

The quarterly magazine of the London District and South Eastern Provincial Assembly of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches—Soon to be on the Web at www.unitarian.info



The photographs in this issue show committed participants from member congregations of the LDPA active in discussions about development and growth at the recent joint LDPA and FOY Seminar on Congregational Development.

COMMUNICATION THAT SEPARATES US

A WAKEUP CALL OFFERED BY DAWN DUCHAC AT THE LDPA AUTUMN MEETING

I once knew a man named Alan.

This man was unique, unlike any man I'd ever met before.

Everyday, I saw him in the hospital where I worked.

Alan had a passion for dialogue. He was always bright and animated when he spoke. His favourite "person" to talk to, however, was a portrait on the wall.

Now, I wanted to help Alan. I thought I could, well, bring him back to reality a bit. One day, I walked over and feigned interest in the painting.

"What a lovely picture," I said.

Alan politely agreed, and resumed his conversation.

Undeterred, I interrupted again, and asked what the topic of discussion for that day was.

"Lot's of things" he said.

I just kept on going.

"You know Alan, when I look at this painting. I don't hear anything."

Alan looked at me through the eyes of one with an "old soul," and simply said "You don't know him as

well as I do."

And so I come before you to speak about communication.

The kind of communication, which separates Unitarians and potential Unitarians.

Us and them. The old and the new.

Kay Montgomery, a Unitarian Universalist from Detroit, says: "An unspoken feeling seems to exist that if you're smart enough to find us, we'll let you in... Many of us hesitate to invite others to join us at

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LONDON DISTRICT and South Eastern PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY of Unitarian & Free Christian Churches (Incorporated)
No. 649091 Registered Address: Essex Hall, 1/6 Essex Street, London WC2R 3HY Registered Charity No. 233390

LDPA Congregations

London Bethnal Green

Mansford Street Church & Mission,
117 Mansford St., London E2 6LX
Tel.: 020 7739 7241

Billingshurst

Unitarian Chapel, High St., Billingshurst,
W Sussex Tel.: 01276 503 489

Brighton

Brighton Unitarian Church, New
Rd., Brighton, E Sussex BN1 6UF
Tel: 01273 696 022

London Brixton

Unitarian Christian Church, 63 Effra Rd.,
London SW2 1BZ Tel: 020 7737 7576

Chatham

Chatham Unitarian Church, Hamond
Hill, New Rd., Chatham, Kent ME4
6 AP Tel: 01634 847 407

Croydon

Unitarian & Free Christian Church, 1
The Croydon Flyover, Croydon,
Surrey CR0 7HB Tel: 020 8667 1681

Ditchling Old Meeting House,
Ditchling, Hassocks, W Sussex Tel:
01323 502 763

Dover Unitarian Church, Adrian St.,
Dover, Kent Tel: 01304 206 601

Enfield & St Albans

Meets in members homes and in
Friends Meeting House, St. Albans
Tel: 01707 872 267

Godalming Unitarian Chapel,
Meadrow, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3JB
Tel: 01483 414 878

London Golders Green

Golders Green Unitarians, 31 1/2
Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS
Tel: 020 8455 5000

London Hampstead

Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Rosslyn Hill,
Hampstead, London NW3 1NG
Tel: 020 7431 4160

Hastings

Unitarian FC Church, South Terrace,
Hastings, E Sussex Tel: 01424 432 135

Horsham

Unitarian Church, Worthing Rd.,
Horsham, W Sussex RH12 1SL
Tel: 01403 263 377

London Islington

Unity Church, Upper St.,
Islington, London N1
Tel: 020 7226 0276

London Kensington

Essex Church, 112 Palace Gardens
Terrace, London W8 4RT Tel: 020 7221
6514

Lewes

Westgate Chapel, High St., Lewes, E
Sussex BN7 1XH Tel: 01273 471 149

London Lewisham

The Meeting House, 41 Bromley
Rd., Catford, London SE6 2TS
Tel: 020 8695 0389

Maidstone

Unitarian Church, Market Buildings,
Earl St., Maidstone, Kent ME14 1HP
Tel: 01795 470 837

London Newington Green

Newington Green Church, 39 Newing-
ton Green, Stoke Newington, London
N16 9PR Tel: 020 8809 1138

Northiam

Unitarian Chapel, Dixters Rd., Northiam,
Rye, E Sussex Tel: 01424 202 552

Reading Reading Fellowship meet-
ings at a central venue Tel: 0118 941
6976

Richmond

Richmond & Putney Unitarian Church,
Ormond Rd., Richmond, Surrey TW10
6TH Tel: 020 8332 9675

Sevenoaks

Old Meeting House, Bessels Green,
Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2PX
Tel: 01732 458 234

Southend

Unitarian Meeting House, Grange
Gardens, Southend-on-Sea, Essex
Tel: 01702 478 541

London Stratford

Unitarian Christian Church, West
Ham Lane, Stratford, London E15
Tel: 020 8534 3646

Tenterden

Old Meeting House, Ashford Rd.,
Tenterden. Kent Tel: 01424 202552

Watford

Unitarian Fellowship meeting in
Friends' Meeting House, Church Rd.,
Watford, Hertfordshire
Tel: 01923 232 110

Worthing

Unitarian Fellowship meeting at
Friends' Meeting House, 34 Mill
Rd., Worthing, W Sussex BN11 5DR
Tel: 01903 202477



The highest qualification a lay preacher can attain in the Unitarian movement is the Certificate in Lay Preaching and the Conduct of Worship awarded only after the completion of several years of study involving the preparation of a number of essays and other practical work. Few complete this programme and it is such an honour that the certificate is normally presented by the General Assembly President at the National Annual Meetings. Cyril Haddon, distinguished lay preacher and member of the Watford Fellowship was unwell at the time of the last meetings and so the certificate came to him at a Watford Service, here presented by Alan Ruston (Past President of the General Assembly). Well done Cyril!

BELIEVE IN YOURSELVES

Theme Talk from the
Rev James Robinson
at the FOY/LDPA Day

I am a fifth generation Unitarian. When I decided to enter the ministry there was not much question which tradition it would be. I was ordained in 1978 and have worked full time as a Unitarian minister in local churches. For the past twenty years I was Senior Minister in Brewster, Massachusetts. During these years the congregation grew significantly, and we also started a new Unitarian church in our area. Because of this growth, I was asked to speak at church growth workshops, and this required that I become familiar with the research done on church growth in the United States.

I have been minister at Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel in London for six months. It is clear to me that there are major differences in the place of organized religion in America compared to the United Kingdom. In America, over 40% of the population belongs to and attends a religious organization. In the UK it is somewhere around 7%. In America people talk about their church, synagogue, or ashram with pride. In the UK it is not an easy topic to discuss. Growing a Unitarian church in the UK is much harder than growing one in America.

However, it is possible. What I present now are my conclusions about what can be brought from the American Unitarian Universalist experience, to the British Unitarian and Free Christian experience, in terms of growing a local congregation.

The first step to church growth is for the leaders of a congregation to get together, with their minister if they have one, and asked themselves honestly: "Do we really want to grow larger in membership?" Basically, there are three answers to this question: status quo, modest growth, or significant growth. Here is a description of each one:

1. Status Quo. We are either happy with who we are or too tired and discouraged to try anything new. We will keep going as we are, without any intentional attempt to grow. We accept the fact that we will probably keep shrinking in membership, just

as Unitarian and Free Christian Churches have done, in the UK, for the past 100 years.

2. Moderate growth. We want to grow enough to at least stay the same size, or perhaps a few members larger. This means we will make an honest and sustained effort to improve our worship services, programs, and publicity so as to attract more new members.

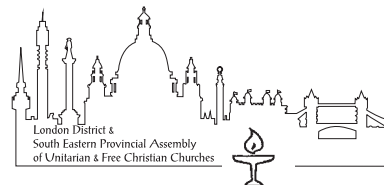
3. Significant growth. We will attempt to grow our membership significantly in the next five years. We will apply church growth ideas which will cause some discomfort in the congregation, but can also encourage us with a new vision. We

will aim for doubling our congregational size, or if we are smaller, aim for quadrupling our membership.

The church leaders and minister must honestly decide which of these three options they want. If they decide to keep the status quo, then no more discussion is necessary.

If they decide to aim for modest growth, then the matter must be brought to the entire congregation. For the minister and church leaders to increase the church membership, even modestly, they need the backing of the congregation. This entails discussions and, at best, a public vote of the congregation.

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ALL WELCOME at our London District & South Eastern ANNUAL MEETING & SERVICE Saturday 19 March 2005



1.30 pm—Anniversary Service

conducted by the Rev Cathal Courtney
Minister Islington & Newington Green Unitarians

2.15 pm—Refreshments & Fellowship
(Contribution of £1.20 per person please)

3.00 pm—ANNUAL MEETING

3.30 pm—MOVING VISIONS

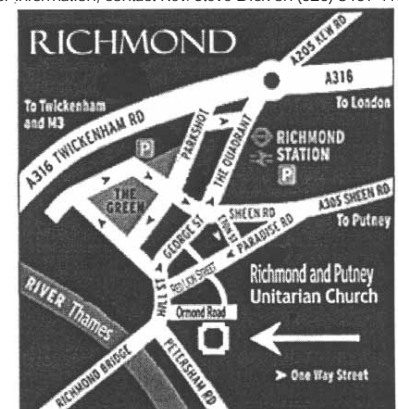
Parrituals presented by students from the
Rambert School of Ballet & Contemporary Dance
as Directed and Choreographed
by Dr Ross McKim

at *CHANGED VENUE*:

RICHMOND UNITARIAN CHURCH

Ormond Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6TH

For information, contact Rev. Steve Dick on (020) 8407 1135



"...the excellent Moving Visions ...
Moving by name and moving by nature,
Ross McKim's spiritually uplifting group of
dancers from Rambert School."
Stephanie Ferguson, *Yorkshire Post*

"... small oases of hope and beauty in a
world filled with gall."
Karen Mark, *Evening News, Edinburgh Festival*



BELIEVE

(continued from page 3)

Assuming the congregation agrees with the church leaders, then either the governing committee and minister, or a new growth task force of laity and minister, study proven ideas for church growth, and decide how to implement them. Here is a sampling of successful church growth ideas:

- +Improve the attractiveness and accessibility of the sanctuary, church buildings, and grounds;

- +Improve the quality of the Sunday morning worship service and church school;

- +Be a friendly, welcoming, atmosphere on Sunday morning. Publicize

REVIEW OF WHAT WORKS NOW?

Letter to the Editor from Pat Preece, Secretary of Maidstone Unitarian Church

I was very impressed with the meeting at Essex Hall on the 30th October. It was entitled 'What works now? A further exchange of experience seminar on congregational development'. I have one main point I want to make about the day, but before I do I would like to share the inspirational things I heard and the ideas they provoked.

Reverend Jim Robinson from Hampstead was the first speaker. He is a fifth generation Unitarian and his faith is alive and kicking. He spoke of being proud of Unitarianism and everything the movement offers. If we find Unitarianism inspiring then perhaps the world will too. He set a challenge, maybe intentionally or otherwise, that we should have a 25 word description of Unitarianism that we can give to newcomers or those that are curious, that won't frighten them away.

The Reverend Cal Courtney from Islington and Newington Green was inspiring in his enthusiasm for congregational life. Whilst listening to Reverend Courtney I began thinking about how Unitarianism presents itself in the 21st century. Do we use modern phrases or the latest 'buzz' words in our posters and literature? What do people recognize as current themes, I came up with a list; stress; downsizing; makeovers; websites. I realized that efforts at

publicity and communication must be up to date.

The Reverend Jo Lane from Richmond and Putney spoke of Unitarianism ministering to the soul, of setting it free. If we can nourish our own souls within our own fellowships then we will be in a better position to help feed the souls of others. She proclaimed a passion for inter-generational sharing and friendships.

The Reverend David Usher of Sevenoaks and Godalming was the last of the speakers. I concurred with him when he said that worship should have emphasis on spirituality. He was practical in his advice to have modest goals, realistic time scales, and (something I thought was a very good idea) a celebration planned for when you succeed.

Whilst listening to the speakers and the ensuing discussion I made an inventory of what I want from my fellowship in the Unitarian movement. I want to laugh; to be inspired; to meet friendly people; to talk to God or my higher power. I want to sing songs and feel part of a community; I want colour and light and peace. What I don't want is to be told what to believe; to be made to feel guilty; incomprehensible academic sermons; droning hymns or threats of damnation. To survive the movement may have to reinvent it-

self, if only to let people know who we are. I had a flash of inspiration for a poster 'Church of the Open Mind - True or False? Come in and find out'.

I felt the best advice, and certainly the most uplifting, was that we should be joyful, we should be joyful in our ten members (or 100) we should be joyful about our events and celebrate our fellowship. We should stop apologizing for being different and celebrate our uniqueness.

I wanted to make a final comment at the end of the seminar but we ran out of time, so I'll make it here. We discuss, talk and debate about spirituality and we allow ourselves the luxury of looking at different prophets and religions, poems and wise words. But what do we do about actually having spirituality - having support and strength in the faith of a higher power or in God. There is a saying that 'there are no atheists in foxholes' - I know when I've faced any major crisis I have just held out my hand and said 'help' - not asked for a debate on which religion scores over another. Whether we live in the 1st, 10th or 21st centuries the basics of fear and joy are the same. I want the freedom to explore my spirituality and I cherish the opportunity of being in this movement, called Unitarianism.

church services and events in the community;

- +Create programs during the week which are of interest to members and the general public. This will help integrate new members into the congregation;

- +Have a clear vision of what your Unitarian church can offer, and be proud of it;

- +Integrate new members into the life of the church — let them share their ideas and change how things function in the church;

- +Deal with conflict in a mature, adult, democratic manner.

All of these ideas are common sense. The question is whether the congregation and its leaders have the will and desire to implement them. If you work with these ideas, for several years, you will grow enough to at least stay the same size, or hopefully, to add members to your total.

The third option is to aim for significant growth. If the church leaders and minister choose this option, then they must talk honestly to the congregation. If you have 50 members, aim for 100. If you have ten members, aim for 40. If you have 80 members aim for 150. The only realistic way to aim for such growth is to have the church leadership and congregational members all in agreement about the importance of the effort.

Basically, this option includes the same strategies for growth as the previous one. The congregation clearly votes to make the effort. A growth

task force is created to study and implement growth strategies. In addition to the growth ideas already mentioned, several more are needed to encourage significant growth. These include:

1. Study after study shows that 80 to 90% of church growth occurs because members bring their friends and neighbours to church. Obviously, this means the church members must be willing to talk to other people about Unitarianism and about their local church. They must get past the British reserve about inviting people to visit their church. Members need training session to learn how to do this well.

2. The minister must have a strong enough ego to honestly explore how she or he can improve their worship services, pastoral care, and other ministerial duties. The programs and services being offered, on Sunday morning and during the week, have to be improved if significant growth is going to occur. The minister must improve the professional quality of their ministry. This is humbling, painful, and rewarding work to do. The minister must also be willing to share the ministry with those in the congregation who are talented and can create high quality programming.

3. Church leaders must be trained to handle conflict in a healthy manner. Significant growth means that the church will change in its culture. People who have held important church position may lose them to new comers. There may be more

children making noise, parking problems, and the mediocre organizer may have to leave before they really want to. All of this creates stress. Conflict must be seen as a positive and creative opportunity. Conflict must be handled openly, democratically, and with human dignity.

So there it is: how to grow a Unitarian or Free Christian congregation in the UK. The first step is for the church leaders and minister to decide what they honestly want: status quo, moderate growth, or significant growth. Then the church membership must also publicly decide. The rest flows from that decision. Back in mid 1970's, Unitarian Universalists in America were discouraged. We had experienced decades of decline, and the staff at the denominational head quarters had to be slashed in numbers. But the momentum got turned around, and for the past 20 years we have grown modestly. We turned around because we started to believe in ourselves again, and we became more intentional about church growth.

I invite you, the Unitarians and Free Christians of the General Assembly, to believe in yourselves. People need what you have to offer. I invite you to be intentional about the growth of your local congregation. If your church leadership and membership agree to grow, then there are proven strategies which can help you. You can do it. It is not always easy, but with sustained intentional effort you can grow your local congregation.





News & Views From The Congregational Newsletters



BILLINGSHURST

65 MILLION YEARS !

Dendy and Susie Evershed recently visited Canada and went to the Vancouver Unitarian Church which was celebrating 40 years in their present building. We were welcomed and a few eyebrows raised when we showed them our history booklet.

Our 2nd visit there was to a dramatic presentation of '65 million years of civilisation'. From cavemen to dinosaurs through all the evolutionary stages to the present day, the children of the Sunday School were running around in various states of (un)dress and thoroughly enjoying themselves. A descriptive commentary in the form of a dialogue between a child and her grandmother kept us informed of the story as it evolved. It was most entertaining.

Later in our trip, while on Vancouver Island, we went to a Service with the Cowichan Valley Unitarians with whom we are partnered. The Service, on Social Responsibility, was illustrated by the work of John Pounds of Portsmouth who founded Ragged Schools in the 18th and 19th centuries, and of Charles Dickens who exposed the iniquities of boarding schools in the 19th century, and of Fred and Bonnie Cappuccino who are pioneering good living standards for street children and particularly to give girls the chance of an education in the 20th and 21st centuries in the Indian sub-continent.

BRIGHTON

BOOKS BY CHURCH MEMBERS

1) *Archaeopteryx*, Jef Jones, Marshwinds Press, Aldeburgh, 2004. Price £5.99.

The rose takes on a new meaning with the poem Ammonite from Jef Jones's recently published book:

to create, to create my beautiful
self, out of nothing, into nothing
and stillness, stillness
in the centre of the Rose,
in the centre of the Tempest Rose

to fold myself around myself
to call from the dust which is lost
to God,
and my eyes, my very skin of
words
are burnt away,
and I am held
so hard that I lose myself

so feverish disguises
and designs evaporate,
when I decide,
when I decide to create,
to create my beautiful self
into and out of Nothing,
silent in the silence
and perfect in the Tempest,
perfect in the Rose.

2) *The Hypochondriac's Handbook: An Illness for every Occasion, a Disease for every Symptom*, John Naish, Harper Collins, London, 2004. Price £10

At this time of celebration and general joyful merry making there is a

particular relevancy in the second paragraph of John Naish's book, which is concerned with Pleasure Deficiency Syndrome. This 'as a survey of 2,000 people has warned, is sweeping Britain. In November 2003 the survey, by pollster You Gov, quoted the psychologist Dr Linda Papadopoulos claiming that PDS victims suffer tiredness, boredom with work and lethargy. "There is evidence that people are malfunctioning because they are not enjoying enough pleasure on a regular basis to be healthy, happy people", she said. 'There are an extraordinary number of surreal, vulgar, mad and sad syndromes out there waiting patiently to be properly appreciated.

Dinah Staples

GOLDERS GREEN

GGU DECLARED GRADE II

GGU has received exciting news from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, which wrote to tell us that we have been included in the statutory list of buildings of "special architectural and historic interest" approved by Secretary of State, Tessa Jowell.

Under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 we have been designated as a Grade II listed building. This is a welcome surprise and follows a visit by the London Director of English Heritage to our open day last year when we were celebrating our centenary. Thanks to the hard work Andrew Tucker put into preparing the guide, which representatives of English Heritage and the Heritage of London Trust read, we were brought to the notice of important heritage specialists and the DCMS itself. We little thought we would receive such a gratifying and unsolicited letter so soon afterwards. The letter and its attachments can be seen on the GGU notice board at the back of the church.

Several people have expressed an interest in seeing the wording of the schedule from DCMS and so we have pleasure in reproducing the text below.

Unitarian church. Opened 1925. Reginald Farrow FRIBA, architect. Red brick with Portland stone dressings. Exterior in the Byzantine revival style, with a pedimented entrance bay with inscribed frieze which reads RELIGION: TRUTH: LIBERTY; arched doorway flanked by inset columns with cushion capitals; thermal window above.

INTERIOR: plaster groin-vaulted ceiling, large arched windows to either side; wooden lobby screen incorporating a carved oak memorial to Rev. Joyce Daplyn (d. 1931), first Unitarian woman minister in London. Over the door is an Art Deco stained glass window showing the celestial city above a forest setting by Joan Fullerlove: it is surrounded by a tempera mural by Margaret Warren in a Florentine Revival style, with full-figures flanking the entrance, with an angel hovering over a golden chalice above. The semi-circular apse with half-dome above sports a notable tempera mural by Ivon Hitchens RA (1892-1979), executed in 1920-21, depicting the River of the Waters of Life: the inscriptions (in Gothic letters) read "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace" and "the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations". Fittings include a pulpit made by Belgian refugees during the First World War.

HISTORY: the Golders Green Unitarian congregation seceded from the Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead in 1903. The building, erected at a cost of £7,500, was designed by a member of the congregation. Architecturally somewhat old-fashioned for its day, this is nonetheless a notable Interwar place of worship which possesses some remarkable decoration. Hitchens, best known as an abstract painter, here executed a fine mural in tempera which drew on Florentine Renaissance sources as well as tapestry designs by Morris and Co. for inspiration. This is a larger version of his "Forest Scene with Animals", a work executed in 1919-20 for St Luke's Church, Maidstone.

(Rev) Feargus O'Connor

PEACE LIKE AN EVER FLOWING STREAM

So what has this got to do with Unitarianism? Well, other than pushing us into the public discourse to propound a set of government policies consistent with our principles and purposes, other than thinking that Unitarianism has something to offer America and Britain and the world, maybe nothing. On the other hand, maybe we, as a religious group, are guilty of a little exceptionalist thinking ourselves.

Exceptionalism requires that you define yourself as the exception. Being the exception means being different from the rule, different from the majority. Defining yourself as different, at the very least, invites you to define yourself by what you're not. And defining ourselves by what we're not (rather than by what we are) is a charge which I believe weakens us in Britain more than perhaps we are aware. We may be non-conforming (obviously against the state religion) but what exactly do we as a group conform to. What is the tie that binds?

If Americans and Brits as well can bring ourselves to understand that we really aren't as different from other people as our somewhat parochial cultures have led us to believe, maybe we can follow that with the understanding that Unitarians aren't as different from adherents to many other religious faiths. Truth be told most people have doubts about their

chosen faith. They're just more willing to accept the metaphor than many of us are. They sort the message out of the myth, letting their priests and preachers prattle on and taking home what fits their lives. Many of them have the same aspirations, the same values as you and I. In a moral or ethical quandary, many of them would make the same choices we would. The big difference, perhaps, is that they're not as metaphorically challenged, as insistent on literal truth or scientific consistency, as many of us are.

One of the American principles of Unitarian Universalism which I find most inspiring applauds the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Both Brits and Americans need to realise that it applies to individuals from all nations, all cultures, all parts of the world. If people in other lands have inherent worth and dignity, how can we support dictatorships and monarchies which oppress them?

The goal of world community requires support of all international laws. We need to get past the idea that, as Hofstra Law Professor Peter Spiro says, "the United States can pick and choose the international conventions and laws that serve its purpose and reject those that do not. Call it international law a la carte." Respect for the interconnected web of all creation requires that we participate in, in fact lead, treaties and other efforts to preserve the ability

Sunday 6th March, 3 pm,

Richmond and Putney Unitarian Church, Ormond Road Richmond:

"Walking the Sacred Labyrinth"

Open to everyone

"Solvitur Ambulando" "It is solved by Walking". These are the words of St Augustine. "Walking a labyrinth is a body prayer. It is non-threatening; all we are asked to do is walk. It is a crucible for change, a blueprint for the sacred meeting of psyche and soul, a field of light, a cosmic dance." These are the words of Rev Lauren Artress, founder of Veriditas-The World Wide Labyrinth Project at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco.

Danielle Wilson from the Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Congregation will be facilitating this walk. Danielle is a labyrinth facilitator who trained with Rev Lauren Artress at the Grace Cathedral.

If you are interested, please contact Rev Jo Lane: 020 8568 6348.

of the Earth to support all life, including promotion of healthy living environments for all.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has issued a statement: "If we delude ourselves that we are simply misunderstood rather than that our policies are arrogant and insensitive, ... then our present agenda will be nothing more than an articulation of narrow self-interest instead of common cause with the rest of the world." Can we as British Unitarians maintain our self respect, if we say anything less forceful?

Francis Fukayama, Professor of Political Economy at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, commented on September 15 that the events of September 11 spelled the death of American exceptionalism. He said that the US "now has little choice but to give up its self-absorption and join the rest of the world." So far, the actions taken by the US government have not bolstered his position.

But maybe, just maybe, if we are willing to undertake some Unitarian ACCEPTionalism, we can help Britain, America and the world to win the peace.

Judy Jerome

HAMPSTEAD

SHARING MINISTERS

When Rosslyn Hill started searching for a new minister, the congregation discussed what we would like the new minister to do. One thing that was frequently mentioned was the hope that our minister would be able to contribute to the wider Unitarian movement, in the London area and throughout the country. For this reason, we have asked Jim to preach 3 Sundays out of 4 and to use this 4th Sunday to visit other congregations or even offer to provide a service if requested. Jim will therefore not be in Chapel on these Sundays which will vary somewhat from month to month. We will review this again after Jim has been here six more months. On the 4th Sunday we will be arranging services with other Unitarian ministers or from other faith communities, or interesting speakers and from our own members. Of course, we will have to fill the pulpit for the Sundays when Jim is on annual leave as well. If you'd like to discuss this, please feel free to approach any member of the Management Committee or Jim.

Tanya Morrison

MAIDSTONE

HERITAGE DAY

Saturday 11th September was Heritage Day in Maidstone and our Meeting House was open from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. to allow interested people to come in and look around.

Twenty three people took advantage of the opportunity, they included: the son of a lady who had been our organist for many years and had himself deputised for his mother on a number of occasions; a couple from the Unitarian church in Lewes; a man who worked at the Hazlitt Theatre and having viewed the building from the outside wanted to see the inside; a historian and his lady companion who had travelled from London to



follow the Heritage Trail; others were interested in the architecture, one man said it reminded him of Unitarian churches in New England (What influence did Hazlitt and son have this?); others were interested in the Hazlitt connection and spent time looking at the pictures in the Hazlitt Room.

We were asked to explain what Unitarianism is all about by some and the freedom to have one's own conception of God always had a sympathetic reception. One lapsed Catholic was surprised to hear that he would be welcomed to our meetings and said he would attend. We were congratulated on the appearance and the "atmosphere" that pervaded the building.

One lady was surprised that two men were the hosts.

It was, by far, the most rewarding Heritage Day of the last three and there can be no doubt that there is an interest and acceptance on the outside, of at least, some of the principles we cherish.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

A One Day Workshop on Human Sexuality

Designed to enrich awareness of the complexity and diversity of loving human relationships.

Based on the curriculum prepared by the Sexual Orientation Equality Group

Led by Linda Phillips, one of the compilers of the curriculum

Where: Meadow Unitarian Chapel, Godalming

When: Saturday, 21st May, 10:30 - 4:00

Cost: £10 (cheques payable to Meadow Unitarian Chapel)

For further information, or to register, please contact:

Rev. David Usher

5 Westerham Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2PX

01732 465248

COMMUNICATION THAT SEPARATES US

(continued from page 1)

church for fear of proselytising in a way that is disrespectful or pushy. And we often feel inadequate about finding the words to describe our faith." In keeping a rich and diverse belief system to ourselves, and by hiding behind a veil of intellectualism, we may implode.

What is the solution?

We need to talk to one another. We need to communicate: with other Unitarians, with other religious communities, and particularly those with no faith at all.

You may say we do this already.

We do.

But few outside of our movement know it.

In the same way that Unitarians are willing to advocate for equality and social justice, we must now take up the "struggle" for Unitarian survival and expansion.

I believe this needs to occur at a grass roots level.

People who enter our churches don't know our history, our leaders, our abbreviations.

Unitarianism offer people "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning."

This is very attractive.

Some people may be shy at sharing their personal views. Others, like myself, may remember the heavy responsibility laid upon us at a very young age "to go forth and preach the gospel..."

We simply need to get over it. We need to move on.

I'm not suggesting we start greeting people at airports or pass out hand bills in the street.

We could start by greeting the newcomer at church.

We could admit to the label "religious" if we feel we are.

We could even begin feeling confident expressing views about our spirituality in our own words.

I have edited the Richmond and Putney Unitarian Newsletter for the past two years and have enjoyed this.

I have always found it ironic, however, the amount of time some people find to critique the layout or punctuation - misspellings here, a date wrong there.

Why do more people not use this time to share their views?

To write their views down, and create their own content?

I would suggest that this is because it not politically correct to be associated with "Religion" (with a capital R) these days. Religion has become a bad word in our society. For many it conjures up images of exclusion, extreme morality or unrealistic expectations of behaviour.

Unitarianism is not like this.

This is to our advantage.

Many of us have not been raised in the Unitarian Church.

Not all of us are outspoken extroverts, and most of us are not scholars.

We don't even have a belief system in common.

We do, however have each other. We each have abilities and skills that can be used to promote the positive message of Unitarianism in our own communities.

I once had a friend who regularly asked me to go to Mass with her in order to hear her sing. She was impressed with the fact that my faith allowed, and even encouraged me, to freely attend various denominations and churches, synagogues and temples of all sorts.

After a few years, she asked me why I had never invited her to my church. It had certainly crossed my mind, but I feared she might feel I was trying to change her in some way. In hindsight, my friend was as curious about Unitarianism as I was (and am) about hers, and all other religions.

Unitarians cut ourselves short by spending too much time bickering amongst ourselves.

This energy could, and should be spent on joining forces. The common goal being to keep our liberal faith alive, and letting others know about it.

This is what I have learned: "For

each time I don't reach out to someone who might join this faith, for each time I hesitate to be hospitable, out of shyness or reluctance, I might be leaving someone's life poorer than it might be." ***

Unitarianism is a message of freedom and hope. It is a message that should not be kept our secret.

The successful series of talks hosted by the Worthing Unitarians at the Friends Meeting House in West Worthing will continue in 2005 on the third sunday at 2.30 pm.

6th January - 4 FUNERALS AND A WEDDING (Rites of Passage in the 21st Century)

20th February - FAITH TRADITIONS 1 (Quakers)

19th March - THE SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION?

Please contact Rev Jane Barton for further details 01903 202477 buc@brightonunitarianchurch.org.uk

Chatham Unitarian Church

*350th Anniversary
1655 - 2005*



Sunday, February 13th 2005

Open House from 12noon
Anniversary Service at 3.30pm

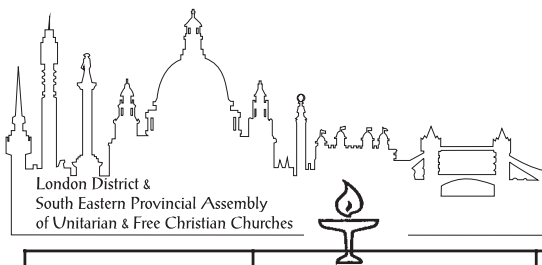
Hamond Hill, Chatham, Kent ME4 6AP Tel: (01634) 847407



LDPA Service Arrangements for January 2005

The information shown is subject to change. NS indicates no service.
New service leaders are always welcome.
For more information about these arrangements or LDPA congregations,
please contact the Rev Steve Dick on (020) 8407 1135

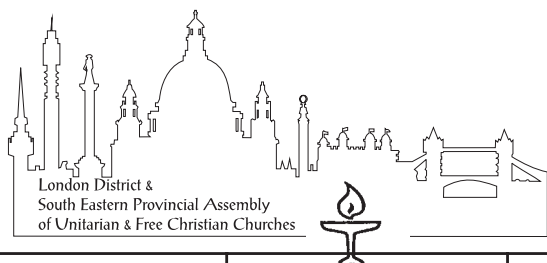
Congregation	January 2	January 9	January 16	January 23	January 30
Bethnal Green	NS	NS	Dr J Williams 6.30	NS	NS
Billingshurst 11	NS	NS	Mrs D Buckle 3.30	NS	NS
Brighton 11 am	Rev Jane Barton	Rev J McClelland	Rev Jane Barton	Ms Kate Whyman	Rev Jane Barton
Brixton 10.30am	Mr Julian Smith	Mr Julian Smith	Mr Julian Smith	Rev Steve Dick	Mr Julian Smith
Chatham	Mrs V Darbon 10.30	NS	Mrs B Payne 3.30	NS	NS
Croydon 11am	Rev E Birtles	Rev E Birtles	Rev E Birtles	Rev E Birtles	Rev J McClelland
Ditchling 11am	Congregation	Mr W Schmidt	Rev A Hills	MR M Garrard	Rev S Dick
Dover 3pm	Congregation	NS	NS	NS	NS
Enfield/StAlbans	NS	A Braithwaite 11am	Mrs P Kern 11am	A Braithwaite 2.30	NS
Godalming	Mr M Barratt 3.30	Rev S Dick 11	Rev D Usher 3.30	Rev D Usher 11	Dr J Williams 3.30
GoldersGreen11	Mr W Schmidt	Rev F O'Connor	Rev F O'Connor	Rev F O'Connor	Rev R Boeke
Hampstead 11&7	Rev J Robinson	Rev J Robinson	Rev S Dick	Rev J Robinson	Rev J Robinson
Hastings 11am	Rev D Skelton	Rev D Skelton	Mr A Larcombe	Rev P Roberts	Mr B Partridge
Horsham 10.30	Rev R Boeke	Rev A Hills	Rev R Boeke	Rev R Boeke	Rev F O'Connor
Islington 11am	NS	NS	Rev C Courtney	NS	NS
Kensington 11am	Mr D Darling	Rev P Godfrey	Mrs D Buckle	Ms L Davies	Mr C Hudson
Lewes 10.30am	NS	Congregation	Congregation	Congregation	Ms S Greenland
Lewisham 11am	Rev F O'Connor	Rev J Harley	Mr A Ruston	Rev A McClelland	Mr M Preece
Maidstone 6pm	NS	Mrs P Preece	Mr M Preece	Rev A Hills	Rev F O'Connor
Newington Green 11 am	NS	Rev Cathal Courtney	NS	Rev Cathal Courtney	Rev Cathal Courtney
Northiam 3pm	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Reading 3pm	NS	Congregation	NS	NS	NS
Richmond 11am	Rev Jo Lane	Rev Jo Lane	Mr W Schmidt	Congregation	Rev Jo Lane
Sevenoaks 11am	Mr A Weeks-Pearson	Rev D Usher	Rev D Usher	Mr W Schmidt	Mr M Garrard
Southend 3.30	NS	NS	NS	NS	Mrs Howell
Stratford 6.30	Rev M Shiels	Rev M Shiels	Rev A McClelland	Rev Steve Dick	Mrs W Adams
Tenterden	Rev D Skelton 3pm	NS	Mrs P Preece 11am	NS	NS
Watford 3pm	Rev F O'Connor	NS	NS	NS	NS
Worthing 2.30	Mrs E Wield	Rev J Barton	Talk: Rites of Passage	Rev J Barton	Rev A Hills



LDPA Service Arrangements for February 2005

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Congregation	February 6	February 13	February 20	February 27
Bethnal Green	NS	Mr W Schmidt 11	Ms L Davies 6.30	Ns
Billingshurst 11	Congregation	NS	Dr J Williams	NS
Brighton 11 am	Rev B Anderson	Mr John Naish	Rev J Boeke	Rev J Barton
Brixton 10.30am	Mr Julian Smith	Mr John Beasley	Mr Julian Smith	Mr Julian Smith
Chatham	Mrs B Payne 10.30	Anniver Service 3.30	Mrs V Darbon 3.30	NS
Croydon 11am	Rev E Birtles	Rev E Birtles	Rev E Birtles	Rev A McClelland
Ditchling 11am	Ms J Currie	Mr T Weeks-Pearson	Rev R Boeke	Rev P Roberts
Dover 3pm	Ms V Tarbuck	NS	NS	NS
Enfield/StAlbans	NS	A Braithwaite 11am	Mrs P Kern 11am	A Braithwaite 2.30
Godalming	Mrs P Kern 3.30pm	Rev J Boeke 11	Rev D Usher 3.30	Mr A Ruston 11am
GoldersGreen11	Rev F O'Connor	Rev F O'Connor	Rev S Dick	Rev F O'Connor
Hampstead 11&7	Rev J Robinson	Rev J Robinson	Rev J Robinson	Rev J Robinson
Hastings 11am	Mrs M Jenkins	Mrs P Preece	Mr Roy Evans	Rev Steve Dick
Horsham 10.30	Rev R Boeke	Rev Richard Boeke	Rev J Boeke	Rev R Boeke
Islington 11am	Rev C Courtney	NS	Rev C Courtney	NS
Kensington 11am	Rev John Harley			Rev John Harley
Lewes 10.30am	Ms Paula Ertl	Mr Roy Evans	Congregation	Ms Jacquie Currie
Lewisham 11am	Rev J McClelland	Mrs W Adams	Mr J Askew	Rev D Usher
Maidstone 6pm	Mrs B Payne	Mr A Larcombe	Mr M Garrard	Rev A Hills
Newington Green 11 am	NS	Rev C Courtney	NS	Rev C Courtney
Northiam 3pm	NS	NS	NS	NS
Reading 3pm	NS	Ms Maud Robinson	NS	NS
Richmond 11am	Rev Jo Lane	Mr Cyril Haddon	Congregation	Rev Jo Lane
Sevenoaks 11am	Mrs I Tavkar	Rev David Usher	Rev David Usher	Mrs Wendy Adams
Southend 3.30	Mr J Meek	NS	NS	NS
Stratford 6.30	Rev M Shiels	Rev M Shiels	Mr D Heineman	Mr M Garrard
Tenterden	Rev E Birtles 3pm	NS	Dr Roy Smith 11 am	NS
Watford 3pm	Rev Steve Dick	NS	NS	NS
Worthing 2.30	Rev B Anderson	Rev Jane Barton	Talk	Rev Jane Barton



LDPA Service Arrangements for March 2005

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Congregation	March 6	March 13	March 20	March 27
Bethnal Green	Rev AMcClelland 11	NS	Rev A Hills 6.30	NS
Billingshurst 11	Rev Ashley Hills	NS	Dr D Williams	NS
Brighton 11 am	Rev Jane Barton	Ms Jackie Currie	Spring Equinox	Rev Jane Barton
Brixton 10.30am	Mr Tony Cross	Mr Julian Smith	Mr Julian Smith	Mr Julian Smith
Chatham	Mrs B Payne 10.30	NS	Congregation 3.30	NS
Croydon 11am	Rev E Birtles	Rev E Birtles	Rev E Birtles	Rev E Birtles
Ditchling 11am	Rev M Whitell	Rev A Hills	Mr Roy Evans	Rev Steve Dick
Dover 3pm	Mrs J Durban	NS	NS	NS
Enfield/StAlbans	NS	Rev Steve Dick 11	Mrs P Kern 11	A Braithwaite 2.30
Godalming	Rev DUsher 3.30pm	M Killingworth 11	Rev D Usher 3.30	Rev D Usher 11
GoldersGreen11	Mrs Judy Jerome	Rev F O'Connor	Rev F O'Connor	Rev F O'Connor
Hampstead 11&7	Rev J Robinson	Rev J Robinson	Rev J Robinson	Rev J Robinson
Hastings 11am	Rev D Skelton	Rev D Skelton	Mr W Schmidt	Rev David Skelton
Horsham 10.30	Mr T Weeks-Pearson	Rev J McClelland	Rev R Boeke	Rev R Boeke
Islington 11am	Rev C Courtney	NS	Rev C Courtney	NS
Kensington 11am	Ms Maud Robinson	Ms Sheena Gabriel	Rev A Braithwaite	Mr David Darling
Lewes 10.30am	Ms C Pybus	Mr W Schmidt	Congregation	Congregation
Lewisham 11am	Mr J Beasley	Ms L Davies	Mr G Dennington	Mr W Schmidt
Maidstone 6pm	Mr J Bull	Mr G Dennington	Mr J Askew	Rev A Hills
Newington Green 11am	NS	Rev C Courtney	NS	Rev C Courtney
Northiam 4pm	NS	NS	Rev D Skelton	NS
Reading 3pm	NS	Congregation	NS	NS
Richmond 11am	Rev Jo Lane	Rev Jo Lane	Rev Jo Lane	Rev Jo Lane
Sevenoaks 11am	Rev D Usher	Rev David Usher	Rev D Usher	Mr M Killingworth
Southend 3.30	Rev F O'Connor	NS	NS	NS
Stratford 6.30	Rev M Shiels	Rev M Shiels	Rev J McClelland	Congregation
Tenterden	Rev D Skelton 3pm	NS	Rev D Skelton 11am	NS
Watford 3pm	Congregation	NS	NS	NS
Worthing 2.30	Ms Jacquie Currie	Rev Jane Barton	Talk	Rev Jane Barton