



E-PULSE

Promoting Unitarianism in London and the South East



SEPTEMBER 2011

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The FUSE is being lit....



The District is planning one of the biggest events in its long history....The Festival of Unitarians in the South East (FUSE)

Mark the weekend of 3 – 5 February 2012 in your diary now.



A full programme is being planned, featuring:

- A keynote presentation by Robin Ince, TV presenter, comedian and scientist
- A major worship service, led by Rev. Patrick O'Neill, minister at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead
- More than twenty workshops on church life, personal spirituality, music and art
- Networking and fun

The Weekend Festival will be held in Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing
www.chatsworthworthing.co.uk

- Single rooms will be £195
- Shared rooms will be £145
- Day delegate rate is £47 (plus £19 for dinner)



Bursaries will be available on the basis of need.

Registration and the web site are open now.

Check out the full programme and book soon.

<http://www.fusefest.org.uk>

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

Attendance Census

District Council is undertaking a census of attendance during the month of October. Each congregation has been asked to keep an accurate record of attendances for all of its Sunday services during the month, with a break-down of members, regular attenders and visitors. A form has been sent to all congregational secretaries, ministers and recognised lay leaders, but please help to ensure that your congregation records these numbers and then returns them to the District Minister in a timely fashion.



Give Life the Shape of Justice

District Minister launches Social Witness Fund

In order to enable the District to have a more visible and active social witness, the District Minister is launching a Social Witness Fund, to which he will donate all preaching fees for services conducted within the District. So that congregations can feel some ownership of this Fund, and in order to make more money available, they are being asked to donate the collection taken at services conducted by the District Minister. Council has agreed to donate collections taken at Quarterly meetings. All monies raised will be earmarked for Social Witness projects with which PULSE Unitarians can be actively involved, not just given to other organisations, worthy though they may be.

Unitarian Fellowship in Canterbury



A Fellowship is being established in Canterbury, where there has not been a Unitarian presence since 1903! The founding service will be held at 7.00pm on Monday, 26th September in The Friends' Meeting House, 6 The Friars, Canterbury CT1 2AS. If you can possibly attend to be part of this historic occasion, you will be most welcome.

Following the service there will be celebratory refreshments, and an opportunity to talk about the future of the Fellowship: how often it might meet, at what times, and what form its meetings might take.

Please invite others to join you for this hope-filled occasion, and publicise it within your congregation and beyond. It would also be helpful to me to know beforehand if you plan to attend, so that plans can be made accordingly.

*David Usher
District Minister*

Chatham hosts Lecture Series on Localism

The Chatham congregation has been hosting a fortnightly Lecture Series throughout the summer, exploring ways in which the local community affects daily life. Four lectures have already been held, with two more planned for September. The lectures start at 7.30 and finish at 9.00pm.

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8 Sep Craig Mackinlay, Local Councillor
22 Sep David Barrett, retired mariner now living near the River Medway.

For further information, contact Inge Van Dooren mivandooren@hotmail.com

Calling Hosts for London Olympics



Last October it was announced that PULSE would act as home hospitality co-ordinating centre for hosts and guests during the London Olympics next year. This will be an excellent opportunity for London-based Unitarians to make some money for themselves, their congregation and the District by offering their spare bedroom (or perhaps even their 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, particularly using our churches in the east end of the city.

Autumn Quarterly Meeting: 'Social Action for the Faint Hearted' !



Saturday, 22nd October, 10.30 - 5.00pm
Golders Green Unitarians, 31 Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS
(ten minute walk from Golders Green tube station)

A day of activities and reflections on what Unitarians offer to our communities, what gifts and talents we have, and some relevant project planning with opportunities to share with friends from other congregations and Fellowships. By the end of the day participants will have generated ideas and plans to take home and carry forward. This workshop has had a warm welcome in other Districts.

Led by Karen Hanley, Chair of the General Assembly Faith & Public Issues Commission, member of St Albans Unitarian Fellowship

With worship led by Sheena Gabriel, Lay Leader, Meadow Unitarian Chapel, Godalming, Surrey

Channing Lecture

October 22, 6.00pm Golders Green Unitarians

The inaugural Channing Lecture will be given by Alan Ruston. The Lecture is titled 'Being a Unitarian: A Diversity of Beliefs and Personalities'.

The lecture will last about 45 minutes and this will be followed by a period for questions. Alan will be looking at the many colourful and diverse personalities of the past and their variety of beliefs and so give an historical perspective to our present diverse theological spectrum. There will be a voluntary collection and part of this will go to the General Assembly.

Why not come to the Quarterly during the day, and stay on for the lecture?



Public Forum with Dianne Abbott, MP + Others

A public forum is scheduled for Tuesday 20 September at 12:30 PM at Newington Green Unitarians to discuss the recent riots and looting which took place all over London.



Choosing To 'Freely Follow Jesus'

An irony in America is that a growing number of Unitarian Universalists, after being granted unlimited freedom, are choosing 'to freely follow Jesus'. This was stated by a visiting Unitarian Universalist, the Rev Victoria Weinstein, at a 'Conversation with Christian Unitarians' at Golders Green Unitarians in North London on 11th July. "We are given all this freedom, and this is what we are choosing," she said. The Rev Weinstein is a parish minister and worship teacher in the US who spent July in Britain leading workshops for the London District. She is prominent in the Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship; she describes her own theology as 'mystical Christian'. Rev Weinstein spoke of wanting to rehabilitate Christianity within Unitarian Universalism. Her points included:

- By embracing the Trinity, she encountered a 'relational God' – creator, redeemer, sustainer. This could be a dance with all three, or a conversation with changing elements: Father, Son, Spirit.
- On grace, sometimes our mistakes were so serious we were not able to forgive ourselves. Through grace, which is the Divine loving and accepting the human, we can pick ourselves up again.
- Obedience was essentially listening to God.



Occasionally she was criticised for 'negating Unitarian history' by accepting the Trinity. This criticism conveniently overlooked the fact that the Universalists had been Trinitarian – and anyway her denomination was now meant to be 'completely diverse'. British Unitarians said they sometimes encountered similar criticism, despite our Free Christian tradition (still part of our name!) aiming to embrace Unitarians and Trinitarians.

Victoria Weinstein said Unitarian Universalists in America were in danger of dying because of a mistaken belief in their own intellectual uniqueness. They cut themselves off from other Christians, but if they mixed more, they would discover other churches were also developing, also contained liberal thinking, also embraced diversity.

Then on Sunday 17th July, after taking the morning service at Rosslyn Hill Chapel in Hampstead, Victoria Weinstein led a stimulating workshop on liturgy and worship in the chapel in the afternoon. Those taking part led the 7pm service at the chapel that evening.

Jim Corrigan (co-convenor of the London District Liberal Christian Affinity Group)



Six Urban Unitarians were joined by the District Minister in Finsbury Park recently for an evening of Ten Pin Bowling, and a very enjoyable time was had by all. Urban Unitarians organises a variety of events – some purely social, some spiritual/religious/philosophical – and invites others to join them. Check them out on their excellent website, Urban Unitarians <http://www.meetup.com/Urban-Unitarians/>

Pastoral Leaders meet for welcome lunch



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Ministers and other pastoral leaders will meet for a shared lunch on 22 September to welcome Rev. Patrick O'Neill, the new minister at Rosslyn Hill, and also Rev. Emily Manvel-Leite, a UU minister newly resident in London with her family.

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Unitarianism is a liberal religious faith.

Unitarians are religious people, heirs to a historical tradition of over 400 years, who recognize and seek wisdom in all the world's great religious, philosophical, and artistic traditions.

Unitarian congregations offer weekly worship services that draw upon the breadth of these great sources of inspiration.

Unitarians believe that each individual is on their own spiritual journey, but that together we can journey toward wholeness.

The LDPA (Pulse) serves the 28 Unitarian congregations in Southeast England, including 9 congregations in London. For more information please go to www.ukunitarians.org.uk/pulse or www.unitarian.org.uk

Calendar

September

Thursday 8 - 7:30 Lecture on Localism - Chatham Unitarians

Monday 19 - 6:00 District Council Meeting - Essex Hall, London

Tuesday 20 - Deadline for October – December IMPULSE

Tuesday 20 - 12:30 Public forum - New Unity, Newington Green

Thursday 22 - 1:00 Pastoral Leaders Lunch - Essex Church, Kensington

Thursday 22 - 7:30 Lecture on Localism - Chatham Unitarians

Monday 26 - 7:00 Launch of Canterbury Fellowship



Advance notice

Saturday 22nd October - 10:30 - Autumn Quarterly - Golders Green Unitarians

6:00 - Channing Lecture - Golders Green Unitarians

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Contributions are welcome.

"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." PAGE 5