

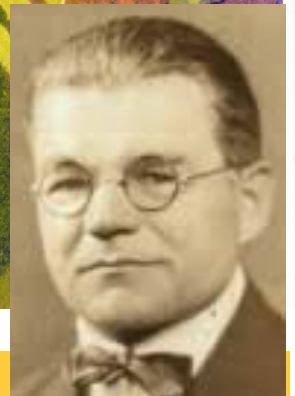


GLASGOWUNITARIANS-SCIO.ORG.UK  
**GLASGOW UNITARIANS**  
JULY 2025

# NEWS & VIEWS



*'The church's task  
must be...  
to place TRUTH  
above any tradition,  
SPIRIT above any  
scripture,  
FREEDOM above  
any authority,  
and PROGRESS  
above all reaction'*  
*Rev. Norbert Capek*



**GLASGOW UNITARIAN CHURCH (SCIO)**

72 Berkeley Street, Glasgow G3 7DS Scottish Charity Number SCO 16472

*Cover - Lyanne Mitchell*

# PROGRAMME and NOTICES

## JULY SERVICES

**Sunday 6th - 11am in Church and on zoom - A service will be live - streamed from Edinburgh - to be confirmed.**

**Sunday 6th - 7pm on zoom - There will be no service on this evening.**

**Sunday 13th - 11am in Church and on zoom - Flower Communion led by Ruth Paxton Wright.** *This service was invented by Norbert Capek (1870-1942) who was a Unitarian minister of extraordinary vision and courage. Everyone is invited to bring a flower to represent themselves within our fellowship - then to take home a flower brought by someone else, to represent what they take from our worship. This is one of the very few rituals we observe as Unitarians and symbolises our shared celebration in community.*

**Sunday 20th - 11am in Church and on zoom - Barry Bell will lead the service**

**Sunday 27th - 11am in Church and on Zoom - Jim Millar.**

*As a man who had the privilege of being educated at Allan Glen's School and who is currently secretary and trustee of Glasgow Unitarian Church, an institution of which he was a founder member, it would be fair to say that my life has been significantly impacted by the life and legacy of Allan Glen.*

*Today I would like reflect and pay tribute to Allan Glen, as a captain of industry, a humanitarian and a Unitarian.*

## AUGUST

**NB - the Church will be closed for the month of August**

*We are so sad to announce that Helen Craig died on Wednesday 18 June after a fall.*

*Our thoughts are with Malcolm and the family.*

*For all of you who knew and remember Helen fondly, please note the date and time of her funeral should you wish to attend.*

**South Lanarkshire Crematorium, Blantyre G72 0TL,  
at 11:00 on 11 July 2025.**



**WEDNESDAY  
DISCUSSION GROUP**

**7 - 8 pm on zoom All Welcome!**



**The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches this year was held at Birmingham Hilton Hotel from Saturday 12 April to Monday 14 April.**



This is a busy time for Attenders, with a full programme to cover over the shortened period of the Conference since it was changed a few years ago from three full days to two full days.

Meditation starts at 7:30; morning worship is followed by plenary sessions, primarily reports and some celebrations until lunch; after lunch many interesting groups compete for our attention: e.g. Unitarian Renewal Group, Unitarian Historical Society, Women's League, etc. Plenary Business Sessions each morning progressed last year's preliminary decision to explore changing the General Assembly from a voluntary Association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). If all goes well with discussions with the Charity Commission, there will be a Special General Meeting in the autumn to confirm the changes. The GA President, Geoff Levermore, was asked to serve for a second year to fill the vacancy created when the Vice President decided for personal reasons not to take up the post of President. There were other decisions made, including an Emergency Motion of support for humanitarian work for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

It's impossible to attend everything even if one never takes a break. Saturday and Sunday evenings present important group experiences: Saturday, the Keynote Speaker, and Sunday, the Anniversary Service.

The Anniversary Service is for most participants the highlight of the Meetings. Each year one of our ministers is asked to be the Anniversary Preacher — a real honour within our community.

While there is time included to honour the men and women who serve us in leadership — ministerial students completing their courses; ministers and lay leaders retiring; and those who have died during the past year — the bulk of the service is set by the Anniversary Preacher: Hymns; Childrens' Story; Readings; and, of course, the Sermon. This year Rev Maud Robinson, formerly of St Mark's, led us in a somewhat altered format; she spoke of her long struggle with depression in three 'reflections' under the theme "What Strength Can We Call On In Dark Times?". Maud bravely shared her struggles with us. The Opening Hymn was written by our Lyanne Mitchell, "Living Energy" and the choir sang a 'Unitarian Psalm' by Jen Hazel with a refrain that we were encouraged to join singing: *"Of all the things that we believe, we believe most in humanity; in every heart and every mind lies the spark that makes us all divine."*

This was a message for us all to remember.

*Barbara Clifford*



Tom Serb - May 25th



Rev John Clifford - 8th June



Pope Leo

### **A Trio of Worship Leaders**

Like Pope Leo, Tom and John  
come from Chicago.  
All three are Chicagoans.

But, so far, GUC has only had  
services from two out of the  
three this summer!

We are a fellowship without a  
full-time Minister....  
but aren't we lucky to have  
such a choice of able  
Worship leaders?

*Thanks to Roddy for pics of Tom & John*

# A PRAYER FOR FATHERS DAY

We pray today for dads:

- + New dads, granddads, stepdads, adoptive dads & solo dads.
- + Baldy ones, beardy ones, skinny ones & cuddly ones.
- + Dads who tell bad jokes & dads who dance to YMCA.
- + Dads who know how to fix things, & dads who just pretend.

Father to the fatherless, we pray for those for whom this day is sadder

than it is happy:

- + Those who feel they have failed
- + Those who are grieving children they never had
- + Those missing their dads, or their children, even more than usual.

Father God, in a world where some dads are distant, absent or even abusive we lean into your ever-present love.

You are faithful, especially to those of us orphaned, abandoned & hurt. "Even if my father abandons me, the Lord will hold me close"  
Ps 27:10

Father of Comfort, heal our wounds. Restore the dignity, integrity and centrality of fatherhood in our nation. "I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. And I pray that you may know love." (St Paul)

And finally Lord, for all those poor souls everywhere who forgot that today is [#FathersDay](#), we ask you to bless them, in your abundant grace and manifold mercy, with the discovery of chocolate and half-decent card in surprisingly well-stocked convenience stores.

Amen.

*Pete Greig*

# FATHER'S DAY

The older I become, the more I think about my Dad, especially on his birthday, the anniversary of his death and on Father's Day. He was born at The Loans, a little hamlet then, near Troon, Ayrshire, in 1908 and died in the Ferguson Anderson Care Home, beside Maryhill Park, just 300 metres from his house, aged 83.

My paternal Grandad was a Nurseryman and the family moved to Kilmardinny, Bearsden, where he was employed as Gardener at Kilmardinny House, which was privately owned in those days. (Jimmy and I were married there in 2009, when it had become an Arts Centre owned by East Dunbartonshire. Such a meaningful place to get married.)

A few years later my Dad had a little brother, Charlie. Tragically, Charlie died, aged not quite 3 years old, from what should have been a straightforward removal of his tonsils, by being administered too high a level of anaesthetic. His Mum died less than 3 years later, from a sudden onset of cancer and a broken heart.

My Grandad and Dad moved to a house in Kessington, Bearsden, which had land, where Grandad grew tomatoes, chrysanthemums and sold fruit and vegetables from a small lean-to at the front of the house. Grandad had remarried a short while after his wife had died. I know my Dad had a difficult relationship with his step Mum. Dad eventually took over the van run from Grandad, driving around Kessington and Bearsden, selling produce bought from the Fruit Market at Candleriggs, Glasgow.

(I remember going with Dad during the school summer holidays, I would be about 8 years old, getting up at 5am. I can still recall the wonderful cacophony of sounds; men calling out prices, whistling, chatting with each other and me being allowed to 'have a shot' down the wooden banana chute at Fyfe & McGrouther; wonderful memories.)

Calling at the 'big houses' in Bearsden with his van, my Dad met Mary, a housemaid, and eventually they married. They set up home at Queens Cross, Glasgow. Mary helped in the wee shop at Kessington, while Dad continued with his van 'round.'

They were to be married just over 2 years when Mary died from Nephritis. Dad travelled by motorbike to Lesmahagow twice during the week after work and at the weekend. Mary had returned to her parents' house when nothing more could be done for her in hospital. She needed nursing. Dad was with her when she died. Every year, on his birthday, Mum and Dad had Aunt Nellie, Mary's sister, to the house. She remained the only link Dad had to Mary. There was no contact with Mary's parents after she died. All so very sad for Dad.

Since my Dad was in a Reserved Occupation, he was not allowed to join any of the Armed Forces at the start of WW2. However, in 1944, he trained as part of a special Fire Fighting Force which was being sent to France. While billeted in Ipswich, Suffolk, and low in spirit, his best friend persuaded him to come along to a local dance, where he met my Mum. They wrote to each other; my Dad numbered the envelopes and there were a lot, which I now have. Mum and Dad married in Ipswich, in the snow, on 29th December 1945. They moved to Maryhill, where I was born in July 1947. I was named after my Dad's Mum. Three years later, they bought a house in the Maryhill Park area, my sister Sheila was born in 1950 and Mum lived there until Dad died.

My parents were good parents. Both of them taught my sister and me to be kind, polite, loyal and not to give up when problems arose. Life was hard for my Dad in particular. His Dad died when I was 3 years old and although there was an estrangement with his step mum, he always handed in a homemade Holly Wreath every Christmas and visited her when she was dying.

Dad had been a member of the Boys Brigade and went to their annual reunions. He would attend Church services with the BB but was not religious. He would come to Church when Sheila and I were on parade with the Girl Guides and at Christmas. Mum eventually persuaded Dad to start reading his Bible towards the end of his life. I hope he derived some comfort from that.

Dad had what could be called a Calvinistic work ethic, working very long hours and determined to make the shop he had bought at Hillfoot, Bearsden, a success. Mum was his loyal right hand and looked after all the accounts and helped out at the shop towards the end of each week. He was successful and had very local customers, who could have saved money going to the recently opened Asda at Kessington.

Dad had his demons to fight, especially in November and January. He carried it all in silence. Dad encouraged me to be independent, to always look after my little sister, to see something through, no matter how difficult and to walk straight, with my head held high.

When I was 8 years old, I wanted a dog. My Dad said I was too young but that when I was 10, he would get me one. After asking repeatedly about getting the dog, Dad told me that if I asked once more, there would be no dog. It was a hard way to learn patience, but that early lesson has stood me in good stead all my life. I did get my dog for my 10th birthday. My sister wanted a monkey, but had to settle on a kitten. Dad was not one to offer praise readily but always wrote me a letter on my birthday, expressing his thoughts about me, reaffirming the good advice he wanted me to follow. He always signed it 'your ever loving Dad xx'

In his 70's Dad had a lot of pain, due to poor circulation in his legs, caused by being a heavy smoker all his life. He eventually had his lower right leg amputated. He battled stoically with physiotherapy and trying to wear a prosthetic, but had to have much of the upper leg amputated, due to gangrene having set in. It was heartbreaking to see a man who had always been so active, having to accept a wheelchair. When he sold the shop and retired he had enjoyed growing fruit and vegetables in his own garden. The greenhouse was out of bounds. He rejected the offer to have a ramp built and built it himself, from old railway sleepers, which he had said would come in handy some day. He was euphoric the morning he launched himself down the ramp, laughing like a youngster and telling Mum and I he knew he could do it. What a man.

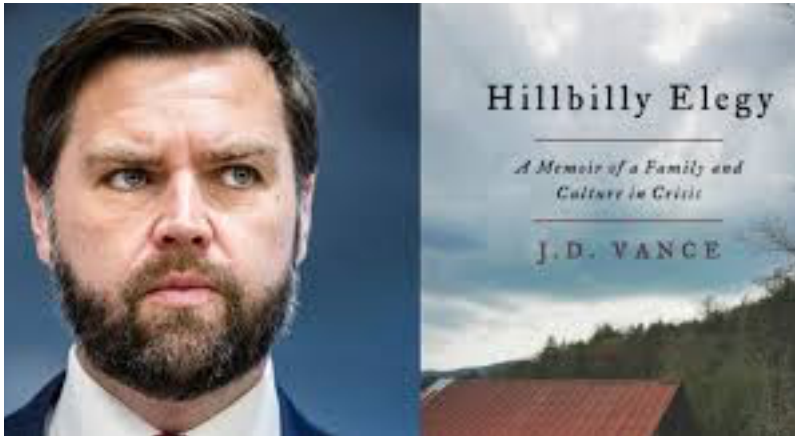
I never saw my Dad cry but there were tears in his eyes on my Wedding Day to Alasdair.

Miss you Dad. Thank you for being such an inspiration and guide to me. Love you lots.

*Margaret Macintyre McClymont*

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Hill Billy Elegy by JD Vance*



An American friend recommended this book to me saying she thought that it would surprise me. It certainly did! This is a candid description of a deeply dysfunctional childhood by a man who is likely to become the next President of the United States.

He is currently waiting in the wings, taking care to dance to the tune of Donald Trump and keep his mouth shut – for the most part.

I knew nothing of the poor whites of Kentucky. Poor in every sense of the word. Coming from Appalachia where opportunities are short, they are according to Vance, sunk into resentment, addiction and avoidance of work. He is cuttingly critical of his mother, whose regular change of partners disrupted his schooling and exposed him to verbal and physical abuse. He was determined to escape through education and the one solid support was a foul spoken, gun toting grandmother who adored him.

Qualified to enter Ohio State University, he deferred his admission until he had served four years in the Marines. This he claims gave him confidence, self-discipline and resilience. After Ohio State, he entered Yale to study law.

When psychologists look at young people who are failing to engage with society, who are causing social disruption and run amok at any opportunity, they often find ACEs – Adverse Childhood Experiences. It appeared to me that JD Vance had experienced several ACEs. Will they rise to the surface if he finds himself with the power that is given, without restriction it would appear, to the “*leader of the free world?*”

He has found two important agents which may guide him: a wife and the Catholic religion. Originally a Democrat, he is now Republican expressing his love of country and loyalty to the folk from his home state where the white underclass has resorted to political rebellion in their support of Donald Trump.

The book has of course been made into a film, available on Netflix!

*Alison Spurway*



*We'd love to hear about a 'good read' you have enjoyed.*

Some of us will remember Dawn Buckle. In case you have not heard this sad news, Dawn has died.

The funeral for Dawn was held at Old Chapel on Thursday 19 June at 2pm. The service at Old Chapel Dukinfield was zoomed and those wanting the link please contact [doc\\_mageditor@btconnect.com](mailto:doc_mageditor@btconnect.com)

Dawn loved to dance and inspired many of us ( even the clumsiest of us! ) to express ourselves through free movement to music.

*Thanks to Margery MacKay for passing on this poem.*

## *Silence and Stillness*

*Silence and stillness  
In a holy place  
Calms me and holds me  
Giving me space  
In which I can seek  
The divine.*

*Silence and stillness  
Closes around us  
Holding and keeping us  
In a holy communion  
In which we seek  
The divine*

*In silence and stillness  
The spirit approaches us  
With comfort and care  
Shrouds us from life's turmoil  
In which we encounter  
The divine.*

*Dawn Buckle  
August 2024*





## A Favourite Poem Contributed by Alison Spurway

*Who made the world?  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?*

*This grasshopper, I mean—  
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,  
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—  
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.*

*Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.  
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.*

*I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.*

*Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?*

*—Mary Oliver*

*Throughout her celebrated career, Mary Oliver touched countless people with her carefully crafted poetry on nature and the natural world. Her work is simple (at first glance), accessible and best-selling. She died as the pandemic was starting in 2019 at the age of 83.*

*She has been called 'the unofficial Poet Laureate of Unitarian Universalism.' Her poems are powerful in asking the religious questions that help us find - what is holy and sacred? ; who are we and why are we here?; how are we called to live our lives? Her poetry speaks through what her messengers – birds, ponds, trees, insects—have conveyed to her. This a favourite poem of mine too - especially the question in the last 2 lines! Please share one of your favourite poems with us?*

*Lyanne Mitchell.*

## 78 years 'Goin' tae Troon'

Every summer, as far back as I can remember, the Glasgow Taxis annual day out to Troon has been a highlight of the summer.

On the 18th of June this year, I was packing my shopping in Lidl's car park, when I heard the taxis on their procession up Pollokshaws Road. I abandoned my shopping to get a look. It's a scene that always fills me with nostalgia, pride of the city and its people, and more than a bit emotional. Balloon festooned and decorated 'black hacks' with drivers in fancy dress and delighted kids, stretching as far as the eye can see. 130 taxis took part this year.



The taxi parade has been a fixture in Glasgow since 1945. In Edinburgh, they started one but not until 1947 or 1948. Liverpool only started their trips in 1985, but when you consider that's 40 years ago, it's still a record to be proud of. In 2020 & 2021, Covid19 put a temporary halt to the fun, but by 2022 the taxis were back in all their glory.

The first trip was a day to Saltcoats for children from Eastpark Home. Following the success of the day, the founders wanted to make it an annual event.

They formed a committee with a well known local bank and started fund raising under the catchy name '**Glasgow Taxi Men and Gaybirds Dance Band Sick Children's Outing Fund**'

The destination changed to Troon for the second outing, where it has been ever since. In the early years, most of the kids came from the TB isolation hospital in Mearnskirck. These days its children from Additional learning Support Schools in the city, some 74,000 children are estimated to have benefited from the day out.

So, my thanks to all the volunteers, all those who raise funds for the event, the sponsors, Police Scotland and most of all the Glasgow Taxi Drivers, who keep the 'show on the road'



Circa 1946, the earliest known picture of the event. The caption on the website dated it as 1945, but the taxi has a notice on the window saying its from Mearnskirck, which would make it at least 1946.

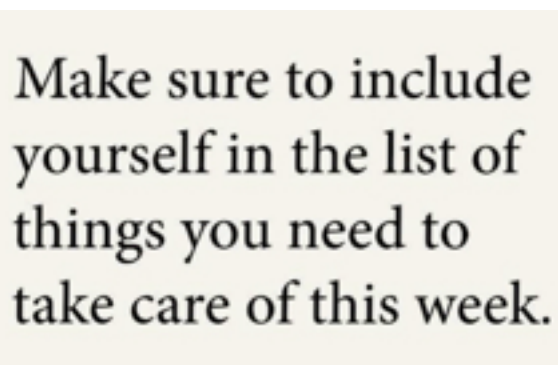
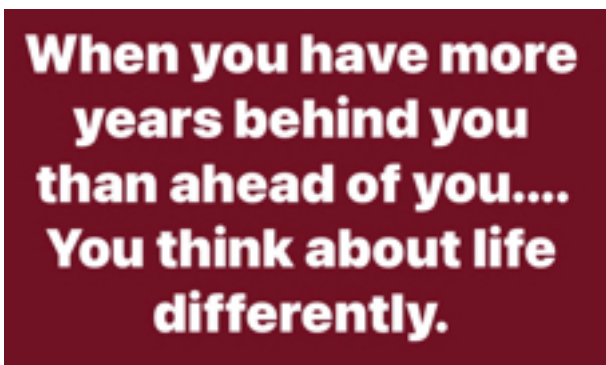
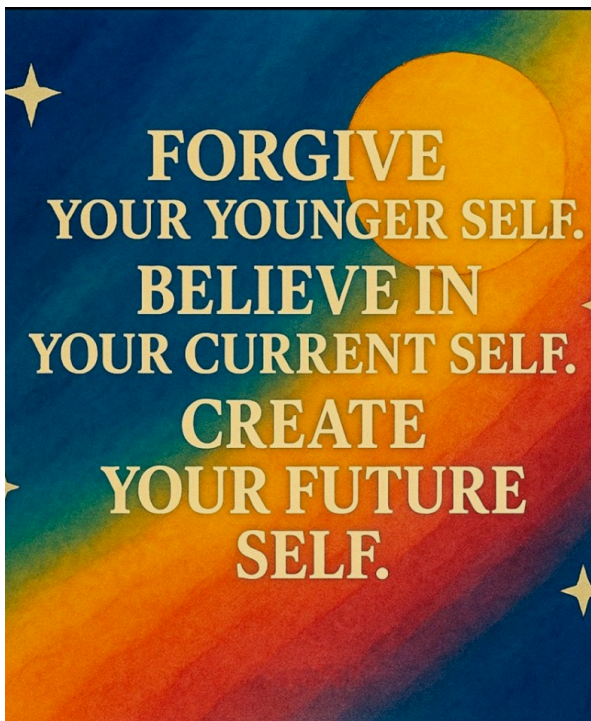
**Ali Briggs**



On 22 June **Abida Farid** led the service which gave her an opportunity to thank the church for the warm and comfortable venue provided to the Women of Faith & Community on the first Monday morning of each month.

She told us of her early life before she arrived in Glasgow when she had lived in a multi-cultural part of Leeds where different faiths and ethnicities were simply accepted as customary. After 9/11 she found herself justifying wearing the scarf as it represented the anger she felt at the terrorists and her desire for a tolerant community. We listened to Muslim prayers set to music and the call to prayer with appropriate photographs.

*Alison Spurway*



*Thanks to John or more memes.*