

Seeds

Feb / Mar 2026

encourage – inspire – challenge

Augustine
United Church



Being one

Revd Juliet
Stephenson



This issue's guest reflection comes from the Revd Juliet Stephenson, Rector of our Episcopal partner congregation at St Columba's by the Castle since last summer.

I came up from the south coast, where I was leading a church community through a transition phase. While there, I introduced membership of Inclusive Church and introduced a church community network called 'Open Table'.

To be welcomed into a covenant with ecumenical partners who all share the same values, vision and commitment to collaborative working is totally refreshing.

As The Local Church (TLC), we celebrated together the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at St Columba's on 18 January. To seek our similarities, rather than highlighting difference, is what Christian unity IS at its heart. It's no surprise that I found this service so wonderful, for you have enabled this sort of thing to come very easily by your commitment as TLC communities. So, thank you!

What makes this for me so much more poignant is that ecumenism, when it is done with true communion, is so easy to achieve. I've been ordained for almost 22 years and have had wonderful relationships in all my

communities with other Christian denominations. But sadly, within my former denomination, the Church of England, clergy and congregations living side by side bore so much difference that an outsider looking in had difficulty seeing the mission of God as a coherent message. Important issues that impact the lives of good, faithful people (lay and ordained) are ignored, dismissed and devalued. Fewer and fewer folk can easily find a place at God's table.

Hence my deep joy at being welcomed to join the Scottish Episcopal Church and as the Rector of a wonderful church, topped off with being one of the common ministers within TLC.

Thank you for your welcome, your support, your heart for the gospel message of inclusion and the willingness to do things as 'one'.

It would be amazing to get to the place where we see the fluidity of church as being 'just the place my bum hits the pew' – which pew (or chair) doesn't matter, as long as week by week, Sunday by Sunday, we move ourselves into a place where we feel welcome and comfortable, and know we will grow in faith and devotion to Christ.

So, with that in mind, and our bums ready to sit on one another's pews and seats, beanbags and floors – here's to 2026!

Whatever we can do as one!

However we can support one another's causes!

Wherever we land to worship! Let's make sure that we do it with a heart for love, a heart of Christ and a heart for our family of fellow Christians.

With so much love and friendship for you all,

Juliet

This Month

LGBTQ+ PERSPECTIVES

Sam Stone on why LGBTQ+ history matters this February



THE WORLD TREMBLES?

Charity Tozivepi-Nzegwu on power and restraint



ELECTION'S COMING

Preparing for the Scottish Parliament election this May



EVERYDAY NORMAL

Carol Joyner's review of Sarah Jones' wit and warm humanity





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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.

Please pick up a 'Sharing' card at church or email **Lewis Reay** directly on rota@augustine.org.uk.

Local and Global

News from the United Reformed Church



LIVING WAGE SYNOD

The National Synod of Scotland has received accreditation as a Living Wage employer. This was agreed as an action within the Synod's Church with People in the Margins policy, adopted in 2025. The policy also encourages local churches to seek accreditation if they employ people. (Augustine United is accredited.) This is part of the Synod's commitment to transform the unjust structures of society, the fourth mark of mission.



ABCS OF LGBTQ+

From the URC's Children and Youth Development Officers, a webinar: Talking About... ABCs of LGBTQ+ inclusive language. Including space for asking how to support children and young people.

Wednesday 18 February 7-8-pm.
bit.ly/T4lkingAbout

ROOTS – DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

A drop-in day at Roots, the grace-driven student community with a Christian foundation. The offices on South College Street, near Old College, will be open for anyone who is interested in hearing more about the organisation's work.

Sunday afternoon, 17 May. More details to follow, or speak to AUC member Andrew Owen.



COUNT YOUR PLASTIC

The Big Plastic Count will run from 9 to 15 March. You can sign up now at thebigplasticcount.com/sign-up. A chance to help gather evidence about the true scale of the plastic crisis and help influence the policies of government.

SYNOD VACANCIES

The National Synod of Scotland is looking to fill two key roles: Synod Clerk (20hr/week, salaried) and Synod Treasurer (25 days/year, paid or voluntary – negotiable). Applicants need to be members of the United Reformed Church or of a Local Ecumenical Partnership in which the URC is a formal member.

Interested? Details at www.urc.org.uk/jobs or contact the Synod Moderator direct at moderator@urcscotland.org.uk. Closing date for applications: Friday 27 March.

CHRISTIAN AID GATHERING

An online event for supporters, churches, and partners from across Scotland to celebrate our shared commitment to global justice. As well as the launch of Christian Aid Week 2026, you can hear from Christian Aid partners in Kenya about their work.

Tuesday 24 February, 10:30am-12 noon.
Sign up at www.christianaid.org.uk/events.

WINDRUSH SCHEME – HOW TO HELP

Interfaith Scotland and the Windrush Engagement Team are offering a guide to supporting members of the Windrush Generation – those who came from Commonwealth countries to help rebuild Britain after the war, but who have often faced difficulties later in life.

Organisers says faith communities and local networks often play a vital role in supporting those who feel isolated, are unsure where to turn, or don't know what government schemes are available to them. 'By learning about these schemes, you can help spread awareness and ensure that anyone affected knows there is help available.'

Online meeting on Monday 16 February at 12 noon. Book via Eventbrite at bit.ly/W1ndh3lp.



Photo: Steve Eason via Flickr

ANTI-SLAVERY MEMORIAL

In Edinburgh, the owner of the Howie's restaurants has proposed a bronze plaque commemorating anti-slavery campaigner Frederick Douglass outside its Waterloo Place restaurant. More at bit.ly/Douglassplaque.

Life on the Bridge

News from Augustine United Church

NEW ORGAN

Stephen Ziffo's Christmas came early when AUC took possession of a new organ. The electric organ, manufactured by Makin Organs, was generously donated to us by Hamilton URC on its closure last year. Many thanks to Ewen Harley, Stephen, and Graham Rule who put in the hours to get the organ transported to Edinburgh and up and running in our sanctuary.

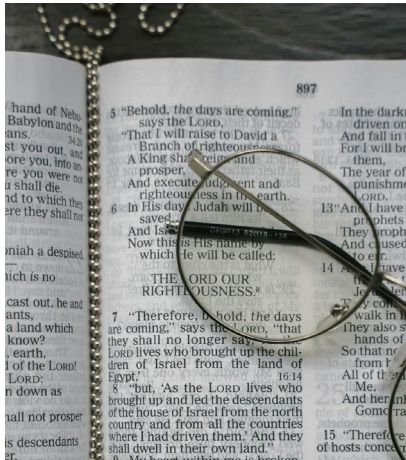
Stephen says that there is still work to do to finalise the organ's installation but that 'we're heading in the right direction'.



'WALK HUMBLY' WITH TRUSSELL AND FOOD BANKS THIS LENT

This Lent, the Trussell Trust is reflecting on Jesus' encounters on the road with a resource written with lived experience partners, Christians who have had no other choice but to turn to a food bank to survive. With them, explore how we can create welcoming spaces where everyone can feel like they belong in our church communities.

'Walking Humbly' Bible study resources can be ordered for free at bit.ly/w4lkhumbly



CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY – WHAT IS IT?

Contextual Bible Studies take place online each week on Wednesdays at 7.30pm and Thursdays at 12 noon.

Small groups discuss a short Bible passage, sometimes one that will be used in an upcoming Sunday worship service.

Why 'contextual'? This method of reading the Bible was developed in South Africa. It seeks to understand a passage in its original context and to find resonance with our current context, listening for what wisdom the passage might offer today.

Sessions last one hour. No previous Bible knowledge is required. All are welcome to join in. If you would like to join a group, please contact Rachel at centre.manager@augustine.org.uk.

FINANCE AND PROPERTY TEAM UPDATE

In Dec/Jan *Seeds*, we did a wee roundup of some of the more significant changes our group oversaw in 2025 and looked ahead to some of our plans for 2026.

Regulars will have already noticed the new organ and the refurbished floor in the sanctuary – both excellent improvements to our worshipping space. During the first part of 2026, we plan to replace the projector

system in the sanctuary with new screens that will give us a much sharper and brighter resolution; to install a new intercom system (in conjunction with our Fringe venue coordinators Paradise Green), to ensure the security of our building and staff; and to install shutters in the upper level of the Sanctuary (part-funded by a small Synod grant), to assist with heat retention and managing natural light levels.

The replacement organ may also require new speakers, and we are also seeking to find a way to install a hearing loop that is free from interference noise, which could mean replacing the sanctuary microphones.

All in all, we'll be investing upwards of £40,000 in the building in the next few months. It will be money well spent and the improvements will be significant, but it won't be cheap!

In terms of our financial performance in 2025, an unexpected surplus of circa £40,000 enabled us to more than offset a downwards trend in freewill offerings. The surplus, though most welcome, was fuelled by some exceptional lettings activity rather than being a trend we expect to continue. Therefore, we are asking everyone to consider if you are in a position to increase your freewill offering and/or Gift Aid at this time. Or perhaps you might feel able to make a one-off donation to support the exceptional expenditure we have planned for this year.

We do appreciate how challenging the cost of living crisis has been and we quite understand that not everyone will feel able to give any more at present, and that Gift Aid is not suitable for everyone. Whatever you decide, please know that everyone's contributions to our church life, whether it comes in financial or other forms, is very much appreciated.



Remember Christmas? As usual, our lovely tree was brought to us from the Carcant Estate – and benefited from an after-church session making decorations. Thanks to all decorators and our tree-gifters.

VOLUNTEER GATHERINGS

Augustine has an incredible number of committed volunteers who undertake many roles each week – both on Sundays and in the days leading up to them. Rota organiser Lewis Reay says that the last gathering of volunteers for sharing and learning was very successful. If you'd like to come to a future session – to find out more about what's involved, share your experiences with other volunteers, or discuss updates to roles – make a note of these dates:

Sunday 22 March 2026 and
Sunday 6 September 2026.

Each gathering will start with a sandwich lunch at 12.45pm, and the

meeting will run until 2.30pm. More information nearer the time.

CARETAKER VACANCY

A vacancy for a cleaner/caretaker role at the church is soon to be re-advertised. Check the regular Friday email for details, or email the Centre Manager at centre.manager@augustine.org.uk.

CHURCH MEETINGS

In 2026 we will continue our practice of holding more of our Church Meetings in the building on Sundays after the service. They will be on the same days as our Soup and Bread Lunches, so that people can be fuelled by conversation and a mug of soup

to join in Church Meeting. The crèche area will remain out for children during meetings and it will also be possible to join the meetings online. Some meetings will remain online on Tuesday evenings.

Coming up:

Sunday, 8 February, 12.30-2pm In-building (hybrid)

Sunday, 8 March, 12.30-2pm In-building (hybrid)

Tuesday, 14 April, 7.30-9pm Online

Sunday, 8 May (AGM), 12.30-2pm In-building (hybrid)

Perspectives on LGBTQ+ History

Sam Stone is a member of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group in the United Reformed Church's East Midlands Synod. Here, she explores the importance of marking LGBTQ+ History Month, and some of the changes made by Churches over the past 60 years.

LGBTQ+ History Month is celebrated during February. It is a time to remember the origins of the LGBTQ+ movement, to honour those who came before us, and to reflect on both the progress made and the work still to be done.

Late on the night of 27 June 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn, a Mafia-owned gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York. Police raids on gay bars were common, but they usually took place on quieter weeknights. This raid, however, was deliberately planned for a busy Friday night, with the intention of arresting as many people as possible and shutting down a Mafia-owned establishment.

What the police did not anticipate was resistance. People fought back, joined by a growing crowd of onlookers. Objects were thrown, violence

broke out, and the small group of officers sent to carry out the raid were eventually forced to barricade themselves inside the bar until they were rescued by the fire brigade and riot police. The unrest continued for six days and became a pivotal moment in LGBTQ+ history.

Although the related movement was originally referred to as 'the Gay Rights Movement', Stonewall was not the beginning of activism. Groups such as the Mattachine Society in the USA and the Homosexual Law Reform Society in the UK had already been campaigning since the 1950s. However, Stonewall was felt globally. Across the world, people who had long been oppressed began to stand up and demand change. One year after the Stonewall uprising, the first Pride march took place.

LGBTQ+ History Month celebrates not only how the movement began, but also the achievements, contributions,

and ongoing work of countless individuals and groups who continue to challenge discrimination and work for equality.

So why is this important? It is important to recognise past struggles – discrimination, homophobia, and transphobia – while also acknowledging how far we have come. It is about raising awareness, challenging prejudice, and helping to create a safer, more inclusive society.

“It is important to recognise past struggles while also acknowledging how far we have come”

For me, it is also about recognising how far some churches have come.

At the age of 16, in 1996, I was told by

Photo: Pavel Danilyuk via Pexels





a priest that God would turn away from me and that I would go to hell if I did not renounce 'these ways'. I was scared, confused, and ashamed – frightened because I liked other girls, and not boys as I was expected to. I heard what people said about homosexuals, and I felt alone and forsaken for something I could not change.

I was never encouraged to explore my faith at home, so my faith grew quietly – through school, Brownies, and slipping into church when it was open. But after that encounter, I never went back to church. If I was not accepted by God, what was the point? It would be another 20 years before I returned. I never told anyone until eight years later, when I met my now wife.

How many young people – and older people too – still feel alone and scared today?

So, what has the Church done in relation to the LGBTQ+ movement? Although the Church in fact played a role in decriminalising sex between two consenting men in 1967, the Church's shifting stance on homosexuality has often been painfully slow.

A significant moment came in 1998 at the Lambeth Conference, where Anglican bishops debated sexuality

and passed Resolution 1.10 (bit.ly/1998lambeth). This committed bishops to listening to gay Christians, affirmed that they are loved by God, and condemned irrational fear of homosexual people while also rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with scripture. Shortly afterwards, 150 bishops – mainly from the USA, UK, Canada, and Australia – issued an open letter pledging to work towards full inclusion in the life of the Church.

Progress continued, though not without conflict. In 2002, the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada became the first Anglican body to offer same-sex unions. In the UK, civil partnerships became legal in 2005, though they could not take place in churches. Same-sex marriage was legalised in England and Scotland in 2014, and the first same-sex marriage in a church took place in 2017. More at bit.ly/CofEsex.

In July 2016, the United Reformed Church (URC) General Assembly voted to allow individual congregations to decide whether to register their buildings for same-sex marriage. This made the URC the largest Christian denomination in Britain at the time to give this freedom to local churches. The URC continues to show its support through opposition to conversion

therapy, support for transgender and non-binary people, and partnerships such as the Open Table Network opentable.lgbt.

Why does this matter? Because it gives people like me – and thousands of others – peace. It tells us we are safe, accepted, and valued. It reminds us that people in the past and in the future have fought and still are fighting so that we do not have to live in fear of being who we are, and so that future generations might be spared the torment experienced by so many before them.

Homophobia still exists. Young people are still frightened to tell their parents who they are, fearing rejection. So, what can we do? We can be kind. We can be supportive. We can listen, stand alongside one another, and choose love over fear.

Because at the heart of our faith is Jesus – who welcomed the outcast, challenged exclusion, and loved without conditions. Jesus loves us all, exactly as we are. No exceptions. No requirements. Just love.

This edited version of Sam's article is share with her permission. To read the full version, go to bit.ly/LGBTQhist26.

See Jo Clifford's reflections on changes in her lifetime, p.11

Making our wishes clear

PREPARING FOR THE MAY ELECTION



On Thursday 7 May, parliamentary elections will be held in Scotland.

The Revd Fiona Bennett writes, 'Particularly given the increase in poverty and hatred across the world, and the rise of the Reform party in the UK, the Scottish election in May is going to be very significant and important to engage with as people of faith.'

Fiona suggests three things for us to consider:

1. To vote and to encourage others to vote.
2. To use this election as an opportunity to raise concerns and hopes with candidates with both passion and grace.
3. To pray for those in government, and all people, to be and build a more just and humane society.

GETTING READY TO VOTE

You can get information about key dates at the Electoral Commission website: www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

Another useful website is www.mygov.scot (go to Voting in elections in Scotland/How to vote).

You will not need photo ID for Scottish Parliament elections or local council elections (see Scottish Assessors' Association – www.saa.gov.uk)

Monday 20 April	Deadline to register to vote
Tuesday 21 April (5pm)	Deadline to submit your application for a postal vote or a postal-proxy vote
Tuesday 28 April (5pm)	Deadline to submit your application to vote by proxy
Tuesday 28 April (5pm)	Deadline to apply for free voter ID

YOUR POLLING STATION

You will get a polling card in the post before the election. This will tell you where to vote. If you haven't received your polling card, contact your local council.

Opening times for voting: Thursday 7 May 2026, 7am – 10pm.

THINKING AHEAD

The ecumenical Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT), which brings together expertise from the URC, Methodist and Baptist Churches, offers resources and information around elections and broader political questions:

'One of JPIT's six hopes is for "A politics characterised by listening, kindness and truthfulness". We believe that Christianity has a lot to say about politics. We cannot ignore the challenges facing society today, and we need to engage fully with democratic processes and decision-making. By participating in elections and political life, Christians can make a positive impact on the political landscape.'

JPIT's website (jpit.uk) and posts on social media are always worth exploring.



Photo: Manny Becerra via Unsplash

AMNESTY'S MANIFESTO

Amnesty has published a human rights manifesto, setting out ten calls on the next Scottish government. Their priorities include maximising rights safeguards for people seeking asylum, fully decriminalising abortion, and respecting and protecting the rights of LGBTI+ people by banning conversion practices.

We may not agree with every point – but they are worth checking out to help us clarify which issues we do want to press our politicians on. Maybe these; maybe others.

Amnesty writes: 'We want political parties to prioritise laws that will help create a fairer, more equal Scotland. These include a Human Rights Bill that will empower people to fight for a decent standard of living. We all deserve a warm home, proper healthcare and a financial safety net. None of those things are too much to ask for.'

Read the manifesto here: bit.ly/scotman26 Register for its launch on Monday 2 February from 6:30pm to 7:30pm GMT via Eventbrite: bit.ly/amnestyscot26.

When the world trembles

The Revd Charity Tozivepi-Nzegwu is a Methodist minister serving in the Cambridge area. She is Chair of the Methodist Church's Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Committee. Here she reflects on recent international events.

I have learnt that there are moments when the world trembles, not because violence has already erupted, but because the conditions for it are being normalised. When power begins to speak as though borders are optional, consent is irrelevant, and the lives of ordinary people are collateral.

Scripture teaches us to pay attention to such moments.

'Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil on their beds. When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in their power.' (Micah 2:1) This is not merely about politics. It is about moral imagination. About whether the strong believe they are accountable. About whether might is mistaken for right. About whether law exists to restrain power or to be bent by it.



The scriptural wisdom tradition is clear. When authority forgets its limits, chaos follows. When force replaces dialogue, when domination disguises itself as order, when resources are valued more than lives, the earth itself becomes unsafe.

'The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord ... He who sits in the heavens laughs' (Psalm 2:2-4) Not because suffering is amusing, but because no empire is eternal.

There is a dangerous logic at work in the world, one that suggests that if power can act without consequence, then others will follow. Scripture rejects this utterly. Violence begets violence. Injustice multiplies itself. What is permitted

"There is a dangerous logic that suggests that if power can act without consequence, then others will follow"

for one soon becomes permission for many.

The prophetic tradition does not call us to cheer, nor to inflame, nor to choose sides hastily. It calls us to discernment. To truth telling. To remembering that law, justice, and restraint are not weaknesses but gifts that protect the vulnerable.

God is never impressed by military strength. God listens for the cries of those who will pay the price long after speeches are finished, families who will grieve, children who will inherit rubble instead of hope.

'...Seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.' (Isaiah 1:17)

This is a moment for vigilance, not vengeance.

For wisdom, not bravado.

For courage that refuses the seduction of domination.

And for prayer, not the kind that numbs conscience, but the kind that sharpens it.

May we remain awake.

May we refuse the lie that force is inevitable.

May we remember that peace is not passive, it is disciplined, costly, and holy.

This article is shared in edited form with Charity's permission.

Everyday Normal – Sarah Jones tour

Carol Joyner reports on an evening of wit, wisdom and warm humanity.

Towards the end of last year, Sarah Jones's **Everyday Normal** tour came to Edinburgh, hosted in the sanctuary of St Columba's by the Castle Episcopal Church.

The Revd Canon Sarah Jones, the first post-gender-change person to be ordained in the Church of England, is priest-in-charge of St John the Baptist Church in Cardiff. She is also a gifted public speaker and folk musician.

Having already received positive reports of Sarah's entertainment value, the evening exceeded all my expectations, and some more.

The first half was dedicated to her outing as a transgender priest by the *Daily Mail* back in 2004, and the furore that followed, despite the support of her diocesan bishop in Hereford, Anthony Priddis. The second half, following a cake-enriched interval courtesy of St Columba's Revd Juliet Stephenson and co, focused on Sarah's current role at St John's in Cardiff, and the public response to trans issues. Sarah then took questions from the audience.

Unsurprisingly, Sarah spoke to last year's Supreme Court decision to define a woman as biologically female at birth, articulating several key arguments against the move, with a series of erudite and humorous takes on the topic.

I particularly enjoyed her well-made point around dangers and threats to women, which do not come from the tiny pocket of vulnerable trans women in society, but from cisgendered men. This has historically always been the case. The presence of intersex bodies and, therefore, identities that challenge biological and gender binaries is a further reality ignored by the political and evangelical right.

The problem, as Sarah explained, is that the liberal left has not mobilised itself as successfully as anti-trans campaigners, often lacking the political nous to respond effectively to the wilful ignorance and hatred directed toward trans women.

Sarah's humour proved an effective vehicle for making her points around both the vitriol of the right-leaning press and its public, and the sometimes self-defeating response of trans campaigners and their supporters, who are often disorganised and, at times, woefully naïve in their counterattacks. A recent TERFS versus Trans demonstration in central Cardiff was discussed, in which the trans side did itself no favours by becoming embroiled in

petty jibes, suggesting on one protest sign that TERFS should be drowned in the River Taff. When invited to speak at the event, Sarah found herself at the centre of an X troll-fest, in which she was variously described as a 'Christian lunatic' and a badly turned out Darth Vader lookalike!



While Sarah's presentation of her X-feed gave rise to much mirth among us, it did highlight the polarised views of the public towards trans issues and, to a lesser extent, the lack of respect afforded the clergy in today's secular society.

What I particularly enjoyed about Sarah's performance was her warmth and humanity. My wife and I arrived early to the event and Sarah was quite happy to chat away to us while setting up, and indeed mixed with the audience during the interval. She also took the time to respond thoughtfully to questions from the audience.

There was a refreshing lack of ego on display and she was unapologetically herself – clever, witty, erudite but also very, very human. Very everyday normal, in fact.

Image: shared with permission

Changes for the good?

Because “all news is bad news” (and the rest is PR) – discuss! – it’s worth pausing to ask what good things are happening around us.

Jo Clifford (below) points to a shift in attitudes in society. What would you identify?

Some examples:

While **plastic pollution** is set to double by 2040 at the current rate, existing initiatives could ‘virtually eliminate’ it while supporting millions of jobs. (Pew Charitable Trusts research)
One key solution seems to be refill schemes. France has mandated them. Scotland’s refill scheme is making a tortuous route to implementation, hopefully in 2027.

Some **species came back from the brink** in 2025. They included cranes in Scotland, and the recovery of 150 on-the-brink species in England (research by Natural England).

Globally, less than one in five people aged 15 or older has not received any **formal education**. Only two hundred years ago, that ratio was reversed – only a small elite received formal education. (Our World in Data)

The **impact of smartphones on childhood** and learning is being debated more widely – legislation in Australia has given other countries food for thought.

Around the world, people are **transforming urban areas** into greener, more liveable spaces – and reviving the civic spirit that makes cities feel alive.

Seventy-nine nations have now ratified the **Global Ocean Treaty**. The treaty will enter into force this year, giving protection to waters that lie outside of national boundaries.

What examples would you choose? Let us know at newsletter@augustine.org.uk.

All change at Pitlochry

In January, Pitlochry Festival Theatre hosted the **Out in the Hills Festival**, curated by the theatre’s new artistic director, **Alan Cumming**.

Jo Clifford and her daughter were there, in conversation, in an event called Family Pride, ‘all about the joys and the difficulties and delights of being a queer family’. In the days before the event, Jo shared these thoughts:

‘It’s wonderful it’s happening at Pitlochry because Pitlochry is such an important place for us. I had five plays on at Pitlochry in the nineties. And each summer, when I was in rehearsals, we’d go there for our family holiday, and we had such a happy time. And the thing is that in those days the theatre was run by a gay artistic director. And there he was and he had to be in the closet. And there was me, a trans playwright, and I also had to be in the closet. And neither of us would have imagined even for an instant that it would have

been possible for there to be a festival called Out in the Hills, a queer festival. And that it would be possible for me to be out and proud and part of it. Unimaginable then, and yet it’s not that long ago.

‘But there it is. It’s happening. The old order is falling apart. Falling apart before our very eyes. And a new way of being is coming into being. And we are all transitioning. Transitioning into a different kind of society.

‘And those custodians of the old order, those who benefit from plundering the world, are fighting with every ounce of their strength to retain it and deploying horrendous violence and the most grotesque falsehoods as they try to do so. But they are losing. Change is coming and they cannot prevent it.

‘In the words of Queen Jesus, hatred is the only thing they have, and it doesn’t amount to much. And no matter what they say and what they do, they cannot stop the change that is coming, and one day we will all be free.’

Shared with permission.

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 posts on the AUC Facebook page.



Giving made easier with AUC's QR code

February / March 2026

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 (see p.4).

NHS Mental Health Drop-in is cancelled until further notice.

February		
Mon 2		Race Equality Week
Thurs 5	7.30pm	Our Tribe LGBTQI+ Gathering
Sun 8		Racial Justice Sunday
		After church, a soup and bread lunch, followed by Church Meeting (hybrid)
	12.30pm	NDAS
Sat 14	2-4pm	Our Tribe Afternoon Tea for LGBT History Month
Wed 18		Ash Wednesday
Fri 20		World Day of Social Justice
Sat 21	10am-1pm	TLC Lent Retreat (St Columba's by the Castle)
Sun 22	1.30-3pm	Come OUT with Our Tribe (LGBTQI+), Coffee Saints, Little King St.
Thurs 26	7.30pm	AUC Church Council
March		
Sun 1	1-2.30pm	Remembering Space (1-1.30pm lunch)
Thurs 5	7.30pm	Our Tribe LGBTQI+ Gathering
Sun 8		After church, a soup and bread lunch, followed by Church Meeting (hybrid)
Mon 9		Big Plastic Count (see p.3)
Sun 22	1-3pm	Rota volunteer get together
Fri 27	7.30pm	Event for Trans visibility Day (31 March)
Sun 29		Palm/Passion Sunday
	1.30-3pm	Coffee Social: Come OUT with Our Tribe (LGBTQI+), Coffee Saints, Little King St.
Mon 30		Holy Week

Seeds deadline

The next issue of *Seeds* will be a double issue for April and May 2026. The copy deadline for the April/May edition is 11 March.

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 and stcolumbasbythecastle.org.uk.

