

Seeds

June 2021

encourage - inspire - challenge

Augustine
United Church



Peace building

Revd Fiona
Bennett



As I write this (mid-May) the news from Israel & Palestine is not good. A powder keg of tension has been ignited and violence is breaking out all over the land.

Years of frustration are being played out and people of all ages are dying. I wonder what the world would look like today if, back in the 1940s, we and other countries had welcomed - en masse - holocaust survivors with open arms and hearts?

I am reminded of a line in the Jesus' Prayer we use each week "forgive us the hurts we absorb from one another": the unchallenged legacies of fear and hurt we allow to continue to shape our thinking and acting; the legacy of protecting self-interest; the legacy of grief; the legacy of tyranny and oppression.

Unchallenged, they shape our perceptions and actions through which we continue to hurt others, ourselves, and the earth itself.

Changing our perceptions is at the heart of what Jesus and John called repentance - turning around. And repentance is often connected with forgiveness.

There has been a lot of energy throughout Christian history explaining how we can find forgiveness from God. I really do not think God has a problem with forgiveness, humans do.

And in forgiveness I do not mean the unhelpful idea of simply wiping out the past as if we cannot learn anything; forgiveness is the power to let go of the hold which past experiences and perceptions have on us without denying their reality, so we can make different choices in the present and future.

"Changing our perceptions is at the heart of what Jesus and John called repentance"

This is walking the way of peace which is a hard road for humanity everywhere but, as Jesus showed, which is the path of life for us all.

Israel and Palestine understandably feature heavily in this edition of Seeds.

See p.4 for the opportunity to join a new reading group and p.5 for a thought-provoking book review.

This Month

FRIENDS ACROSS THE DIVIDE

David Townsend Reviews
'Apeiron' by Colum McCann



TALKING CLIMATE JUSTICE

Katrina Tweedie discusses
peace and justice priorities



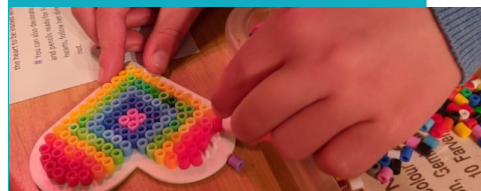
PRIDE MONTH AT AUC

AUC celebrates Pride with
special guests



JUNIOR CHURCH RETURNS

Families gather again at AUC for
the Sunday service





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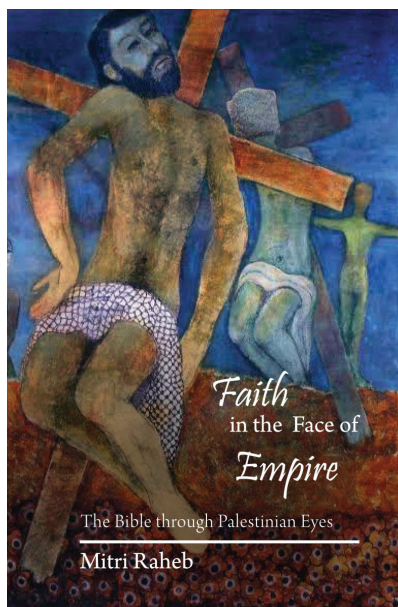
Local and Global

News from the United Reformed Church

JOIN A NEW PALESTINIAN LIBERATION THEOLOGY READING GROUP

Victoria Turner is setting up a Palestinian Liberation Theology Reading Group. Meeting monthly, the group has set a number of books to consider over the coming months. Victoria notes, "I was really intimidated by the Israel/Palestine conflict before I read these books. They shattered my unemotive, centrist, confused position.

For me, these are some of the most hard-hitting liberation theologies written. I strongly believe there cannot be peace without voices and stories being heard in conflict. Reading as a first step to activism seems pretty nice to me. Please contact me on V.A.Turner@sms.ed.ac.uk if you are interested in joining us."



NEW GENERAL SECRETARY FOR CWM

The Council for World Mission has appointed the Revd Dr Jooseop Keum as its next General Secretary.

Dr Keum is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Korea and currently serving as the Distinguished Professor of World Christianity at the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary and Director of the Korea Institute for Future Ecumenism. Dr Keum will assume office on 1 July.

GREYFRIARS RECRUITS COMMS COORDINATOR

Greyfriars Kirk is looking for an experienced, detail-oriented individual to serve as Communications Coordinator. The full-time role is advertised at greyfriarskirk.com/jobs where you can learn more about this role, and how to submit your C.V. and cover letter. Closing Date: Sunday 13 June 2021

UK PLASTICS DUMPED AND BURNED

A Greenpeace investigation has found that UK plastics sent to Turkey to be recycled were in fact being dumped and many burned.

Since 2017, Turkey has become the main destination for UK plastics. Greenpeace examined 10 locations around the southern Turkish city of Adana in March and published the data in a report you can read here: www.greenpeace.org.uk/resources/trashed-plastic-report/. See p.5 for our own Katrina Tweedie's thoughts on this important issue.



CORRECTION

With apologies, the finance article produced in May's Seeds contained two errors. As the eagle-eyed among you will know, Ian Rathjen is also among the members of the Centre, Property and Finance team and the chart on "income: how was it used?" should read 2019 instead of 2021.

Friendship in the Midst of Division

David Townsend
Reviews 'Apeirogon'
by Colum McCann

This is a quite extraordinary book. It's both a novel and a real-life drama. It's about two friends: Rami Elhanan and Bassam Aramin.



Rami is a Jewish Israeli and Bassam a Muslim Palestinian – men on opposite sides of the age-old conflict at the centre of this month's Seeds.

But Rami and Bassam have several things in common: they're both fathers; they have both lost young daughters (Rami's daughter to a suicide bomber and Bassam's to a rubber-coated bullet fired by a trigger-happy member of the Israeli Defence Force); and they are both members of the Parents' Circle* – an organisation set up by the bereaved families of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Rami and Bassam have dedicated their lives to telling and retelling their stories to whoever will listen. They don't hold back any punches; neither do other members of their families in describing their own experiences.

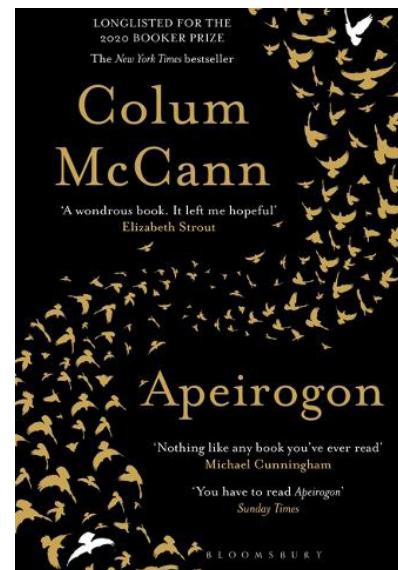
It's a book that is at once both raw and beautiful. In writing it, Colum McCann doesn't sugar-coat their lived experience. Indeed, he describes the day-to-day experience of Rami and Bassam both within their own

communities, and as they engage in the realities of life in Israel, the West Bank and beyond.

It's a book of both devastating loss and grief, and of hope. It's stark and devoid of sentimentality, yet it depicts the friendship and fraternity that arises when two men, and their families, lay aside all that would separate them, and unite to tell their stories – stories that need to be heard, both by those in their divided communities, and by you and I living in peace and comfort some 2,500 miles from their homeland.

Like many of the Biblical writers, Colum McCann has woven real life – the lived experience of Rami and Bassam – into the story he tells. But the central characters are real and the central events happened.

Today, the characters might bear different names but the events repeat themselves.



Find out more about
The Parents Circle at
[www.theparentscircle.org/
en/pcf-home-page-en/](http://www.theparentscircle.org/en/pcf-home-page-en/)

A Window on the World

As the Peace and Justice team prepare to focus on climate justice in July, Katrina Tweedie talks us through some of the issues they are considering.

Climate justice: a huge topic! What to focus on? We could look at some of the following topics:

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

What Scotland could be doing to take responsibility for the damage caused by our carbon emissions, particularly to the countries least responsible.

At COP 26, the Global South will repeat its demand that wealthy nations compensate them for the climate crisis. Will Scotland take this opportunity to put pressure on the UK government to act justly and agree?

OTHER LIVING CREATURES THAT SHARE OUR COUNTRY WITH US

Scottish endangered species include red squirrels, wildcats, otters, bottlenose dolphins, honeybees, capercaillies, pine martins and puffins. There is much to lament but we can also celebrate good work being done. For example, on the Isle of May volunteers have worked hard to put in drainage in order to save puffin chicks as unseasonal rain can flood puffin burrows.

AIR POLLUTION

Air pollution is especially harmful to children, the elderly, and people made vulnerable by complex health conditions. There are over 2,500 early deaths in Scotland every year caused by air pollution. Can we attain a clean, accessible, and fair transport system?

A JUST TRANSITION

Workers in oil, gas and aviation and their supporting industries and communities need a just transition with re-training and green jobs. Have we learned from the dismantling of the coal industry from which many communities have still not recovered?

ENGAGE AND SUPPORT

As we have seen in this pandemic, women, people with mental health issues and the poorest in our communities are the most vulnerable and suffer most in any crisis. The climate crisis is no different. What can we as a church do to engage and support them?



Brian Yurasits on Unsplash

So, what to focus on? Where can we be effective? We already do work in many of these areas, for example by supporting Christian Aid and the Grassmarket Community Project for their work with the most vulnerable.

One of the biggest things we can all do as individuals is to cut down on single use plastics. Most plastics are made from oil or natural gas. The more oil and gas we extract, the greater the damage done to our planet.

We will need to find technical solutions to replace the plastic we really need,

but as individual consumers and as a church community we can cut our use of single use plastics.

Indeed, the URC Synod has called on all churches to cut single use plastic. This is an action we could all take. I would therefore like to invite you all to join in Plastic-Free July.

To find out more about Plastic-Free July and how you can get involved go to: www.plasticfreejuly.org/.

AUC Celebrates Pride Virtually



Toni Reed on Unsplash

We are delighted to have Revd Elder Pat Bumgardner as our guest preacher on Sunday 20th June.



Pat is the Senior Pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of New York, where she has served in multiple capacities for the past 40 years. She is the founder of the Sylvia Rivera Memorial Food Pantry and Sylvia's Place, both housed at MCCNY.

Named for the late civil rights leader and Mother of the Queer Rights Movement in the US, Sylvia Rivera's

Place serves as an emergency shelter and drop-in site dedicated to providing safe space and food for homeless LGBTQI youth.

Rev Elder Pat also serves as the Executive Director of the Global Justice Institute, coordinating and overseeing the global justice efforts of MCC. Her current focus involves not only local church efforts, but projects with activists in Kenya and Uganda, Romania and Russia, Honduras, Brazil, Jamaica, and Mexico.



ON THURSDAY 3RD JUNE, OUR TRIBE WILL ALSO CELEBRATE PRIDE SEASON.

The session will open at 7.20pm and start at 7.30pm. We'd love if you want to join us in painting your face or wearing bright colours.

We'll hear from Revd Dr. Ana Ester, who is an ordained clergy of the Metropolitan Community Church of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. She is a member of the Global Interfaith Network Latin America and of the American Academy of Religion.

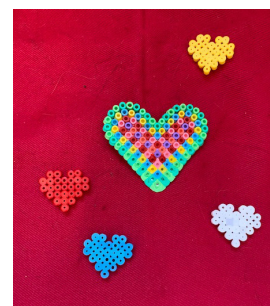
All are very welcome at both Pride events. If you don't usually receive emails with the details for services and Our Tribe please contact centre.manager@augustine.org.uk

Find out more about MCCNY at www.mccny.org

If you would like to donate to the Global Justice Institute, visit donatenow.networkforgood.org/1435416

Junior Church Gathers

Tamsin Kilgour reflects on a significant month for our youngest members



Great excitement this month as, on 9th May, several Junior Church families gathered in AUC for the Sunday service.

This was the first chance we'd had to all be together since Advent (albeit in socially distanced, face-masked family groups).

One of our newest Crèche members, Lewis, came to their first ever service. The cuddles will have to wait though!

The theme of that week's reading was Love. Here's a selection of our children's creations, including one beautifully presented by Max.

During June we will continue to provide weekly activity sheets linked to the lectionary readings.

As we move towards the school holidays we will be having some activities for families to do outside, as well as those at home.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Services where young people and their families are invited to worship in the building will take place on 27th June and 22nd August. Pre-registering is required.

What's On?

Most of our gatherings and resources are currently online. You can find out details on our website www.augustine.org.uk.

STAYING IN TOUCH

If you wish to receive weekly updates of AUC events please register to receive the Friday email by contacting our Centre Manager (centre.manager@augustine.org.uk).

Find us on 

Check our daily posts on the AUC Facebook page.

Worship

SUNDAYS, 11AM

Join services through the zoom link (see Friday emails), AUC website or Facebook page. Junior Church activity sheet on the website. The Post Service Social Time is a valuable way of keeping in touch with each other 11.45-12.30pm. Link in the Friday email.

TLC Youth

SUNDAYS, 1.30 - C.3.00PM

Inclusive youth group for all young people from S1 up. Email Matt for more information.

Our Tribe

FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH, 7.30 – 9.00PM

LGBTQI+ ministry at Augustine United Church. This month: Pride

Contextual Bible Studies

TUESDAY 12-1PM, WEDNESDAY 7.30-8.30PM, THURSDAY 12-1PM

Email our minister, Fiona, to join in.

Midweek Social Time

WEDNESDAYS, 1-2PM

Drop in and chat for 10 mins or the hour. Link in the Friday email.

Church Meeting

SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH, 7.45-9PM

Open to all. Link in the Friday email. Social time from 7.15pm

Church dates in June

Tuesday 1 – Church Council

Sunday 6 – Blended worship service

Tuesday 8 – Church meeting: 7.45pm, with social time from 7.15pm

Sunday 13 – In-person worship service

Sunday 20 – Pride Sunday blended worship service

Sunday 27 – Blended worship service with in person Junior Church

Worship in our building

We are currently offering a monthly service with limited numbers for folk to attend in person if they wish. We'll be using the same booking system as before and we'll advertise the link well in advance. Note that Sunday afternoon parking controls have now been put in place in the city centre from 12.30pm to 6.30pm every Sunday. (Details at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/sundayparking).

Seeds deadline

Seeds is published on the Sunday prior to the beginning of each month. The copy deadline for the **July/August** edition is **Friday 18 June**.