



“Reverence for life”
Cherishing the diverse life of our planet



Dear Friends

Radio 4 has been holding a series of talks for Lent. I was particularly struck by the contribution of psychoanalyst and novelist Salley Vickers on the theme of Destiny versus Fate. Whereas we might use these terms interchangeably, in ancient Greece these two concepts meant very different things. Fate is beyond our control, whereas one can fulfil one's destiny despite the workings of fate.

Oedipus was fated to kill his father and marry his mother. When told of this fate by the oracle, his parents, Laius and Jocasta, saw infanticide as the obvious way out. But Oedipus was rescued and brought up by a kind shepherd. When he was told of his fate, he left his adoptive parents to avoid the predictions of the oracle coming true. Unknowingly, he killed his birth father in a fit of rage and went on to marry his mother, siring four children. A plague hit the land of Thebes and Tiresias, the seer, is forced to speak the truth to Oedipus. Jocasta kills herself and Oedipus blinds himself and becomes an exile to save the land. He had sought the truth regardless of cost. Oedipus accepted his fate, without trying to change it, thus becoming holy. In contrast, Laius and Jocasta had tried to subvert fate and, ironically, in so doing, ensured that the predictions of the oracle were fulfilled.

At this time of year, with Easter approaching, our thoughts move towards death, the final destination of us all. We all must die, but our genes can survive in the next generation; through loving our offspring, we help them shape their lives. Laius and Jocasta cut their son off from the means to survive and flourish. They refused to surrender to fate and suffered the consequences.

In her talk, Salley Vickers went on to consider the death by crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. There are those who say that Jesus was put to death as a willing sacrifice, to atone for our sins. Along with Salley Vickers, I find this a 'grotesque' notion. Jesus knew he was likely to die – his subversive message that the poor would inherit the earth; that it is far easier for innocent children to enter the kingdom, than adults contaminated by wealth and status, etc., put him at risk – but it was human beings exercising their free will, choosing to go down the route of envy, cruelty, greed and unkindness, who killed him. His love of the marginalised and dispossessed made him a threat to the established order, an enemy of both his own people and the ruling power of the land. Through teaching that a higher authority is available to us, he put himself at risk; he was fully aware of the likely consequences. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he recognises his *fate* closing in upon him, but his death by suffocation on a cross does not represent his *destiny*. According to Salley Vickers, it was the creative spirit that he engendered, in spite of his cruel end, that has proved to be his *destiny*:

“the message that love, mercy and kindness are stronger than any power, even the power of death, and can, if we only have courage, finally prevail.”

Blessings from the Minister

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Services April 2017

SUNDAY	Service Leader	FLOWERS	COFFEE
2nd	Rev Maria Curtis	Teresa Ramsden	Teresa Ramsden
9th	Stephen Crowther	Brenda Soltysik	Ann Malloch
16th	Rev Maria Curtis (Easter)	Teresa Ramsden	Pam Perkins
23rd	Jo O'Sullivan	Eileen Wield	Julie Derry
30th	Rev Maria Curtis (Membership Service)	Jill Allen	Eileen Wield

Events - April 2017



**Friday 7th & Saturday 8th
at 7.30-9.00pm**

Unity Players Cabaret

Give my Regards to Broadway – a colourful combination of musical numbers and dramatic sketches referencing the great shows and songs of

Broadway's golden era, ranging from 'Guys and Dolls' and 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes' to 'Annie get Your Gun', 'West Side Story', 'The Pyjama Game' and 'My Fair Lady'. End-of-show refreshments will follow a retiring collection on behalf of our charities, Cancer Research UK and the Red Cross Syria Appeal. Doors open 7.00pm. For advance booking contact Pat Poole Tel: 07810 407949 or e-mail: patriciamariapoole@gmail.com

Monday to Thursday 10th – 13th in Birmingham

Our minister and the Rev Richard Boeke will be attending the **2017 Unitarian General Assembly** in the



Hilton Hotel, Birmingham, as our nominated Horsham church delegates.

Saturday 22nd 2.00pm

St John's Roman Catholic Church



Horsham Interfaith Workshop on the topic of Religion and conflict. A showing of the film 'The Three Amigos' - a

conversation between a Rabbi, a Pastor and an Imam - will enliven the meeting, which will conclude with afternoon tea.

Sunday 30th During Morning Service

Member Rededication Service

led by our Minister Maria Curtis will celebrate the embracing of Unitarian values by our church members and will include an invitation to record their names by signature in the membership book.



...and Forthcoming



Celebration of Spring

Wed 3rd May - 7.00 to 9.00pm

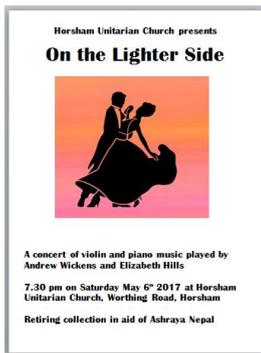
Our next GreenSpirit meeting will take the form of a celebration of spring.

Please bring a poem, prose or a prayer to read; a film clip or some recorded music to play. Andrew Wickens will play his violin; Charmaine Sadler will play the piano. There will also be some singing.

If you would like to contribute to this evening in any way, please let Maria know, so that a programme can be devised. All are welcome. Why not bring a friend?

Events - May 2017 Continued

Saturday 6th May - 7.30pm in church



Concert 'On the Lighter Side' a programme of classic and modern musical entertainment which will be performed by Andrew Wickens and Liz Hills in aid of the Nepalese education charity Ashraya Nepal.

Sunday 7th May 2.30pm "Hayes" Farm

Bluebell Walk (weather permitting) through the picturesque woods at their farm off Gay Street, courtesy of Andrew and Teresa Ramsden.



Events - June 2017

**THE
GREAT
GET
TOGETHER**

IN HONOUR OF JO COX

**Sunday
18th June**

Across the UK, communities will be marking the first anniversary of the death of Jo Cox, with 'Great Get Together' events. We at Horsham Unitarian Church are hosting our own event on Sunday 18th June. We will be holding a special community service for members and invited guests on the theme of unity. This will be co-led by our minister Rev Dr Maria Curtis and Mehrdad Kalani from the Baha'i faith, and will be followed by lunch.

This event is a non-political, non-denominational celebration of Jo's life. It aims to bring communities together in a spirit of friendship and harmony.

***'We have FAR MORE IN COMMON than that which divides us.'* Jo Cox, MP**

We hope you will be able to attend this special event and share in our community celebration.



Stories from our Congregation

The second in our series of stories taken from the range of inventive and touching stories presented by members of the congregation at our 19th February service. This contribution was made by Richard Boeke.

CELEBRATION OF HUSTON SMITH 1919-2016

Crescent Moon and Venus in the predawn sky. I am part of the Universe made alive.

My eyes are the Universe seeing itself. Silence. Ego dissolves in Oneness.

I am conscious... I am getting old

Some days depressed by the cultural divide ... between Trumps and No Trumps.

I want to be a bridge builder for life on our glorious Blue Ball in space.

(RB)



I thank two who opened the doors of perception for me: Professor Huston and his wife Kendra. Their story is told in a delightful book, *"TALES OF WONDER"*. The story begins as Huston is born

in a small city in China, a child of Methodist Missionaries.

When he was sent to Missouri to attend a Methodist College, he woke up each morning saying "GOOD."

He went on to study Philosophy at the University of Chicago. He didn't think he could find anything better than his Philosophy Professor; then he met Kendra Wieman, Professor Wieman's daughter.

Three daughters blessed their marriage.

St. Louis on the Mississippi River was their home as Huston taught Philosophy and learned yoga from a Swami. He was invited to do a television show on Religion. The producer taught him to ask "Where's Bessie the Cow?" Don't just use big words. Tell stories, Be AN ACTOR. Be an actor not just a lecturer. These TV programmes became the basis of his 1958 book, *"THE RELIGIONS OF MAN"*.

In 1958 I ended my three years as a Baptist Chaplain with the US AIR Force. 1959 at Harvard I was in a course on World Religions. Huston spoke on Hinduism. To illustrate Yoga, he sat on the desk in full lotus. Fifteen years later, Huston gave the sermon at my installation as Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Berkeley.

When they retired in Berkeley, California, Kendra and I joined others to encourage Huston to revise and expand. Guess the main reason?? ? (for gender inclusive language). Now, along with his friendship with the Dalai Lama, *"THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS"* included Tibetans, Sufis and Primal Religions. Together, over three million copies of his books have been sold.

Huston gave hundreds of TV shows, five PBS Programs with Bill Moyers. He and Kendra spoke for Religious Freedom www.iarf.net and for the WCF www.worldfaiths.org Jopie and I enjoyed hosting them in Horsham.

In retirement at Berkeley, Huston gave one World Religions Course at the University. To end at his last lecture, I joined two hundred students in a ten-minute standing ovation.

At the end of his book, Huston views religions as a "Stained Glass Cathedral." I think of the beautiful line of Shelley, *"Life like a dome of many coloured glass, stains the bright radiance of eternity."* Different religions are different languages of the sacred. To understand a second language or a second religion is to see the world through different eyes. Huston Smith calls this *"binocular vision."*

He calls upon us not necessarily to give up our own religion, but to see the light through windows of other religions. *"TALES OF WONDER"* ends with this quote from a Saint; "THANKS FOR EVERYTHING. PRAISE FOR IT ALL."