



## Schedule of Services

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

**2 June**                      **Rev. Dr. Ian Ellis-Jones**                      **"Shinto for Non Japanese."**

Shintò is the authentic, native religion of Japan with its roots stretching back to 500 BCE. Today, there is a lot of interest in the West in this spiritual path which has no dogma, no concept of sin, no sacred books as such, and no mandatory precepts. Shintò, with its respect and reverence for 'Great Nature', and its acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of all things, has great relevance to the Japanese as well as non-Japanese---and Shintò and Unitarianism have more than a bit in common.

**9 June**                      **Jan Tendys**                      **"Love, Africa and the Women's Movement."**

Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists are very good at asking questions. Some African women are concerned to give us the answers they have discovered in their own lives especially with regard to the low status of women, freedom of choice in marriage, polygamy and other "women's concerns". They don't neglect love. By listening to the songs of Oumou Sangare and thinking about her words, I hope we will dare to become more assertive in talking about our own life's answers.

**16 June**                      **Morandir Armson**                      **"The new Atheism - An Examination."**

Ever since the publication of Sam Harris' *The End of Faith*, in 2004, a movement or fashion, often called New Atheism has developed and become popular throughout the English speaking world. This movement is commonly associated with writers and thinkers such as Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens. But is the New Atheism an anti-religious movement or is it a form of religious movement itself? This presentation will discuss the New Atheism, as both an anti-religious literary movement, and as a form of non-Deistic religious movement.

**June 23rd**                      **Rev. Dr. Ian Ellis-Jones**                      **" Haiku as a Spiritual Practice."**

Haiku, a form of Japanese poetry, is also a way of living mindfully, letting the very livingness of life to write itself. It is thus a means by which we can learn to experience life in all its directness and immediacy.

**June 30th**                      **Rev. Geoff Usher**                      **"Of Life and the Eagle's Nest."**

Helen Keller wrote: "Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing."

# Ministry to the Disabled and Lonely

*Rev. Douglas Webster*

First I must define what I mean by a Working Model Ministry. It is my hope that my experiences can be put to use by you in the community in which you live, that is what I mean by a working model. Ideas can be transplanted from country to country and from town to town. I believe that what works very well, in Auckland, would work equally well here in Australia (or New South Wales) but each State has different rules and regulations.

Here in NSW it is not possible to implement the Day Care Centre System that I helped to found because wheel chairs can not be admitted to a Day Care Centre unless there are qualified persons trained to handle people in wheel chairs. In New Zealand there are no such restrictions, and the Day Centre staff are taught by the organisation Communicare, the largest Day Centre organisation in New Zealand, the simple methods needed how to help people alight from a wheel chair.

It was during the late 1950s that a group met for the first time in the Auckland Unitarian Church under the leadership of the minister Maurice Wilsie (UUA) who was trained as a Psychotherapist. During the next few years other Day Care Centres were opened and by the time I arrived in Auckland in 1971 the Day Care System founded in the Unitarian Church was flourishing. I began as a Helper in a Day Centre near where I lived. There are only really two categories of people in the Day Centres; Helpers and Guests. I was invited to serve on the Executive Committee and was eventually asked to be Chairman. During this period in the mid 1970s the number of Day Care centres was increasing rapidly, until nearly every Auckland suburb had a Day Centre.

Now you need to know how to found a Day Centre, but before that perhaps you should be aware of how many people in every community are disabled. I cannot give you an exact figure for where you live as the situation is obviously not the same everywhere, but it

is probably far higher than you think it is. The reason most people don't know this is because the disabled are not as visible as people that are mobile; many are housebound and dependent on others to do their shopping, or they are in Nursing Homes vegetating or bored stiff looking at TV or the others around them, who have deteriorated more than they should have through the lack of interaction with mobile people.

The Day Care system you are thinking of may be like a Nursing Home, where people are simply cared for by providing for their basic needs. **The basic needs of people are much more than food or sustenance, it is love, caring, interaction and knowing you still have something to contribute.** This is why the Communicare scheme is so successful it makes those attending feel much more alive. In the Grey Lynn Day Centre which I first joined, the owner of a Nursing home where people were picked up by volunteer drivers and taken to the centre, became so impressed by the day centre, she bought a mini bus so she could transport her 'guests' and pick up others - she eventually paid for a concrete drive to be laid to the Church Hall so it was easier to deliver her charges.

As the demand for new centres increased I was busy helping as my job as Chairman was to do the 'spade work'. So here is how a centre is started. First you 'recce' the area/suburb looking at Halls to choose for the new centre. Churches are usually the best choice, but you look for level access, a good spacious kitchen and spaces to put things, such as handicraft materials. The minister is contacted and asked if he or she would support our using their Hall for a Day Centre, very few refuse after all the care of the sick or lame is in the Gospel! Having proceeded that far, a day is chosen for a Public Meeting and "flyers" are sent to organisations that employ volunteers, such as the Red Cross, Country Women's Association (in UK it could be Women's Voluntary Society) – the local free newspaper is given a notice of the meeting.

I would speak for about twenty minutes giving an outline of what was needed to start a Day Centre for the Disabled. Nowadays we have car crash victims, stroke cases from as

young as mid 30s as well as the more well known illnesses that afflict people of all ages - the number of people with disabilities could be as high as ten per cent in a community. Relatives of the disabled are naturally quick to respond and you ask for volunteers as Drivers, as Helpers to work in the kitchen preparing lunches and morning tea as the Guests arrive, a Day Centre Supervisor and a Transport Officer to coordinate the Drivers. Names are taken of the people who agree to help. Other needs are for Craft Teachers, of all kinds. **Teachers of all kinds who have retired who can teach skills to the Guests.** The acquiring of surplus material from industry, such as selvage, the ends of material being produced that are normally waste; this can be used to make into bath mats. Car upholstery waste can be made into purses. You will be surprised what can be made out of what is normally thrown away. I have seen a man with no arms or legs painting pictures taught by a retired art mistress. You will need someone to take charge of the trading table where things that have been made are sold. The Guests who have made them usually buy a lot of the things they have made as they become proud of their new skills. Not everyone may want to learn a craft and no one should be coerced as other interests can be met. In an ideal situation you will have a Social Worker whose job it is to receive the referrals that come, as you become established from Doctors, Hospitals and other sources. Auckland has three Social Workers.

**Where does the money come from?** You are an established charity and it is quite amazing how many sources you can apply to for grants, even the government, because you are going to save them money by the improved ability of the guests to cope. **The things that are inherent in all this that cannot be counted in terms of money, is the friendship that a Day Centre generates.** **The Helpers include people that were lonely with no friends or relatives perhaps and now they look forward each week to the Day Centre Meeting.** If you start a Day Centre that is successful it will almost inevitably need another one in the next suburb and in Auckland which has 26 Day Centres, the adjoining ones meet on different days so that for example a person recovering from a car

crash or a stroke victim who is making good progress thanks to the "therapy" of being in a Day Centre can benefit by going to two Centres a week.

Circumstances of Day Centres vary considerably; you will find out more about the Church or other Hall owners, such as the Order of the Buffalo, in Point Chevalier in Auckland. The Baptists usually have the best equipped Halls, but the Seven Day Adventists in Auckland were great. They do not allow meat to be eaten or tea and coffee on their premises, but they have cooking classes for their members and they provided all the food for our Ponsonby Day Centre, and of course it is good for health reasons. Diet is a subject that is related to health and could be introduced for the centres' lunches. A charge is usually made for lunch, when I began it was 20 cents, but with inflation it will be much more now; any minister present is usually invited to say grace.

A day is chosen for the Centre to begin operating once all the Requirements needed are met; usually it does not take long. A point occurs to me; if your church has a good Hall it is uneconomic not to use it regularly. The date for the Official Opening of the Day Centre is decided after the Centre has been operating say for about three months, then you invite the local Mayor and Mayoress, many local councils have buses which they use to transport people shopping if they are disabled, you could easily persuade your council transport to be used for taking Guests to and from the Day Centre.

**An amusing happening at the Official Opening of a Day Centre: I had three months prior to the Opening giving a talk asking for volunteers at the Baptist Church at Blockhouse Bay, Auckland and when the Official Opening was to be held I went along, being the Chairman, to see how things were. I arrived about an hour before the Official Opening. (Guests usually arrive about 9.30 a.m. Many Helpers are taking children to School (The Centres do not usually operate during school terms) and the Guests leave at about 2 p.m. in time for parents to pick up their children.) The Centre was in full swing**

**with many new faces and I was approached by a young woman who assumed I was a new Guest and asked me to sit at a table with other guests making purses, out of off cuts of leather. I was given a cup of tea and a biscuit and was quite happy looking and working, but as the time went on, I noticed the Supervisor was getting quite agitated on the platform and saying, "Mr. Webster should be here by now". I excused myself to the astonished lady in charge of my table and went on stage to speak to the Supervisor, and greeted everyone by remarking how well the centre was operating and that I could speak from personal experience.**

It was really the most satisfying experience I have had in the ministry, the Auckland Unitarian Church fully supported the work I was doing and it was because of one member, the late Gwen Harwood, who had been one of the original group that worked with Maurice Wilsie, and in the early years when it was more difficult to raise funds, Gwen opened an Opportunity Shop opposite the church and worked tirelessly, and told me I should get involved. I remembered the words of the late Paul Carnes UUA, who said we need to get involved with our communities' needs.

I also learned a great deal from William Withy King a retired solicitor who was my predecessor as Chairman and, a former Alcoholic; he wrote the Constitution for A.A. International, which I believe is still in use. "Scotty" as we called him was my mentor and a reliable friend. Edgar Guest wrote a wonderful poem entitled, "Sermons we see" which begins, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day". If anybody should open a Day Centre on the lines I have described, you will see many sermons, and your lives will be fuller for having given more to life.

I have a short Video film I took just prior to Christmas when I visited Communicare H.Q. in Mt. Eden, Auckland, the Committee were there to greet me and I was taken to two Day Centres, Royal Oak and Mangere. It was such a great feeling seeing the same principles being used so successfully that began in a Unitarian Church - it would make me feel

even better if these principles of community self healing could be used widely.

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Postscript: This was originally printed in the British Journal of the Unitarian Ministry in 2003 and was distributed first to the ministers attending the UK General assembly Meetings at Chester University. However, because it included.....(criticism of a Church)....the ministers decided to withdraw this issue..... It just occurred to me this article might be suitable to use during the ANZUUA conference in Aukland coming up soon. **DW**

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See also

<http://www.communicare.org.au/>

for information on Communicare in Australia. They say: "Communicare is a dynamic charity which helps more than a quarter of a million Australians every year. Since 1977, the organisation has grown rapidly establishing a reputation for innovation, leadership and professional excellence in Support Services". More on the history of Communicare can be found at:

<http://www.communicare.org.au/About-Communicare/history.html>

## ~~~~~ **Letter Writing / Submissions**

**Jan Tendys**

Our president, Ginna Hastings had the following letter published in *The Sydney morning Herald* in response to an editorial on the ABC:

**LCD and ABC (Ginna's title)  
To keep the Roman Populace's minds off the dismal political, economic and moral state of their government, the Roman government paid for the basest form of entertainment to entertain the general populace in the Circus. We have commercial stations instead. I'd double my 10c/day contribution to the ABC any day thank you!**

Here is another letter published on the same

topic by someone in Narooma:

“Your editorial appears to have been written by a city person who believes that NSW is Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. Outside those cities are real people who find the ABC and all its services a lifeline to the rest of the world. Just as the *Herald* gives us insight and information the ABC gives us that and a whole lot more.

I can't think of one of our many public institutions that has been sold off, resulting in higher services and less cost to the consumer.

Bringing the ABC into the marketplace to take advertising revenue from websites, commercial TV, radio stations and newspapers, which have all seen a drop in advertising during the past decade, seems an odd notion.

Obviously the Victorian Liberal Party members are all from the city, because country folk know the value of an independent, publicly-funded ABC and would not entertain the idea. Let's hope the next time the member for Warringah is on his bike in the country, he'll talk to real people, and kill this idea off 'dead, buried and cremated'.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/letters/taxpayers-10-a-day-for-abc-is-worth-it-20130523-2k3zf.html#ixzz2UBbqL7QL>

As Esprit editor, I have suggested that letters do not have to be long. Submissions to enquiries do not have to be long either and significant points can be made by including an internet address for an article. Here is a submission I sent in by email to a media inquiry in 2011

**I am principally concerned with the fact that News Corporation, based in a foreign country, owns 70% of Australian media. To my knowledge this state of affairs has no counterpart in any other western democracy and is dangerous to the health of our democracy.**

**For example, News Corp media outlets, particularly The Australian, have paid lip service to scientific opinion about climate change, while giving their main coverage to climate contrarians like Lord Monkton.**

**Example of reporting of Monkton's position with no balancing explanation of the**

**position of 97% of climate scientists who uphold climate change :**

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/monckton-blasts-australia-over-climate-change-scam/story-fn59niix-1226084943326>

**The position of News Corp is doubly concerning in so far as the phone-hacking scandal in the UK saw the News Corp owned tabloid "News of the World" condemned by all parties in the UK parliament. We need an inquiry to make sure that Australian media owned by News Corp is not animated by the same lack of journalistic and ownership ethics. Lack of ethics is a worry about media owned by other groups too, but the overwhelming numerical dominance of News Corp makes that group of major concern.**

Full name & full postal address and phone number should accompany a submission.

You may well ask, “What good did that do?” But then, if the people who were able to bring Murdoch to account before the Leveson inquiry hadn't bothered, I think the world would be a worse place. Perseverance!

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## Elephants Plodding

Plod! Plod!

And what ages of time

The worn arches of their spines support!

### On the Drum

The huge old female on the drum

Shuffles gingerly round

And smiles;

the vastness of her elephant antiquity

is amused.

**D. H. Lawrence**

## It Is I Who Must Begin

It is I who must begin.  
Once I begin, once I try --  
here and now,  
right where I am,  
not excusing myself  
by saying things  
would be easier elsewhere,  
without grand speeches and  
ostentatious gestures,  
but all the more persistently  
-- to live in harmony  
with the "voice of Being," as I  
understand it within myself  
-- as soon as I begin that,  
I suddenly discover,  
to my surprise, that  
I am neither the only one,  
nor the first,  
nor the most important one  
to have set out  
upon that road.

Whether all is really lost  
or not depends entirely on  
whether or not I am lost.

**Vaclav Havel**

(Teaching With Fire, ed. by S.M. Intrator and M. Scribner)

## A Fresh Look at Mark's Gospel and Related Matters.

*Evan Davies*

Before I launch into a new look at the Gospel, I must say I used "The new English Bible" as a primary source of information. It is a completely new translation—plus the Apocrypha—into modern English, made some years ago, to update the version of 1611. Corrections were made, particularly about the ending of Mark's Gospel, alternative meanings of certain words and in the Old Testament certain parts are given in their original poetic form.

Now to Mark's Gospel and associated matters. There are no stories about the birth of Jesus, but there is one story that could be true and that is "the Star of Bethlehem", which is regarded as a conjunction of two planets in 3BC. (Not in Mark though)

The Gospel was written 65-70 A.D. making it the oldest of the four. When we meet Jesus for the first time he would have been about thirty years of age. He had come with others to be baptised by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. They knew each other already as they were cousins. The two mothers were related. It is assumed that John the Baptist had been a member of the Essene community which was a small, strict sect of Judaism that possibly had some affinity with early Christianity. Jesus might also have been an Essene and that would account for the missing years of his younger life.

However, there is a mysterious person mentioned in Essene records as "The Teacher of Righteousness". Could he have been Jesus? If the dates are right.

Mark's Gospel consists mainly of Jesus' teaching, his travels, arrest and crucifixion. Few were able to write in those days so much extraneous material was added orally that Mark incorporated into his Gospel. This process of addition, by others too, went on for many years.

On the Sunday after the Crucifixion, two women went to the rock-cut tomb to anoint

The body, but they found the tomb open and a youth sitting inside dressed in a white robe. He gave them a message for the disciples that the risen Jesus was going to Galilee where he would see them. The two women ran away in fear and told no-one. This ends the Gospel according to some of the oldest texts. Other endings were added later.

Who was the youth dressed in white? Was he an Essene? They were known to dress in white.

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## **Cats!**

No matter how much cats fight, there always seems to be plenty of kittens.  
-- **Abraham Lincoln**

Of all God's creatures, there is only one that cannot be made slave of the leash. That one is the cat. If man could be crossed with the cat it would improve the man, but it would deteriorate the cat.  
-- **Mark Twain**

The smallest feline is a masterpiece.  
-- **Leonardo DA Vinci**

With their qualities of cleanliness, discretion, affection, patience, dignity, and courage, how many of us, I ask you, would be capable of becoming cats?  
-- **Fernand Mery**

I have studied many philosophers and many cats. The wisdom of cats is infinitely superior.  
-- **Hippolyte Taine**

When I play with my cat, how do I know that she is not passing time with me rather than I with her?  
-- **Montaigne**

After scolding one's cat, one looks into his face and is seized by the ugly suspicion that he understood every word and has filed it for reference.  
-- **Charlotte Gray**

A dog will flatter you but you have to flatter the cat.

-- **George Mikes**

You can keep a dog; but it is the cat who keeps people, because cats find humans useful domestic animals.

-- **George Mikes**

Thousands of years ago, cats were worshipped as gods. Cats have never forgotten this.

-- **unknown**

A cat sees no good reason why it should obey another animal, even if it does stand on two legs.

-- **Sarah Thompson**

Cats are kindly masters, just so long as you remember your place.  
-- **Paul Gray**

There are two means of refuge from the miseries of life. Music and cats.  
-- **Albert Schweitzer**

A dog jumps into your lap it is because he is fond of you, but if a cat does the same thing it's because your lap is warmer.  
-- **A. N. Whitehead**

**Contributed by Caz Donnelly, the cat tragic.**

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## **Third International Gathering of Religious Progressives**

Canberra

<http://www.commondreams.org.au/index.php/programs>

**19-22nd September**

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## **ANZUUA 2013 Conference**

**Auckland, New Zealand, 26-28 October**

<http://anzuua2013.weebly.com/>

Note that a special session on the **25th October** will be devoted to *lay ministry training*.

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**

## The Disability of Deafness

*Jan Tendys*

Jim Scarfe wrote to me in March 2012:

"Although I could hear the voices at the Annual Meeting hardly got a word. You were always the speaker with the clearest voice for me but, regrettably, no longer. No one else in the race!

Socially I am at a disadvantage even in small groups, such as our coffee time, when amplified (by aids) chatter drowns out what people are saying, which must be a bit frustrating for them i.e. my lack of adequate response."

We continue to send Jim our newsletter.



Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Minister Jenny Macklin

### National Disability Insurance Scheme

The legislation will increase the Medicare levy from 1.5 to 2 per cent of taxable income from 1 July 2014, with every cent raised to be put towards funding DisabilityCare Australia.

The Government announced in the 2013-14 Budget that it will invest \$14.3 billion over seven years for DisabilityCare Australia

### Some Questions

I currently receive disability support – do I need to do anything right now?

You don't need to do anything right now. Your current arrangements will stay in place until you've met with DisabilityCare Australia to discuss your needs and to develop an individual plan of supports after 1 July 2013. Our priority is to make sure you continue to get the support you need.

I don't receive disability support – will I be covered?

If you don't currently receive disability support and you have a permanent and significant disability you may be able to access the scheme once it's available in your area.

For more information about DisabilityCare Australia, the rollout of the scheme from 1 July 2013 and specific information for service providers: Call: 1800 800 110.

Visit: [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

Email: [NDISEnquiries@fahcsia.gov.au](mailto:NDISEnquiries@fahcsia.gov.au)