



IMPULSE

Promoting Unitarianism
in London and the South East

July - September
2011



**'Youth Bike Ride' report
PLUS**

- Call for Olympic Hosts
- Autumn Quarterly details
- Youth Events

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Dear Friends,

This summer will mark the thirtieth anniversary since I graduated from the University of Oxford and was valedicted from Manchester College (as it then was called) after four years of study and preparation and, it has to be said, a lot of very enjoyable times. What a privilege those four years were. Those thirty years of ministry have seen me in some quite different places.

My first ministry was in the beautiful Chowbent Chapel in the small cotton and coal town of Atherton on the western outskirts of Manchester, where many of the quite large congregation had longstanding family associations. I was there for four and a half years, and it was an excellent place to start the real process of learning what ministry was all about, with people who were warm, friendly, and endlessly patient with my youthful and sometimes wayward enthusiasms.

I then moved to Rosslyn Hill in north London, and a more stark contrast of environment would be difficult to imagine. From deeply rooted loyalties in a poor working town to the bohemian fleshpots of Hampstead where transiency was more the order of the day, and the congregation was highly educated and sophisticated and had ready access to every form of culture and distraction. Ministry in Hampstead was both highly challenging and very rewarding, and during that ministry the first two of my three daughters were born. I was in Hampstead also for four and a half

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years, but then for reasons both ministerial and personal (my wife is American), we moved to the States, to a small town in New Hampshire.

Peterborough offered a new challenge. It was an idyllic New England town of only five thousand people, to which many high powered city types had fled with their computers in search of a better quality of life, and there was a surprisingly lively cultural life with an internationally famous Artists' Colony and excellent professional theatre to match the stunning beauty of the countryside. It was a town with the strongest sense of community I have ever encountered anywhere. During my nine years in that fine Bullfinch style church, the congregation doubled in size to two hundred and fifty members, and it was a very happy time in our home overlooking a river. Our third daughter was born there to complete the family.

The logical next career move would have been to a large church somewhere in north America. Instead, I moved to northern Lancashire, to the small town of Padiham on the outskirts of Burnley, drawn by the desire to return to England and some particular challenges about that congregation which attracted me. There I stayed just shy of three years, too short, but even so many of those challenges had been met by the time I left to come south because my wife's new business required her to be near the capital.

And so to Sevenoaks nine years ago, first as half-time minister at Bessels Green and adding Godalming as quarter time minister a short while later. As the only active minister in all of Kent, I also assumed pastoral oversight of Tenterden and Hastings for two years some while later. I very much enjoyed ministering with all four congregations, small and scattered though they were, and as limiting as it inevitably was with such distances between them. I did that work for five years, and probably would still have been doing it, had I not been approached to consider the new vacancy as District Minister. And so it came about that I assumed this new role, which I will have been doing for four years by the end of the summer. It is better for you to be the judge of that, though I can tell you that I enjoy the role very much, with the opportunities it offers to minister in new and different ways. We bought our house in Sevenoaks three years ago just before the property crash (well, we didn't want to buy a cheap house, did we?) and my office is now in the basement at home. We are very happily settled in the town, and it is an excellent base from which to be District Minister, with easy train access up to London and the M25 on the doorstep.

In those thirty years, I have preached goodness knows how many sermons, or is it that I have preached the same sermon goodness knows how many times? I have performed hundreds of weddings, funerals and child dedications. I have attended countless meetings, listened to the joys and sorrows of people's lives, led courses in religious education and spiritual growth, done the work required for my own continuing education and spiritual growth, been involved in the work and witness of social justice, offered myself at national and international level. In short, I have done all the work of ministry in its many different forms. And, though I have ministered in places which have been very different, people everywhere have been much the same.

And what a privilege it all has been. There have been times of frustration and disappointment of course, sleepless nights as I have fretted over some congregational issue or interpersonal conflict, days when it seemed not worth the worry and why not go drive a white van instead. But, pervading all such moments, ministry has been a remarkable privilege. I have never regretted finally answering the call to ministry while still in my early twenties, and in spite of the relatively low income compared with what I might have earned elsewhere, it has provided me with a life rich with blessings. I am very grateful.

Ministry might not be a fashionable career choice in today's predominantly secular world, even less so in a small denomination such as ours. But it is a career I recommend without hesitation. As I watch the commuting suits marching to the station early in the morning and trudging home late at night, I give thanks that I am largely master of my own time, doing work because I believe in it and which offers fulfilment and satisfaction because it is helping to shape the world as I would want it to be. And I am grateful to the London District which continues to offer me those opportunities, and to you, the Unitarians in London and the South East, for working with me in the shaping of the world as we would want it to be.

See you in church!

David

"I asked God for all things, that I might enjoy life.
God gave life, that I might enjoy all things."

Author unknown



Over the Rainbow?

On Being a non-heterosexual Unitarian

As readers of the PULSE E-Bulletin will know, the District has recently supported the formation of Rainbow, a group for Unitarians who are not heterosexual, and/or who do not see themselves as sitting comfortably in a conventional gender role. What they may not know is why. After all, Unitarians are liberal, aren't we? And dedicated to social justice too. Isn't the need for this kind of group a thing of the past – in an era of civil partnerships and transgender characters on Coronation Street, aren't such groups, to use youth speak, like so over?

Here's the good news: the need for such groups is less now than it ever has been, thanks to the big change in social attitudes in the last decade or two. And yes, Unitarians do have a very positive record on LGBTQI rights issues (that's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex, in case you're wondering!). Ann Peart's elevation to the top rank of British Unitarianism is a further welcome sign. It's even the case that some heterosexual members of my own congregation, and surely others too, have left other churches because they could not agree with the anti-gay – to use a shorthand – prejudice that they saw there. This is fantastic, and an amazing solidarity which I appreciate deeply.

But even in Unitarianism, that's not the whole story. Some congregations can actively make LGBTQI people feel unwelcome; others do so more by what might be called sins of omission. Heterosexual family life is often taken as the norm, the convention; heterosexual, conventionally-gendered life paths are also often simply assumed to be universal. This is what's known as heterosexism – it's not the active hatred of, or prejudice against, LGBTQI people that characterises homophobia, but it can be similarly corrosive in its very

familiarity: drip, drip, drip, not slap bang, but still as an LGBTQI person, there you are again – on the margins.

In many ways, and perhaps for most of the time, this doesn't matter too much, particularly if congregations are otherwise welcoming and supportive. But for some LGBTQI people, overtly identifying themselves as such in a congregation is a step too far – something to be kept private, or something that can be disclosed only once a feeling of absolute security has been reached. Your congregation may very well have more LGBTQI members than you think. And where congregations are not actively welcoming, heterosexism can be very problematic for LGBTQI people who want to find a spiritual home in our movement.

For many, 'coming out' – recognising and accepting one's non-heterosexual orientation – is a difficult process. I think it is always a consciousness-shaping one, and it also often influences the way LGBTQI people respond to their spirituality. Many of us have been confronted with a choice by our original faith communities – you can either be Baptist/Catholic/Hindu, or you can be gay, but you can't be both. Others of us – including me – were for years utterly turned off religion by the inability of so many religious communities to accept our sexual orientation/identity. Even the Dalai Lama – hero to so many – is not exactly leading the charge for acceptance of 'the gays'. So for LGBTQI people, Unitarianism is a particularly precious refuge, and one in which I hope all Unitarians will help us to share.

What, concretely, am I asking for? Small signs of welcome – that's all. First, it would be great if all congregations in the District would display a plaque in the form of a small rainbow flag – the international symbol of the LGBTQI community – welcoming LGBTQI people. It's a small gesture, but such an important one. Adding a similar device to your website would be even better. Second, it would be wonderful if service leaders would overtly mention LGBTQI lives and issues in their services, regularly. Maybe a service based on same-sex love in the Bible or other sacred texts, or adopting a local LGBTQI organisation as your official charity of choice for a year. Nothing feels more like inclusion than actively being included! Third, it would be wonderful if each congregation that has a web-page would link to the Rainbow site. A guide to becoming a congregation which actively welcomes LGBTQI people, devised by Yvonne Aburrow, is in train – if congregations follow that once it is ready, that would be fantastic.

We want Rainbow to be a group that facilitates and celebrates LGBTQI spirituality and diversity within Unitarianism. As Rainbow becomes more

established, we will seek to compile worship resources so that it becomes easier to weave LGBTQI issues into services and congregational life more generally. We will post group members' stories and experiences as LGBTQI people within Unitarianism to facilitate understanding of where and how congregations can help reach out to their LGBTQI members – and maybe even attract more.

My husband and I are so grateful for the welcome and spiritual home we have found in Unitarianism. Please help Rainbow to help others find the same.

*- Alex Warleigh-Lack
Richmond and Putney Unitarian Church*

The Restlessness of Thought

For a little while I would like to escape
The nagging reminders of my body and the world.
I would like every restlessness to be stilled, except that of thought,
And let my eager mind race out
To reach beyond all bounds of time and space
Or turn, and look within, to the inmost core of being.
I would like to be freed from the demands
Of necessity, ambition and desire, to commune with myself
And to leap across the abyss of the unknown
To listen for the voice of the universe
As it might speak through me.
I would feel myself one with the stars and know their patience
As they swing through space,
Where perhaps forms of life and mind
Blossom on planets whirling around them
Beyond any forms and qualities our minds could grasp.
I would seek in this moment to catch a glimpse
Of meanings that might include all of this with us,
Have awareness of beauty beginning
Where the human mind leaves off,
This day and this moment knowing myself
One with all being.
I would be silent and let infinity speak through me
To create in myself a greater patience
And passion
For our still unknown and undetermined ends.

- Robert T. Weston

Urban Unitarians

Do you think of yourself as 'spiritual but not religious'? This group could be for you - a social group for inspiration and discussion in the Unitarian spirit of tolerance, sharing and hope for the contemporary world. We meet regularly to attend talks, watch films, or go to other events with a spiritual theme.

Here is what some people have said about Urban Unitarians:

I liked the idea of a social group that met to take advantage of the spiritual events in London that were not always in the chapel.

I really enjoyed our trip to the V&A to hear a talk about Faith and Fashion. It sparked a lot of debate about whether you should literally 'wear your faith on your sleeve' by displaying symbols of your religion through your dress.

I think it's good to have an opportunity to meet other Unitarians in the district and get involved with events beyond local worship services.

Over the past few months the Urban Unitarians have met up to attend a number of talks hosted by Inner Space, the information centre for the Brahma Kumaris, a Spiritual University that provides opportunities for people from all backgrounds to explore their own spirituality and learn skills which help develop inner calm, clear thinking and personal well-being. These talks focused on the notion that to change our outside world, we must first change the world inside ourselves i.e. our thoughts, through taking moments of silence (through meditation and reflection) and getting to know who we really are - tools that invariably can be found in various religions and philosophies . More recently, we attended an inspiring talk on forgiveness and letting go by Dadi Janki, a nonagenarian sister who has been a meditator for over 70 years!

It was good to discuss this and bounce off ideas with fellow Unitarians present at the talk. Some of us went as far as deciding it was worth putting what we had just heard into practice that weekend and observing what came up - practising together always makes the practice encouraging and more powerful. It is a real privilege not only to have access to these talks but to attend them, reflect on them, and discuss with like minded fellow Unitarians.

Find out about our next meeting by signing up to the group online: www.meetup.com/urban-unitarians or email urbanunitarian@gmail.com We are also linked to Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel (www.rosslynhillchapel.com) and New-Unity (www.new-unity.org) in London.

District Attendance Census Takes the Pulse

For the past three years, membership records have been kept of all congregations within the District so that we can monitor progress towards one of our five year goals – a 50% numerical growth in membership. (So far, we have achieved 12% growth). Unfortunately, the only data we can use is the membership reported to the



General Assembly each year for the purposes of assessing congregational quota payments, and these figures are notoriously inaccurate. Not only that, but congregations have very different standards for what constitutes membership and how well they keep their records.

To get a more accurate measure of the health of our congregations, Council is undertaking a census of attendance during the coming month of October. Each congregation will be asked to keep an accurate record of attendances for all of its Sunday services during that month, and then to submit those numbers to the District Minister.

Further information will be sent to all congregational secretaries, ministers and recognised lay leaders, but everyone is asked to ensure that their congregation participates in this venture, the point of which is to gain a much more accurate picture of our institutional health.

Autumn Quarterly to look at Social Justice

Karen Hanley will lead a workshop on Social Justice as part of the Autumn Quarterly, to be held on Saturday 22nd October at Golders Green Unitarians, Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS. Sheena Gabriel, Lay Leader at Godalming and student for the ministry, will lead the service. Full details will be circulated in due course, but please put the date in your diary now.

Council meets for Away Day

Eight members of District Council, plus the District Minister, met at Lewisham Meeting House on Saturday 28th May for an Away Day to plan the coming year's work. Aply led by Miriam Lahage (Chair) and Kate Buchanan (Vice-Chair), the day was productive and fun, with John Carter providing a superb vegetarian lunch for his appreciative fellow Council members.

Several achievable ambitions for the year were established as a result of the day. Among them were:

- A new congregation will be started at Bethnal Green
- A new constitution will be drafted to reflect vision for the future, not just institutional maintenance
- We will have a thriving Uniteens group
- We will have a Charter for Compassion Affinity Group
- We will have District accounts on Face Book and Twitter
- There will be varied educational offerings across the District
- New People will attend successful district events
- A programme for having a series of American UU visitors will be well established
- We will have more trained people in congregational leadership
- FUSE – Festival of Unitarians in the South East will have been a great success

Individual members of Council volunteered to take leadership roles to ensure that each of these goals were achieved.

It was also agreed that meetings of Council should move away from spending much of its time doing routine business and should, instead, have a major item for discussion at each meeting.

Items for detailed discussion will include:

- Starting and growing new Fellowships within the District
- What congregational growth means for congregations inside/outside the M25
- How to embed the goal of growth into the other goals
- Quarterly Meetings – their content, purpose and target audience
- Making Youth work more integral to our mission
- Twitter feed – how we can be more effective in the use of social media
- Hucklow in the South – how do we understand that and how can we make it happen

Rosslyn Hill calls new minister



At a Special General Meeting held after the service on 10th April, the congregation voted 106-1 to invite Rev. Dr. Patrick O'Neill to be its new minister, with effect from September 2011. Rev. Dr. O'Neill is presently minister of the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn, New York, and has a distinguished thirty year career in the ministry. He is particularly noted as a gifted preacher. He has been married to Patricia Williams for 25 years and she will be accompanying him to London. Patrick is a passionate amateur artist and unrepentant lifelong NY Yankees fan.

"I love the ministry. While it has certainly been a conscious professional choice for me, I'm not really sure I could have gone any other route for my life. I have found it to be a rich life, full of opportunities for learning and for service. I feel blessed and privileged to share it."

Toward the end of his life, Henry David Thoreau was urged to make peace with God.

"I did not know that we had ever quarrelled," he replied.

LDPA Charter for Compassion Affinity Group

Following the passing of this year's DISTRICT resolution affirming the Charter for Compassion and encouraging fellow Unitarians and constituent congregations to 'reflect on its vital humanitarian message and act in its spirit', two DISTRICT Council members, REV. John Carter and Rev. Feargus O'Connor, are taking the initiative in setting up an LDPA Charter for Compassion Affinity Group. Our District is therefore joining our General Assembly nationally, the Unitarian Universalist Association of North America, and the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) in declaring our support for the Charter and embracing the Golden Rule and its ethical ideal of empathy and compassion.

Our new Charter Affinity Group will encourage and support congregations and individuals in the District who wish to witness to the ethical ideals promoted by, and plan and co-ordinate initiatives and events inspired by the Charter for Compassion. Such a Unitarian commitment to the Charter may, in the words of our General Assembly President, Rev. Ann Peart, inspire our Unitarian communities to 'radiate the values which we cherish, and so become beacons of possibility in our world'.

Among District initiatives so far are Charter for Compassion study groups reading Karen Armstrong's book Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life (devoted to the Charter and its ideals) at Kensington, Richmond, Godalming and Golders Green Unitarians and interest in the Charter and its exciting possibilities is already widespread in the District.

At Golders Green Unitarians on Saturday 2 July at 1 pm the District Charter for Compassion Affinity Group, in conjunction with the IARF and the World Congress of Faiths, will be holding a launch event, at which the Charter and our responses will be discussed and a service in celebration of the Charter will be held.

For more information please contact Rev. Feargus O'Connor
020 7837 4472 or email: ggunirev@aol.com
To read more about the Charter please see its website:
www.charterforcompassion.org

The Unitarian and Free Christian Churches invites you to

Fun Days Away (FDA)

for all 12-17 year olds - theme:
What do u stand For?

t: 0798 5900 935 jharley@unitarian.org.uk
Mon 8th – Fri 12th Aug 11 £120*
www.yuonline.org.uk



Five days of fun, creativity, friendship, discussions, outdoor pursuits, circle time and a sponsored event. We will also be exploring a UUA programme exploring what you believe in and what matters to you.
* £120 if booked before 1st June, £125 after.

For 7-14 year old southern Unitarians
a Uni-kids Weekend



THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

* Swanage Youth Hostel, Dorset
* Sponsored Sandcastle event 22-26 July 2011
* Visit to Brownsea Island t: 07985 900 935
** Jurassic coast
* Fun packed www.yuonline.org.uk
* Circle time Only 14 places so book soon!
£100 all inc. if booked before 1st June



An initiative for young Unitarians in the South organised by the Youth Programme and supported by the Wood Green Trust.
A Unitarian and Free Christian Church Event.

SIZZLING YOUTH EVENTS



There are two big sizzling youth events coming up over the summer - please spread the word so as many of our children and young people can join in with the fun.

Unikids – 22-26th July – at Swanage Youth Hostel, Dorset. For 7-14 year olds. A long weekend jam packed with trips, swimming, circle time, creativity and even a sponsored sand castle building event. Transport from London and Guildford to Swanage (minibus) is included in price. Cost: £110. There are still a few places left.

FDA (Fun Days Away) – 8-12th August at The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow, Derbyshire. For 12-17 year olds. This year's theme is **'What do U stand for?'** – we will be following a series of workshops exploring what we believe in, our ethical outlook and our identity. The holiday will include a sponsored cycle ride round Carsington Water as well as our other standard activities such as credo groups, circle time and Showtime on the final night. Cost: £125 (£120 if booking received before 1st July)

For further details about both these events go onto the Unitarian website – follow the link: <http://www.unitarian.org.uk/info/events.shtml> or go to www.yuonline.org.uk

It is hoped that Uniteenz (a monthly youth club for 12-17 year olds living in the LDPA district) will get a new lease of life soon, after being 'rested' for a year or so. If there are any youth leaders out there who may be willing to get involved do let us know. We may also be running an OWL (Our Whole Lives) course, a programme exploring issues around sex, sexuality, gender and identity – probably for 14-17 year olds. Let John Harley or Jen Hazel know if you are interested in finding out more. Watch this space.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the above or any other events or initiatives run by the Youth Programme.

- John Harley – Youth Coordinator
jharley@unitarian.org.uk

Calling Hosts for London Olympics

Last October it was announced that PULSE would act as home coordinating centre for during the London Olympics next year. This will be an excellent opportunity for London-based Unitarians to make themselves, their congregation and the their spare bedroom



announced that PULSE hospitality co-hosts and guests Olympics next year. This will be an excellent opportunity for London-based Unitarians to make themselves, their congregation and the their spare bedroom

whole house) to Unitarians from elsewhere in the country or around the world. Already enquiries are being received from Unitarian Universalists in North America, and as the Games get closer we can expect more and more enquiries to come in. The proposal is that hosts will keep one third of the rental income, one third will be donated to the host's congregation, and one third to the District (which will absorb the administrative costs).

If you would like to host a Unitarian from elsewhere, please contact the District Administrator, who is keeping a database of all enquiries and in due course will match guests with hosts. What a shame it would be if this great sporting event were to come to London, and we did not take full advantage of it to introduce visitors to Unitarianism in the capital. Contact Danielle now.

Plans are afoot for other ways in which the District can participate in the Olympics, including offering a Chaplaincy, a Drop-in Centre, or working on some of the social justice issues raised by the Games. We tried to be part of the Inter-church organisation, More Than Gold, but were told we were not welcome on theological grounds. So let's make our presence felt in our own right.

Church Officers enjoy workshop and dinner

Church Officers from throughout the District gathered at Bessels Green, Sevenoaks, on 4th June for a Workshop followed by a superb professionally catered dinner. Rev. Jim McClelland led a group on How to be a Church Treasurer, while Jeff Teagle led on How to be a Church Secretary, followed by a plenary time to share good practice and to speak about some of the challenges and satisfactions of church work. The event was sponsored by the District as part of its programme to encourage and support competent congregational leadership.

If you thought Light the Fire was good...

Last January, the District sponsored Light the Fire, a pioneering weekend event held at The Friars in Aylesford, Kent. More than fifty people came, not only from throughout the District but also from Ipswich, Southampton, Manchester, Bristol and Bridport. By general consent, the weekend was a great success, bringing people together for a time of imagining, dreaming, planning and having fun.

If you thought Light the Fire was good, you will not want to miss **FUSE** – the Festival of Unitarians in the South East. Planning Group (Kate Buchanan, Leighton Cole, Jen Hazel, Ann Howell, Miriam Lahage, Meredith Moss, Andy Pakula, David Usher and Roberta Wedge) is already excited by the prospects and is busy putting the weekend together. This will be **3-5 February 2012**, at Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing. Please put the date in your diary and plan to attend. It promises to be a great event.



If you came to Light the Fire, you will definitely want to come to FUSE. If you missed Light the Fire, don't miss this. It promises to be even bigger, brighter, better.

A lady notorious for courting celebrities sent G. B. Shaw an invitation reading "Lady _____ will be at home on Tuesday between four and six o'clock."

Shaw returned the card annotated, "Mr Bernard Shaw likewise."

American Unitarian Minister comes to London

Rev. Victoria Weinstein is a Unitarian Universalist minister currently serving a congregation in Massachusetts. She is also on the Adjunct Faculty of Andover Newton Theological Seminary on the outskirts of Boston, where she teaches a very popular course in Worship. She will be in London for a month, July 8 – August 10, staying in the manse flat at Bethnal Green. In addition to taking services in London churches (Newington Green/Islington on July 10, Hampstead on July 17 and 31, and Kensington on July 24), she will lead three workshops and a residential retreat for ministers.



Monday 11th July - "Conversation with Christian Unitarians", 7.15 pm for 7.30pm start. Golders Green Unitarians. This conversation will address how we nurture our spiritual lives as Christians within the Unitarian church. Victoria Weinstein has suggested the Conversation could focus on: how we nurture our spiritual lives as Christians within the Unitarian church; and how to lead Bible study with Unitarians.

Rev Weinstein has quite a 'high Christology' herself. She has written: "Who is Jesus Christ to me? He is both a teacher of the Way, and the Way itself. For one who has always had a hard time grasping the concept of God ... Jesus both points me toward a definition of God and then lives that definition ... Jesus is my soul's safety from all harm. He is the avatar of aloneness, a compassionate and unsentimental narrator of the soul's exile on earth, and proof of the soul's triumphant homecoming at the end of the incarnational struggle ... "I call myself a Christian because I am a disciple of Jesus Christ—not just Jesus-that-great-guy-and teacher-with-the-long-hair-and-sandals but Jesus the living avatar of the great God and Jesus the Christ of Easter morning ..."

This essentially mystical approach to Jesus has become an important trend among UU Christians. Of course, many Hindus and Buddhists share this attitude to Jesus. It could also be a growing trend among Christians in our diverse denomination in the UK, but perhaps difficult to acknowledge for fear of being labelled 'not Unitarian'.

The event is organised by the London District Liberal Christian Affinity Group. Do come and join the conversation!

Sunday 17th July - "Moving Through the Liturgy" This will take place at Hampstead from 2.30 – 5.30pm, with the participants then leading the evening service at 7.00pm. An evening meal will be shared between the workshop and the service. Publicity about this is being sent to all Lay Worship Leaders in the District.

Saturday 23rd July - "Nurturing a Ministry of Activism" This will take place at Unity Church, Islington from 1.00 - 5.00 PM. This workshop will address the challenge of involving congregational members in the work of social activism.

Monday 25th – Wednesday 27th July -"Moving through the Liturgy: A Workshop for Worship Renewal" This will take place at The Emmaus Centre, West Wickham, Kent. This workshop will explore the minister's roles as teacher of tradition, mediator between the sacred and the mundane, and manager of communal energy.

"Faith is not making religious-sounding noises in the daytime. It is asking your inmost self questions at night – and then getting up and going to work."

- Mary Jean Irion



world congress of faiths

www.worldfaiths.org

Compassion and the future of our World

2 july 2011 1 – 3:30 PM

Golders Green Unitarian Church
31 ½ hoop lane, London nw11 8bs

The World Congress of Faiths looks forward to having Karen Armstrong as our speaker at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St. Johns Wood Road, London, on the evening of 7 December, 2011.

As a preparatory event, we are co-hosting an afternoon on Karen Armstrong and the Charter of Compassion, 1-3:30 PM, Saturday, 2 July. A representative of the Charter of Compassion is invited to a panel discussing the charter.

The programme will open with a worship service at 1 PM led by the Rev. Feargus O'Connor. Rev. Richard Boeke, Chair of the British Chapter of the International Association for Religious Freedom www.iarf.net will give a sermon on THE FREEDOM TO BE COMPASSIONATE, drawing on words of Martin Luther King, Jr, "I cannot afford the luxury of hate." The panel will follow about 2 PM.

Spirituality promotes passivity when the domain of spirit is defined as outside the world. When this world is the terrain of spirit, we ourselves become actors in the story, and this world becomes the realm in which the sacred must be honoured and freedom created."

- *Starhawk*

London Unitarians raise money with **Bike Ride**



Seven hardy London Unitarians cycled from Croydon to Brighton on June 9, raising money for the national Youth Programme. Led by Rev. John Harley, Youth Co-Ordinator, who was using the event to celebrate his birthday, they made their way to Ditchling where a warm cup of tea and a surprise birthday cake for John awaited before making their way up and over Ditchling Beacon and the final run down to Brighton. There were some sore thighs and bottoms by the end of the day, but also big smiles as they celebrated with fish and chips on the pier. James Barry was the support team. It is expected that the effort will raise a total of more than £1,000. Well done John, Liz, Janet, Mandy, Lori, Annabel and Matthew.

Group convenes to re-draft **District Constitution**



As authorised by the AGM in March, Leigh Engeham, Kieran Seale, Miriam Lahage and David Usher will be working on a new draft for the District's Constitution.

Uganda Update

Reverend Mark Kiyimba, Unitarian minister from Uganda, has visited London and spoken at several churches. He started a school which now has 500 primary school children and also an orphanage. Mark puts into practice the Unitarian tenet of tolerance. For the past two years on Valentine's Day he has organised a conference 'Standing on the Side of Love' in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. Unfortunately Uganda is a dangerous place for homosexuals due to some of the radical evangelical ministers who preach hatred and violence there. In January a young man was murdered after his name and photo was published in the newspaper and identifying him as gay. Mark still held his February conference. He is brave. The political situation has become graver, though, and Mark was picked up by the police several times. In March, fearing for his safety he left Uganda and is now staying with friends in the United States for a 'cooling off' period.



That's the bad news. The good news is that American and British Unitarian churches are setting up a formal structure to support the school. Nine American schools have pledged to each support one of the nine classes in the school offering books, help to buy school uniforms and money to enhance the teacher's low salaries. Rosslyn Hill Chapel has raised money for capital projects such as computers or repairs to the building. The framework organised by the Partnership Council of the Unitarian Universalists in the US ensure transparency and accountability for the money donated. Last year I visited the school in Uganda. It is a lively place with enthusiastic students and committed teachers. There is so much need, though: the school has no windows or doors, it has dirt floors and very simple desks. There are few books or other resources. School lunch is cooked on an open fire and water has to be brought from a water hole a kilometre away.

Uganda struggles with a fragile infrastructure and has been wracked with diseases such as malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis. The needs are great.

What can we do in London and the Southeast due to support this Unitarian initiative in Uganda? You can learn more by visiting Rev. Mark's website <http://ugandaunitarian.org/aboutus.html> and see photos of the school. Rosslyn Hill Chapel continues to raise funds for the school and children's home. If you would like to add your support or learn about future fund raising, please contact me at leightoncole90@hotmail.com. If you would like to visit Uganda to see the projects yourself, do contact me and I will let you know more about my trip. It was great fun.

Unitarian Church Dover

Heritage Open Days 2011

Saturday & Sunday - September 10th & 11th

11am - 4pm

Admission Free

This will be the 13th year that Dover's Grade II* Listed Chapel & Vestry will be open as a building of historic interest in the town of Dover. In addition to self-guided tours of the premises, there will be a history of the Church, baptism & burial records to view, an Art Exhibition in the Hall (featuring works by the Unitarian Art Club and other Kent artists) with some exhibits for sale, and Refreshments.

The Chapel is a five minute walk from Dover Priory Station.

The premises are disabled friendly with a ramp at the hall entrance and Blue Badge parking outside.

Enquiries: David Embry - Telephone 01233 850384

Art Club

Second Thursday of each month

6.30pm in Hall

Free - but donations towards materials appreciated

Enquiries to Tutor: David Embry - Phone 01233 850 384

"Art is a collaboration between God and the artist, and the less the artist does the better."

André Gide

Can you help?

Mike and Maureen Cassidy of the Unitarian church in Ottawa are looking for a B&B or accommodation in London from July 16 to 22. Maureen is the daughter of a former LDPA district minister, Wilfred Waddington. Any offers or ideas would be welcome.

mkcassidy@sympatico.ca



Minister has to run for it

Congratulations to Rev. Linda Hart who, on 30 May, successfully completed a 10k run, raising money for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Linda raised more than £550, with more still expected to come in.

Lewes establishes partnership with congregation in The Philippines

The Lewes congregation has partnered with a congregation in Manila, using the wonders of modern technology to make their contact more immediate. You can view their first visual experiment on the following sites:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCfFkfhowkU> -

for the Metro Manila Congregation

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4304_fcNb28 -

for the Westgate Chapel Congregation

Are any other PULSE congregations using such technology to forge international partnerships? It would be good to know if they are.

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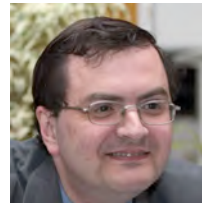


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"We Unitarians value the freedom of thought, to explore and understand faith from each individual's perspective. Therefore every word spoken and written ultimately reflects the thoughts and beliefs of the person speaking or writing. We welcome your responses in the spirit of mindful discussion and debate."

What's On 2011

July

Monday 11 - 7:15 Conversation with Christian Unitarians, Golders Green, London

Sunday 17 - 2.30-5.30 Liturgy workshop, Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead, London

Saturday 23 - 1.00-5.00 Activism workshop, Unity, Islington, London

Monday 25-Wednesday 27 - Liturgy workshop (residential), Emmaus Centre, West Wickham, Kent

Tuesday 26-Thursday 28 - 7-14 yr olds - 'The sky's the limit', Swanage

August

Monday 8 - Friday 12 - 12-17 yr olds 'What Do U Stand For?' - Great Hucklow

Monday 22 - Copy date for September e-Bulletin

September

Saturday 10-Sunday 11 - 11:00-4:00 Heritage Open Day at Dover

Monday 19 - Copy date for October-December IMPULSE

October

Saturday 22 - PULSE Autumn Quarterly - Golder's Green, London



PULSE: Supporting and inspiring Unitarian communities in London and the South East, now and for future generations