

# Glasgow Unitarians News & Views May 2026

## A BLESSING FOR BELTANE

Bless everything within your dwelling and in your possession. Bless the kine and crops, the flocks and corn, with goodly Progress.

May the energy of the sun infuse your spirit with warmth and vitality. May it burn away your sorrows and illuminate your path to hope and abundance.

May the beauty of the natural world inspire your creativity.

May every flame remind you that your light matters, shining courage into dark places.

May your heart be filled with gratitude and laughter.

May love and light be with you always, guiding you forward.

BLESSÉD BE!

**GLASGOW UNITARIAN CHURCH (SC016472)**  
**UNITARIAN HOUSE, 72 BERKELEY STREET GLASGOW G3 7DS**

# Programme & Notices

## May 2026

**Sunday 3 May** - 11.00 in Church and on Zoom. AGM no service. The meeting will be followed by a community lunch.

**Sunday 3 May** - 7.00pm on Zoom. Linda Haggerstone: Beltane - Wheel of the Year

**Sunday 10 May** - 11.00 in Church and on Zoom. Geoffrey Levermore: The Golden Rule or love thy neighbour, extended to a proposed declaration for all faith leaders and politicians to sign up to, to try to heal the divisions in societies in so many countries.

**Sunday 17 May** - 11.00 in Church and on Zoom. Tom Serb: Reflections on a Life so far!

**Sunday 24 May** - 11.00 in Church and on Zoom. Brett Nicholls: The Iona Community, an introduction to the history and the vision.

**Sunday 31 May** - 11.00 in Church and on Zoom. Roddy Macpherson: Volney's critique of organized religion, as compared with his concept of the religion of nature: an introduction to the writings of French philosopher Constantin-Francois de Chasseboeuf, comte de Volney (1757-1820).

## June 2026

**Sunday 7 June** - In Church and on Zoom: Live streaming from Edinburgh

**Sunday 7 June** - 7.00pm on Zoom. Donald Jacobs



**Soup & sandwich  
Community Lunch  
all are welcome!  
(Sunday 3 May after  
the AGM)**

# Reflections on Ramadan in Tunisia

## 13 - 20 March 2026

Our son Colin is the BBC, Country Director for Tunisia, Libya and Algeria [Colin Spurway | LinkedIn](#)

With "Granny's randoms" safely in place at 76 Fergus Drive, I set off on my own to visit the family this month. My visit coincided with the last week of Ramadan and Eid. My introduction to this period of national fasting and feasting was our drive from the airport at about midnight after my arrival. The roads were packed with vehicles climbing the pavements and approaching roundabouts with high risk strategies.

"Ramadan!" explained Colin. They fast all day and then go crazy for hours after they eat at 6.30pm. "Iftar", the first food and drink after fasting became a regular occurrence during my time with them. My first experience was on Saturday night when we joined friends of the family at a local hotel based in the tourist resort of Sidi Bou Said (think white buildings and blue doors!)

Traditionally the fast is broken with 3 dates (which may be



stuffed with almond paste) and a sip of water. Mohamed broke his fast in this way. This was followed by a Harira soup, spicy lentils with meat or fish, salad, Brik, a savoury pastry filled with a soft egg, tuna and deep-fried until crispy, a salad, a meat or fish dish with couscous or bulgar wheat, accompanied by a kefir drink and Baklava sweet, sweet snacks of

filo pastry and honey. More or less this pattern was followed on 3 more occasions during my visit. My final Iftar was outside a



restaurant on the street with a young man who lived with his parents because he was not yet married. We gathered and waited with all the other clients until the gun was fired marking the end of that day's fast. The challenge for the owner was to ensure that everybody was served immediately before the gun so that the soup did not cold before the signal was given. He succeeded.

In 2026, Ramadan was at a time of year when dawn was not too early and sunset not too late. In high summer the challenge is extraordinary. Working after an early rise and breakfast becomes difficult about 3.00pm when people give up and head for home, abandoning any concept of traffic regulations. For women, this is a challenging time as they continue to be responsible for feeding babies, children and the elderly or any others who are exempt from the fast. Each evening is regarded as Christmas with these special dishes and friends joining in the family meal.

Given it is a month long, the impact on the economy must be significant as performance drops and energy levels take a dive. But it appears that the whole country participates and the streets and houses echo to the call to prayer many times a day. I asked the young man if he read the Quran in Arabic during this period and attended the mosque to pray. He was somewhat ambivalent but he said that he loved Ramadan because of the sense of community it gave him. Colin said that he loved the

fact that there was no alcohol and yet everybody seemed very happy to be together and to celebrate with new clothes and family gatherings.

On 19 April, we shall welcome, Kish Sultana, our next door neighbour to talk about Islam, the Andalus mosque and educational centre run by her husband Javed Ali [Andalus](#). Kish approaches Ramadan with great sincerity and despite having 5 young adults under her roof and the responsibilities of being the lead GP in her Kelvin Medical Centre, she aims to have a period of reflection, prayer and reading. I think it will be fascinating to hear her.



Alison Spurway

ذَهَبَ الظَّمَأُ، وَابْتَلَّتِ الْعُرُوقُ، وَتَبَّتَ الْأَجْرُ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ

*"The thirst is gone, the veins are moistened, and the reward is confirmed, if Allah wills."  
Transliteration: Dhahabaz-ẓama'u, wabtallati 'l-`urūq, wa thabata 'l-'ajru in shā Allāh.*

Every day's  
a schoolday!

English has two different terms for words that come into English from other languages. A 'calque' is translated from the source language. (E.g., flea market, beer garden, paper tiger) A 'loanword' is ported in its original form. (E.g., cafe, bazaar, kindergarten) Perhaps ironically, the word 'calque' is a loanword, while 'loanword' is a calque (from Ger. 'lehnwort').

# In Pictures April 2026

## Another busy month in GUC.



### We missed you!

Ruth, Barbara Tom & Donald back safely from their travels to far off lands ‘ aka Derbyshire’, kindly bringing back some shocking weather.

### Snow Day!

Truly, 4 seasons in one day. We had sunshine earlier in the day.



### Here's one he made earlier!

Alastair Moodie gave the Easter Service, always good to see him, he's looking well. *(Pic by Roddy)*

### All together now!

Ruth and Nana just can't resist an opportunity for a singsong. Nana went all the way to West Kilbride to practice and had to confess that she had contracted a case of garden envy. Ruth, best host ever! *(Pic by Roddy)*





## Reflections of a Muslim Life with Dr Kish Sultana

Alison chatting with Kish, Despite some unfortunate technology issues it was lovely to meet Kish and friends.  
*(Pic by Roddy)*



**Margery Mackay**  
Always a pleasure to see Margery. *(Pic by Donald)*



## A Very Happy 65th Wedding Anniversary!

To our very dear friends and long-time members Margaret & George Paxton  
From Glasgow Unitarian Church  
*Pics courtesy of Ruth Paxton Wright. Margaret & George with 'a young' Clare and at Clare's wedding on 29 March 2026.*

# General Assembly 2026



This year's *General Assembly* meetings took place at the Hayes Conference Centre near Alfreton in Derbyshire on 27-29 March. The centre is located within beautiful park-like grounds including a couple of lakes, however the cold weather precluded any outdoor pursuits.

Donald and myself were lucky enough to attend for the second time this year, together with our friends Barbara and Tom. We travelled together by car stopping over at Tebay for a mid morning breakfast treat. We managed to arrive and check in on time and sit down to lunch before the inspiring opening service including the banner parade in which Tom proudly carried the *Glasgow Unitarian* banner.

This was followed by the engaging keynote address. The speaker Sarah Corbett, the daughter of a vicar and a council leader from Liverpool, shared her passion for Craftivism, a blend of crafts and activism which uses words to effect change in a gentle and non-aggressive manner. Below you can see the *Craftivist's Manifesto*.



# A Craftivist's Manifesto

Connecting our hands, hearts and heads  
we can truly make a difference.

## 1 Be the tortoise

Breathe; take it slow. Craftivism is about taking a thoughtful approach to mindful activism.

## 2 Craft is our tool

It can bring about effective long-term change, but it should always fit seamlessly with what we're saying, never used for the sake of it.

## 3 Solidarity not sympathy

Preserve the dignity of others by showing solidarity with them in your craft. Understand their struggles and you'll understand their solutions. Activism is not about charity.

## 4 Find comfort in contemplation

Use the slow, stitch-by-stitch, nature of craft to help you consider the complexities of injustices. It will lead to a deeper understanding of them and their solutions.

## 5 Empathy never points fingers

Try to see everyone's perspective. Everyone faces different challenges, so aim to make critical friends, not aggressive enemies.

## 6 Small & beautiful

However small, pieces inspired by beauty and love can be powerful reminders of just how gorgeous the world can be. Don't worry about imperfections either; they're endearing.

## 7 Humility holds the key

The world often needs us to change before it can. Consider your role within the bigger picture. Work with people, never against them and always keep an open mind.

## 8 Provoke don't preach

Never shout, always encourage. Inform through your craft and it will provoke thought and action. Intriguing activism inspires never intimidates.

## 9 Embrace positivity

It's the most encouraging tone we can take. Being cynical's easy, but a positive, compassionate world vision has the power to fuel dreams and build movements.

## 10 Make the change you wish to see

If we want our world to be more beautiful, kind & just, then let's make our activism beautiful, kind & just. So pick up your needle and thread and join us in crafting! Together we'll change our world one stitch at time...

As always the exhibition room with all the stalls was very well

attended and we found some fantastic books from Sheena Gabriel's personal collection.

After a long day we missed the peace vespers ably led by John Carter.



Saturday's highlight was the anniversary service led by Rev Daniel Costley during which moving tributes were paid to our dear Rev John Clifford. The story for all ages was *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and the actor Mel Gibson was used as a memorable and fun illustration for the interconnectedness of all.

Sunday started with communion in the picturesque chapel led by Rev Robert Foreman. There was a communal Ostara celebration led by Rev Kate Dean and other members of the Earth Spirit Network. And finally our friends Revs Alex and Jean Bradley were welcomed to their joint GA presidency by the outgoing president Jeff Levermore.



After another tasty lunch and many fond farewells we travelled through sleet and high winds back to bonnie Scotland.

Ruth Jacobs

# The annual Vasaikhi Sikh procession 2026

Easter Sunday, lots going on.

While we were setting up for our service the Vasaikhi Sikh procession, Scotland's biggest Sikh celebration of the year, passed Unitarian House.



The five beloved ones

The 2026 Glasgow Nagar Kirtan, is a vibrant Sikh procession celebrating Vaisakhi and Khalsa Sajna Diwas. The procession features traditional music, hymns (Kirtan), and a parade honouring the Guru Granth Sahib. The parade celebrates Vaisakhi (Sikh New Year) and the birth of the Khalsa, marking the birth of the Sikh nation.

the Guru Granth Sahib (holy scripture)



A key event for Scotland's estimated 10,000+ Sikhs, particularly in Glasgow, the procession is led by Panj Pyare (five beloved ones) in traditional

attire, and wielding swords. It features the Guru Granth Sahib (holy scripture) on a float. Starting at Guru Nanak Gurdwara (Otago Street, West End) and making stops at the Central Gurdwara Singh Sabha (Berkeley Street) and Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara (St Andrews Drive) the final destination is Gurdwara Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Albert Drive), its quite a hike.



The procession. (awful weather - hail snow rain and sunshine)

# Glasgow Unitarian Church (scio) - Contacts

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## **Executive Trustees:**

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**Trustees:** Margaret Macintyre McClymont, Ruth Paxton Wright, Ruth Gregory, Barbara Clifford, Stephanie Little

**Church Officer:** Alison Briggs

**Worship Leaders:** - Barry Bell, Alison Briggs, Barbara Clifford, Ruth Gregory Donald Jacobs, Roddy Macpherson, Jim Millar, Lynne Mitchell, Margaret Paxton, Alison Spurway,

**Music Co-ordinator:** - Roddy Macpherson

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

**Property Manager:** Charlie Dand

**Building matters:** Church Officer/Property Manager

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

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

***Please contact the Church Officer if you require additional personal email addresses or telephone numbers. We can also be contacted on Facebook Messenger or our Website.***

***Any errors on this page are unintentional. Corrections should be sent to the he Church Officer.***

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