

# Seeds

June / July 2025

encourage - inspire - challenge



Augustine  
United Church

## Forgiveness from the rubble

**Revd Fiona Bennett**



**In May this year I joined the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN) for a retreat on Lindisfarne.**

Following the destruction of Coventry Cathedral during the bombing of the city in November 1940, Provost Dick Howard made a commitment not to call for revenge, but to forgive and be reconciled. He declared that when the war was over, we should work with those who had become our enemies 'to build a kinder, more Christ-like world'.

The words 'Father Forgive', which Jesus spoke from the cross, were inscribed on one wall of the cathedral's ruined chancel. Two charred beams which fell in the shape of a cross were bound

and placed behind an altar of rubble. Medieval roof nails were formed into crosses that were presented to churches in German cities such as Kiel, Dresden and Berlin.

By the 1970s, this vision of transforming enemies into friends had spread to other areas of conflict, and in 1974 the Community of the Cross of Nails was formed. CCN has a Litany of Reconciliation which is shared every Friday at 12pm in the cathedral, and people are invited to join in from across the world.

On the retreat, CCN was exploring gender identity and language in the litany, which seems to me to be a significant implementation of incarnating the spirit of the litany. There is work to be done. However, even pre-renewal of language, for a prayer written in 1958 it strikes me as a profoundly significant and needed litany to be prayed and acted upon in our world today. The words in brackets are my suggested expansions of the language.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class, [gender from gender], Father [Holy One] Forgive.

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own, Father Forgive.

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth, Father Forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others, Father Forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee, Father Forgive.

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children, [The abuse which dishonours bodies], Father Forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God, Father Forgive.

### This Month

#### A LIFE BEYOND FEAR

AGM reflections and a vision of the future



#### OYSTERCATCHERS = GOD?

Revd David Coleman shares his 13-point manifesto



#### OUR DAILY BREAD

Ensuring everyone gets a level of income that will banish poverty



#### PASSING THE BATON

Linda Harrison on how we fill roles and meet responsibilities





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#### **WANT TO GET MORE INVOLVED IN AUC?**

Do you feel called to get more involved in the life and ministry of AUC? Then joining the volunteer rota might be for you! We are always looking for new people to join the rota to provide our inclusive ministry of hospitality for all.

There are a variety of roles available and full training will be given, mainly by shadowing current volunteers. The rota for July and August is currently being compiled, so now is a good time to get in contact.

Please pick up a 'Sharing' card at church or email **Lewis Reay** directly on [rota@augustine.org.uk](mailto:rota@augustine.org.uk).

# Local and Global

News from the United Reformed Church



## SUPREME COURT CRITICISED

The URC has expressed its 'lament' at the Supreme Court's legal ruling on the definition of a woman, made in April. In a statement, the URC said that the ruling would 'have a negative impact on the lives of trans, intersex, non-binary/gender non-conforming people, who already experience significant marginalisation and misunderstanding within our society'.

The statement reaffirmed that 'the traditions that make up the URC have been at the forefront of challenging long-held barriers to inclusion and equality'.

In the case of 'For Women Scotland Ltd v Scottish Ministers', the Supreme Court ruled that the legal definition of a woman is based on biological sex, in a decision which could have far-reaching implications for who can access single-sex services and spaces.

## AUC STILL GROWING

Membership numbers at AUC remain buoyant, Linda Harrison, Church Secretary told the church's Annual General Meeting. She said that membership had grown from 95 to 98, but noted that the coming-and-going nature of our congregation means that figures do fluctuate.

## ALEX GOES TO JPIT

The Revd Dr Alex Clare-Young, a friend of AUC and the URC General Assembly's Deputy Clerk, has been appointed as the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)'s new Campaigns and Church Engagement Officer.

## FASLANE VIGIL

'Disarm Now: Peace Witness Vigil' is to be a Christian ecumenical gathering in united opposition to nuclear weapons, held at Scotland's nuclear submarine base in Faslane. The vigil will take place on Saturday, 2 August, at 10.30am at South Gate Faslane. It will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



## UK EQUALITY RANKING FALLS

The UK has fallen to 22nd place on the annual Rainbow Index of European countries, according to Equality Network. The index ranks countries by their laws on LGBTI equality. The UK is now the second-worst country for overall LGBTI laws in all of western Europe and Scandinavia, with only Italy ranked lower.

Equality Network said: 'The UK was in first place in 2015 but has slipped down the index every year since. This year, the UK fell seven places because of the Supreme Court judgement and the UK government's response, overturning two decades of recognition for trans people's identities.'

## PRESENCE IS RESISTANCE

'Presence is resistance' is what Palestinians say about their determination to remain in their

homes and on their land despite all the pressures facing them. The message comes through strongly in a new video that records a visit made in February by representatives from the URC, and other Church denominations. They travelled to Palestine to show solidarity with communities living under threat in the West Bank. The short video can be viewed on YouTube: [bit.ly/C4LIQPT](https://bit.ly/C4LIQPT).

## JPIT CONFERENCE: FOR GOODNESS SAKE

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) will hold its 2025 conference on 8 November. Exploring the theme 'For Goodness Sake', Christians longing for justice from around the UK will gather together at Reach Conference Centre in Derby. See [jpit.uk](https://jpit.uk) for further information.



## CALENDAR CALL-OUT

Photos are invited for the URC 2026 Calendar, on theme of 'Seeds of Hope'. Based on a verse from John 15, 'I am the vine, you are the branches', next year's calendar will feature images of people and plants connected to the URC. Learn all you need to know, including submission guidelines, at [bit.ly/3yUiT1p](https://bit.ly/3yUiT1p).

# Life on the Bridge

News from Augustine United Church

## PASSING THE BATON SMOOTHLY

**We need to give thought to how we fill roles and meet responsibilities at AUC, says Linda Harrison, our Church Secretary.**

In a written report to the church AGM in May, Linda expressed gratitude for those who serve as the congregation's elders. In January 2025, Church Council welcomed Jo Clifford, Moira Holmes, Siân Joyner and Jim Kerr to serve with Fiona Bennett (Chair), Maxwell Reay (Associated Minister), Ewen Harley (Treasurer), Denis Mallon, Tyler McNeil, Thomas McPolin and Linda herself.

Linda said that, normally, we begin to seek nominations for elders in late autumn, leading to our election at the Church Meeting in December. Election will continue to be held in December. However, AUC has introduced 'Safer Recruitment', which began to be implemented in 2024 for those joining our Church Life Ministry Teams or working with Children and Youth; and 'Safer Election' for those who are nominated to be elected as elders, which means conversations, checks and references adds more time to the

overall process.

For that reason, with Church Meeting's agreement, it is proposed that we begin the process of seeking nominations for the Elders Election in early September from 2025, to allow time for the new processes.

As Linda Harrison enters the final year of her second term as Church Secretary, she noted that the role of Assistant Church Secretary is still unfilled. At the same time, the Church Treasurer, Ewen Harley, is approaching the end of his term of office in 2026.

**“understanding a role helps to allay fear, as well as helping to be energised”**

The role of Church Secretary is mandatory for a church to function within the United Reformed Church structure. The Secretary serves both the Church Meeting and the elders' meeting (Church Council at AUC). In a 'grass roots' structure, the Church Meeting is vital, and so is the Secretary

for its functioning.

In AUC, an Assistant Church Secretary is allowed by our constitution, and would be a huge help to the workload of the Church Secretary, especially where that person is also working. Linda says she has wondered whether someone might take up the role of Assistant Church Secretary with a view to taking up the Church Secretary role this time next year. She has also considered the option, if Church Meeting agreed, that she becomes the Assistant Church Secretary to a new Church Secretary this time next year, as support and to give some space to that person to consider how best to divide up the role going forward.

Linda says that if anyone feels called to this ministry, they should have a word with her or the minister, and adds that 'the role of Church Secretary [in AUC] has felt to be a very supported part of the amazing AUC team, which definitely allows this role to be a calling not a burden'.

Likewise, if you feel called to succeed Ewen Harley as Treasurer, or to become an Assistant Treasurer, speak to Ewen, Linda or Fiona. Linda says: 'In my view, understanding a role helps to allay fear, as well as helping both



Photo by Boom





to be energised in our ministry and to achieve smooth handovers for the future.'

### LIVING THE HOPE WITHIN

**On Saturday 14 June, the United Reformed Church's National Synod of Scotland will celebrate 25 years since its formation, and the establishment of the United Reformed Church as we now understand it across the UK's three nations.**

The gathering, which is taking the theme 'Living the hope within', will take place at St. Matthew's Church, Perth, 10am – 4pm.

The day will be as much about looking forward as about remembering our past. A series of workshops will equip people to 'give an account of the hope that is within them', including through creativity, social justice, communications, and learning about the URC's Church Life Review. AUC's Mike Holroyd will lead one workshop on worship and singing.

Free tickets, and details of the livestreamed act of worship at 3pm, are available from the Synod Office: [pa@urcscotland.org.uk](mailto:pa@urcscotland.org.uk).

In the latest edition of *Reform*

magazine, Synod moderator the Revd Lindsey Sanderson reflects with Laurence Wareing on the impact made by the decision of Scottish denominations to join the URC.

### PRIDE AS SOLIDARITY

**Lewis Reay says taking part in Pride is even more important this year than ever.**

Our Tribe will be marching on Saturday 21 June in the Pride Edinburgh March and Parade. We will gather at AUC at 10am for coffee and cake before we set off for the start of the march – which begins outside the Scottish Parliament. Please let us know if you are coming by emailing [ourtribe@augustine.org.uk](mailto:ourtribe@augustine.org.uk), so that we know to expect you.

We will be celebrating 30 years of Metropolitan Community Church in Edinburgh. MCC Edinburgh started on the Pride Weekend of 1995, at the first Pride Scotland.

You might ask, 'Why is it important to celebrate Pride?'

Pride is a celebration, remembrance, party, protest, and an act of solidarity. This year it is more vital than ever for us to be visible within the LGBTQ+

community. The human rights of transgender people have been seriously eroded this year with a negative Supreme Court judgement on the definition of 'women' and 'man' that erases trans people (see 'Local and Global', p.4).

This has been followed by interim guidance from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. It states that trans people cannot use single-sex facilities such as gendered toilets, changing rooms etc.

We are asking that you consider joining us on the 21st regardless of whether you are LGBTQ+ as an act of solidarity with the transgender and wider LGBTQ+ community. As a community of faith, we have an important role in welcoming the transgender community when there is so much discrimination and a roll-back of human rights.

We look forward to joining with you. Further information is available from Maxwell at [ourtribe@augustine.org.uk](mailto:ourtribe@augustine.org.uk).

# A life beyond fear

**At the church's AGM on 13 May, our minister, the Revd Fiona Bennett, offered reflections on the past year, and a vision of what the future might hold for us, as individuals and as a community.**

**I am very grateful for another year in the life of AUC and for the privilege to be part of this chaotic, evolving and fun community of disciples.**

It is another year in which we have addressed things which we set out to address:

- We planned to renovate the pantry, and have done so.
- We recognised the need to increase support for transpeople within and around us, which we have done in various ways, including support for Resisting Transphobia in Edinburgh.
- We have evolved our intergenerational services into interactive services.
- We understood the need to raise understanding of the role of URC elders and increase our number of elders, and we have done both.

In every aspect of our church life we have moved forward in the direction we discerned that God is calling us to move, with our Guiding Principles to steer us.

We are not perfect. There may be other things we could or should have done. But in our chaotic and evolving way, what has grown and moved in the life of AUC over the past year has been very good.

All that has not happened by accident, and the life of the last year reflects the effort and dedication and gift and prayer of many, many people. Thank you.

It is also important to remember how our context (individually and collectively) has also travelled.

**“The invitation is to live as people who are not driven by fear ... to live and grow from love”**

Across the world it seems there has been a significant shift, or at least increase in vocalisation, of more right-wing views, and perhaps more rigid views about how human society will flourish. As there have been at other points in history, this has fuelled a desire to find someone else to blame for our fear: it is the immigrants; it's the transwomen; it's the benefit cheaters.

And if we stand with those who are oppressed, we blame the politicians; the Russians; the wealthy...

I believe everyone who holds power (by which I mean, power of money, ability, influence and opportunity) is responsible for how we use that power. In our current

climate those with power and those without are all affected by the scent of global fear, which often becomes a seeking to blame someone else and to divert blame from ourselves.

I remember from learning to play chess (which I play rarely and very, very badly) that the best form of defense is attack. In looking at our world today, I believe we need to create a culture in which we are not driven by fear, and do not therefore feel we need to defend and attack.



Photo by Pixabay

This doesn't happen overnight. To live in our world today as people not driven by fear takes discipline, effort, companionship and a lot of grace. But I am increasingly of the conviction that this is what the Spirit is beckoning us, as Christians, to do and be today.

The calling of the Church is not to be busy, to justify our existence, or be successful to swell our egos. The calling of the Church is to follow the Spirit.

So, whether we are sharing coffee with Our Tribe in Coffee Saints, or leading prayers, or talking with the student who has come to a worship service, or talking to one of our staff, or washing up a coffee cup... The invitation in all the little and large things we will do as we journey forward in the year ahead is to live as people who are not driven by fear, who do not react from an urge to attack or defend, but who support and enable the discipline, effort, companionship and grace it takes to live and grow from love.

And if we do that, and nothing else in the year ahead, we will be truly following the Spirit's calling.

*(Slightly abridged)*

# Seeds - five years on

It's five years since Laurence and Denis took over the task of editing and producing *Seeds* from Eilidh Carmichael...

**It was May 2020, and we'd entered into the time of Covid. All our gatherings and resources had gone online.**

Fiona was writing about Christian Aid, love, and her favourite soap. (Soap was quite a thing in those early pandemic days ... so was love.)

This Anglo-Irish team was walking in the footsteps of Eilidh, Tamsin Kilgour and Bill Stevenson. Our experience would entirely echo what Eilidh said about the role at the time:

'... it has everything to do with our community. It's taken my breath away time and again how many thought provoking, funny or informative articles are sent my way, often unsolicited. We are an active, passionate, earnest community and

helping to bring to life articles which express that has been a privilege.'

Denis and I are not planning to put away our quills just yet. But it's likely we will at some point. We wonder if anyone else has an interest in taking

on what is more of a privilege than a job, or perhaps shadowing the process even now. As Denis says, 'There is real creative satisfaction in publishing a journal regularly.'

*Seeds* shares information among friends and members, and also tries to be an outward-looking expression of the kind of community AUC aspires to be. But what should it be doing more of? Or less? Every editor/

team has done it differently.

If you'd like to know more about its production involves, do chat to either Denis or I, or email [newsletter@augustine.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@augustine.org.uk)



## New book from Carol

**You are more likely to spot a UFO than meet a bisexual Christian...**

.... reads the advertising blurb for an exciting pan-European publication, being edited by AUC member and worship leader Dr Carol Shepherd (Carol Joyner) and Dr José Calvo Tello of Göttingen State and University Library.

José and Carol have collected stories from bisexual Christians across Europe, in the form of written narratives or transcribed interviews. So far, over a dozen chapters are 'in the bag', with three more to come before the earnest business of seeking a publisher begins.

Carol writes that, 'despite forming by far the largest cohort of the LGBT+ community, bisexual people's experiences are routinely omitted from queer anthologies and productions, or conflated with homosexuality'. Carol has already published widely on the bisexual Christian intersectional identity from an academic and autobiographical perspective, but it felt time to ask bisexual Christians to write their own stories in their own words. *Bi Christian Stories*, the working title, is already shaping up to be a rich and profound addition to the Queer Christian genre.'

'What is particularly striking and perhaps unique about this collection so far, beyond the range of ages and ethnicities, are the diverse political and cultural backdrops that frame each narrative, from C's experiences of moving from Madagascar to Paris as a bisexual woman of colour, to B's experiences of conversion therapy from the Catholic Church in rural Italy. Perhaps the most eye-opening story so far is that of K from Moscow, who speaks of being arrested, not for her sexuality, but simply for having a subtle patch in Ukrainian colours on her backpack.'

It is hoped to publish *Bi Christian Stories* in English sometime next year, with editions in German and Spanish planned in the future. For more information, see [bisexualchristianstories.my.canva.site](https://bisexualchristianstories.my.canva.site)



# If there are Oystercatchers, there must be God!

The Revd David Coleman, chaplain to Eco-Congregation Scotland and AUC member, has developed his 13-point 'Oystercatcher Manifesto for Bible reading' over many years.

1

**Your printed Bibles and commentaries** presume a world without climate crisis. They're made for a different planet. None lack their own agenda and slant, all of which is fine... BUT even the most conscientious translators translate only into the idiom they're expected to. Beware the semantic exclusion of non-human personalities (e.g. in Mark 16:15, Jesus tells his disciples to 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation' (NRSV), but *The Good News Bible* tells us to 'preach the gospel to all people'.)

2

**Experiential, pedestrian, terrestrial** Bible imagery is rooted in experience rather than in detached abstracts. This stops us despising writers as 'primitive'. The environmental literacy of writers like Jeremiah (who knows his trees) and Isaiah (try writing chapter 55 without knowledge of the water cycle) is impressive. The 'dome of heaven' (Genesis 1) is how the sky actually looks when you look up. 'Outer space' provokes wonder, but is weaponised to distract from terrestrial urgency (Hint: what do playboys like Musk, Bezos and Branson mess about in?)

3

**When you hear 'Earth'...** Not just a location but, next to God (or Jesus in the New Testament), the personality most mentioned in the Bible. 'Heaven and Earth' (Sky and Soil), taken together, are one unified Creation. An undivided dynamic unity created by God the Sustainer. Everything affects everything. Rebel options: Spell Earth with a capital 'E'. You'll think differently. THEN: only ever use 'who' rather than 'it' for Earth.

4

**When you hear 'Heaven'...** Look at the sky today. In the Bible, Heaven/Sky are the same word, most of the time. Heaven is not 'another universe' – that's science fiction, not the Bible! But if you insist on separating them, experience Skyness first of all, and only then bring your imagination into gear for 'Heaven'. Likewise: 'Angels' are not aliens but fellow creatures. 'Unseen' is not 'unreal'. Or we'll only value what we think has purpose.

5

**Give us this day:** In the Lord's Prayer, are you praying for God's will to be done throughout both 'Heaven and Earth'? In a climate crisis, interdependent realms of God's Unified Creation need that prayer. We can't take it for granted that 'heaven' is invulnerable and in balance (see Matthew 11:12).

6

**When you hear 'World'...** Touch the Earth, stroke an animal, drink water. Eat bread. Don't accept 'world' as merely 'human culture'. Allow that 'World' includes every creature. Choose to read that this is what God so loves that God 'gave his only Son' (affirmed in prayer globally).

7

**When you hear 'Spirit'...** Stand in the Wind and feel their movement. Breathe in and out. Spirit, Breath and the wayward gusty Wind belong together in the Bible and require no additional rapture to step into. Spirit is reality, not abstraction.

8

**When you hear 'Redemption'...** Think 'liberation'. Christ and the truth (both, without conflict) set us free! Coming into your own place and purpose. Don't wait till you're dead to find it.

9

**When you hear 'obedience'...** Obediently and faithfully question who or what you are being asked to be obedient to. The only story of Jesus' 'obedient' childhood is when he disappears in a crowded city and drives his parents frantic. Do you serve Church best by 'obedience' or by loving challenge?

10

**When you hear 'servant/slave'...** Remember the useless ones do only what they're told (e.g. Luke 17:10). Check to see if translators have made 'good' slaves into 'servants' and kept the bad ones 'slaves'. (See no.12)





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11

### When you hear of God in Christ Jesus...

Remember and respect with gratitude and wonder how Church has insisted on (though often ignored) the full and unreserved humanity of Jesus. How much of this is shared with other creatures? Even to a cellular level? Feel your own body. Go to the toilet. Get hot, get cold. Swim in the sea. The radical implication of the Incarnation, if you don't limply pass it off as a 'mere metaphor', is that Jesus also shares our evolutionary history – thus also that of all living things.

12

**No more othering...** After 'Black Lives Matter' and 'Legacies of Slavery', churches are more than ever aware of the 'othering' of races, gender identities, different abilities etc. 'Stewardship Christianity', which identifies our calling as 'looking after (God's) property' without allowing that Creation has feelings or an opinion, is well past its sell-by date. Cf. the Poverty Truth Commission: 'Nothing about Earth without Earth

is for Earth'. God's Rainbow Covenant (Genesis 9) is with 'All Flesh' and 'The Earth' rather than just with us. We are the Earth. So is all life. From which follows...

13

**The Cross is also always the Tree:** Ancient stone crosses present the Cross as habitat for Birds of Heaven. A sermon without trees may be a crime, because it deprives people of what they need in order to respond to the signs of our times. Rebel Option: Can you bring a tree into church on a special festival – like Christmas, perhaps? And let the tree be tree?

**'Climate denial'** needs to be no more acceptable in churches than racism because: i) It's stupid, and God is no protection against stupidity; ii) It does real harm, and not just to others; iii) It's deeply ingrained in our (church) culture and will stay that way unless named and challenged.

(See 'Prayer becomes action', p.11)

## Listen to creation

**In the latest 'Politics in the Pulpit' podcast from JPIT, Alex Clare-Young talks with 'mission theologian' Alison Webster.**

The conversation covers Peter's vision of 'something like a large sheet' being lowered to the ground, filled with 'all

kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air' (Acts 10:11-12).

They ask: Does this reading elevate non-human animals, encouraging us to respect and learn from everything around us? [jpit.uk/politicsinthepulpit](http://jpit.uk/politicsinthepulpit)

# 'Give us today our daily bread'

## Guarantee our essentials

**A** campaign is underway, led by the Trussell Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), to ensure everyone gets a level of income that will help them climb out of poverty.

The campaign organisers write:

'When people are going without, it's time to **Guarantee Our Essentials**.

'Our social security system, like our NHS, should be there for us all when we need it most, but right now it's not even providing enough to cover the cost of life's essentials and it's pushing people to food banks.

'The UK government has proposed huge cuts to disabled people's social security. More than three quarters of people on Universal Credit and disability payments have already

gone without essentials in the last six months.

'The UK government's planned cuts aren't about making social security better, or helping people overcome barriers to work. They're about making short-term savings by slashing the support of disabled people who most need our collective protection from hunger.

### WE NEED AN ESSENTIALS GUARANTEE

'The basic rate of Universal Credit should at least cover the cost of essentials like food, household bills and travel, but it is not currently set according to any objective assessment of what people need. This is only £92 a week for a single adult. That means there's a significant shortfall between people's living costs and their income, and it's pushing people to food banks.

'This is why we're calling for an Essentials Guarantee within Universal

Credit, which means the basic rate at least covers life's essentials and that support can never be pulled below that level.'

Since JRF and Trussell Trust launched the campaign, a wide range of parties and policy makers have shown support for the policy and shared the desire to end the need for food banks. 'Our collective voice has demonstrated that people in the UK are concerned about the rising levels of hardship in their communities. Now we need our government to lay out how they'll tackle this.'

### MORE INFORMATION

Read more about the Essentials Guarantee policy on the JRF website: [bit.ly/JRFTT92](https://bit.ly/JRFTT92).

You can also email your MP and ask them to call on the Work and Pensions Secretary to rethink the planned cuts social security: [bit.ly/3F5TZzv](https://bit.ly/3F5TZzv).



Photo by Ron Lach



## Prayer becomes action

**Professor David Clough is a Methodist Local Preacher, and a leading scholar in Christian ethics, currently resident at Aberdeen University. He asks what it means for Christians to pray the words of the Lord's Prayer, 'Give us this day our daily bread'. (Or, in the Jesus Prayer that many of us use at AUC: 'With the bread we need for today, feed us.')**

**L**ike all God's other living creatures, we humans are radically dependent on God and the world around us for our survival.

Our bodies are vulnerable: we can survive very little time without oxygen, only short periods without water, and not very long without food. The Psalmist observes that all creatures look to God to give them food and praises God that 'when you open your hand, they are filled with good things' (Psalms 104:27–28).

We live in a time when there is sufficient food for everyone on the planet, but many people don't have access to healthy food, both in poorer and wealthier countries. In such a context, this petition to God is not only a reminder of our dependence, but also of our responsibility to ensure we don't consume food or other resources in such a way that others don't have the means to feed themselves. We know that the God to whom we pray wills that no one is left hungry.

When we pray to God for our daily bread, then, we are praying that we receive the means to sustain ourselves in a way that is also compatible with our neighbours receiving their daily bread.

The quotation from Psalm 104 is a reminder that God's concern does not end with human creatures. The God we address in the Lord's Prayer is the

The problem is ... there are major systemic problems with how we produce food globally. To put it bluntly, the way we produce food is killing humans, killing vast numbers of domesticated and wild animals, and killing our shared environment. Worsening human health and disease, human food insecurity, human water insecurity, injustice to food workers, environmental racism, farmed animal

suffering, wild animal extinction, air and water pollution, and weather extremes from a changing climate all follow from food business as usual. And food business as usual will continue until citizens demand something different.

In this context, to pray 'Give us this day our daily bread' is a regular encouragement to rethink our participation in food systems that imperil the lives of our human and more-than-human neighbours. Local churches can make changes in the right direction by consuming fewer animal products, because the vast majority of these come from factory farms that operate in ways that are bad for human health, bad for farmed animals, destroy wild animal habitats, and are a major cause of carbon emissions.

CreatureKind's DefaultVeg Congregations programme has some great ideas for how to

get started – find out more at [bit.ly/VegAUC](https://bit.ly/VegAUC).

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God of all creatures. So, just as we should not expect an answer to our prayer for daily bread that prevents our neighbours from receiving theirs, we should also not expect that the God we worship provides us with food in a way that unnecessarily prevents the flourishing of fellow non-human creatures.



# What's On?

Most of our gatherings and resources are currently online. You can find out details on our website [www.augustine.org.uk](http://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](mailto:centre.manager@augustine.org.uk)).

Find us on 

Check our posts on the AUC Facebook page.



Giving made easier with AUC's QR code

# June / July 2025

Every Sunday at 11am: Blended Sunday worship and after-service Zoom social.

Contextual Bible Study takes place online twice-weekly, on Wednesday at 7.30pm and on Thursday at 12 noon.

June		
Sun 1	12:45pm – 3:15pm	Belonging: Exploring Church Membership (hybrid)
Thurs 5	7:30pm	Our Tribe LGBTQI+ Gathering
Sun 8		<b>Tax Justice Sunday <a href="http://www.justmoney.org.uk">www.justmoney.org.uk</a></b>
Tues 10	7:30pm	AUC Church Meeting (online)
Sat 14	10am – 4pm	National Synod of Scotland 25th anniversary, Perth (see p.5)
Sun 15	2pm – 3pm	Space to Remember
Sat 21	10am onwards	Pride Edinburgh (see p.5)
Sat 28	2pm – 3:30pm	AUC Strawberry Tea
Sun 29	1:30pm	Come OUT with Our Tribe (LGBTQI+) (Coffee Saints, Little King St)
July		
Tues 1	7:30pm	AUC Church Council
Thu 3	7:30pm	Our Tribe LGBTQI+ Gathering
Sun 13	12:30pm	AUC Church Meeting

## Seeds deadline

The next issue of **Seeds** will be a double issue for August and September 2025. The copy deadline for the August/September edition is Wednesday 23 July.

## WANT TO WRITE FOR SEEDS?

If you're thinking of writing a longer piece for **Seeds**, we hope this information will be helpful. Roughly speaking, we find that a good length for a one-page article is c.570 words, allowing for an image as well. A two-page article will be no more than 900–950 words.

Augustine United Church has been in ecumenical partnership with Greyfriars Kirk and St Columba's by the Castle since 2002, and we enjoy joint services and events through the year. You can discover more about our partners at [greyfriarskirk.com](http://greyfriarskirk.com) and [stcolumbasbythecastle.org.uk](http://stcolumbasbythecastle.org.uk).

