

Oscailt

Oscailt since January 2005 has become the monthly magazine for Irish Unitarians. Originally it was the calendar for Dublin but due to popular demand by non members this new format was born and continues to grow and flourish.

Oscailt is Published by the
Dublin Unitarian Church
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To Subscribe

Annual subscription 12 monthly issues.
€35 Posted for Ireland
£35 Posted for England & Scotland
Cheques and PO should be made payable to: *Dublin Unitarian Church*.

Deadline

The deadline for articles to be included is the 21st day of the month.

Unsolicited articles, news items, letters, poems, etc are always welcome, however there can be no guarantee of publication. Copy should be sent by e-mail or at least typed, photographs should be 300dpi.

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Front Cover: The children who took part in the coming of age programme.

(photo Denise Dunne)

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Oscailt

Our magazine title, ***Oscailt***, is inspired by the account of the **Healing of the Deaf and Mute Man** in St. Mark's Gospel, Chapter 7. Jesus commands the mans ears to open up with Aramic word "Ephphatha" - open ! The Irish word *oscailt*, (from the verb *os-cail*, to open), means an opening, or, metaphorically, it could mean a revelation or a beginning.

We Need your Help

Hello, my name is Khatira Samim, an Afghan programme refugee. I was granted a Protection Visa in Ireland on 2nd September 2021 for myself and my family including my 2 children, my husband, my mother and my brother by Irish Government as our lives were in danger due to the nature of my work as human rights defender and women rights activist.

As you all know Afghanistan's government collapsed in August, When the Taliban took control, most of the people who were human right activists, NGO workers, especially women, were at high risk. I was one of the women who had worked for many years for human rights with a non-profit organisation (Concern). Because my life was threatened I left the country on 20th September 2021.

My family had to remain in Afghanistan because their passports had expired. My family extended their passports and they left Afghanistan on 30th October 2021 for Pakistan to come to Ireland. My family passed the Pakistan border legally with a Pakistan visa and they stayed for 2 weeks in Islamabad Pakistan till the arrangements were made for their travel. On 17th November 2021 their flights were booked on Qatar Airways, they went to the airport with their passports and got exit stamped, and suddenly airport immigration stopped them. During immigration clearance, the stickers on their visas for Pakistan were found to be 'tampered'. Subsequently, the passengers were off-loaded from the flight and my family transferred to Federal Investigation Agency in Islamabad. My children with my mother were released by the guarantee of the owner of the hotel but my husband remained for 3 days at FIA, then he was transferred to prison. He was tortured and subjected to forced labour. My children (aged 9 and 7) and my elderly mother were shocked by this sudden unexpected situation, which was only resolved after direct intervention from the Irish Consul, for which we are very grateful.

Although my husband was released from the terrifying imprisonment after a few days, the situation has been dragging on. It is about eight months now and there have been several court hearings. All witnesses and documents are proof that the family is innocent, but the system over there is very corrupt, and the case is being

delayed and sent from one court to another with no reason. During this time of anxiety, my mother's health situation has deteriorated and my children sound very distressed on the phone. My family didn't receive any proper support yet except updating their Ireland visa regularly and some letters as support document. I am kindly requesting that there could be some intervention from the Irish government, which has recognised that we as a family need International Protection.

Their life is in danger in Pakistan, my mother has had few times anxiety attacks which affect her breathing and circulation. My children are very terrified and distressed. I am sure that the Irish Government can help my family by talking to the Pakistan authorities according to diplomatic procedures to release them because they are Irish refugees. Please do all you can to help my family in this terrible situation.

Thank you for your help.

Khatira Samim

Human Rights Defender & Women Rights Activist.

Write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney
and /or the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee on behalf of
Khatira Samim.

Sample letter on page 4

We would ask you to lobby politicians as this family has been
issued with valid Irish Visas to Ireland.

Many thanks for anything you can do

Helen McEntee is at helen.mcentee@oireachtas.ie
Minister Coveney at simon.coveney@oireachtas.ie

A sample letter could look like this:

Dear Minister

I would be really grateful if you could intervene on behalf of the family of Khatira Samim, an Afghan woman now in County Limerick and a former women's rights activist and human rights defender (and Concern Worldwide employee), who have their refugee papers to come to Ireland but who are stuck in very difficult circumstances in Pakistan.

Her husband, mother, brother and two children were due to fly to Ireland on 17 November 2021. However, they were taken off the plane at the last moment at Islamabad airport because their papers were deemed to have been 'tampered' with. Her husband was imprisoned and tortured, but was let out of prison after the intervention of the Irish consul. However, for the past nearly eight months they have been shuttled from court to court, with no sign of being allowed to travel to Ireland, despite having their Irish visas and having them regularly updated.

Khatira believes their lives are in danger in Pakistan; her mother has suffered anxiety attacks and her children are "terrified and distressed". Please put this family out of its misery by intervening with the Pakistani authorities to allow them to leave for Ireland.

Kind regards and many thanks

Your name, address, phone and email.

Junior Coming of Age

On Sunday 5th June 2022, four of the younger members of our community celebrated their Junior Coming of Age ceremony. The children, Josephine, Michael, Caoimhín and Matea (picture on front cover) worked hard over the last few months, meeting every two weeks in the vestry during services, to learn more about the Unitarian Church, some of the beliefs people who attend our church hold, and in particular to work on their project.

The project the children presented during their service was based on the beautiful carving which is a central part of our building – the beatitudes. Over a number of weeks, the children read and discussed the meaning of these phrases and rewrote them in their own words to reflect the meaning they take from them. As part of the service, the children presented this to the community. They also took part in other elements of the service, lighting the chalice, selecting the hymns, and most importantly sharing the Children's Story (to both young and older!). Rev. Spain's address spoke directly to the children reminding them of the importance of their back bone, elbow bone (and grease) and their funny bone. No doubt all present took her thoughtful message on board.

The service concluded with a communion, where we shared bread and wine as a community. The bread was a delicious fish-shaped creation of Dietmar, Caoimhín dad, who made it based on recipes from his home in Germany. Following the service, we had our first tea and coffee gathering, which we have greatly missed in the last two and a half years. We look forward to many more celebrations, big and small, in our community.

Denise Dunne

Dublin Unitarian Church

The Magic of Being

The title of this address is the “Magic of Being“. I suppose I should begin with the usual Unitarian warning: What you hear from a Unitarian pulpit is food for thought, an encouragement to think and ask questions.

We hope you will take on board what you hear, but at the end of the day you are the judge. We have it on good advice that you don't have to believe anything without questioning. The Buddha himself is quoted as saying *Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it, simply because it is spoken and rumoured by many, simply because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. Do not believe in traditions simply because they have been handed down for many generations. But, after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.* Advice there from the Buddha.

I am sure there are as many opinions as there are people listening to this and that is a good thing, something to be celebrated rather than feared. Here we celebrate difference.

Now there are principles that Unitarians share despite our diversity of opinions. We believe in freedom of religious thought, the importance of reason and scientific inquiry, and we respect other religious traditions. So when we come today to reflect on the Magic of Being we stress that Unitarians do not define for others what the word “God” means. The idea of God is too big to be captured in a 3 letter word. Even too big to be captured in all the text books that have ever been written.

So what are we to make of it all, this magical existence of ours? It is a constant source of fascination to me that you and I are here sharing this existence. We have to ask ourselves *Just how can this be so? How can it be that you and I are here sharing this journey of life?*

We look around us and what do we see? We see a fascinating world of wonder, the amazing natural world which we can now examine in extraordinary detail with the aid of powerful telescopes

and electron microscopes. You and I were given an extraordinary gift on the day we made our entrance into this world.

In his *Mass on the World* the French Jesuit theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin captures something of this amazing gift when he says *What a terrifying thing it is to have been born, to find oneself, without having willed it, swept irrevocably along on a torrent of fearful energy.*

Having been born is certainly a terrifying thing, finding ourselves here and finding ourselves faced with these questions. But it is not only terrifying. It is a wonderful thing to be here. We open our eyes, we look around. In the first place we see the world of nature in all its fascinating variety. And as well we see all around us our amazing man-made creations. What a wonderful world this is.

But familiarity can creep in. These wonders are so regular, so reliable. We can take all this for granted. We see it every day. It is as familiar and as taken for granted as a comfortable old tee shirt. The result of this familiarity is that we can drift through life with our eyes oblivious to the beauty of the world. We can sail through our days in a routine type of way, with a “*so-what*” type of attitude. But at some time hopefully all of us will stop to ask *What is this all about?*. This is the question that has occupied thinking people since the beginning of time.

One view is that this existence of ours is simply the result of chance, that the world around us and we human beings ourselves are just the result of a mindless accumulation of atoms. We have all heard it described this way. *This is just the way things are. Things just evolve.*

This view of reality is accompanied by the belief that science will explain it all in the end. It is admitted that we do not have all the answers right now but we are assured that we will find the answers sooner or later.

Materialists tell us that we just have to dig deeper and deeper, not just examining what we can see with our eyes and microscopes, but probing further and further into the sub-atomic world of quantum physics.

The extraordinary thing is that as the search deepens we find that the nature of reality becomes ever more mysterious, ever more nebulous. We search for the final answer, the theory of everything, and we find ourselves opening something that resembles one of those Russian dolls.

You have seen them. You open the outer one and find another one inside, and then another inside that and so on – and so on.

In our probing of the physical world, each layer that we peel back leads to another and another and - so far - without any end in sight. The work of exploration is like peeling an onion, You remove layer after layer but in this exploration you never manage to get to the centre. In that materialist view of reality the alternative possibility is be written off as old-fashioned mumbo-jumbo. *How could we rational beings possibly be expected to believe that some unseen power could be the basis of all that is?*

And, after all, God is said by believers to be all good, all powerful and all knowing. And if this God is the cause or basis of everything then how do we reconcile the idea of an all good, all powerful and all-knowing God with all the pain and suffering that is all too evident in the world around us?

Now it is true to say that the existence of evil is among the most difficult arguments that believers have to confront. Of course we know that much of the suffering in the world is caused by humans. It arises from our greed, our tendency to aggression, our desire to control other people. That part of the evil we see in the world **can** be blamed on humans.

But what about natural disasters, illnesses and the like? These provide difficult-to-answer arguments against the idea of an all-wise all-knowing and all-powerful God. And in fairness to the non-believers we have to admit that God has the most incompetent set of public relations people that anyone could possibly have employed. For example the image of God as presented in the Old Testament is anything but attractive.

Now I am no fan of Richard Dawkins. When he rejects the idea of God it seems to me that he is not rejecting God so much as rejecting God's messengers, God's dreadful PR people. He is confusing the issue and missing the point. But his description of the God of the Old Testament is spot on. He puts it this way and I am sure many of you will have read it:

"The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.

You have to admire Richard's command of English!

And, since the time of Jesus, the Roman Catholic authorities themselves have failed in their task of projecting a positive image of God. We have the Inquisition, the Crusades, the persecution of non-believers, the denial of science - as in the case of Galileo. And even today we see the covering up of abuse in order to protect the church. And the continuing dominance of a celibate male clergy and a failure to accept the reality of the human condition when it comes to matters of sexuality. With public relations staff like this is it any wonder that many people have let the baby out with the bath water?

And yet faced with the alternative, that we live in a meaningless chaotic universe, we do need to try to rediscover what it is that gives rise to the Magic of our Being. What is the basis of this reality?

It might help -first of all - to take a look at ourselves, the people making this inquiry. We are tiny finite beings, living out our short lives on a fragile rock circling a minor star in the suburbs of the Milky Way galaxy. And our galaxy is just one of thousands of millions of galaxies in the known universe. Imagine an ant trying to understand the complexity of a nuclear power station or trying to figure out the workings of the International Space Station. We are little more than ants as we engage in an exploration of something far more complex than the ISS. or a nuclear power station, far more complex than anything we can even imagine.

That image of an ant studying something beyond its ability, gives us an idea of how difficult, how impossible, our task is. And aren't we the cheeky little ants when you come to think of it? Here we are finite beings struggling to come to terms with an understanding of the infinite and the eternal and, at the same time, convinced that we can know it all.

But strangely, the very fact that we are here attempting that study is surely one argument against the idea that we are simply a random purposeless accumulations of atoms. How could a mindless accumulation of atoms begin to make such an inquiry? How could a mindless accumulation of atoms even come up with the question? Our very intelligence, limited as it is, seems to suggest the opposite. We all know there is no smoke without fire. Our very enquiry, the fact that we can ask the question seems to suggest that there **is** an underlying intelligence that supports this existence of ours.

The problem is very simple really: the too familiar word “God” itself. We are inclined to see God as a bigger, stronger, version of ourselves, God as superman or superwoman. But just think what an awful God that would be. Consider for a moment what we have done to one another and the damage that we have inflicted on this planet. Beginning with sticks and stones we have developed ever more efficient means of killing one another. We have progressed - although you would hardly call it progress - through bows and arrows, spears, swords, armour, guns, tanks and an ever more sophisticated collection of weapons until now we possess the ability to destroy the planet and everything on it several times over. Only the certainty of Mutually Assured Destruction has prevented us - so far – from pressing the nuclear buttons that could end life for all of us humans as well as every living thing on this earth.

And when you consider what we have done to this planet, how we have exploited it, plundered its resources, overheated it to the point of near calamity you would have to despair at the prospect of a bigger more powerful version of ourselves being in charge of this world. Even now, when we are faced with flashing red lights and clear evidence that climate change is threatening the future of civilisation, we are reluctant to take the steps that are needed to avert the looming calamity. Whoever or whatever God may be, let us hope that he, she or it bears very little resemblance to ourselves.

Any attempted description of God loses sight of what God by definition must be. The word “God” is a very small word. And our easy use of it has given rise to belief in a very small God. This very small God is the God that people these days cannot believe in. How could they? Why should they? The book of Genesis tells us that God made humankind in his “image” and “likeness”, that we are made in the image of God. But we have come to believe that God is made in our image.

So when faced with the alternatives:

- 1 - That we are a mindless accumulation of atoms, or,
- 2 - That there **is** an impossible-to-define underlying reality (that we inadequately refer to by the name “God”) which is the more reasonable explanation?

Can we bring ourselves to believe in **something** rather than **nothing** as the basis for the Magic of our Being? Maybe belief in God makes more sense once we don't try to bring God down to our size and once we don't limit the infinite by our definitions.

When we ask ourselves about God's "existence" we have to try to grasp an idea of existence (not **a** being but **being itself**) which goes beyond existence as we understand it.

When we try to think of God's "presence" we must try to imagine a presence and an intimacy which goes far beyond presence and intimacy as we experience it.

And when we talk in terms of a "personal" God what we have to try to comprehend is something that goes way beyond any idea of "personal" in our limited human sense.

It is the same when we talk about the idea of the love of God. Our idea of love is so very limited, the sometimes flippant love of one person for another, the love of family, the love of home, the love of a country.

The God we are trying very inadequately to describe is present beyond any idea of presence, closer than any idea of closeness and by definition has to be more intimately associated with us than any idea of love and intimacy that we can conjure up.

Perhaps the most useful description we can come up with is that used by Saint Paul when he said that *In God we live and move and have our being*.

The alternative to faith in an ultimate power is the acceptance of an ultimate emptiness, an ultimate pointlessness. This makes for a pitiful existence that just doesn't make sense when we examine the world around us, when as Elizabeth Barrett Browning puts it: *Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God*.

How could it be that we are born, that there is no meaning, just some temporary pain and joy between life and death, leaving us sad human beings trying to have a spiritual experience? A more logical explanation might be the idea that was given to us by Teilhard de Chardin who said the opposite. He says "*We are spiritual beings having a human experience*"

So to sum up:

If we can abandon the effort to bring God down to size, if we can accept that God is indescribable within the limits of our thinking and

our vocabulary, and if we can simply come to realize that *In God we live and move and have our being* we might find it easier to give thanks to the Ground **of** Being for the Magic of **our** Being

Tony Brady

Dublin Unitarian Church - 13 June 2022



PLANT SALE IN AID OF THE REFUGEE COMMITTEE

Dear friends,

When our minister Bridget put out the call that she was organising a plant sale in aid of the Refugee Committee's work with Hajira, a young woman from Afghanistan, I mentioned to my sisters that I would try help out with the sale and some plants and if they had any plants going I'd appreciate it. We're a family of gardeners and enjoy passing on plants to others but to help raise money for such a deserving cause gives added joy. The sister's plants came in as I expected. Many of our congregation also brought in plants to the sale which was deeply appreciated but the main supply was from Bridget which was truly spectacular.

One of my sisters, Adrienne also held a plant sale recently as many of her friends, her daughters and their friends wanted to support Hajira.

Adrienne and her friends raised €350.00 on top of the €735.00 raised in the church.

We all have plants given to us by other gardeners and are reminded of the person as we see them grow in our garden. I hope that all the plants that were bought are thriving and for me thinking of Hajira reminds me that I am lucky to have the freedom to grow and enjoy my garden.

Alison Claffey

Dublin Unitarian Church



Dublin Unitarian Book Club's
choice for May 2022.



MOON TIGER

by
PENELOPE LIVELY

Moon Tiger :
a green coil that slowly burns all night repelling mosquitoes

Claudia Hampton the protagonist of our story is a deeply flawed and complex woman. She is arrogant, vain, self-centred, fiercely independent and ambitious. Yet, you can't help but admire her as she remembers her life over the decades from childhood during the First World War to where she is now in her seventies dying of cancer in a nursing home.

Her father died in the First World War leaving Claudia and her brother Gordon in what Claudia considers to be the boring upper middle class domesticity of their mother. Gordon and Claudia are rivals but also develop a close and exclusive cliquish relationship that lasts through their lives. Claudia escapes her mother's world and carves out a niche for herself in the male dominated world of writers and journalists. She has a quick wit, a sharp tongue and a superior attitude towards those she considers 'boring' (her daughter Lisa) or 'stupid' (her sister in law Sylvia).

Her reminiscences jump forwards and backwards over the decades leaving the reader to piece together the sequence of events of her life. The narrative can also jump from Claudia's telling of an event to, without warning, one of the other character's giving their perspectives on the same event, which can be enlightening but also a bit confusing as you don't always know who is doing the talking.

The centrepiece of Claudia's story takes place in Egypt during the second world war when she becomes a war correspondent. But *before* the reader is told about this time in her life we have already formed an opinion of Claudia as she tells of her childhood and family relationships and their dynamics, of her meeting with her lover Jas-

per **after** the war, and birth of their daughter Lisa without them getting married. They subsequently leave the care of Lisa to their respective mothers who form an alliance in their 'boring' life of upper middle class domesticity. Claudia pursues her career as a historical writer and journalist, Jasper pursuing entrepreneurship in cinema and TV.

It is when Claudia is in Egypt that we encounter another side to her character. She meets Tom Southern, a British soldier while she is out in the desert with other journalists reporting on the war. They fall in love and grasp every moment to be together that they can, the Moon Tiger burns through on their last night together at their bedside. Tom is killed and Claudia now pregnant tries in vain to stop a miscarriage occurring. Claudia never tells of her time in Egypt to anyone.

The author's writing of Egypt and Cairo is wonderful especially the descriptions of the desert and the soldiers experiences in such a harsh environment. The diary written by Tom during his last mission is very moving and heart-breaking. It is only discovered forty years later by his family and they send it to Claudia, the 'C' that he refers to.

Claudia continues with her life, with her strained relationships with family, with her successful career as a historical novelist.

Moon Tiger is a book about memories and personal histories. Each person has a different take on events and so the author asks us to question what is the truth? If personal memories can be unreliable and subjective then how do we know what really happened in the past. This is not to deny the fact that historical events occurred such as battles and wars and their atrocities but she asks us to listen to the multiple voices and testimonies of the individuals involved. We read the description in Tom's diary of what it was really like in the desert battlefield versus the clipped prose of the BBC of 'engagements in the Western Desert inflicting severe losses on the enemy', and then the stiff upper lip comments of the British based in Cairo such as 'They're really at it in the desert again....we're really bashing Rommel, everyone says'.

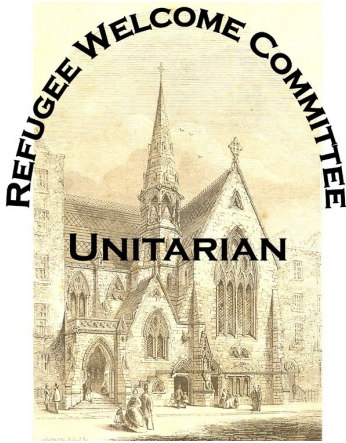
In the end Claudia's last thoughts and conversation is with Tom, forty years younger and frozen in time. She speaks directly to him and says that he would not recognise the Claudia she has become. Tom once said to Claudia 'Death is total absence', which she

agrees is true, but she also says as she is dying 'I preserve you , as others will preserve me. For a while'.

The book club readers had differing opinions on the book. Some found it hard to piece together as the story jumped backwards and forward and also the narrator changed from first person to third which lent to the confusion. The characters were not easy to identify with , the reserved upper middle class English with their stiff upper lip attitude. All agreed that the writing was great and the themes of memory and what constitutes truth are well explored. It was a book worth reading.

Alison Claffey

Dublin Unitarian Church



Up-Date

The members of the Unitarian Refugee Welcome Committee, want to share with you another excellent milestone achieved in our refugee support work.

Since November 2021 we have been supporting a young Afghan refugee, Hajira (a pseudonym to protect her privacy). We were able to get her settled into rented accommodation, help her to claim welfare supports, be her companions while she orientated herself and support her financially while waiting to get welfare. Hajira has adapted to her new life here with amazing resilience and is already in paid employment which is also a training opportunity with a major firm.

Hajira shared with us her worries about the fate of her mother, Laila (also a pseudonym) and her brother and his family whom she had left behind in Afghanistan. Laila had been a working journalist and critic of the Taliban before their takeover. Since the rise of the Taliban Laila had been unable to work, while attempting to do a report from the field she was attacked and beaten by Taliban members. She also suffered violence at the hands of some family members who blamed her for helping Hajira to leave the country. It was clear to us that Laila was in dire circumstances and we decided to lobby politicians to get her admitted to Ireland. With the help of church members and wider supporters we mounted a determined campaign. In May we learnt that Laila had been admitted to the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and was on her way to Ireland to be reunited with Hajira. Securing Laila's safety, her reunion with her youngest daughter and the chance of a new life for her is obviously a source of great joy. We want to thank most sincerely those who helped in the lobbying efforts, those whose donations meant we were able to pay travel, visa and accommodation expenses for Laila and especially the benevolent landlords of the accommodation that Hajira and Laila are now sharing.

One member of this family remains in Afghanistan in grave want and under threat from the Taliban. That is Laila's son and Hajira's brother : Mohammed (a pseudonym). He and his pregnant wife and 2 year

old child have no way of earning a living and our group has agreed to give them basic financial support which at the moment amounts to €200 a month. If any member wants to give practical support by way of sponsoring them for a month or so we would be delighted to pass on this help through a channel we have already set up.

Our ultimate goal is to have them also admitted as refugees here.

In the case of Laila the fact that we had a firm pledge of accommodation was very influential in having her accepted to the Irish refugee protection programme. We believe that if we can secure an accommodation offer for Mohammed's family of four we will greatly increase our chances of having them accepted to the Irish refugee programme. We appeal to you to spread the word that our group is looking for accommodation for this family. If anyone is in a position to and has a big enough home and heart and could open them to this family for a period that would be wonderful. Equally we are looking for a rented property. We guarantee rent payments while social welfare support is being applied for; we guarantee that the property will be returned in excellent condition at the end of the tenancy; if minor works are necessary to make the property suitable for rent we will ensure that they are done. We will support and assist the family to integrate successfully. This offer might appeal to a reluctant or anxious landlord or someone motivated by a desire to do a special humanitarian deed.

We can be contacted at unitarianrwc@gmail.com or by approaching any of our members :

Mary O'Brien; Trish Webb-Duffy; Sheila Hanley; Paul Murray; Emer O'Reilly; Aidan O'Driscoll; Jennifer Buller; Éanna Ó Muiré; Ciara Nic Cháirthaigh and Andy Pollak.

The Unitarian Refugee Welcome Committee would be grateful for any information you might have about a 3-4 bedroomed house for a reasonable rent in Dublin for an Afghan refugee family (husband, wife and small child) - he is the brother of the young woman and her mother whom the URWC are sponsoring in a flat in Dublin under the Community Sponsorship Scheme for refugees.

Kylemore Abbey Co.Galway

Kylemore Abbey is located in one of the most beautiful places in Ireland. It is the home of a community of Benedictine Nuns and Kylemore has unexpected connections with Irish Unitarians/NSPCI churches.

Kylemore Abbey was built by Mitchel Henry son of Alexander Henry and Elizabeth Brush. Alexander and Elizabeth Henry lived in Manchester however Elizabeth was born in Killinchy. Their son Mitchel Henry married Margaret Vaughan from Dromore. Alexander Henry was a trustee of Cross Street Church in Manchester and Mitchel was baptised in Cross Street. Mitchel was a very successful doctor but when he inherited his father's estate he gave up medicine and became a Member of Parliament.

While on honeymoon in Connemara Margaret fell in love with the countryside and Mitchel kept his promise to her to build her a castle there. The result is Kylemore Abbey. Margaret and Mitchel Henry lived very happily in Kylemore with their nine children until Margaret's sudden death aged just 45 years. Both Margaret and Mitchel are buried in the grounds of the Abbey.

Mitchel built a Gothic Church in the grounds of Kylemore as a tribute to his deceased wife. This is a beautiful building and the Nuns at Kylemore have given us permission to hold a service in this church.

The date we agreed on is
Sunday 21st August 2022 time is 2.30/3.00p.m.

This is an open invitation to all members (and friends) of the NSPCI to join us for the service. I hope that we can bring together Unitarians from Northern Ireland, Dublin and Cork for the service.

Practical arrangements. There is **some** funding for travel available from Synod of Munster. If enough people are interested, we can

hire a bus to travel from Belfast to Kylemore. Rev. Alister Bell has agreed to co-ordinate arrangement for those travelling from Belfast.

Rev. Alister Bell alister.bell@icloud.com

The date of the 21st August opens up another possible tourist attraction. Kylemore Abbey is close to Croagh Patrick one of Ireland's very sacred mountains.

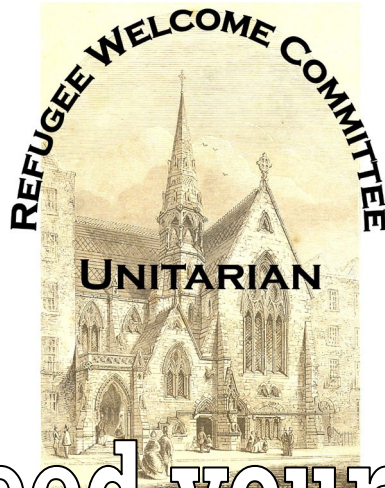
Twice a year on the 18th April and the 24th August the setting sun drops to the peak of the mountain and then appears to roll down the side of Croagh Patrick . It is also visible for a night or two before the 24th. Some people might like to stay overnight and experience this unusual sight. Sunset on 24th August is 8.30p.m. the spectacle would start about an hour earlier, it lasts about 17minutes, before the sun sets behind the mountain.

Rev. Mike O' Sullivan osullmike@gmail.com will co-ordinate the group travelling from Cork.

Those wishing to travel from Dublin should contact the Secretary Ms.Trish Webb-Duffy secretaryunitarianchurch@gmail

Or

Rev. Bridget Spain revbspain@gmail.com



We need your help

In securing a home.

The Unitarian Refugee Welcome Committee would be grateful for any information you might have about a 3-4 bedroomed house for a reasonable rent in Dublin for an Afghan refugee family for a period of two years.

It will act as guarantor for the family.

This guarantee offers the landlord peace of mind as there will be no issues with payment of rent or the condition of the house.

Please contact us for more information.
email address: unitarianrwc@gmail.com