



# UWG NEWSLETTER

## Unitarian Women's Group Conference

22nd to 24th October 2021

The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow, Derbyshire

**Killing Eve**



### Facilitators

Sue MacFarlane  
and  
Jo O'Sullivan

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## Letter from the Chair

Firstly, greetings to all UWG members and friends. I've been asked to put something together for the newsletter, so I will say a little about the last year or so. I caught Covid-19 early on, April 1st (yes, really) 2020. I was poorly, terrified, and had to have some conversations with loved ones very quickly that you really shouldn't have to have in a rush. Later in the year, my brother was in hospital very poorly, and there was nothing either me or my sister could do to support him or our sister-in-law, Jo. Supporting Jo would have meant that she couldn't go to the hospital, etc. Anyway, after all of this, I did some deep thinking and made some big decisions. We had always wanted to live by the sea 'at some point', but never really got any further than talking about it. Given the year that 2020 was, we decided that now was as good a time as any to move to the coast. I steelled myself for some emotional conversations with my brother and sister, as there would then be more miles between us. Anyway, I needn't have worried as both of them and my sister-in-law decided to move with us. I initially thought they meant that we would all get a place by the sea somewhere and live near each other. No, we decided to get a bigger place together and start our own commune.

There's lots more to tell, like how the first house fell through at the very last minute, and we were 'in between houses' for four months starting right in the middle of a lockdown. Anyway, to cut a very long story short, we moved into our new place on 24th June 2021 and are absolutely loving it. We are in Criccieth, North Wales, and it's absolutely great. Our house is just one street back from the beach, so it takes us all of five minutes to walk down for a quick dip in the sea. We are all getting used to living together, making decisions as a group, and enjoying the summer.

I'm looking forward to the conference in October and, hopefully, seeing some of you there. Who knows what life will look like by then? If the last eighteen months has taught us anything, it is that change is constant and inevitable.

Love to you all  
Sue Mac  
Chair, UWG





Sonya and Margaret's garden

"Foxgloves and roses and fluttering bees wings"

A reminder from Debra

Dear friends,

Just a reminder that the UWG will be re-introducing subs for the coming year (Oct 2021 - Sept 2022 inclusive). I will send out an e-mail (or letter) in late September, inviting you to pay £15 in subs for the year. This could be paid by BACS, cheque (details to follow in the e-mail) or even when you attend the Conference weekend in October.

Also, I'd like to let you know that there is a Bursary Fund to help with Conference fees if that is a difficulty for you. Please ask Margret R for details.

Best wishes,

Debra Burbery  
(Membership Secretary for the UWG).

### Note from a founding member of UWG

I am very proud to have been an original member of the UWG. I slept on Ann's floor at Newcastle! Thanks again Ann! I remember Joy Croft and Celia being involved. There would be others too. How passionate we were in those days! and different from the then Women's League.

I want to recommend "The Hill We Climb" by Amanda Gorman, She read it at President Biden's inauguration. It is out in soft back and inspirational.

I miss the Hucklow meetings enormously but the laughter stays with me  
love to all

Helen Parsons

### MOTHER TO SON

by Langston Hughes

It's from a mother to her son and you can imagine the American South accent as you read it.

Well son, I tell you:

Life for me ain't been no crystal star.

It's had its tacks in it, and splinters and boards torn up

And places with no carpets on the floor ..... bare.

But all the time I'se been a-climbin' on, and reachin' landings

And turnin' corners and sometimes goin' in the dark

Where there ain't been no light.

So boy, don't you turn your back, don't you sit down on the steps

'cause you find it's kinda hard.

Don't you fall now ..... for I'se still goin' honey.

I'se still climbin'

And life for me ain't been no crystal star.



Contributed by Lis Dyson-Jones

### Some quotes from Margaret

When you're forced to take a different direction in life, it can sometimes lead to things you never even expected.

Remind yourself of how far you've come in your journey; what you calmly do today you may have feared to attempt last week, month or year.

Celebrate your successes, no matter how small, and you will find your confidence grows. Focus on all your positives!

### Smiling



Smiling is infectious  
you catch it like the flu,  
when someone smiled at me today  
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner  
and someone saw me grin,  
when they smiled I realised  
I'd passed it on to them.

## Findhorn Unitarian Network Meditations in 2021

Since its formation in 2018, the Findhorn Unitarian Network has continued to offer two themed hour-long meditation sessions a month, at the weekend and during the week. I've been attending to practice meditation on topics such as Visualisations for Spring, Kundalini Yoga, and 'It's About The Breath'. Many thanks to Rev. Ralph Catts, Laura Dobson and others for creating these meditations! I especially enjoy the chance to attune at the start of the meditation, dividing into small groups which we practise inner listening – sharing what is in our hearts at the present moment. Perhaps this interactivity with each other could be incorporated into more worship styles! The Meditation sessions have been great, and I hope they will continue to be, but let's also hope that at some point in the near future, we can return to the Findhorn Community itself and gather together for worship and celebration in person.

Louise Reeve



The next meditation is led by Ralph Catts, and is offered twice:

**at 10:00 am on Saturday 21 August,  
and 9:30 am on Tuesday 24 August.**

Register your interest for either or both sessions by emailing [funtomeditate@gmail.com](mailto:funtomeditate@gmail.com)

### **This dish is surely worth something to taste true happiness:**

Take -

Two heaped cups of patience

One heartful of love

Two handfuls of generosity

A dash of laughter

One handful of understanding

Sprinkle generously with kindness

Add plenty of faith and mix well.

Spread over a period of a lifetime  
and serve to everyone you meet

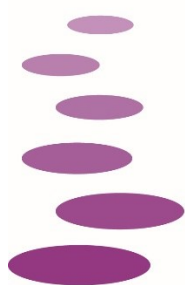
Sunday Express 1995



### **A Hug** (Author unknown)

There's just no doubt about it,  
We scarcely could survive without it.  
A hug delights and warms and charms,  
It must be why God gave us arms.  
Hugs are great for Fathers and Mothers,  
Sweet for sisters, even for brothers.  
And chances are some favourite aunts  
Love them more than potted plants.  
Kittens crave them, puppies love them, Heads  
of state are not above them.  
A hug can break the language barrier  
And make the dullest day seem merrier.  
No need to fret about the store of 'em  
The more you give, the more there are of em.  
So stretch those arms without delay  
And give someone a hug today.





# Pathways Through Dementia

Clarifying your legal options

## Pathways Through Dementia – supporting our client group through the pandemic

No-one can have escaped unscathed from the past 18 months which have brought unprecedented challenges to us all no matter our financial and/or personal situations. But people living with dementia have certainly been impacted very badly by the lockdowns and this means predominantly women who deliver the majority of informal care. Our helpline went quiet for a while as people adjusted to this new 'normal' and then we were deluged by calls about rights to enter care homes (people don't really have any), care home residents being moved when their covid funding ran out, financial assessments which appeared to be implying certain assets be released to pay for care often wrongly, amongst a host of other issues. As a result we applied for National Lottery funding and secured £8000 to pay for a social media campaign called **Paying for Care: Know the Rules** as people have historically been confused about what the rules say (and where to find them) and now were feeling pressured to meet care bills in all manner of ways, due to the financial hit local authorities have taken. We do not want the cost of covid passed on to our client group!

I originally set up Pathways Through Dementia with the aim of reaching people who were working whilst caring for someone with dementia having witnessed my own mother give up work to look after my grandmother who had dementia. I wanted to reach people with information about dementia and the law to lessen the challenges of working and caring at the same time.

Again, this group is comprised mainly of women - Carers UK has calculated that the economic value of the unpaid care provided by women in the UK is estimated to be a massive £77 bn per year. We also continue to provide online talks and training to community groups with the sincere hope that we will get back to face to face events soon!

For more information visit [www.pathwaysthroughdementia](http://www.pathwaysthroughdementia) or email me [swilcox@pathwaysthroughdementia.org](mailto:swilcox@pathwaysthroughdementia.org)



Help me to remember  
What I forget each day.  
Don't let the dementia  
Take my memories away.  
Keep reminding me  
What we used to do,  
And always remember  
I'll always love you.  
You are my beautiful child,  
That will never change.  
Though the dementia  
Will make me act strange,  
It's not my fault, my love.

It's the dementia that I have.  
It's what it does to you,  
So try not to be sad.  
Just hold my hand  
And try to reassure me.  
If I'm very confused  
Just change the story.  
At times I will be there.  
I'll remember little things,  
But then it will fade again

## Unitarian Digital Resources Network, April 2021: Digital Church?

The Unitarian Digital Resources Network had its second meeting, which couldn't have been more timely, as it was about the challenges of moving back to gathering and worshipping in person, whilst at the same time meeting the needs of people who prefer to participate by going online. Can you do both at once without compromising either? How do you

Organised by Louise Rogers with opening words by Rev. Bob Janis-Dillon, the first speaker was Myron from Plymouth Unitarians. Myron spoke about the difference between a 'digital church', which is interactive, non-local, and in parallel with or replacing conventional worship, and a 'hybrid' service, which blends live physical worship and live digital worship. He also suggested that congregations tend either to explore this and develop their approach organically, or start from scratch to entirely redesign their worship. Finally, Myron suggested that factors to consider were the resources of the congregation to support new ways of worship, including the workload of the minister or lay leaders, and what the feelings of the congregation were about this – do they welcome change, resist it, or just want to know more about it?

Other congregations shared their experiences of trying out new ways of worship. Common issues were sound quality (a test run is a necessity!) and ensuring the camera both has a good angle, and doesn't obscure or distract the worship leader. All of us were keen to continue with this journey of discovery we've found ourselves on. More meetings will follow.

A reminder that UDRN has three resources on offer: a regular newsletter (email Louise Rogers about this: [louise.rogers256@gmail.com](mailto:louise.rogers256@gmail.com)), a forum for discussions about this - join here at: <https://tinyurl.com/ygkorst4> and an area on the Unitarian Association for Lay Ministry website for digital worship resources, including readings and prayers: <https://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/uallministry/worship.htm> Let's hope we can continue our learning from the strange situation we've all been in.

Louise Reeve

### The computer swallowed grandma

The computer swallowed grandma,  
Yes, honestly it's true.  
She pressed "control" and "enter"  
And disappeared from view.  
It devoured her completely.  
The thought just makes me squirm.  
She must have caught a virus  
Or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched through the recycle bin  
And files of every kind:  
I've even used the Internet,  
But nothing did I find.

In desperation, I asked Jeeves  
My searches to refine.  
The reply from him was negative,  
Not a thing was found "online":

So, if inside your "Inbox",  
My Grandma you should see,  
Please "Copy", "Scan" and "Paste" her  
And send her back to me!

*Author: unknown*



Margaret Robinson

UWG Secretary

[margaretrobinson81@gmail.com](mailto:margaretrobinson81@gmail.com)



## Congregational Connections: The Sacred and the Social

This was the third in the 'Connecting Congregations' series of Zoom meetings organised by Rev. Bob Janis-Dillon, the Congregational Connections Lead Officer, in which Unitarians across the UK get together to share good practice and think about how we can continue to support and develop our communities. This one had the title 'Sacred Meets Social', which is the hashtag used by Lewisham Unity, and the gathering was led by Rev. Clare MacDonald, their minister. About 20 Unitarians met on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June to discuss how Lewisham embody their values – as Claire explains:

"Lewisham Unity's hashtag is **#sacredmeetsocial**. It's about having our roots in Unitarian values and histories and our wings in the individual in community, that place where soul and activism connect. When we are thinking about what we commit and connect to — it helps to guide us. Tonight's conversation is about where that is leading us as a small community growing younger, greener and more inclusive. Please join the conversation."

After hearing Claire's introduction to her congregation, we gathered in small groups in breakout rooms to think about what this means for us. It was a very interesting discussion for me personally, since Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians have recently begun expressing our shared values at the start of each of our services with our values statement:

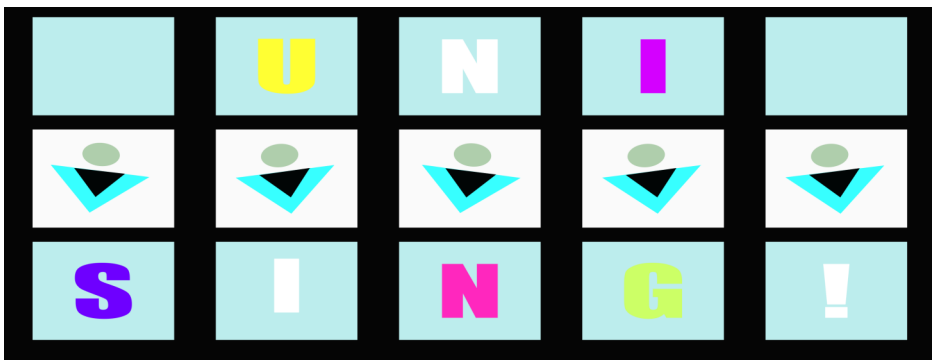
I shared this with others, several of whom said they agreed, so we must be on the right track! Let's face it – you'll never get every Unitarian present at any gathering to agree on something.

I felt that 'sacred and social' captured very well much of what we all value about our communities, but that for me, to be complete, we need a third value – action. What do we do to express our values in the world, and serve our communities? I think this is the next big question facing all of us. Thanks to Bob and Claire for giving us the space to explore this!

You can see a recording here, and I'd encouraged Unitarians to view it:

[https://youtu.be/SvBUw\\_uCcWo](https://youtu.be/SvBUw_uCcWo)

Louise Reeve



Uni-sing! mailing address is: [louise.rogers256@gmail.com](mailto:louise.rogers256@gmail.com)

Contact Louise if you enjoy singing, for information or to subscribe to Uni-sing! e-news letter.



Dot's Lockdown



Hewerdine's Amaryllis

### From a Francis Gay Friendship book

I think it is appropriate at this trying time.

Take time to listen,  
Don't hurry away  
When your friends have  
something they want to say.

Take time for kindness  
Keep looking about  
There are lots of ways  
you can help someone out.

Give of your friendship  
And you'll find it's true -.  
The blessings you scatter  
Will come back to you.



## My Two Gs and Covid

**Gratitude:** for so many blessings in my life:

- for my own situation - with family and friends not hugely affected by the pandemic.
- for gentle living - in a supportive, rural community surrounded by beautiful countryside.
- for an opportunity to really slow down and assess my life.

**Guilt:** a life-long habit of dwelling on what I feel I could, or should have done:

- increased by reading on social media and elsewhere of all the industrious activities of others during lockdown.
- that having had a glorious 2019 of celebrations with family, my personal life ever since has been affected in such minor ways, compared to the lives of others.



Time in the garden - however short - is a necessary therapeutic part of each day for me. I try to ignore what I haven't tackled as gardening is always unfinished business.

I'm grateful for these Sunflowers "planted" by the birds. Admiring little successes of soft fruits and vegetables, and the act of dead-heading to prolong a display, is very calming.

This summer I have grown Cosmos, so here's an attempt at a Haiku in celebration.



### Cosmos

How the bees love them,  
Nodding gently in the breeze;  
Bright palette of pink.

*Hazel Warhurst*

## Unitarians New Design Project

The General Assembly's national office recently wrote to all congregations, saying:

"We were very excited this week to have sent out to all congregations, ministers, societies and districts a new Design Programme and Wordpress website template, which we hope will help congregations with their communications – including websites, social media, leaflets, newsletters, noticeboards and more. These materials and resources have been created by the team at Unitarian headquarters and a steering group of ministers and lay people from across the movement, working with design agency - This Ain't Rock 'n' Roll."

The new national Unitarian website has not exactly been uncontroversial; some love it, some don't, but it's certainly attention-catching – and it's worthwhile thinking about whether we want a website for existing members or potential new ones (or both!)

This is the next step, and I attended out of curiosity and interest. Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians have just completed the purchase of our new website, which we're pretty happy with, so what was in this for us? Quite a lot, as it happened – this isn't only about 'here's how to do a new website', but has some useful design tips and templates for modifying and improving existing websites, also posters and notices.

As we recently wrote to the Inquirer about our view that Unitarians across the UK need to advertise and raise our profile, it was good to see that our national office is taking action on this. And as ever with Zoom, it was just good to hang out and catch up with other Unitarians across the UK, and swap ideas on who might want to join us, and how we find them. We'll think about how we might use some of the new ideas for our own communications here at Newcastle very soon!

Anyone with questions about this can contact the UK Unitarians Communications Officer, Rory Castle Jones, at: [rcastlejones@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:rcastlejones@unitarian.org.uk)  
You can see a recording here, and I'd encouraged Unitarians to view it: <https://tinyurl.com/4j64sv4s>

Louise Reeve

### Words to ponder on:

- \* Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- \* Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.
- \* If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- \* If you lend someone £20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- \* It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to be kind to others.
- \* Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
- \* Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- \* Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
- \* The second mouse gets the cheese.
- \* When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- \* Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- \* You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- \* Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.
- \* We could learn a lot from crayons... Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colours, but they all have to live in the same box.
- \* A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
- \* Have an awesome day and know that someone has thought about you today...I did.



Yarm

Where

Margaret  
Robinson

lives



Hucklow Summer School 2021  
Online

***Why Are We Here?  
Discerning our Unitarian Mission in  
an Upturned World  
(21-27 August 2021)***



We are once again presenting an online series of events during the August week when Hucklow Summer School would usually take place. This event is free and open to all.

There will be a worship service at 7pm on Saturday 21 August, led Jane Blackall and the Summer School Panel, and five daily theme talks at 7pm from Monday 23 – Friday 27 August (given by Jo James, Shana Begum, Rory Castle Jones, Stephen Lingwood, and Kate Brady-McKenna).

During these events we will be considering the question 'What is our Unitarian church for, anyway?', examining how the landscape of 'doing church' has changed (especially during the last eighteen months), pondering how we can flex and adapt in turbulent times while remaining true to our religious roots, and offering some constructive visions for Unitarianism in the challenging landscape of the twenty-first century.

To pre-register and receive the Zoom links, sign up to the Summer School mailing list here. ([ctrl + click](#))



Jo O'Sullivan and Sue MacFarlane - facilitators for 2021 UWG



Debra Burbery

UWG Membership Secretary