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www.augustine.org.uk  
Scottish Charity no. SC000385

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## Sabbatical

*By Rev Fiona Bennett*

In the Hebrew Bible there is a strong concept of a Sabbatical year. This was every seventh year; in various texts it is referred to as a year when ground was to lie fallow and rest, a year when any debts were forgiven, & a year when slaves were released. There is debate amongst scholars as to whether the rest and release of Sabbatical years was put into practice, but the concept of a day of rest has stayed strongly within the Jewish faith in the marking of Sabbath.

Within the URC, Ministers of Word & Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers are offered 3 months of Sabbatical every 7 years of service. Different people use this time in different ways, but at its heart it is a time for renewal and refreshment.

This year will be my 20th year as an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament,

but due to the varied nature of my employment this is the first Sabbatical I have taken. I am very excited about it!

I will be on Sabbatical for the months of April, May & June 2016. During this time I have booked a number of short courses and conferences, both theological and practical. I have given myself space to write up some of the resource material I have been compiling at AUC over the past 7 years, and to work through an interesting pile of theological resources I have gathered. In fact all of the events, the compiling and resources are things which I have been wanting to explore for a while, but have not been able to make the space for...until now.

I feel we are living in a very exciting time theologically and

## Getting involved

Within AUC there are 7 Ministry Teams which are responsible for different areas of Church Life. If you would like to know more or get involved with one of these please e-mail the contact person

### Children & Young People

**Kirsty Murray**

kirsty.murray@ed.ac.uk

### Membership

**Alex Peden**

a.peden@ed.ac.uk

### Our Tribe (LGBTI Ministry)

**Nicola Robinson**

nicola.a.robinson1@gmail.com

### Commitment For Life

#### (Social Justice Ministry)

**Kathleen Ziffo**

secretary@augustine.org.uk

### Pastoral & Mental Health

**Doris Caldwell**

hhfcaldwell@gmail.com

### Worship & Christian

#### Education

**Rev Fiona Bennett**

minister.auc@gmail.com

### Centre, Property & Finance

**Tom Murray**

murray.tom@blueyonder.co.uk

If you would like to get involved volunteering within AUC or the local community:

### AUC Volunteering

**Anne and Nicola Robinson**

rota.auc@gmail.com

### Local Community

#### Volunteering

**Della Morris**

dellagreenlanes@gmail.com

< 1 ecclesiastically. The perpetual dance of all the factors which shape our thinking, our values & our organisations are bringing Christianity (in the Western world at least) to a very interesting place. The Spirit is very hard at work trying to birth new life, and I strongly believe that at Augustine, as we strive to be an ever-evolving inclusive community, we are in the privileged position of witnessing her work. However we are far from alone. There are theologians and communities of faith across the country and the world that are coming to similar conclusions, and I am highly excited in this gift of Sabbatical space to hear and learn more from them. Who will I meet? What ideas will come back to AUC? It is an adventure!

The one other goal which I hope to achieve in my Sabbatical may turn out to be the greatest adventure of all and that is my plan to clear out/tidy up our loft. The Edinburgh charity shops will be bulging!

It may be that during the time I am away the work will have begun on AUC's roof. This is due to the incredible amount of work with Ian Rathjen, Tom and many others have invested to get the grant applications and plans put in place. It is also an amazing achievement by our whole congregational community that we have managed to raise so many funds towards this endeavour.

Sustaining any building demands resources of money and time. Beyond the roof and heritage project there will still be a continued need to replenish and maintain the Fabric Fund – but we can hope that the roof at least will hold for some time! I look forward to seeing all that has happened by the time I return.

During the months of April, May and June, Kathleen has managed to engage a terrific group of people to lead worship at AUC. These include Jenny Williams, Trevor Jamison & Laurence Wareing, along with others. Please read the calendar at the back of Seeds or the website for details, but Trevor & Laurence in particular are leading quite a number of worship services offering both continuity and diversity.

For pastoral care Kathleen and Maxwell are the first ports of call. Their contact details can be found on the front page of Seeds or on the AUC website. Along with them I am very grateful to a bank of ministers within TLC and the URC in Edinburgh who are available for funeral cover, should the need arise (but I hope you all stay healthy!).

Easter Sunday will be my last Sunday leading worship before my Sabbatical starts. I am looking forward to seeing you all again back at AUC in July, (after attending the URC General Assembly in Merseyside on 8-11th) renewed and refreshed.



## ***Dandelion Greens—Your Gifts***

*(Things to chew on from the Membership Ministry Team)*



**A**s we think about Gift Sunday on March 6th and the Augustine Building Challenge (ABC), I would like you to consider three things – none of which involve giving money!

Firstly, I would ask you to look up or Google 1 Corinthians 12:12-17 and consider again Paul's description of the church as being like a body, with each part being both essential and dependent on the others. You may feel your skills are limited, or could play no part in the body that is Augustine United Church, but I would ask you to look again at yourself in a new light. You might be shy, but your ability to notice the emotions of others, both young and old, might be most suited to the pastoral care team (led by Doris Caldwell). You might have an aversion to numbers, yet have skills of reliability and organisation appropriate for the Centre Property and Finance team (led by Tom Murray). You may be driven by wider concerns for the world and society, and those concerns might find a voice in the Commitment for Life team (led by Kathleen Ziffo), or in our interactions with our United Reformed Church through the Scottish Synod (see Kathleen Ziffo).

Secondly, I would like you to realise that there is an urgent and ongoing need for more volunteering and participation in the life of AUC, particularly in the 'hard core' activities of

our church, such as managing our finances, and overseeing bookings in our centre. The ABC group (led by Ian Rathjen) has had the arduous task of securing money from the Heritage Lottery Fund to renovate our roof. This was a very small group of people, with an average age well into the seventh decade. There is clearly an imbalance here that needs to be addressed by thinking about our church as an interdependent body, and asking God to remind us of the skills we each have.

Thirdly, I would like us to give thanks for again for the gift of Augustine United Church, and all those who have got us to where we are today. As a gathered church, with an open mindset, AUC is growing in confidence. We are living out God's message in our city centre, but maintaining our presence here in a 155-year old building is a great challenge. Any part you can play will make a contribution to what is a very important project. If you need more information please contact myself (Alex Peden, Membership team) or any of the coordinators of the other Church Life Ministry Teams. Our email addresses can be found page 2 of Seeds.

**Alex Peden**



### ***Eco-Congregation Scotland Edinburgh Network***

#### ***CoP 21: What Next?***

***Monday 14th March 7.30-9pm  
at St John's Church, Princes St***

**A** talk and discussion led by Adrian Shaw, Climate Change Officer for the Church of Scotland

- ◆ What does the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris (CoP21) mean for churches?
- ◆ What did we achieve and how do we take this forward?



## C4L CLMT Update



### Fairtrade Fortnight

At its most basic level, Fairtrade is about ensuring that producers are paid a fair rate for the goods that they produce. Despite efforts over the years and the fact that Fairtrade products are now easily available in our supermarkets, we can't be complacent. Farmers and producers need our help more than ever. They face more challenges: changes in the world economy, harsher trade rules, the impact of climate change and the rapidly-changing retail landscape. The Fairtrade movement has already achieved a lot, but until every producer is treated fairly there is more to be done.

Fairtrade products now encompass a much greater range than just tea, coffee, bananas and sugar. The One World shop (now at City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, Nicolson Square) sells a wide range of crafts, toys, jewellery, homeware and foods (including Easter Eggs) – you can even now buy Fairtrade wedding rings! What's more, many of their products are more unusual than the normal High Street offerings.

Fairtrade Fortnight is from 29th February this year. Why not take the opportunity to try something new, while supporting small producers everywhere?

Della Morris



### Fairtrade 'Big Brew'

To celebrate Fairtrade fortnight, Anne Mackenzie invites you to a 'Big Brew' on **Monday 7th March**, from **10am-noon** and **2.30-4.30pm**, at her home.\*

Come and enjoy a chat and a fairly-traded cuppa!

*\*(Anne's address is on the noticesheet or available from the church office)*



### AUC Fairtrade Challenge

A little challenge from the C4L team for Fairtrade fortnight:

Can you come up with the most unusual fairly-traded product, or display an advert & photo of it on Sunday 13th March?

A Fairtrade chocolate prize will be awarded to the winner (decided by Joy Godfrey).



Christian Aid week this year runs from 15th-21st May, which gives us all time to turn out our bookshelves and cupboards!

Some of us at Augustine help at the St Andrew's and St George's West annual book sale. This is an ecumenical effort with people coming from all churches (or without church connection) organised by the indefatigable Lady Mary Davidson. Work goes on throughout the year sorting and collecting items for sale. It is not just books which are required – we sell toys, stamps, pictures, vinyl records and DVDs etc.

Friends are always surprised when I tell them how much we raise – last year for instance we raised over £120,000. The money is needed more than ever, and Edinburgh book lovers await each year's sale with keen anticipation!

If anyone has items to donate, please contact me at church.

Della Morris

**BEFORE YOU FINISH  
EATING BREAKFAST  
IN THE MORNING,  
YOU'VE DEPENDED  
ON MORE THAN  
HALF THE WORLD**

*(Martin Luther King Jr, A Christmas sermon on peace, 1967)*



## *Earth Hour*

In the world we live in it can seem like every day is 'Something Day'. The 19th of March is National Clear Your Clutter Day and National Poultry Day. It falls during the Sport Relief Weekend, British Science Week and Nutrition & Hydration Week. The whole of March is dedicated to awareness raising for at least 12 different causes. This can lead to 'Something Day' fatigue, which is why we wanted to draw attention to *Earth Hour*.

Run by WWF (World-Wide Fund for Nature), it is simple and achievable: for one hour on **Saturday 19th March at 8:30pm** take some small action to tackle climate change. The most common way people celebrate is simply by turning lights and non-essential appliances off and spending the hour, perhaps, reading by candlelight or stargazing outdoors.

If you spend Earth Hour outside, you'll notice that a number of Edinburgh's familiar landmarks will be in darkness! If you want you can be more adventurous, maybe hosting a candlelit dinner (bonus points if you make dinner without using your gas or electricity 😊!) but the concept is designed to be simple – just switch off!

Eilidh Carmichael

## *Haggis Heroines—Behind the Scenes at Burns Lunch*



### *(1) Perfect Burns Lunch Pots*

Della and Zandra have everything in order on the huge stove (that only they can operate!)



### *(3) All that was left...*

Well, everyone gaily consumed large quantities of offal and orangey mash...and all that came back to the kitchen was a few crumbs



### *(2) Haggis Heroines inspect giant Haggis*

The incredibly large stove emitted alarming pops and explosions. I though perhaps it was my mismanagement of the gas knobs—but it was just the expanding haggis skins.

Thank goodness the experts were on hand!

### *(4) Dirty Pots and more...*



Della and Zandra are then left with the giant pots and lots of oatmeal crumbs. They direct their elf helpers upstairs and downstairs.

They sook bottles of Irn Bru—it gives them the stamina to carry on and finish the job...

...and they do this every year!

**Lindsay Macdonald (one of the elves)**

## *Our Tribe in March*

On Saturday 26th March, the Saturday of Holy Week, we are hosting an evening of art and reflection. We are delighted that Rev Jenny Williams will be facilitating the gathering.

As at every Our Tribe gathering, there will be an opportunity to share communion.

***All Welcome!***



### *Helplines:*

LGBT Support: 0300 123 2523

Samaritans: 116 123

Childline: 0800 1111

Silver Line: 0800 4 70 80 90

Rape Crisis: 8088 010 302

Breathing Space: 0800 838587

Edinburgh Crisis Centre: 0808 8010414



## *January Our Tribe— Praise and Worship*

Towards the end of January, Our Tribe gathered together for a different kind of experience.

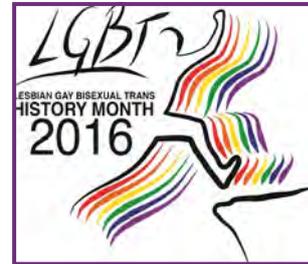
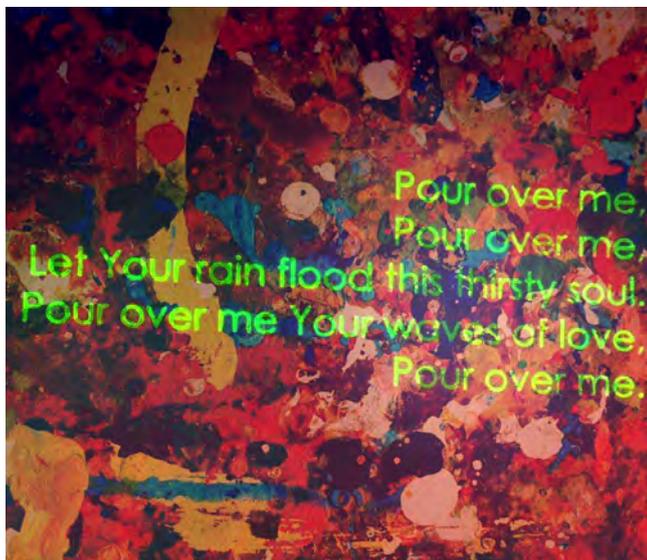
The wonderfully talented Karl Macrae led us in an evening of worship and praise as we resurrected some older, alongside contemporary songs and hymns.

I joined Karl on the cajón (box drum), but I'll leave it to those who attended to decide whether 'wonderfully' and 'talented' should make the cut!

As Susan and Jonathan administered communion and Karl played in the background—a wave of peaceful reflection washed over us. It was beautiful.

We were very glad to be able to welcome around 20 people—some for the first time.

**Christine Rarity-Middleton**



During LGBTI history month there was a weekend of celebration and fun at Our Tribe and Augustine United Church. Over 100 people, including friends from Northern Lights MCC Newcastle, joined in the activities of our Saturday night Our Tribe celebration and the Sunday morning worship service.

Rev Elder Ines Paul Bauman (from MCC Koln) and Rev Elder Cecilia Eggleston (from Northern Lights MCC) joined with us to celebrate this joint ministry of MCC and AUC.

It was a truly blessed weekend.

**Rev Maxwell Reay**





## ABC Update



### The Next Phase

Following a month or more of feverish activity on the part of many members of the Development Steering Group\*, at the end of February we were finally able to submit our bid for the main part of the Heritage Lottery Fund Grant. If and when it is approved, this will enable us to carry out the ambitious plans which we have for Augustine, (provided, of course that your donations and fundraising for the ABC Fund continue at the same generous level during the coming year).

As it is so long (nearly a year) since we were awarded a provisional grant, here is a reminder of what we are planning:

There are two distinct projects although both are closely linked. The main aim is to encourage more visitors to Augustine by providing a watertight and safe environment for them to enjoy the facilities and to learn more about our heritage. To achieve this we have first to completely re-slate our leaky roof and repair several parts of the roof area – this is the most expensive part of the project. With the building watertight and safe we are also going to renew the insulation above the false ceiling of the Sanctuary – saving on heating costs and making the place warmer.

Then we turn our attention to making available, to many more visitors, the impressive results of the research work carried out by Laurence Wareing and Nicola Robinson. An audio-visual production will be based on this work and will run on screens in the foyer; these will be accessible to passing visitors as well as to all those using the premises. The film will be backed up with free leaflets, and an illustrated booklet will be available for purchase. The ageing electronic equipment will be upgraded with new projectors, speakers and microphones – all of which are increasingly in demand by those organisations which hire our

premises. Open days are planned when visitors will be shown round the premises and told more about our rich history. We have some volunteers already, but we are still looking for more people who would be willing, from next autumn, to be trained as guides for these open days.

### The Calm Before the Storm

It is perhaps only fair to warn that all this work will not be carried out without disruption and inconvenience to all who come to Augustine.

Exterior scaffolding will hopefully not be too disruptive, but building noise during the week and the erection of interior scaffolding across the whole of the Sanctuary (to carry protection from dust and debris) will have some effect. It is hoped to finish the roofing and insulation work before the building is taken over for the Festival Fringe in August. Then, when the Fringe departs, the new equipment will be installed and tested. Again there will be some disruption when new cables are put in and screens installed.

Everything possible will be done to keep disruption to an acceptable level and we hope that by the autumn, the benefits will be seen by everyone as having been worth the effort.

Ian Rathjen

\*(To give an idea of workload the application amounted to about 13,000 words. Anyone who's ever faced writing up a dissertation will appreciate the enormity of that task! Ed.)



## Getting To Know You



**M**y name is...Karl Macrae

**I spend my time...** working, socialising and enjoying time with my beautiful cat, Stein. I work as an Education

Consultant in Music, specifically for children with visual impairments, additional support needs and severe and complex disabilities. I am very passionate about my work and if you start talking to me about it, you'll never get me to stop! I'm most happy at my work as well as with my friends and family having the odd glass of prosecco (or two!).

**My favourite place...**is my home. I love my flat. When I have free time, I go to art classes, mostly working in mixed media. Over the years, I have created a number of pieces of art that adorn my walls. I also like to support local artists and you can find some interesting pieces hanging

on the walls in my flat. I find my home a very calming place to be, where time spent listening to the radio and pottering in the garden is always a positive experience. One of my favourite things to do is to put a washing on and hanging it out to dry – especially in the spring!

**My favourite hymn...** This is a difficult one for me, especially being a musician. If I was to be pushed, it would be 'This is the Air I Breathe'. I love the chords that I get to play on the piano when playing this hymn. They can be very luscious. The words also strike me as being so true:

"This is the air I breathe  
This is the air I breathe  
Your holy presence living in me."

I am so blessed to have music as part of my life, which I believe has been my calling to worshipping God.

## Pastoral Care

If you have prayer requests or would like to contact a minister, please contact:

Rev Fiona Bennett (minister.auc@gmail.com)

Rev Maxwell Reay (revmaxwell.auc@gmail.com)

Requests can also be made via the Prayer Requests box in the porch (kept locked, accessed by the ministers) or via the Church Office.

If you would like support due to a mental health issue, you would be welcome at the Mental Health Drop-in, held weekly on Tuesdays 10.30am-Noon in the Sanctuary (followed by a Time for Reflection). This is hosted by AUC and run by the NHS Lothian Spiritual Care team. Further details are available on the 'Tenants and Room Users' noticeboard, or speak to Maxwell.

(Full contact details for Fiona/Maxwell are on the cover of Seeds)

## March: Journey to Jerusalem

Junior Church are focussing on the theme of 'Journey to Jerusalem' this month. Lent is a time of journeying towards Easter.

We will:

- ◆ Learn some songs about journeying;
- ◆ Hear a Godly Play story called 'The Good Shepherd and World Communion' and share a Feast together afterwards;
- ◆ Share in an All-Age Service on Passion Sunday – we will journey from the noise of Palm Sunday to the quiet of the Tomb;
- ◆ Take part in some fun Easter activities including an Easter Egg hunt and active games on Easter Sunday!



"This is the table of the Good Shepherd... Sometimes the people of the world come to this table, and...even the children come."

(Image from [www.godlyplayresources.com](http://www.godlyplayresources.com); Words from 'The Good Shepherd and World Communion' The Complete Guide to Godly Play Volume 4.)

Questions for you to think about:

- ◆ I wonder where the table could really be?
- ◆ I wonder if the people are happy around this table?
- ◆ I wonder if you have ever come close to the bread and the wine?



**Happy Birthday to...**  
**Rachel who will be 14 on 20th March**

Junior Church welcomes families in all their diversity, specifically inclusive of members of LGBT families. We have varied activities each week, from storytelling, to crafts, games and video making. We have a crèche for little ones and baby changing facilities are available. We use materials to appeal to children's different learning styles following the Cornerstones curriculum and also use Godly Play ([www.godlyplay.org.uk](http://www.godlyplay.org.uk)).



I WONDER

# Calendar (cont'd)

Season of Easter		
Sunday 27th	10am	Easter Egg Hunt (Egg rolls available)
	11am	Easter Day Worship with Communion
Monday 28th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Annual General Meeting (Close of Session)
<b>April 2016</b>		
Saturday 2nd	2-4pm	Augustine Assignments (see p.11)
Sunday 3rd	11am	Morning Worship with Communion. Led by Rev Jenny Williams
	12.30pm	Church Discussion Meeting – "Funeral Poverty" led by Nicola Robinson
Tuesday 5th	7.30pm	Elders Meeting in the Library
Sunday 10th	11am	Morning Worship. Led by Rev Jenny Williams
Tuesday 12th	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study: Ezekiel 37 "New Life"

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## WELCOME TO AUGUSTINE ASSIGNMENTS

This dynamic new youth group (for 11-18 year olds) is holding its first meeting on:

*Saturday 6th March 2-4pm at AUC*

with subsequent meetings on the 1st Saturday of the month—  
April 2nd, May 7th and June 4th.

You'll get the chance to try out various art assignment activities ([www.theartassignment.com](http://www.theartassignment.com))

During the first four sessions we'll explore:

- ◆ recycling old clothes
- ◆ making a rug
- ◆ discussing online ethics and communities
- ◆ and so much more!



We will be challenging ourselves to tasks that are not about our individual performance, but instead about building up community and discovering where assignments that use everyone's strengths can take us.

*Do come along, and help us to decide what assignments to try next!*

To find out more, please contact one of the facilitators:

Elizabeth Bay ([elizabeth.r.b.b@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.r.b.b@gmail.com)) or  
Nicola Robinson ([nicola.a.robinson1@gmail.com](mailto:nicola.a.robinson1@gmail.com))

# Calendar

AUC Worship Services at 11am on Sundays at AUC,  
George IV Bridge.

(All events at AUC, unless otherwise stated. Later  
updates on website/notice sheet)

March 2016		Season of Lent
Monday 29th February – Sunday 13th March		Fairtrade Fortnight
Tuesday 1st	7.30pm	Elders Meeting in the Library
Wednesday 2nd	7.30pm	TLC Lent Course: "Mission Impossible? Being Church in a Secular World" (2/4). In the Library
Friday 4th	2.30pm	World Day of Prayer. Our local church service is at Craigmillar Park Church
Saturday 5th	2-4pm	Augustine Assignments (see p.11)
Sunday 6th	10am	ABC Gift Day. Our Minister and Treasurer will be available to receive donations for the ABC Roof Fund. Bacon Rolls available
	11am	Morning Worship with Communion
	12.30pm	Church Business Meeting
	5-8pm	Nitekirk: "Remembering our Connections" at Greyfriars Kirk
Monday 7th	10am-Noon 2.30-4.30pm	Fairtrade "Big Brew" at Anne MacKenzie's home (see p.4)
	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Footcare – Anna Sibbald
	7.30pm	"Exploring Church Membership" (1/3) – Belonging to Christ's Church
Tuesday 8th	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study: John 12 "Costly Gift"
Wednesday 9th	7pm	"Welcome One Another in Love" – Sarah Agnew presents a storytelling performance of Romans at Scottish Storytelling Centre
	7.30pm	TLC Lent Course: "Mission Impossible? Being Church in a Secular World" (3/4). In the Junior Room
Friday 11th – Sunday 13th		URC Synod of Scotland meeting. Youth Synod and Young Adult Synod at Tulliallan, Kincardine
Sunday 13th	11am	Morning Worship. Led by Rev John Miller
		ABC fundraising Bring and Buy Sale. Display of Fairtrade products and result of Fairtrade challenge
Monday 14th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Bring and Buy Sale
	7.30pm	"Exploring Church Membership" (2/3) – Belonging to the URC
	7.30pm	Eco-Congregation Scotland Edinburgh Network meeting at St John's, Princes Street (see p.6)
Tuesday 15th	7.30pm	Spirituality Book Group: Inclusive Church – Poverty (1)
Thursday 17th	7.30pm	TLC Lent Course: "Mission Impossible? Being Church in a Secular World" (4/4). In the Junior Room
Sunday 20th	11am	Passion Sunday. All-Age Worship with Communion
	7-8pm	Refugio at Greyfriars Kirk
		Holy Week
Monday 21st – Thursday 24th	8am	Communion service at St Columba's by the Castle (followed by coffee/rolls)
Monday 21st	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Home Security – Police Scotland
	7.30pm	"Exploring Church Membership" (3/3) – Belonging to the AUC
Tuesday 22nd	7.30pm	Coffee, Cake and Conversation
Thursday 24th	1.30pm	Coffee, Cake and Conversation
	7.30pm	Maundy Thursday Communion service at Greyfriars Kirk
Friday 25th	12-3pm	Good Friday Reflection at St Columba's by the Castle (Come and go as wish)
	9pm	Tenebrae Service at Greyfriars Kirk
Saturday 26th	6.45 for 7pm	Our Tribe – "Art and Reflection" with Rev Jenny Williams

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Please note that the deadline for material for the next issue is Friday 25th March 2016 (Good Friday).

You can send your material to Tamsin Kilgour by hand, at [newsletter.auc@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.auc@gmail.com) or via the church office.

*DISCLAIMER: Although we check all information in the newsletter, as ever with these things we can give no warranties as to accuracy or relevance and encourage active checking before you make any decisions. The views expressed in our newsletter are those of the individual contributor, they are not necessarily those of AUC or the editor.*