



## Schedule of Services

Services are held every Sunday at 10:30 at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre

**6 July      Ginna Hastings      "The Four Agreements, A Toltec Wisdom Book, by Don Miguel Ruiz"**

This self help book had some unusual ideas regarding how we frame our reality and our psyche. It claims to come from the Toltecs, in Mexico. The benefits of this book will be discussed from a personal perspective, but reasoned criticism will also be given.

**13 July      Morandir Armson      "The Mayans and the 2012 'Mayan Apocalypse' "**

In 2012 the whole world, it seemed, lost its collective mind over the Mayan Calendar and the coming apocalypse. As it turned out the world didn't end, but why did this mania erupt? What is the Mayan Calendar anyway, and who created it? This talk will re-examine the 2012 phenomenon, and look at the Mayan civilisation, the Mayan Calendar, and the roots of millennial beliefs.

**20 July      Jan Tendys      "Patience"**

We live in anxious times. This talk will be an extended meditation on the value of patience.

**27 July      Laurence Gormley      "India and Bhutan: A fascinating Journey"**

Some observations on my recent trip to two very different countries. Strongly aligned politically but utterly different spiritually, culturally and in population numbers, the two countries are amongst the most interesting I have visited.

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**Joining in "The Conversation"?**

**What is it?**

***The Conversation is an independent source of news and views, sourced from the academic and research community and delivered direct to the public.***

***Our team of professional editors work with university, CSIRO and research institute experts to unlock their knowledge for use by the wider public.***

***Access to independent, high-quality, authenticated, explanatory journalism underpins a functioning democracy. Our aim is to allow for better understanding of current affairs and complex issues. And hopefully allow for a better quality of public discourse and conversations. (See p. 8)***

## Some quotes from Eleanor Roosevelt's "You Learn by Living"

Whitehouse portrait, from Wikipedia



Happiness is not a goal, it is a by-product. Paradoxically, the one sure way not to be happy is deliberately to map out a way of life in which one would please oneself completely and exclusively. After a short time, a very short time, there would be little that one really enjoyed. For what keeps our interest in life and makes us look forward to tomorrow is giving pleasure to other people.

It is easy to slip into self-absorption and it is equally fatal. When one becomes absorbed in himself, in his health, in his personal problems, or in the small details of daily living, he is, at the same time losing interest in other people; worse, he is losing his ties to life. From that it is an easy step to losing interest in the world and in life itself. That is the beginning of death.

Someone once asked me what I regarded as the three most important requirements for happiness. My answer was: 'A feeling that you have been honest with yourself and those around you; a feeling that you have done the best you could both in your personal life and in your work; and the ability to love others.'

But there is another basic requirement, and I can't understand now how I forgot it at the time: that is the feeling that you are, in some way, useful. Usefulness, whatever form it may take, is the price we should pay for the air we

breathe and the food we eat and the privilege of being alive. And it is its own reward, as well, for it is the beginning of happiness, just as self-pity and withdrawal from the battle are the beginning of misery.

I think everyone, at some time in his life, has this happen to him, comes face to face with the bitter realization that he has failed in something that means a tremendous amount and probably in a relation that is close to him. Life teaches you that you cannot attain real maturity until you are ready to accept this harsh knowledge, this limitation in yourself, and make the difficult adjustment. Either you must learn to allow someone else to meet the need, without bitterness or envy, and accept it; or somehow you must make yourself learn to meet it. If you refuse to accept the limitation in yourself, you will be unable to grow beyond this point.

Meeting smaller emergencies and learning to deal with them had given me the confidence to deal with this larger emergency. So, little by little, I found out how to do things. After each catastrophe you don't worry so much the next time, and each time you emerge stronger from your victory.

Courage is more exhilarating than fear and in the long run it is easier. We do not have to become heroes overnight. Just a step at a time, meeting each thing that comes up, seeing it is not as dreadful as it appeared, discovering we have the strength to stare it down.

One of the most successful of self-help books [You Learn by Living: Eleven Keys for a More Fulfilling Life](#) was written by Eleanor Roosevelt at the age of 76. It was the product of a life that had had its share of hardships not least of which was her husband's controlling mother and realising her husband's proneness to affairs, as shown in the film "Hyde Park on Hudson".

The **bio.** site supplies the following summary of her life:

## Early Life

First lady, writer and humanitarian Eleanor Roosevelt was born Anna Eleanor Roosevelt on October 11, 1884, in New York City. The niece of President Theodore Roosevelt, Eleanor was known as a shy child, and experienced tremendous loss at a young age: Her mother died in 1892 and her father died two years later, when she was just 10 years old. Eleanor was sent to school in England when she was a teenager—an experience that helped draw her out of her shell.

In 1905, Eleanor married her distant cousin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who would later become president of the United States. The couple had six children: Anna, James, Franklin (who died as an infant), Elliott, Franklin Jr. and John. Despite her busy home life, Eleanor became active in public service during World War I, working for the American Red Cross.

## U.S. First Lady

After her husband suffered a polio attack in 1921, Eleanor stepped forward to help Franklin with his political career. When her husband became president in 1933, Eleanor dramatically changed the role of the first lady. Not content to stay in the background and handle domestic matters, she showed the world that the first lady was an important part of American politics. She gave press conferences and spoke out for human rights, children's causes and women's issues, working on behalf of the League of Women Voters. She even had her own newspaper column, "My Day." She also focused on helping the country's poor, stood against racial discrimination and, during World War II, travelled abroad to visit U.S. troops.

For her active role in public policy, Eleanor was heavily criticized by some. She was praised by others, however, and today, she is regarded by as a leader of women's and civil rights, as well as one of the first public officials to publicize important issues through the mass media.

## Life After the White House

Following her husband's death, on April 12, 1945, Eleanor told interviewers that she didn't have plans for continuing her public service: "The story is over," she reportedly stated. However, the opposite would actually prove to be true. From 1945 to 1953, Eleanor served as a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly. ***She also became chair of the UN's Human Rights Commission. As a member of the Human Rights Commission, she helped to write the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—an effort that she considered to be her greatest achievement.***

Outside of her political work, Eleanor wrote several books about her life and experiences, including *This Is My Story* (1937), *This I Remember* (1949), *On My Own* (1958) and *Autobiography* (1961). She made a return to public service the same year her autobiography was published (1961), when President John F. Kennedy made her a delegate to the United Nations. President Kennedy also appointed Eleanor chair of the Commission on the Status of Women.

## Death and Legacy

Eleanor died of cancer on November 7, 1962, at the age of 78. A revolutionary first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the most outspoken women to live in the White House. While she's had her share of critics, most agree that she was a great humanitarian who dedicated much of her life to fighting for political and social change.

### See:

<http://www.biography.com/people/eleanor-roosevelt-9463366#awesm=~oHpo68QMht1Pzb>

**Footnote (*Jan Tendys*)** In his novel *In the First Circle*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn describes a visit by Eleanor Roosevelt to a Soviet prison camp. Before she arrives, the place is cleaned, provided with a library full of books, clean sheets issued, the starving, ragged prisoners decently dressed and fed. After the impressed first lady leaves, the sheets, books etc disappear again. It is sadly true that very high-minded people can be over trusting; Eleanor Roosevelt was not the only idealist of her day to be thus deceived.

# Love, Life, and Elephants: The Story of Daphne Sheldrick

Posted on *PetsLady* June 4th, 2014 by Laurie Kay Olson

Daphne (Jenkins) Sheldrick came into the world 80 years ago today in Kenya with an incredible mission ahead of her -- to help orphaned animals survive and thrive. It is a mission that she has accomplished admirably with grace and style. Among her accomplishments are her pioneering work in perfecting the right husbandry and milk formula have saved numerous elephants, rhinos, and other baby animals from certain death.

Sheldrick's family first moved to Africa from Scotland back in 1820, setting things in motion for her to make history more than 100 years later. After high school she opted for marriage to David Sheldrick (her late husband) over college. This led the pair of them to co-warden Tsavo National Park from 1955 to 1976.

It was during this time that she started to raise and rehabilitate a wide range of animal infants to return them to the wild. While most of these animals did return to the wild successfully, a few stayed on as family pets. The animals she worked to save included elephants, black rhinos, buffalo, zebras, elands, kudus, impalas, duikers, reedbuck, dikdiks, warthogs, civet cats, mongooses and a variety birds.

While she is considered an expert on raising wild animals, one of her most important contributions to the field of wild animal rescue and rehabilitation has been finding proper formulas to feed infant elephants and rhinos so that they can thrive. She also worked out the proper husbandry to raise these animals



with the goal of returning them to the wild.

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After her husband's death in 1977, Sheldrick created the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust in Nairobi, which has been recognized as the most successful elephant orphanage in the world.

Among Sheldrick's proudest achievements is raising children who are passionate about working for the preservation and conservation of wildlife.

Sheldrick has put her amazing story into a memoir of her life, her love for husband, David Sheldrick, and the ago-

nizing struggle against wild animal poaching in Africa. But despite her heartbreak over dwindling populations of animals, Daphne says she can't imagine living any other way. She hopes people will pull together to help defeat the poaching menace that continues to threaten so many species.

[Love, Life, and Elephants: An African Love Story](#) is available in print and on Kindle so that you can read about the Sheldricks, their family, and their amazing relationship with animals.

Learn the stories of the animals that came to stay with them. Such as Geri, a Thompson gazelle, that came to live with them after her mother had been killed for bush meat. She was raised in Sheldrick's daughter Angela's home and became a family pet. One day she was lounging on a daybed on Angela's veranda when she was nabbed by a lioness. Angela took off after the lion "shrieking like a banshee." The noise apparently freaked the predator and she and her pride took off running, leaving Geri behind and badly injured. Somehow the vet managed to patch her back together and she survived.

"I truly love all animals," Sheldrick said in an interview with the U.K.'s Daily Mail. "People often assume elephants are my favorite but

there are lots other species that I adore. Apart from the big cats, I have raised just about every sort of animal imaginable over the years and every one has been remarkable."

- See more at: <http://petslady.com/articles/love-life-and-elephants-story-daphne-sheldrick-66359#sthash.fQGwneJu.dpuf>

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On twitter, Dr. Paula Kahumbu reminds tourists:

"Only elephants can legally own ivory in Kenya. Humans with ivory will go to jail. Don't buy ivory - it'll ruin your holiday."

Dr Kahumba is CEO of <http://wildlifedirect.org/> She bravely exposes poachers and tackles authorities who are insufficiently proactive in protecting wildlife.

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### Some questions:

While major religions retain some value-based authority, most have remained largely silent on the real political, economic, environmental, and security challenges that the world faces. Why do Christian churches continue to focus on people's private behaviors and not on the rules of the social and economic game? Why does the Chief Rabbinate of Israel never discuss peace, much less make a statement on what, in the eyes of God, should have priority: a piece of land or millions of human lives? Why do Muslim authorities so rarely condemn crimes supposedly committed in the name of the Prophet?

Perhaps that will change, too. Pope Francis, for example, appears to be leading the Catholic Church in the direction of greater social engagement. It is the global public's duty to take the same route.

**Michel Rocard, former First Secretary of the French Socialist Party and a member of the European Parliament for 15 years, was Prime Minister of France from 1988 to 1991.**

**Read more at <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/michel-rocard-urges-the-global-public-to-compel-its-leaders-to-overcome-three-obstacles-to-peace-and-prosperity#klov2Ypvc4jvwiYb.99>**

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## Letter Writing

**Colin Whatmough has provided these samples;**

The Hon Mr Hunt  
Minister for the Environment  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir

I and the church community of which I am a member, are concerned re the lack of commitment expressed by your government to the reduction of carbon emissions.

The existence of the disturbing effects of global warming is now well known and is beginning to be addressed seriously by leading nations with target reductions from 25-30% by 2030.

By comparison, the Australian Government's target of a mere 5% by 2020 is embarrassing and an insult to our future generations.

Our question is: are you going to reassess the above target?

Yours faithfully

\* \* \*

Minister of Education  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
The Hon Mr C. Pyne

I, and the church community of which I am a member, are concerned re the lack of commitment by your government to the complete Gonski Reform of the education system; Gonski emphasised the exposed needs of the public education system based on five years of research and advocated urgent



expenditure to address these needs.

The Federal Government has advocated that we all have to share the ‘heavy lifting’ to bring the budget back from deficit.

So, we are amazed that in the area of education, that the rich, elite schools where the students have their needs well met with many consequent advantages, have been immune from cuts and from any ‘heavy lifting’.

It’s an easy option to hit the poorer sector but it takes more courage to hit the richer sector when they have a greater ability to retaliate.

Your government considers that Australia is a democratic, Christian nation so it should be more carefully considering Christian principles of justice and compassion and democratic principles of access and equity.

Yours faithfully

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**Extract from  
“Bush’s folly has left Obama out of options as ISIS surges in Iraq”  
Adam Quinn  
Senior Lecturer in International Politics at University of Birmingham  
13 June 2014, The Conversation**

Does Obama’s perceived inward turn, and particularly his aversion to any new or prolonged military entanglement in the Middle East, bear responsibility for what is now unfolding in Iraq? The answer is a qualified yes, but that answer must be placed in the context of the grimness of the options he faces. These options have their origins in the bleak legacy inherited from his predecessor’s disastrous strategic misstep in invading Iraq in 2003.

**Damned if he does ...**

Let’s recall the original rationale proffered for regime change in Iraq, by the Bush administration and its supporters (aside from the notorious disappearing weapons of mass destruction).

It was argued that by overthrowing tyranny,

and replacing it with a liberal democratic state where Sunni, Shia and Kurd lived side by side in peace and prosperity, the United States would be facilitating the birth of a new a new role model for the Muslim world. They would be draining the swamp of disillusion, economic decline and extreme religiosity that had given rise to radical Islamist militancy. It seems remarkable now that this scenario could have been sincerely proposed by so many serious people.

This best of all possible worlds having proven elusive, Obama faces an appalling set of choices in Iraq. These options are either (a) stand aloof and watch the most virulently hostile anti-American force in the world carve out a swathe of territory in Iraq and Syria to use as a base of operations; or (b) reinsert a level of direct American military force into Iraq which he has not previously contemplated, in order to aid a Baghdad government whose escalating authoritarianism and sectarianism – not to mention its close Iranian ties – have contributed to the insolubility of the conflict.

Nouri al-Maliki (Wikipedia)



Both courses will result in the hardening of anti-American anger among a large number of dangerous people. Neither is assured to work.....

.....and this is the legacy of the American decision to invade and occupy Iraq in 2003.

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<http://theconversation.com/bushs-folly-has-left-obama-out-of-options-as-isis-surges-in-iraq-27949>

## Extract from Richard Dawkins' letter to his 10 year old daughter (how to warn your child about this irrational world)

The third kind of bad reason for believing anything is called 'revelation'. If you had asked the Pope in 1950 how he knew that Mary's body disappeared into Heaven, he would probably have said that it had been 'revealed' to him. He shut himself in his room and prayed for guidance. He thought and thought, all by himself, and he became more and more sure inside himself. When religious people just have a feeling inside themselves that something must be true, even though there is no evidence that it is true, they call their feeling 'revelation'. It isn't only popes who claim to have revelations. Lots of religious people do. It is one of their main reasons for believing the things that they do believe. But is it a good reason?

Suppose I told you that your dog was dead. You'd be very upset, and you'd probably say, 'Are you sure? How do you know? How did it happen?' Now suppose I answered: 'I don't actually know that Pepe is dead. I have no evidence. I just have this funny feeling deep inside me that he is dead.' You'd be pretty cross with me for scaring you, because you'd know that an inside 'feeling' on its own is not a good reason for believing that a whippet is dead. You need evidence. We all have inside feelings from time to time, and sometimes they turn out to be right and sometimes they don't. Anyway, different people have opposite feelings, so how are we to decide whose feeling is right? The only way to be sure that a dog is dead is to see him dead, or hear that his heart has stopped; or be told by somebody who has seen or heard some real evidence that he is dead.

People sometimes say that you must believe in feelings deep inside, otherwise you'd never be confident of things like 'My wife loves me'.

But this is a bad argument. There can be plenty of evidence that somebody loves you. All through the day when you are with some-

body who loves you, you see and hear lots of little tidbits of evidence, and they all add up. It isn't purely inside feeling, like the feeling that priests call revelation. There are outside things to back up the inside feeling: looks in the eye, tender notes in the voice, little favors and kindnesses; this is all real evidence.

Sometimes people have a strong inside feeling that somebody loves them when it is not based upon any evidence, and then they are likely to be completely wrong. There are people with a strong inside feeling that a famous film star loves them, when really the film star hasn't even met them. People like that are ill in their minds. Inside feelings must be backed up by evidence, otherwise you just can't trust them.

Inside feelings are valuable in science too, but only for giving you ideas that you later test by looking for evidence. A scientist can have a 'hunch' about an idea that just 'feels' right. In itself, this is not a good reason for believing something. But it can be a good reason for spending some time doing a particular experiment, or looking in a particular way for evidence. Scientists use inside feelings all the time to get ideas. But they are not worth anything until they are supported by evidence. A Devil's Chaplain:

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**A note on "inner feelings" (Jan Tendys)**  
Evolution seems to have built into us some "inner feelings" on which we do rely. For example, in this short video [http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=2b0\\_1335643826](http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=2b0_1335643826)

by biologist Frans de Waal, a monkey expresses what we can only call "moral outrage" when he is given cucumber for performing the same task for which another monkey, within view, is given a grape. Our most basic "moral intuitions" seem to be thus evolutionarily derived. However, these feelings are not complex thoughts like "There is a God" or "Life after death exists". Of course, if we wish to rely on such complex inward feelings whether or not we can give convincing evidence for them, we are perfectly entitled to do so - always remembering to respect the right of others to differ.

*From p. 1*

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***Since our launch in March 2011, we've grown to become one of Australia's largest independent news and commentary sites. Around 35% of our readers are from outside Australia.***

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***Sincere thanks go to our Founding Partners who gave initial funding support: CSIRO, Monash University, University of Melbourne, University of Technology Sydney and University of Western Australia. Strategic Partner RMIT University and a growing list of member institutions also provide financial support.***

***Our Newsroom is based in Melbourne, Australia. We also have editors in Sydney, Canberra, and Brisbane. We are wholly owned by The Conversation Media Trust, a not-for-profit company.***

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Readers can review the articles on the Gonski report produced by The Conversation here: <http://theconversation.com/topics/gonski-review> A relevant one for the history of the present government's policy is by David Zyngier, Monash University <http://theconversation.com/ditching-gonski-whats-so-unfair-about-funding-based-on-need-20795>

### **Would you care to join Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship?**

**Membership is open to all adults and includes this newsletter.** *Full membership \$50 concession \$20* . If you would like to join us as an active member of Spirit of Life, please ring **0466 940 461** or consult our website [www.sydneynunitarians.org](http://www.sydneynunitarians.org) . Please note that all membership applications are subject to approval at a meeting of the Committee. Ask Rev. Geoff Usher or Ginna Hastings for an application form at the Sunday service.

***If you have a news item or written article you believe would be of interest to the congregation, we invite you to submit it for Esprit.***

It would be helpful if items for publication, including articles and talk topics with themes could reach Esprit editor by the 15th of each month: [jtendys@bigpond.com](mailto:jtendys@bigpond.com) or hand to Jan Tendys at the Sunday service.

***Do you have a topic of a spiritual / ethical nature that you would like to share with the congregation?*** As Unitarians, we support an "Open Pulpit" and invite members of the congregation to lead the service if they so wish. *Please see Caz Donnelly at the Sunday service*

**Fellowship contact 0466 940 461**