

waymark



unitarians in edinburgh

Volume 53 Number 1
Feb / Mar 2021

**“Be patient where you sit in the dark.
The dawn is coming.”**

Rumi

Image by Kris Calder

A Very Warm Welcome to St Mark's

from Rev Peter Fairbrother



Living with the unpredictable

I hope this issue of Waymark finds you well and coping. Over the timeframe of this issue we'll have made our way through a full year of pandemic. I know for many of us it has been a difficult, destabilising, and exhausting year. We've lived a rollercoaster, navigating waves of infection and mortality, various mitigation measures and lockdowns, and now waiting our turn to receive vaccine.

Threaded throughout has been the constant challenge of living with the unpredictable. It has required us to show the utmost flexibility, resourcefulness, and resilience in not only adjusting to unprecedented circumstances, but also in living with rapid change, change often thrust upon us in a world churned upside down by Covid. And whilst the experience has doubtless felt relentless, perhaps the churn has also afforded us the opportunity to re-evaluate the world(s) in which we live, opened us to seeing old problems with new eyes, and empowered us to consider change as a route to healing. In this pivotal year I pray that each of us give up 'putting up'. I pray that we may *liberate ourselves* in living the unpredictable. I pray that we may *embrace all the possibilities* that change brings. *And I pray that we ask for better, seek better, expect better, create better, and know that we're deserving of it.*

With love, Peter

Unitarians in Edinburgh

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Future Sunday Services at St Mark's

our spirituality is all of us
all of you is welcome here

unitarians in edinburgh
together every Sunday, 11am
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/459569403>

We are continuing our time together in community online every Sunday, via Zoom.

These gatherings provide space for personal sharing, readings, music and song, and time held in silence, meditation and prayer.

To join us simply go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/459569403> on **Sunday** at **11am**. Immediately after, drop by for **virtual teas and coffees** at <https://zoom.us/j/939360646>.

Other **weekly** Zoom gatherings occurring during February and March are:

- **Tuesday — Mindfulness@Lunchtime** from **12.30pm-2pm**. A time of guided meditation, silence, and sharing. For more information contact the team via **Mindfulness at Lunchtime** on **Facebook**.
- **Wednesday — drop-in** between **3pm** and **4pm** for chat at <https://zoom.us/j/106391104>.

Our **monthly** Zoom gatherings during February and March are:

- The **Earth-based Paths Exploration Group** meet on **Wednesdays 17 February** and **17 March** at **12.30pm**. For the Zoom link email Eli at eli.roth.personal@gmail.com or find **Earth-Based Paths Exploration Group** on **Facebook**.
- The **Bereavement & Support Group** meet on **Saturdays 20 February** and **20 March** at **11am**. For more information email Jane at ja11951@outlook.com
- The **Poetry and Prose Reading for Pleasure Group** meet on **Saturdays 6 February** and **6 March** at **1pm**. The March theme 'March' for Women, please bring 2 poems on that theme.
- The **Journaling Group** meet on **Saturdays 27 February** and **27 March** at **2pm**. For more information email Julia at juliamacintosh.uk@gmail.com

Lighting the Chalice

**Margery MacKay lit the last chalice
of 2020 with these words.**

It has been said many times before but at the turn of the year we humans tend to look back at the past year and look forward to the next. We are all well aware of the great sadness, suffering and despair of many people this year. Elsewhere there are continuing conflicts and wars which we seldom pay attention to. Even for those not so badly affected it has been difficult. A lot of us will find it hard to look forward with hope into 2021.

Suffering is one of the most difficult conditions for humans to face physically, mentally and as a concept. All the world faiths and philosophers have tried to address it from the Buddha to Jesus.

Kahlil Gibran, who talks about joy and sorrow bring intertwined also said "Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars."

Albert Schweitzer wrote about the fellowship of suffering and I summarise his words. The fellowship of suffering of all those who have learned by experience what physical pain and bodily anguish mean and that they belong and are united by this bond. Also that those delivered from pain must not think they are now free again and at liberty to take life up just as it was before, entirely forgetful of the past. Their eyes have been opened with regard to pain and anguish, and they must help to overcome those two things and to bring others the deliverance which they themselves have enjoyed.

I imagine that means all of us as this is part of the human condition. I personally do not believe that by some master plan suffering is there to teach us, or that it is there to punish us, absolutely not. It is just there. On the whole, however, we seem to become more compassionate, and aware when facing it.

I have been reading the book "Last Witnesses" by Svetlana Alexievich - interviews with those who were children, at the time when they faced terrible suffering in the former USSR during WW2. Surprisingly, the book was not completely depressing and there was a lot of hope, kindness and resilience in it from ordinary people. We also learnt who the children become in later life.

Hope does Spring eternal. We have to believe it. The resilience of the human race to overcome difficulties and show compassion to and help those who need it most is on the whole amazing. We must remember that. I light the peace candle for strength and resilience to face the future.

John Clifford lit the first chalice of 2021 with these words.

Friends, we come together in the spirit of worship during challenging times. Our life journeys involve many companions, some fleeting, some enduring. Our mental health, some would say our very existence, depends on the links we have with these travelling companions; it depends on the quality and sincerity of the questions and answers that comprise so much of conversations that link us; it depends on recognition of each other and recognition of our goals, particularly our shared goals.

2020 saw our departure from the European Union; whether we like this or not, at least 2021 starts with new priorities and decisions to make; 2020 also saw the emergence of a virus which has been stalking the world for 12 months AND it also saw the development and approval of vaccines against the virus. But one impending crisis which we have yet to properly address is global warming, caused by our dependence on fossil fuels, that is threatening the destruction of the fragile ecological system that supports all life on this planet. This globe, that circles our sun annually, nourishes us through its annual growth cycle of edible plants and protects us by its electromagnetic field. Human lives are stressing the systems that uphold life, all life, on the surface of the Earth and one possible future is that of an almost lifeless globe continuing its orbit to little practical benefit.

May the light of truth and the warmth of love, as symbolised in our flaming chalices we are about to light, serve to foster cooperation and collaboration in our community as we face these challenges.

May the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Love, and the Spirit of Beauty, which some would call God, inspire us and strengthen us as we move into the future. Amen

Brenda Rafferty lit the chalice on 17 January 2021 with these words.

Life is so strange and difficult right now. I light this candle in the hope that we can all find peace, purpose, energy and self-love to get us through each day.

This week I was reminded of how difficult this is to accomplish. It requires discipline, determination and self-care. It is easy to lie in bed, hide under the covers and avoid life. It's harder to find the energy and self-love to motivate us. More difficult still if you live alone: no one to get up for, no pet to care for. Nothing to give your life immediate purpose.

For me, my alarm goes off at 8am, I get up a little after that, shower, dress, breakfast and then make the rest up as I go along.

It is important that we are kind to ourselves. The Universe loves us. We need to also love ourselves. By loving ourselves we can find purpose and be grateful for what we have achieved. We need to stay in the moment. Enjoy the present moment, for there is nothing else. Yesterday is gone, tomorrow is not here. All we live in, is the NOW.

What are you all going to do today to enjoy the NOW of today?

So you can look back and appreciate the small pleasures in your day. Some days I knock on a neighbour's door, just to say hello, perhaps drop off some home baking, or return a book....., or I enjoy a chat with the postman or a passing dog walker. This contact reminds me how wonderful life can be when we engage with others, enriching not only our lives but theirs as well. Being here today, at this Service, helps me each Sunday.

So today I light this candle in the hope that we can all find peace, purpose, energy and self-love to get us through each day.

New year, new opportunities

At St Mark's, there are opportunities for folk to contribute to the development of our community through involvement in a number of teams that take forward what we do. Rev Peter Fairbrother explains.

"These opportunities are open to members and friends alike, to 'new folk' and to those with longstanding connection. If you'd like to contribute to our future growth and development, we'd warmly welcome your energy, skills, and expertise to join our **Communications Team**, our **Ministry Team**, or our **Pastoral Care Team**.

Contributing to our teams offers the following benefits:

- The opportunity to develop and deepen friendships with our community
- An opportunity to share your skills and experience, and develop new ones
- The satisfaction of knowing that your input is making a big difference in helping us to help others.

The teams all meet on Zoom, so contribution to the team and any corresponding activities can all happen remotely.

Add your energy to shape our future!"

The **Communications Team** seeks to articulate the vision, values, and activities of our community to new and existing markets through the development of print and online media. The team remit includes marketing and publicity, and we'd particularly welcome those with skills and experience in these areas. For more information or to express your interest, **email Rev Peter Fairbrother, our Minister, at minister@edinburgh-unitarians.org.uk**

The **Ministry Team** has space for a further member. The team meets approximately every three to four months, providing feedback on past services, as well as feeding-in ideas for future services, all the while aiming to foster worship of the highest quality. For more information or to express your interest, **email Lesley Hartley at lesley.j.hartley@gmail.com**

The **Pastoral Care Team** seeks to support the wellbeing of our community by working with the Minister in offering a listening ear to those who need it, and in proposing and implementing initiatives that foster a caring culture within our community. The Team wish to expand by attracting empathic listeners who are willing to give a little time each month to connect with others. Team members respect confidentiality within the bounds of safeguarding, and it is important that prospective new members agree to this. An open heart is the most important qualification, above any others. For more information or to express your interest, **email Rev Peter Fairbrother, our Minister, at minister@edinburgh-unitarians.org.uk**



The **Pastoral Care Team**: here to listen. To make contact email Rev Peter Fairbrother or reach out to team members.

Holding on: faith in difficult times

Reflections from our Minister Rev Peter Fairbrother, from our first gathering of 2021.

On 14 December, Phil and I were host to an unwelcome visitor.

A couple of days after coming off shift from the Covid Testing Centre at the airport, Phil began to feel unwell. At first we assumed it was simply a winter bug of sorts, or his body's response to tiredness after a busy couple of days, but as symptoms developed it became clear that it was something else... Something we had both dreaded, and had so strenuously attempted to avoid. Phil got tested, and the result was as we feared: he'd contracted Covid-19.

I'll never forget the moment that Phil told me his test result. Ashen-faced, wearing a face covering — "I'm positive", he said, tears rolling down his face. We both cried.

It was an intensively sad and frightening moment.

Intensively sad, in that I wasn't able to go over to comfort him, to give him a hug or hold his hand, or make any form of physical connection.

And intensely frightening, in that Covid-19 is such an unpredictable disease. What now for us both, I wondered?

The ten days which followed were days of self-isolation for us both; self-isolation not only from the world around us, but also from each other in our own home. It was tough going.

I was contained in the second bedroom, which I ordinarily use as both an office and a sanctuary for prayer, two things I had neither the inclination, nor the composure, nor energy to engage with.

I've heard it said that in times of difficulty, we turn to our faith to get us through.

I gave thought the resources I could draw upon.

For me the books of my favourite self-care 'gurus', held in the room where I was self-isolating, remained firmly on the shelf. My beloved music, unplayed. The candle on my altar, unlit.

Continued on next page...

The most I could manage was to connect with sleep, often at odd hours, then waking to the thought that the whole situation was a bad dream, a nightmare... Only to slowly re-orientate myself to the realisation that it was in fact the reality I was occupying.

And to the decision not to draw the blinds in this wee room. This enabled me to be present to each day's sunrise and sunset. Under a blanket, on a make-do bed, looking out the window I could observe the world around me: the daily movement of the geese across the sky; the appearance a young seagull with a broken sticky-out wing perching precariously each morning on the roof opposite; and the frequent guest appearance of a plump woodpigeon on a nearby fence waiting for scraps to be placed on a local bird table at lunchtime. All evidence of life carrying on around me, oblivious to the fractures created in my world. Oddly soothing or numbing, I'm not sure which, these things were about as much as I had capacity to be present for.

My faith during this dark time was simply to be present, moment by moment, as much as I could. This, for me, is what resilience looked like during those ten days of self-isolation.

We often have mighty projections of what we think of as faith and spirituality. Perhaps for some, faith is that bottomless well of positivity, there to bail us out of feelings of hopelessness/despair.

For me the metaphor of the well is a potent one, except faith is less a place where I turn to 'bail out' my feelings of fear and discomfort, but rather a place where I may choose take a deeper dive into the darkness to see what's really there.

Because, for me, this strange thing we call 'Spirituality' is about listening. Listening -in to the not knowing, to the stumbling about, to the fear and confusion, to feelings of being all messed up, and knowing it's all absolutely OK.

Our faith is, in essence, the call to authenticity — to acknowledging and accepting

- what we're *really* with
- how we *really* are
- who we *really* are

when we drop the facade.

Sometimes we might feel that it's 'the very least we can do', but really if we can be with ourselves in a place of honesty and acceptance, then in my view it's more than enough.

During this time of continuing pandemic, with all its constraints and restrictions, worries and concerns, the gift of listening, is I believe the greatest gift we can give to ourself and each other. To see and be seen for who we really are is to my mind (and heart) the most we can ever be.

Listen

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving me advice, you have not done as I asked.

When I ask you to listen and you tell me how much you have worried about me you are not honouring me, but seeking for yourself.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me what I should be thinking or feeling, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you try to fix me, you have failed me.

All I asked was that you listen - not talk or do, nor project or fix, just hear me.

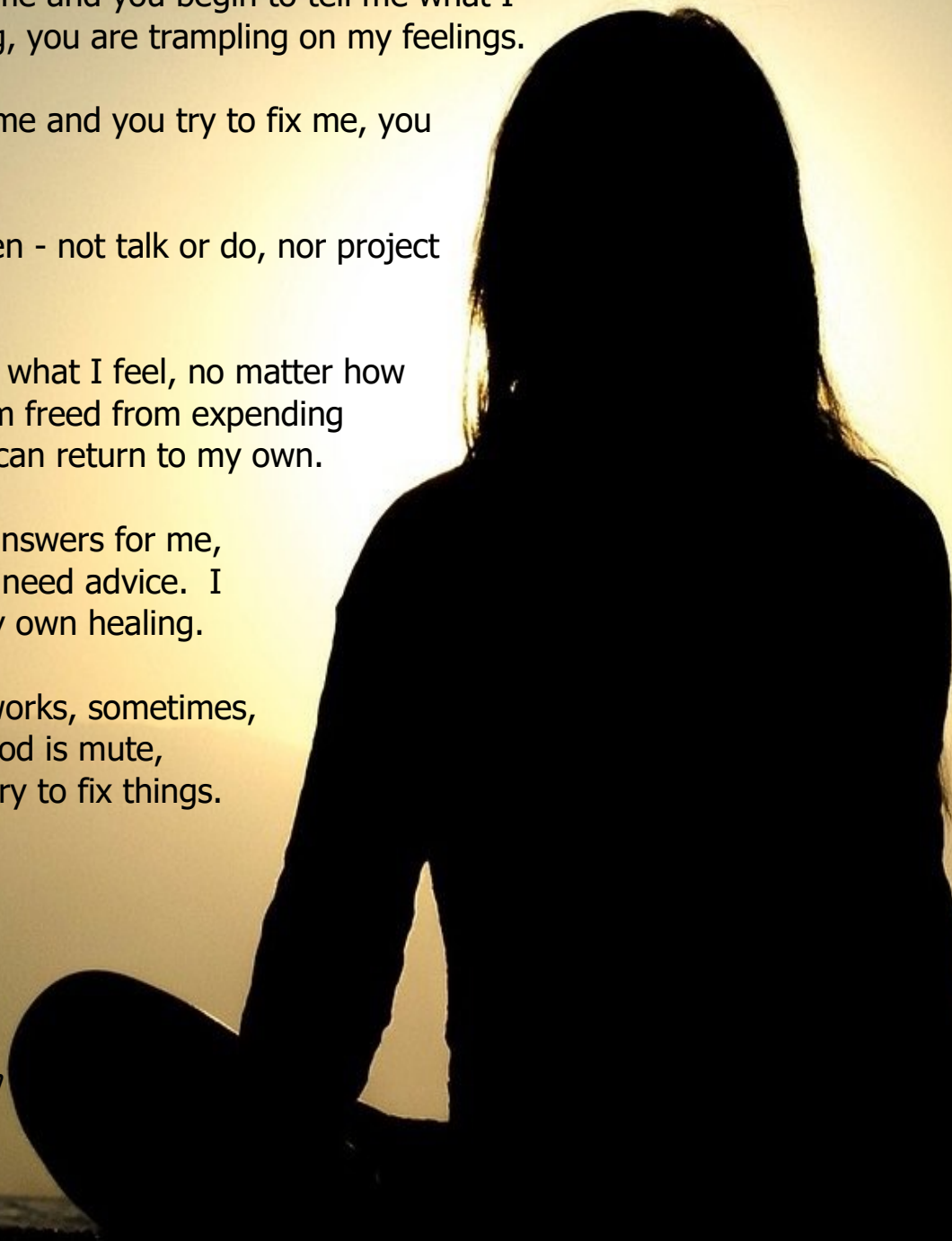
When you accept that I feel what I feel, no matter how it may seem to you, then I'm freed from expending energy on your needs, and can return to my own.

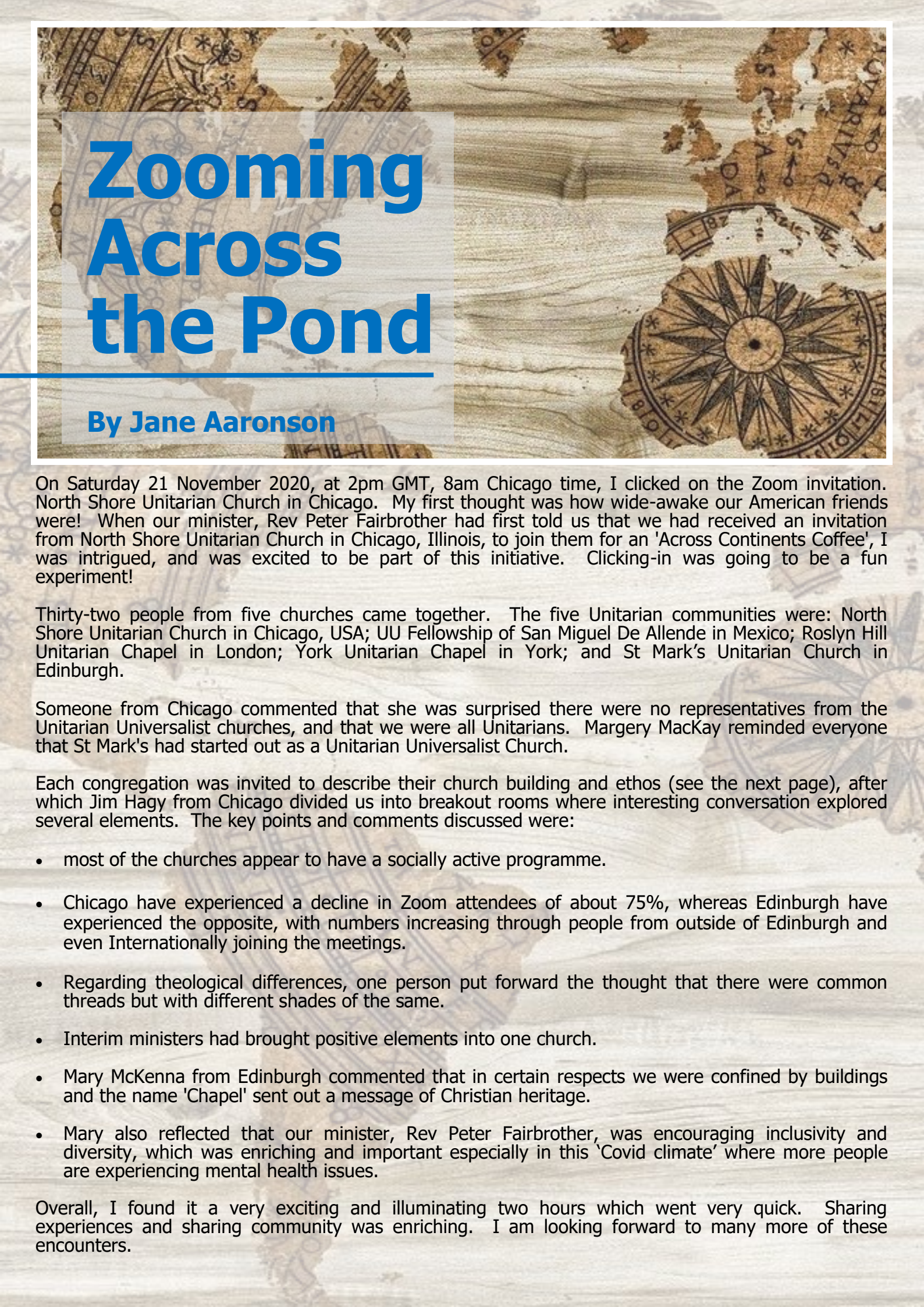
And when that's clear, the answers for me, become obvious and I don't need advice. I become the originator of my own healing.

Perhaps that's why prayer works, sometimes, for some people, because God is mute, God doesn't give advice or try to fix things.

God just listens and hears.

*With all respect and appreciation
to the author (unattributed)*





Zooming Across the Pond

By Jane Aaronson

On Saturday 21 November 2020, at 2pm GMT, 8am Chicago time, I clicked on the Zoom invitation. North Shore Unitarian Church in Chicago. My first thought was how wide-awake our American friends were! When our minister, Rev Peter Fairbrother had first told us that we had received an invitation from North Shore Unitarian Church in Chicago, Illinois, to join them for an 'Across Continents Coffee', I was intrigued, and was excited to be part of this initiative. Clicking-in was going to be a fun experiment!

Thirty-two people from five churches came together. The five Unitarian communities were: North Shore Unitarian Church in Chicago, USA; UU Fellowship of San Miguel De Allende in Mexico; Roslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel in London; York Unitarian Chapel in York; and St Mark's Unitarian Church in Edinburgh.

Someone from Chicago commented that she was surprised there were no representatives from the Unitarian Universalist churches, and that we were all Unitarians. Margery MacKay reminded everyone that St Mark's had started out as a Unitarian Universalist Church.

Each congregation was invited to describe their church building and ethos (see the next page), after which Jim Hagy from Chicago divided us into breakout rooms where interesting conversation explored several elements. The key points and comments discussed were:

- most of the churches appear to have a socially active programme.
- Chicago have experienced a decline in Zoom attendees of about 75%, whereas Edinburgh have experienced the opposite, with numbers increasing through people from outside of Edinburgh and even Internationally joining the meetings.
- Regarding theological differences, one person put forward the thought that there were common threads but with different shades of the same.
- Interim ministers had brought positive elements into one church.
- Mary McKenna from Edinburgh commented that in certain respects we were confined by buildings and the name 'Chapel' sent out a message of Christian heritage.
- Mary also reflected that our minister, Rev Peter Fairbrother, was encouraging inclusivity and diversity, which was enriching and important especially in this 'Covid climate' where more people are experiencing mental health issues.

Overall, I found it a very exciting and illuminating two hours which went very quick. Sharing experiences and sharing community was enriching. I am looking forward to many more of these encounters.



Gloria Schneider from North Shore Unitarian Church gave us a guided tour in pictures of their church which looked like a purpose-built building and was finished in the 60s.

They are hugely concerned with the natural world which was reflected in the design of the building - beautiful oak doors with seed pods, root system and tendrils illustrated the growing part of the world; the sanctuary was designed as a cave with fused glass by the glass artist Bob White; the pulpit was a huge rock which sat on the ground. We were also shown pictures of their Labyrinth and meditation garden.

Several members from Roslyn Hill Chapel spoke. They told of their stained-glass windows, and commented that along with the Edinburgh community they were one of the largest communities in the UK. Unlike Edinburgh they had several churches around them in London. They let out their building, which has a labyrinth and sound bath, during the week to a local school. The Chapel has a clock once owned by Charles Dickens, as well as an organ and a grand piano. They are very socially active, opening the church in the evening during cold weather as a shelter for 10-15 homeless people. They have a thriving children's programme which can be viewed on YouTube.

Roslyn Hill Chapel has affiliated itself to Channing School in Highgate by financing a Channing Award. Matilda and Emily Sharpe had started the school in 1895 to provide education for the daughters of Unitarian ministers.

Shana Begum, Roslyn Hill's Ministry Assistant, spoke about their various initiatives. They were experimenting, for example, with hybrid services, and before Covid they had a morning and evening service. The theme of the evening service every six weeks was wheel of the year which focused on seasonal cycles. Currently, because of the restrictions they hold Zoom services.





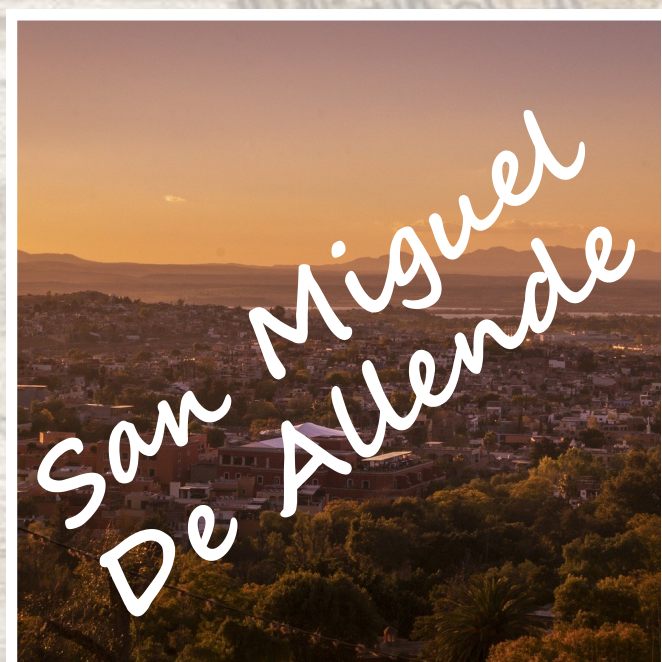
St Mark's Unitarian Church has been in existence since 1776, having been in the present building since 1835. There is a membership of 100 with a few hundred friends, making the congregation is one of the largest at the moment.

Rev Peter Fairbrother explained that during the Covid-19 epidemic, many of the groups had been able to continue to meet via Zoom, including our Sunday services, Mindfulness@Lunchtime, the Children's Programme and our Journaling sessions to name a few. One of the initiatives stated during the Pandemic was a monthly quiz. Before lockdown St Mark's had a 'good cause' programme which covered a variety of local charities, including supporting one of our local homelessness initiatives. On a more international level St Mark's partners with the Unitarian Christian Church in Chennai, South India.

About five people from York Unitarians attended the Zoom conversation, mentioning that their Unitarian Chapel at St Saviourgate in York is the oldest dissenting chapel in York. Built in 1692, it is a Grade 2 listed building. Secretary Jenny Jacobs reported a friendly and welcoming congregation of around 30, plus many others now on Zoom. As well as being a place of worship, it is a go-to place for music performance and culture.



Dan Neuspiel was the spokesman for the UU Fellowship of San Miguel De Allende. He said that the Fellowship had been in existence for 33 years and had been lay led until two years ago. Now they have a part-time minister. Their following has mainly been expats with a congregation of mostly older people, but due to the political situation in USA they are now welcoming Mexican families who have been forced to return to Mexico. There appears to be a growth of liberal religion in the area and this has been enhanced by virtual services which encourage people from all over the world to join in. They are now having to cater for both an aged population and a burgeoning children's programme. Their services are enhanced by a diversity of videos in services, as well as a volunteer choir in which there are many professional singers.



On Being Left-Handed

by Lesley Hartley



When working on a topic about Victorian children with my class of 8 and 9-year olds, we had a special trip to a schoolroom set up in the style of the 1850s. The children took part in Victorian lessons — saying their tables, reciting, and writing in 'a fine hand.'

Two of the children in my class were left-handed and were well prepared for having to play their part by writing with their right hands. The school ma'am did not make any negative comment about their work and did praise them for trying hard. But it struck a chord: both children couldn't understand why they were not allowed to do what came naturally to them.

My mum was left-handed — made to write with her other hand, but bless her, she never inflicted that on me, although by the time I started school I was used to using right-handed scissors and holding a needle in my right hand. These were things that she thought were incredibly difficult for a left-hander to have to cope with. I tried hard with my writing at primary school — and of course now we have to go back to prehistoric times because this was before children had access to felt-tip pens or biros to write with - for me, inkwells and scratchy nibs. I know that at no point did anyone try to think of a way to help me. When I became a new teacher, I found there was no guidance given for teaching left-handers.



So I made that a feature of my classroom practice throughout my teaching career — teaching left-handed children, their parents and...the teachers. If you have a school age child or grandchild who is left-handed, have they received input into how to hold their pen/pencil? How to put work on a desk? Where to sit? Most left-handers who crab their writing have had to sit next to a right hander. No-one was ever unkind to me because of left-handedness. Children tended to be more cruel I'm afraid to those wearing glasses, but there was dismissiveness. I was disadvantaged and sometimes discriminated against.

Being left-handed did not allow for inclusiveness and it has taken quite some time for children to achieve a parity in handedness in school. But not in society at large. It's a right-handed world. I have tried to give children a voice for left-handedness in the same way that anyone who feels discriminated against should have a voice and expect something to be done.

Once, on the first day of an autumn term I remember hearing a teacher say to a pupil "Now, you were in Mrs Hartley's class last year and I think you've got something to say to me." "Yes...please can I sit at a table where my arm can move freely?" Brilliant!

Continued on next page...

As a headteacher, I had to rebel against the peripatetic violin teacher, who, when teaching the whole class, and me, to play violin, made us all hold the instrument in the same way. Health & Safety apparently. Better to stick to the clarinet or flute — left-hand first. No problem with my guitar — restring. Think Paul McCartney, Sting and Jimi Hendrix (although he didn't restring his guitar, just learned to play it upside down!)

Can you remember the feeling of something not being fair for you? In preparing today's service I was reminded of the most uncomfortable lectures and seminars in college where the seats had a little desk attached to them on the right-hand side, so I had to sit curled to my right in order to make notes. Gosh...some of those lectures seemed long.

From then on, not too much to note apart from cheque book stubs, until I went on a special course to learn how to write calligraphy. Five members of staff went on this course — and we ALL were left-handed. So guess what — the left-handers were in one teaching group and the three right-handed teachers from another school were in the other group. And did they feel left out — they were extremely vocal about it!

Using my laptop I have the freedom to use the mouse with either hand — there's the option available — hurray! I choose to use the mouse with my right-hand so my left-hand can make written notes if needed. My school secretary was left-handed and used the mouse with her left-hand — we set it up especially. We always felt so proud of ourselves when we sat at a table working on the school budget — we never got in each other's way.

But there are times now when I can get a little weary of 'leftie' jokes. Yes, because that's what we're now referred to — as lefties. I can't imagine calling 90% of you 'righties!' That's it — at least 10% of you are left-handed. In some situations that percentage can be higher, for instance with twins. Children are no longer 'encouraged' to write with their right-hands and instead are now left to choose their hand of favour when selecting a pencil or paintbrush. In fact, did you know that Queen Victoria was left-handed? There are pictures of her painting using the brush in her left-hand. It is thought that she wrote right-handed because she had been persuaded to do so.



We haven't got to put up with being told we're cack-handed; in French, 'gauche' can mean 'left'

or 'clumsy'. In English the word 'left' comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'lyft', meaning 'weak'. 'Right' also means 'to be right. Consider the sayings - two left feet and right-hand person.

Cultural bias against left-handers has existed throughout history. Left-handed people have been considered unlucky and even evil - the word 'sinister' comes from the Latin word for left.

In Britain in the Middle Ages, lefties were associated with the devil and often accused of the crime of witchcraft, meaning they would get burned at the stake, or in Edinburgh, drowned in the Nor'loch. I wonder how many of those women were left-handed. In more recent history it is thought that King George VI's bad stammer was a result of being made to write with his right-hand although he was a natural left-hander, a trait now seen in his great-grandson, Prince William.

Handedness is probably hardwired before birth. Still, most development experts say parents would most likely not have a good sense of their child's dominant hand until age 2 or 3. Your brain's right-side controls muscles on the left-side of your body and largely drives musical and spatial abilities. That may be why left-handers often hold more than their fair share of slots in creative professions. Whether you are left-handed or right-handed, have mixed handedness or are ambidextrous — be proud of the skills you possess and the gifts you can share. Be proud to be different.

Unitarians welcome difference - we welcome diversity.



St. Catharine's Mercy Centre

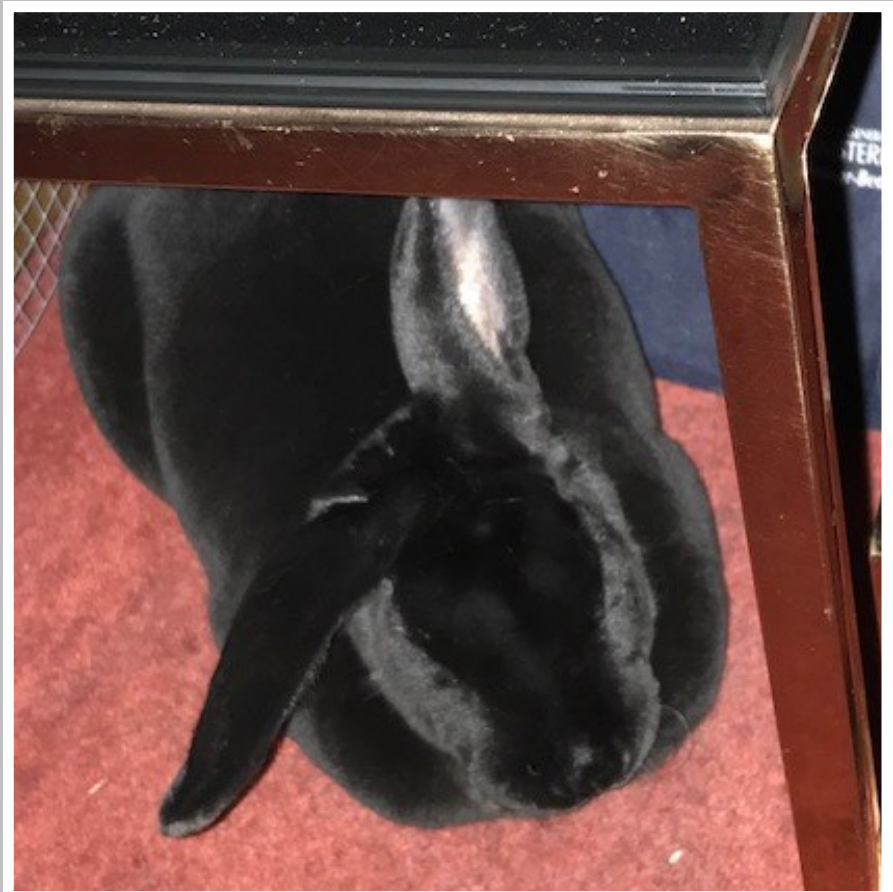
St Mark's community recently raised over **£370 for winter clothing** for those who have previously used the services of **St Catharine's Homeless Project**. Huge thanks to B Jones who coordinated and supported the online giving to the Project.

Sister Aelred, from the Project, sends her thanks to the community for the generous donations. While the Project remains closed at this time, you will be glad to hear that the Convent are working with other service providers who are providing meals and temporary accommodation to the Convent's clients during this time of ongoing pandemic.

Elaine Edwards sent this lovely photo of her rabbit Silas Ebeneza enjoying a recent church service.

Elaine says "It's the first time we've joined the service from our back room so this meant Silas could be out and about with us. I looked down and he was near the screen with one ear up! Hope it makes you smile as it did me."

Yes Elaine, it did!

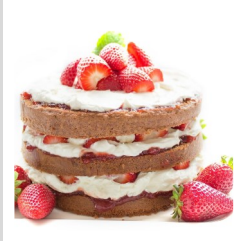


Winter Fayre: an invitation

To brighten the dark days of winter, we're with the idea of holding a 'Winter Fayre' on Zoom, showcasing and sharing the skills, creativity, and positivity held within our community, even at this difficult time.

Here's a few ways you could get involved:

Bake the best cakes? Skilled in flower arranging? Good with DIY? All singing and dancing? How about leading a short 'how to...' class? Teach us!



Maybe you're a provider of complementary therapies? We'd be delighted if you could offer us some Zoom-based tasters.

Gifted in the field of arts? Perhaps you'd like to 'show and tell' us about your paintings, creative writings, craftwork or creations of any kind — we'd love to know more.



Got 'product'? Jewellery, cakes, cosmetics, cards? Perhaps you might like to contribute a 'virtual stall' as part of an online winter marketplace?

These are just a few ideas for starters. We'd very much welcome yours. The fayre will be run on a not-for-profit basis with any donations offered for goods and services going to support the upkeep of our community. To discuss how you could bring your talents to the Fayre contact Eli Roth at eli.roth.personal@gmail.com

Updates on the development of the Fayre will be provided in the weekly e-bulletin.



Friday Night is Quiz Night!

Moira Holmes hosts the next quiz nights on **5 February** and **5 March** at **7pm**.

The Zoom details are:

Meeting ID: 889 0401 6144
Passcode: 938953

An Introduction to Barry Bell...

I was pleased to be invited by Peter to provide a short introduction to myself for inclusion in the Waymark.

I grew up in Kirkcaldy, studied and worked in Edinburgh, and lived and worked in various places in Scotland before settling down as "a Glaswegian by choice".

I have been a member of Glasgow Unitarian Church since 2006, having found Unitarianism in 2005 following a period of spiritual awakening after a moment of clarity. Indeed, I used to describe myself as "a born-again non-Christian" – it was that sort of experience, although I did not take Jesus into my heart in the normal Christian sense. Many here will remember me from the following decade in which I involved myself in the Scottish and UK Unitarian movement with the enthusiasm typical of those excited to have found a new spiritually-inclusive home.

I like to think of myself as being on a late-start journey of spiritual growth (I was 53 in 2005), becoming better able to help others on their journeys as I grow. In 2020 I re-engaged with the Glasgow church as a trustee and with St Mark's through the medium of Zoom, and am now happily looking forward to contributing money and time to both communities.



...and Barrie Peterson

Barrie Peterson from New York State worshipped at St Mark's a few times when he was in Edinburgh in 2019. Although Barrie subsequently returned to USA, he has, for a few months, been attending our services and after-service teas & coffees on Zoom, as well as the Zoom poetry sessions.

Barrie let us know about a virtual chorus concert "Banjos and Bagpipes: Scottish, Scottish-Irish, Irish and Appalachian Music" he was planning for 24 January. At the concert Barrie intended to perform Auld Lang Syne, introducing it as follows:

"Perhaps sung by the most people in the world, Auld Lang Syne translates from Scots to English as 'For old time's sake'. Composed two hundred and thirty years ago by Scotland's National Poet, Robert (Rabbie) Burns, it exudes good cheer, optimism and human solidarity. Celebrating sentiment reminds us to honour friends and experiences of the past. It was the first song our chorus performed in public 20 years ago.

Scots sing it with people in a circle holding hands on New Year's Eve, on Burns' birthday 25 January, and at close of gatherings of all types. With few dry eyes, it binds people regardless of religion, politics or race. The piece spread throughout the British Empire as Scots often were its agents, missionaries, soldiers and colonists. The hospitality of Scots which the song reflects is felt by visitors to the nation of 6 million.

Here's to a cup o' kindness."



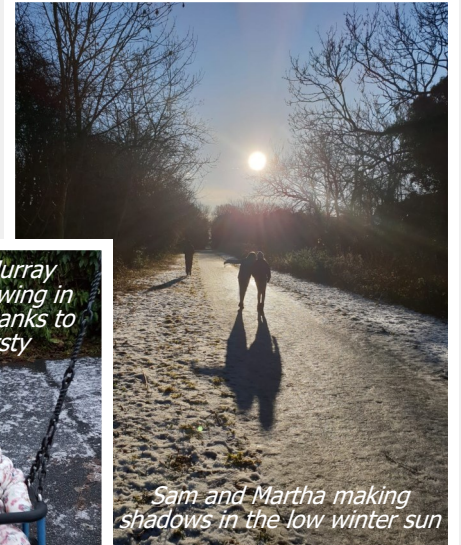
Barrie in McCauley regalia

Children's Corner with Rachael King

Hello and welcome to the Children's Corner!

A huge thanks to our families who contributed so thoughtfully to our Family Christmas service, you brought a smile to all of our faces and a joyful end to a year like no other! We enjoyed beautiful readings, splendid piano playing, a demonstration of festive songs in British Sign Language and snowflake Christmas crafts. Our youngsters once again embraced the online environment with energy and creativity.

2021 arrived with news that we would be home-schooling once again and so our families are busy juggling work, school, and, of course, play! We have been blessed with some proper wintery weather; we hope you enjoy these pictures of our families taking to fresh air as we welcome in a fresh new year.



*Catriona Murray
enjoying a swing in
Inverness thanks to
Mum Kirsty*

*Sam and Martha making
shadows in the low winter sun*



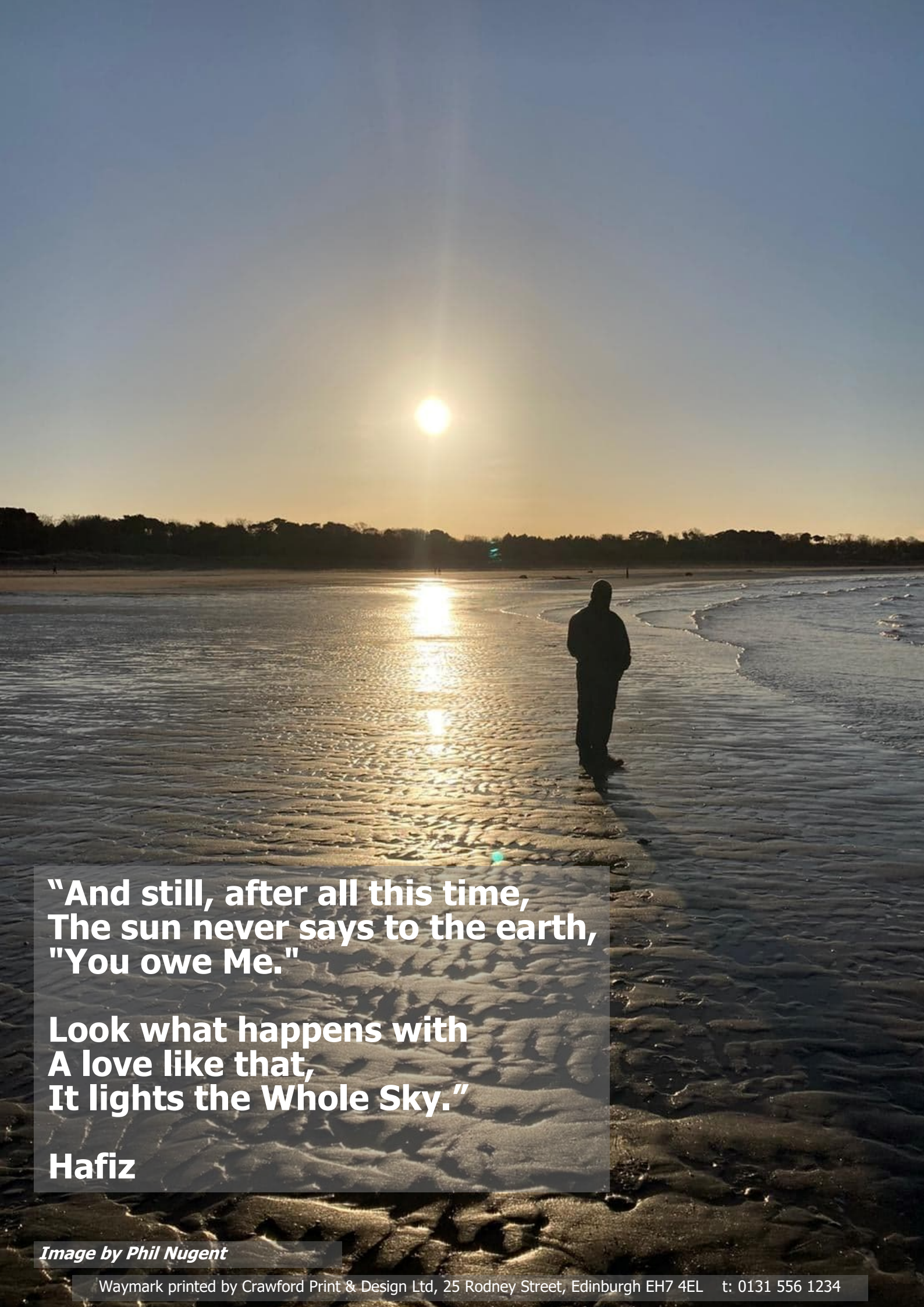
Cora & Leo (with Mum & Dad)



*Aisling, Euan & Tommy enjoying
waffles on Portobello Prom*



Leo, Sam, Martha & Cora with their families enjoying a winter meet-up



**"And still, after all this time,
The sun never says to the earth,
"You owe Me."**

**Look what happens with
A love like that,
It lights the Whole Sky."**

Hafiz

Image by Phil Nugent