

#### **Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless People**

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"Inspired by the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, we at the Capuchin Day Centre welcome people in need of food aid who have no home, or are socially excluded and respecting their dignity, provide a caring pastoral holistic and non-judgmental service responsive to their needs" (Mission Statement)

18th December 2023

Dublin Unitarian Church. 112 St Stephens Green, Dublin D02 YP23

#### Sincere Thanks to Dublin Unitarian Church



Christmas Blessings from Fr. Kevin Kiernan. As we celebrate this Holy Season, my prayer for you is that the Child of Bethlehem will fill your heart and home with his peace and joy this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

Dear Congregation,

Just a brief note to formally acknowledge your generous donation of €1,570 in Smyths Vouchers and clothes and food, this will go a long way to help our work here in the Capuchin Day Centre with people who are homeless or in need. This donation will help in offsetting our care costs, particularly over the Christmas period and during the current cost of living crisis.

On behalf of the people who attend the Centre, our staff and volunteers and the Irish Capuchin Franciscan Order, we offer renewed thanks and our prayers for God's blessings on you and all you hold dear.

With every good wish.

Fr. Kenn Kioman Hercap

Fr. Kevin Kiernan OFM Cap **Capuchin Director** 



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 112 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin D02 YP23.

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**Cork Unitarian Church** Princes Street, Cork. Minister: Rev.Mike O'Sullivan

Editor: Paul Spain

#### **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  $15^{th}$  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.

e-mail: oscailtmagazine@gmail.com

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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 oscail, to open), means an opening, or, metaphorically, it could mean a revelation or a beginning.

Front Cover: Is part of the Hubble eXtheme Deep Field picture. (NASA/ESA/XDF/HUDF09 Team)

All the smudges, smears and spots, are galaxies.

## Point at the Sky

IN 1995, ASTRONOMER Bob Williams wanted to point the Hubble Space Telescope at a patch of sky that was said to be filled with absolutely nothing remarkable. For 100 hours?

It was a terrible idea, his colleagues told him, and a waste of valuable telescope time. People would kill for that amount of time with the sharpest tool in the shed, they said, and besides — no way would the distant galaxies Williams hoped to see be bright enough for Hubble to detect.

Plus, another Hubble failure would be a public relations nightmare. Perceptions of the project, which had already cost multiple billions of dollars, were pretty dismal. Not much earlier, astronauts had dragged Hubble into the cargo bay of the space shuttle Endeavour and corrected a disastrous flaw in the prized telescope's vision. After the fix, the previously blind eye in the sky could finally see stars as more than blurred points of light. And now, finally, it was time to start erasing the frustrations of Hubble's early years.

Except that staring at nothing and coming up empty didn't seem like the best way to do that. But Williams was undeterred. And, to be honest, it didn't really matter how much his colleagues protested. As director of the Space Telescope Science Institute, he had a certain amount of Hubble's time at his personal disposal. "The telescope allocation committee would never have approved such a long, risky project," he explains. "But as director, I had 10 percent of the telescope time, and I could do what I wanted."

Williams suspected the billion light-year stare might capture eons of galactic evolution in a single frame and uncover some of the faintest, farthest galaxies ever seen. And to him, the potential observations were so important and so fundamental for understanding how the universe evolved that the experiment was a no-brainer, consequences be damned.

"Scientific discovery requires risk," Williams says. "And I was at a point in my career where I said, 'If it's that bad, I'll resign. I'll fall on my sword.""

So, with his job perhaps on the line, Williams went off, put together a small team of post-docs, and did exactly as he'd planned. For 100 hours, between December  $18^{th}$  and  $28^{th}$  1995, Hubble stared

at a patch of sky near the Big Dipper's handle that was only about  $1/30^{\text{th}}$  as wide as the full moon. In total, the telescope took 342 pictures of the region, each of which was exposed for between 25 and 45 minutes. The images were processed and combined, then coloured, and 17 days later, released to the public.

It turned out that "nothing" was actually stuffed with galaxies. More than 3,000 of them came spilling out, some roughly 12 billion years old. Spiral galaxies, elliptical, irregular – red, white, blue, and yellow – the smudges of light that leaped from the final composite image cracked the universe in a way scientists never could have imagined.

"With this achievement, the estimated number of galaxies in the universe had multiplied enormously — to 50 billion, five times more than previously expected," wrote John Noble Wilford in the New York Times, and some of the older galaxies – those distant, faint ones that were supposedly impossible for Hubble to see – looked really, really different.

"When the galaxies were young, they were very irregular they were having collisions, they were erupting, they were having adolescent outbursts," says Robert Kirshner of the Harvard-Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics. He was among the scientists who initially thought the deep field was a bad idea. "Bob was right, I was wrong. The use of that discretionary time was a courageous thing," he says.

But there was more. Williams had gotten in touch with astronomers at the Keck telescopes in Hawaii ahead of time and asked them to point their Earth-based guns at the same patch of sky. Together, the observations helped astronomers develop something of a shortcut for determining cosmological distances to these galaxies, unlocking large portions of the universe.

As for public relations? The image now known as the Hubble Deep Field captivated pretty much everyone. To say it was a triumph would be an understatement. "The nerve that it took to say, 'We're going to point where there isn't anything,' was interesting," says John Maher, a Nobel Laureate and senior project scientist for the James Webb Space Telescope. "And Bob Williams got a lot of nice recognition for that leadership."

Not long after, Williams' experiment was repeated in a different patch of sky in the southern constellation Tucana, and came to be called the Hubble Deep Field South. In 2004, a million-second exposure of nothing produced the Hubble Ultra Deep Field, filled with even more galaxies than the original. And in 2012, combining 10 years of Ultra Deep Field exposures produced the Hubble eXtreme Deep Field.

These images have offered "a glimpse of the hundreds of billions of galaxies that fill the universe," says Hubble senior scientist Jennifer Wiseman, of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Centre. "That gives me and many people pause to be quiet and contemplate this majestic universe we live in, and be grateful we have a chance to look at it."

Jason Kalirai, project scientist with the Webb telescope, goes a step further and places the Hubble Deep Field in a rather impressive historical context. "One of the questions that even the earliest civilizations probably asked themselves is, 'What is our place in the universe?" There have been a few times in our history when the prevailing answer to that question has been overthrown, he says. Once was when Galileo turned his telescope to Jupiter and its moons and helped show that not everything revolves around the Earth; another was when the astronomer Edwin Hubble showed, in the early 1900s, that not every speck of light in the sky belongs to our own galaxy.

A third is the Hubble Deep Field. "It showed that the universe is teeming with these galaxies, and if you do a census of how many galaxies you see, and think about how many more are in the night sky, you can conclude that there are as many galaxies as there are stars in the Milky Way," Kalirai says.

As for Williams? Well, he sums up the experience in a characteristically understated way:

"It turned out to be a neat image. Really !" (see front cover)

*Report from E.S.A.* 

## The Question ?

There is only one interesting question in philosophy, the question is, what is a fragile finite life in an infinite eternal universe doing here?

I think the answer is whiles we are definitely physically insignificant, when you consider, the earth is physically one planet, around one star, amongst 400 billion ordinary stars, in one galaxy, amongst two trillion galaxies, in a small patch of the universe, yes, we are definitely just small specks of dust.

But if you think of what we are, we are just a collection of atoms some of them are as old as time, some of the them, the other ones were made in the stars, they were all cooked over billions of years into a cocktail. We are in this pattern that can think, so suddenly you have a means by which the universe can understand and explore itself, which is us.

And that sounds unlikely when you put it like that, you have a few things that were cooked in the heart of the stars to stick them together into patterns and suddenly it has some ideas, that can start to think, reason, write music, create art, explore its existence and things like that, is quite difficult to comprehend.

Prof.Brian Cox

### Imagine

Imagine there's no heaven It's easy if you try, No hell below us, Above us, only sky, Imagine all the people, Livin' for today, Ah

Imagine there's no countries, It isn't hard to do, Nothing to kill or die for, And no religion, too, Imagine all the people, Livin' life in peace, You, 'ou, 'ou, 'ou

You may say I'm a dreamer, But I'm not the only one, I hope someday you'll join us, And the world will be as one.

Imagine no possessions, I wonder if you can, No need for greed or hunger, A brotherhood of man, Imagine all the people, Sharing all the world, You, 'ou, 'ou

> You may say I'm a dreamer But I'm not the only one I hope someday you'll join us And the world will live as one

"Imagine, the lyrics and tune are just a simple idea, I wanted it bare, without flourishes, a simple tune, to reflect Peace. Why can't people just let it be."

John Lennon

The comments directly above are the reply John Lennon gave in an interview, Peace was foremost on his mind.

## A vale of tears or a place of happiness?

The declaration of Independence of the United States has the following introduction:- "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness". The desire for happiness and how to avoid suffering are among the strongest motivators of human behaviour.

One of the seemingly unanswerable questions in life is the existence and the meaning of suffering. Every person will experience suffering. Suffering can appear to be arbitrary; it seems that there are some people who sail through life without a care; while others experience a lion's share of suffering. There is no fairness when it comes to suffering.

The perennial question in religion is how can God allow suffering to exist? How can a loving God allow innocent children to suffer? Why we ask does God not intervene to prevent "needless suffering"? Another mystery of suffering is how some people live life where, despite suffering, their glass is always half full rather than half empty? Is the world a place of suffering – a vale of tears- or is it a place of happiness interspersed with some suffering?

We can all agree with the **first noble truth** the Buddha enunciated; the truth that suffering exists. We accept that suffering exists; there is probably less agreement about to why suffering exists, what causes us to suffer and how we can alleviate suffering. Does suffering have value can we find meaning in our suffering?

Buddhism also teaches the path that leads to the cessation of suffering but that is for another day. And just to say that the Buddhist path is not easy.

An easy cop out but one often used in Western culture is to blame God for suffering. There is no God because surely if God exists a good God would intervene to prevent suffering. Honesty demands that we admit that much of the suffering in the world is caused by our inhumanity towards one another. Blaming God is futile and dishonest.

Every religion teaches the Golden Rule of 'do unto others.....' When we fail to live the maxim we create suffering. God is not an agent of war. Wars are the province of humans. In most situations if we had a will to do so; we could relieve hunger and we could alleviate much of the world's suffering.

Religions provide different answers to the existence of suffering. In the Christian tradition, we suffer because we inherit the sin of Adam and Eve. In disobeying God Adam and Eve excluded themselves from the Garden of Eden. As their descendents we share their inheritance of living in a world of suffering.

The stark reality of this teaching is relieved by the belief that if we live as ordained by Jesus (and the church) then when we die we will experience unending happiness. But this life is destined to be a vale of tears; to be endured until we die and hopefully come to a happier place in eternity.

Islam shares the belief that this life is a test for humanity; if we follow the pillars of Islam then God in his mercy will bring us to paradise when we die. Muslims accept suffering as being "God's will." The acceptance of suffering because it is the will of God; sustains many Muslims. The doctor whose entire family was blown to pieces because some faceless individual decided that their home was something else, accepted the trial, 'the will of God.'

Eastern philosophies have a different explanation as to why we suffer. The Hindu tradition puts the blame for suffering firmly with the person who is suffering. The Hindu Laws of Karma state that our actions either in this life or in a previous life; are re-visited on us. If I have done good deeds in the past I will be rewarded by good experiences. If I have caused suffering in the past then at some time in the future I will suffer. I am responsible for my suffering. I am responsible for my good fortune. I cannot evade responsibility for my actions; my deeds in the past have earned what I am now experiencing. I can only influence what I will experience in the future. If I should act with justice, honesty and compassion now; this will ensure freedom from suffering in the future.

These are different explanations for the existence of suffering; the explanations differ from faith to faith. We are the inheritors of



A place of worship since 1717

#### UNITARIAN CHURCH Prince's Street, Cork. Registered Charity Number 0000246

### Service: Sundays at 11a.m.

Minister:-Rev.Mike O'Sullivan Telephone:023-8842800

e-mail:- osullmike@gmail.com Mobile 087-9539998

Further information from 087-9539998

Treasurer : Brian Cluer e-mail: bmcleur@gmail.com Secretary : Colm Noonan : e-mail : colm.noonan@gmail.com

www.unitarianchurchcork.com

### Jazz Vespers, first Friday of the month @ 6pm.

An ecumenical service with the Methodist church.

### **Please Note**

If you are aware of any member of our community who is unwell, or who has suffered a bereavement, and who would welcome contact from others in the church, please e-mail Rev.Bridget Spain.

Vestry 01 - 4780638

e-mail: revbspain@gmail.com

### **Childrens Programme - Sunday Club**

Takes place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month

For any queries about Sunday Club, or to volunteer as a leader, please email Denise at sundayclubunitarianchurch@gmail.com

### **DUBLIN UNITARIAN CHURCH**

Lunch-time service every Wednesday from 1.10 to 1.40 p.m.

Each week Eileen Delaney sends an e-mail circular as to what is happening in the church and the other activities associated with the church.

If you would like to receive this information you should send your details requesting your name be added to the list to:eileendelaney76@gmail.com



### **Dublin Unitarian Church**

112 St.Stephens Green Dublin 2.

### Service 11.00a.m.

### Sunday Rota for January 2024

7 <sup>th</sup> January	Rethinking the Wilson Window
Service	Elaine Harris
Reader	Andy Pollak
Flowers	Janet Mulroy
Welcomer	Frank Tracy, Emer O'Reilly
Coffee	Sheila Hanley, Madeline Stringer, Grainne C.
14 <sup>th</sup> January	And how are the children?
Service	Pam McCarthy
Reader	Rory Delany
Flowers	Paula Mills
Welcomer	John Eardly, Orla Griffin
Coffee	Paula Mills, Emer O'Reilly, Colette Douglas
21 <sup>st</sup> January	Who was James the Elder?
Service	Dr. Martin Pulbrook
Reader	Paul Murray
Flowers	Maire Bacon
Welcomer	Janet Mulroy, Denis Conway
Coffee	Paul Murray, Peter White, Maire Bacon
28 <sup>th</sup> January	
Service	Gavin Byrne
Reader	Emer O'Reilly
Flowers	Paul Murray
Welcomer	Michael Robinson, Janet Mulroy
Coffee	John Eardly, A Connolly Crangle, Doireann Ní Bhriain

Services are broadcast live from the church each Sunday at 11a.m. On our WebCam, click and connect at www.dublinunitarianchurch.org

Recordings of previous services are also available on the website.

LOVE IS THE DOCTRINE OF THIS CHURCH THE QUEST OF TRUTH IS ITS SACRAMENT AND SERVICE IS ITS PRAYER. TO DWELL TOGETHER IN PEACE TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE IN FREEDOM TO SERVE MANKIND IN FELLOWSHIP TO THE END THAT ALL SOULS SHALL GROW IN HARMONY WITH THE DIVINE THIS DO WE COVENANT WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH GOD.

### **DUBLIN UNITARIAN CHURCH**

112 St.Stephen's Green, Dublin D02 YP23, Ireland. Unitarian Church - Dublin Registered Charity Number 20000622

#### Service: Sunday at 11a.m. Phone: Vestry 01-4780638

Managing committee:- Chairperson: Denise Dunne; Vice Chairman: Dennis Aylmer; Secretary: Trish Webb-Duffy; Treasurer: Rory Delany; Tony Shine; Andy Pollak; Peter White; Will O'Connell; Collette Douglas; Malachy Hevehan; Paul Murray; Madeline Stringer; Gavin Byrne.

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Rev.Bill Darlison (Minister Emeritus)

Chairperson: Denise Dunne:- Tel: 087-2450660

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Treasurer: Rory Delany: 087-2217414,

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Musical Director: Josh Johnston :- 086 892 0602

Caretaker: Kevin Robinson Telephone: 4752781

Recordings of the church services are available on the church website.

the guilt of Adam and Eve, suffering is God's will and we must submit to God's will, or that our suffering is payback for the suffering we have caused in the past.

Leaving aside religious beliefs; there is another explanation for suffering. Some people believe that before birth we chose experiences that will enable us to learn the life lessons we need. This belief that we chose our life experiences alters the meaning of all aspects of life. Now all our experiences including suffering are an opportunity to learn a lesson I need; all my life experiences are tailored just for me.

Whatever our views on the causes of suffering; I believe that our thinking process multiplies our suffering. There are many examples of this. We cause ourselves suffering when we do not live in the present moment; we do it when we make comparisons between our life and the lives of others. We increase our suffering when we persistently label experiences as being good or bad.

How much time do we spend alive in the present moment. How often do we live yearning for something in the past. Missing someone or something, reliving past experiences either with regret that they are past or re-stoking the embers of hurt and anger for something that is in the past? How often to we try to envision the future often in trepidation or fear? Regrets, past loss, future fears these are sorrows we create for ourselves and none of them even exist.

We create our own sorrow when we make comparisons with people around us. How come so and so is beautiful, talented, happy, rich...... you can fill in a scenario. Comparing ourselves to others is a sure fire way to feeling miserable.

And there is our addiction to putting a label on every experience. As in the children's story this morning we judge events as being good or bad. This address is an example of an attempt at labelling. I am teasing out the idea of whether the world is a place of suffering or happiness. And of course the world is neither wholly happy or completely sad. It is we who label our experiences.

In his book the Prophet Khalil Gibran writes that our joys and our sorrows are inseparable. Most of our sorrow is

because "we are weeping for that which has been our delight." The loss of someone we love through death is a sorrow; it is a sorrow because of the love experienced. This is an example of how our sorrows and our joy are inseparable.

Those who study human behaviour have tips that can help us cultivate a happier disposition. We do not find happiness in outside events. My mind translates events as being happy or unhappy. I make the choice I make the label.

Let go of past hurts - forgiveness increases our happiness.

Stop, come into awareness of the present moment. Open your eyes, ears, senses and heart. And simply be.

The surest way to happiness is having a sense of Gratitude. Cultivate a sense of gratitude for everything. As Meister Eckhert said "If the only prayer we say is "thank you" it is enough."

When we are grateful happiness will be our inheritance.

*Rev.Bridget Spain* Minister Dublin Unitarian Church

## Life is never perfect

As you settle down to read this Christmas has fast disappeared in the rear view mirror and the celebrations of another new year have once again come and gone and for most life has resumed its familiar pattern. The anticipation and fanfare of a new year is an exciting one, we all have our hopes and dreams, we can all look back on the previous year often with mixed feelings; life as much as we might wish is never perfect. It was never meant to be, it could never be.

At this stage you fall into one of three categories; those who made new year's resolutions and have so far kept them; those who made them but have lapsed and those who didn't bother at all. If you are the latter then I stand shoulder to shoulder with you; if you have lapsed, I feel your pain and that's why I'm in the latter camp. Take heart, if like me you just don't bother, it seems we are not alone. Research carried out by Forbes Advisor earlier this year shows that 51% of adults in the UK have never set nor have any intention of setting new year's resolutions for themselves.

The history of these goals we set ourselves on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January each year can be traced back to the ancient Babylonians who celebrated each new year with a twelve day festival; Akitu. It marked in that culture the beginning of the farming season, alongside offerings to the gods promises were made to curry their favour; the returning of borrowed farm equipment and the paying of debts. The celebrations along with the promises or resolutions were then adopted by the Romans though the date changed to the now familiar 1st of January with the advent of the Julian calendar in 46 BC. Those promises were made to the god Janus from whom January takes its name. In mediaeval times knights would at the end of the Christmas season make what were known as" Peacock vows" renewing their commitment to chivalry. In the modern era their existence can be traced back to 1671 when a diary entry from the diaries of Anne Halkett an author and member of the Scottish gentry lists a number of pledges largely based on bible verses, the entry was dated January 2<sup>nd</sup>. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century they seemed to have gained in popularity with the word "resolution" being used after

the words New Year.

Human nature is nothing if not predictable and by the early 1800's a now familiar pattern began to appear; with resolutions on the horizon, with a promise to do better, December became the month for over indulgence, both this very human attitude and the phrase "new years resolution" were found for the first time in a Boston newspaper article from 1813 : "And yet, I believe there are multitudes of people, accustomed to receive injunctions of new year resolutions, who will sin all the month of December, with a serious determination of beginning the new year with new resolutions and new behaviour, and with the full belief that they shall thus expiate and wipe away ail their former faults".

It is indeed a very human response, one that echoes the words of St Augustine; "make me good Lord but not just yet". We soothe our conscience, justify what we consider our indulgence by promising ourselves that tomorrow we will be better until the promise of all our tomorrows pile up like a heavy weight on our shoulders. We can get caught up in the promise of tomorrow, of what might be rather the promise of today; the moment; the now because as limiting as that may sound, that is all we have. Life is just one moment moving in the next. Of course we need to think of the future, we need to plan, we need to be prepared, not to do so would be foolish but like everything else in life the key is balance.

But let's get back to those new year resolutions. According to Forbes Advisor, for this new year (2024) only one third of British adults have set resolutions. It seems from this research the younger you are the more likely you are to make them with 51% of those aged 18 to 34 doing so. By contrast in those aged 55 and over the figure falls to just 12%. However, don't be overly impressed with the enthusiasm of youth. The same survey also found that young people feel more pressured than any other age group to make resolutions. There is little doubt we live in a society now more than ever demanding not only perfection but perfection aligned with a herd mentality. Ads for various forms of cosmetic surgery, weight loss programmes and the latest fashion are all designed amid a veneer of personal development and well being to make us feel we must be perfect. On average it seems about 8% of those who make resolutions actually stick with it and achieve their goal. So, what of the other 92%? It would be lazy thinking to simply think they were lazy, lacking willpower or not just motivated. Often the problem is one that plagues any form of aspiration; its twin desire for perfection, the achievement of standard doomed to failure. The most popular resolution is to exercise more and who could argue with it, its benefits both physically, mentally and emotionally are well documented. It is in this area that many fail. Put simply you can't go from being a "couch potato" to Usian Bolt in just two weeks, even Usain Bolt couldn't do that!

If you have set resolutions for yourself I salute you, you are more motivated and far less cynical than I am and I wish you well. Avoid striving for perfection and you may be half way there. If like me you haven't bothered, well, there's always next year.

*Rev.Mike O'Sullivan* Minister Cork Unitarian Church

## **Status Anxiety**

by Alain De Botton

Changing what is (assumed) to be True.

How do we change attitudes that are embedded in our culture? Many of us will remember being met at work with the refrain "this is always how we have done it".

History, of course, shows us that a number of determined people have made enormous strides in challenging the cozy consensus.

George Bernard Shaw in his wonderfully titled The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism (London 1928) wrote:

"You must clear your mind of the fancy with which we all began as children, that the institutions under which we live are natural, like the weather. They are not. Because they exist everywhere in our little world, we take it for granted that they have always existed and must always exist. That is a dangerous mistake. They are, in fact, transient makeshifts.

Changes that nobody ever believed possible take place in a few generations. Children nowadays believe that to spend nine years at school, to have old-age and widows' pensions, votes for women and short-skirted ladies in Parliament is part of the order of nature and always was and ever will be; but their great grandmothers would have said that anyone who told them that such things were coming was mad—and that anyone who wanted them to come was wicked."

Virginia Woolfe began a Room of One's Own (1929) describes a visit to the library in Trinity College, Cambridge, and how as she was about to step into the library, "a deprecating, silvery, kindly gentleman" appeared and told her that ladies were only admitted if accompanied by a Fellow or have a letter of introduction.

Many women would have been hurt by the incident but few were likely to have responded to the offence politically. Few were likely to have done anything other than blame themselves or nature or God for it.

Woolfe was less easily silenced. Rather than asking herself, 'What is wrong with me for not being allowed into the library?' she asked 'What is wrong with the keepers of the library for not allowing me in?'

Returning to London, the questions continued: 'Why did men drink wine and women water? Why was one sex so prosperous and the other so poor?' She went to the British Library (which had been letting in women for two decades) and investigated the history of men's attitudes to women down the ages.

She found a stream of extraordinary prejudice and halfbaked delivered with authority by priests, scientists and philosophers. Women were, it was said, ordained by God to be inferior, they were constitutionally unable to govern or run a business, they were too weak to be doctors, when they had their periods they couldn't be trusted to handle machinery nor to remain impartial during trial cases.

And behind this abuse, Woolf recognized that the problem was money. Women didn't have freedom, including freedom of the spirit, because they didn't control their own income. 'Women have always been poor, not for 200 years merely, but from the beginning of time. Women have had less intellectual freedom than the sons of Athenian slaves.'

Woolf's book culminated in a specific, political demand: women needed not only dignity, but also equal rights to education, an income of 'five hundred pounds a year' and 'a room of one's own'.

Paul Murray (Reading on Sunday July 23, 2023)

### **Managing Committee Notice**

Annual Registration of Voting Members (2024)

For the Attention of Members

If you are a Member of the congregation (*that is, if you signed the Membership Book during any year up to and including 2022*) and you wish to have your name included as a Voting Member on the Register of Voting Members for 2024, you should complete and return a Voting Registration Form by, and not later than:-

### 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

Voting Registration Forms are now available for collection in the church. If you are a Member who can't attend church often, or who usually listens in online, a form can be sent to you on request by post or email.

Requests for Voting Registration Forms should be sent to (by post)

The Treasurer Unitarian Church 112 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin D02 YP23.

or

(by email) treasurerunitarianchurch@gmail.com

# Cork Carol Service

On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December we held our Christmas Carol service with standing room only. Our church hall looked beautiful with thanks to Neal and Mya. Our deepest thanks for a wonderful evening go to those who performed; Choral Con Fusion lgbts Choir Cork. The Sacred Harp Singers, Chris Kelliher and Virginia Giglio. To our readers; Neal Dunnigan, Brian Cluer and the Rev.Bruce Pierce.



To Teresa Goggin and Kay O'Sullivan for refreshments and to all who attended and made it a wonderful night full of wonderful memories. Our thanks are also extended to Cllr Collette Finn, Deputy Lord Mayor for her attendance and kind and gracious words.

Thank you, have a Happy and Peaceful Christmas.



