ability allows women to have a greater role than elsewhere.

This movement gave me the opportunity to serve (and continue to serve) at a national level - and I was very privileged to be our National President in 1996/7. Unitarianism gave me opportunities and the courage to seize them. I hope it is doing so for all of you here.

I congratulate the congregation of Rosslyn Hill Chapel on the occasion of this 150th Anniversary of this Building - I wish us all the best for a happy, prosperous and successful future. **Jane Williams**



I discovered Unitarianism in the mid 1970s, while working as a Nursery Teacher at the ‘House on the Hill’ – a private nursery which was based at Golders Green Unitarian church hall. In 1976, I joined the congregation, and very soon Mohan and I were involved in congregational life – preparing lunches for special occasions, helping with Children’s Chapel, joining committees, etc.

In the early nineties, the Minister, the Rev Keith Gilley retired, a number of people left, and the dynamics of the congregation changed. Eventually, the Rev Ann Peart was appointed as the new minister.

At the same time, Rev Judith Walker-Riggs started her ministry here at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, and as she was renowned as a great preacher, some of us attended a couple of services. I was impressed with the vibrancy and energy of the congregation and decided to become a member. Once again, Mohan and I became fully involved in congregational life.

At that time, the congregation had voted for a new mission statement which read:

“Rosslyn Hill Chapel seeks to provide, for as many people as possible, a loving community in which to explore, question and celebrate in fellowship the meaning and value of life without the imposition of creedal restrictions, and to give active witness to its concerns for the wider world”

This statement resonated with me and I continue to be a member because here I have the freedom to follow my personal spiritual path in a caring and supporting community.

My hopes for the future of the Chapel are that -”we are striving to build a community within which are embedded the moral and ethical views, and the values we hold consonant with being Unitarian.”

In conclusion, I would like to share a short reading:

If you are proud of this church, become its advocate.
If you are concerned for its future, share its message.
If its values resonate deep within you,
Give it a measure of your devotion.
This church cannot survive without your faith,
Your confidence, your enthusiasm.
Its destiny, the larger hope, rests in your hands.
(Michael A Schuler)

Let us “give it a measure of our devotion” – and help our beloved community to grow and flourish.
Ingrid Tavkar

*“Life is a gift for which we are grateful.
We gather in community to celebrate
the glories and the mysteries of this gift.”*

(- Marjorie Montgomery)

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

"A Spiritual retreat is time with ourselves to find our way back to the age-old wisdom of the ancestors."

(Susanna Aarnio)

Retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh 2012

This Easter, I attended my fourth five day retreat, 'Cultivating Happiness,' with Buddhist Zen master, Thich Nhat Hanh, known as Thay. The retreat was held on the University of Nottingham campus, a large open space with beautiful trees, flower gardens and an open-air labyrinth to walk. To attend a retreat with Thay, a man of great compassion and humility is a precious gift, a celebration. Now 87 years old, Thay gives retreats all over the world and works tirelessly for peace and social justice issues.

One of the most important messages of Thay's work is to be mindful in our everyday lives, to live in the present moment and to listen deeply to each other and to our planet's needs with compassion and love. All of the inner work and meditations we did on the retreat were centred on mindfulness, mindful of each breath, each action we perform, and each step we take, not an easy task. Amongst some of the guided meditations he uses are:

'Breathing in, I am aware of the tension in my body,
Breathing out, I relax my body.'
'Breathing in, I calm my body,
Breathing out, I smile.'

Our day began with meditation at 6.30am followed by mindful yoga or qigong. Breakfast was at 8.00am and all meals were eaten in silence so we could be aware of chewing every mouthful of food, for example, with bread, to be aware of the growth of the grain, the sun and rain that nourished it, and the people who picked and harvested it and to eat it with gratitude.

Thay's two hour talk was at 9.30am in the dharma hall, the first part addressed to the children, also good for the adults, of course, and the second part for the adults. His talks are always full of profound wisdom and teachings. After the talk, hundreds of us followed Thay in a slow walking meditation through the campus grounds, a calming and centring experience - each step to be taken slowly and mindfully, being aware of the earth underfoot, the trees around and the birdsong.

In the afternoons we had our dharma sharing groups where we could raise any problems or questions we had. In my group we became close and trusting of each other during those five days and I found it to be a profound experience. Before bed we went into the 'noble silence' until after breakfast the following morning.

This retreat was a deep inner experience for me, to listen to Thay's wisdom, to be with his compassionate energy, to slow down and be mindful throughout the day. I came home feeling energised, renewed and centred, feeling truly grateful for this privilege to be with Thay.

Rosalind Beeton

Findhorn- Spiritual community, Learning Centre, Ecovillage

I went to the Findhorn Foundation for the first time because I was intrigued by its history being little short of miraculous. For those who don't know, it started in the late 1960s from a wonderfully fertile garden alongside a caravan and grew so rapidly that within fifteen years, this spiritual and educational community had taken over the entire caravan park. Within ten more years, it also took over a four star hotel in nearby Forres.

The motive power? Eileen Caddy receiving guidance through daily meditation, her friend Dorothy getting in touch with the nature spirits, and her energetic husband, Peter, putting the guidance into practice. In the last twenty years the ex-caravan site (now the Park), has seen the creation of a whole eco-village.

Impressed but sceptical, I attended an Experience Week - the usual introduction to the community - in 1989. I rather expected the place to be full of more or less ageing hippies. So one of the first things that impressed me was the business-like manner in which my mistaken arrival was sorted out. The next was my first experience of the Findhorn work ethic. Having volunteered to be part of the kitchen team, I was sceptical when invited to join hands with the others around the central work surface and to dedicate the morning to working with love, but blow me, we did and we worked 100% efficiently. The third surprise was when I needed a replacement shirt and was sent to 'the boutique'. It took me five minutes to grasp that every item of clothing was free, having been donated. When I got home five days later, I sent two shirts I'd hardly ever worn.

Behind all this, was the spiritual element. Both the park and the hotel had two formal meditation areas with two or three group led meditations scheduled daily, but the areas were otherwise open for personal use. The key point is that there was no pressure to attend from our Experience group focalisers - or anyone else. I chose to go to two or three of each and always felt better for it.

The formal part of Experience Week took the form of hearing members of the community talk about how the community worked, with tours of both centres, plus the surrounding district and its beautiful Findhorn river.

I enjoyed that week very much and returned to Findhorn annually for week-long workshops on a variety of spiritual, personal and artistic themes for the next twelve years. The loving, focused and creative atmosphere was most of the attraction, but during the Thatcher years, when she preached that people worked out of fear, ambition or greed, it was vital for me to experience such a totally different and successful way of living. I have attended less since, but will return when I need to be reminded afresh that when people work with love the results can be miraculous. **George Appleby**

Our Larger Unitarian Movement



SimpleGifts: Social Action Lab

As part of its mission to foster and support Unitarian social witness, the newly established 'SimpleGifts: Unitarian Centre for Social Action' will host a half-day "social action lab" on Saturday 10 November, from 10.30am until 3.00pm at their offices at Mansford St. Chapel, in East London.

The programme will include a speaker/panel discussion and three "lab" style workshops (i.e. informal round table discussions) to include: *"A Brief Introduction to SimpleGifts and its 'New Unitarian Mission'"*, *"A Short Theological History/Historical Theology of Unitarian Good Works"*, *"Congregational Best Practices and 'Pulling Together in 2013' for Unitarian-inspired Social Action/Social Justice"*.

There will be time for a shared, leisurely lunch and a tour of the historic Mansford St. Chapel and Mission to the East End of London. £25 fee will cover lunch and materials cost (£15 student and low income concession also available.)

For more information, visit the SimpleGifts website or to register contact Rev. Rob Gregson (rob@simplegiftsucsa.org.uk) or Ann Howell (ann@simplegiftsucsa.org.uk) or write to: SimpleGifts, 117 Mansford St. London E2 6LX UK



A weekend by the sea filled with Celebration, Inspiration, and Education

8-10 February 2013

Lighting the fuse for an explosion of Unitarian vitality

For Unitarians and other seekers with a passion for the future
Sponsored by the London and Southeast district and open to all
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Multiple workshops: traditional, contemplative, and contemporary
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Bursaries available to make this event accessible to all, regardless of distance or financial circumstances
Main worship service led by Rev. Bill Darlinson

Book early at <http://fusefest.org.uk/registration-form/>
Visit the FUSE website: <http://fusefest.org.uk/>

Bhagavad-Gita study group

Ever wanted to discover one of the great holy books of the world and never got around to it properly? A group to read and reflect on the 'Bhagavad-Gita', the most important Hindu scripture, will meet monthly on first Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm at Golders Green.

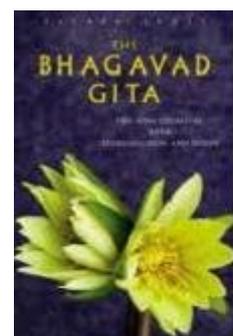
First meeting - Wednesday 7 November.

An opportunity to get to know the world's oldest scripture still in widespread use, in friendly Unitarian company. Come to any or all of these meetings and brighten a dark evening.

Golders Green Unitarians, 31 1/2 Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS

Website: www.ggu.org.uk

Contact: Wade Miller-Knight – Tel: 07952 820 333



NOVEMBER DIARY

(* = further details elsewhere in Bulletin)

Sunday 4 November

11.00am – Morning service - “Rule No. 1: Integrity”^{*}
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

7.00pm – Evening service - “Rule No. 1: Integrity”^{*}
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

Wednesday 7 November

7.00pm – 150th Anniversary of Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel “Jubilate Deo”^{*}

Thursday 8 November

7.00pm – Management Committee meets^{*}

Sunday 11 November

11.00am – Morning service – “Amazing Stuff: A Sermon on Grace”^{*}
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

7.00pm – Evening service – “Amazing Stuff: A Sermon on Grace”^{*}
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

Tuesday 13 November

7.30pm – Social Action Committee meets^{*}

Sunday 18 November

11.00am - Morning service – “Simple gifts” at the heart of our shared faith”^{*}
Led by Rev Rob Gregson

7.00pm – Evening service - “Simple gifts” at the heart of our shared faith”^{*}
Led by Gordon Jackson

Monday 19 November

7.00pm – Poetry group meets^{*}

Wednesday 21 November

5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*
7.30pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel*

Thursday 22 November

7.30pm – Chapel Book Club*

Sunday 25 November

11.00am - Morning service – “Whistling In The Dark: On Courage”^{*}
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

12.30pm-2.00pm – Our Unitarian Way*

12.30pm-2.00pm – Potluck Lunch*

7.00pm – Evening service – “Whistling In The Dark: On Courage”^{*}
Led by the Wheel of the Year group

Wednesday 28 November

5.45pm Tai Chi class in the Chapel*
7.30pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel

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Registered Charity 1131346
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*“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”*