



IMPULSE

Promoting Unitarianism in London and the South East

SPRING edition 2024



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Kensington induction



News from our AGM



Soul Deep book launch



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COVER *The Tudor Courtyard at The Friars, our venue for FUSE!*



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The London and South East Unitarian District is a constituent part of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, whose stated purpose (Object) is: "To promote a free and inquiring religion through the worship of God and the celebration of life; the service of humanity and respect for all creation; and the upholding of the liberal Christian tradition."

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Ideas that still count

Message from the District Minister Rev'd Jim Corrigan

Our General Assembly (GA) annual meetings in early April were an inspiring affair, as our District delegate Rev'd Sue Sinnamon captures in her overview (p. 8-9).



of the Anglican Church, Government and landed gentry in their attempts to control knowledge, the interpretation of scripture, and even truth itself.

I myself was particularly inspired by two talks given on the first and last days of the meetings, talks that took us back to the ideas and struggles of 250 years ago and which still hold relevance for us today. What were these?

Lizzie Kingston Harrison

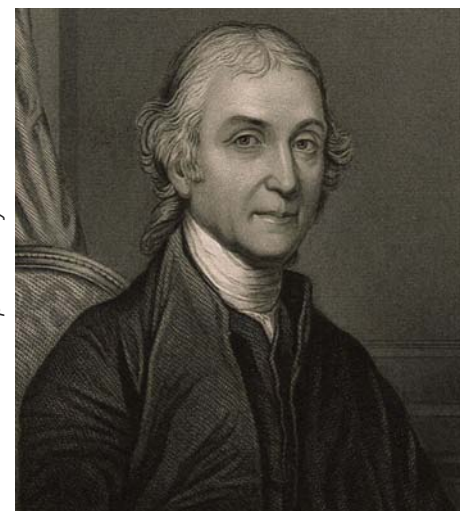
First, Dr Lizzie Kingston Harrison of the GA took us deep into the thought of Joseph Priestley (pictured below), the scientist and founding theologian of British Unitarianism. In a talk for the Unitarian Christian Association, Lizzie Kingston Harrison (who gained her PhD on Priestley's thought) showed how this thinker challenged the combined power

Priestley dissented from the dominant Calvinist ideas of his time that humans are innately sinful and only through Jesus' sacrifice (as God) have we been saved. He developed instead an expansive vision of an ever-loving God and of a Jesus who was human.

Priestley believed strongly in objective truth which could be accessed through reason. Dr Kingston Harrison pointed to the relativism of our modern age, where truth has been dissipated into 'my truth' and 'your truth' in this era of 'fake news'. This was a key challenge for our time, she said.

We could take Priestley with us to bring his thought into our post-modern world in ways that emphasise collective meaning-making. Truth is not inaccessible. Rather, our speaker said, we need the courage to believe in something that "integrates all the paradoxes we now appreciate ... but is grounded in a shared belief that truth is out there, and is within us and is what unites us rather than fragments us".

Can we still believe this? Can we still be bound by truth that unites us? That's a challenge!



Joseph Priestley: Wellcome Collection

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“a fascinating exploration of our early history by a renowned expert, with echoes too of present-day concerns”

➤ **Grayson Ditchfield**

The other talk I was particularly struck by was by Professor Grayson Ditchfield, given to the Unitarian Historical Society, on the early years of the first avowedly Unitarian church in Britain, Essex Church, just off The Strand in London. This is the 250th anniversary of its founding by Theophilus Lindsey. Today it's the site of our Unitarian headquarters.

The talk was presented by Society member Rev'd Daniel Costley as rail strikes prevented Prof. Ditchfield from reaching our conference in Northamptonshire. The lecture focused on members and supporters of the early congregation, which included a number of prominent women, as well as on the nature of worship there and its importance for the developing Unitarian movement.

Again a fascinating exploration of our early history by a renowned expert, with echoes too of present-day concerns.

Theophilus Lindsey was the other main pioneer of early Unitarian thought in the UK, and as Prof. Ditchfield intimated, his and Priestley's ideas held sway before they were challenged in the 19th century by another of our pre-eminent thinkers, James Martineau (pictured).

Martineau was to draw on even earlier developments in English Presbyterianism to advocate for what he saw as a more inclusive 'free Christianity' encompassing 'all Christians of goodwill', Unitarians, Trinitarians and those rejecting such labels in a non-denominational Free Christian church. Though Unitarian himself, Martineau bitterly opposed calling our churches 'Unitarian', arguing this restricted them to a single theological position.



Martineau's legacy here continued into the 20th century and is still with us today at least in that many of our churches still bear 'Free Christian' in their names. I'm not sure we always appreciate the history behind this. Yet learning about

our history is vital. I hope Worship Studies courses in the District later this year will give chances for such learning.

But I will no longer be in post then.

Why not? I was appointed to this position for three years and I've decided to leave when my time is up at the end of June. I've greatly enjoyed the work, but am looking forward to my third retirement! Thank you for all your support over the three years. May you go forward in faith and in hope.

REV'D JIM CORRIGALL

James Martineau: Wikimedia Commons

Ministerial Matters

Kensington Induction

Rev'd Dr Jane Blackall (right) at the lectern during her Induction Service as Minister with Kensington Unitarians on Saturday 27th January. Members of the Kensington congregation played a big part in the celebratory ceremony, which had as its theme 'Ministry is All That We Do Together'. They were joined by friends and ministerial colleagues from across the country for the ceremony at Essex Church, home of Kensington Unitarians. It was also live-streamed.



Rev'd Jennifer Sanders

Congratulations to Jennifer Sanders (pictured on the left), who for the past year has been minister-elect at Brighton Unitarian Church, and has now been placed on the GA Roll of Ministers. Well done to Rev'd Jennifer on all the hard work involved and to Brighton Unitarians who now have a full minister!

Beryl Payne

Our District sends warm appreciation to Beryl Payne as she steps down after more than 30 years in leading roles at Chatham Unitarian Church. Beryl (pictured centre right) has served Chatham in a variety of posts over the years, as preacher, celebrant, Lay-Person-in-Charge ('lay minister'), and as chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Beryl also served on the LDPA Council.



A happy AGM+Quarterly

Annual general meetings are not normally thought of as 'happy', but our District's Spring Quarterly and AGM on Saturday 16th March at Croydon Unitarian Church was both enjoyable and enlightening, buoyed as we were by the generous hospitality of our hosts. More than 30 Unitarians attended in person with another dozen or so online.

Proceedings began with the District Minister Rev'd Jim Corrigan welcoming attendees and holding a short silence in memory of leading figures in the District who'd died since the last AGM: Jef Jones, much-loved Lay Leader at Brighton, John Parsons, stalwart of the grant-giving London Trusts, and Colin Turnage, former Lay Pastor at Chatham and later in the Southern District.

A focused AGM followed, well guided by Council chair Rev'd Michael Allured, with reviews of the past year from the main officers, and a detailed financial account from the finance officer Bruno Martin. No elections were needed for Council posts this year, but Dr Jacky Woodman was re-elected President by acclamation for another year.

PICTURED AT CROYDON: TOP RIGHT (l to r): John Bates, Jim Corrigan, Michael Allured and Vince McCully. LOWER RIGHT: Attendees listen to John Bates.

The President of our General Assembly, Vince McCully, visiting from his home congregation at Rivington in Lancashire, then led a moving service on the theme of 'Freedom'. His worship style was warm-hearted and distinctly Lancastrian (a style which possibly surprised some).

John Bates of the GA Executive Committee was next, with a clear presentation on the denomination's new growth plan known as the 'Innovation Challenge Scheme' (Our speaker said this name might change). In questions and answers that followed, John indicated there was still much flexibility in the scheme, and that criticisms and challenges were being taken seriously. Even hardened sceptics seemed at the end to have been impressed.

The day ended with a collection for the Red Cross Appeal for 'Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories' (including Gaza) which raised £201, and tea and celebratory cakes. Thank you to Croydon!



GA: A feast of choices

It never fails to bring tears to my eyes when we lift our voices in song for the first hymn in the opening session. I have attended many General Assemblies (GA's) in the United States. This was my first in the UK. It had the same power to embrace us in all our diversity as a faith community.

Folks go to the GA annual meetings for many reasons. You can attend worship services as your primary experience. These begin in the early morning and run through the day. Each plenary session begins with worship and the Anniversary Service closes the final evening together. This year's Anniversary Service was a challenge to us to not give up and to embrace innovation.

You can go to the GA to attend workshops on many varied topics. This year the GA staff presented workshops on their work in Social Justice, the

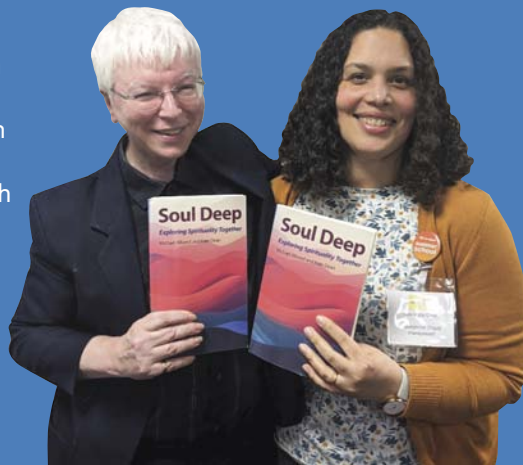
'Toolkit', Worship Web, Youth, and International Collaboration, to name a few. The Inquirer and the Executive Committee (EC) had listening sessions. There was much to choose from to learn more and to engage in dialogue with our fellow Unitarians.

You can go to the GA to participate in the business of the denomination. There are ordinary motions presented by congregations and groups of congregations and administrative motions from the EC. This year there were four ordinary motions for the delegates to vote on. We passed a motion that calls on us to study and learn about AI. We passed a motion to support No More Deaths Campaigns. We passed an amended motion on Gaza and Israel, and we did not pass a motion that called for deleting the requirement that there only be four ordinary motions accepted at each GA.

Soul Deep book launch

Exploring Spirituality Together
by Rev'ds Michael Allured and Kate Dean

An eight-week course of spiritual exploration for small groups, designed to encourage personal reflection and shared insights. Each session plan includes suggested readings and activities, with practical guidance for facilitators, to help participants find meaning and spiritual fulfilment in their daily lives. Paperback £10 + p&p available from <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/shop>



PICTURED ABOVE Welcome to the Ministers admitted to the General Assembly Roll (left to right): Rev'ds Jennifer Sanders, Arek Malecki and Lynda Kane, pictured on stage with GA Chief Officer Liz Slade, Rev'd Jo James and Rev'd Sarah Tinker.

The administrative motions gave approval to make preparations to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and that the GA and EC develop a matched-funding scheme to invest in local leadership. We approved the appointment of the President, Vice President and a new Honorary Treasurer for 2024-25. Three distinguished veterans were named honorary members for their service to Unitarians, our highest honour. There was appreciation expressed for staff and volunteers that make the GA work.

You can go to the GA to participate in family programmes. The children and

youth and their parents had a rousing good time. Squeezed in between all this activity is time to network, meet old friends and make new ones. Our District was well represented by congregations and staff. My Chapel Society in Oxford had seven people there and Brighton had five.

I encourage everyone to experience this annual event at least once. The power of hearing all our voices joined in song may bring tears to your eyes and hope to your soul.

REV'D SUE SINNAMON
LDPA Trustee

Year of climate activism

It's a year since a loose affiliation of climate-concerned Unitarians formed around a shared aspiration to encourage our movement to engage in a more explicit way with the defining issue of our time, as well as to have a presence at 'The Big One' demonstration for biodiversity in London last April. Promoted by Extinction Rebellion, this event was conceived as a summit for the many organisations, including faith groups, which are striving for a greener and more just future for all the world's people, and which would speak with one voice in Westminster.

Word-cloud poll

Unitarians for Climate Justice (U4CJ) was formed at the 2023 GA annual meetings, encouraged by a word-cloud poll in Rev'd Winnie Gordon's Anniversary Service on social justice. It revealed 'climate justice' to be one of the key issues for Unitarians. About 20 of our new group went on to march together at 'The Big One', alongside around 100,000 other demonstrators. We were delighted that wildlife presenter Chris Packham proudly carried our new U4CJ banner.

Over this past year, the group has held regular meetings remotely, maintained contact and shared ideas and information via a WhatsApp group and Facebook, and attended demonstrations in London and other cities. We also held an 'in-person' meeting at Kensington Unitarians in February.

Faith in courage

At this meeting, attended by over 50 Unitarians, we were addressed by Clare Farrell, a co-founder of Extinction Rebellion, who, despite not having a religious or spiritual tradition of her own, spoke movingly about discovering faith in the goodness, love and courage of the people she encountered in activism work.

Also at this meeting, Dr Tim Harrison, teacher and scientist, focused on the practical and personal side of environmentalism. He led a lively workshop on the impact of food and diet on the world, asking us to consider the huge problems our Western way of eating creates for sustainability, and how we as individuals and congregations can make changes to mitigate this.

Looking forward, our aspiration as a group is to remain a meeting point for information sharing, mutual encouragement, activism and change – individually, within our congregations and in the wider Unitarian movement. If you'd like to get involved with U4CJ or simply join the conversation, then email robert.oulton@btinternet.com

DR ROB OULTON

TOP RIGHT: Unitarians marching with 100,000 others at 'The Big One' through central London last year.

LOWER RIGHT: At the climate conference at Kensington Unitarians in February.



Horsham's DIY services

Before Covid, there was a pool of ministers and lay people happy to take services at Horsham when our part-time minister was absent. Post-pandemic, this situation changed dramatically.

Last year we were faced with a dearth of visiting service leaders and some difficult decisions:

- a) Should we meet only when our regular minister is present, leaving the church closed for half the Sundays in a month?
- b) Should we rely on zoomed or pre-recorded services as we'd done during lockdown?
- Or
- c) Should we present services ourselves?

The result was this: while we still use zoomed and pre-recorded services (for which, much thanks!), last year our members led a quarter of the Sunday services. We are aiming for a similar target this year. We are proud of our achievement, and the benefits to the congregation have been considerable: we've kept our church open every Sunday and we've tapped into the enthusiasm, talents, wide-ranging interests and life experience of our members.

Members can choose to lead a mainly traditional service in our church or an informal 'Cafe Sunday' gathering in the hall. Both are popular. Most services start with a simple idea and a gathering together of members to contribute readings, prayers, music and videos.

One person is needed to co-ordinate each service and to produce a simple Order of Service, but that individual does not have to provide the content. Two things are encouraged: make the service personal to you, and work with others. Ideas for themes are unlimited – our small congregation is full of them!

Is this an easy route to avoiding an empty pulpit? Not really, but it's a worthwhile endeavour. There's a part for everyone to play in a DIY Sunday. I have guidelines you could adapt for your congregation, and I'd be delighted to send them on request - please email: theperky4@gmail.com

JANET PERKINS



Mideast: Love us all!



PICTURED (l. to r.): Hanna Yaffe, Heather Jane Ozanne (chief executive of Spirit of Peace), Sheikh Ghassan Manasra, and musician and singer Isabel de Berrié.

An appeal for people in the UK to support both sides to bring peace to Israel-Palestine was made at Golders Green Unitarians in north London on 19 February. The call came from a renowned peace-builder, Sheikh Ghassan Manasra, visiting from his home in Nazareth. He told his audience: "Don't choose only one side in this conflict, support both sides! Both Palestinians and Jews need your love, your prayers and your wisdom. Love us! Pray for us!"

Sheikh Ghassan went on to call for a ceasefire in the region. "The killing must stop." The latest conflict had been caused by selfish leaders and by fear. "We want strong leaders to make peace with. We need strong people for peace," he said.

The Sheikh, who is a Sufi teacher and poet, said it was a tough time for peacemakers in his region. All projects of his interfaith organisation Abrahamic

Reunion had stopped when this latest war began. But he and his team of peacemakers were envisaging new projects.

October 7th was not the beginning, he said. Palestinians in Gaza had for far too long been under siege. Peace could only come through creating a better life for all. His organisation, Abrahamic Reunion, is working to bring together members of the three Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. "God wants us to live in peace."

The event was part of a UK tour organised by the interfaith charity Spirit of Peace. The evening included singing, music and stories, and featured special guest Hanna Yaffe, the Jewish story-teller and singer from Jerusalem. Hanna is to be theme speaker at the London District's Festival of Unitarians in the South East (FUSE) in Kent in June.

REV'D JIM CORRIGALL

Congregational snapshots

Some extracts from the congregational reports for 2023 submitted to our LDPA's AGM in March



Ditchling Unitarians

The Old Meeting House is looked after by a trust, which also lets the neighbouring cottage. The congregation and the trust are actively pursuing a merger to form a new charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). We hope that this may take place within the next year.

Membership of the church is steady and we were glad to welcome two new members in the past year. However, we remain a small congregation and we recognise the need to grow. We will continue to look for new opportunities to do so throughout the coming year.

Stratford Unitarians

During the past year we have continued with our varied programme of weekly Sunday services. These always involve sharing and we feel very strongly that this participation is central to our worship practice. All shades of opinion are heard respectfully, and lead to discussion and spiritual reflection as different points of view and fresh perspectives are opened up. Recognising the diversity of our congregation, in a typical month we hold services which serve those who prefer both formal and informal worship styles; we also include meditation services.

Golders Green Unitarians (GGU)

As with many Unitarian communities across London and the South East, 2023-24 has been a year of challenges and opportunities, concerns and joys.

One of the highlights of the year for Golders Green Unitarians (GGU) was hosting the LGBTQ+ exhibition, which was developed by our Unitarian General Assembly. It has been touring the country since its launch at the 2023 Annual Meetings and arrived at GGU for two weeks in September. We celebrated its arrival on one of the hottest Saturdays of the Summer with a meeting at which Peter Tatchell, a human rights campaigner, and Derek McAuley, former Chief Officer of our Unitarian General Assembly, gave presentations.



Peter talked about Dudley Cave (1921-1999), a member of GGU in the 1970s and 1980s who, along with GGU's then minister Keith Gilley, was a pioneer of welcoming gay people into Unitarian communities. The national exhibition features material from the time, including the setting up of Integroup, which provided a space in Golders Green for people to meet for conversation, regardless of their sexual orientation. On the following day we held a service at which we rededicated Dudley's memorial bench. The exhibition was open to the public over the week and visited by the local Anglican priest.

Horsham Unitarians

2023 has been a year of interest and innovation for our Horsham church and its twenty-five members. Most prominent among events of interest was the 300th anniversary of our building which we celebrated in July with an Open Day when visitors were able to enjoy displays of our history and tours of our nascent Wildlife Haven. It was also encouraging to have participation by outside exhibitors and substantial coverage in the local press.



ABOVE: Ministers past and present at the 300th anniversary celebrations: (l to r) Jopie Boeke (who flew in from the US), Maria Curtis and Duncan Voice.

Richmond and Putney Unitarians

Our 'Connections' forum continued to explore outreach and ways to offer support to our local community. At the start of the year we opened the church as a 'warm space'; in November we ran our first Death Café (with more planned in the new year); our weekly 'Dance for Health' class, run in partnership with Dance Health Alliance, offers dance-based exercise designed to provide physical and mental therapy for people living with neurodiverse conditions or general mobility issues.

We will seek local partners to extend our social action provision and hopefully develop our 'café' format to run a regular 'Rainbow Café' for elderly gay people who might be encountering social isolation. Our monthly creche for young children has become firmly established again after the pandemic hiatus, and is now supplemented by a Sunday school run by parents within our congregation, increasing our accessibility to families. We continue to offer a weekly mindfulness/meditation session (with our spectacular candlelit labyrinth meditation around Christmas proving a big hit) and monthly journaling.

Innovation Challenge Scheme

Our General Assembly (GA) provided this list of Frequently Asked Questions (and answers) to foster understanding of its new 'growth plan'

Q Can the scheme be used for building improvements, maintenance, or repair work?

A NO – The Challenge Scheme will only make grants to congregational partnerships for recruitment, training, remuneration (salary or fees) and associated overheads of the people they need for up to five years.

Q Can the scheme be used for employing a Minister?

A YES – e.g. A group of congregations investing in a new team Ministry, finding a common purpose that will allow a Minister to work with the strengths of each community, building energy and capacity, and moving towards financial sustainability in the role within five years.

Q Can the scheme be used for employing an Outreach worker?

A YES – e.g. A group of congregations investing in a community outreach worker to build relationships with local stakeholders and discover the ways in which the congregation and chapel building can serve local needs in a way that is aligned to their purpose.

Q Can the scheme be used for supporting existing Ministry or administration costs?

A NO – however we do encourage the fund to be called on to support the costs of Ministry, but this must be a change to or development of a current appointment, with a clear story of what changes you expect to see as a result.

Q Can the scheme be used for employing an administrator.

A YES – e.g. A group of congregations investing in a development administrator and systems to help Trustees efficiently manage governance and accounting tasks or rental activity that can share the local chapel buildings with local stakeholders while bringing in new revenue that can enable a richer programme of activities to be offered.

Q Can the scheme be used for paying consultants?

A YES – for short term research or project management e.g. a group of congregations developing an 'artist in residence' scheme that can bring creative practice into the communities, expressing Unitarian stories in new ways.

Q Can a single congregation apply for a grant?

A Priority will be given to collaborative bids between two or more Congregations with District level support.

Q Who can help our Congregation prepare a grant application?

A The scheme will be run by a Programme Manager who will be funded by the GA and report to the Chief Officer. As well as administration, their role will include supporting and encouraging potential projects to successful applications, and funded projects to successful completion.

Q How do we apply?

A An outline bid (maximum 1,500 words) should be submitted to the Programme Manager describing the congregation(s), summarising the project's aims, describing the proposed activities and explaining their intended impact. It should include a summary budget and information about who will be overseeing the implementation. If approved, you will be invited to submit a full bid to the Assessment panel

Q Who will assess our application?

A Every full application will be reviewed by an Assessment Panel of three people, randomly allocated from a pool of assessors to be recruited from across the Unitarian movement, and perhaps also from beyond.

Q Can we get funding to help develop a grant application?

A YES - If the Programme Manager or the Assessment Panel agrees that a proposal is strong but needs more preliminary work (e.g., to develop a job description, or undertake community research, or run a pilot to test a hypothesis) then the Programme Manager may approve a one-off Development Grant of up to £5,000. Awarding a development grant does not bind the Assessment Panel to approve an application for a full grant.

Q How will the Grant work in practice?

A Once a grant is approved, 10% of the total grant will be payable within 28 days.

Thereafter, projects must submit a quarterly report showing progress against the agreed criteria, and a drawdown request accompanied by receipts for eligible outgoings. Quarterly reports will be approved by the Programme Manager within 14 days of receipt, and payment will be made by bank transfer within 14 days of the approval.

Q What happens if the original plan doesn't work out?

A Recognising that circumstances change, the scheme allows the Programme Manager discretion to agree reasonable changes to plans, indicators, and budgets, or to agree to an early wind-down of the project so resources can be deployed elsewhere.

Q What other obligations are there?

A Primarily keeping good records and sharing your learning and experience with the rest of the movement.

Q When can we apply?

A There will be an online or paper-based application form.

The GA is hoping to receive the first applications in late 2024. However should you identify a potential bid, talk to potential collaborators and your District and start to prepare your proposal NOW. A good bid will probably take three to six months to develop.

The future of District Ministry

Latest news from the Council

At our recent Annual General Meeting Rev'd Jim Corrigan announced his intention to retire. It's right that Jim's time as District Minister comes to a close with this year's FUSE. We'll say a proper thank you to him then. In the meantime there's work for Council to do planning for Jim's succession.

We've established a search committee comprising Rev'd Sue Sinnamon, Jo O'Sullivan and myself. We're drawing on the experience of our Hon President, Dr Jacky Woodman, and shall report on progress to the whole Council.

Ministering to a District as diverse as ours in terms of geography, size of congregations, some with ministers and buildings and some not, is a challenging role. It's also full of potential: it's about working in partnership with all 25 congregations and shaping our Unitarian landscape for the coming decades.

We have reflected on the essential qualities required for District Ministry: a talent for inspiring leadership; a clear and committed personal spirituality, creativity, initiative, pragmatism and tact; experience of ministering to and working in partnership with diverse groups of people in different size organisations so as to meet the needs of congregations and the District as a whole; a deep understanding of how to communicate in a range of ways.

There are three pillars to District Ministry leadership:

The central one is creating a programme and nurturing a common vision.

The second is governance and congregational support.

The third is effective internal and external communication.

The advert will be published shortly. On our current timeline we aim to have Jim's successor(s) in place by September. For those who have noted the (s): the rationale is that Council wants the flexibility of different options. One person may not necessarily have the full cadre of skills and strengths we are looking for. For example, someone may be passionate about some aspects of District Ministry, working in partnership to craft a strategic vision for the future, but lack the important technical knowledge needed to help advise on congregational governance.

If you are interested and would like to talk to Sue, Jo or me please get in touch. Our emails are listed opposite.

REV'D MICHAEL ALLURED
Chair of LDPA Council

District Council



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fuse

FESTIVAL OF UNITARIANS
IN THE SOUTH EAST

14th-16th
JUNE 2024
The Friars
Aylesford

The Power of Story + Song

Theme Speaker **Hanna Yaffe**

DEVELOP
OUR
COMMUNITY

DEEPEN
YOUR
SPIRITUALITY

INSPIRE
YOUR
CREATIVITY



London District's annual festival is returning to The Friars, Aylesford in Kent. We hope you will join us!

- Theme speaker: Hanna Yaffe
- Workshops for Body, Mind + Spirit
- Worship and Morning Devotions
- Meditation and Nature Walks

With an exciting children's programme led by Jim Blair and Jenny Canfield

For our programme, further details and booking please visit:

www.LDPAunitarians.org/fuse2024

Time to book for FUSE!

The deadline for booking for our annual Festival of Unitarians in the South East (FUSE), is fast approaching. The festival is being held at The Friars retreat centre, Aylesford in Kent on the weekend of 14 to 16 June. Please book via our website: www.LDPAunitarians.org/fuse2024

When is the deadline? To be certain of a place, book before 17th May. After that, the centre will begin letting out any rooms we have not taken. It is probable you could still secure a room until end of May, and possibly even up to 7th June, but it will be increasingly difficult.

What's happening this year?

There'll be music and song, prayer and meditation, talks, workshops, nature

walks and a children's programme. Our theme is The Power of Story and Song, with Hanna Yaffe from Jerusalem. Hanna uses stories and music to foster healing and unity in her work with Jewish, Christian and Muslim artists.

What capacity does The Friars have?

There are 68 bedrooms available, many suitable for sharing. Rooms are comfortable and the food is good, but the centre does not meet full hotel standards. There are hotels in Aylesford and nearby Maidstone if you'd prefer.

What are the rates? See costs on the flyer and our website. We are heavily subsidising fees for children, and also offering subsidies for families.