

waymark

unitarians in edinburgh



Edinburgh Festival Fringe at artSpace@StMarks

MICHAEL MULLIGAN,
Venue Manager, reports



Time rushes by and here we are again looking forward to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe returning to St. Mark's. Michael Mulligan here and once more it is my pleasure to be the Venue Manager for the church this year. Ross will return as the daily Manager of the venue, and as ever, will keep everything running smoothly.

We also look forward to many of you acting as volunteers to help out front of house and enjoy seeing the large variety of shows which will perform at the church this August.

Whilst most of the performances will involve music and singing, we do have our old friends from *Interrupt the Routine* returning with their great fun show based on an old fashioned radio programme *The Gin Chronicles*.

At the piano, Fringe favourite Richard Michael will stage three solo performances and another three with his very talented family, fantastic music of the highest standard. Also at the piano will be Andrew Wright with his show *A Night at the Opera*. Other returning participants are the *Edinburgh Renaissance Orchestra*, the *Edinburgh Festival Ensemble* and the *Royal Scottish Pipers Society*.

Lawrence Dunn once again brings the magic of silent movies to us with a live accompaniment for his two showings of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*. Edinburgh composer *Peter Robinson* has a programme of his own music, and smaller ensemble pieces from *Sadie Maskery* and also the *Brass Tacks Quartet*. *John Sampson* plays on his own, as well as with *Philomusica of Edinburgh* and we have contributions from *Sheena Jardine* and *Alasdair Cameron*.

Finally no August in Edinburgh is complete without an international flavour and, from the United States, *Patrice Fitzgerald* visits us with *The Great American Songbook* and *Duo Terra Nova* are coming from Paris with their marvellous piano playing for four hands.

We welcome them all to the largest arts festival in the world, and I hope that as ever in August, in Edinburgh, you will be part of our great venue at artSpace@StMarks. See you there!

Poetry Reading for Pleasure

on

Sunday 11 June at 13.00



Come and share some favourite poems

Want to know more?

Please speak to Margery MacKay

(image from clipart)

**St Mark's Unitarian Church Edinburgh, also known as Unitarians in Edinburgh,
is a registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation Scottish Charity Number SC014167**

St Mark's Unitarian Church
Castle Terrace
Edinburgh EH1 2DP
0131 659 7600

enquire@edinburgh-unitarians.org.uk

www.edinburgh-unitarians.org.uk

Search for 'Unitarians in Edinburgh' on

www.facebook.com



Lay Celebrant & Lay Preacher

Joan Cook (available for rites of passage)

WHO'S WHO

Convener: Mary McKenna
Secretary: Margery MacKay
Treasurer: Ali McDonald
Pulpit Secretary: Lesley Hartley
Social Secretary: Lynsey Bailey

Management Committee: Ann Sinclair
Ministry Team: Lesley Hartley
Church Flowers: Mary McKenna
Music: Jack Westwell

Children's Programme Co-ordinator: Ida Silkenat

Email: stmarkschildrensprogramme@gmail.com

Venue Enquiries: venue@edinburgh-unitarians.org.uk

PASTORAL SUPPORT AND CONCERNS

If you know of anyone who has any pastoral concerns, and may like some support, please let us know.

0131 659 7600

minister@edinburgh-unitarians.org.uk

Waymark

Editor Jane Aaronson
for Unitarians in Edinburgh
Email ja@ednet.co.uk

Waymark is published ten times a year for members and friends of St Mark's. If you wish to receive Waymark by post, a suggested donation of around £15.00 per year towards the cost of publication will always be welcome. For more information please speak to our Treasurer, Ali McDonald.

We welcome contributions, though space is limited, therefore contributions will be published at the discretion of the editor. Email to ja@ednet.co.uk by the 7th of the month. If you cannot send copy electronically, please note that Audrey Simon will type and email material to the editor. Please contact Audrey at St Mark's.

Attendances

April	23	45 (adults)+ 4 (children) = 49
April	30	45 + 4 = 49
May	7	39 + 5 = 44
May	14	49 + 4 = 53

SUNDAY DUTIES AT ST MARK'S

SUNDAY STEWARDS

June 4 Lesley & Roger Hartley 11 Margery MacKay
18 B Jones 25 John Reid & Mary McKenna
July 2 Rachael King

PEACE CANDLE LIGHTING

June 4 Coby Macaulay 11 ICUU* 18 Rachael King
25 Kati Murray **July 2** Tony Finlay

*International Council of Unitarians and Universalists

WELCOME

June 4 Elizabeth Welsh & Heather Coates
11 Rachael King & Kate Foggo 18 Kris, Jamie & Kenna
Calder 25 Margaret Ross & Joan Cook
July 2 Jill & Tom Stamper

COFFEE

June 4 Jill Stamper & Liz Marshall 11 Rose McDonagh
& Margaret Ross 18 Brian Robertson & Rachael King
25 Kirsty Murray & Hilary Anderson
July 2 Bláthnaid Quinn & Heather Coates

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

June 4 Susanne Urquhart & Ida Silkenat
11 Susanne Urquhart & Tom Stamper
18 Bláthnaid Quinn & Lynsey Bailey 25 Amy &
Ali McDonald **July 2** Rachael King & Ida Silkenat

FLOWERS

June 4 Roger Hartley 11 Margaret Ross
18 David McGill 25 Joan Cook **July 2** Jane Aaronson

**Roster of volunteers
for St Catharine's Homeless Project**



June

- 2 Brian Robertson & Margaret Mackenzie
- 9 Elaine Edwards & James MacDonald Reid
- 16 Lesley & Roger Hartley
- 23 Kris Calder & Lyndsay Bailey
- 30 Amy Worthington & DM

July

- 7 David McGill & Richard Ross

If you would like to be a part of this worthwhile initiative, please speak to Elaine Edwards or email elaine.m.edwards@virginmedia.com

Promoting Pastoral Care

by MARY MCKENNA
Convener of Council

Caring for each other is a key aspect of our beloved community and this is especially important during this time when we are without a minister. It may be unclear who to speak to, in the absence of a minister, if you wish to have a quiet chat about something personal, have a concern about someone housebound, or wonder who to contact if you wish to arrange a wedding or a funeral service.

We now have formed a network of people, eight of us in all, who will be attentive to the pastoral care needs of our community. Knowing that different people need different things at different times, we understand the need to have a range of ways of reaching out, supporting people and keeping them in touch with St Mark's.

One of the most successful initiatives currently running is the Bereavement Support Group. This group meets monthly, and offers a safe space for those experiencing grief and loss to come together and share their experiences and gain support and comfort from each other. This is an open group. Please contact Jane Aaronson if you wish to find out more about the Bereavement Support Group ja@ednet.co.uk

We hope this initiative and others will continue following the appointment of a minister. While any new minister will have an important contribution to pastoral care, we hope this network will complement the role of a minister and enhance the ways we can support each other.

We are able to respond to requests for services as Joan Cook is our Lay Celebrant & Lay Preacher, and is trained and licensed to conduct marriages, funerals and naming ceremonies. Joan can be contacted at her e-mail address below. Joan is also able to contact ministers, if she is unable to fulfil requests to undertake services herself. Joan currently responds to any requests from our website when people contact the Minister. Anyone seeking advice about a service or spiritual guidance can contact Joan via minister@edinburgh-unitarians.org.uk

In addition we will prepare slips for the pews to enable anyone attending a service at St Mark's to make a request for pastoral care, or let us know about anyone who they think may appreciate some support. These can be posted anonymously in a box in the vestry or handed to Joan, Jane or myself.

We appreciate the importance of confidentiality in our duty of pastoral care and we are therefore not publishing the details of this network, rather we have identified three members who are willing to be the initial contact point for pastoral care and will co-ordinate our response to any requests. Contact details for any pastoral care requests or concerns will be included on in all future copies of Waymark on page 2. Joan, Jane and I can be contacted as outlined below:

Joan Cook joancook@hotmail.co.uk
and
minister@edinburgh-unitarians.org.uk
Jane Aaronson ja@ednet.co.uk
Mary McKenna mckscotland@gmail.com

Scottish Women's League Lunch at

The Royal George Hotel,
Tay Street, Perth PH1 5LD

on 7 June

*all women and men are invited
average cost £12.00 per person*

Email cliffordbarbara@yahoo.co.uk

A Reflection by LORNA BARRY

It's over five and a half years ago since we discovered that our daughter Maisie was deaf. She was just twenty-eight days old and had failed three different rounds of audiological testing. The image of James holding her as each frequency and volume was altered, and every time the words 'No response, let's try the next level.' James has described those two and half hours as like watching a car crash in slow motion. There was just no flicker of reaction on the computer screen in front of us. Both of us fighting to hold it together, knowing devastating news was on the way.



James and I went on a roller coaster ride of emotions over the months that followed. We cried over silly little things. We cried over big things. But we laughed too. We laughed over the fact that every night for a month after diagnosis we continued to whisper when we went to bed so as not to wake Maisie up. But life went on. Slowly it got easier. We learnt to adapt.

That was five and a half years ago and a lot has happened. Maisie is bright, articulate and energetic; a dotting big sister and incredibly loud. Speak to her you would not know she was a profoundly deaf child. The clarity, intonation and articulation of her speech and her receptive language is immense, better than many of her hearing peers. Bilateral cochlear implants have allowed her access to sound. Implanted at fifteen months old, the change in her reaction to sound was virtually instant. At every audiological and speech and language assessment since, she has exceeded expectation.

What it is important to remember is that what she hears is electronic, not acoustic as a hearing person. Cochlear implants provide access to sound but do not make her a hearing child.

Maisie enjoys mainstream school. She has an education health care plan which provides the school with additional funding to pay for one to one support for her. Her learning support assistant pre-teaches new language, elements of BSL and social skills work. Deafness is not a learning disability but it can be a barrier to learning. We have never let it hold Maisie back. She is as able as her hearing peers but only under the correct circumstances, adaptations have to be made. The technology is truly amazing but underneath it there is still a profoundly deaf little girl, who will always be profoundly deaf.

Along our journey we have been lucky enough to engage with a range of professionals, volunteers and other families of deaf children, from the local authority deaf pre-school group to family weekends run by the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) and many other events. We have learnt that we are not alone, and that we have been incredibly lucky with the support that we have received through our local authority, the NHS and the friends we have made along the way.

Our hopes for the future are that people truly learn to understand hearing loss, the impact of background noise and concentration fatigue; and that hearing technology is an aid. It does not alter the diagnosis. The world is Maisie's oyster regardless of being deaf.

Lorna Barry is Margaret and Andrew Hill's daughter, and is a member of St Mark's.

The photograph is by Margaret Hill. It shows her granddaughter, Maisie, presenting a cheque for £9,000 to Hanna Sturman, from the National Deaf Children's Society, at this year's General Assembly Meetings in April. Also pictured is Janet Poole who stepped down as the President of the Women's League.

HELP US TO LISTEN, FOR WE ARE VERY DEAF

by Rev Andrew Hill

SINCE RETIREMENT

In the ten years since my retirement from St. Mark's and from the active ministry; and since Margaret and I left Edinburgh and removed to York; we have been blessed with four grandchildren. We are visiting with two of them and their parents in Burntisland this weekend. They live with wonderful views across the Firth of Forth here to Edinburgh and inland along the coast to the Bridges. Our other two grandchildren live as far away from us in York in the opposite direction in Sussex in a place called Hassocks just a few miles inland from Brighton. As non-car drivers, you will appreciate that Margaret and I are frequent travellers on the East Coast main railway line.

A few of you have met our eldest grandchild and will know that she was born profoundly deaf, her condition being early-identified by a, now routine, new-born hearing test. So at sixteen months - at St. Thomas's Hospital in London (that's the one across Westminster Bridge from Big Ben and the UK Parliament) - she, courtesy of the National Health Service, was fitted with bi-lateral cochlear implants and has never looked-back. The implanted processors in her skull convert external sounds into electrical impulses which bypass her failed cochlear nerves to reach and stimulate her brain - by an alternate route - where they are interpreted as sounds.

Simulations of what someone with implants may actually 'hear' by this alternate route simply leave the hearing person astonished that anything useful can be 'made out' at all; and yet our grand-daughter's spoken speech is clearer and more developed than most children of her age. It is also quite obvious that, just as young children acquire speech and language by natural absorption, our grand-daughter has similarly acquired lip-reading skills. A major difficulty is background noise and yet audiology tests have shown that the amount she can actually cope with is considerable. At school - she is in main stream education - she is also equipped with a special radio aid which by-passes the classroom hub-hub so long as the teacher remembers to switch on her microphone. Oh, and there is also a specially-assigned teaching assistant as well.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

There's that wonderful story in the Hebrew mythology about the prophet Elijah who - in a highly confused state - sought shelter in a mountain cave. But Elijah's unsettled state only intensified such that he began to ask himself:

'why are you even here, Elijah?'

So Elijah left the cave and returned to the bare, bleak wind-swept mountain - only for his confusion to intensify. There was an earthquake followed by a huge fire-storm; and then, when tranquillity was restored, there came 'a sound of sheer silence' and a gentle voice which asked:

'what are you doing here Elijah?' [1 Kings 19:9-13 NRSV]

A STILL SMALL VOICE

I recall this ancient story whenever I reflect about our grand daughter and her deafness and her cochlear implants:

- how, for her, not only does her classroom radio aid shelter her from the noise and hub-hub of an infant

school classroom; as, indeed, the shelter of the cave sheltered Elijah from the storm;

- but also, how - through the stormy and confused sound which the cochlear implants provide her brain - there also comes a quiet and gentle voice which asks:

'what are you doing here?'

And our grand-daughter's response would be - well far from it for me to put words into a five year old's mouth - so as she told a hospital doctor she had not previously met:

'These are my proper ears and they don't work and these are my magic ones and they do.'

ISSUES

Within the deaf community - so I have discovered - there is an historic debate which the advent of cochlear implants has revived and especially among families with hereditary deafness. Apparently, there are many in the deaf world who regard themselves - not as individuals with a disability - but as persons belonging to a specific language and cultural minority - like the Gaels and the Welsh.

Through force of circumstance, persons who happen to be deaf have a higher chance of socialising with others who happen to be deaf; and who then happen to meet, marry and have children who may or who may not be deaf. The parents then become uneasy because their hearing children - while fully able to participate in their parents' deaf world - are also fully able to participate in the hearing world which is not accessible to their deaf parents. Such participation, it is argued, reduces the opportunities for social interaction and community among people who are deaf; and in the United States there is actually a university - Gallaudet University in Washington DC - especially for deaf students. At one time there was even a scheme for a particular American state to be set aside especially for the development of deaf community and of deaf culture.

Now, I have to say that, until our grand daughter was born, this particular issue was new to Margaret and myself; and until we found ourselves in a supportive, listening mode with two parents faced with making a huge decision on behalf of their first child who just happened to have been born 'profoundly deaf'.

So just what are the issues for hearing parents who have given birth to a profoundly deaf child?

- First - is the child's life to be defined according to a minority 'deaf culture' - sign language, lip reading and special schools into which alternate culture the hearing parents would also need to enter simply in order to communicate with their child?
- Secondly - should the parents accept - on their child's behalf the risky, costly and generous offer of modern medicine and the National Health Service to implant their young child's skull with modern, new-fangled bi-lateral cochlear implants costing thousands of pounds; and this on the basis of what is, so-far, still limited evidence that the earlier they are implanted the more successfully the child will acquire speech?

Well, whatever decision our grand-daughter's parents had made, I'm sure that Margaret and I would have been supportive; but as it happens we did know of a profoundly deaf colleague of mine who in his mid-sixties had been successfully fitted with a single cochlear implant; and I remembered him telling me about hearing black bird song for the first time in twenty-five years, and that helped, tremendously. My colleague, of course being an adult, had himself, been the ultimate decision maker, while with a very young child, two parents were making a decision about dangerous and interventionist surgery on behalf of another human person.

ON REFLECTION

On reflection there are at least three different ways of being deaf:

- The first is those who – like our grand-daughter - are born congenitally deaf and for whom decisions need making about how they will manage in a majority hearing world; together with the whole business of acquiring alternate ways for human interacting – signing, lip reading, note-takers – and even the amazing wonders, 'the magic', of cochlear implants.
- The second way is those persons who are deaf because, as they age, their hearing has become less acute and who appreciate the assistance of ear trumpets, hearing aids, deaf loops in public places, folk who 'speak up' and who may even, like Beethoven, fill many of their hearing gaps from their own vivid imaginations.
- The third way of being deaf is that of those persons who are deaf not because they are physically deaf, or because their hearing has become less acute through aging; but because they have simply become less careful and less attentive as **listeners**, and this sort of deafness is something which can affect us all.



OUR JACK IN CONCERT!
Gifted young pianist,
Jack Westwell,
winner of the 2015 Edinburgh
Concerto Competition

Jack will perform 'Poulenc's tuneful, energetic and somewhat neglected Piano Concerto,' with **the Meadows Chamber Orchestra,** conducted by **Peter Evans**

3 June at 19.45
at the Queens Hall
full price £11
concessions £9
students £5/ schoolchildren £1

Tickets available from the Queens Hall

Teens and Tweens Group

Programme for ages 9-15

We meet from 11.00 -12.00 noon
 in the upper hall
 on the third Sunday in the month
 during term time

For more information speak to
Ida Silkenat or email

stmarkschildrensprogramme@gmail.com

HELP US TO LISTEN

From somewhere in the depths of my mind, these past few years, there has frequently emerged a request which simply asks:

'Help us to listen for we are very deaf'

and this, surely, is our prayer whether we be physically deaf; or simply dull of hearing because of age; or simply inattentive listeners:

'Help us to listen for we are very deaf'

- to our busy minds, our beating hearts and our neighbour's quiet breath;
- to city sounds invading this quiet space – an ambulance rushing by - or a rumbling train below;
- to the sounds of playing children; the hopes, fears, pains and sorrows of friends and neighbours, and of unknown persons just like us;
- to the mental strains of students and scholars; the cries of the tormented and the forgotten;
- to the silent motion of planets, the ordered dancing of stars and galaxies; and the still, small divine whisper of cosmic being.

Help us to hear, to touch, to see, to smell, to taste.
Help us to listen for we are very deaf.

Copyright Andrew Hill
used by permission

given in St Mark's on 14 May 2017

Rev Andrew Hill is a retired Unitarian minister and was our minister from 1974-2007. He is a member of St Mark's. See also page 3 for his daughter, Lorna Barry's reflection

Chalice Singers Rehearsals



If you enjoy singing,
 do come and rehearse
 with us

You don't need to be able to read music

We will meet in the upper hall
 from 10.00-10.45
 on the following Sundays

June
 11
 25
 July
 9

St Mark's Book Group

on 24 June after the service
(Bring your lunch)

This group is open to all, and we shall be meeting every 4-6 weeks

We shall be reading novels, biographies, anything which we feel has something to say to us as Unitarians

The book for our next meeting will be
 'A Man Called Ove.' by Fredrik Backman.

For more details, contact Joan Cook
joancook@hotmail.co.uk

St Mark's Annual General Meeting

LYNSEY BAILEY reports



On Sunday 7 May, after the usual morning service, coffee and conversation, St Mark's Annual General Meeting got underway. Kicking off the standing items of business, the minutes of last year's meeting were formally adopted in short order. Council then presented this year's Annual Report, and it was heartening to see that we had kept up the momentum of the work of our beloved community as we were reminded of our outreach work and affiliations. Ali McDonald went over the detail of the financial section of the report, illustrating that in order to be sustainable in the future with a full-time minister, the congregation as a whole would need to review its approach to monetary contributions. Always a tricky subject to tackle, but some helpful suggestions were made which definitely provided food for thought. Following these discussions, the Annual Report was then adopted. Moving on to the election of Council, the bulk of the exiting Council were content to continue (Jane Aaronson, Jon Bagust, Margery MacKay, Ali McDonald, Mary McKenna, Ann Sinclair and David Wood) and with two nominations for two vacancies, the new Council members (Elizabeth Welsh and Bláthnaid Quinn) were automatically elected with the full support of the members in attendance. Kate Foggo and Ida Silkenat stepped down from Council and were thanked for their work.

Margery MacKay provided an update from the Search Committee on the recruitment of a new minister and, following a refresh of the job description, a new advert had been placed and the Search Committee awaited the responses with interest. This was followed by an update from Jane Aaronson, on behalf of the Ministry Team, and it was particularly impressive to note that the vast majority of the services taken since our 'interregnum' began in August had been led by our own members. It was also pleasing to note that there were planned services for the coming few months and no shortage of people to call upon should there be a need to plan beyond that.

The final main piece of business to be discussed was the need for some significant repair work to be done in the church basement. Ann Sinclair provided an overview of the extent of the work to be done, what it would involve and the initial quotes. While it was reassuring to see how well the Management Committee had matters already well in hand, a substantial fundraising effort would also be necessary to help cover the costs. This could have ended the meeting on something of a downer, but the feeling seemed to be that we were well placed to meet these challenges due to our willingness to pull together. This sentiment was echoed by the closing hymn sung by the Chalice Singers, 'Here I Am' which finished with the final line 'If the work is worth it, getting anywhere, everyone can take a share'.

Scottish Unitarian Association

Annual Meeting

JANE AARONSON reports



The Scottish Unitarian Annual Meeting took place at St Mark's on 13 May. The delegates from St Mark's were Joan Cook, Mary McKenna, Ann Sinclair and me.

Alastair Moodie, President, chaired the AGM. He indicated that the SUA was a member of an Advisory Group to the Scottish Parliament. He represented the SUA at these cross party meetings in which the SUA represented the Unitarian Church nationally in Scottish affairs. Mary McKenna commented that the Parliamentary interface was very important. Alastair went on to encourage us to complete a survey conducted by Rev Sue Woolley, *Not Only But Also – A Survey of 21st Century Unitarian Beliefs and Spirituality*. It covers the whole of the UK. The closing date is the end of June.

Bill Good, Secretary, stated that Rev Dr Rob Whiteman had accepted a position as part time minister at Dundee. Bill remarked that Joan Cook had 'retired' from The General Assembly Executive Committee. He indicated that her insights had been invaluable to the SUA. Joan had facilitated a series of worship leader workshops which had been held at St Mark's. These have been helpful for those of us who wanted to lead worship or participating in services. Mary McKenna remarked that it was laudable that since August 2016 three quarters of those leading worship at St Mark's had come from the congregation. Rev John Clifford reminded the meeting that there were several retired ministers who would like to become more involved in SUA activities.

Ann Sinclair, Treasurer, reported that the SUA was financially viable and hoped to cover a number of activities this year. It was hoped to hold a lay ministry development day, and a meeting for those interested in developing church websites. Along with local historical groups, it was hoped to explore ways of restoring the Rothiemurchus, James Martineau Memorial, Inverness-shire.

After a delicious buffet lunch, Alastair McIntosh, 'a Scottish writer, academic and activist' and a Quaker gave a talk entitled *A Spirituality for our Time*. This was followed by a service led by our General Assembly President for 2017–18, Rev Charles VanDenBroeder. His theme was *A Unitarian and Free Christian Theology For Our Time*. We were pleased that Charles was able to worship with us the next day, when Rev Andrew Hill led worship.

After the AGM, at an Executive Meeting, Joan Cook agreed to become the President of the SUA 2017–18. So Joan was not allowed to remain in retirement for very long! She brings much experience to an office that she has held in the past. Ann Sinclair will continue as Treasurer, Bill Good as Secretary and Sue Good as Minute Secretary. A collection for the Clara Barton fund raised £200.

General Assembly Impressions

Elizabeth Welsh and Kate Foggo were among a group of Edinburgh Unitarians who attend the General Assembly Meetings in Birmingham in April. Elizabeth attended for the first time, while Kate is a seasoned attendee! The photograph of Kate with Ross Hartley in the GA Zette office was supplied by Kate. As Elizabeth explains, because of her surname, there was a bit of confusion when she checked in. The photograph of Unitarians Wales presenting the story of Unitarianism in Wales is courtesy of the GA photography team.

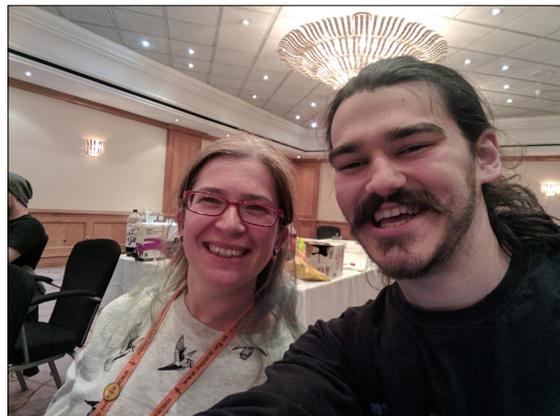
ELIZABETH WELSH reports

My first impression of the General Assembly Meetings was walking up to the check-in desk, and being asked my name. My reply, 'it's Welsh', turned out to be ambiguous for those behind the desk, who were waiting for the arrival of a large contingent of Welsh Unitarians. Indeed, something I've taken from attending the GA is a sense of St Mark's being part of a much wider movement: nationally, and internationally too. I learnt about the work of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship (something I wasn't aware of before), and the work Unitarians have supported through organisations such as the British Red Cross. There were also emergency motions to communicate united condemnation of the Coptic Church bombings on Palm Sunday.



Workshops and plenary sessions took place throughout the day, starting with morning worship at 07.30 (I only managed one of these!) I learnt about preserving Unitarian documents in archives and, on the opening night, the Welsh Unitarians put on an impressive musical-theatre-style performance of Welsh Unitarian history: again, something I previously knew nothing much about at all! However, the main focus was on the future: for example, projects to update and improve ministerial and community training; the creation of a new portal website; and ideas for 'rebranding' the chalice logo. Although some ideas were controversial, there was a lot of energy for growth and change.

Being amongst 300 Unitarians all at once was quite overwhelming (in a good way), and I enjoyed meal time, coffee-break, and Jacuzzi conversations with people from all sorts of Unitarian backgrounds across the UK and Ireland (oh, and Rev Petr Samojsky, the Czech minister who led services at St Mark's in November last year, was there too). Perhaps typically, people were expressing slightly different perspectives on how Unitarians should move forward. For example, do we need a new language for terms like prayer, congregation and pulpit? Is language a barrier for people, or a connection to our past? Beyond semantics, something else that came across strongly was Unitarianism as a faith of action, 'deeds not creeds'. As the new GA President Rev Charles VanDenBroeder asked us in one of the final speeches: if Unitarianism became illegal, would you be arrested? In other words, what do you do in the world that makes you a Unitarian? So, happily exhausted, I had that to consider on the train back to Edinburgh.



KATE FOGGO reports

When I was preparing to go to my first Annual Meetings in 2013, Ann Sinclair told me 'There will be people trying to sell you something called the Zette, you might want to buy it, but you don't have to'. Little did I know that five meetings-in-a-row later, the people I meet and do the Zette with are basically the reason that I attend the meetings. The Zette is a magazine supported by the FOY society (Fellowship of Youth) published five times during the approximately seventy-two hours the meetings take place. The first edition is made of articles submitted in advance, but the rest are created and printed on the spot during the small hours by a group of young(er) adults who mostly all know each other from coming up through the Unitarian Youth Programme. (I really recommend that parents check out the Youth Programme as these people are the most welcoming, truly grounded Unitarians and considered thinkers that I know). The co-editors for the last four have been Mattie and George, and then there is a whole host of others submitting pieces and causing the editors a headache when it's 03.00, the Wi-Fi has broken down, and Joe is still writing a piece that turns out to be six pages long.

The Zette aims to cover as much of the meetings as possible, in particular the workshops and motions that not everyone gets to. If you have been to a workshop and it inspires you to write something then this is encouraged, and is a great way to reflect on the meetings and Unitarian movement as a whole whilst being the most engaged I will be with it all year.

It's only seventy-two hours long, over four days, but the General Assembly is now looking into shortening the Annual Meetings to forty-eight hours over three days, which could jeopardise the future of the Zette as it might not be viable to do all the set up for just one full day. The main reasons given to shortening the meetings are around costs, and not being able to get enough time off work. Next year they will bring forward a motion to formally instigate this, and I am not sure I can support it. I feel it would perhaps be better to re-arrange the programme so that the business parts happen in one day, and the rest in the other two. So it would be easier to attend for one or two days, and also to encourage parents to use the Youth Programme that runs alongside so that everyone has the opportunity to be inspired.

Chalice Lighting Words

'Depression is now the leading cause of ill health and disability in the world, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), following a huge spike in the number of people who report living with the condition'. (Guardian Newspaper 31 March 2017).

It is our practice for a different member of our community to light our chalice at the start of Sunday worship. It is an opportunity to highlight important concerns and issues. Richard Ross lit the chalice on 16 April and Brian Robertson lit the chalice the following week on 23 April. In different ways they both presented thought-provoking views on two different aspects of mental health. Both agreed that it is important to share and learn more about mental health. After the service, Brian added extra material for inclusion on this page. This extra material is in italics.

RICHARD ROSS

World Autism Awareness Week which ended on 2 April, reminds us that autism is a hidden disability which affects many around us.

Recent estimates suggest one in sixty-eight of the population are somewhere on the Autistic Spectrum. It affects more boys and men than girls and women. There is as yet no cure, but much can be done to help.

Sensory overload is a challenge for autistic people, too much distracting noise; bright flashing lights; unexpected situations; a change of routine.

This can lead to unhappiness, distress, dis-orientation and even emotional meltdown.

I light this candle so that we may understand better the challenges facing people with hidden disabilities like autism.

BRIAN ROBERTSON

Today is a day of races with the Great Run in Edinburgh city centre causing us all a bit of inconvenience as we make our way to St Mark's.

Today is also the day of the London Marathon. Its charity of the year 2017 is 'Heads Together', the aim of which is to 'end the stigma and change the conversation' around mental health and mental ill health.

In the build-up to the Marathon this week, one of the better TV programmes (*'Mind over Marathon on Thursday 20 April'*) was one which showed ordinary people with mental health difficulties preparing for the race. This was most encouraging as was the active support given to these race preparations by the Princes William and Harry. In particular, Prince Harry, - the all-action tough guy - deserves credit for speaking out this week (*about the loss of his mother*) and this can only be helpful.

I like to think that we also do our own little bit in St Mark's (*to promote good mental health*) with our Mindfulness at Lunchtime which is open to all and costs nothing, as well as our Bereavement Support Group.

I recall lighting the Peace Candle some four or five years ago when I expressed the hope that there would be greater acceptance and understanding of mental ill health. I think I can say today, with certainty, that progress has been made. But we're not there yet.

So I light the Peace Candle with the very realistic hope that progress in tackling the stigma around mental ill health will be maintained and that perhaps the conversation can indeed be changed 'once and for all'.

(Episode 2 of the programme that I mentioned above was shown on Thursday 27 April and this showed how the race had gone. It is equally worth watching if you can catch it on BBC iPlayer before 2 June).

Bereavement Support Group

we will meet

on

Saturday 24 June

at 11.00

This is an open meeting. You are welcome to join us if you have been bereaved recently, or in the past

Please speak to Jane Aaronson

Email ja@ednet.co.uk

St Mark's Good Cause in June PARKINSON'S UK

'The Parkinson's charity that drives better care, treatments and quality of life'

For more information
go to www.parkinsons.org.uk/
or speak to
Mulan Bagust

PARKINSON'S^{UK}
CHANGE ATTITUDES. FIND A CURE. JOIN US.

Mindfulness @ Lunchtime

meets at St Mark's at 12.15 on Tuesdays

Interbeing Buddhist Meditation

meets at St Mark's every Thursday, usually at 19.15

For further information speak to Jon Bagust

www.facebook.com/mindfulnessatlunchtime

Thanks Giving 2016-2017

Once again, we give, and record, our thanks to all the members and friends who have helped during the year with the life and work of St Mark's.

Minister: Maud Robinson (until 31 July 2016)

Lay Celebrant and Lay Preacher: Joan Cook

Officers: Convener - Mary McKenna, Treasurer - Brian Robertson (until 31 December 2016), Ali MacDonald (from 1 January 2017), Secretary - Margery MacKay

Council: Jane Aaronson, Jon Bagust, Kate Foggo, Ida Silkenat, Ann Sinclair, David Wood

Ministry Team: Maud Robinson (until 31 July 2016), Lesley Hartley, (from June 2016), Jane Aaronson (from June 2016), Hilary Anderson (from December 2016), Lynsey Bailey (from June 2016), Tony Finlay, Rachael King, Jean Lapsley (from June 2016), Ali MacDonald (June - December 2016), Bláthnaid Quinn (from June 2016), Margaret Ross (June to December 2016), Elizabeth Welsh and, ex officio, Mary McKenna

Everyone who has been responsible for, or involved in Sunday services

Management Committee: Ann Sinclair, Maciej Gutowski (until Sept 2016), Brian Robertson, Richard Ross (from April 2016) and, ex officio, Mary McKenna

Search Committee: Margery MacKay, Jon Bagust, Kris Calder, Roger Hartley, Jill Stamper

Venue Group: Ann Sinclair, Roger Hartley, Mary McKenna, Maud Robinson (until 31 July 2016), Ida Silkenat (until November 2016), Rob Whiteman (until 31 July 2016)

Ministry Evaluation Group: Maud Robinson, Jean Lapsley, Ali McDonald, Bláthnaid Quinn (Group disbanded June 2016)

Gift Aid (tax reclaim): B Jones

Acting Venue Manager: Ann Sinclair

Venue Treasurer: Ida Silkenat (until November 2016)

Fringe: Our Fringe Manager and Front-of-House Manager

Lettings: All volunteers who helped with front-of-house and box office during the Fringe, and those who attended public events throughout the year, assisting our paying guests, and looking after security

Administrative Assistant: Suzanne Stirling

Caretaker: Euan McGlynn

Housekeeper: Kay Thornhill

Music: Ailsa Aitkenhead, Ellen Beard, Heather Coates, Leon Coates, Margaret Christie, Veronika Gancheva, Lesley Hartley, (Slav) Svetoslav Todorov and Jack Westwell

Waymark Editor: Jane Aaronson with assistance from Kirsty Murray

Website: Jon Bagust (until November 2016), Roger Hartley (until July 2016), Thomas McPolin (from August 2016 - February 2017), Caroline Puck Graves (web builder), Maud Robinson (until 31 July 2016), also DUWIT Team of James Barry and John Wilkinson (until June 2016). From March 2017: Jane Aaronson, Lynsey Bailey, John Clifford, Kate Foggo, Suzanne Stirling (Waymark) and Elizabeth Welsh

Mindfulness@lunchtime: Jon Bagust and helpers

Bereavement Support Group: Maud Robinson (until 31 July 2016), Jane Aronson and all who facilitate this group

Chalice Singers: Lesley Hartley and singers

Poetry for Pleasure: Margery MacKay

Social Secretary: Lynsey Bailey

Bring and Share Suppers: Lynsey Bailey, Elizabeth Welsh and all who facilitate this group

Children's Programme: Co-ordinator - Ida Silkenat, assisted by Lynsey Bailey, Katherine Caldwell, Lesley Hartley, Rachael King, Kirsty Murray, Bláthnaid Quinn, Emily Rueggeberg (until December 2016), Tom Stamper, Susanne Urquhart and those on standby duty

Sunday Duties: all the Sunday stewards, peace candle, welcome and coffee people

Sunday Coffee (maintaining supplies): B Jones, Ann Sinclair

Flower Rota: Mary McKenna, and thanks to all who dedicated and arranged flowers

Duty Rotas: Jane Aaronson

Good Cause Arrangements: Jane Aaronson

St Catharine's Homeless Project: Elaine Edwards and all volunteers who help with this project on a Friday evenings, and who help in other ways during the year

Chennai Fund: Jon Bagust, Mike West

Care of indoor plants: members of children's programme

Waymark mailing: Minnie Masterman, Jane Aaronson, Jean Lapsley, Margaret Mackenzie, and others who gave occasional help

Representatives: General Assembly - Margery MacKay and Mary McKenna in 2016, Jane Aaronson and Ann Sinclair in 2017; Scottish Unitarian Association - Joan Cook, Maud Robinson (until 31 July 2016), Ann Sinclair; Edinburgh Interfaith Association - Jill Stamper, Unitarian Representative* and Treasurer (until September 2016) and Margery MacKay, Secretary (September 2016) Equality Network - Maud Robinson (until 31 July 2016)

****If anyone is interested in being the Unitarian Representative on the Edinburgh Interfaith Association Board, please speak to Margery MacKay***

JUNE IN ST MARK'S

Every Sunday	11.00	Church Service and Coffee
Every Tuesday	12.15	Mindfulness@Lunchtime
Saturday 3	19.45	Jack Westwell and the Meadows Orchestra at the Queen's Hall (see page 5)
Sunday 11	10.00–10.45	Chalice Singers Group Rehearsal (see page 5)
Sunday 11	13.00-14.00	Poetry Reading for Pleasure (see page 1)
Saturday 17	19.30	Gary Ryan Classical Guitar Concert (tickets £12, concessions £8) (see page 10)
Saturday 24	11.00	Bereavement Group. email ja@ednet.co.uk (see page 8)
Sunday 25	10.00–10.45	Chalice Singers Group Rehearsal (see page 5)
Sunday 25	13.00	Book Group (see page 5)
JULY		
Saturday 1	11.00	Waymark mailing. Email ja@ednet.co.uk if you would like to help
Sunday 9	10.00–10.45	Chalice Singers Group Rehearsal (see page 5)

SUNDAYS IN JUNE

Services are at 11 am in the church, with coffee and conversation in the upper hall afterwards. Children sit with their parents for the opening part of the service, and then follow their own programme.

The good cause in June is Parkinson's UK. More details on page 8.

Sunday 4 June Trishna Singh and Mary McKenna

An insight into Sikhism

Sikhism is a way of spiritual enlightenment and Sikh scriptures teach the importance of respect for all humankind. Trishna Singh is a member of the Edinburgh Gurdwara, and she will introduce us to Sikh principles and practices. After the service Trishna will be happy to have an informal question and answer session, and to share her experience of growing up in Scotland as a Sikh woman.

Mary McKenna, our Convener, is a member of St Mark's and the Chair of Sikh Sanjog. Trishna Singh OBE is the Director of Sikh Sanjog

THERE WILL BE A BRING AND SHARE LUNCH AT 13.00 PLEASE EMAIL LYNSEY BAILEY FOR MORE DETAILS

Sunday 11 June Claire MacDonald

Loose Change: Hope, Freedom and Belonging

Change is always with us, for better or for worse. Let's reflect today on what change feels like, as we step forward into the unknown, at times in doubt, at times in uncertainty, but always in conversation, in love, in kindness, and in hope.

Claire MacDonald is studying for Unitarian ministry at Harris Manchester College, Oxford

Sunday 18 June Rev Alison Wagstaff

Discipleship

With readings from Matthew 9 and Genesis 18

Rev Alison Wagstaff is a member of the Clergy at St Columba's by the Castle

Sunday 25 June Rev David Paton-Williams

Rev David Paton-Williams is the Rector at St Columba's by the Castle

This will be Jack Westwell's last service with us

Sunday 2 July Lesley Hartley

The Miracle of Reading

I do it in a comfy chair, some people do it in the bath, others lie on a bed, or on the floor, or stood on a tram. How do you read?

Bring and Share Midsummer Lunch

You are warmly invited to a Bring and Share Midsummer Lunch/ Outdoor Picnic at St Mark's on Sunday 4 June.

We'll be gathering from 13.00 onwards, and may even make it an outdoor picnic if the weather allows.

Bring a dish to share: savoury or sweet, homemade or shop-bought. All will be gratefully received.

Wine and soft drinks will be provided for a small donation.

Whether you're a newcomer or long-time attender at St Mark's, we hope to see you!

If you would like more information, or can help to setup and clear away, please email Lynsey Bailey.

bailelynsey@gmail.com

Look out for signup sheet in the church hall

(Background image from Clip Art)

Gary Ryan Classical Guitar Concert

on

Saturday 17 June
at St Mark's

Concert starts at 19-30 (doors open 19.00)

tickets £12 (concessions £8)

For further information contact mikemcgeary@msn.com

Printed by Bookbinding By Crawford Ltd