



IMPULSE

Promoting Unitarianism in London and the South East



Summer edition 2019



Lewisham welcomes
new Minister



Summer Quarterly

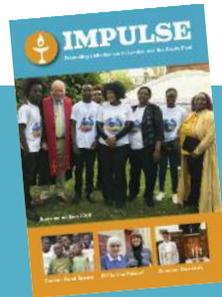


Off to the Palace!



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COVER Rainbows Across Borders at Lewisham Unity

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Website www.LDPAUnitarians.org

Facebook @LDPAUnitarians

@FUSE: Festival of Unitarians in the SouthEast

"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."

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Message from the District Minister



Welcome to our summer edition of IMPULSE and I trust that you will enjoy reading it either online or in the printed versions that go to your congregations. As usual there is news about past events of note as well as interesting and important events in the future.

But before anything else can I say that I hope all is well with you personally and in the congregation or fellowship to which you belong? I really mean that because I am conscious that there is much anxiety and stress in our nation and these are not easy times for people who value peace, stability and kindness. Unfortunately it doesn't seem that there will be anything different for some time, so what have we to offer to our families, neighbours and friends – and indeed to our own souls?

As Unitarians we don't settle for the simple answers. So, although I am a great admirer of the words of the 13th century Persian poet and Sufi mystic Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, it isn't always a comfort to be forced back on our own resources – great as they may be!

"Oh soul, you worry too much. You have seen your own strength. You have seen your own beauty. You have seen your golden wings. Why do you worry?" Rumi



People are unsettled, impatient and even despairing and some will turn to us for some gesture of wisdom. So perhaps Tolkien's words from 'The Lord of the Rings' speak more rationally to us:

"In the end, the shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was a light and high beauty forever beyond its reach." J.R.R. Tolkien

But words are probably something people have had enough of. So can I encourage you to help and calm yourselves by trying to help and offer calm to others? This is the time for us to make the most of the sacred space our chapels and churches offer. We can offer a place of quiet sanctuary for those who long to be away from arguments and from people talking over each other.

Many of you are opening your places of worship during the week and this in itself can be a real ministry. Can we make the times of quietness in our services simple silence and something more? A little guidance during this time of meditation can direct our minds to our blessings and gifts. Along with this,

maybe we can perform some random acts of kindness to neighbours and strangers as well as friends. It would be great if we could become known as the people whose

> VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.ldpaunitarians.org

chalice flame on our lapels and notice-boards is the sign and symbol of people who are kind in deed and word. You may think I'm always saying this but the bottom line has to be 'Deeds not creeds', much as I value the things we in common believe. I wish you well with it!

Recent events around the world have reminded us that not everyone wants to show kindness to people of faith. This is a gentle but serious reminder to us to be alert in our public meetings and services and to keep safety and security running quietly in the background of our spiritual activities. I hope to be able to bring something to you about this in the future.

We do have many good things to do as well as to be in the coming weeks and months. I hope to see many of you at the Summer Quarterly when we can enjoy time together in Horsham's beautiful space and hear about the green and

environmental emphasis that has been 'growing' there in recent years. And of course summer gives us the chance to be part of PRIDE parades. We didn't get on the London Parade this year but being with our friends in Brighton is a great alternative.

I am pleased that Professor Jacky Woodman has agreed to be the new Chair of Council and grateful to Rev'd Feargus O'Connor for his time in the office. I'm sure Jacky will bring fresh ideas and energy to us.

As the summer progresses I look forward to seeing many of you in your congregations and around the District. Should you need me please don't hesitate to make contact.

Blessings and best wishes. Your friend,

Martin

Off to the Palace!

For most of 2018, Brighton Unitarian Church was hidden from view, shrouded in hoarding attached to scaffolding. Our classical portico, with its four pillars surmounted by the triangular pediment, had been found to be in serious danger of collapse. But thanks to support and funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund we were able to embark on the extensive renovation work required. The HLF grant would cover a little over half the eventual costs so intensive fund raising was which needed to be done. We received wonderful support, with very generous donations from Unitarian trusts and individuals, as well as grants from other organisations.

Now, thanks to excellent work by architect Mark Anderson and hard

work by the builders Malcolm Charles Contractors, our much-loved portico is restored to its original appearance, an important part of the Regency architecture of New Road.

The value of this has been acknowledged by Brighton and Hove City Council; the Mayor's office made a recommendation to Buckingham Palace that an invitation to a Garden Party be issued to the Church treasurer, in recognition of the value to the city of the restoration of this important building.



So, Phillida Simpson, ex-treasurer, and Marion Bance, invaluable administrator, will be off to Buckingham Palace this summer hoping for glorious weather!

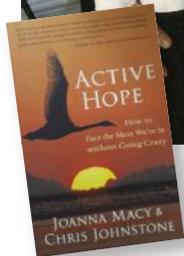


FUSE 2020



We are returning on 21-23 February 2020 to Chatsworth Hotel in Worthing for our Festival of Unitarians in the South East. More details coming soon

LDPA Quarterly Meetings



For the Summer Quarterly meeting we are visiting our friends at Horsham Unitarian Church on Saturday 22 June

The theme of the day is “Active Hope – Bringing about the Great Turning” inspired by American Buddhist and eco-warrior Joanna Macy.

Tea/coffee will be available from 11am, and there will be a walking tour of Horsham at midday. You are free to bring your own lunch or pick something up at the cafe in the park, at the Saturday market, or at any of the many eateries in Horsham town centre. You are welcome to eat your lunch in our church garden.

The service starts at 2pm, followed by a workshop/discussion, with tea at approximately 3.30pm. Please let us know if you would like to attend so we have a rough idea of numbers for catering purposes. Email horsham.unitarians@gmail.com

Horsham Unitarian Church, Worthing Road, RH12 1SL is situated opposite the bus station and is a 15-minute walk from Horsham train station. Limited parking at the back of the church.

Worship that works

Our Autumn Quarterly Meeting is a special one-day training session to develop congregational leadership skills on Saturday 21 September.

This autumn's LDPA Quarterly will feature a whole day's training session introducing participants to best practice in Unitarian worship. This will be particularly beneficial for anybody who would like to be involved in leading worship in their own congregation or in churches around their district. It would also be useful for people who already lead worship and who would like to develop their skills and share hints and tips with other Unitarians. However, all who enjoy Unitarian worship and would like to think about it more in a structured way are also welcome to attend. The workshop will have a particular focus on reflective practice and the meaning and purpose of the worship we do together.

The workshop will also act as an introductory session for anyone wishing to undertake the Worship Studies Course (Foundation Step), a nationally recognised GA course, which we are intending to run once again in the LDPA at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead, between autumn 2019 and spring 2020. The remainder of the course will be run over three further Saturdays, by a variety of expert tutors, and we would be glad to hear early expressions of interest from any who might wish to sign up.

To book a place on the workshop and/or register your interest in the WSC Foundation Step, please contact administrator@ldpaunitarians.org or the District Minister on 07976 839299.



Schedule: 10.30am arrivals for an 11am start. The workshop runs from 11 am until 3pm. This will be followed by worship and refreshments until 4.30pm.

Venue: Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, 3 Pilgrim's Place, Hampstead, London NW3 1NG

Climate change lobby



Boru lives in Kenya and relies on his camels to survive. But even they are dying from drought.

Will you stand together with Boru for climate justice?

The time is now.

Join the mass lobby on 26 June and call for urgent action on climate change.

As Unitarians, we seek to put our faith into action by loving and caring for our neighbours and the Earth, our common home. And now, both are threatened by the impact of climate change.

Urgent action is needed to save our world as we know it. Will you join the mass lobby in Westminster, London on **26 June** and tell MPs that it's time to act on climate change?

Climate change is devastating the world's poorest communities right now, as more extreme weather events, from flooding to droughts, drive families from their homes and create food crises.

Urgent action is needed, whether it's for women like Aster in Ethiopia who

struggle to feed their children when the rains don't come and crops burn on the stalk, or fisherfolk like Lope in the Philippines battling to make a living as climate change brings super typhoons and extreme heat, or (left) pastoralists like Boru whose camels are weak from drought.

We know what we need to do to reverse the trend of climate change and protect people like Aster, Lope and Boru: we need to cut global greenhouse emissions to net zero. The existing UK Government targets don't go far enough – we need to get to net zero by 2045 to make a difference.

On 26 June, we'll come together in London to celebrate our faith in action, lobby our political representatives, pray together and energise one another for the challenges to come.

It is being coordinated by *The Climate Coalition* and *Greener UK* alliances that represent a support base of over 15 million people. Members include WWF, CAFOD, Christian Aid, RSPB, The Women's Institute, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, The Wildlife Trusts, NUS, Tearfund, CPRE and Marine Conservation Society. For further details visit caid.org.uk/timeisnow

JANET PERKINS

Horsham Unitarians
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LONDON PRIDE

For many years LDPA Unitarians have joined the London PRIDE Parade, something which has always been happy and colourful event for all of us who have taken part. Unfortunately because of the huge demand this year we didn't get a place. However, our congregation at Brighton have invited us to join with them and Godalming Unitarians extend a warm welcome too.

BRIGHTON PRIDE PARADE

Saturday 3 August

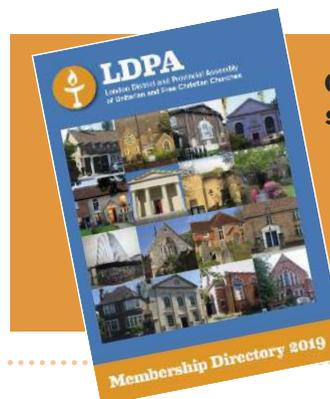
Walking groups to arrive at the seafront between 9.00am and 10.15am.

The walk is no more than a couple of miles at a slow pace and it is a great way to show our support – so do come and join us! To register your interest and reserve a place contact us by email administrator@ldpaunitarians.org or the District Minister on 07976 839299.

SURREY PRIDE

Saturday 10 August in Woking

Woking and Godalming Unitarians will be there with a stall and we would love you to come and join us. A parade through the centre of town from 11am until midday. Then there will be a party in Woking Park throughout the afternoon until 10pm. Details from Christine Martin on mobile 07801 915513 or email csmartin24@gmail.com



Our 2019 LDPA Membership Directory will be sent to each of our congregations this summer

Next year we aim to publish this information alongside the annual report from each Church – to make it a comprehensive and useful overview of our community.

Highlights from the General Assembly Annual Meetings



The final feedback forms and reports are still coming in but clearly the General Assembly Annual Meetings at Birmingham this year were a huge success. The format had been condensed to three days instead of four, making it more affordable and it appears, more attractive. Over 360 people attended and more than 70 of these were there for the first time. There were more younger Unitarians this year and it felt like there was a new pulse and pace to our main Unitarian annual event.

ABOVE The General Assembly began with our Administrator Helen White bringing in the LDDPA banner at the opening ceremony

As mentioned in Epulse (are you signed up for this?) LDDPA congregations, people and Ministers were fully involved. The Rev Dr Maria Curtis from Horsham delivered the address at the Anniversary Service (pictured below). Her theme “Knowing our place” was highly contemporary, urging us to consider the state of the planet we know as Earth – our home. But it wasn’t just a call to be environmentally and ecologically aware: Maria gently but irresistibly pulled the rug out from under what she called species imperialism. We need to know our place and recognise our dependence on the many processes, balances and co-habitants of the planet. Her closing thought was that the whole natural world, rather than the human species, is the primary revelation of the divine. After 13.8 billion years we need to prove ourselves worthy of all that brought us into being.



Earlier in the service we had welcomed three Ministers who had trained and qualified as Unitarian Ministers. Two of these are ministering in LDDPA congregations, Rev Duncan Voice at Ditchling and Rev Dr Claire MacDonald at Lewisham (l and r standing above).

There had been a few voices of discontent and opposition to the choice of Lord Mark Price as the keynote speaker (pictured right). However, Unitarian courtesy, tolerance and eagerness to let a person be heard before coming out in judgement was overwhelmingly the response of those assembled. Mark spent some time introducing us to his story, growing up in a nonconformist family, the son of a greengrocer and lay preacher.

Lord Price began his career in the ranks of the John Lewis Partnership, rising through the department store division and eventually being appointed Managing Director of Waitrose and finally Deputy Chairman. With this as a background he now seeks to develop workplace happiness.

Convinced that the key person in our working lives is our ‘line manager’, his formula was explained in six steps:

1. Reward and recognition
2. Information
3. Empowerment
4. Well being
5. Sense of pride
6. Job satisfaction

He didn’t take time to develop the similarities but this transfers quite well into congregational happiness too! The way he was received and applauded >





showed that people were impressed with his thinking. He was impressed by us too, noting our values and the professionalism of our meetings and spending time speaking to over a dozen people about their work experience during his time with us.

The meetings also paid tribute to Derek McAuley, who is retiring from his position of Chief Officer after more than nine years. During his time of service in this role, Derek brought our Unitarian and Free Christian views on equality and same sex marriage into the public and political arena, overseeing the modernisation of the headquarters

activities and being an ambassador for UK Unitarians around the world. The four Executive Committee convenors, including our District Minister led the tributes to Derek (pictured above).

Here in the LDPA District we look forward to collaboration with his successor Liz Slade. The new President, the Rev Celia Cartwright, was welcomed and has already challenged us to value our Unitarian ties and interdependence as well our cherished autonomy.

Ours is plainly no ordinary faith community. Let's work together to share the secret and make it better known.

Camp Jojo

VISIT CAMP JOJO
www.campjojo.org

An update from the Colchester Unitarian group on the second year of their social action project, Camp Jojo.

Camp Jojo provides an opportunity for families who have a child with complex needs to have a holiday – a camping holiday! Not perhaps the most obvious choice for families where one or more members may be in a wheelchair, but our belief is that we can all benefit from time in the beauty of the wild. The LDPA provided us with our first £500 of 'seed' funding for this initiative last year, and is supporting us again this year

Our first group of families came along last August, and a great time it was. The setting was a beautiful location on a farm on Mersea Island, Essex, and the sun shone! Through a wonderful group of experienced volunteers, we offered much practical support to each family, and a great menu of fun activities meant there was something for everybody.

Now we want to update you on what has grown out of that seed. We felt that this idea fills a real need for some families who find themselves in the

situation of being intensive care-givers to one child, whilst struggling to cope with daily life and with making sure their other children don't 'miss out'. We also now know it *is* possible to hold such camps! So Camp Jojo has now been set up as a separate organisation – with three camps booked this August.

This year we have focused on raising funds for the procurement of specialist equipment. We are hoping to become a charity in due course so have done a lot of planning.

Our vision for the camps has slowly grown and developed. We want to help to build mental and emotional resilience for tired parents, to consider the needs of siblings, and to build community amongst groups of families from the same geographical area – often the same special needs school.

There is much to be done, but the vision and families' feedback is energising, and we are really encouraged by all the interest shown. We will let you know how it all goes this August!

CHRISTINE WRIGHT



Lewisham welcomes new minister



The Rev Dr Claire MacDonald was inducted into the Ministry of the Lewisham Congregation on Saturday 18 May. Now known as Lewisham Unity, the congregation has been busy making the premises attractive, modern and ready to be a focal community destination.

Members of the congregation, along with Ministers and friends from the District, joined with Claire and many of her friends from the music, drama and arts world to make the occasion of many blessings memorable and different. The induction service itself was led by the Rev Winnie Gordon, from New Chapel Birmingham. Winnie gave a thoughtful and encouraging address and promises were made by Claire and the congregation.

A welcome blessing came from the District Minister and we enjoyed the vibrant music of the Rainbows Across Borders Chorus as well as other gifted musicians and singers.

It was standing room only at times, so not all of the ceremony was held in the worship space. A blessing of Claire with 'laying on of hands' by her ministerial colleagues, the congregation and the whole gathered community took place around the Peace Pole in the front garden for all to see. A Hebrew prayer recited by Claire's husband was a

welcome feature here. And in the freshly landscaped rear garden, there was more singing from the Rainbows Across Borders Chorus and other singers and musicians, as a tea was enjoyed and people had the opportunity to talk.

The induction was part of a weekend of events, some of which took place in a yurt in the garden.

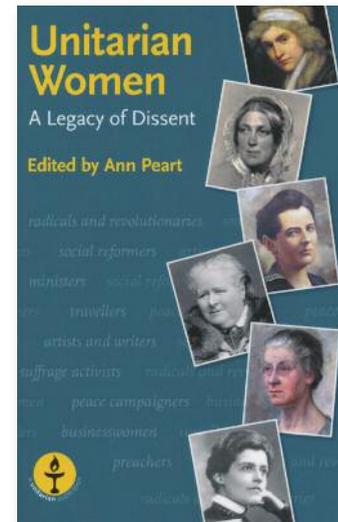


ABOVE Gifts were given by the community to Rev Dr Claire MacDonald (right).

Claire has already been ministering at Lewisham for nearly two years and becoming involved with the other faith communities in this part of South East London. We wish Claire and the congregation many more blessings as they build the faith community with an emphasis on environment, equality and contemporary spiritual discovery.

The Lindsey Press

2019 sees the publication of two original and beautifully produced books commissioned by the Lindsey Press.



Unitarian Women – A Legacy of Dissent

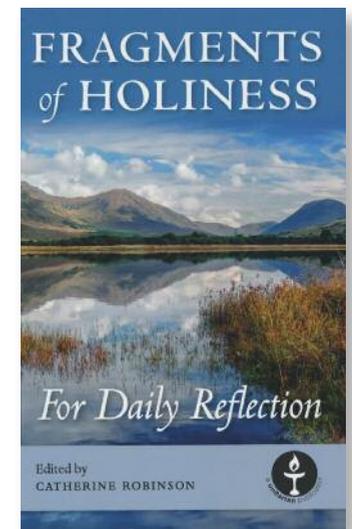
This book celebrates the pioneering achievements of Unitarian women who made a difference to their world – as writers and artists, social reformers, suffrage activists, peace campaigners, educators and politicians, preachers and ministers – for 200 years from the mid-18th century. As Unitarians, they dissented from the orthodox religious doctrines of their time; as women they dissented from the restricted cultural roles prescribed for them by society.

Edited by Ann Peart, a historian, LDPA life member, and former Principal of Unitarian College Manchester. Cost £10 plus p&p.

Fragments of Holiness – for Daily Reflection

Edited by Catherine Robinson, a member of the Oxford Unitarian congregation, this is a collection of reflective texts for every day of the year. We have been 'road testing' it at Lewisham Unity and have found its contents sensitive, imaginative and incredibly useful. We have each bought one already and I urge you to do so, too. It makes a great gift. I have taken to reading it every day, and it really 'speaks' to the day. £9 plus p&p.

To purchase your copies by card you can call Essex Hall between 10am & 5pm (Monday to Friday) tel: 020 7240 2384. Both books are also available through major online booksellers.



REV DR CLAIRE MACDONALD

Zimbabwe Orphans



Like many of our congregations which generously support overseas charities, Stratford Unitarian Church supports this educational programme in Zimbabwe.

The Tengenenge Orphans Fund was set up to pay the school fees and provide uniforms and books for the orphans and single parent children of Tengenenge Village, a remote community of sculptors in Mashonaland, Zimbabwe.

Tengenenge, which wonderfully means *the beginning of the beginning*, because it is by a spring which is the source of a river, is a happy and well run village that cares deeply for all its children. The community has not escaped the AIDS epidemic: since the country's economic collapse – when the 2006 World Health Report Zimbabwe as having the lowest

life expectancy in the world (34 for women and 37 for men) – it is not uncommon for young children to find themselves parentless. The orphans of this village belong in extended families and are loved and looked after. But in these difficult times, the villagers are managing on one or two US dollars a day and they struggle to find school fees for their own children. So that's where we came in.

Since I started this project in 2014 with the support of the Stratford Unitarians, all the children in the village have been able to attend school. The project has grown, gone on to identify further needs and to help in other ways. As the secondary school is 10 kilometres from the village there had been incidents of girls being attacked, molested, and even raped on their way to and from school. >

Helping the children of Tengenenge Village in Zimbabwe

> So we started a girls' bike club, providing every girl with a sturdy Zimbabwe-made bicycle designed for dirt roads and stony paths. The girls, a dozen of them, all ride to school together. We also added two community bikes, so villagers can get to school meetings, take their grain to be milled and visit the health centre.

Three years ago, the villagers decided that they no longer wanted junior age children walking a 20-kilometre daily round trip to attend the nearest primary school. They took over in an old tobacco barn, a garage and a ruined farm house and they hired a local teacher. We were able to help with benches, tables for the top class and decorating materials so the parents could paint the makeshift classrooms. After a year of one teacher teaching several hundred children, they gained government recognition and were supplied with four qualified teachers. The school now has over five hundred

pupils and serves other nearby villages and the children of newly settled farmers.

I will be visiting Tengenenge in June. Julian Meek has asked me to visit the school and identify any particular project they need our help with. We are starting to raise funds for that project and for school fees – Zimbabwe has just raised the primary fees by 100% and secondary by 50%. These are difficult times in rural Zimbabwe.

If you would like to help us with the education of these children and the survival of this community please send cheques made out to *The Tengenenge Orphans Fund* to Julian Meek, Stratford Unitarian Church, West Ham Lane, E15 4DP or online to The Co Op Bank: *The Tengenenge Orphans Fund*. Sort code 80 92 99 Account number 65704600 The Stratford Unitarian Church.

ALISON NEVILLE
Stratford Unitarian Congregation



TOP MAIN PHOTO
Girls' bike club

LEFT Effort (far left) the youngest and most reluctant student, is flourishing and came top in class last term!

Vacancy for Treasurer

We are currently searching for a person to be co-opted onto the Council of the LDPA to serve as Treasurer until the end of the Council year – 14 March 2020. **Professional book-keeping supports the day to day aspects of the role.** A full description of the duties are available from Bruce Bebington.

Applicants need to be of good standing in one of the Unitarian congregations or Fellowships forming part of the LDPA.

If you are interested in this opportunity to join in the important work the District does supporting our Unitarian congregations please send a Curriculum Vitae with two references, one from your congregation, to the Company Secretary Bruce Bebington by email bsbebington@msn.com or District Minister Rev'd Martin Whitell at district.minister@ldpaunitarians.org

New Council Member

Pat Fitzsimons

Pat was born in a suburb of Chicago many decades ago. She attended the Unitarian Church on Ridge Avenue in Evanston Illinois on many occasions. Her mother was a non-religious Jew and her father a Jesuit. This led to a childhood spent in the Lutheran Church and Quaker Meeting House, and a celebration of all the Catholic holidays and rituals along with the Jewish ones.

Since moving to London 40 years ago, Pat has been employed in the not for profit sector. She has worked in local government, housing associations,

NGOs, charities and social enterprises. She has worked on a wide range of issues – employment and skills, older people and isolation, the environment and more. She has now started her own consultancy, supporting women in their leadership roles, at home, in the community or in their work.

Pat has attended the Stratford Unitarian church for four years and is a member of the Trustee Board. She has two daughters, one married and heading up digital marketing in ASOS and one completing her university career studying physics in Swansea.

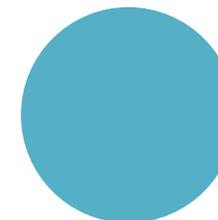
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Forthcoming events

JUNE

- 17-19 Ministerial Old Students' Association – Oxford
22 Summer Quarterly at Horsham from 11.00am
23 Ditchling Meeting House, Butterfly service 3.00pm
-

JULY

- 4 LDPA Council at Essex Hall 6.45pm
6 London PRIDE Parade
18 Pastoral Leaders' Group at Essex Hall from 11.00am
-

AUGUST

- 3 PRIDE Parade in Brighton
10 Surrey PRIDE in Woking
-

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

- 21 September LDPA Quarterly at Hampstead
21 November LDPA Council

DATES FOR THE NEXT WORSHIP STUDIES COURSE

- 7 December 2019, 28 March + 20 June 2020

Contributions are welcome

Please submit articles and photos for inclusion in the autumn edition of IMPULSE by mid-August to email district.minister@ldpaunitarians.org

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