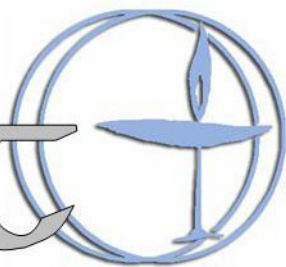


Oscailt



March 2025

IRELANDS UNITARIAN MAGAZINE

Vol.21 Nº 3



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.

Contact : - e-mail: revbspain@gmail.com Vestry 01 - 4780638

Sunday Club - Childrens Programme Take place on the 2nd Sunday of each month

For any queries about Sunday Club, or to volunteer as a leader, please email Denise at sundayclub@dublinunitarianchurch.org

Childrens Educational Trust Funds The Damer and Singleton Trusts

Our congregation has two funds dedicated to supporting the educational needs of our voting members' children.

For further information please contact any member of the committee if you want to know more,

or

write to Dennis Aylmer c/o aylmerd@gmail.com

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 complete the Weekly e-mail form available at

[https://dublinunitarianchurch.us9.list-manage.com/subscribe?
u=520442759bc8abadb1b0b3818&id=295c346bce](https://dublinunitarianchurch.us9.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=520442759bc8abadb1b0b3818&id=295c346bce)

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– Sign up to Weekly e-mail – to complete your details.

DUBLIN UNITARIAN CHURCH

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



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.

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Front Cover: Detail from the Wilson memorial Window.
(photo P.Spain)

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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 man's 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.

Well, what would you do in a war?

The title for this address, does not, as we might suspect, emerge purely from concerns about the current international conflicts. It comes partly, from something that lies under my bed, a left-handed golf putter the wooden handle of which has been chewed by a visiting dog over the years.

Why, the question arose, do you have a left-handed-putter under your bed. Well, you might guess why: as protection in the event of a night-time burglary. But then the questions kept coming: how much force would you use on someone who might not want to do you personal harm but just wants your watch; what if you seriously injure the intruder, and when does seeming defence become offence?

All of which begs many questions, particularly in the current international climate. Indeed, perhaps now, more than in the last decade, we may be facing the ultimate moral choice, how do we deal with issues surrounding violence and war. Even in the smallest way we may feel the effects of international conflict which could oblige us to make ethical decisions on whether to engage in fighting, materially support one of the warring factions, or offer sanctuary to some of the millions who would be displaced by a conflict.

Now, indeed, it is perhaps time to decide, not in the heat of battle (however far away it could be) or when the armies come marching in. Where do we stand on violence either as a resister of aggression, or in taking anticipatory action in the possibly mistaken view that we will be attacked.

And then, the other vital question is, from where would we get the information which would lead us to a particular stance in, for example, the event of a possible incursion by belligerent forces. Is it a case of 'my country right or wrong' where our attitude could be dictated by the prevailing political view? Or would our verdict emerge from a considered examination of conscience on the rights or wrongs of a proposed action.

A one-time activist has said that the last decision would qualify under the pacifist umbrella. It is hard to be sure, although there is a persuasive argument which refers to the “pacifism of the honest study of cases”, which is somewhat similar to Just War theory.

As articulated by John Howard Yoder (Nevertheless, varieties of religious pacifism) “pacifism of the honest study of cases” means that we would be obligated to study in detail the characteristics of why a particular war might be justified. Under these criteria, “we must,” says Yoder, “evaluate the cause for which a war is fought, the authority in whose name it is undertaken, and the methods to be used.”

And, of course, there are other forms of religious pacifism, which Yoder outlines, including:

The Pacifism of Absolute Principle where the command “thou shalt not kill” is an absolute which admits no exceptions.

The Pacifism of Programmatic Political Alternatives which claims that War is not a solution to any problem, is counterproductive.

The Pacifism of Non-Violent Social Change, where non-violence as a tool of social change has a decided advantage over violence.

The Pacifism of Prophetic Protest whereby, for example someone might hold back whatever percentage of their tax obligation is spent on the military. I knew a Mennonite who said he did this in Ireland.

The Pacifism of the Categorical Imperative, which asks what would happen if everyone allowed themselves to engage in war.

And what is Just War theory? It is explained simply by A.C.Grayling, the British philosopher, in *The Heart of Things*. The theory goes back to Thomas Aquinas who examined the proposition that “it is always sinful to wage war”. Aquinas believed this was not true, that war was justified on three conditions: a just cause; it is started on proper authority and that it is waged with the right intention (The advancement of good, or the avoidance of evil).

Two other conditions have been added in modern times: the war must have a reasonable chance of success and the means used to conduct it must be proportional to the ends sought. Many will query the words “proper authority” but this originally Catholic theory has stood the test of time, and has avoided the extreme of war being designated as always wrong.

It is nuanced even regarding nuclear disarmament, disappointing absolute pacifists (who believe all use of armed force to be morally wrong) but the RC hierarchical position is that while the prevention of nuclear war is its overriding position “it does not want to risk the possibility that unilateral disarmament might provoke such a war, should an aggressor take advantage of a vulnerable opponent” (The New Dictionary of Theology, Eds, J.A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, D.A. Lane).

But the morality and the circumstances of many violent actions in times of conflict, as we are learning now in the Middle East and Russian/Ukrainian fighting, is to say the least, confusing. Largely this is because of the discordant voices and huge doubts from whence our information comes.

Even if we trust the honesty of foreign correspondents, and we are lucky in Ireland to be able to do so, we do not know the extent to which the information given, or which they glean, has been distorted by wily PR and press advisers. Or indeed, by diplomatic sources anxious to put a gloss on raw information to suit the sensibilities of their own particular governments.

And we all will be familiar with the misuse of language, as outlined by Steeven Poole, in *Unspeak*, which he calls a mode of speech that persuades by stealth, for example climate change (rather than warming), war on terror, collateral damage, and coalition of the willing.

John Simpson, the BBC veteran correspondent, in his book “Unreliable Sources, How the 20th century was reported” cites the British newspapers’ handling of Bloody Sunday in Croke Park over 100 years ago. The London media were not prepared to make the connection between the earlier killings of 14 mainly British intelligence officers and the similar death toll when Auxiliaries opened fire on the GAA crowd.

The Daily Mirror, for example, clearly suspected that there was some connection between the events, but was not prepared to say so, says Simpson, and it was the establishment London Times which finally had the courage to opine that some of the crown forces had “themselves committed acts of terrorism and violence of which no disciplined force should be guilty.”

And throughout the decades there have been multitudinous incidents where the official efforts successfully or otherwise sought to manipulate information, information which, and this is the significant thing, could have allowed people to make considered ethical choices on whether to engage in war, or agree with its continuation.

To be frank, however, there are only limited chances of us getting full and accurate information during and, indeed, before a conflict. Many studies and books have highlighted this: a few random examples make the point:

Tom Bouverie tells us in *Appeasing Hitler*, that before World War II, huge pressure was put on the London Evening Standard to stop its cartoonist upsetting the Germans; many will know Phillip Knightley's classic study of propaganda, *The First Casualty*; a fabricated story about Saddam Hussein's soldiers throwing babies from their incubators in Kuwait has been well documented (*The Press Effect*, Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Paul Waldman); Anyone here been raped and speaks English (Edward Behr), Ireland, the Propaganda War; *The British Media and the Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Liz Curtis), and *Gotcha, The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis* (Robert Harris), are others which show that deliberate false information is endemic during conflicts.

And not forgetting, how victors can change the narrative, which in turn can lead to later violence. How many people know, for example, that in 1923 the French and Belgians invaded the Ruhr, Germany's industrial heartland, in a row over reparation delays after World War I and about the evil behaviour of the occupying soldiers. (1923, *The Forgotten Crisis in the Year of Hitler's Coup*, Mark Jones, Assistant Professor of History, UCD).

And, another issue, if we are invaded, how should we ethically respond, a dilemma which millions of people in World War II had to confront? Is it right to continue with futile resistance if many more civilians could die? A question posed, and answered in many ways, by French people who either resisted, accommodated themselves to the Germans or co-operated with the puppet Vichy state under Marshal Petain.

This dilemma was faced in microcosm by Channel Islanders when the Germans arrived from France: it was agreed by the invaders and the islanders that there would be a Model Occupation (*The Model*

Occupation, the Channel Islands under German rule, 1940-1945, Madeleine Bunting). Every islander, according to Bunting, was faced with uncomfortable choices: where did patriotism end and self-preservation begin? And what moral obligation did the islanders have to the thousands of emaciated and ill-treated slave labourers the Nazis brought with them to build defences?

The full story of what happened on the island of Alderney, for instance, is only now being investigated four decades after a journalist Solomon Steckoll in the Observer claimed that Carl Hoffman, the Nazi commandant on Alderney, was not handed over to the Soviets as the UK government claimed but had been in British custody until 1948 when he was allowed return to Germany where he died peacefully in his bed in 1974. Truth, as Phillip Knightley says, is the first casualty of war.

So far, we may agree three things: Perhaps most debatable, a person can be regarded as a pacifist (and there are various versions of pacifism as outlined) if s/he makes a conscientious decision about how to respond to a particular war situation;

It can be difficult to get accurate information on how to make such decisions;

There is an ethical issue on how populations should respond if their territory is being invaded. In one view, expounded by Yoder, “the loser in any war would always have been better off to have made peace sooner rather than later, even against an absolutely unjust aggressor.”

This was demonstrated, he says, by the experience of Denmark and the Low Countries in World War II, the Hungarians in 1956, the Czechs in 1968, or the Poles in 1980. “Their capacity to resist and later to rise up again was greater,” he says, “precisely because they accepted defeat soon enough to leave their society intact.” This was it seems the main reason Irish negotiators of the 1921 treaty with Britain buckled when David Lloyd George promised that not signing would lead to “immediate and terrible war”.

Today’s Ukrainians may take a different stance, particularly as Yoder reminds us, that at the Yalta peace conference in 1945, in return for the support of Stalin, the US conceded to this tyrant control over half of Europe.

So, besides the Pacifism of the Honest Study of Cases, and the Just War theory, where else might we go for advice on how to respond to violent conflict? We may not need to go much further than Muham-

mad Ali in 1967 while explaining why he refused to fight in Vietnam said: “Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam after so-called negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights.”

Here, Ali identified with his possible victims and has an acute sense of their personhood. He was, however unintentionally perhaps, “speaking to that of God in everyman” as the Quakers put it, Quakers who have been shining lights in working for peace.

Or indeed, we could look to the example of Costa Rica which has no army and did not resurrect one even during a nasty dispute with Nicaragua. Although, to take the gloss off a bit I think it might have been realised that not having an army in that part of the world, reduces considerably the chance of a military coup against the democratically elected politicians.

Sometimes, having so far been protected from foreign invasion, we unintentionally overlook the horrors of war (although that has been less likely recently). Even this island’s recent experience of IRA and Loyalist atrocity is far removed from the minds of our young people, and who, while they might just about agree that the repeats of the BBC’s Dads Army are funny do not often seem to engage with the background story about the suffering of millions of people during World War II.

It is, perhaps, time that we and they did and perhaps align with pacifists (if that is what they can be termed) of “the honest study of cases”, obliging an intelligent look at each demand to engage in or support war, a stance which falls between the permissive and the absolutist principle of refusing ever to be involved.

This is not, of course, to gainsay the highly principled and brave Quakers and Mennonites, and many others, who have resisted involvement in war, nor indeed those who believe that in the cause of what they would term “right” war is usually acceptable. It is just to posit the view, and I know many will disagree, that circumstances do alter cases when it comes to war, and that as Unitarians we are, at the very least, obliged to formulate a considered view.

Paul Murray,
St. Stephen’s Green Unitarian Church

November 2023

A Working Hypothesis

The dictionary defines An Hypothesis is a provisional explanation, or a theory that remains to be proved or disproved by reference to verifiable facts or a proposal assumed for the sake of an argument. It is a rational approach to deciding matters of fact. It works as follows – for ease let us call the matter under discussion A. There are three possibilities (A) may be true, (B) may be false or (C) there may be insufficient evidence to decide either way. An unbiased rational person will look at all the facts and come to one of the above conclusions. A rational unbiased person will also keep an open mind to the possibility that at some time in the future new evidence may emerge. The new evidence may confirm or it may change an earlier conclusion. New evidence may turn what appeared to be solid fact right on its head. This is a good way to decide matters of fact.

For Unitarians who have a scientific approach to all things, the arguments between Creationists and Evolutionists, are perhaps the most difficult to understand. For Unitarians the matter has been settled a long time ago. Yet there are people who discount the scientific evidence in favour of a literal interpretation of the creation story as it is told in the Book of Genesis. In debates between Evolutionists and creationists the debate centres on the belief in the truth of one version of the creation story. The creation story as told in Genesis is only one story of many that exist concerning the Creation of the Universe. Babylon, Egypt and the Greeks all had their versions of a creation story. There are common themes in all the creation stories. As a general rule the story line is that the Universe was chaotic and God brought order to chaos; when order came into existence then there was growth and in due course humans emerged. These creation stories; that may once have been believed are now labeled myths; they were a human way to explain the world. They had their basis in human experience and the knowledge of their time. Over time in the light of new evidence they became irrelevant only of interest to scholars. The stories of Uranus or Zeus as creators of order in the Universe were used to explain the world; they were a working hypothesis. In the light of new truths they became irrelevant and were replaced by a new theory.

This process of beliefs changing in the light of new knowledge is ongoing. Aristotle's incorrect model of an earth centered universe was accepted for hundreds of years. It was accepted because at the time it seemed logical and it was easy to overlook small niggling inconsistencies. When Copernicus produced an alternative hypothesis it was initially met with resistance; but Galileo's access to a telescope confirmed Copernicus' theory and the heliocentric model of the universe became universally accepted. Both Newton and Einstein in their turn increased our knowledge of how the universe works. Current experiments in Cern are throwing up questions that may change Einstein's theory. All this demonstrates that in the history of humanity there is a continuous process of questioning, that we accept explanations as true, but that time may prove to be incorrect. So it is essential that we keep our minds open to new possibilities; we must live keeping an open mind. I often preach that we have a duty to find our own truth; perhaps what I should say is that we have a duty to find our own working hypothesis. We have a duty to keep a mind that is wide open to new insights and new ways of perceiving the world. Most importantly we must be aware that when we are drawing our version of reality that to all intents and purposes we are looking at the evidence wearing dark sunglasses while at the same time peering through a fog. Humanity has made huge strides in knowing how the universe works; but there is infinitely more for us to discover. We do not have all the answers; we don't have all the answers about the physical world, we certainly do not have all the spiritual answers.

In matters of religion our view of reality was in all probability influenced by the Christian interpretation of the world. This is Trinitarian, God the creator, Jesus and the Holy Spirit live somewhere in the heavens. Human life is a test with eternal reward or punishment allocated after death. Hell is located somewhere under the earth. This literal very physical view of the world does not hold water; its needs to be replaced.

Many people are opting for the humanist position. There is no God and no afterlife; this is the whole deal. Some people are embracing Eastern Philosophies with its belief in reincarnation. Some of us make our own designs; picking and choosing

beliefs that we find logical or that simply appeal to us. Whatever path we opt for we must be constantly aware that in all likelihood our decisions are based on our intuition rather than on hard verifiable facts. We also need to be aware of the limitations of language when we try to articulate spiritual beliefs.

The limitations of language are very apparent when we consider the God word. Such a small word with so much baggage attached. I can say that I believe in something that I call God; this version of God is my own working hypothesis. For people who believe in God as Father in a way I envy your acceptance; I know that this image of God is one many people struggle with. I think that one of the greatest mistakes made by the Christian Church was the widespread representation of God as being a very kind superman. The idea of God as creator and as being infinitely kind and infinitely good is contradicted by the human experiences of suffering and pain. Again the image of God as an attentive father actively caring for us; can make God become a distant and a very deaf father figure. The fact that we experience the world through our senses makes it hard to conceptualise the idea of God without form. We must think beyond the image of God as Superman. Unitarian prayers are helpful in making the break from God as Superman. Source of life, Infinite Mystery are phrases that allow us to move to thinking of God in non human terms. Muslims say that humans are humans and Allah is Allah they are different.

I find the existence of the Universe to be good evidence for the existence of God. Its immensity, its beauty its grandeur its mystery the force of power that brought it into existence draws me to awe and wonder. When humanity took to the skies perhaps they hoped to find heaven behind a well concealed door with God inside sitting on his throne. Well we still haven't found a superman but what we have found is that our universe is more wondrous than we ever could have imagined. The more we have discovered; the more we realize that we know only a fraction of its secrets; the universe continues to exceed our expectations. In a tiny corner of this amazing setting; spinning in space, is the earth, our home. This amazing creation is **not** the work of human endeavour – an easy word to use is God – but God as transcendent mystery not God as Superman. From the dawn of time humanity has felt drawn to this mystery; and we still feel the urge to join together in community in search of knowledge of and unity with the mystery. When we unite in this way we feel ourselves drawn to give of our best selves.

Then what of human beings? What is the purpose of our life? is it incumbent on us to live according to a particular ethical guideline? Will

we be judged when we die, will we be rewarded or punished? The honest answer has to be that I don't know. The fact that I don't know does not stop me from having my own theory. I believe that something we call the soul does survive physical death. This is a belief that I was brought up with and it can be easy to hold on to comforting beliefs. I have had personal experiences where I believe that I have had contact with people who have died. The experiences in themselves were small incidences in some ways inconsequential – no one has sent me the winning lotto numbers –yet- but I found them reassuring, useful and yes comforting. Someone wrote to the effect that the fact that we are born is amazing, it is so miraculous that there is no reason to limit it to a once off event. I can accept the idea of reincarnation and I am happy with the idea of many lives. But this is speculation and the facts we use to support our beliefs are always subjective and often just our pet theories. Incident of past lives.

What I know to be true is that while we may not be called to follow a particular set religious teaching; humans are called to live with honesty, integrity, compassion and in community. We are in some way connected one with another; at our most noble we see others as our brothers and sisters and we feel responsibility for their well being. Each of us is the judge of our actions and behaviour. When we act nobly and justly we know the correctness of our actions. When we act with dishonesty or without compassion we are consciously aware that we have dishonoured our essential being. To this extent we are indeed as God.

I know that throughout the ages great minds have considered the paradox of human existence. This life is full of contradictions; the answers to many questions continue to elude us. Genuine human happiness is elusive. We are often drawn to seek happiness in the things of this world. But no matter how deeply we immerse ourselves in the material world the human soul always hears the call of the spirit. As in the reading today love is the key to happiness. When we reach out to others with love all the great questions disappear; solutions fall into place. It is o.k. for us to speculate about theories about religion - to find our own working hypothesis - provided we remember act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Rev. Bridget Spain (Minister Emerita)
St. Stephen's Green Unitarian Church

Dublin Unitarian Book Club's choice for January 2025.

Butter

by

Asako Yuzuki

Rika Machida is an ambitious journalist with a very poor work-life balance but she is on the verge of becoming the first woman to make the editorial desk at her Tokyo based newspaper, the Shumei Weekly. This has come about because Rika, seeking a hit story, reached out to Manako Kajii who is currently serving time in the Tokyo Detention Centre convicted of the serial killing of three of her older male lovers which she allegedly lured with her cooking skills. But the interviews are not about Kajii's murder cases, which she refuses to talk about, they are about Kajii's food blog and her recipes and love of food, especially butter. Kajii has a condescending attitude towards women and tells Rika that she cannot tolerate 'feminists and margarine'. This outspoken insolent individualistic worldview earns Kajii public condemnation which sometimes verges on hatred as it is in total opposition to the social mores of Japanese society. Rika's encounters with Kajii make her examine the contradictions for women in society and reflects 'Japanese women are required to be self denying, hardworking and ascetic and in the same breath to be feminine, soft and caring towards men'. Kajii's is not just judged on her views but also her weight. She is heavier than what is considered acceptable and her weight is targeted and weaponised against her with constant body shaming during her trial and now incarceration. The mysogyny and fatphobia are to the fore in this novel as is the relationship between food, alcohol and trauma. Kajii does not care about societies judgements on her or her weight. It is a society that is held rigidly by strict unwritten rules of perfection which are impossible to live up to, both for men and women.

Kajii gives Rika tasks to do involving food. She must complete these foodie tasks and report back to Kajii, otherwise she will

not continue with the interviews. As Rika cooks for herself and dines out as per Kajii's instructions she discovers an awakening of her senses and emotions. She also puts on weight and comes under the scrutiny and criticism of others, just like Kajii. The food also brings up memories of her upbringing and especially her relationship with her father, a recurrent theme in the book.

Other relationships are explored too such as that of Rika and her best friend Reika who is trying desperately to live the perfect life with husband Ryusko.

The relationships of Rika's parents, Reika's parents and Kajii's parents come under scrutiny as does the effects of marital breakdown on parents and children which can last into adulthood.

Loneliness and isolation are key themes as we see how Rika navigates her way through her relationships with her boyfriend, friends, work mates, associates and family while also trying to steer her career upwards. As Rika investigates Kajii's past with the help of her friend Reika, they discover more about themselves than the guilt or innocence of Kajii, which becomes incidental to the story. Rika has come under Kajii's influence and manipulation, she thinks she will get her exclusive but Kajii gives her interview to a rival male journalist, the ultimate betrayal.

But Rika has come through for herself as she learns to be more self accepting and realises that it is her personal relationships that need feeding and nourishing in order to live a meaningful life and not to sacrifice family and friends for a career and social acceptance.

There was a very mixed view to this book as there was no plot as such and it did go off on tangents especially when the author described certain foods, recipes and cookery details almost rice grain by rice grain. Some readers found this laborious and too much, whereas others enjoyed the foodie bits. It's a very good translation and easy to read but could have done with some editing. It's a very different book with a 50/50 recommendation.

Alison Claffey

St. Stephen's Green Unitarian Church

Making our voices heard in the church

On Saturday morning, March 22nd from 10.00 to 1.00, I will be running a workshop as a support to those of us who do readings or take services.

I hope to provide some pointers to participants about things they can do to improve and clarify their delivery for all our benefit. There are some useful techniques I have used in my work over the years that I will be happy to share.

The workshop will take place in the church, so that we can check that our voices can be clearly heard everywhere, and that we are using the microphones correctly. Whether you have a light voice or a stronger one, I hope you'll find the session useful.

The workshop will be limited to 10 participants, so please get your name down early, by emailing Trish :-

secretaryunitarianchurch@gmail.com I will then contact you directly with instructions on what I'd like you to bring along on the day. It should be an enjoyable and a rewarding morning.

Doireann Ní Bhriain

Query

February 1, 2025

Dear Rev. Spain,

Our family (UU's for 3 generations) will be in Dublin between June 19 -July 3. Our 15 year-old Lauren is competing in the World Irish Dancing Competition at the Church of Scientology Center and Community Center of Dublin June 26-29.

We wonder if your church members occasionally host travelers (other Unitarians) in their home.

Our backgrounds are varied: floral designer (mom), geologist (dad), and social worker (grandmother), plus Lauren and her sister Alli (19, college student).

If you could consider exploring this possibility, I would be very pleased to discuss it with you further by phone, text, or email. Our research so far tells us that accommodations in all forms will be in short supply, so while we keep considering details, we are eager to make plans as soon as feasible.

Thank you.

With kindest regards

Sandra Locke

815/980-6530 (phone or text) (Our time zone is 6 hrs. earlier than yours)

slocke@sbcglobal.net

The Damer and Singleton Trusts.

Support for Educational Needs

Did you know? Our congregation has two funds (male and female) dedicated to supporting the education needs of our voting members' children.

These funds can help cover a variety of educational expenses, including school fees, parental contributions, uniforms, schoolbooks, technology, and even sports equipment from primary school through to third level.

If your family could benefit from this support, please don't hesitate to get in touch. All inquiries and applications will be handled with the utmost confidentiality.

The members of the Damer and Singleton committees are Dennis Aylmer, Andy Pollak, Nuala Kelly, Jill Arthur, Elaine Sisson, and Rob Mark.

We meet to assess applications three times a year. Our next meeting is in April 2025. Please contact any member of the committee if you want to know more,

or write to Dennis Aylmer c/o

aylmerd@gmail.com

Anjila's Graduation Day

21st November 2024

St Ann's Church of Ireland, Dawson Street, Dublin 2

In late 2021 Anjila arrived in Ireland after fleeing Afghanistan where she had to cut short her university studies. The Unitarian Refugee Welcome Group, made up of some 8 members of our church congregation, arranged housing for Anjila and helped to integrate her into life in Ireland. (The Group had been set up some years previously as a government-supported community sponsorship group (CSG) to assist possible Syrian refugees.)

Anjila is a gifted, hardworking and ambitious young woman who was keen to resume her university studies, and had her heart set on getting a Masters in Business Administration (MBA). With the help of the Group and others, she managed to get a place on a programme at IBAT College, Dublin to pursue an MBA validated by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

One of the photographs shows a justifiably proud Anjila on her Graduation Day last November with her degree award in the beautiful setting of St Ann's Church! Anjila had been busy in her personal life also; the other photograph shows her with her equally proud husband Farid and their daughter Maryam.

The Unitarian Refugee Welcome Group has also been instrumental in helping Anjila's family to flee Afghanistan and re-settle in Ireland during 2022. Her mother, her brother, his wife, and their young son are now all living together contentedly in this country.

It has given us all in the Group great fulfilment to follow, and where possible assist, Anjila on her journey of education and personal development since arrival in Ireland. As I have a career background in education, watching her grow and flourish has been deeply satisfying. (*see pictures back cover*)

Aidan O'Driscoll

On behalf of the Dublin Unitarian Refugee Welcome Group

March 2025



Dublin Unitarian Church

112 St. Stephens Green Dublin 2.

Service 11.00a.m.

Sunday Rota for March 2025

2 nd March	<i>Holy Stones, Holy Mortar</i>
Service	Denis Conway & Jake Lester
Reader	Elaine Sisson
Flowers	Daniela Cooney
Welcomer	Daniela Cooney - Carol Stafford
Coffee	Elaine Sisson, Maeve Edwards, Lorraine Doyle

9 th March	<i>Fellow passengers</i>
Service	Monica Cremins
Reader	Jennifer Flegg
Flowers	Margaret Leeson
Welcomer	Trish Webb-Duffy - Emer O'Reilly
Coffee	Gráinne Carty, Paul Murray, John Leeson

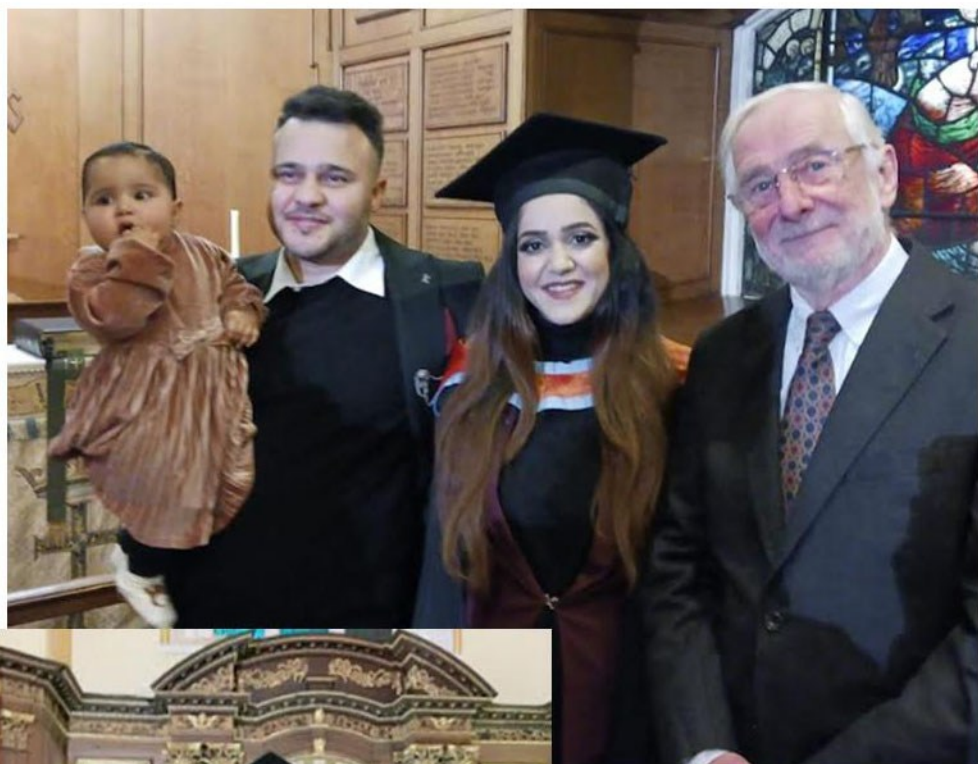
16 th March	<i>Silence</i>
Service	Mark Hutchinson
Reader	Will O'Connell
Flowers	Jane Nolan
Welcomer	Janet Mulroy - Doireann Ní Bhrian
Coffee	Will O'Connell, Sheila Hanley, Janet Mulroy

23 rd March	<i>Belief & Unbelief: Atheist - Agnostic - Theist</i>
Service	Rev.Maud Robinson
Reader	Tony Roche
Flowers	Paul Murray
Welcomer	Paul Murray - Catharine Cook
Coffee	Sheila Hanley, Malachy Hevehan, Daniela Cooney

30 th March	<i>Being Unitarian</i>
Service	Gavin Byrne
Reader	Mary O'Brien
Flowers	Mary O'Brien
Welcomer	Sheila Hanley - Mary O'Brien
Coffee	Daniela Cooney, Gráinne Carty, Theresa Fontana

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.



Anjila with her equally proud husband Farid and their daughter Maryam. On the right Aidan O'Driscoll a member of Unitarian Refugee Welcome Group

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Anjila on her Graduation Day last November 2024, with her degree award in the beautiful setting of St Ann's Church