

Horsham Unitarian Newsletter

November 2022

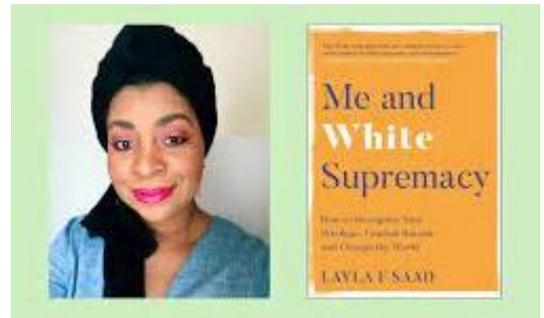


This Month

Talking About Racism

At the end of October I was fortunate enough to attend a conference with my fellow ministers at The Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow. The centre is a popular venue for Unitarian gatherings and courses. Set in the beautiful Peak District National Park it is always a pleasure to go there, but in October the Autumn colours made this particularly so.

Our gathering was organised by the Unitarian Ministerial Fellowship, of which I am a committee member. It may sound a bit like a secret society, but its purpose is to support ministers in various ways which includes organising two gatherings a year. A good opportunity for sharing, reflection and learning. This year the theme for the conference was racism, and was partly based on a book by Layla F Saad called *Me and White Supremacy*.



This can be an emotive subject, bringing up all sorts of feelings for people. I wondered how it was going to go and I was a little apprehensive - but I'm pleased to say it went well. The testimony of those affected by racism was difficult to hear, and the personal reflection could be painful too; but the conversation and sharing was compassionate and supportive, and this made all the difference. So often a subject like racism is treated as a political weapon, leaving little space for learning and caring.

I felt I learnt a lot and I hope I can take this forward in to my life. Having greater self-awareness and being a more active anti-racist. It seems important to me and I think it is important for our Unitarian faith too. We aspire to be an inclusive community, but can we truly be so unless we have an awareness of the injustices minority groups face? Can we do so unless we have an awareness of our own prejudices?

With this in mind I have organised an event called *Talking About Racism* on Saturday 19th November at 2.30pm. This will be a caring conversation and a gentle introduction to the subject. It may not sound like a fun way to spend a Saturday afternoon, but I hope you will find it enlightening! So please join me if you can.

I have been pleased to see that our Unity Café is beginning to get noticed and we have been welcoming our first visitors. May there be more welcoming, and may there be more unity!

With blessings,

Duncan

*All are welcome to call in for coffee and chat
and to participate in our Unity Café mornings
10.00am to 12.30pm every Wednesday
during November*

Saturday 19th November 2.30 pm to 3.30 pm approx.

‘Talking about Racism’ Event

As described by Duncan in his event planning announcement to the committee ‘*Talking About Racism* will be a gentle introduction to the subject for church members. I anticipate it will last for about an hour, followed by a hot drink’.

In our front-page letter Duncan poses the question ‘*we aspire to be an inclusive community, but can we truly be so unless we have an awareness of the injustices minority groups face?*’ This Saturday afternoon event aims to increase that awareness and to enable us to show greater understanding in debate and in behaviour.



A New Weekly Meditation Circle, Thursdays 7.15pm

Together in Meditation



We, and other Unitarian churches have received from Elizabeth Kingston Harrison (Congregational Connections Lead) the following invitation:

You are warmly invited to *Together in Meditation*, a new, national, weekly, online group for Unitarians and friends to practice meditation together in a supportive environment. The group is open to everyone, and we hope that those with no experience of meditation can join alongside those with an established practice.

We aim to provide basic instruction in simple and well-established meditation methods and offer formal guided practices in which to try them out, including around 20 minutes of silence.

The sessions will be facilitated by Rev. Sheena Gabriel and Rob Oulton who have held weekly meditations for Godalming Unitarians for the past 13 years alongside Richard Bober from *The Meditational Fellowship* and Lizzie Kingston Harrison, *Congregational Connections Lead*. Please contact Lizzie if you would like more information. **Join Zoom Meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87445055226?pwd=V1YUWs1WjdSZnZJbnZjbHh4Qm1pQT09>

Meeting ID: 874 4505 5226

Passcode: 949149

2nd - 4th June, 2023

‘Seeking Paradise’ - Next Year’s FUSE Announced

The first weekend in June is now announced as timing for next year’s Festival of Unitarians in the South East (FUSE 2023). Festival theme is ‘Building Paradise’ and venue is The Friars at Aylesford in Kent (pictured below).



Theme speaker will be Unitarian minister Stephen Lingwood (pictured opposite), drawing on the inspirations in his recent book ‘*Seeking Paradise – A Unitarian Mission for Our Times*’. The book not only sets out a future vision for our Unitarian denomination, but also suggests how congregations might move towards this goal. Apart from the theme talk, Stephen will also lead at least one of the workshops on offer.



Registration opens in January and full details of accommodation, programme and prices will follow in future newsletters.

IN MEMORIAM

The Reverend Ashley Hills



It was with profound sadness that we learned of the death on 20th October of our dear friend, former committee member and much-valued visiting minister Ashley Hills.

We in Horsham felt a very special attachment to Ashley because of his frequent visits to lead our services and his valuable contribution to the work of our church committee.

However, we were well aware that Ashley's work with us in Horsham was only part of a remarkably wide-ranging and distinguished preaching career, becoming an Honorary Life Member of our LDPA District and a three-time District President, as well as a General Baptist Messenger (a lifetime honour).

The funeral celebrating Ashley's life was conducted by our Horsham Minister, the Rev'd Duncan Voice at Hither Green Crematorium, Verdant Lane, London, on Friday 11th November. It was live-streamed for those who could not attend and many members of our congregation will have participated online.

On a personal note, I like all who got to know Ashley – will remember him for his personal warmth and sense of humour as well as for his abilities as a minister. In Ireland, where I grew up, there is the appreciative expression "a lovely man". Ashley was just such a man and our sympathies go out to his wife Elizabeth and daughter Beth in mourning his loss.

Patrick Wynne-Jones
Chairman HUC

A celebration of Ashley's life of service will take place at Horsham Unitarian Church on Saturday 10th December at 2pm.

Our November services

Sunday 13th	Duncan Voice (Remembrance Day)
Sunday 20th	Jo O'Sullivan
Sunday 27th	Rev'd Duncan Voice