



Open Mind

The Bulletin of Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel

August 2014

August Services

Sunday 3 August (11.00am)

'WW1 Centenary Service of Remembrance'

**Led by Rev Dr Patrick T O'Neill &
Ed Fordham**

Today we look back and reflect on the conflict that was to start across the whole of Europe and become known as World War One – The Great War... The lives of all in Great Britain were touched – all families felt a loss – indeed by the end of the war 16 million had been killed and over 20 million were wounded.

We will draw out the voices from that war in poems, readings, hymns and songs – to reflect, to consider what happened, to give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy, and to remember. You are most welcome to join us for this moving service!

Sunday 3 August (7.00pm)

'Lammas Celebration'

The Wheel of the Year celebration of Lughnassadh or Lammas, the first of the Celtic harvest festivals. With music, ritual, poetry and perhaps a circle dance, we celebrate abundance. Led by the Wheel of the Year group.

Sunday 10 August (11.00am)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching

'Human Rights in the 21st Century'

Peace, hunger, shelter, justice, protection of the defenceless: these are all very abstract notions for most of us, most of the time. So it is important for us to find concrete articulate expression of what these notions and ideals translate to in the realities of human community.

Sunday 10 August (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 17 August (11.00am)

**Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching
*'Living In Wonder'***

For whatever reason, on this speck of cosmic dust, planet earth, the universe has become conscious of itself in us, astronomer Chet Raymo reminds us. And thus it may well be that our purpose here is to witness even as we seek to become worthy of our participation in the Creation. Come join us for a lively discussion...and bring a friend!

Sunday 17 August (7.00pm)

"Music and the Spirit"

Led by Rev O'Neill and our Music Director Matthew Fletcher. Do come join us and bring a friend!

Sunday 24 August (11.00pm)

**Guest Preacher Terri Quaye
*'Our Daily Gift'***

An opportunity to reflect on whether we are consciously aware of this miracle and its effect on our quality of life.

Sunday 24 August (7.00pm)

We will be drawing on Terri Quaye's sermon from the morning, reflecting and sharing our thoughts. Led by a member of the congregation.

Sunday 31 August (11.00am)

Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill preaching

***'To Hell With Damnation' -
or 'How Abraham Lincoln Finally Got to Heaven'***

Here's a radical thought: ever considered that perhaps there are many ways to be a good person, a person pleasing to God? And just maybe there are many kinds of religions that help people become good and decent and loving in their own ways? Come join us for a lively discussion...and bring a friend!

Sunday 31 August (7.00pm)

**Rev Dr O'Neill leads the discussion on
*'To Hell With Damnation' -
or 'How Abraham Lincoln Finally Got to Heaven'***

**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, 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 **September** issue of 'Open Mind' is **Wednesday 20 August 2014**.

From the Editor

*In August, the large masses of berries,
which, when in flower, had attracted many wild bees,
gradually assumed their bright velvety crimson hue,
and by their weight again
bent down and broke their tender limbs.*

Henry David Thoreau

The pagans call the 1st August 'Lammas' - from the ancient words meaning 'loaf mass,' for on this day the ancients baked the first loaves of the harvest. This is only the beginning of the season, the full harvest is yet to come. But the crops we have sown, the plans we have laid, have now borne enough fruit that we can sample their richness.

Glennie Kindred writes, 'Lammas is a celebration of the summer and the gathering in of the grain harvest.. After all the hard work of getting the grain crop cut, threshed, stored and stacked, there came a time for feasting, and celebration.'

What has grown in you this year? What do you need to store up in your inner world to nurture you during the cold and dark of the winter months? And perhaps of most significance at this time, what will you offer to balance the darkness in the world?

On Sunday 3 August, at our 'evening gathering', we have the opportunity to celebrate this day with music, ritual, poetry and dance.

What else is on offer in August at Rosslyn Hill Chapel? - Although our usual Chapel programmes will not be held, Sunday services continue - starting with 'WW1 Centenary Service of Remembrance' on Sunday 3 August. (p.4) Rev Patrick O'Neill will be preaching on 10, 17 and 31 August, and while he takes a break we will have Terri Quye in our pulpit.

Visitors may join us giving us an opportunity to welcome them to our Unitarian community - So please join us if you can. **Ingrid Tavkar**

*'Whilst August yet wears her golden crown,
ripening fields lush - bright with promise;
summer waxes long, then wanes, quietly passing
Her fading green glory on to riotous autumn.'*

Michelle L. Thieme, August's Crown





PO'Nderings

From our Minister
Rev Patrick T. O'Neill

Hope the summer is allowing you all some time for rest and re-creation. There are some upcoming events at Chapel that I want to call to your attention.

On Sunday 3 August, we have put together a very moving Service commemorating the beginning of the WWI Centennial year. My thanks to Ed Fordham who researched and put the whole service together for us. You won't want to miss it, I'm sure! Our intention is to specifically commemorate the twenty-one men from our congregation who died in that war throughout the coming year as their anniversary dates occur.

Then on Sunday 10 August at 4.00pm, the Chapel will host a farewell celebration for one of our former ministers of the Chapel(1986-1990), Rev David Usher, as he is leaving his current post as District Minister to take up his new ministry as an Interim Minister in California. Unitarians from around the London and South East District will join us in wishing David a hearty 'Bon Voyage' after 13 years as our District Minister. Come join us at 4.00pm that day.

As you already know, our Children's Programme on Sunday mornings is on summer hiatus until September. We are interviewing some well-qualified teachers to succeed Anthea Williams as our new Coordinator for the programme. Stay tuned as we expect to make an announcement this month.

I am delighted to announce that the British Border Agency has finally approved the three-year extension for our visas. The process is one I wouldn't wish upon you, but it's done now. My thanks to the congregation and the Board for all the support and work involved in helping us achieve this!

Finally, friends, I now have a set date for my knee-replacement surgery on 12 September. The expected recuperation and rehabilitation period will take a number of weeks, I'm afraid. The Worship Committee is already at work scheduling some excellent guest preachers, so rest assured our Sunday services will be of a high standard while I am out of the pulpit. Patricia and I will keep you well apprised of things as they go along.

Thanks for all you do for our Chapel! Have a great August! ...po'n

Chapel Activities



Monthly Activities and Meetings

CHAPEL POETRY GROUP – meets on **Tuesday 5 August at 7.30pm**. For more information contact George Appleby (Tel: 020 7424 9733, email: gappleby@talktalk.net)

POT LUCK LUNCHESES - The next 'Pot Luck Lunch' will be on **Sunday 31 August** 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

All other Chapel programmes will not be held in August.

You may like to mark in your diaries the following start up dates for September:

Tuesday 2 September (7.30pm) – Poetry Group

Wednesday 3 September (7.30pm) – Chapel Choir Rehearsal

Tuesday 9 September (7.00) – Social Action Committee

Thursday 11 September (7.00pm) – Management Board

Sunday 21 September (11.00am) – 'Harvest Festival'

Sunday 21 September (7.00) - 'Autumn Equinox'

Sunday 28 September (12.30pm) – 'Pot Luck Lunch' (in the side aisle)

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

Viewpoint - 'Looking and Seeing'

In the past I had about 40 years of regular counselling. Most questions in those sessions were related to life and living, relationships and the universe.

Towards the end of that period in my life something totally unexpected and extraordinary happened to me. Wherever I was and whatever I was doing (like washing the dishes) I had a string of cognitions and realizations, meaning I could suddenly 'see things'. It was a wonderful and dramatic change for me. Every time when it happened, it was as if someone had opened a window for me to see something new. It was as if I had grown and thus my horizon was further extended and I could now see and know 'things' I hadn't realized before.

Trying to work out what was happening to me, I had another realization: In those years of counselling I had to look: I was constantly asked, invited - to look. When I did not know the answer to a question, I never allowed myself to say: 'I don't know' or 'there is nothing there', as I knew, I was the only person who could find it. So I persisted and kept on looking until I found the answer. So one could say I practised looking and ended up seeing. I have also come to realize that while this is happening to me, my mind is by-passed and it is I, the spirit, who is looking and then seeing.

Thinking is of course very important. Some believe thinking proves our existence as humans. That is why Descartes proclaimed, 'Cogito ergo sum' (I think therefore I am). Of course that is true, but I now know that there is something more basic, more valuable, and more important than thinking, and that is looking which results in seeing which equals knowing. **Britta Burtles**

*'The world is full of magic things,
patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper.'*
W.B. Yeats

Pastoral care required in August.

A senior member of Rosslyn Hill Chapel will require some care for much of August due to their existing carers being on holiday.

The requirement would be for the carer to attend the member in their home in the centre of Hampstead Village for periods of up to four hours to be a cheerful companion, do light shopping, tidy the house with possibly some cleaning, and provide light meals or accompany the member to Hampstead coffee houses etc. The carer could do all or some of the above. A reasonable hourly rate would be payable.

Please contact Christopher Mason -
07721 592869 for further information.



WW1 Centenary Service of Remembrance

August 4th this year marks 100 years from when Britain joined the commencement of hostilities for World War One. To recognise this we will have a special service on Sunday 3rd August and are starting a series of services of remembrance.

Our aim is to remember, to reflect and to learn. There will be no glorification of the horror of war. But 21 men from this Chapel went to war and gave their lives- they are all commemorated on the memorial in the altar space of the church. In addition we are researching details on each of the men, their families, their lives and when and where they died.

If you can be there on Sunday 3rd August do come along - it looks to be a special and emotional service. -

If you would like to help with the research project about the Chapel during World War One please contact ed.fordham@gmail.com or have a chat with him at one of the services.



COFFEE & TEA MONEY DURING AUGUST

will be in aid of 'SimpleGifts' and our Sunday collection basket will also be divided with 'SimpleGifts' during August

Volunteers invited



Serving tea/coffee at 12.00pm in the side aisle is an enjoyable and useful activity. Please see Margaret Perry to offer 30 minutes of time to suit you. Thanks.

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

The first same sex wedding took place in May 2014 and the second same sex wedding in July. Both events went very well and several comments were made about how welcoming the Chapel and its members were. Our Minister received a letter of support from an MP who attended the second event.

STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE

ROSSLYN HILL UNITARIAN CHAPEL
IS PROUD TO BE
ONE OF THE FIRST CHURCHES IN
LONDON TO HOLD

LEGAL SAME-SEX WEDDING CEREMONIES

Ahead of the curve

On behalf of Russell and myself and our families we wanted to thank the congregation of Rosslyn Hill Chapel for their support in the run up to and during our wedding last month.

Rev O'Neill was superb, Leighton Cole as Registrar and Derek McAuley just brilliant on the day - and Huggy so helpful as our parents took over the chapel for flower arranging.

But aesthetics aside we were proud and honoured to make our vows in a place of such beauty, charm, simplicity and contemplation. Supported by Matthew, the organ and piano, and some superb singing it will be a day we and our families and friends will never forget. Thank you Unitarians for being ahead of the curve and understanding the simple and honest meaning of equality. **Ed Fordham and Russell Eagling**



**Martyn Watson's & Tim Skelly's
Wedding May 2014**



Ed & Russell with wedding guests July 2014

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY



**QUIZ
NIGHT**

Quiz Night in Hampstead

**Which is the only animal born with horns?
What is the name of Harry Potter's owl?
How many lines are there in a limerick?**

If you could have answered these questions correctly, your team might have won the coveted prize at Quiz Night which was held on Friday 11 July in the Chapel. There was a delicious buffet, drinks and many more questions. There was laughter, lively chat, intense competition and even disputes with the judges – all typical of a good team sport. And, more importantly, the evening raised £525 for Simple Gifts, the Unitarian Centre for Social Action.

A big thank you to members of the Chapel's Social Action Committee for organising this event.



Other events in the Chapel

Saturday 2 August (7.30pm) – 'It's Nice To Belong' an evening of music & light entertainment in tribute to Mary Powell (LEBA's long serving Secretary), in support of The London Ex-Boxers Association. Tickets £15 Concessions for LEBA Members & Seniors £10 from David Powell 020 7240 4421 or on the door

Saturday 16 August (7.30pm) – 'The Jones & Maruri Cello & Guitar Duo'. Music by Marcello, Marchelie, Gnatalli, Romberg & Falla. Admission £5

Saturday 30 August (7.30pm) – 'Grand Duo - Hampstead Concert' - Gershwin, Bernstein, Brahms & Weber – works for clarinet & piano. Admission £10 (www.seetickets.com) or £12 on the door.



To make everyone feel welcome in our beautiful chapel on Sunday mornings; and to help them feel comfortable within our friendly community, we use a Welcoming Steward system.

We arrange for two regular members of our congregation to be there, greeting and welcoming people as they come in. They are there to offer a smile, a hymn book, the order of service for the day and an invitation to stay behind for a chat over tea and biscuits.

Visitors are also encouraged to enquire about our approach to religion and the historic building where we congregate. Jim Burtles



Worship Assistants

3 August	Julia Reid
10 August	Haley Glennie-Smith
17 August	Nick Holywell-Walker
24 August	Zoe Gerrard
31 August	Leighton Cole

Stewards

3 August	Mercedes Freedman & Claire Julian
10 August	Victoria & Bill Ellington
17 August	Leighton Cole & Ken Levy
24 August	Britta & Jim Burtles
31 August	Zoe Gerrard & Ed Fordham



OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

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 11 September 2014 at 7.00pm** in the Chapel Committee Room.

Meeting held on Thursday 10 July 2014

Kerry Reid in the chair

Minister's Report

Rev Patrick O'Neill's and Patricia Williams's Visa renewals have been approved. Half of the cost of this will be covered by the Minister's expenses fund. The Board has agreed to pay the other 50% from Chapel funds. We look forward to at least another three year's ministry from Patrick!

The Chapel held its second same sex wedding in July. This went very well and several comments were made about how welcoming the Chapel and its members were. Rev. O'Neill received a letter of support from an MP who attended this event.

Rev. O'Neill will undergo knee surgery in September. Thanks are due to the Worship Group for organising cover for Patrick during his recovery.

There will be a special service at 11am on the Sunday 3 August to mark the centenary of the commencement of hostilities of WW1. Thanks are due to Ed Fordham, the Worship Group and Rev. O'Neill for organising what promises to be a very moving service.

A service will be hosted by Rosslyn Hill Chapel for our District Minister, the Rev. David Usher, on the afternoon of Sunday 10 August. All members are invited to this and we hope as many of you as possible are able to attend.

Staffing

Anthea Williams has now resigned as Children's Programme Co-ordinator. The post was advertised in local schools but no applicants came forward as a direct result of this. We have however received two good applications through word of mouth and they shall be interviewed later this month.

Gabriela Selin, who has run the crèche for a number of years has also handed in her notice and we shall be seeking a replacement in the near future.

Our administrator, Sharron Conduit, has now signed a contract with us. A licence agreement combining the Organist and Choir Directors duties was finalised and we hope that this will be signed shortly.

SGM

The date for the SGM was set for the **12th of October**. The possible options for the renovation of the hall will be brought to our members for their consideration. Please put this date in your diaries!

Fundraising

As the fees for hiring the Chapel for events has remained the same since we carried out a market comparison two years ago, the Board voted to adjust these, according to inflation. This will generate some extra income for the Chapel.

Margaret Perry, as a representative of the choir brought us a suggestion for a fundraising project for the choir, and asked if the Board might like to be a part of this, perhaps splitting any proceeds between the choir and the Chapel. The details of this will be finalised before we make any decision on this.

Treasurer's Report

The account sheets were discussed. Options for the monies set aside for the hall renewal were discussed, so that we might generate a higher interest on them until this renovation goes ahead. This will be discussed with the Long Term Finance Group.

Committee Reports

The Board gratefully received a report from the Choir. No report was requested from the Children's Programme as their co-ordinator has resigned and the programme is taking a summer hiatus.

Administrator's Report

Sharron reported that she had her annual appraisal this month. This will be discussed at September's Board.



**On Sunday 29 June, Dr Jane Williams (Past President of the GA)
led our service focusing on
'General Assembly Sunday'
and here are some parts of this service.**

Call to Worship

*We come from separate places to be together here.
We know only a little of each other's thoughts,
dreams and cherished hopes,
only a very little of each other's
confusion and anxiety.
But together, here, we become as one,
lifted by each human presence,
lifted by the spirit flowing between us,
the comfort of togetherness.
Every whisper of truth, every openness of heart
takes away our separateness
and binds us to the common purpose
of serving what is good, beautiful and true.*

Margaret Kirk

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (GAUFCC or colloquially British Unitarians) is the umbrella organisations for Unitarian, Free Christians and other liberal religious congregations in the United Kingdom.

The General Assembly was formed in 1928, with denominational roots going back to the Great Ejection of 1662. Its headquarters building is Essex Hall in central London, on the site of the first avowedly Unitarian chapel in England, set up in 1774.

The GAUFCC brought together various strands and traditions besides Unitarianism. These included English Presbyterianism, General Baptist, Methodism, Liberal Christianity, Christian Universalism, Religious Humanism and Unitarian Universalism.

Unitarians are now an open faith community celebrating diverse beliefs; some of its members would describe themselves as Buddhist, Pagan, or Jewish, while many others are humanist, agnostic, or atheist. Unitarianism differs from many other religions in that it helps people find their own spiritual path rather than defining it for them.

The Unitarian Movement is sometimes described as a patchwork quilt.

'The GA has always been a patchwork of people, churches and beliefs. Its success, and by its very continuance that is what it is, is based on a sense of compromise and communication amongst the congregations and the people who make it up. In over eighty years there has never been a danger of it splitting apart despite the disparate views held within its constituent parts. Ways of speaking together and seeing the other point of view have consistently been found despite people and organisations seemingly being poles apart. This is a cause for continuing celebration. We continue to worship together under one banner, and this service is an attempt to celebrate this achievement.'
Alan Ruston

'Some of the patches are bold and colourful, standing out from the rest, whereas others have quieter, calmer patterns and shades. All are necessary for the patchwork cover to be effective. From time to time, some of the patches become worn out or even torn and damaged and remedial work needs to be done to restore or change them. This is happening all the time in the Assembly. A few churches are closing, a few others are going through turmoil and others still, are growing or grouping together to work for and support each other. From time to time the whole coverlet is found to need an overhaul.'
Dawn Buckle

'A Unitarian community is like a quilt, a patchwork of people of different shapes, sizes and prejudices, different colours, enthusiasms, ages, and moods; a patchwork quilt to creep under from the colds of solitariness, fear and partialness, somewhere to experience the warmth of companionship, wholeness and love. To leave the Unitarian community is to leave the quilt's warm cosiness for the openness, opportunity and challenge of the wider world. Unitarian community is like that.'
Rev Andrew Hill

Closing Words

*Beloved Community -
- suffused with the Divine Presence -
we will carry you in our hearts always.*

*May our inner life be nourished by our community.
And may our community be strengthened
by each person's unique gifts.*

*May we honour the diversity of our spiritual journeys,
and help each other on the path. Amen*

Yvonne Aburrow

OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

VALUES IN ACTION

Do you feel passionate about a cause, project or issue that demonstrates your Unitarian values?



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 first 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)

On Sunday 6 July, Leighton Cole presented Values in Action

Last September the Social Action Committee suggested that the chapel support the Food Bank in Chalk Farm. The congregation were encouraged to bring non-perishable goods to chapel and the Social Action Committee ensured that these were safely delivered to the Food Bank once a month.

In April I was a steward. I arrived early and set up the table to receive the Food Bank items, adding my packet of pasta. At the end of the service I returned to put the food in the loft and was surprised to see that there was so much food on the table that I could not carry the bag upstairs to the loft on my own. I reflected on this during Sunday afternoon – on the generosity and constancy of the congregation in providing food each week. I discussed it with the Social Action Committee and we decided that this month's Values in Action would be a thank you to the congregation for their support and also bring news from the Food Bank itself.

I visited the Food Bank which is held in the Revelation Baptist Church in Primrose Hill. I would encourage anyone interested to visit on a Saturday morning between 11 and 1pm. You will be warmly welcomed by the volunteers and offered coffee/tea and biscuits as are all the people who come to collect emergency food. I was told by Laura, one of the organisers, that they normally have around 25 people coming each Saturday, but there can be more in the winter, sometimes over 70. Everyone is given enough food for 3 days and needs to have a voucher from a professional. People are not encouraged to use the Food Bank regularly as this is emergency support and people are referred on to other long term services for help.

People attend for a variety of reasons:
they may be in debt;
the recent benefit changes have often meant that people may not receive their normal payments, or receive them late;
they may be on short term contracts or be paid the minimum wage and not be able to meet their rent/bills that week;
they may have mental health problems which prevent them from organising their finances;
they may have returned from working abroad and not yet organised a job.

These are people in real need. I was struck by the professionalism and care of the volunteers despite the fact that they are ordinary people drawn from their congregation. There are a range of services for referral including a debt counselling service. Laura said that she had personally intervened when someone with mental health problems had been caught up in payday loans that she could not afford. Sometimes chatting with people elicit less serious problems: some people do not own a can opener so need to be given ring-pull tins (although the food bank now has purchased some can openers to give out). Some people do not have a cooker so need instant rice or pasta.

I will end with a lovely story that Laura shared with me. Last Christmas they received a number of donations from businesses in the area including a big box of chocolates. They decided to put the box aside and give it to a family. As often happens in a busy place, though, the chocolates sat around for a few weeks. One day a very old lady looking beaten down by her hard life came in. Laura saw the box was still there and decided to give it to her. The lady was overcome and cried. She said that she had never received such a generous gift.

So this month we will be giving the coffee/tea money and half the collection to help the good people with their work at the Chalk Farm Food Bank.

But I would like to end where I began and say that this is a big thank you to you the congregation for your Values in Action in support of the Food Bank. Perhaps you would like to give yourself a round of applause.



*The world has enough for everyone's need,
but not enough for everyone's greed.*

Mahatma Gandhi



OUR CHAPEL COMMUNITY

ROSSLYN HILL UNITARIAN CHAPEL

Consultation with our congregation about the role of the District Minister

Firstly, thank you for consulting with us about the role of the District Minister. I felt that the most appropriate way to garner our congregation's opinions on this was to email a short piece about the District Minister's role, together with the two questions that we were asked to respond to. The processes set out in our standing orders to hold a Special General Meeting did not allow the time to discuss these questions openly as a whole congregation before the deadline for this consultation. The views expressed therefore, are not necessarily a consensus view of the congregation as a whole, but are those of a number of individual members.

Kerry Reid (Chair of the Board of Trustees, RHUC)

A) Considering your experience and that of your congregation generally, what do you feel about the role of the District Minister?

Many members of our congregation feel that they have been well served by Rev David Usher in his role as District Minister, and that he has defined the role as he does it. Our Minister, the Rev Patrick O'Neill expressed that he, along with the other Ministers in the District, has also felt extremely well supported by David, who made him feel very welcome as an American Minister in the UK by Rev. Usher.

David Usher showed tremendous vision by starting **FUSE** and the Unitarian charity **SimpleGifts**.

FUSE has brought the District together, giving people a chance to meet and socialise, offered lively workshops and a fun weekend. Meeting other Unitarians in the district is a huge plus as the movement is thin on the ground. David has been keen to find ways to revitalise the movement and this has been a successful one. It has energised the District and given it an identity.

SimpleGifts offers social action in a deprived borough of London, but also helps congregations clarify their own vision of social action and to act upon it.

Both projects unite the district and bring energy to its congregations.

However, many in our congregation did not feel that they knew enough about the role of the District Minister to make an informed comment about it. Not enough has been done to engage with congregations to inform them of the role of the District Minister and the support available/provided to them. The Board of our congregation should perhaps take some responsibility for this also.

While many in our congregation are fully supportive of the role of District Minister, the view was expressed that both the LDPA and the District Minister are a tax on the larger congregations to supply support services to small and provincial congregations.

The role of the District Minister was very important in our search process for, and appointment of a settled minister.

We were provided with support and guidance and the LDPA provided the necessary certificate of sponsorship required by the UK Border Agency for our American minister and his wife to obtain their Visas. They have just supported and guided us through the necessary steps for the renewal of these visas.

B) What suggestions do you have for the role of his replacement?

A large component of the District Minister's role relates to spiritual matters and so the general consensus was that the role should be filled by a minister. However, the question was raised about whether there was a case for splitting the role into two; spiritual and administrative?

The next person in the role should seek to enhance their visibility within the District, perhaps by attending/taking more services within the District, supplying pieces for congregation's newsletters and engaging with their social media. They should actively encourage more collaboration between larger congregations to provide a stronger presence in London.

The next District Minister should seek opportunities to represent a Unitarian voice within the media. This may include local/national news and radio, as well as social media. The movement misses out on a lot of publicity and PR on social issues because we do not have a readily identifiable spokesperson to convey a Unitarian point of view. The Pulse website only offers the opportunity to download a newsletter, so our London PR is entirely passive. We recognise that Derek McAuley and the GA do a great job, but having a spokesperson on the local news is important. Other opportunities to engage with the wider community, such as the BBC's 'Thought of the Day' and 'Pause for Thought' could also be explored.

He/she should continue to provide support to congregations seeking to employ ministers from overseas.

The next District Minister should be a person with vision and a sense of how the movement could/should go forward. They should also be a person with considerable experience in administration.

Our Larger Unitarian Movement



You're invited!



LDPA Council invites all Unitarians
within the District

to a **Farewell Celebration**

for the **Rev David Usher**

before he departs for the United States.

Sunday 10th August 2014 from 4.00pm

Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel
London NW3 1NG
(nearest tube station Hampstead)

RSVP by 4th August to Danielle Wilson
daniellewilson@ldpa.org.uk



34th IARF World Congress

will be held at the

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM UK

24th – 27th August 2014

*'Challenges for Religious Freedom
in the digital age'*

Keynote speaker is Dr Karen Armstrong

author of

'TWELVE STEPS TO A COMPASSIONATE LIFE.'

Registration Details can be found at

IARF website: www.iarf.net/congress/



Unitarian Music Society

Annual Conference

Friday 8th – Monday 11th August 2014

The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow.

A weekend of fellowship and music making
for singers, instrumentalists and non-musicians.
All ages are welcome.

For further details contact:

phone: 0151 625 5488

email: richardandhelenmerritt@hotmail.com

AUGUST DIARY

(* = further details elsewhere in Bulletin)

Sunday 3 August

11.00am – Morning service –
'WW1 Centenary Service of Remembrance' *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill & Ed Fordman

7.00pm – Evening service - *'Lammas Celebration'* *
Led by our 'Wheel of the Year' group

Sunday 10 August

11.00am – Morning service –
'Human Rights in the 21st Century' *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill

4.00pm – **'Farewell Celebration'**
for Rev David Usher *

7.00pm – Evening Gathering – *'Meditation'* *
Led by Ingrid Tavkar

Sunday 17 August

11.00am – Morning service – *'Living In Wonder'* *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill

7.00pm – Evening Gathering –
'Exploring Our Values: Compassion' *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick O'Neill

Sunday 24 August

11.00am – Morning service – *'Our Daily Gift'* *
Led by Guest Preacher Terri Quaye

7.00pm – Evening service – *'Our Daily Gift'* *
Led by a member of the congregation

Sunday 31 August

11.00am – Morning service –
'To Hell With Damnation' - or
'How Abraham Lincoln Finally Got to Heaven' *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill

12.30 – Pot Luck Lunch *

7.00pm – Evening service –
'To Hell With Damnation' - or
'How Abraham Lincoln Finally Got to Heaven' *
Led by Rev Dr Patrick T. O'Neill

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