

Glasgow Unitarians & Views March 2026

Dear March—Come in—
How glad I am—
I hoped for you before—
Put down your Hat—
You must have walked—
How out of Breath you
are—

Dear March, how
are you, and the
Rest—
Did you leave Nature well—
Oh March, Come right upstairs with
me—
I have so much to tell—

Emily Dickinson



Programme

Every Sunday Morning Unitarian House is open for Congrats to gather. Services will start at 11am in Unitarian House and on Zoom.

March 2026

1st 11am: Dundee Unitarians live streaming

7pm Zoom only: Ali Briggs - Christian Nationalism

8th Susan Siegel - Reflections on a Jewish life

15th Reflections on an Indian journey

22nd Neelam Bakshi

29th Roddy Macpherson- As sure as our Lord was at Priddy' -
Reflections on what is truth

April 2026

5th Morning: Alistair Moodie will be delivering the Easter Service
Evening: Reverend Janine Sim

12th The next in our series "How can I keep from Singing" with
Margaret Macintyre McClymont

***The Zoom link is the same each week, with the exception of the 1st Sunday of the month when we generally live stream another Congregation's service.**

The link can be saved to your calendar from the weekly email.

This month we have another packed issue of News & Views. World Thinking Day! Reverend John Clifford's recent Life as A Unitarian in Glasgow! The Quakers! Tradwives!

If you have anything you would like to share or comment on please feel free to send it to me. Ali

Rev. John Clifford's Recent Life as a Glasgow Unitarian

(as delivered on 18th February 2026)

The current edition of Glasgow Unitarian Church's magazine is devoted entirely to our beloved Minister Emeritus, John Clifford. On the front cover are Robert Burns' words, "An honest man here lies at rest." These words, from the rest of the famous Epitaph, say it all:

**The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, and guide of youth...
If there's another world, he lives in
bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of
this.**



John & Barbara

John's head, "with knowledge so informed" —particularly on matters Unitarian— brought delight. No GUC Christmas service led by John or Barbara was complete without John's special seasonal benediction: "Remember, 'Jingle Bells' was written by a Unitarian." In later years, he added to his knowledge that Robert Burns' prayer "O Thou unknown, Almighty Cause of all my hope and fear" was in Unitarian hymn books during Burns' own lifetime.

At a Sunday service in November of the year before last, John was interviewed about his life, Desert Island Discs-style. The Complete Works of Burns made his list. John spoke his truth: "The people make this church." That day we sang a hymn John had written, set to the Irish melody Pete Seeger borrowed for "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" This is a beautiful line of John's: "Love is not a 'thing' to hold! - Love is living lovingly".

Life brought John to Glasgow in 1975 as the new minister, where he would serve as full-time minister until 1983. Even then, some

Glasgow members - I mean George and Margaret - already knew him from his time at Dundee. His last conversation at our church, on his final day, was about the happy prospect of officiating at their granddaughter's wedding.

Our organist in 1975 was Kerr Jamieson—and Kerr is with us today, accompanying John for the last time, here at the crematorium on Ash Wednesday. John, I'll never forget your laugh: the rising up, and up of moustache, and then - that snort!

Last year, the "Year of the Three Men From Chicago" at Glasgow Unitarian Church, had a humorous ring to it. First, of course, there was John leading a service. Later, we asked Tom, also a man from Chicago, then completely new to Glasgow, to speak to us. Finally, singing the Pater Noster, we heard from Pope Leo.

John served joyfully as associate minister of St. Mark's, Edinburgh, from the early 1990s until 2007, alongside its minister, his friend, Andrew Hill. John and Barbara were delighted by Andrew's leading



John & Family, East Kilbride Christmas Lights

of Glasgow's Bicentenary service in 2010. But in 2024, the fortieth anniversary year of being in our current building, the conducting of that great religious and civic event - our Ruby Jubilee - fell entirely to the Reverend John C. Clifford. He led it magnificently. His address, "Bows and Arrows," fairly hit the mark. His whole service was a masterpiece.

Elected Minister Emeritus of Glasgow Unitarian Church in 2016, John gave so much to us, as worship leader, stalwart supporter of our midweek Wednesday Group discussions, and faithful friend. Whatever our mistakes - and he could spot them - John was always the same: he was there for us, conscientiously, in loving fellowship. Integrity (the third time that word has been mentioned in this service) was his watchword and his practice. On his last Sunday, there in church, we're glad we told him this - out loud, right to his face: "John, we are so proud of you."

World Thinking Day

On Sunday 22 February 2026 the congregation present and those on Zoom were invited to celebrate World Thinking Day and to join Scouts and Guides in the UK and internationally, to celebrate the birthdays of the founder of the Scout Movement, Lord Baden-Powell and his wife Olave, World Chief Guide. As the chalice flame was lit, those present were invited to renew the promise they had made as a child:

I promise on my honour that I will do my best

1 To do my duty to God & the Queen

2 To help other people at all times

3 And to obey the Guide Law



Robert Baden-Powell or BP as he was known, returned from military service in South Africa where he had held Mafeking, a critical supply centre for the British army, against the Boers who outnumbered his troops 7 to 1. He used many devices to trick the enemy into believing that the town's defences were much stronger. The siege (217 days) was widely reported in the press as an example of bravery and defiance appropriate to a soldier of the Empire. BP was a celebrity and crowds cheered in the streets for four days of celebration. His experiences led him to write *Scouting for Boys* which was issued in weekly editions costing 4 pennies. All over the UK boys formed themselves into patrols and went off into the country to camp, to track and to build dens. They loved it! The first Scout troop to be formally registered was here in Glasgow and is still known as "The First". Another first was the Cuckoo Patrol led by Alison Cargill, a pupil at the Park School for Girls. When BP held a rally at the Crystal Palace, behind the marching boys carrying their scout poles, were girls, dressed in scout uniforms. "Something for the girls!" they pleaded! The Girl Guide Association was founded in 1910 led by BP's sister Agnes and later by his wife Olave Soames who shared 22 February as her birthday with BP.

William Alexander Smith had formed the Boys Brigade in Glasgow and it had attracted large numbers. Initially it was exclusively Church of Scotland but it did expand to other denominations in the Christian tradition. He was keen that the two organisations - Scouts and BB - should merge. With great vision, BP turned down the offer in order to create an international interfaith organisation which would bring young men from all over the world to Jamborees where the friendships made would build a movement for peace. Currently there are 60 million scouts and 11 million girls in the organisation (many countries have a joint boys/girls organisation).

The Promise is a significant event in a young person's life. Girlguiding UK reviewed the wording in 2014 and came up with a change that caused an outcry around the establishment.

I promise that I will do my best
To be true to myself and develop my beliefs
To serve the King and my community
To help other people and to keep the Guide Law



Many Brownies and Guides meet in church halls leading to a general assumption that it is a Christian organisation. Parents who were actively agnostic or atheist, restrained their daughter from joining as did those who retained a belief that the whole thing was too militaristic. The introduction of the new promise sadly has not resulted in a total rethink about the place of this much loved and much mocked institution of our UK society. The words: "To be true to myself and develop my beliefs" reflect a unitarian approach which should not be ignored but drawn to the attention of the influencers and visionaries of our community today.

Alison Spurway

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

As you may know, the Buddhist Centre on the first floor will soon be moving to new premises in Sauchiehall Street. While we will be sorry to see them go, they were always planning to move on, and joined us on a temporary basis. It's just been a bit longer than we originally thought.

There are plans afoot for Glasgow Quakers to take over the licence for the space. The Quakers recently sold their building in Elmbank Street and are currently renting, while waiting for the Buddhists to complete the required renovations in their new place. .

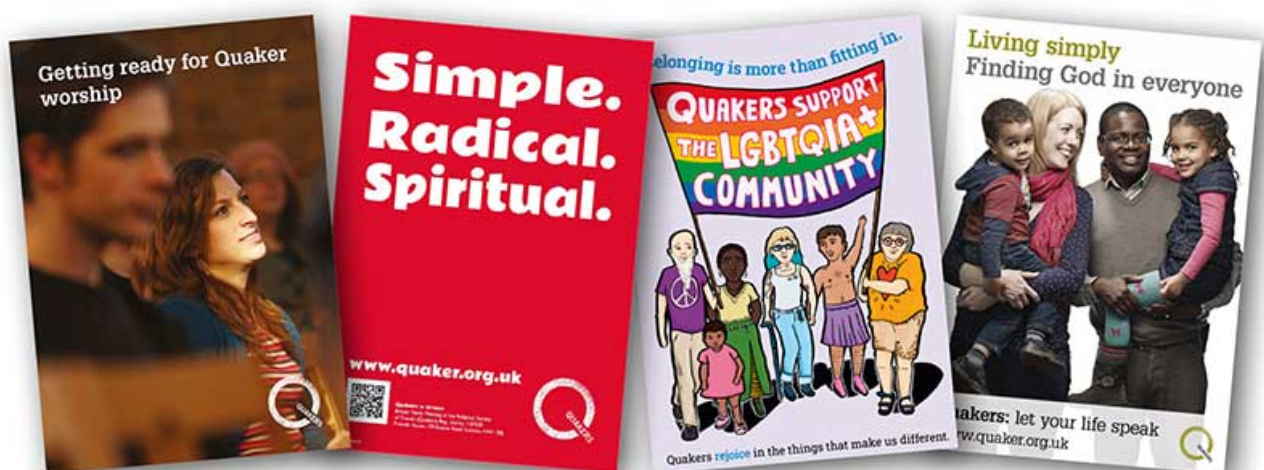
Officially the Religious Society of Friends, The Quakers in the UK originated in the 17th century as a radical nonconformist movement. Known for pacifism, silent worship, and social activism, they have roughly 12,000-17,000 members across 400 meetings in Britain.

Some some interesting facts about Quakers in the UK:

Quakers don't have Priests, ministers or rigid hierarchy. They believe in a direct relationship with God. Meetings often consist of silent reflection, where anyone can speak if moved to do so.

Some Quakers believe in God, some don't. They welcome all faiths and none, and they don't get hung up on beliefs.

Quakers are Equal Rights Advocates, treating everyone equally. They were early activists for women's rights, the abolition of slavery and prison reform. Quakers were the first religious organisation in Britain to formally recognise same-sex marriages.



Quakers are environmentalists and work for peace. They have always challenged the accepted order of things. Quakers try to live simply and peacefully, being true to themselves and speaking truth to power. Modern British Quakers are very active in climate change activism, social justice, and refugee support, often prioritising "love in action" over rigid dogma.

Quakers are also active Pacifists: They have a long history of opposing war and violence, often acting as conscientious objectors during world wars. The Quakers were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947.

Quakers believe in doing good (faith in action). They draw inspiration from their experiences in Quaker meetings and use their time on earth to help others.

Quakers were historically excluded from many professions and universities, driving them into banking and trade. Major banks, including Barclays and Lloyds, were founded by Quaker families.

Several iconic British chocolate companies, including Cadbury, Rowntree's, and Fry's, were founded by Quaker families. They started as a moral, alcohol-free alternative and were known for treating workers well, such as building the Bournville village for employees. They also provided workers with education and healthcare.



The name "Quakers", began as a derogatory nickname for early followers who would "tremble at the word of the Lord" during meetings, particularly after founder George Fox told a judge to tremble.



Quakers try to live life adventurously. They believe in letting your life sing, to live a more positive and meaningful existence.



Finally:

Despite popular belief and the picture on the box, the Quakers have no association with Quaker Oats.

Talking about 'Tradwives'

We are currently witnessing the strange phenomenon of 'traditional wifedom' (Tradwives). Personally, I find the whole concept disturbing, a sort of unholy alliance of hankering for a time that never was, mixed with politics and religion. Specifically, right wing politics and Evangelical Christianity. Yes, it's another American thing, which is creeping insidiously over here. Their numbers are small but their influence is growing.

Far-right tradwives believe contemporary society is beset by decadence and consumerism, sexual depravity and promiscuity, and "unnatural" ways of living. This is all supposedly engineered to weaken the white race. Becoming a 'tradwife' is one way far-right women push back against these supposed threats.

So, in a nutshell, it's about 'white' supremacy with women 'submitting' to their husbands. They describe the "good woman" as demure, well-behaved, quietly intelligent - and although incapable of leadership, key to the future of white people. These women are "wounded by the lie of equality, but not broken by it".

'A woman's value is one of service. Serving as a wife by serving and caring for your husband and bearing and serving his children.'

The problem for me is it's not just a niche choice in life for some women, who want to find a man (not a partner), to provide for her and 'his'

children. It a situation enjoyed by those who would prefer to keep women in their 'place'. Hmmm!



International Women's Day 8th March 2026

"Be the kind of woman that when your feet hit the floor each morning, the devil says, 'Oh crap, she's up!'"



If you think a woman's place is in the kitchen. Don't forget that's also where the knives are.



*Remember when women knew their place and didn't complain?
Yeah, me neither!*



A woman's place is wherever she wants it to be!

Have your say!

The Trustees have been discussing signage on the building.

This is the sign that the Quakers would like to display on Unitarian House. It was handmade by one of the Quakers in Glasgow, so is understandably quite precious to them. (For scale, its about a meter wide. Not actually as big as the picture makes it look)

It has been suggested that we should ask the Quakers to add a bit below, to indicate they are on the first floor. The sign would probably be attached perpendicular to the building so that it sticks out and can be seen as you walk up Berkeley Street. Your comments are welcomed!



Nana, from New Zealand at our first community lunch. Travelling the world in retirement.



Ruth Gregory has been busily investigating the possibility of introducing the Wheel of the Year to our schedule of services.

Glasgow Unitarian Church

Useful Contacts

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Alison Spurway

Music Co-ordinator: Roddy Macpherson

Publicity/Social: Ruth Paxton Wright, Margaret Macintyre McClymont,
Ruth Gregory

Property Manager: Charlie Dand

Fire & Safety: Church Officer/Property Manager

Website: <https://glasgowunitarians-scio.org.uk>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GlasgowUnitarians>

Please use the main number and email address to contact Glasgow Unitarians. We can also be contacted on Facebook Messenger or our Website.