

Augustine
United Church

Seeds

encourage | inspire | challenge | No. 65 | April & May 2017

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In this edition

2. Daily Devotions from the URC
3. Report from Synod
4. Getting to Know You
5. Members' and Friends' News
6. Upcoming Events
7. Our Tribe and the Big Brew
8. Past Case Review
9. Christian Aid Week
10. Seedlings
11. Calendar

Hope, By Rev Fiona Bennett

Each Easter we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. We celebrate that Christ has died, Christ is risen and Christ will come again, but what difference does this make to our daily lives? The short answer, for me, is Hope.

In Holy Week and through the season of Easter we are reminded that even in the midst of grief, betrayal, brutalisation, oppression and injustice, God never leaves us, is right with us in the thick of it, and that planted deep in the midst of pain (which we never wish to experience) are seeds of new life.

These seeds may not grow into what we want (often the violence does not stop, the illness does not go away, the grief continues to surge) but nevertheless they can and do grow and something new is born from the old.

Following the way of Jesus is learning to be open to, and perceiving, the new growth in ways and forms which we could not predict, and

allowing ourselves to honour, embrace and celebrate that new life wherever we find it.

Just as in the story leading up to the cross, as individuals and as global communities, we find ourselves today in many situations which are fearful. Ill-health, grief, poverty, discrimination, exhaustion, uncertainty about our own future, uncertainty for the future of those we care for, the health of many across the world and our very planet can create a fog of despair.

Jesus invites us to trust that even when we cannot see or feel it, God is alongside us, with us, nurturing new life from the very seeds of suffering and fear. This is a transforming Hope which we can carry even into the darkest times and places, this Easter time and at all times.

I leave you with an Easter invitation in the words of the hymn writer Alan Gaunt:

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

Peace & Justice

(Commitment for Life)

Harriet Davidson

harrietdavidson@hotmail.com

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

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"Come living God when least expected, when minds are dull and hearts are cold,

Through sharpening words and warm affection revealing truths as yet untold.

Break from the tomb in which we hide you to speak again in startling ways;

Break through the words in which we bind you to resurrect our lifeless praise.

Then, through our gloom, your Son will meet us as vivid truth and living Lord,

Exploding doubt and disillusion to scatter hope and joy abroad."

Extracts from CH4 609 Licence: CLLI 1133487

Daily Devotions from the URC



Every morning a reading, reflection, and prayer is sent out by email from the URC. They are written by a team of around 100 people from different places and perspectives and provide inspiration in our inboxes! The devotions are designed to help enrich our discipleship and, whilst designed for personal use, have also been found helpful for Bible Study groups, service preparation and devotions at the start of meetings. You can read them all by going to <http://devotions.urb.org.uk> where you can also sign up to receive them yourself using the link on the bottom left of the screen.

Andy Braunston, Co-ordinator URC Daily Devotions Project

(I've been receiving the emails for the last few weeks now and thoroughly enjoying them. There was even one recently from an familiar face at AUC! ~Ed.)

Report from Synod: Karl Macrae

Synod, a weekend of deep reflection. A time to bring together our congregations and our ecumenical partners to help us shape our future path in God's light.

This was my 2nd residential synod weekend and it was as informative and challenging as the first. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting, discussing and debating which path God would like us to take.

There were the usual mundane tasks to get through as at any meeting of an organisation, and I'd love to say I'm enthralled by them, but the truth is, I'm not. These are dealt with quickly and efficiently which meant we could move on to the interesting stuff!

And interesting it did become. I really enjoyed the workshops I attended in 2016 and this year's didn't disappoint either!

Francis Brien, the URC's Deputy General Secretary, gave as a very thoughtful introductory session on Walking the Way - Living the Life, challenging us to think: what would Jesus do? Which direction would Jesus choose? Needless to say, it's always the path less trodden; the one that challenges our thinking and preconceptions - something that I personally love to do. If there's a glimpse of a path that's been unexplored, I'd like to think I would be with the crowd that is willing to explore it and make it clearer for others to follow.

A very interesting workshop in Building Interfaith Relations and Safer Communities in Scotland, was led by Chief Inspector Shaheen Baber. Unfortunately I don't have the information to the 2011 population census to hand, but I was very surprised by the minority faiths in Scotland. Discussions were of course very much centred around 'terrorism' and its impact on society. The word terrorism only seems to apply to those of the Muslim faiths, which in turn creates tension between communities. This is such a dangerous path that we tread in creating

division. Our media and politicians need to step back and start uniting our communities, not dividing and creating fear through the use of inflammatory language. Shaheed Baber did end on a very positive note by saying that Scotland is probably the most forward-thinking country when it comes to interfaith relations, resulting a safer and happier country.

This year's youth representation was extremely impressive. As we worry about the future of our congregations within our churches, we need to look towards our youth—who are our future. They have wonderful suggestions for the way forward which we mustn't pay lip service to. As a result of their hard work over the weekend, they've decided to abandon the Youth and Young Adults forum and instead work within a Youth Executive framework, giving them more control over how they shape the way forward. An exciting and interesting prospect!

Of course, no weekend would be complete without a social gathering on the Saturday night. The organisation of this was left to me...interesting! We (sorry, me) decided that we'd have a ceilidh, inviting people to come up and have a "turn" in whatever way they fancied. The evening was full of dances, tunes, poems and a quiz. My worst nightmare is a quiz, and here I was, responsible for cobbling one together! With faith in the internet, I had 4 rounds of questions that I hoped and prayed would work out. Put it this way, in one round I'm pretty sure I had to give at least 50% of the points to all the teams because of the inaccuracy of some of the questions, oops!

On Sunday we celebrated Holy Communion lead by our Moderator, David Pickering. A beautiful service that tied up our theme for the weekend, Feasts and Festivals, Walking the Way - Living the Life.

Of course, so much more happened over the weekend. Here I have written about particular highlights for myself. I already look forward to next year's residential synod.

Getting To Know You

My name is... Matt Baines, known as Matt.

I spend my time... working for Crossreach with adults who have learning disabilities. I've been doing this for over five years now and before that I worked with children and teenagers in various settings, including churches and schools. When I'm not at work I can usually be found out and about on my bike, or at the cinema, or in the library reading, or taking dance lessons at Dancebase (I've just moved up from Absolute Beginners Ballet to Beginners Ballet!) or helping my wife, Karolina, with her new business or... You know what? If you need to find me you're probably best texting me!

At the moment though I'm struggling with vertigo and having to take things a wee bit slower... I'm still trying to use my time fruitfully, but with a higher quotient of relaxing strolls, reading, and reflecting on where I am going in life. I'm 35 but still trying to work out how best to make a contribution in this world. There are so many things that I'm interested in and that I could do, but where should my focus be?



My favourite place... is the area surrounding my wife's home village in Poland, especially in the summer. I love taking a cycle around the village or lying in the grass and watching dragonflies overhead or discovering whopping great big snails! I suppose it reminds me of the summers of my childhood in North Yorkshire—only hotter! I also have many fond memories of times spent there with our nephews and niece. They have a baby brother now who we have yet to meet in person. Hopefully we will get to see them this summer!

My favourite hymn... well, I'm not sure I have a favourite hymn right now. I do like songs which speak of God's heart for the vulnerable or the outsider. So hymns like Graham Kendrick's 'Father of the Fatherless' and 'God of the Poor' really resonate with me, especially at those times when I have felt like an outsider. Then 'When I Needed a Neighbour' and 'Make Me A Channel of Your Peace' are always wonderful reminders of the part we can play in God's healing for the world.

I'm currently trying to make a difference through a sponsored Lenten fast of caffeine. That's right—42 days without coffee or tea! They may make me resign my British citizenship! You can sponsor me at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/matts-caffeine-free-lent and follow me for updates on:

- **Instagram:** /kurtybaines08
- **Twitter:** @RIPMattB (Don't worry it's just my handle; I am fairly optimistic about my chances!)
- **Facebook:** /mbaines81

Not A Goodbye, But 'See You Soon'



It was with slightly heavy hearts and a few tears that AUC said goodbye to our own dear Lorna Bowry in March.

However, what joy it's brought to see updates from the US, like this picture of Lorna's first Sunday with wife Becca's congregation!



...And A Welcome Back!

A little birdie tells us that Carolyn Thornton, who some members may remember, is returning from two years in Australia this April.

We hope to have the opportunity soon to welcome her back in person.



Congratulations: Jo Clifford



Augustine's own Jo Clifford (top row, third from the left) was inducted by Saltire Society as one of their Outstanding Women of Scotland, alongside the likes of journalist Joyce McMillan, Professor Dame Sue Black and Co-Founder of the Glasgow Girls, Roza Shalih. The event is in its third year running and obviously we couldn't agree more with their excellent decision! Many congrats, Jo.

Quiz Night!



Duke Street URC (108 Duke Street, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 8HL) are hosting a Quiz Night on Wednesday 12th April at 7.30pm.

It's £5 to enter with a table of four or five individuals and the money raised is going to Scottish Churches Housing Action.

Light refreshments will be provided.

**Scottish Churches
Housing Action**



no room for homelessness!

“Stations on the Road to Freedom”

A four week course exploring Dietrich Bonhoeffer - his life, theology, poetry and relevance for today.

St Columba's by the Castle,
14 Johnston Terrace, EH1 2PW

Thursdays 7.30-9.00pm

27th April, 4th, 11th and 18th May

If you would like to go along please email:

d.patonwilliams@gmail.com



Ways of Praying Course

Have you ever considered that there might be a wide variety of prayer methods? This 4 week course draws on Christian traditions and Eastern Spirituality.

Sundays 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th June

5-6.30pm at Augustine

Course Content

Week 1: Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina (Benedictine)

Week 2: Imaginative Contemplation (Jesuit)

Week 3: Daily Examen (Jesuit)

Week 4: Music and Mandala (Eastern Spirituality)

To find out more or to register for Ways of Praying, please contact one of the facilitators:

Rev Fiona Bennett

minister.auc@gmail.com

Dr Nicola Robinson

nicola.a.robinson1@gmail.com

Places are limited, please register as soon as possible and **not later than 15th May 2017.**



The theme of the last Our Tribe was Supporting Earth Hour, which coincided with our meeting on March 25th.

We saw a short video from the Climate Reality Project which highlighted the effects of global warming in three areas of the world:

- 1) was parts of Brazil where flooding has occurred;
- 2) was parts of Belize where the coral is dying due to the rise in sea temperature; and
- 3) was in Bolivia, where people rely on water from a mountain glacier to drink and water crops. 70% of their water has disappeared and there is not enough to drink and quench crops.

During the hour we were asked to switch off lights and electrical appliances. We made biodegradable plates and ate from them by candlelight.

The same weekend M.C.C. were holding a National Weekend of Prayer for Transgender Justice in which we remembered Transgender Folk and the struggles faced in some parts of the world. Quite and full and busy evening.

Stephen Hoare

Big Brew Reports Back

The 'Big Brew', which celebrated Fairtrade Fortnight was an opportunity for a chat and to enjoy a fairly traded cuppa. More than thirty friends shared in the event including my Member of Parliament!

It was not an event for fundraising but to raise awareness of fairly traded goods available locally (see the picture!). However, folk were very generous and I was able to send £124.70 to Traidcraft Exchange. This will be used to help change the future of some of the world's poorest families.

Elizabeth Rathjen 'Caught the Chicken' and received a small box of fairly traded goodies.



Edinburgh's 'Fair Trade City' status was renewed on March 1st at an event in Stenhouse Primary School where one of the benefitting producers from South India was present. But in order to maintain this status we need to be constantly vigilant, purchasing Fairtrade wherever possible and asking questions of retailers if they do not have the Fairtrade goods we need. Hope to see you at next year's 'Big Brew'!

Anne MacKenzie

A Message from the URC Past Case Review

We have all made mistakes and we want to learn from those mistakes.

People have been hurt by bullying or abuse in churches in the past. Things went wrong and people may be carrying the hurt inside them. We want to learn from the past and do better in the future. The Past Case Review is a way for the United Reformed Church to listen and to learn.

We truly want to hear about any behaviour which may need challenging, or if you have been hurt in the past by anyone in the United Reformed Church.

If anyone who has had any connection with your church wishes to share something that has happened to them within any United Reformed Church, we would ask them to get in touch with the Past Case Review team.

We want our churches to be safer places, where people can grow without fear.

The deadline for contacting the review has been extended until 30th June 2017

Telephone: 020 7916 8682

Website: www.urc.org.uk/past-case-review

Email: pastcase.review@urc.org.uk

Pastoral Care

*“...bearing with one another in love...”
(Ephesians 4:2)*

At AUC, we aim to provide a web of care which promotes growth in relationships and good spiritual/mental health, through both informal and formal contacts.

If you are looking for individual support please contact a minister:

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

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

As well as offering 1:1 support in the setting which is most appropriate for you, they can link you with the pastoral visiting team which offers regular support to the housebound.

Prayer requests are welcomed. They can be shared with the ministers either directly or via Rachel in 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-12pm 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 and the office are on the cover of Seeds)



Justice & Peace (C for L) Update— Christian Aid Week



Christian Aid Week (Sunday 14th—Saturday 20th May) was set up to support refugees in Europe following the

Second World War. 60 years on and tens of millions of people worldwide still find themselves forced to flee conflict and disaster, making perilous journeys in search of safety.

Everyone should have a safe place to call home. Imagine facing these choices - to leave everything you know behind? To risk your children's lives in a plastic dinghy on the open seas? To face the indignities of a refugee camp or the horrors of war - terror, bombs and bullets? These stark choices are all too real for all too many.

With millions around the world displaced from their homes by war, conflict and disaster, there has never been a more important time for Christian Aid to be able to offer life-changing assistance. Unfortunately at the end of 2016 the charity faced a £1.5m shortfall in expected income, making it difficult to continue to honour some of their vital projects.

We will be marking Christian Aid Week with worship and a collection on Sunday 14th May.

Please do consider making a donation, however small it may seem - just think of the collective power of our ABC penny pots! Let us all seek to play our part to help relieve suffering and build a world where everyone has a safe place to call home.

Harriet Davidson

Christian Aid Book Sale

The Christian Aid Book Sales will no doubt be familiar to many Seeds readers. The festivities get underway on Saturday 13th May when doors to this year's three sales begin at St Andrew's & St George's West on George St, Morningside United Church and, for the first year, the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church. Opening times vary at each of the three venues but the last option in the week to pick up a bargain will be at Holy Corner on Saturday 20th. The other two sales finish on the Friday.

All three locations are taking donations in the run up to the events, see <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/scotland/latest-news/book-sales.aspx> for more details.

And, of course, mark the week in your calendar for a visit. I'm confident you won't regret it!



Helplines:

Trauma Counselling Line Scotland: 08088 02 04 06 (M-W 5-8pm; Th-F 9am-2pm; 24/7 answerphone; www.survivorscotland.org.uk)

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

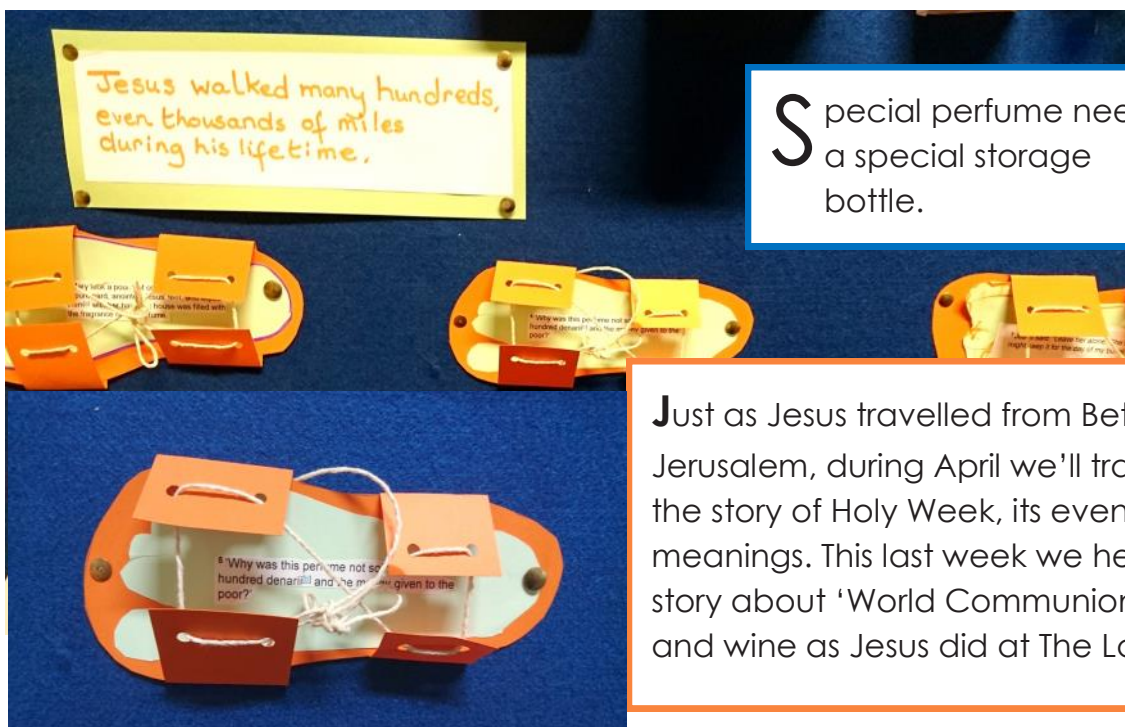
Edinburgh Crisis Centre: 0808 8010414

April: Symbols of Holy Week

During the first part of Lent we've been learning about Mary of Bethany and her anointing Jesus' feet with the costly perfume nard. The next day Jesus travelled from Bethany to Jerusalem, arriving on Palm Sunday.



Special perfume needs a special storage bottle.



Just as Jesus travelled from Bethany to Jerusalem, during April we'll travel on through the story of Holy Week, its events and their meanings. This last week we heard a Godly Play story about 'World Communion', sharing bread and wine as Jesus did at The Last Supper.

On Palm/Passion Sunday (9th April) we'll be joining the rest of our church family for all-age worship. Josh (from Augustine Assignments) will talk to our minister Fiona about engaging/involving youth in the church.



During Lent's 'Time for All Ages' we've been lighting candles and thinking about Christian Aid's **'Count Your Blessings'** Lent Calendar. Have you seen the children's version on our noticeboard? At the start of April it covers 'Journeys' and 'Safer Homes'.



Happy Birthday to
two of our songbirds...

Ellie will be 7 on 15th April
and Rowan will be 9 on 22nd April

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)

April		Season of Lent
Sunday 2nd	10am	Communion Music Practice
	11am	Morning Worship with Communion, led by Rev Sarah Agnew
Tuesday 4th	12.30-2pm	Spiritual Discussion Group on 'The Journey to Easter: Forgiveness'
Friday 7th	10am	Walk & Talk, meeting at AUC for a two-mile walk over a few hours ending at a café
Sunday 9th	11am	Passion Sunday All-Age Morning Worship
	12.30pm	Church Meeting on Christian Aid
		Holy Week
Monday 10th – Friday 14th	8am	Morning Service at St Columba's by the Castle
Tuesday 11th	12.30-2pm	Spiritual Discussion Group on 'The Journey to Easter: Struggle'
	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study on Micah 6:1-8 'What is Good?'
Wednesday 12th	7.30pm	Quiz Night for Scottish Churches Housing Action at Duke Street URC (see p.6)
Thursday 13th	7.30pm	Maundy Thursday Service at St Columba's by the Castle
Friday 14th	10am	Walk & Talk, meeting at AUC for a two-mile walk over a few hours ending at a café
	12-3pm	Good Friday Three Hours' Reflection
	9pm	Good Friday Tenebrae Service in Greyfriars
Saturday 15th	2-4pm	Augustine Assignments (Youth Group)
		Season of Easter
Sunday 16th	10am	Pre-service egg rolls and egg hunt
	10am	Communion Music Practice
	11am	Easter Sunday Morning Worship with Communion
Tuesday 18th	12.30-2pm	Spiritual Discussion Group on 'The Journey to Easter: Transformation'
	7.30pm	Spirituality Book Group
Friday 21st	10am	Walk & Talk, meeting at AUC for a two-mile walk over a few hours ending at a café
Saturday 22nd	10.30am-3.30pm	Eco-Congregation AGM & Workshop at Burnside Blairbeth Church of Scotland in Glasgow
Sunday 23rd	11am	Morning Worship
Tuesday 25th	7.30-9pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation
Thursday 27th	1.30-3pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation
Friday 28th	10am	Walk & Talk, meeting at AUC for a two-mile walk over a few hours ending at a café
Saturday 29th	6.45pm for 7-9pm	Our Tribe: Human Library
Sunday 30th	11am	Morning Worship
	12.30pm	Church Lunch
cont. overleaf		

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)

cont. from overleaf

May

Monday 1 st	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC: Bring and Buy Sale with Tea
Sunday 7 th	10am	Communion Music Practice
	11am	Morning Worship with Communion
	12.45pm	Church AGM & Business Meeting
Tuesday 9 th	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study on Romans 8: 1-11 'Life in the Spirit'
Sunday 14 th	11am	Morning Worship for Christian Aid Sunday, with Rev David Paton-Williams (see p.9)
Tuesday 16 th	7.30pm	Spirituality Book Group
Saturday 20 th	2-4pm	Augustine Assignments (Youth Group)
Sunday 21 st	11am	Morning Worship with Communion
Tuesday 23 rd	7.30-9pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation
Thursday 25 th	1.30-3pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation
Saturday 27 th	6.45pm for 7-9pm	Our Tribe: Musical Workshop
Sunday 28 th	11am	Morning Worship
	12.30pm	Church Lunch
June		Season of Pentecost
Saturday 3 rd	2-4pm	Augustine Assignments (Youth Group)
	2-5pm	Public Speaking Skills for Leading Worship, led by Rev Sarah Agnew
Sunday 4 th	11am	Joint TLC Morning Worship and Communion at Greyfriars
	12.30pm	Post-Service Refreshments at AUC
	6.30-8pm	Ways of Praying, led by Rev Fiona Bennett and Dr Nicola Robinson (see p.6)

Please note that the deadline for material for the June issue is Friday 26th May.

You can send your material to 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.