



Open Mind

The Bulletin of Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel

September 2012

The foliage has been losing its freshness through the month of August, and here and there a yellow leaf shows itself like the first grey hair amidst the locks of a beauty who has seen one season too many. *Oliver Wendell Holmes*



September Services

Sunday 2 September (11.00am & 7.00pm)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
"Living From The Inside Out"

Would it change things, do you suppose, if we really knew how it is with other people in their heart of hearts, in their inside lives, if we knew that their struggles and worries and insecurities were just the same as ours? If we knew that others were just as anxious for approval and love and respect as we are..... if we could see this truth on the outside of people, would it change things?

Sunday 9 September (11.00am & 7.00pm)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
"Is God a Good Idea?"

As in most of Europe, churches in Britain are virtually empty, and there is a growing blankness where God once existed in the human consciousness. Perhaps mature religion is precisely about journeying into that "God-shaped hole in our hearts," and over a lifetime of learning and exploration, discovering for ourselves that which is Godly and creative and eternal within the human spirit.

Sunday 16 September (11.00am & 7.00pm)

Special General Meeting Sunday

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
"The Shoemaker's Window"

On this Sunday after service we will have an important Special General Meeting to discuss a plan for supporting the future financial health of our Chapel. We have important choices to make that will need support from all our members. We urge you to make every effort to attend. Rev O'Neill's sermon will reflect on what it takes to empower our communities of faith. Please join us!

Sunday 23 September (11.00am)

Guest Preacher David Darling
"Growth through reflection: keeping a spiritual journal".

Looking at how writing and writings can help us to make sense of our lives.

Led by David Darling (Lay Preacher and Chair of the Congregation at Essex Church)

Sunday 23rd September (7.00pm)

"Autumn Equinox Celebration"

Led by members of our "Wheel of the Year" group, and drawing from the Celtic earth/pagan tradition, we will celebrate the autumn equinox. The service is participatory and one of the eight great Celtic celebrations during the "wheel of the year".

Sunday 30 September (11.00am & 7.00pm)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
"Personal Faith in an Objective World"

Since the sixteenth century the Unitarian tradition has proclaimed the primacy of simple truth over the complex institutional variety. Ours is a way that values love over doctrine, a way that prizes practice over creedalism, a way that values community over conformity. We say it is not our church that gives meaning to truth, but our personal understanding of truth that gives meaning to our church.

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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**

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.

From the Editor

*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)

September is the time when our regular Chapel activities recommence and new initiatives are planned – this offers many opportunities for all of us to 'give it a measure of our devotion' and to help our beloved community at RHUC to continue to grow and flourish.

So what is on offer during September? Our Minister, Rev Patrick O'Neill, is back from his holidays and offering thought provoking and challenging sermons. Please note the call to attend the 'Special General Meeting' on Sunday 16 September - Your vote counts, your voice counts, and your presence counts!

On Sunday 23 September, we welcome David Darling who will lead the morning service, and our 'Wheel of the Year' group invite us to celebrate the 'Autumn Equinox' during the evening service.

Following the morning service, we are opening the Chapel to visitors and call members to use their 'helping hands' by making a cake, welcoming visitors, showing people round the Chapel and/or serve tea. On Sunday 30 September, all are welcome to our monthly 'Potluck Lunch'.

Last but not least, I'd like to draw your attention to the opportunity to join a discussion group focusing on issues of 'Assisted Dying' – meeting on Sunday 9 September at 4.30pm in the Chapel.

*I am only one
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something.
And because I cannot do
Everything
I will not refuse to do the
Something that I can do.*

(Edward Everett Hale)

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 August issue of 'Open Mind' is **Wednesday 18 July 2012.**



PO'Nderings

From our Minister
Rev Patrick T. O'Neill

“Marriage and Other Loving Commitments”

As a Unitarian minister for some three and a half decades now, I've been privileged to officiate and co-officiate at more than three hundred wedding ceremonies. These ceremonies have taken place in all manner of settings: in small chapels and grand cathedrals, in hotels and at country clubs, in backyard gardens and public parks, on mountaintops and on ocean shores. I once married a couple in a hospital room as the groom was near death with cancer (they had lived together for years and wanted to make their bonds legal before he died).

Marriage ceremonies are different in the United States. Once the couple gets a marriage license from the state where they reside, ordained clergy have the authority to bind them both legally and sacramentally. Here in Britain the local Registrar is the legal “authority,” the attending clergy are strictly sacramental ceremony conductors. There are advantages and disadvantages to both systems.

Such ceremonies have become somewhat stickier over the past few decades as same-sex partnerships have gained gradual social and legal recognition in both countries and in many other countries around the world now. National polls both in UK and USA show that the majority of people in both countries now feel that same-sex partnerships ought to be fully recognized and granted full legal status. We know that legal recognition alone will not automatically erase age-old prejudice against sexual minorities, either within society itself or within many religious traditions and institutions. But slowly and often painfully, same-sex unions are coming to be accepted and recognized for what they are: the public commitment of two adults who love each other enough to join their lives, their fortunes, and their future in familial union.

Personally, I grow ever so weary at the vocabulary of resistance employed by those who for whatever reasons are unwilling to accept the changing norms around same-sex unions. Marriage by any other name does not change the basic nature of such a loving covenant between two individuals. I believe that we are all created equal regardless of our sexual orientations, and thus we are all endowed with the same basic human rights to love whoever loves us in return. Legalists will forever seek to parse the fine distinctions between “marriage” and “union” and “partnerships.” I am not a lawyer, and frankly, I find all arguments that somehow same-sex unions threaten other kinds of unions to be specious and disingenuous.

I leave all other churches and faith communities to work out their own understandings and approaches to these questions as their conscience and their God lead them. In the meantime I am proud that our Unitarian tradition and its ministry have consistently chosen to “stand on the side of Love” in lending our blessing to loving covenants between people regardless of their orientations.

I will proudly continue to lead such ceremonies when requested. Now I will be coming to the congregation at our SGM on 16 September asking you for your collective support to do so “legally” within our Chapel walls. See you at the meeting! *
...po'n

* SGM Item 7: Introduction and discussion of proposal to approve an application to the London Borough of Camden for a licence to register civil partnerships in the Chapel under the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

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.

September Activities and Meetings

11 September - **Social Action Committee** will meet Tuesday at 7.30pm.

13 September - **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.

17 September - 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)

20 September - **The Book Group** will meet at 7.30pm at the Magdala at 2a South Hill Park in Hampstead. We will discuss ‘What to do when someone dies’ by Nicci French. For further information, contact: Bill Ellington (Tel: 020 7354 0397, email: Ellingtonbill@aol.com)

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.

'Let's all come together to celebrate our 150th anniversary'

Sunday 7 October 11.00am - Service of Thanksgiving and Ingathering. Rev Patrick O'Neill leads this celebration of the Chapel's 150th anniversary, with participation by members and representation by local Unitarian churches. Service followed by lunch.

Friday 12 October 7.30pm - Anniversary Soiree. An evening of words and music with supper, commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Chapel's use of our present building.

Wednesday 7 November 7.00pm – 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.

Celebrating the Anniversary Year continues up to June 2013!

So far we have enjoyed several celebratory and fundraising events, with an accent on the fun. Of course, they didn't just happen. Due to the kind generosity of the individuals sponsoring and organising these events, they were planned and paid for in advance. Dates were confirmed, publicity was organised, fees paid, attention paid to issues of security and the usual 'housekeeping'. Volunteers were welcomed and the welcoming face of Rosslyn Hill Chapel was shown to the world.

Do you have the resources to take on the entire sponsorship of an event with all it entails?

Or perhaps you could offer to pay performance fees or the cost of printing publicity and tickets? It would be good if the costs of sponsoring successful fundraising events might be shared. May we all share a wider vision of the future together!

If this idea appeals to you, or you have a particular idea for a concert or other fundraising event, please contact Janna Williams (j.williams16@virginmedia.com) or Ingrid Tavkar (ingridtavkar@tiscali.co.uk)

WHERE I STAND

I found RHUC twenty plus years ago after some years of spiritual searching. It felt as if it was somewhere I could feel I belonged. As a young adult, I had started and continued to investigate different religions and faith traditions that I was coming across - and though never feeling bound to any particular set of dogmas, was able to take from each whatever I experienced as being helpful in understanding life and how to live it. I increasingly found that, since for me, living means 'growing', it necessarily involved allowing myself to 'change'. I'm clearly not what I was yesterday and am not now how I may become in the future; this applies to all of the levels on which I operate - physical, emotional, mental, and also spiritual and, therefore, what I may resonate to. So the Chapel was, and is, somewhere I can do that, while at the same time being respectful of others and tolerant of their differing beliefs or lack of them - as I wish them to be of mine. Not that, these days, I say I 'believe' anything. That sounds too permanent. Best I can say is, 'just for now, I relate, resonate or subscribe to something'.

So equally I don't really call myself an anything, though I certainly am 'Unitarian' in philosophy. But then I would also have to say, perhaps more accurately, that I'm also 'Buddhist' and 'Theosophical', with a bit of 'Quaker' and 'Bahai' thrown in and probably a few other things as well, including things 'Jewish', which I got through my upbringing. Buddhism and Theosophy and Unitarianism, have, till now, in their different ways, probably most influenced my spiritual 'progress'; have most strongly provided me with a platform for how I try to live my life.

I'm thankful to have found Unitarianism. It doesn't demand belief in anything, or stand in the way of my changing my understanding of something and accessing the help other traditions may give in providing the underpinning I need for living life and negotiating the difficulties that all too frequently arise in it. I'm grateful for whatever contributes towards my maintaining my balance when the road feels 'rocky'! And its fundamental principle of 'Open Mind, Loving Heart and Helping Hands', though simplistic in the way it's put, feels absolutely right as a basic guideline for how we should interact with our fellow human beings. I've heard the Dalai Lama put it that, 'We're all going up the mountain, but are all taking different paths up it', which exactly accords with the Unitarian philosophy that differences in belief, or non-belief, are not what matters. What I totally subscribe to is the encouragement it gives us to take individual and collective responsibility for helping to create a society in which we are tolerant, and caring, of each other and respect each others views and differences, however difficult in practice that may turn out to be. The Chapel continues to feel the right company in which together to practise that. **Shirley Malin**

(Articles express the views of the authors)

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY



News from Children's Chapel

Our heartfelt thanks to Charlotte Illingworth who is stepping down as leader of our Children's Chapel as of 2 September.

Charlotte has given dedicated service to the children of our Chapel for four years. She leaves us now to pursue a full time study programme in needlework, a deep passion of hers. Thanks so much for all you have given, Charlotte, and many blessings in your new endeavours!



Open Chapel Event
Sunday 23 September
from 2-5pm



Following the success of the Open Chapel afternoon in June we are opening the Chapel during the Open House weekend. Visitors will be able to look round our beautiful Chapel, have a cup of tea and browse through some books.

Can you contribute a cake or buns for the teas or come along to greet visitors and help for an hour or so? If you can, could you contact Janna Williams, email: j.williams16@virginmedia.com?

One Sunday in August, Lis Dyson-Jones, President of the General Assembly, led our morning service on the theme of "Loving Communities" - these are the words Lis used for reflection and meditation.

Let us be quiet, without and within.
Let the stillness be in us.
Let the silence hold us.
May we find the deep places of the soul
And begin to let go of the distractions which plague us.
Words tell us of our thoughts,
Silence helps us hear our deepest feelings.
Let the silence hold us.

Infinite Spirit of Life, we seek to build a religious community
founded on liberty of conscience and thought;
on belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all.
May we respond to the human condition in ways
that reflect the faith we profess.

As sowers, we go out to sow the seeds of our liberal faith,
Conscious that the ground on which we sow can vary
from place to place.
We may encounter the stony, unyielding ground of a
secularised society,
Or the fertile ground of those seeking refuge from
negative religion,
And sometimes, the unbroken ground where our seed
is new
And the task is just to get it rooted at all.

Let our seeds flourish with good intention and let us
nurture them at their core
Let this community offer an open door, open hearts
and open minds.
Then our seeds will grow and yield a harvest for the
human spirit and the world's wholeness.
May it be so.

Helping Hands at Services

Stewards

2 September	George Appleby
9 September	Roger Harrabin
16 September	Claire Julian
23 September	
30 September	Alice Whieldon

Worship Group Reps

2 September	Julia Reid
9 September	Leighton Cole
16 September	Zoe Gerrard
23 September	James Chiriyankandath
30 September	Victoria Ellington

Our Chapel Community

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

"Don't forget to mark your diaries for the Special General Meeting!!"

**Sunday 16 September 2012
at 12.30pm in the Chapel**

AGENDA

1. Devotional
2. Welcome and introduction to the meeting
3. Establish a Quorum for SGM
4. Approval of Minutes of SGM of 26 February 2012
5. Presentation on the report of the 'Long Term Finance Group'
6. Questions and discussion
7. Introduction and discussion of proposal to approve an application to the London Borough of Camden for a licence to register civil partnerships in the Chapel under the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
8. Vote on the proposal
9. Closing of meeting

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

NEWS FROM THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee did not meet in August. The next meeting is at 7.00pm on Thursday 13 September, in the Cottage basement Science room, at the Chapel. 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.



Joys & Concerns

Please keep in your hearts Ann Finer and send continued best wishes and prayers for Ann's complete and speedy recuperation at Harley Street Clinic - Cards welcome but visitors are limited.

OTHER EVENTS IN THE CHAPEL



Saturday 15 September (7.30pm) - Recital with Elin Árnadóttir (soprano), Peder Holtermann (tenor) and Simon Marlow (piano). Tickets £5 on the door.

Saturday 22 September (7.30pm) – Concert by Gustavo Ubeda

Saturday 29 September (7.30pm) – Beethoven Chamber Orchestra with Conductors Santiago Mantas & Patrick Noronha



Service of Thanksgiving and Ingathering

Sunday 7 October 2012 at 11.00am

Members, ex-members, friends of the Chapel, visitors from the wider denomination are all invited to join together in this special service to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Unitarian worship in this Chapel building. Our Minister, Rev Dr Patrick O'Neill will lead the service.

The service will be followed by light refreshments (including a birthday cake) and fellowship in the side isle.

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

ASSISTED DYING

Assisted dying is a difficult subject, but it seems to be very much in the news at the moment. There are many arguments for and against, and indeed most of us haven't made up our minds about it.

Those who are interested in discussing the subject of assisted dying might like to meet on Sunday afternoon at 4.30pm on 2 - or 9 September. There are various readings available and indeed a draft bill coming before Parliament if you want to read something ahead of the meeting. It is fine if you just want to come to share your views. For further information contact Leighton Cole on 020 8444 9728 or email leightoncole90@hotmail.com.

Potluck Lunches!



The next 'Potluck Lunch' will be on Sunday 30 September 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. **Margaret Perry**

Dates for the diary

28 October - 25 November - December- TBA

Our Larger Unitarian Movement



Forgiveness Project

Kensington Unitarians are hosting the Forgiveness Project exhibition from 9th to 16th September, along with a varied programme of linked events – including a Sufi concert, Playback Theatre, storytelling for Rosh Hashanah, a One Light spiritual gathering, ritual dance workshop based on the teachings of Sobonfu Some.

Guest speaker Marian Partington will run a workshop on 9th September.

Check Kensington Unitarians website: www.kensington-unitarians.org.uk for full details and booking info or phone for a leaflet on 020 7221 6514.

Essex Unitarian Church, 112 Palace Gardens Terrace,
London W8 4RT

Youth Events

Junior Weekend

**Friday 5 Oct – Sunday 7
October 2012**

Nightingale Centre, Great
Hucklow, Derbyshire
Contact: John Harley Tel:
7985 900 935



September Diary

(* = further details elsewhere in Bulletin)

Sunday 2 September

11.00am – Morning service - “Living From The Inside Out”*

Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

7.00pm – Evening service - “Living From The Inside Out”*

Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

Sunday 9 September

11.00am – Morning service – “Is God a Good Idea?”*

Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

4.30pm – ‘Assisted Dying’ discussion

7.00pm – Evening service – “Is God a Good Idea?”*

Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

Tuesday 11 September

7.30pm – Social Action Committee meets*

Wednesday 12 September

5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*

7.00pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel*

Thursday 13 September

7.00pm – Management Committee meets*

Sunday 16 September

11.00am - Morning service – “The Shoemaker’s Window”*

Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

12.30pm – Special General Meeting

7.00pm – Evening service - “The Shoemaker’s Window”*

Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

Monday 17 September

7.00pm – Poetry group meets in the chapel*

Wednesday 19 September

5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*

7.00pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel*

Thursday 20 September

7.30pm – Chapel Book Club*

Sunday 23 September

11.00am - Morning service – “Growth through reflection: keeping a spiritual journal”.

Led by David Darling

2.00-5.00pm Open Chapel event*

7.00pm – Evening service – “Autumn Equinox Celebration”

Led by the Wheel of the Year group

Wednesday 26 September

5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*

7.00pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel*

Sunday 30 September

11.00am – Morning service – “Personal Faith in an Objective World”*

Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O’Neill

7.00pm – Evening service - “Personal Faith in an Objective World”*

Chapel Directory

Chapel Office

Sharron Conduit
Tel: 020 7433 3267
Fax: 020 7435 7457

Chapel E-mail

admin@rosslynhillchapel.com

Chapel Online

www.rosslynhillchapel.com
www.facebook.com/rosslynhillunitarianchapel

Chapel Address

Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, 3 Pilgrims Place
London NW3 1NG United Kingdom

Registered Charity 1131346
Registered Co. No. 05992717

The Minister

The Rev Dr Patrick O'Neill, The Manse, 3 Pilgrim's Place,
London NW3 1NG Tel: 020 7435 3506
E-mail: revponeill@aol.com

Care & Support

Deborah Frankel
Tel: 020 8209 1000
Email: debfrankel@totalise.co.uk

Children’s Chapel

Charlotte Illingworth
Tel: 020 8882 3491 / E-mail: cillingworthuk@yahoo.co.uk

Bulletin Team

Ingrid Tavkar, Editor
Editorial Team:
Stella Fakiyesi, , Margaret Perry,
Janna Williams
Layout: Stasi Kotsis & Ingrid Tavkar
Tel: 020 8455 0162; Email: RHUCbulletin@yahoo.com

*“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”*