



# Kensington Unitarians

Newsletter: June 2016

## What's On...

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 7-8pm  
**'Heart and Soul'**  
'Changes'  
Led by Jane Blackall

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 11am-noon  
**'Reclaiming Joy'**  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 12.30pm  
**Small-Group Communion**  
Led by John Hands (tbc)

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 11am-noon  
**'Reclaiming Community'**  
Led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 12.30pm:  
**Essex Church AGM**

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 11am-noon  
**'Reclaiming Virtue'**  
Led by Veronica Needa & Sarah Tinker

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 12.30-1.15pm  
**'Finding Your Voice'**  
Singing workshop with Margaret

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 3.00-5.00pm  
**True Heart Theatre:**  
'Perspectives on Happiness'

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June, 11am-noon  
**'Soul'**  
Led by Stephen Crowther  
Member of Brighton Unitarians

## Dates for your Diary:

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 12.30-1.15pm**  
John Hands' 'Bike Ballads'  
Poetry Book Launch

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July**  
'Dress for Success'  
Clothing Drive for Charity

## Agreeing to Differ A Message from our Minister

*"Though we cannot think alike,  
may we not love alike?"*

John Wesley, founder of Methodism



I'll be repeating these wise words of John Wesley's to myself in the run up to the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union. If you're anything like me you're probably heartily sick of the subject, in which case apologies for mentioning it. We seem to have been discussing it for months and I've had some surprising conversations in that time. People I thought would agree with me have come up with unexpected points of view and I've listened to opinions very different from my own. I've also heard friends changing their minds, one way or the other. It's quietly pleasing when they start to see things the way I do. It's frankly unnerving when they veer in the other direction.

Several of us attended a conference on Unitarian Theology recently. This is a topic potentially as contentious as the EU though perhaps not quite so vital to world peace. There's a great diversity of belief amongst our members because one of our defining features as a movement is that we are non-creedal. Our faith encourages us to think for ourselves and to allow our beliefs to develop and change. Sitting together on a Sunday morning in Unitarian congregations will be people who identify themselves as agnostics, theists, atheists, Christians, pagans, deists, religious humanists, Buddhists, Sufis, panentheists, to mention just the first ten possible faith groupings that came to mind for me. I wonder if you find your own views within that list. What other groupings would you add? How do you describe your faith? It's over twenty years ago now that I wandered into a Unitarian chapel and met a group of people interested in exploring the nature of our beliefs and in asking how such beliefs could then shape the living of our lives. I've had so many fascinating conversations since then and I've watched my own and other people's ideas expand and inter-weave and sometimes change completely over the years.

When it comes to faith, to politics and to any other issue that attracts a spectrum of responses, we are never going to reach wholehearted unanimity. But let's not close down the conversations just because we may not agree. Politicians are used to arguing with one another but for us ordinary folk it's not always so comfortable to find ourselves in disagreement. Perhaps if we remember John Wesley's suggestion that we can love one another even if we do not share the same thoughts, then we'll find the strength to express our opinions and the good grace to listen respectfully to the views of others.

Rev. Sarah Tinker

## In this month's newsletter...

\* 'Perspectives on Happiness' with True Heart Theatre \* 'Dress for Success' Clothing Drive \* Building News \* 'The Pleasures and Pains of Ageing' – Feedback from Recent Sunday Group \* 'Bike Ballads' – John Hands' Book Launch \* District and National Unitarian News \* Dignity in Dying Report \* Yoga Mats Needed \* See Michaela Singing at Watford Colosseum \* London to Brighton Bike Ride \* 'Reverence for Beauty' by Sarah Tinker \* and much more...

# Kensington Unitarians

At Essex Church (founded 1774), Notting Hill Gate

Kensington Unitarians are a community of kindred souls who meet each week at Essex Church in Notting Hill Gate to explore, reflect, converse, be still, share joys and sorrows, and support one another on life's journey. We are proud to be part of a worldwide and historic liberal religious tradition.

Our main activity is Sunday worship and we hold a service each week at 11am. All are welcome. Services are usually themed and include readings from a variety of sources, prayers, music, singing, stillness, and a short sermon. Our children's leaders provide an alternative programme of activities for younger people.

Small-group activities are another key part of our programme. We offer courses and one-off workshops exploring spiritual and religious matters and considering life's meaning together with others on the spiritual journey.

If you are aware of any member of our community who is unwell or suffering in some way and who would welcome contact from others in the church, please contact our minister.



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Alister Hardy Trust & Scientific and Medical Network

## Health and Spirituality

Day Conference Here at Essex Church  
Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June from 10.30-3.00pm



This day conference will feature Rev. Dr. Jeff Leonardi speaking on 'Counselling, Health and Spirituality' and Dr. Peter Fenwick speaking on 'The significance of meditation practices in our understanding of spirituality: a new thrust towards health'. There will be a panel discussion after lunch.

**There is a generous offer of reduced rates of £15 for members of Kensington Unitarians** and for students (standard price £35). Please contact John Franklin, the conference organiser, for more information and to book: [johnfranklin35@hotmail.com](mailto:johnfranklin35@hotmail.com).

True Heart Presents a Playback Theatre performance:

## Perspectives on Happiness



**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 3pm - at Essex Church**

We welcome you to an afternoon of stories on this theme! So much could be said or unsaid, told or sung. To laugh and weep at the same time! Little fragments of memories or substantial sagas. Incidental or treasured. We create a space for these to emerge. And if you choose to share, we will do our best to 'play back' your stories with all the artistry we can muster and with deep respect.

**Help us prepare for two days of exploration on Perspectives on Chinese Happiness - on 29 & 30 June - for the University of Westminster at an event open to everyone and free of charge.**

## Volunteering Rotas: Stewarding, Coffee and Greeting



### Stewarding:

5 <sup>th</sup> June:	Alice Lambert
12 <sup>th</sup> June:	Heidi Ferid
19 <sup>th</sup> June:	Brian Ellis
26 <sup>th</sup> June:	Gina Bayley

### Coffee:

5 <sup>th</sup> June:	Jo Tye
12 <sup>th</sup> June:	Deborah Moran
19 <sup>th</sup> June:	Juliet Edwards
26 <sup>th</sup> June:	Sue Smith

### Greeting:

5 <sup>th</sup> June:	Roy Clark
12 <sup>th</sup> June:	Sue Smith
19 <sup>th</sup> June:	Deborah Moran
26 <sup>th</sup> June:	Kendra Torgan

We circulate the rota list each month by email. Please contact Jane if you are willing to be on the rota mailing list.

**[rotas@kensington-unitarians.org.uk](mailto:rotas@kensington-unitarians.org.uk)**

# Clothing Drive for Dress for Success

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July – Here at Essex Church



I wrote about Dress for Success and a proposed clothing drive in the last newsletter. We now have a date: Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

For anyone who might not have read the last article, Dress For Success is a small charity that provides suitable clothing, interview training and a support network for unemployed women looking for work. 60% of their clients are single mothers. One in two women they help get a job, which is an amazing statistic. They are based in East London, near Shoreditch. Their website is [www.dressforsuccessgl.org](http://www.dressforsuccessgl.org).

Could any women reading this, please have a look through your clothes to see if there anything you don't want or need, which would be suitable for women applying for jobs. Could any men reading this, please ask your female relatives and friends if they have any clothes appropriate for the office that they no longer need?

What Dress for Success especially needs right now are:

## Accessories

- Shoes
- Handbags
- Jewellery
- Other accessories appropriate for an office setting

## Clothes

All sizes are welcome but size 16+ are especially welcome

- Suits
- Blouses
- Skirts
- Dresses
- Trousers

The clothes need to be:

- Clean - no stains
- Excellent condition
- Current or classic style

Liz Tuckwell

# 'Heart and Soul'

Midweek Spiritual Gatherings

Thursdays 2<sup>nd</sup> June and 7<sup>th</sup> July from 7-8pm



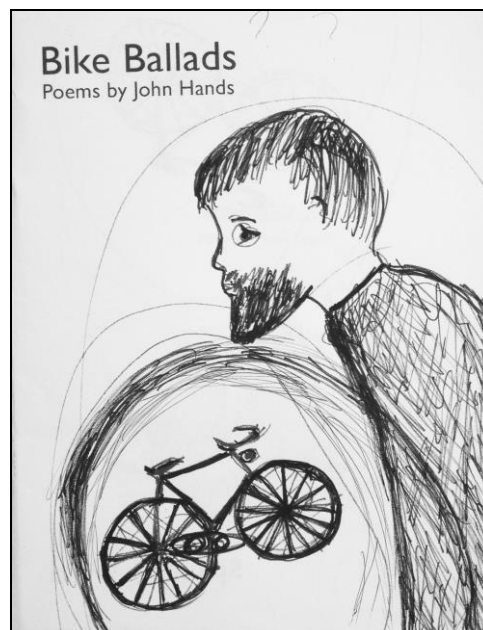
*Gathering at 6.45pm downstairs in the library  
Followed by social time and refreshments*

Come and join us for our monthly alternative spiritual gathering, with music and silence, words and prayers, and a chance to explore the evening's topic in relation to your own life. This will be followed by refreshments and fellowship.

Our June gathering will be led by Jane Blackall and has the theme 'Changes'. If you would like to suggest a theme for a future gathering and possibly co-lead with Sarah then please do get in touch. All are welcome to join us. If you would like to know more about our 'Heart and Soul' gatherings email [jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk](mailto:jane@kensington-unitarians.org.uk)

# 'Bike Ballads' John Hands' Book Launch

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 12.30-1.15pm  
Here at Essex Church



A new poetry book by John Hands will be launched at a special event after the service on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July. There will be some readings from 'Bike Ballads' and time for people to share their experiences of cycling. Do put the date in your diary and plan to stay behind that day.

## The Pleasures and Pains of Ageing

16 of us spent a few hours on a Sunday afternoon together down in the library sharing our thoughts and experiences about the process of ageing, which of course begins on the day we are born. We made a list of some of the pleasures we experienced in getting older. Do any of these chime with your experiences? The group was a good reminder of how varied our life experiences are.

### Some Pleasures of Ageing:

Glad to have more time – working part time – less worry  
Happy to be retired  
Glad to be still healthy and strong  
Pleased to have reached the age I have  
No more rushing onto a crowded morning tube  
Mortgage paid off  
Feel easier about death – more reconciled  
Calmer in myself  
Less dutiful  
Less worried about goals and targets – many earlier worries no longer affect me  
Over 60 – things get cheaper and I have a Freedom Pass  
I'm more prepared to do things on my own  
Much better at time management now – makes life easier  
Glad not to be a teenager in this day and age  
Less bothered about what others think  
Life is simpler now and I like the simple things  
I feel less isolated and more in solidarity with others in a similar situation  
The older we get the more stories we have to tell  
I am not so fearful – I know there'll be a solution out there  
There's always a pinprick of light and hope  
Easily talk to people now



*Photograph of a mallard in the Isabella Plantation, Richmond Park, taken by Juliet Edwards in May.*

## 'Finding Our Voice' Singing Workshops



**Sundays 19<sup>th</sup> June and 17<sup>th</sup> July  
after the service from 12.30 to 1.15pm**

Margaret Marshall has worked as a professional singer all her adult life and is also a very experienced singing teacher. She is leading monthly sessions to help us all find our voice. These workshops are for anyone who is prepared to open their mouth and make a sound. Margaret will show us how to improve the quality and strength of our voices. Using a few simple exercises we'll gain joy and confidence in our singing by learning how to produce and develop the voice, something everyone can do. We'll work with the breath and overcome unconscious blocks that can prevent us singing with our true potential. Fun and achievement are guaranteed and these sessions are designed for everyone, whatever your experience or ability. All are welcome.

## Good Cause Collection of the Month General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches



### Collection on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June

With your support the General Assembly will: develop professional ministry and local leadership, represent Unitarians nationally and internationally, organise our annual meetings, produce publications, posters and leaflets, provide training and development programmes, support church growth, advise on buildings, legal and governance issues, promote religious education and provide a national youth programme, and more...

**For more information see:** [www.unitarian.org.uk](http://www.unitarian.org.uk)

### Previous Charity Collections:

Thank you for your generosity in contributing to recent charity collections. I am pleased to let you know that we will be sending the following donations to good causes:

**February – 'Respond' - £555.04  
March – Water Aid - £402.93**

## Building News



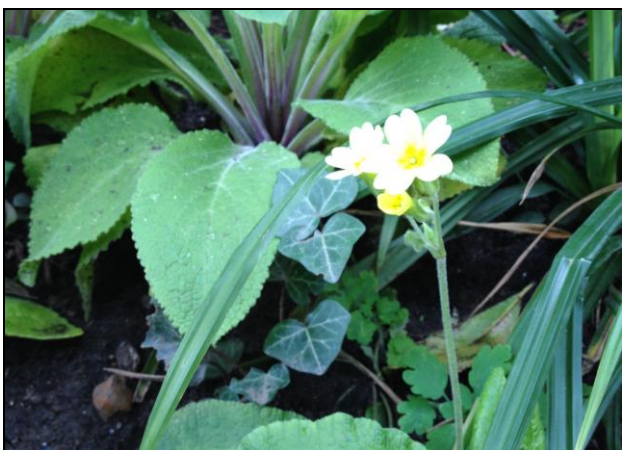
Our management committee has agreed two important building projects that will be starting in mid-July. We're having a completely new heating system installed throughout the building and our roof is to be covered in a waterproof membrane.

Hopefully by the autumn we'll have a warm and water tight building but a lot of work will be needed to achieve that, some of which will be quite disruptive. The concrete and steel structure of our building, with solid floors, means that pipework will have to come down some walls and be boxed in. Once it's all finished though it should all blend in. We've planned to have the work done over the summer when our regular lettings ease off and the company installing the heating system are experts in church heating, used to leaving a building usable for the evenings and weekends. Imagine our much loved worship space warm and snug on a cold winter's day, with radiators silently heating the room, new roof-lights letting in the light and keeping in the warmth. Let's keep reminding ourselves it will be worth it!

We've been saving up for this work for some time and have already received a generous grant and several unexpected donations, for which many thanks. If you would like to make a contribution to these building costs our treasurer Natasha would be most grateful as every extra pound will help us keep this building feeling really loved and cared for. Hundreds of people use Essex Church every week and our task as its custodians is to keep it in excellent condition for the use of all.

And have you noticed the garden this year? Isn't it looking lovely? Thanks to all who have been quietly working away, especially Brian, Arda, Michaela and Jackie.

**Sarah Tinker**



## Michaela Singing at Watford Colosseum



Our very own Michaela will be singing in the Watford Philharmonic Summer Proms on Wednesday 29th June at 7.30pm and if you would like a lift there are two spare places in my car. Tickets cost around £20. They're offering 'a fun filled summer proms concert with a varied programme of familiar music including Henry Wood's Fantasia on British Sea Songs, Parry's Jerusalem and, of course, Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance March Number 1 with Land of Hope and Glory. Other favourites are Bernstein's Chichester Psalms, Elgar's Sea Pictures and, for good measure, a selection from Rodgers and Hammerstein's South Pacific'.

**Sarah Tinker**

## District and National Unitarian News



Our Kensington Unitarians congregation is part of a London District and a national Unitarian & Free Christian movement and there's lots for us to be getting involved with.

Our London District has a quarterly publication called Impulse which tells of District news and events. Contact Danielle Wilson on [daniellewilson@ldpa.org.uk](mailto:daniellewilson@ldpa.org.uk) if you would like to receive a copy by email.

Our District holds quarterly meetings, which are a good way to visit other churches and meet up with other Unitarians. On Saturday 18th June the meeting is in Hastings. We'll pay travel costs if you'd like to attend and let Sarah know if you'd like to travel together and have a day at the seaside.

On July 29th a Ministry Inquiry Day is being held in Leicester for people to find out more about ministry training. Again our committee is glad to pay travel costs – have a chat if you'd like to know more about any of these events.

# 'Reverence for Beauty'

Sermon by Rev. Sarah Tinker from Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May

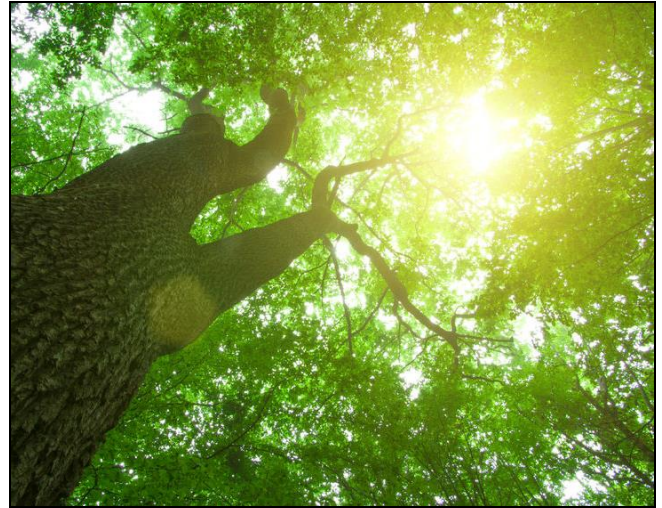
*This sermon is also available online as a podcast.*

When I first came down to work in London ten years ago, I joined a posh Notting Hill gym. The young Australian man who interviewed me and filled in the application form, asked for my title. I'd just left theology college, ministry training complete, and was quite chuffed with my new title of reverend – so that was what I told him. He looked slightly confused but finished the application and in a couple of days they sent my membership card to Lady Sarah Tinker – clearly thinking that the title reverend meant you were part of the aristocracy. And OK, I admit – I milked it for all it was worth and delighted in their greeting me as 'Good morning Lady Sarah' for the rest of the year.

I've tried using the title reverend to get off parking tickets but it's never worked – and in truth I have some ministerial colleagues who would never use the title. The root of reverend is reverence – meaning deep respect, holding in highest regard, a sense of awe and wonder even, to be amazed in the presence of something most precious – and even on the best of Sundays most ministers of religion know we're not in that 'most precious' league!

But reverence is a word I'm reclaiming this month. As you came in today you'll have received a copy of our 14 days of reverence challenge and we're inviting anyone who wants, to join in this project of noticing, of paying attention, of remembering the mystery and magic that is life itself. If you're a podcast listener, just send us an email here at Kensington Unitarians and we'll send you a digital copy of the booklet – most of which is based on the work of a great organisation called **KindSpring**, dedicated to encouraging us all to be kinder to one another and to ourselves. My thanks to them for this project, which I'm now passing on to you.

This feeling of reverence - I wonder when you have experienced that heightened sense of awe and wonder, of deepest appreciation? It seems to be a central human response to some aspects of life and though it's found in all the world's religious systems yet I think it goes beyond them. We feel it in moments of being lifted in some way, touched by something greater than ourselves. I've felt reverence in the presence of the new born and holding the hand of someone moving towards death. I've felt it when watching other natural processes like a chrysalis opening up to allow the scrunched wings of a butterfly to unfold, I've felt it in the arms of those I love and who love me, and in majestic natural surroundings, by waterfalls and on mountain tops, or late at night staring into a star filled sky. Talking to some of you I've heard descriptions of nests of baby birds clamouring for food, newts found in ponds, streets of cherry blossom, the birth of children, the death of loved ones, singing in choirs or listening to sublime pieces of music. UUA Minister Kendyl Gibbons, who has written powerfully about the need for religious humanists to reclaim words like reverence, talks of 'moments that left us with a lump in our throat or a song in the heart'. I'd like to hear what some of those moments are for you.



Focusing on reverence reminds us to pay attention, to not take anything for granted, and in today's service we're considering reverence for beauty. We're honouring our human ability to create beauty and honouring the beauty of the earth on which we live. We're encouraging one another to see beauty in humanity, to go beyond any dualistic thinking that has us categorise – this as beautiful and this as ugly. Reverence takes us deeper to an awareness of a beauty in all that is, reverence encourages us to accept what is, in its imperfections. Like that Zen master, in the story we heard earlier on, who sees the perfectly tidy garden and shakes the leaves from the tree to mess it up a bit, we know that real beauty is always flawed, never permanent, that by its very nature beauty is a fleeting experience of the here and now.

American priest and theologian Matthew Fox, who did so much to develop the ideas of creation spirituality, has extensively explored our human ability to create beauty. 'Beauty saves,' he writes; 'Beauty heals. Beauty motivates. Beauty unites. Beauty returns us to our origins and here lies the ultimate act of saving, of healing, of overcoming dualism. Beauty allows us to forget the pain and dwell on the joy.'

And I guess that's some of what brings us to gather in a community like ours – not denying the pain and difficulties of life but rather holding them in love and together finding that which is beautiful, that which inspires us and brings us joy in this crazy thing called life that we're all so very much engaged with. Let's end today by speaking together the words of a Navajo blessing:

"Beauty is before me, and Beauty behind me  
above me and below me hovers the beautiful.  
I am surrounded by, I am immersed in it.  
In my youth, I am aware of it,  
and, in old age, I shall walk quietly the beautiful trail.  
In Beauty, it is begun. In Beauty, it is ended."

*If you would like a copy of our 14 days of reverence booklet just ask.*

'We are always beginners in the art of compassion. No matter how advanced or refined we believe our understanding to be, life is sure to present us with some new experience or encounter with pain we feel unprepared for. Your partner betrays you, your teacher disappoints you, some event of unimaginable cruelty happens in the world, and once more you are asked to open your heart and receive it. "This also, this also" is the essence of compassion. Over and over you are asked to meet change, loss, injustice, and over and over you are asked to find the strength to open when you are most inclined to shut down.'

- **Christina Feldman**



## Yoga Mats Needed

The Simple Gifts social action project based in Bethnal Green are seeking yoga mats to start a low cost class for local people in the autumn. We've asked some of the yoga groups who use our building for help with this and if you have a mat at home that's sitting in a cupboard and no longer of use, why not take this opportunity to give it a new life. Bring it to church any Sunday and we'll arrange to take our collection over to the project.

## Inclusive Communion

**Sundays 5<sup>th</sup> June, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2016  
at 12.30pm Down in the Church Library**

Once a month we hold a small-group communion, after the main morning service, downstairs in the library. A team of volunteers take turns in leading the services so we experience a variety of approaches.

**5<sup>th</sup> June** (*irregular date*) – led by John Hands (tbc)  
**10<sup>th</sup> July** – leader to be announced

If you would like to find out more then please feel free to speak to Jane Blackall or Tristan Jovanović.

## Dignity in Dying

*The following is a report from a recent Dignity in Dying meeting our minister attended. Unitarians are still the only faith group to have spoken in support of the right for a terminally ill person to end their life.*

Sir Keir Starmer is now MP for St Pancras and Holborn, but his work in the area of assisted dying in his previous position as Director of Public Prosecutions was highly significant. He addressed a meeting of inter-faith clergy for Dignity in Dying (IFDiD) and explained how his involvement arose through three particular cases.

The first was that of Dan James, a young rugby player who had an accident whilst playing the sport, which left him paralysed from his neck down. When it became clear that there was no hope of any recovery, but that he might live on in that condition for another fifty years, he decided he did not wish to continue living and wanted to go to Dignitas to die. His mother was initially opposed to helping in any way, but gradually changed her mind. She did accompany him there and, on her return to England, was charged with assisting a suicide.

Sir Keir decided that, although the law had been breached (Section 2 of the Suicide Act), a prosecution was not in the public interest, while he also felt the law ought to be clarified to deal with other such cases. He therefore issued guidelines in 2009 stating that there would be no prosecution in cases where:

- 1) there was no financial gain by the person assisting the suicide
- 2) the person assisting was acting wholly out of compassion
- 3) the individual who died had had a settled intention to commit suicide (i.e. it was not a whim or temporary depression or the result of pressure)

He pointed out that the final draft did not insist that the person had a terminal illness, owing to the request by disability groups that he omit that qualification, as they wanted to keep their options open if individuals were severely, but not terminally, disabled. However, it was stated that the person assisting had to be doing it as a unique act, and not as a regular procedure, thus barring health professionals from being involved.

These guidelines operated so effectively that 83 out of the following 84 cases were not prosecuted. A particular aspect was then challenged by Debbie Purdy who had a terminally illness, wanted to go to Dignitas, but rather than go immediately while she was fit enough to do so, wanted assurance in advance that she could wait till she had limited capacity, be assisted by her husband and be guaranteed in advance that he would not be prosecuted. Advance exemptions are almost never given in matters of potential prosecution, but she died in England before the matter could be resolved.

The third case surrounded Tony Nicklinson, who was paralysed but not terminally ill. He not only wanted the right to have an assisted death, but also to have it at his home without having to travel abroad. The case was rejected by the House of Lords and his reaction was to commit suicide by starving himself to death.

Sir Keir's term of office came to an end at that point, and with his election as a Labour MP in 2015, it meant that he was able to speak in the Commons during the Bill to make assisted dying legal, sponsored by Bob Marris. He admits he was surprised at the heavy defeat it suffered (330 in favour, 118 against), especially as public opinion was heavily in favour. He put this down to several different factors coming together: some MPs not fully understanding the bill and its limits; others fearing political repercussions (eg being identified as 'pro-death' by opponents); well-organised religious opposition; those not wanting to 'rock the boat' and preferring the fudge of the status quo.

However, Sir Keir had no doubt that eventually a form of assisted dying would become legal in the UK, as it was morally right to give individuals options over their own life and death. He predicted that with time and greater understanding (as well as reassurance of fears), opposition would crumble: "In the end, this will give, and people will look back and say: 'why did this take so long?'"

Sarah Wooton, Chief Executive of Dignity in Dying, said that despite the Marris Bill's defeat it had been useful in obtaining media coverage and galvanising public support, as well as helping to map out those MPs in favour, against and unsure - information which will be very useful to a follow up Bill, though it was unlikely till after the next general election. In the meantime, there would be a dual strategy of approaching individual MPs and pursuing matters through high profile court cases.

**Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain  
Chair, Inter-Faith Leaders for Dignity in Dying (IFDiD)**

## Services at Essex Church in June



### Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 11am – ‘Reclaiming Joy’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

William Blake described ‘Joy and woe as woven fine’. How might we reclaim life’s joy when the tough times assail us?

### Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 11am – ‘Reclaiming Community’

Service led by Rev. Sarah Tinker

In a busy and fragmented world how best can we create a sense of community? This will be followed by our AGM.

### Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 11am – ‘Reclaiming Virtue’

Service led by Veronica Needa and Sarah Tinker

In preparation for our afternoon with Playback Theatre we’ll hear the origins of the Dragon Boat Festival and consider how a life of virtue might look in the 21st century.

### Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June, 11am – ‘Soul’

Service led by Stephen Crowther

What is this thing that may be in each of us and gives its name to certain types of Music and Food? Do we have one? Or, are you with C.S. Lewis when he says ‘you don’t have a soul, you are a soul – you have a body’?

## Essex Church Annual Report & AGM

Our Annual Report and accounts for 2015 have now been published and can be found online or ask for a copy if you haven’t already received one. We’ll be presenting it for formal approval at our AGM on Sunday 12th June and everyone is warmly invited to attend.

## Unitarian Bike Ride from London to Brighton

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June - Setting off from Croydon

After a number of successful bike rides in 2011, 2012 and 2015 we are planning another ride on Saturday 11th June. The ride is open to anyone who wishes to come along who has a basic level of fitness and owns a bike in good working order - preferably a mountain bike or hybrid. We are going to cycle as a group of friends for fun rather than be sponsored for the Youth Programme. This is not an official Youth Programme event so you need to take out your own insurance if you want to and you cycle at your own risk. The route involves two big hills but apart from this is not too taxing. It is around 50 miles. Open to 16 year olds and over who have good experience of cycling.

We’ll be mustering at Croydon Unitarian and Free Christian Church, No 1 The Croydon Flyover, CRO 1ER from 8am for coffee and setting off by 9am. We usually buy some lunch from a newsagent in Burgess Hill - or you can bring sandwiches. We won’t be cycling back (unless you really want to!). Hopefully we’ll arrive by around 7pm and have some time for fish and chips on the pier for those who want to partake and a quick drink in the pub - we’ll be catching the train back to Croydon on the Saturday evening at around 9pm. We will be stopping off at Ditchling Unitarian Chapel for tea and cake before we brave Ditchling Beacon - the second big hill of the day. We have chosen 11th June because we are more likely to get some summer weather. This day is not the day of the official London to Brighton bike ride! Our route will roughly follow the route of the official event and will follow smaller, minor roads as much as possible.

### Preparation

It is essential that you get your bike checked thoroughly or preferably serviced before the ride - and make sure your brakes (there are many hills on the way!) and gears are in good working order. You may like to do one or more practice rides to get your fitness up to a good level and to check your bike is working fine.

### Things to Bring - Essential:

Bike helmet / Water / Sun cream/block / One item of warm clothing like a fleece / Spare inner tube in case of punctures / Energy bars and drinks / Any medication you are on / Something reflective to wear / Your bike! / Personal information form (with doctor’s details etc) if you are under 18 years old

### Other things to bring:

A pannier bag to go on back rack (it’s best to put your gear in a bag rather than a ruck sack on your back) / Waterproofs if you wish / Padded cycling shorts and gloves if you want / Lights if you need them later for getting back home from East Croydon station / Mobile phone / Pocket money for lunch and ice creams etc / Tyre pump (if small and fits onto your bike)

I will bring maps, first aid kit and puncture repair outfit. Please let me know if any of you have done a course in First Aid. Do ring me (John) on 07985 900935 or Liz 07582 349071 if you have any questions/issues. Let me know if you would like to join us and send this email onto anyone who may be interested. Looking forward to some good pedalling...

John Harley and Liz Hills