

# GREETINGS FROM EMMANUEL ROAD, 26TH JUNE A NOTE ABOUT THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH MEETING THE NEW SERIES OF WEDNESDAY EVENING CONVERSATIONS AND ABOUT BEING "FREETHINKING MYSTICS WITH HANDS" . . .

*Posted on June 26, 2021 by Andrew Brown*

Greetings to you all.

As in all previous weeks, I trust things remain as well as can be expected with each one of you.

Firstly, thank you to all those who helped run the Sunday morning Service of Mindful Meditation whilst I was on leave, especially Joy, Patrice, Andrew (Bethune), Brendan and Stephen (Watson). Much appreciated indeed.

Thank you, too, to the twenty-four people who attended the important **Life of the Church congregational meeting** on Wednesday 23rd June. It was a very helpful gathering and conversation characterised by a gentle and genuinely positive mood. Most encouraging indeed. Anyway, whilst remaining open-minded about other things we might do in the future we now have agreed to keep the Service of Mindful Meditation central to our morning worship in the coming period of our life together and to find ways to frame this in ways that work well both for those attending either face-to-face or joining us online and whether in lockdown or not. In the next couple of months we'll be buying various bits of kit to enable us to run hybrid live-streamed services and then trying to figure out how that all works. COVID-19 restrictions allowing, the hope is that we'll begin to meet face-to-face and live online from September onwards.

We also talked about [setting up a church Slack site](#) to facilitate easier communications between us all. I've now started a basic site so if you'd like to join this to help me get it working well before sending out a general invite to the whole congregation please email me and I'll send out an invitation to you directly.

### **WEDNESDAY EVENING CONVERSATIONS RESTARTING Wednesday 30th June, 7.15 for 7.30pm**

In addition to the morning service of mindful meditation on Wednesday evening we also talked a bit about how best to continue to encourage and practice the critical, enquiring, freethinking, intellectual side of religious life that has always been so important to the Unitarian tradition in which this community stands. To this end on **Wednesday 30th June, 7.15 for 7.30pm**, we will be restarting our Wednesday Evening Zoom Conversations. As with our Sunday service provision, the way we used to do things seems clearly to be in need of some change. In a blogpost/podcast written and recorded during April 2021 called: **Adopting the role of umpire and letting the role of player go . .**

.” <<https://andrewjbrown.blogspot.com/2021/04/adopting-role-of-umpire-and-letting.html>> I talked a little about what, from my perspective, I thought the fundamental change should be. It seems not inappropriate, therefore, that we might usefully restart our conversations by thinking and talking about some of the things that this piece contains. Please click on the link above or below either to read the piece or hear a podcast version of the same.

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/3QWWdubZjOsahcnamwQ6k8>

Here's the Zoom link for the meeting:

**Topic: Wednesday Evening Conversation Time: Jun 30, 2021 19:30 London**

Join Zoom Meeting

<<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82230453501?pwd=ME9obFIwWGJjSjJiNytBeER0VkNlUzZz09>>

Meeting ID: 822 3045 3501

Passcode: 676471

## FREETHINKING MYSTICS WITH HANDS

It seems to me that if, over the coming year, we can slowly, patiently and gently begin to settle into a new routine of the Sunday Morning Mindful Meditation and a Wednesday evening Conversation well be well on the way to making real the four-and-a-half-century old aspiration to be a community of freethinking mystics with hands.” [As the Unitarian Universalist minister Tom Owen Towle notes in his book with the same](#) title we

*“. . . are freethinkers: unfettered pilgrims in search of governing truths. We are mystics as well: spiritually attuned to marvels of the universe and awake to omens of the divine. We are also blessed with hands outstretched in praise, resistance, and caring embrace”* (p. 5).

Taken together, the Wednesday Evening Conversations and the Morning Service of Mindful Meditation provide (or at least I have some realistic hope that they can provide) us with a balance in motion as we walk together into the future, alternating between the right step of reason which, as Towle notes, *brings a clarifying, steadying influence in a world that prizes the impetuous and flamboyant*” so we are not *tempted to glide on the wings of the latest mindless fad*” (p. 2), and the left step of the heart which knows there is *so much we do not know that remains mysterious*” and that we *are sustained by processes and powers that we can neither fathom nor do without*” (p. 3). Absolutely importantly, this freethinking, mystic walk is designed, not to wander around endlessly in an abstract garden of thought but to “consummated . . . through the employment of our hands”(p. 4), i.e. in acts of hospitality, justice-building and peace-making. Hence, freethinking mystics **with hands** .

Aside from all the foregoing, please remember that if you would like to speak with me during the week simply reply to this email and we can arrange a suitable time to talk properly either by telephone, Zoom or on a socially distanced one-to-one walk/talk. More people are getting in touch with me to arrange this kind of thing so please do be in touch if you’d like to do this.

And, lastly, as always, if on reading this you decide you would like to join us for the

Sunday morning service of mindful meditation and time of conversation following and do not have the necessary Zoom link then please either reply to this email or contact our Church Secretary, Brendan Boyle, via the contact page of our website. Just look through the dropdown tabs to find "Secretary":

<<https://www.cambridgeunitarian.org/contact/>>

Please log in between 9.45 and 10am. The meditation starts at 10am sharp, and finishes at about 10.50. There will then be a short break to allow you to stretch your legs, compose your thoughts, or put the kettle on. The 'Time for Conversation' will start at about 11am, and if you aren't taking part in the meditation, feel free to sign in during the break for the conversation.

To get the most from the meditation, you will find it helpful to either print out the order of service, or display it in a second window. Here is the link:

**Order of Service for the Mindful Meditation:**

<<https://www.cambridgeunitarian.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Evening-Service.pdf>>

You might also wish to have a small candle or tea-light to hand to light at a certain point during the meditation.

**A representative recorded version of the service is available for download via my podcast site here:**

<<https://www.buzzsprout.com/1378024/7314817>>

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/58kI7c6zviN3JgGqWmAync>

**A homespun video introduction to the service can be found on YouTube at this link**

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfmVH34meck&t=904s>

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With love and best wishes as always,  
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*Other stuff...*

<http://andrewjbrown.blogspot.com/> (Blog)

<https://footprints.buzzsprout.com> ( *Making Footprints Not Blueprints* Podcast)

<https://twitter.com/caute> (Twitter)