



Open Mind

The Bulletin of Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel

February 2015

Snowdrops

I like to think that, long ago,
there fell to earth some flakes of snow
which loved this cold, grey world of ours
so much, they stayed as snowdrop flowers.
Mary Vivien



February Services

Sunday 1 February (11.00 am)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
'Wobbly Feet and Fly-Away Hearts'

Counsellors constantly hear the complaint these days that people feel as though their life threatens to fly off in a thousand different directions every day. We'd really prefer, most of us, to be left alone to spin in place peacefully in a nice uninterrupted, centred kind of way, thank you, without pieces of us flying off in random directions. Got time to go to church for an hour this week? Come join us for an interesting exploration this morning!

Sunday 1 February (7.00 pm)
'Celebration of Imbolc'
(also known as Candlemas)

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. Come and celebrate Imbolc with music, song, poetry, and meditative silence. Led by members of our 'Wheel of the Year' Group'.

Sunday 8 February (11.00 am)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
'Are You For Real?'

Ever feel like nobody knows the 'real' you? A sermon for the 'impostor' who lives in all of us. Come join us, and bring a friend!

Sunday 8 February (7.00pm)
'Meditation'

'The essence of meditation is simply to reach a 'state of being' - Come and join us for silence, reflection, poetry and music. Led by Ingrid Tavkar

Sunday 15 February (11.00 am)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
'The Oldest Unitarian Churches in the World'

This morning we'll hear the story of the great Unitarian preacher and martyr Francis David and how his vision would help establish one of the oldest continuing Unitarian movements in the world in Hungarian Transylvania. Come hear a proud history.

Sunday 15 February (7.00pm)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
'The Oldest Unitarian Churches in the World'

Sunday 22 February (11.00 am)

Guest Preacher Alan Ruston
'Have you got imagination?'

Can we define it and do we think it's a quality we all possess. Would we admit it if we didn't have it? Is it a necessity for those following a religious path?

Alan Ruston is an active Unitarian – GA President in 2002-2003, he has held posts associated with most aspects of the Unitarian movement, which he fitted in with being a career civil servant. He is a retired civil servant and lives near Watford in Hertfordshire.

Sunday 22 February (7.00pm)

'Intellect and Spirituality'
Led by James Chiriyankandath

Do we have to suspend our reason to be spiritual? Is unreasonable spirituality simply superstition? We will consider how our intellects can relate to living a spiritual life, as well as helping us make sense of our material circumstances.

The Rosslyn Hill 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, same sex 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.

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 **Wednesday 18 February 2015**.

From the Editor

'February - the first month of Spring?', asks Ark Redwood in his book 'The Art of Mindful Gardening'. He answers his question with these words, 'February always used to be considered a month associated with wintertime, and I suppose to a lot of people it still is. However, with the climate chaos associated with the phenomenon of global warming, it feels more and more like the first month of spring'.

The beginning of the month is Candlemas - the Celtic fire festival of Imbolc - which heralds the coming of spring and the change from dark to light. It marks the return of the sun, and the first stirrings of germination in the Earth begin.

By Imbolc the days are noticeably longer and signs that winter is loosening its grip can be seen. The first shoots are pushing through the soil and snowdrops, the 'Maids of February' are gracing gardens and woodlands. Imbolc is a celebration of light and the renewal of the earth - life is beginning to stir again. It is a time to sow seeds for new projects and renew our commitments to the principles we hold dear.

What's on offer at Rosslyn Hill Chapel?

On the first Sunday, our minister will focus on 'Wobbly Feet and Fly-Away Hearts' in the morning. In the evening, the 'Wheel of the Year' group invite us to join the celebration of Imbolc with music, song, poetry, and meditative silence. (p.1).

On Sunday 15 February, we welcome Transylvanian ministry students during the morning service, followed by a shared 'pot luck lunch'. (p.4)

We are offered possibilities to renew our commitments to the principles we hold dear by offering our 'helping hands' and volunteering to be stewards (p.5), help with Children's programme, help during coffee hour, and make contributions to Food Bank.

Last but not least, on Sunday 22 February, we can come along to the morning service and support our guest preacher Alan Ruston, and/or attend the 'evening gathering' when James Chiriyankandath will ask the question 'do we have to suspend our reason to be spiritual?' - Just a few suggestions. **Ingrid Tavkar**





PO'Nderings

From our Minister
Rev Patrick T. O'Neill

I'm remembering my father this morning, as I write this. William Francis O'Neill was born 110 years ago today in Motherwell, Scotland. It is amazing to me to realize that he's been gone for more than thirty years now. Looking back, I know I was lucky to have such a good man for a father, and in many ways he remains a very real presence and influence in my life. Of course the older I get, the more I see all the ways I am like him and all the ways I could never be.

The Reverend Max Coats, an American Unitarian poet, wrote these wise words which I have often shared at memorial services:

'No one who loves you is expendable.... and the elders have a unique place in your own being as it moves through time. Only parents, grandparents, old family and old friends can reminisce, can recall you to your life as it was once upon a time. When they go, you lose not only them, but something of yourself. In time, you are left as the only keeper of what used to be. It is lonely living alone in your time.'

From the beginning there were old cousins, aunts and uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers, and always the parents - in line going back in time further than we, as children and adolescents, could imagine.

And then somewhere they drop away... too soon it is not antique and half-remembered uncles who leave spaces behind us. It is the closest. It is the best. The loss can be taken with a smile for remembering, but the emptiness behind is real.'

I remember thinking when my father died at age 87 that his was a long and full life, well lived. I think most of us would want the same for ourselves if we could choose. He was physically and emotionally strong and smart and funny, a man of deep faith, a family man first and last. Robert Ingersoll's words come to mind when I think of him....'This brave and tender soul in every storm of life was oak and rock, but in the sunshine was vine and flower.'

See you in Chapel, friends. ...po'n

Chapel Activities



Weekly Activities

Children's Programme 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.

Monthly Activities and Meetings

CHAPEL POETRY GROUP - If you like to read and /or write poetry, the group meets on **Tuesday 3 February at 7.30pm**. For more information contact George Appleby (Tel: 020 7424 9733, email: gappleby@talktalk.net)

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE meets on **Tuesday 10 February at 7.00pm**

THE CHAPEL MANAGEMENT BOARD meets on **Thursday 12 February at 7.00pm** in the Cottage basement science room at the Chapel. Members of the Chapel are welcome to attend but please contact, as a courtesy, Kerry Reid (Chair), in advance.

CHAPEL BOOK GROUP - meets on **Thursday 19 February 2015 at 19.30** at the Holly Bush pub, which is located at 22 Holly Mount, up a steep hill from the Hampstead Tube Station. We will be discussing a relatively new, but highly acclaimed American novel, 'The Round House' by Louise Erdrich. For further information, please contact Bill Ellington at ellingtonbill@aol.com

STITCH & STORIES GROUP - meet on **Thursday 27 February (7.00pm-9.00pm)** - to knit and crochet for various charity projects, and to share personal stories. The group is open to anyone who would like to learn to knit or crochet as well. Everyone is welcome. For more information contact: Ingrid Tavkar (Tel: 020 8455 0162; email: ingridtavkar@gmail.com)

POT LUCK LUNCHESES - The next 'Pot Luck Lunch' will be on **Sunday 15 February** in the side aisle 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 or make a financial contribution (£2.50 minimum). We look forward to seeing you there. Margaret Perry

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY



Annual General Meeting

Sunday 15 March 2015
at 12.30pm
(after the morning service)

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 Management Board.

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

Meet and Eat with the Transylvanian ministry students! Sunday 15 February



Thanks in part to your generous donations in October, three Unitarian ministry students from Transylvania will be spending a week in the UK with the ministry students who are training in Oxford.

They will be at the Chapel service on Sunday 15 February and you are invited to join us for a pot luck lunch after the service. Please help the organisers (Ingrid Tavkar & Margaret Perry) by bringing a plate of food to share.

If you want more information, please contact Kate Dean (formerly Buchanan) kateboo@gmail.com



An evening of TALENT!

Friday 6 February
(7.30pm to 10.00pm)

Fund-raising evening supporting
'Simple Gifts' and 'Dr Hadwen's Charity'

sponsored by
Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel
and Golders Green Unitarians



The annual Rosslyn Hill Choir fund-raising event will be held on

Friday 6 March
(7.30 – 10.00pm)

The evening will include an excellent home-cooked hot meal, plenty of chances for audience participation in singing 'Songs of the Sea'.

A bar, raffle, and plenty of high spirits will be included in the format of this established event.

Tickets £12 (children under 12 half price) can be purchased either through a choir member or following Sunday morning service.



Other events in the Chapel

Sunday 1 Feb (3.00pm) – Concert for children by DeCapo Music with 'The Lawyer's Orchestra'. We are excited to announce the world première of DaCapo's composer and writer in residences - 'In Time' - to accompany 'Peter and the Wolf'. Tickets: £5 on the door.

Sunday 8 Feb (3.30pm) - An Afternoon of Song by Scale Vocal Trust

Monday 23 Feb (7.30pm) - Concert by Silk Street Sinfonia. The Silk Street Sinfonia is an uncondacted chamber orchestra which was founded in 2013 by students of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Ticket prices - £10, Concessions - 50% off - £5 for students



OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

Donations to Good Causes



In February the Coffee & Tea money and a share of Sunday collection basket will support the

'Bumble Bee Conservation Trust'
(www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk)



**Coffee/tea money and a share
of the Sunday collection
for Good Causes**

Thank you for your generosity in contributing to recent charity collections. We are please to let you know that, so far, we sent donations to the following good causes:

Oct – Chapel Cold Weather Shelter	£301.64
Oct – Ministry student exchange project	£232.15
Nov - Combat Stress	£1,059.96
Dec - Marylebone Women's Shelter	£1,240.10



Stewarding Can You Help? An Appeal to all Members

Stewarding is a simple way to get more involved. Good stewarding makes a difference: a warm welcome from the stewards is a welcome to the Chapel.

Please look at your diaries and contact Jim Burtles (email j.burtles@hotmail.com) with any dates in the next few months when you'd be available.

If you haven't stewarded at a service before please don't worry as there is always an experienced worship assistant present.

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 14 March 2015

All proceed will be donated
to charity projects.



Worship Assistants

1 February	Leighton Cole
8 February	Julia Reid
15 February	Martyn Watson
22 February	Victoria Ellington

Stewards

1 February	Janna Williams & Emma McMahon
8 February	Jane & David Williams
15 February	Zoe Gerrard & Dereck McAuley
22 February	Claire Julian & Sally Somerville

NEWS FROM THE MANAGEMENT BOARD

Any member of the Chapel is welcome to attend the Management Board meetings as an observer. If you would like to attend, as a courtesy, please contact Kerry Reid (Chair) in advance. The next meeting will be on **Thursday 12 February 2015 at 7.00pm** in the Chapel (in the Cottage Basement Science room).

Meeting held on Thursday 11 December 2014 Kerry Reid as Chair

Steve Thompson was nominated as Vice-Chair of the board, to replace Dominic Williams who has resigned from the Board. This was passed unanimously and the Board is delighted with this appointment.

The Estate Group: The Chapel Hall renewal project was discussed. A meeting between delegates of the Board and the Academy School was held in November. The School is willing to fund and project manage the renovation. They are hoping for an arrangement that gives them a greater degree of permanence on the site in return. They are in the process of working on a more detailed plan and proposal for further discussion/negotiation with the Board. They are keen to accommodate the Chapel's needs for the hall, as well as our other licensees.

This was largely welcomed by the Board, though it was deemed essential that any agreement reached with the School must benefit the Chapel as well.

Minister's Report: In his monthly report to the Board, Rev. Patrick O'Neil included a list of the forthcoming services in the Chapel. He also mentioned that the Children's Programme is trialling a possible candidate for the Crèche.

The Minister also brought a recommendation from the Social Action Committee to extend the Chapel's participation in the Cold Weather Shelter for another few weeks, to cover for another church which is now unable to offer the service, due to unforeseen circumstances. A decision was made to offer them use of the hall, provided that this does not inconvenience the Dance School and that the logistics are handled by C4WS.

Administrator's Report: Sharron highlighted the Manse roof as being urgently in need of repair due to a leak. Quotes have been obtained and repairs will be carried out as soon as possible.

Staffing: Sharron's pay and conditions were also discussed, following an earlier Staffing Committee report. No final agreement was reached and the Board has requested that the Staffing Committee look into this again.

Finance: Having obtained quotes for auditors to replace Messrs A Groman, as requested by the Members at the 2013 AGM, it was agreed that Shaw Gibbs be appointed.

Cold Weather Shelter: A report from the Social Action Committee was gratefully received. September and October collections, totalling £1036.73, went to our Cold Weather Shelter, which is in full swing. The response to the Shelter from the congregation has been extremely generous, in time, financial support and in donations of clothing.

Publicity: Adverts for our Sunday Services are currently appearing in the Camden New Journal and the Ham and High. Thanks are due to the Communications Team for this initiative, which the Board fully supports.

Date for your diaries! The AGM date was set for Sunday 15 March 2015. A little later than usual, this date was chosen to avoid half term and the busy schedule of events to be held in the Chapel at that time.

Meeting held on Thursday 8th January 2015 Kerry Reid as Chair

AGM: The agenda for the forthcoming AGM, to be held on Sunday, the 15th of March, was approved. A brief discussion was held about the delegates, who might represent the Chapel at the GA was held. If any Chapel member is interested in representing the Chapel, please contact the Chair of the Board as soon as possible. Board member Christopher Mason is currently representing the Chapel at London District meetings, and will do so for another year, as this is a two year post.

The Estate Group continue to liaise with the Academy School regarding plans for hall, and are hoping to have something ready to circulate for consideration in time for the AGM.

Civil Partnership Conversions: As of 10 December, 2014, conversion from civil partnerships to same sex marriages may take place in religious buildings. The Chapel will be offering this service and its website will be updated accordingly.

Staffing: A discussion of the Chapel's staffing costs was held.

Minister's Report: Patrick O'Neill mentioned how proud he was of the Chapel over the Christmas period. There was an abundance of volunteers to decorate the Chapel for the Christmas services. The Candlelight service on Christmas Eve was beautiful, and packed. The collection amounted to around £600. It was mentioned that we could use this opportunity to bring in more members in the future.

The Cold Weather Shelter has been extended this year, to accommodate the extra demand caused by one of the other churches having to pull out. Claire Julian is stepping down from the running the shelter. The Board wishes to thank her for the fantastic work she has done, and recognises the need to spread the workload of running the shelter. To this end, a sub-group of the Social Action Group will be set up for next year. 15 people have been spared from sleeping on street thanks to everyone's continued efforts.

Rev. O'Neill reported that Martin Whittle will be replacing David Usher as the District Minister.

Administrator's Report: Planning activity was noted with regard to rear of shops backing onto RHUC's car park. This will be followed up.

Treasurer's Report: The new financial year continues to be in line with expectations.



Viewpoint

IS WORLD PEACE POSSIBLE? - Thought for the New Year

The news these days seems endlessly to be about the various different groups of people currently inhabiting the Planet who are virally antagonistic to, and want to harm and eliminate each other. It's not difficult to feel that everything is going downhill and there's nothing we can do to change it; that Peace in the World will never be achieved. So it's now more important than ever it has been that we also hear good news about the positive things going on in the World, which there is. And it's sometimes in the most unlikely of places and mostly never heard of - like a village in Israel, lying mid-way between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. It is called 'Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam (NSWaS)', which translates as 'Oasis of Peace' in Hebrew and in Arabic. Through the inspiration of Fr. Bruno Hussar, (Jewish by birth but who became an Egyptian Catholic), it was founded together by Jews and Palestinian Arabs, all of Israeli citizenship, who, over thirty years ago, jointly made the decision to live together in peace and equality' and, what is more, to educate their children together.

I first heard about NSWaS and decided it had to be supported several years ago. The booklet describing the work of the Village is headed 'Peace is Possible' and describes the Village as 'an Oasis of Peace in a land of conflict'. It's philosophy and ideals are respect and understanding, equality between Jews and Arabs, grassroots peacemaking and education and awareness raising. It's described as being 'democratically and co-operatively run', and 'not politically affiliated'. Founded 30 years ago, by 2003, it already had fifty families living there - approximately half Jewish and half Arab. It runs a 'bi-national kindergarten, a primary school and a junior high, where both Hebrew and Arabic are both spoken. One of its current projects is to run a secondary school. So far it has been able to promote a 'school for peace', described as 'a framework for Arab-Jewish encounter', a guest house with conference facilities, and a 'pluralistic' Spiritual Centre - which gives opportunity for reflection on issues at the core of the Middle East Conflict.

To mark its 30th anniversary, a meeting was recently held at the St. John's Wood Liberal Jewish Synagogue. It was supported by the St. John's Wood Church, Pathways and the Golders Green Unitarian Chapel. In a talk entitled, 'Arabs and Jews refuse to be enemies', we had the privilege of hearing from two speakers, both intimately involved with 'NSWaS'. Bob Fenton, a Jewish Israeli, emigrated from America to Israel over 30 years ago said the Village showed him that there were those in Israel who were 'seriously thinking about peace and building the country in a way that all of its citizens could live together'. He currently works in the Village's Communication and Development Department. Rami Mannas, an Arab Israeli, is now 29. He grew up and was educated in NSWaS after his family made the decision to move there when he was 4. Now working as a Commercial Manager in one of the largest retail chains of pharmacies in Israel, he has also recently started a group for second generation members of the Village to help them become actively involved in promoting and extending its activities. He told us his closest friend is an Israeli Jew.

We need people in the world like the courageous Arabs and Jews who have together made the brave decision to be involved in the NSWaS project. They've taken the risk of being cut off from the communities to which they originally belonged; but that hasn't deterred them. Hearing Rami, in particular, describing his total commitment to the Village and its work in promoting co-existence, not only brought tears to my eyes, but also raised my hopes that, however it looks right now, peace in the world is possible. What they are doing is a lesson for us all. We should let them know we salute them and can, if we wish, do that by supporting its work financially.

In its basic ethos of tolerance and the acceptance of difference, the NSWaS project, to me, feels very Unitarian. If you're interested to know more and feel drawn towards supporting it, the Village website:<http://nswas.com> and/or the British Friends of Neve Shalom-Wahat al-Salam (a UK registered charity) @ www.oasisofpeaceuk.org are where to find out more. **Shirley Malin**

Oasis of Peace UK
British Friends of Neve Shalom / Wahat al-Salam

FEBRUARY DIARY

(* = further details elsewhere in Bulletin)

Sunday 1 February11.00am – Morning service -
'Wobbly Feet and Fly-Away Hearts' *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill7.00pm – Evening service - *'Celebration of Imbolc'* *
Led by members of the 'Wheel of the Year' group.**Tuesday 3 February**

7.00pm – Poetry group meets*

Wednesday 4 February5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*
7.30pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel***Friday 6 February**

7.00pm – An evening of Talent! *

Sunday 8 February11.00am – Morning service – *'Are You For Real?'* *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill7.00pm – Evening service - *'Meditation'* *
Led by Ingrid Tavkar**Tuesday 10 February**

7.30pm – Social Action Committee meets

Wednesday 11 February5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*
7.30pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel***Thursday 12 February**

7.00pm – Management Committee meets*

Sunday 15 February11.00am - Morning service – *'The Oldest Unitarian Churches in the World'* *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill

12.30pm – Pot Luck Lunch in the side aisle

7.00pm – Evening service - *'The Oldest Unitarian Churches in the World'* *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill**Wednesday 18 February**5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*
7.30pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel***Thursday 19 February**

7.30pm – Book Group meets*

Sunday 22 February11.00am - Morning service –
'Have you got imagination?' *
Guest Preacher Alan Ruston7.00pm – Evening service - *'Intellect and Spirituality'* *
Led by James Chiriyankandath**Wednesday 25 February**5.45pm – Tai Chi class in the Chapel*
7.30pm – Choir rehearsal in the Chapel***Chapel Directory****Chapel Office**Sharron Conduit
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