

GLASGOW UNITARIANS

JUNE 2021

NEWS & VIEWS



*A blend
of chalice
logos
old and new*

How hard life must be
in the many places on the globe
where people are not yet free
where there are people still
in the grip of slavery, in bondage,
in fear for their lives,
for their children's lives
for any kind of future
for religious persecution,
indiscriminant death



How blind we are,
to the realities around the world
How silent we are
to the evil that stalks this sphere
How much more we could do
if we took our freedoms more seriously
and invested in justice
to the four corners
of this troubled planet

Raymond A. Foss

Programme and notices

Social events in June

5th The Nurture Society are planning a meeting with Alcoholics Anonymous to fly kites in Cambuslang Park, and members and friends of Glasgow Unitarian Church are welcome to join them. Contact Janet Briggs for more details j.briggs159@virginmedia.com

23rd Congregation outing to Pollock House. Look out for GUC hellos and/or contact Ruth Gregory rlgregory1765@gmail.com

Sunday Services in June at 7.00pm

6th local worship leader Jim Millar will take the service

20th Bert Clough from Oxford - "Turning the Tide of Faith" - reflections influenced by the *Sea of Faith* movement founded by Don Cupitt

Wednesday Meetings at 7.00pm

2nd a short video about a reforestation project in New Zealand followed by discussion

9th discussion of Unitarian practice in dealing with controversial, charismatic preachers, and the fallout for churches and members

16th John Clifford introduces the topic of Unitarian Universalism, contrasts and comparisons with British Unitarianism, and opening up for discussion

23rd short video and discussion to be arranged

30th Ümit Göker will talk to us about the prophet Mohammed and his message, and the different kinds of Islam that have developed

Jim Millar's service, from a few weeks ago, on the topic "**Science & Genesis**" is now available to watch at the following link: <https://youtu.be/HuT-4m97E3g>

The full text of the speech by chief Seattle, read by Lyanne Mitchell during Donald Jacob's service last month, can be heard at this link: <https://youtu.be/0lomIER6pZY>

Scottish Unitarian News: we were sorry to hear about the resignation of Rev. Peter Fairbrother as minister of St Mark's Unitarian Church in Edinburgh on Tuesday the 4th of May. The Edinburgh congregation plan a Special General Meeting for the 20th of June. We wish the best for Peter and all the Edinburgh congregation as they navigate a difficult situation.

UK Unitarian News: the website development team have released templates available for congregations to use. See information and examples at the following address:

<http://www.unitarians.org.uk>

Reports to the General Assembly 2021 can now be viewed online:

<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/whats-happening/agm-2021/>

Please send us any material for July *News & Views* **by the middle of June:**

lyanne.mitchell@mac.com, newsandviewsguc@aol.com, j.briggs159@virginmedia.com

And don't forget, **weekly coffee morning chat on Tuesdays at 11am via Zoom!**

All church services and meetings can be accessed at the following link—**keep it handy**

<https://zoom.us/j/5291141523?pwd=YjdhaFgxakY0TWJHWENZMW1PYjhoZz09>

Report on the Management Committee of 10th May 2021

From the chair, Roddy Macpherson, after welcoming the meeting, noted that following the resignation of their minister, a message from him as chair and Iain Brown as Secretary will be sent to the convenor of St Mark's Unitarian Church, Edinburgh conveying the support of the Management Committee of our Glasgow Church to the Council of St Mark's. Iain Brown noted that it is important that the Glasgow Church should not take sides in their ongoing dispute. It was also noted that Barry Bell had withdrawn his resignation as a trustee and our sympathies were with Donald Jacobs on the loss of his grandmother.

Roddy Macpherson noted that Janet Briggs had stepped down, not just from the Management Committee and the Ministry Sub Committee, but as sole editor of the News and Views. She will continue to be part of the News and Views editorial team, where Lyanne Mitchell and Donald Jacobs were also continuing, and part of the Property Sub Committee and a trustee of the Chennai Fund. He suggested that we arrange a meal to celebrate Janet's achievements in the church. Donald Jacobs noted that there should also be some presentation to Janet. Alison Briggs suggested that as Janet Briggs is not the only member likely to be retiring we should perhaps be considering plaques to mark their contributions and display them on the wall of the church and some discussion followed on the possibility of plaques for people within the church but no decision was made.

Some members of the Committee had taken part in a series of national Zoom meetings mounted by the General Assembly titled "Leading Change in the Congregation". Ruth Gregory indicated her intention of writing a report on the series perhaps to be titled "What is Our Church for?" and Barry Bell drew attention to the videos available of Gil Rendle, the author of the book around which the series had been constructed. Alison Briggs, who had also been on the course, thought that the subject was too wide for the Management Committee alone to tackle within the hours of its meeting and could overwhelm it. She suggested that special meetings outside of just the Committee alone, perhaps open to the whole congregation, might be set up on Zooms that any member can join and write a paper to convey their thoughts on. Ruth Wright and Iain Brown agreed that this could be a productive way forward and Iain Brown also suggested that we pick similar topics which require further discussion and invite other members of the congregation to come to the discussions. Ruth Gregory wanted to inquire why people leave GUC and Iain Brown noted that we might want to form working groups that might bring proposals to the Management Committee.

Roddy Macpherson reported that he had asked Douglas Brown to investigate the possibilities of investments and had now received a paper outlining his initial proposals and Roddy himself advised that we should look to the GA for guidance on investing ethically.

Regarding the Climate Change conference to be held later this year in Glasgow, Ruth Gregory reported on her investigations within Glasgow City Council and reported that an official has offered to address on Zoom the Management Committee on the city's plans. We are also exploring co-operation with Interfaith Glasgow and, perhaps in conjunction with the SUA, with Interfaith Scotland. Barry Bell reminded us that we also had our own plans.

As Treasurer, Charlie Dand produced a fully updated report and advised that our portfolio should be revised in the light of Covid and we should seek professional advice about that. We had lost funds on investments in the past. Iain Brown agreed that following the example of the GA should expedite our agreement on ethical investments and Ruth Gregory reminded us that we have on file an ethical investment policy that has never been rescinded.

Following the report from the Ministry Sub-Committee, Roddy Macpherson re-opened the questions about the eventual re-opening of the church building. Many suggestions were made and considered but there was no clear surge of opinion in any specific direction except that we will work towards ‘blended’ services – enjoyable by some attending in person within the church and others participating simultaneously on Zoom. No decisions were made.

A very full report on pastoral care was delivered in print by Margaret Paxton.

The Property Report focused on the replacement of window frames,

The Social report focussed on the walk in ancient woods near Drumchapel and a play produced by Mary Jensik and noted possibilities opening up for visits with various museums and freshly accessible sights.

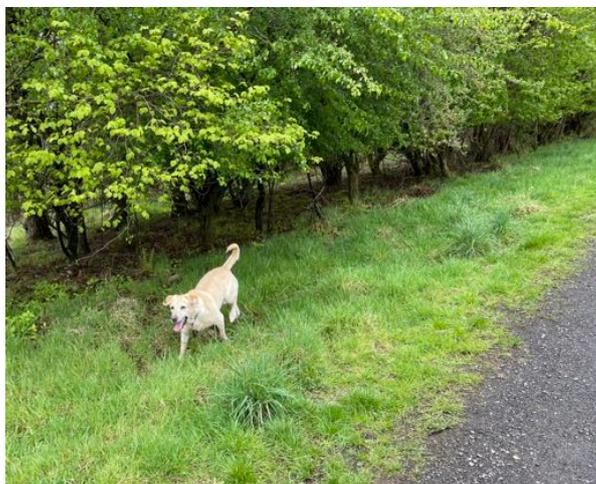
Finally it was reported that the constitution had been appropriately updated to allow for full participation in all Zoom based events - whether in person physically or by Zoom.

Iain Brown

Walk in Garscadden Wood

On Wednesday May 12th, seven of us met up for a walk in Garscadden Wood at Drumchapel. Actually—that was eight of us, including Ruth Gregory’s dog Megan (like how Enid Byton’s *The Secret Seven* included their pet dog Scamper as one of the group) and we *should* include Megan,

because she’s such a friendly companion to have around! The idea for the trip arose from discussions at the Wednesday group around climate change and what the congregation might do to get involved in solutions. Reforestation was mooted as a cause we could get involved with in Glasgow. Some online research revealed that Garscadden Wood in Drumchapel boasts some of the oldest native woodland in Scotland, and we decided to meet up and have a look for ourselves. Wishing to leave the woods in a little better shape than we found it, John Clifford came along prepared to remove litter from



the site, and others lent him a helping hand. Oak trees were only beginning to come into leaf, but we did spot a couple, early in the walk. Very noticeable was a stand of hazel trees that had clearly been coppiced—an indication that the wood has been managed at some point. Various nonnative conifers were interspersed among birch, rowans and ash. At half time the group relocated to the nearby *Yummy Drummy Deli* for a take-away bite to eat. In the afternoon the group went to the other, eastern half of the woods which was full of bluebells at this time of year. There was a little rain, on and off, but it was bearable. Before we knew it, it was time to head for



home in various directions. In the evening we reconvened on Zoom to further discuss the events of the day and our future plans. We were joined by Alastair Moodie who shared with us news of his involvement in a project on Loch Goil to promote the growth of native trees in the Cormonachan Woodlands. Details can be found at the following link.

<http://www.cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk>

Further information on Garscadden Wood can be found at these links.

<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/75578/1/13833355.pdf>

https://forestryandland.gov.scot/images/pdf/rec_pdfs/DrumchapelWoodsLeaflet.pdf

The next congregation outing looks set for Pollock House in June (see notices). We will have further discussion, and hopefully action, on reforestation and/or other climate initiatives leading up to COP26 in November, and beyond.

Donald Jacobs



BEING 'REAL'

Recently, I decided to sponsor a puppy to be trained as a guide dog. I received a 'welcome pack' with photos of 'Sprout', the pup I have adopted. There was also a cuddly toy pup as part of the package. I sent that to our grand daughter Rowan, explaining all about guide dogs and their training and suggesting she and I share the experience of being Sprout's sponsors. Rowan is almost four. I am delighted to say that the 'free gift' toy 'Sprout' has become her favourite toy.

Guide Dogs send regular up-dates about sponsored pups and the latest communication was a charming animated film explaining about a pup's pre-training stage. I forwarded this to Rowan, saying that I hoped she would be interested in how the 'real' Sprout was getting on. Our son Mark reported that Rowan had loved the film but was very upset to think there was another 'Sprout' - obviously her Sprout was real to her!

I was reminded of this wonderful passage from the classic children's book - 'The Velveteen Rabbit'.



'The Skin Horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others. He was so old that his brown coat was bald in patches and showed the seams underneath, and most of the hairs in his tail had been pulled out to string bead necklaces. He was wise, for he had seen a long succession of mechanical toys arrive to boast and swagger, and by-and-by break their mainsprings and pass away, and he knew that they were only toys, and would never turn into anything else. For nursery magic is very strange and wonderful, and only those playthings that are old and wise and experienced like the Skin Horse understand all about it.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

[Margery Williams, The Velveteen Rabbit](#)

(above-the original cover for 'the Velveteen Rabbit' 1922.)

Lyanne Mitchell

Looking Again at Psalm 23

This is such a familiar hymn to many of us from our childhoods. Singing a different musical setting of it in my choir, allowed me to meet it again and see it in a fresh light. Unitarians may not easily identify themselves as sheep (!) but I became aware of the power of the words. King David is using the shepherd / sheep analogy, very specifically in every single verse of this psalm...(more specifically than I had previously thought.)



The guidance and protection of the shepherd, from danger and death, is acknowledged in verse 3 - *'For thou art with me, and thy rod, And staff me comfort still'*. These are the implements of a shepherd, which David would have used himself as a boy. *'My table thou has furnished'* (verse 4) - rather than being a table for humans, as I had thought, may refer to the old oriental shepherding practice of using little raised tables to feed sheep.

'My head thou dost with oil anoint' (verse 4) I took this as a reference to King David's Royal Coronation, being anointed as King - but, staying with the sheep analogy, he could be referring to an ancient form of externally applied medicine for sheep. The shepherd poured it on the head and along the backline of a freshly shorn sheep to control lice or other parasites. In the British Isles, it is called *'pour-on'* or *'backliner'*—this was also used as a healing oil for sheep wounds. David was speaking as a sheep throughout this psalm, not as a King!

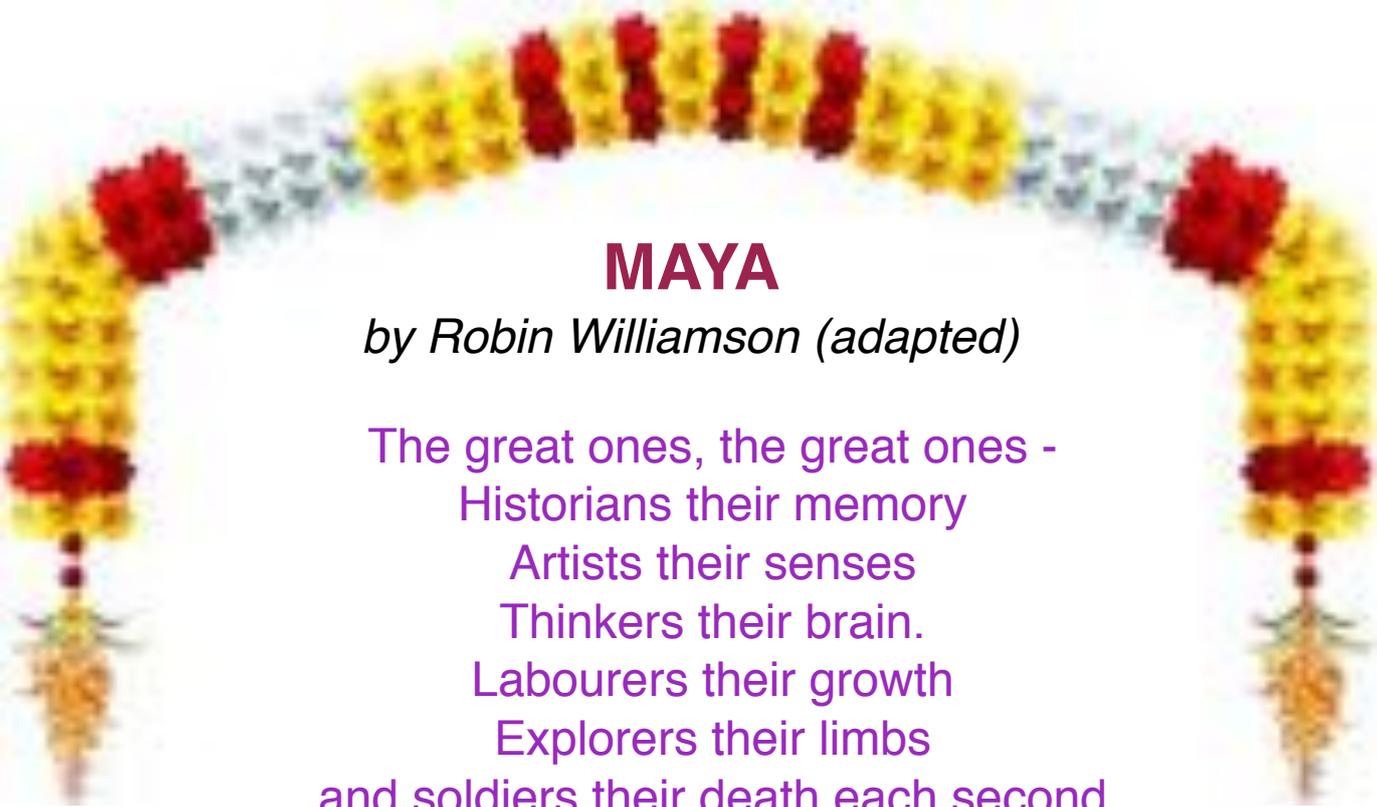
David's background as a shepherd would have made him aware of how fitting all these analogies were for the people of his day. At the risk of being flippant, someone suggested that *'Goodness and Mercy'* (verse 6) could be interpreted as two sheepdogs following behind the flock!...*'Goodness and Mercy Shall surely follow me.'*

Psalm 23 is traditionally sung by Jews in Hebrew at many Jewish celebrations. For Christians, it evokes the image of Jesus, described as *'The Good Shepherd'* in the Gospel of John.

I would like to share my own, highly personal 'take' on this text, which has been brought to life and immortalised by being set to music. *'The Lord'* is for me a metaphor for *'Highest Energy'* which guides and protects; it reminds me to connect with Nature and to take time out to be still (*pastures green & quiet waters*); My spirit is nourished by tuning into this energy. It encourages me to live with an attitude of gratitude for all that I have; being connected to this Highest Energy gives me courage in dark times and helps me to come to terms with fears about death; and finally, I am guided by goodness and kindness and will try to tune into these qualities all my life.

Forgive me, but I confess that I am rather charmed by the idea of two faithful collie sheepdogs, *Goodness & Mercy*, (I think I'll call the second one *'Kindness'*) running behind me every day, rounding me up when I get lost in dark places and guiding me back to the safety and security of 'home'.

Lynne Mitchell



MAYA

by Robin Williamson (adapted)

The great ones, the great ones -
Historians their memory
Artists their senses
Thinkers their brain.
Labourers their growth
Explorers their limbs
and soldiers their death each second
and mystics their re-birth each second.
Business men their nervous system
No hustle men their stomach.
Astronomers their balance
Lovers their loins
Their skin is all patchy
but soon will reach one glowing hue.
God is their soul
Infinity their goal
The Mystery their source
and Civilisation...
they leave behind.
Opinions are their finger nails.

Maya Maya

All this world is but a play.....

Be thou the joyful player.

māyā **Maya**, (Sanskrit: “magic” or “illusion”)
a fundamental concept in Hindu philosophy.

Maya originally denoted the magic power with which a god can make human beings believe in what turns out to be an illusion.

Glasgow Information to the Executive of the SUA June 2021

During the first half of 2021 the Glasgow church has held its AGM covering the calendar year 2020. The building has remained closed because, under continuing government plague regulations, it is only allowed thirteen members at a time in its worship room and in recent years the Sunday morning attendance has often almost reached thirty and occasionally topped it. The church building has also remained closed for those organisations renting accommodation from us and all payment of rents has ceased. Only the Church Officer, Ali Briggs, works irregularly from her office in the building and from her home, and occasionally she works within an empty worship room as the leader in the production of some parts of services on Zoom, the nation's sudden electronic saviour of all meetings in groups.

We have maintained the collective management of the church by Zoom meetings of the Management Committee, the Ministry Sub-Committee and, most importantly in today's circumstances, the work of the Pastoral Care network under the organisation of Margaret Paxton to whom we plan to present a recognition of her sterling services to the whole community. Several other work groups now meet in the same way. To that extent the Glasgow church is still, after more than fifteen months of lockdown, fully functioning and we look forward to meeting for worship again - perhaps in the autumn if we are lucky?

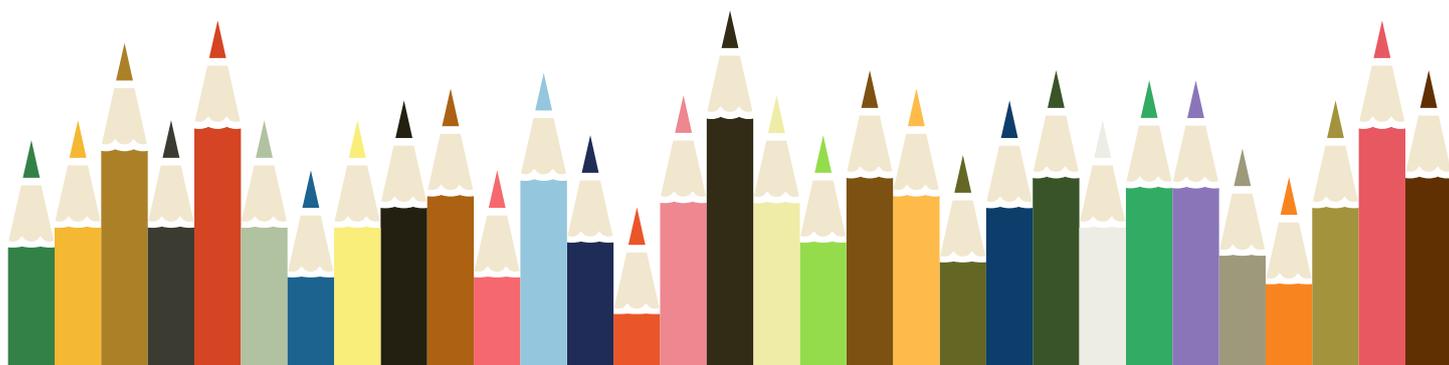
Various social activities continue with regular coffee mornings on Tuesdays and a variety of possibly more stimulating activities at the discussion meetings on Wednesday evenings. Since the partial raising of lockdown conditions Ruth Gragory has, as social convenor, already arranged a walk in a remnant of some ancient woodland on the outskirts of the city and, if conditions remain favourable, further collective expeditions are to be planned and mounted.

With the selection of the City of Glasgow as the site of the International Conference on Climate Change in November we are still exploring how we can contribute to the success of that meeting – possibly with the co-operation of the SUA?

A few members have attended a course on leadership within churches, mounted by the General Assembly, and it is planned to enlarge discussion of some of the interesting issues to allow more inclusive participation by a wider spectrum of the congregation.

The current pattern of 'narrowcasting' of services of worship on Sundays is under consideration for possible change if more technically skilled people can be found to create two independent technical teams and if the church can be further equipped for 'blended services' part face to face and part Zoom. We still have the richly varied range of home grown worship leaders we have spent years fostering and we are discovering that, with Zoom, we can quite cheaply draw on a much wider national and even possibly international galaxy of sensitive and interesting thinkers.

Iain Brown



The COP 26 Conference has been rescheduled to take place in Glasgow in the first week of November this year, having been cancelled last year because of the Corona Virus Pandemic, which is still raging around the world. Interfaith Glasgow held a Zoom conference on Monday 24th May, in preparation for this. It was attended by several of our members, most likely (like me) looking for suggestions of how a small ageing congregation might help to further the aims of cutting harmful emissions, and supporting bio-diversity.

Proceedings began with a speaker on Rambi Island, deep into the Pacific Ocean, somewhere near to Fiji and Kiribati. His Banaban people had been re-located there from their ancestral home on Ocean Island in 1940, because of the environmental destruction caused by the British, mining Ocean Island for phosphates, which have many farming and industrial uses. Since being settled on Rambi, the Banabans have adopted modern dress, and learned another language to integrate with the indigenous people there. Inter-marriage has caused the collapse of the Banaban cultural heritage. Our speaker felt that they had been totally let down by the British, with all promises ignored.

Sadly, this reflects in microcosm, the natural sadness felt by all people who find themselves obliged to abandon their ancestral home and culture, whether because of past colonisation, warfare, or more widespread present changes in the climate - changes that we now see are being caused by industrial activities in the more developed and industrialised countries.

Interesting, remarkable even, that he could speak to us on Zoom from mid-Pacific, but not the advice I was hoping to find. When I asked that direct question in a breakout session, the Muslim spokesman suggested that we 'Leave it to God'.

There were several speakers from other faiths, expressing only goodwill. However, another speaker was from 'Stop Climate Chaos'. She brought a number of practical suggestions that local groups might be able to implement.

- Host talks on relevant topics, or groups who have something to say.
- Give visitors a warm welcome.
- Host a climate defender, in your home, and get to know them.
- Offer 'hot desks', or discussion space.
- Show visitors around the city.
- Volunteer at opportunities in other spaces.
- Form links with other organisations.

There will be pilgrimages to COP 26. One, taking place over the last two weeks in October, will be walking from Dunbar to Glasgow, over the John Muir Way and the St Ninian Way, with a stopover in Edinburgh.

There will be marches in Glasgow.

There will be a Climate Strike on the Friday of COP 26 Week.

Glasgow schoolchildren are planting a Children's Wood, between Castlemilk and Carmunnock.

There are also Poster competitions, in schools and in Faith communities.

Watch out for a Climate Fringe Week from 18th to 26th September.

In conclusion, Maureen Sier of Interfaith Scotland thanked all contributors, saying that she felt enthused by so much goodwill and interest, and that 'surely our Government cannot ignore us now'.

Janet Briggs

Ruth Gregory commented: we heard testimony from Fiji of their plight under climate change - but how will their concerns be heard at COP26 conference? Can we add our voice to theirs?

Prayer was promoted as a solution to climate change. But shouldn't we be praying for the courage and strength to take the actions necessary? Closing remarks were good: that actions in the service of good causes are an essential part of worship.

Margaret Macintyre commented: we could see what local schools in the area are doing with regard to exploring Climate Change/ COP26. (My granddaughter, aged 10 is learning all about sources of energy in school.)



Unitarian Corporate Identity

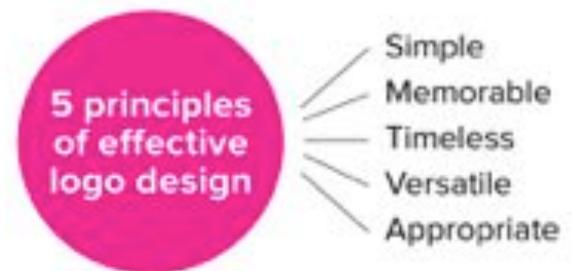
A personal view

When I worked as a Further Education Lecturer, one of my favourite modules to teach, was 'Corporate Identity'. An organisation's corporate identity encompasses a number of elements and one of the most important, is its LOGO.

What Is A Logo? To understand what a logo is, we first must understand its main purpose. The design process must aim to make the logo immediately recognisable, inspiring trust, admiration, loyalty and an implied superiority. **Logos are used to identify.**

Logo design is a key job for the graphic designer. It is a challenging one - how do you symbolise a whole, complex organisation with one small mark? I have designed many logos and always found this to be the most difficult part of my job .

An effective logo needs to be simple and above all, MEMORABLE. The logo is central to the brand identity design. It's the piece of brand identity that people will be exposed to the most. It needs to line up with all the other elements of the brand identity, as well as the broader emotional appeal of the brand.



On the new GA website, there appears to be 2 versions of the new Chalice logo - top right, is a stylised flame burning in a geometric chalice shape. The version below, takes the abstract direction even further - there is no flame - just the abstract geometric 'chalice.'

I think both versions are intended to be used in tandem. The green stripes are intended to be eye catching and immediately recognisable and the flame version is intended to retain the traditional connection to our previous chalice.



In my opinion, the new approach is above all, **fresh**. It creates a sense of **youth** and **energy** (as do the bold colours on the new website.) The diagonal stripes give a feeling of **growth...upward reaching**. Surely we would all aspire to this for our movement?



I was taught that a logo must be *consistent* and that an organisation changes its logo at its peril. It is natural for many of us to resist such a dramatic change. There has been much discussion in the Inquirer. This is just my 'twopence worth'. I like it! The GA has been accused of failing to make these changes without consultation. I can't help feeling that consultation among Unitarians on this would be a never-ending nightmare. There will be no pressure on GUC to adopt it - we can decide for ourselves. Should we ? Shouldn't we? We would love to hear what *you* think. We hope you will share your opinions with us in News & Views.

Lyanne Mitchell

The Vernon Atkinson Memorial Library

Long-time member Vernon Atkinson came from Bury, Lancashire to be the chief Mechanical and Electrical Engineer at Central Station. He was a regular attender at our church, and was for many years active on our Management Committee. In his final years, he brought, then sent a poinsettia plant, every Christmas. He would have been a hundred years old this April, but he died in January 2019. His eulogy at the funeral was delivered by our Convener, Roddy Macpherson. At the time, his family made a generous donation to the church, and after some deliberation it was decided to use some of it to build up a better library for worship leaders, members and friends. Accordingly, white shelving was purchased and assembled in the Social Hall.

Existing books have been retained, and additional ones added by means of donations reflecting the interests of members and friends. This was work in progress, when our Centre was closed in March last year, and it has lain untouched since then. Donors can make use of a stamp to show their name, since it is not envisaged that they will have given away books



that they wanted to keep. Donations can be made at any time.

The books will be arranged roughly according to subject – shown on the shelf edge. The library will be tended by those who use it. It is not intended that the books be catalogued, since there will not be a Librarian. Books may be borrowed on presumption of honesty, and returned when convenient. If they don't reappear, we shall consider that they have been liberated, as good books ought to be. It may be, also, that unpopular books are culled, to make room for more attractive ones. We all hope that members and friends will make good use of interesting books, kindly given. Any questions can be addressed to the Spurways, the Jacobses, or the Briggses.

Janet Briggs