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The
United
Reformed
Church

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The Gift of the Present, By Rev Fiona Bennett

Many years ago, I participated in a workshop which explored spirituality and clowning. At the heart of this workshop was an awareness that awakening to the present moment brings a great gift.

When children play, often they are not concerned about the future or the past, but are fully engaged in the present game.

It does not take long until many of us close down to the present moment and spend our lives worried about the future or tortured by the past.

The clowning workshop was an opportunity to be fully present and savour the now through unpredictable play, because in truth the now is the only time we have.

This thinking was not an invitation to the hedonism of "eat drink be merry for tomorrow we die"; it was an invitation to be aware that much of the guilt, shame and

anxiety we carry is about how we imagine the past or future to have been/will be, and it can be so consuming that we miss out on savouring the now: the gift of breath which is keeping me alive; the smooth touch of the computer key; the 100s of shade of green in a park; the pleasing curve in the shape of a lamp; the brief smile of a stranger; clowning about with strangers who become friends. Each moment of life contains a treasury of gifts if we can awaken ourselves to them and allow ourselves to savour them.

Does savouring the present moment resolve the environmental crisis or find a path through Brexit? No, but it does help us to find a core strength and a resilience to treasure life as we journey through the big and small challenges.

I wonder if this is something of what Jesus was trying to express to his disciples when he told them, "But seek first God's

Getting Involved

Within AUC there are 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.

Centre, Property & Finance

Tom Murray

treasurer@augustine.org.uk

Children

Kirsty Murray

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Communication

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To get involved volunteering within AUC or the local community:

AUC Volunteering

Fiona Somerville

rota@augustine.org.uk

Local Community

Volunteering

Della Morris

della.morris@augustine.org.uk

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kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Matthew 6: 33-34

Summer Seeds

Just a quick reminder that our next Seeds is our bumper summer edition which will cover July and August. Your next one after that should hit your inbox on Sunday 1st September (and can't be late as your editor is off on a little trip the next day!). If there are events happening in September you'd like people to have advanced notice of, the Summer Seeds deadline is 30th June.



Member, musician, crafter and all round good guy Karl celebrated his 40th birthday in May. He had a brilliant birthday bash in the Sanctuary at AUC and in doing so raised a wonderful £728.91 for our building!

We thank him for his kindness, both in sharing his special day with us and also for the wonderful fundraising.

Hip Hip Hooray!

p.s. pictured here with dad.

Calling All Readers!

We'd love to dedicate some space in Seeds to short (300 word) reviews of theological, Biblical, social justice books, which will in turn inspire us all to read and grown more.

To whet your appetite, you can read a thoughtful response to Richard Frazer's recent book on p.10!

If you'd be interested in writing a review please email me at newsletter@augustine.org.uk and I can share with you a suggested format.

Eilidh Carmichael



Shaping a Healthy Future



Hi all,

I'm the new consultant working with AUC. I'm here so we can figure out together how to sustain the wonderful ministry you have, well into the future. Having spent some time talking with people, reading and attending worship, I feel I know you a little and I like you very much! It's a great privilege to call a community like yours my workplace for a time.

I'm Australian, a country kid who left the farm to study IT and then spent my adult life living and working in Melbourne, a city almost as lovely as Edinburgh. I'm married to Ken Luscombe, the Associate Minister at Greyfriars and together we provide a home and probably too much attention to Toby, our elderly ginger and white cat.



I've held various technology leadership roles within financial services, led a social enterprise and picked up some handy analysis and problem-solving skills along the way. I've also been on the governance teams of the Melbourne churches I've attended so I'm quite familiar with the financial and property challenges churches face.

I hope to be able to identify and assess all the options you have for the tricky parts of being a city central Christian community with an old building, much commitment and goodwill but lacking an abundance of available, skilled people and funds to help manage the day-to-day running of AUC as an organisation.

If you notice me, please say hello and feel free to share any questions or thoughts you have that could help me in my work here. You can also email me at deborah.pike@augustine.org.uk.

Deborah Pike

Save the Date - Shaping a Health Future Discussion Meeting

Sun 9th June, 12.30-2pm

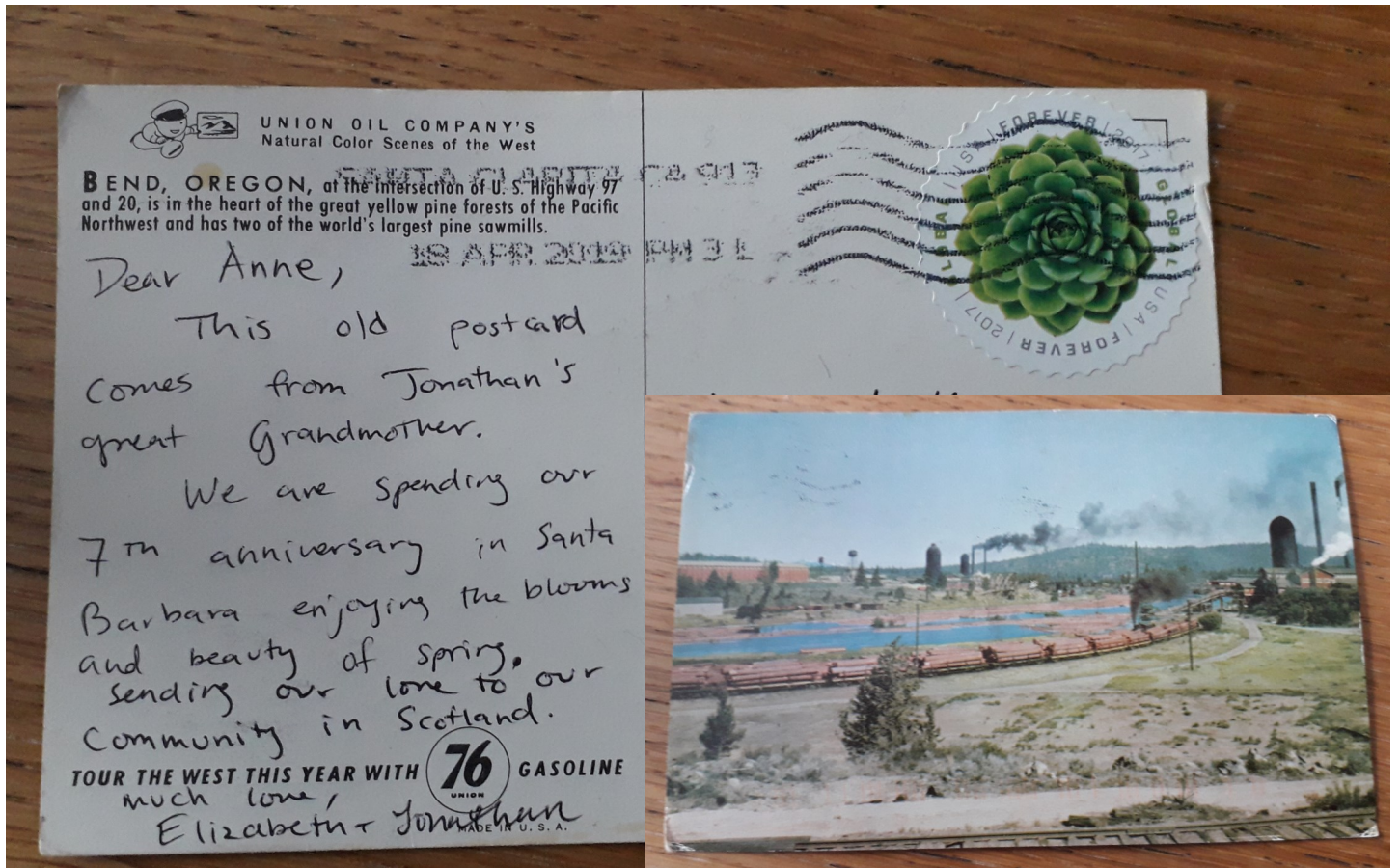
With Deborah's support, this meeting is an opportunity to analyse our current mission and ministry, providing a collective starting point in the process of identifying what changes might be feasible to enable AUC to shape a healthy future.

It is vital that as many AUC members and associates contribute to this meeting and process as possible. If you cannot be there on June 9th please watch out for the letter coming out from Deborah by email and offer her email responses. If you can't attend the meeting and don't use email, we'd still love to have your thoughts captured. Speak to Rachel in the office about how best to feed in!

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible as we begin this journey together.

A Letter from America

When this lovely postcard hit her door mat, Anne didn't want to keep it to herself. Thanks for sharing! I'm sure I speak for us all when I say we send our love across the ocean too.



Red Letter Christians UK Launch

**Shane Claiborne Seminar for
Leaders and Activists,
Fri 21st June, 10.30am @ AUC**

Shane Claiborne is a best-selling author and renowned activist, writing and speaking around the world about peace-making, social justice and Jesus.

It is hoped that Red Letter Christians UK can become a Spirit -ed force for connecting, empowering and amplifying voices for Jesus and justice in the UK.

Book tickets at tinyurl.com/y4ody9nv or search for Soul Talk on Facebook and Instagram.



Helplines:

Stand Alone: www.standalone.org.uk (for those experiencing family estrangement)

LGBT Support: 0300 123 2523

Samaritans: 116 123

Childline: 0800 1111

Rape Crisis: 08088 010 302

Breathing Space: 0800 838587

Edinburgh Crisis Centre: 0808 8010414

URC votes unanimously to divest from fossil fuel companies

The Rev Dr David Pickering, Moderator of the URC National Synod of Scotland, presented the resolution at the meeting of the URC Mission Council, which took place at the High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, from May 13-15.

He was supported in the preparation of the resolution by James Buchanan, Campaign Manager for Bright Now, a campaign run by Operation Noah, a Christian charity working with the Church to inspire action on climate change.

Dr Pickering said: *'I think it's fantastic that a prophetic decision was taken today by the United Reformed Church to end investments in fossil fuels and to up investments in renewable energy.'*

As Christians, we are challenged to be good stewards of God's creation and as a Church we have taken a welcome new step.'

During the debate, the proposal had the support of Natalie Gibbs, one of the Moderators of the URC Youth Assembly, who spoke on its behalf.

'We believe that by divesting from fossil fuels we can support God's creation on a scale that is now needed given our planet's fragile condition,' Natalie said. 'It will be URC Youth members that have to live through and deal with this volatile future planet if change does not happen now.'

Welcoming the motion, Amanda Mukwashi, Chief Executive of Christian Aid, said: *'To achieve climate justice we need to ensure an extremely rapid transition out of the use of fossil fuels and the onus must be on those whose emissions are historically the highest, to transition first and fastest. The Church needs to be at the forefront of putting our money where our mouth, and our heart, is.'*

In 2014, Brighthelm URC in Brighton became the first local church in the UK to divest from fossil fuel companies, and in 2015 the National Synod of Scotland became the first URC synod to divest.

James Buchanan added: *'We are delighted that the URC has decided to divest. This is a hugely positive response to the climate emergency. We hope many other churches will join them in divesting from fossil fuels and investing in clean alternatives.'*

The Synod of Scotland's resolution and accompanying paper 'Creating a climate of change' can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2VCYARK>

You can read the motion agreed by Mission Council here: https://urc.org.uk/images/MissionCouncil/May-2019/X1_Paper_on_divestment_for_URC_National_Synod_of_Scotland.pdf



Left to right: James Buchanan, Bright Now Campaign Manager; Rev Alex Mabbs, Minister of Brighthelm URC; Katie Henderson and Natalie Gibbs, Co-Moderators of URC Youth Assembly; AJ Mills, representative of URC Youth Assembly to the Mission Council; Rev Dr David Pickering and Mark Kirkbride from the Synod of Scotland.

Article reproduced from URC with grateful thanks

Chance Encounters—A Life Viewed Through Nobel Moments

At my old University College of the West Indies, we had to queue for lunch, while dinner was crowned and formal. One lunchtime a student ahead of me turned suddenly and hit me with his elbow. He apologised and we got talking. His name was Derek Walcott and he was from St Lucia. (At the time I had to find that island on a map!) Years later in 1992 I heard that Derek had won the Nobel prize for literature.

Soon after university I got a place on the Special Internships Programme at the United Nations in New York. That was a real life changer. I met Buddhists, Muslims, communists - people I had never encountered before. The internship programme was initiated by the then Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld. I was told by a senior member of staff that he wanted to see some young faces in the building! We were scheduled to meet him at a special 'do' but that year was full of excitements: the Suez crisis, the Hungarian revolution and more besides. We did not get to meet him formally in the end but I once shared the lift with him (when he was not using his personal lift!). He is one of only four people to be awarded a posthumous Nobel Prize.

During that time, I became a bit confused about my religious faith. The nicest people I met were Buddhists and I wondered whether I would make further inquiries about that faith. An American friend suggested Biblical seminary, which I tried but didn't like. Another friend had a brother at Princeton Seminary and suggested it. I went there and it changed my life.

At Princeton we were never told what to believe. We had to read, study, discuss, talk with friends, listen to lectures from staff and others. When Paul Tillich, a visiting lecturer, spoke you could have heard a pin drop. I have never attended another lecture like his: he kept his eyes firmly on his script, never once made eye contact with his audience and did everything else the Speech Department did not approve of - but he held us spell bound. I had read two of his books and he helped confirm my faith.

While I was still at Princeton, the American Presbyterian Church invited foreign students to a huge conference to be held in Athens, Ohio. The chief speaker was to be Lesslie Newbigin, then a Bishop of South India. After I heard him I wandered about looking for another lecture. I looked into a room and there was a talk being given by a black man with a southern accent, intriguingly different. I was so fascinated by his matter of speaking that I did not pay attention to the message! I looked on my programme and read that I had heard the Rev. Martin Luther King, whose name at that stage meant nothing at all to me. The USA at this time was still segregated so it was great to hear a black Southerner speak.

Many years later I was living in Wessex when Lesslie Newbigin was Moderator of the URC. When I told him I had heard him and Martin Luther King speak he told me that conference was the point in time where all the right people gathered and the Civil Rights Movement began, one of the truly great movements in the USA.

It reminded me of the time when I was at the UN and had visited New Orleans in a programme funded by the Ford Foundation when there was segregation. The Mayor of that city awarded all twenty of us Special Interns the key to the city in his private parlour. We were a mixed bunch, some a bit dark in skin colour, and so it was not done in public in case there was outrage. My Spanish flatmate and I were offended by the segregation laws and to show our dislike we went and sat at the back of a bus to see if the conductor would remove us. She knew we were with a UN group and desisted. I still have my key to remind me of those dreadful days.

Then I married John and moved to Northern Ireland. When we were in the wilds of Co. Tyrone the Arts Council thought we needed some intellectual input, so they sent two young poets to stimulate our imaginations, namely Seamus Heaney and Michael

<6 Longley. Seamus won the Nobel in 1995.

Some years later, John was a minister in London when he started the interfaith movement which is now an important part of our life. We met so many interesting people and learnt how to meet different religious groups. For instance, the Imam would not shake hands with me and now I know not to offer a hand to Muslim men!

It was this interest which took us to the Parliament of the World's Religions in Capetown, South Africa. One of the speakers was Nelson Mandela - I admire him greatly. I had visited Robben Island where he had been imprisoned for 27 years and yet he was able to forgive and not be embittered by his long incarceration. I pay tribute also to F.W. de Klerk who was brave enough to release him. They jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

My last encounter happened when John was minister at St Johns Wood. The manse was in West Hampstead, on a small street full of Jewish residents with three non-Jewish households. I met a woman from across the street who lived with a retired Professor of Physics. His name was Joseph Rotblat. When the family went on holiday I was

given the key to their house and asked to put the professor's mail in neat rows on his desk.

It transpired he had left Poland on the last train before the Germans arrived. Just before leaving his wife developed appendicitis and this caused a dilemma: he held information on the nuclear bomb which he did not want the Germans to have and what about his wife? They decided he should leave alone. He returned after the war but could not find her.

After the nuclear bomb was dropped on Japan he was horrified and turned his attention to ensure that nuclear energy was used for peaceful purposes, working on the Pugwash Conference. He was later awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for this work.

I admire a man who could change direction like this.

Joan Miller

The URC Synod of Scotland is awesome!

Amongst the many placards and posters along the marathon route, the ones that struck me the most said "Everyone has their 'why'". Just in case we thought about giving up hope, they were there to remind us of why we are running.

I certainly had enough 'why's' to keep me going: the communities LUV+ is now able to help in Tanzania; the supporters from Edinburgh, Glasgow and Clydebank who came down as spectators. Then, of course, there are the hundreds who gave donations, especially Synod churches.

We raised £3,156.50 (with gift aid-beyond the original goal of £2,000) for LUV+. I finished in 5hrs 37mins, without hitting the wall (my colleague Kipchoge beat me, but oh well). And the charity itself has a little more publicity than it did a few months ago.

One last tale: many of the runners had their names on their shirts so that spectators could shout out their names for encouragement. My name wasn't on my shirt. So as I passed by, the crowds were shouting, "One Luv...you can do it Luv...keep moving Luv!" I'll take that!

So with gratitude to you all for your support, I say, "One LUV"!



Shalom, Rev William T Young

christian aid

Big Brekkie



Thanks in no small part to Harriet and a team of helpers, we celebrated Christian Aid week with a smashing Big Brekkie.

We actually had our breakfast in between the service and our church AGM, but the unusual timing didn't detract from the fantastic spread!

The generous donations to Christian Aid have all been sent off and once they have opened the envelopes they will be in touch to let us know how much we raised.

In the meantime, thank you to all who participated!

Safeguarding Training 2019

Please note the change of time!

Thurs 6th June: 7.30-9pm

Sun 9th June: 2-3.30pm

If you had previously booked to attend the session on Sun 2nd June, please contact Ivy (ivg.ng@augustine.org.uk) and let her know your preference now.

As a reminder, this training is for all Junior Church leaders, creche helpers, TLC Youth Group leaders and helpers, Home and Hospital Team members, Elders and volunteers who obtained PVG membership through AUC.

Refreshments to be provided before the training.

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@augustine.org.uk) or **Rev Maxwell Reay** (associateminister@augustine.org.uk).

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 directly 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-12pm in the Sanctuary. This is hosted by AUC and run by the NHS Lothian Spiritual Care team. Further details available through Maxwell.

Bumper Celebration of New Members!

In May we welcomed (from left to right): Dot, Denis, Sian, Jan, Laurence, Helen, Andrew, Kate and Andrew as members and associate members of AUC. How blessed we are to have them!



KILTWALK in EDINBURGH *Sunday 15th September*

The Kiltwalk is the lowest cost way to raise funds for what you care about. You can raise funds for the charity of your choice and 140% of what you raise goes directly to that charity.

Last year Fiona Bennett and I took part in the Kiltwalk and we raised about £700 for the mental health pilgrimage work at Augustine United Church.



Some of this came from sponsorship and a further 40% is added on from the Tom Hunter Foundation. As a charity, AUC can raise a maximum of £5000 at the Kiltwalk and then £2000 will be added to this to give us a total of £7000. This is more than Gift Aid.

This is a great way to help raise funds, have fun and of course get fit or fitter!

The Edinburgh Kiltwalk has 3 levels of walks:

- **The Mighty Stride:** 24 Miles - £30 entry fee
- **The Big Stroll:** 15.5 Miles - £30 entry fee
- **The Wee Wander:** 5 Miles - £12 (£6 Child) entry fee

There are lots of stops on the way to get refreshments and toilets. You can go at your own pace. It is NOT a race.

Let's make this a great big church fun day!

Sign up at www.thekiltwalk.co.uk/events/edinburgh/

And join our Augustine United Church Walkers Team.

Maxwell Reay

Pilgrimage—A Reflection on ‘Travels with a Stick’

In planning local pilgrimages around AUC there are lessons to be learned from Richard Frazer’s recollections of travelling the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. He recounts his pilgrimage in his recently published book *“Travels with a Stick”* (Birlinn). The book is a good read.

Not that Richard believes a true pilgrim gives himself the designation of “pilgrim”. It is in the gift of others to call a person a ‘Pilgrim’, once certain things happen to the walker on this type of journey!

Richard himself was already a seasoned walker of Scottish hills and a Munro ‘bagger’ before he set off on this epic 700-mile journey (to last 7 weeks). He felt that he knew what it was all about, taking on this pilgrimage during a Sabbatical. He had planned to keep up a cracking pace, to cover a certain distance each day, even feeling good when passing slower walkers along the way.

However, this was a false premise as he learned to his cost as he developed debilitating foot and tendon problems after just a few days, due to mistakes he had made early on in selecting ‘under broken-in’ footwear and keeping going with wet feet. He felt very ‘down’ and that was when this adventure started to become ‘a journey of discovery’ – of himself, and of the

kindness of strangers!

He was humbled to receive wonderful foot care from a fellow walker of the way, a man who tended to him with skill and kindness in the hostel where he stopped overnight. Richard learned to accept offered help, to wait-up for a few days to allow the healing process, to accept advice, to develop a slower rhythm and pace, and to open his mind to things he had not anticipated or had misconceived.

It wasn’t what he had expected at all. He discovered that the thing that “we start out to do”, takes hold, and “does us”!

One of the most important things about this kind of pilgrimage is that this is where Christians and other spiritual seekers find out that it is not the ‘trappings’ (great cathedrals, devout clergy and majestic liturgies) of such a worldwide powerful institution (in this case the Christian Church as it has developed over centuries) that are important. It is the humility of becoming open to the help and experiences of others, the receiving of gifts from others, the mundane-ness of persevering on the journey with fellow seekers that matter far more.

Can we find, in short hour-long pilgrimages near AUC, opportunities to gain some spiritual understanding from others walking the way with us?

Kathleen Ziffo

Calendar cont. from back page

Sunday 30th	9.15-10.15am	Living the Questions – DVD and discussion on ‘Evil, Suffering and a God of Love’
	11am	Pentecost Morning Worship, led by Kathleen Ziffo and Fiona Bennett
July		
Monday 1st	2pm	Women’s Union at Saughtonhall – Strawberry Tea
Wednesday 3rd	4.30-6pm	‘First Wednesdays’ at Edinburgh Methodist Church, Nicolson Square
Sunday 7th	11am	Morning Worship with Communion, led by Fiona Bennett and Caro Penney
	12.20-1.30pm	Church Business Meeting

Ready for Pentecost



We begin June with a music morning, followed the next week by our Godly Play story.

In the middle of the month we will be worshipping at St Columba's by the Castle.

After that we will be having a 'youth and children' celebration at Augustine.

At the end of the month we will begin our new module 'Holidays@ Hippo' where we will be enjoying a variety of ways to learn about and engage with Saint Augustine, whom we are named after. More on this in our next Seedlings!

"They became so full of the power of the holy spirit that they seemed to be on fire. Their tongues burned in their mouths. They were so excited that people wondered what was going on...."

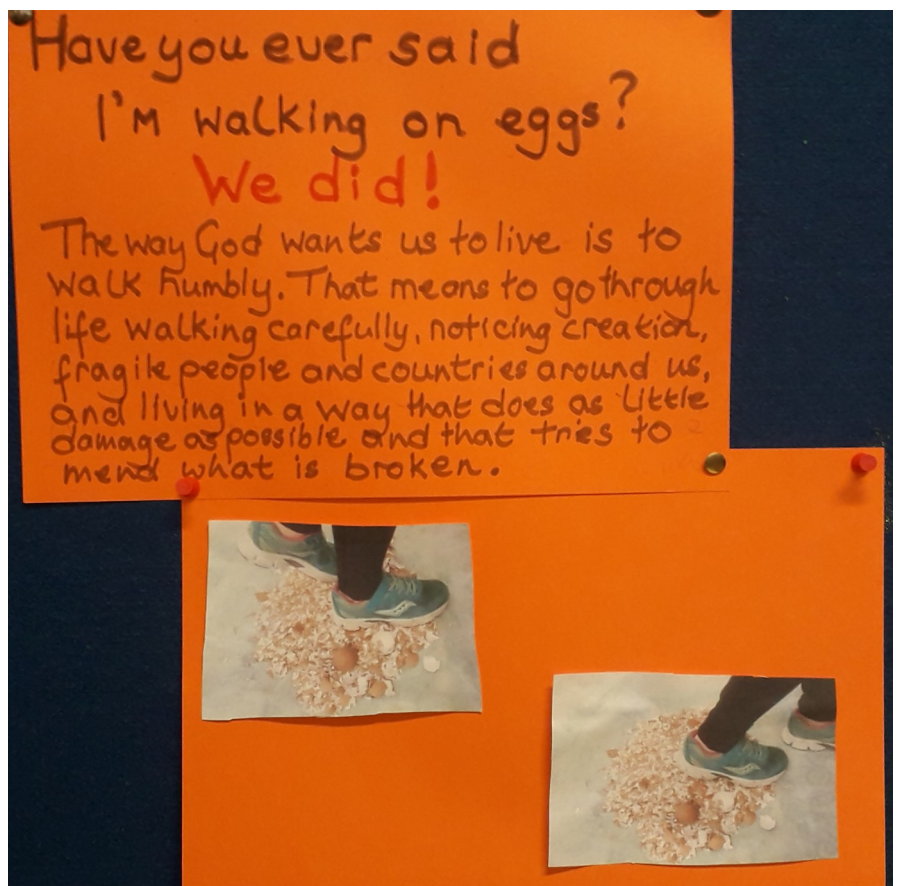


I WONDER

Quote from 'The Mystery of Pentecost' in Volume 4 of The Complete Guide to Godly Play by

Jerome Berryman.

Image from www.godlyplayresources.com.



Junior Church welcomes families in all their wonderful diversity. We do our best to offer a safe and nurturing space for families and their friends. 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 using the PowerXpress curriculum, and also use Godly Play (www.godlyplay.org.uk).

Children at Augustine are welcome to receive communion and to fully participate in the life of the church. Children regularly help during services, and sometimes serve communion to the wider church community.

Please feel free to contact us using the details on p.2 of Seeds if you have any questions.

Calendar

Worship Services at 11am on Sundays at AUC, George IV Bridge. All events at AUC, unless otherwise stated. Later updates on website/notice sheet

June		Season of Pentecost
Sunday 2 nd	9.15-10.15am	Living the Questions – ‘Into the World’ DVD Discussion
	11am	Easteride Morning Worship and Communion, led by Laurence Wareing, with preacher Ken Luscombe
	12.15-1.45pm	Pilgrimages – exploration of how we can develop pilgrimages in and around AUC
Monday 3 rd	2pm	Women’s Union at Saughtonhall URC – Summer Gathering
Wednesday 5 th	4.30-6pm	‘First Wednesdays’ for LGBTQI people exploring spirituality & faith, at Edinburgh Methodist Church, Nicolson Square
Thursday 6 th	7.30-9pm	Safeguarding Training (see p.8)
Sunday 9 th	9.15-10.15am	Contextual Bible Study – Psalm 37: 1-10 ‘Sustaining’
	11am	Pentecost Pride Service led by Fiona Bennett with preacher Mike Holroyd
	12.15-2pm	Extraordinary Church Meeting – Shaping a Healthy Future (see p.3)
	1-3pm	TLS Youth Group
	2-3.30pm	Safeguarding Training (see p.8)
	3-5pm	Our Tribe – Preparing for Pride
Tuesday 11 th	7.30pm	Contextual Bible Study – Psalm 37: 1-10 ‘Sustaining’
Friday 14 th	2.30-4pm	Walk & Talk, a leisurely stroll ending at a café
Sunday 16 th	11am	Morning Worship for Trinity Sunday with Communion at St Columba’s by the Castle
Monday 17 th	7pm	Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of Jean Vanier at St Mary Magdalene’s Church, Bingham Avenue
Tuesday 18 th	7.30pm	Living the Questions – DVD and discussion on ‘Divinely Human’
Friday 21 st June	10.30am	Red Letter Christians UK Launch (see p.4)
Saturday 22 nd	TBC	Pride Edinburgh, with Healthy Living Centre (ticketed) breakfast in AUC, followed by march and stalls at Teviot House. To hear more about our banner project speak to Maxwell.
	TBC	Farm BBQ in Perthshire, organised by the Fife URC Churches. See blue notice board for more info and speak to Kathleen
Sunday 23 rd	9.15-10.15am	What Could Holy Habits Be? Discussion
	11am	Celebration of Young People Worship with Communion led by Fiona Bennett
	12.15-2.30pm	Celebration Lunch
Tuesday 25 th	7.30-9pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation
Thursday 27 th	1.30-3pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation

See p. 10 for the rest of the calendar!

Please note the deadline for material for the July/August issue is Sunday 30th June.

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