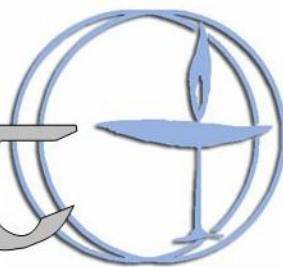


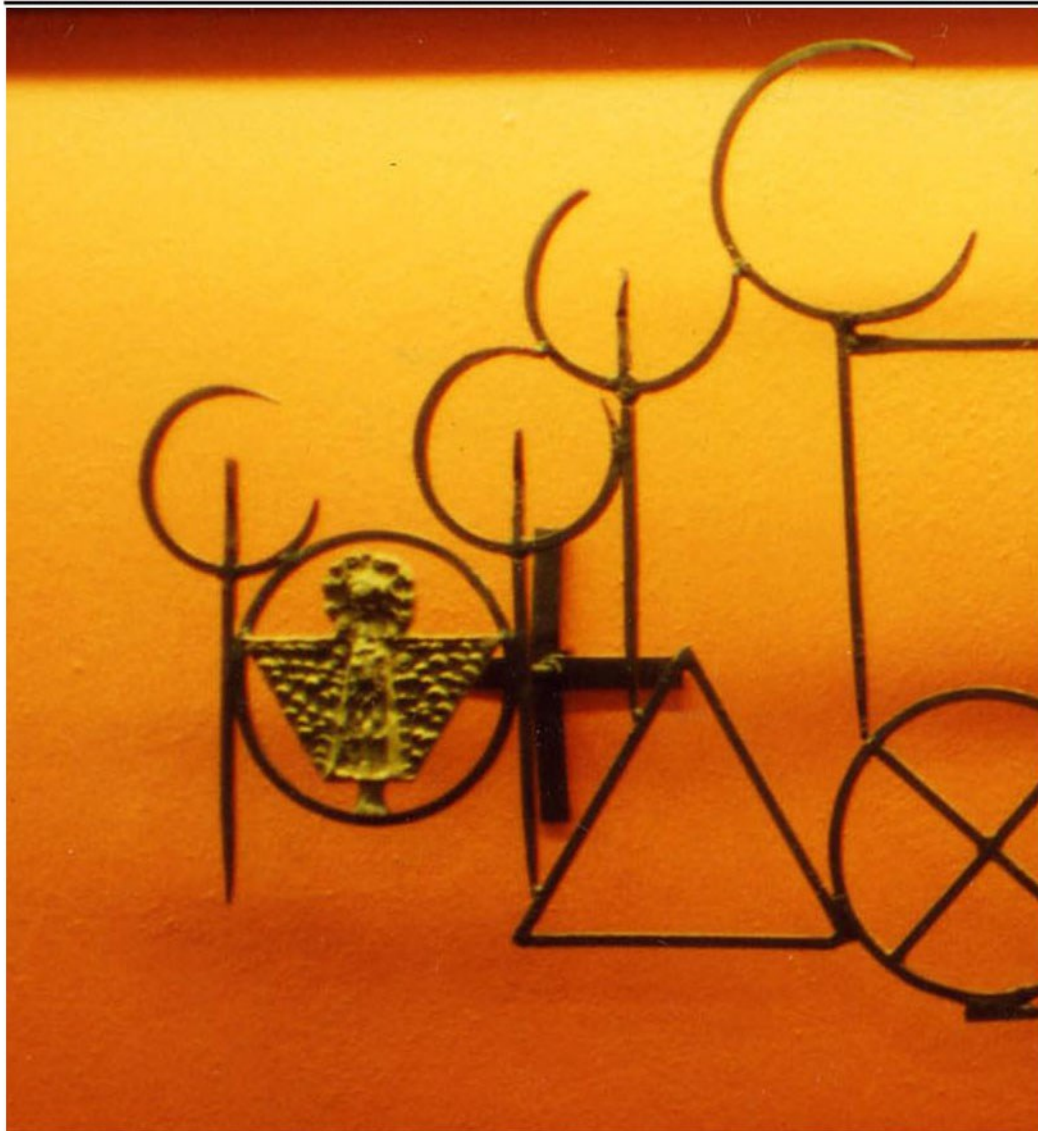
Oscailt



October 2025

IRELANDS UNITARIAN MAGAZINE

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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

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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 Paddy MacElroy sculpture. Paddy was a member of this church.
(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 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.

Let the Divine Assail You

My address today is entitled ‘Let the Divine Assail You’. It asks you to consider the interconnection between the divine and the ordinary, between the eternal and the everyday, between the sacred and the secular, between the numinous and the normal. Exploring this connection, it argues, brings benefit both to one’s spiritual life *and* to the mundane practicalities of just living. Put more simply, we may discover, and experience, the divine in our daily tasks, while in turn, our real-world labour may become enriched and guided by the divine. But first two stories...

My rite of confirmation when I was 13 was an event I remember well. In the Church of St. John the Baptist, in Blackrock, Co Dublin, we boys assembled to be each asked a question about our knowledge of the faith, and then be confirmed, by a bishop of the diocese holding an impressive crozier. As my turn for questioning approached, I stared downward in an anxious way. After I answered the bishop’s question correctly, I glanced upward to this tall stern distant man. As he moved on to the boy beside me, I wondered what would have been my fate if I had failed the question he asked me – what was the fourth commandment? While I have fond memories of the day, the bishop, I feel now, belonged with the gods of dispassion and severity.

My other story also took place in a church. Just recently I had the opportunity to visit St.Patrick’s College Chapel on Maynooth University campus. Completed in 1891 and used by the seminarians and priests of St.Patrick’s Pontifical University, it must be one of the most beautiful places of worship in Ireland, an outstanding masterpiece of architecture and design. The chapel contains 454 carved choir-stall seats, making it the largest of its kind in the world. There is a magnificent rose window, and much wonderfully crafted ornamentation throughout. My abiding impression is of a Pre-Raphaelite tone

of lightness, colour and emotion. And the eyes are continually drawn upward to the soaring 21-metre-high ceiling painted in exquisite and storied detail. I was truly spellbound. In awe.

Where do we look for the divine? Where does our god reside? Where is eternity? If asked, many people might look upwards to the skies and the stars. Others, perhaps of a gloomier disposition, might look downwards to the supposed place of our Biblical God's nemesis. The search is, somehow, up-down, vertical, structured, ordered, and exclusive.

So today I wonder if it is possible to engage with religion, and search for the spiritual, not so much in a vertical, up-down way, but in a more horizontal, organic, back-and-forth, inclusive manner. In other words, let us see the divine and the everyday as closely interwoven. Let us find, and experience, the divine in our daily tasks. Equally, these real-world tasks become enriched and deepened by the divine. What is everyday can also be eternal. The French philosopher, mystic and political activist, Simone Weil declared: "To be always relevant, we must speak eternal things."

To understand this deep, and meaningful, entanglement, it is beneficial to define what we mean by *divine*. We come together in a free-thinking church, with a liberal theology. Most of us are happy to define the divine across a wide spiritual spectrum. The divine should (I quote) "include multitudes", to borrow Walt Whitman's phrase. So, we engage with the divine, with God - whatever you consider him or her to be, and we encounter the profoundly spiritual, in many ways and spaces. In a church or house of worship. Also, of course, in nature, with its beauty and mystery. With music, art, and literature. But also in the daily, and often messy, business of just living our human lives. We observe, experience or perhaps practice acts of kindness, compassion, and mercy in our everyday labour. We witness deeds of suffering, alienation, cruelty, but also we see feats of struggle, redemption and forgiveness. And all of this in the wondrous project of just living our ordinary, quotidian, lives.

To pray, to reflect deeply, to contemplate, to have a meditative silence, to ponder the transcendent, to be simply astonished, to be troubled, to be angered, in these moments where the everyday and the divine connect, can give renewed meaning and belief to our lives.

On such occasions we can have profound and useful insight, and experience feelings of gratitude, of hope, of healing, of good intention. We can sense a call to reset out way ahead, a call to action, a call to do better. The insight and experience may be reinvigorating and transformative; it may help us to try and lead more worthwhile and decent lives. Perhaps, in that moment, we can speak of a connection, a *communion*, of the everyday and the divine.

Consider there may some divine, not up there, down there, or out there, but *within us*. Consider there *is* divine within each of us. I remind you of the words of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the French Jesuit priest and theologian:

*'We are not human beings having a spiritual experience;
'We are spiritual beings having a human experience.'*

Teilhard de Chardin was also a palaeontologist. Paleontologists explore a vast range of ancient life forms, from microscopic organisms to colossal mammals. This field intertwines geology, biology, chemistry, and ecology to reconstruct the evolution of life over billions of years. Teilhard de Chardin applied this evolutionary understanding of the universe to spiritual life. He came to see the origin and purpose of human life as 'not just the result of a single, long past, act of creation'. Rather he perceived human life as participating in an ongoing process of creation – a co-creation of the human and divine. I quote Teilhard de Chardin:

*'By means of all created things, without exception,
the divine assails us, penetrates us, and moulds us.
We imagined it as distant and inaccessible,
when in fact we live steeped in its burning layers.'*

The divine assails us. Teilhard de Chardin contended that humankind is actively partaking in 'an ongoing process of *becoming*' – a continuing journey of growth in human consciousness, understanding and knowledge. Again, I quote Teilhard de Chardin:

*‘We are not spiritual defenders.
We are spiritual explorers in pursuit of greater spiritual
Knowledge and understanding.’*

In his wonderful address in this church last October (27th 2024) entitled ‘What is, is’, Frank Tracy spoke to us of Teilhard de Chardin and also of the interwoven relationship between the natural world and the supernatural world to be found in Celtic spirituality. (... If you didn’t hear Frank’s address on the day, I urge you to listen to the podcast and it is reproduced in Oscailt in January 2025.)

Frank quotes St Columbanus, the sixth century Irish missionary:

*‘All of life, all of nature,
Pulsates with the life-force of creation,
And there is nowhere, where the Creator is not.’*

This conception of a divine presence in all creation, and of humans actively participating in an ongoing process of becoming, helps, I believe, to navigate a faith contradiction that many feel is present in the Christian Church. On the one hand, we have the person, and for many also the God, of Jesus Christ who speaks of the need for boundless love and compassion and who identifies strongly with the poor and marginalised. On the other hand, the conventional church, and the official dogma, present us with a God who is often distant and afar, if not dispassionate and severe. We may choose to pray with the God above, but we may also choose to pray with the divine within.

Taoism, as a philosophy and a religion, also embraces this meaningful entanglement between the natural and the supernatural, between the everyday and the sublime. Harmony, balance, and inclusion are all underpin Taoist thinking. It is founded on a belief in a principal of unity of two opposite forces: yin and yang. These forces are seen as opposites yet complementary, constantly shaping the dynamics of the universe, for example, day versus night, the earthly versus the heavenly. Their balance is crucial for maintaining the natural order and harmony. The symbol of Taoism – two tear-shaped forms contained within a circle, each exactly reflecting the another, one white, the other black – represents a powerful visualisation of this duality.

I will read again the opening lines of The Tao, the prayer by Lao Tzu I recited earlier in the service. It captures the notion of creation as a continuing process of becoming, of shaping and reshaping:

‘Before creation a presence existed, Self-contained, complete, formless, voiceless, mate less, changeless, Which yet pervaded itself *with unending motherhood.*’

Moving towards conclusion, I make a recommendation. Visit Brú na Bóinne in the Boyne valley of County Meath and its wondrous passage tombs of Newgrange and Knowth. Built over five thousand years ago during the Neolithic Era, these tombs are older than the Pyramids, Stonehenge and the Mycenaean culture of ancient Greece. They are awe-inspiring. While Newgrange is widely known for its solar alignment at the winter solstice, the other site of Knowth has even more archaeological and artistic interest. The discovery and excavation of Knowth is associated with the distinguished archaeologist George Eogan. In 1968, he became the first person in over a millennium to enter the east-side tomb at the site. Here Eogan recounts in a subsequent book (1986) his Tutankhamun moment:

‘Before me in the lamp’s beam was the most amazing sight of my life... What a structure and what a surprise! ... I had never expected a second tomb in the main mound, let alone such a more impressive one. And having wriggled through some difficult parts in the passage on my way in, my presence alone in the tomb – despite its massiveness – gave me a sense not of isolation, but of security.’

To conclude... Take heed of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

Be spiritual explorers.

Let the divine assail you.

Aidan O Driscoll

St Stephen’s Green Unitarian Church, Dublin,

11 May 2025

Planet Earth

One of the traits of a contemporary Unitarian service is that often, you will be presented with a number of ideas from different traditions. We are not a church that says ‘this is the truth of it’. We say, ‘the search for truth is our sacrament’. When attempting to say something about our Unitarian community, I sometimes say that we look to prophets, poets, scientists, rebels and dreamers for wisdom and inspiration. We seek out wisdom from other faiths and philosophies. We listen, we endeavour to understand and we may be moved to act or think differently. There is no creed or confession of faith required - this is what marks us out among Christian denominations. A service leader or minister is like a curator; we search for wisdom from many traditions. And we respect the spectrum of beliefs that are represented in our congregations. So today I bring science, I bring words and ideas from Christianity, Daoism, Buddhism, poetry, philosophy and atheism. And, if you’ll allow me, I will consider a Papal encyclical, which has drawn not only Christian, but Jewish and Islamic praise and consideration. In my address this morning I am not going to outline the practical steps we must take to save the planet from climate change and the inevitable results that will emerge, (I suspect we know what each of us must do), I am, rather, going to explore how we are an intimate part of creation. I gained a new understanding in composing this address. You might too. We are not visitors on planet earth. And we have the capacity to understand that and to relearn what our ancestors understood.

I remember having a chat downstairs after a service. The consensus was the earth will survive, it’s us who are in trouble. I think we both are in trouble. We are experiencing stronger storms, more rain, more heat. It’s as if we are acting like a parasite on this green earth. We are consuming more; and we are told that more consumption means greater wealth - we are told that in order to solve the world’s ever present poverty, hunger and conflict, we must create wealth which can only be achieved by more consumption.

And the earth is responding. Yet we are not visitors here. This is our home, our natural habitat. We as a species have adapted to be very successful creatures. Our home is in trouble. And ironically it needs our attention and care, or more correctly, we need to stop or at least temper our consumption of earth’s resources. Buddhism tells us that human actions have consequences for the planet, and that a mindful, compassionate approach to living is essential for both personal well-being and environmental sustainability.

I read a short poem by Sara Teasdale during our sacred listening service a few weeks ago. I think it deserves a second reading:

*There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;*

*And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum-trees in tremulous white;*

*Robins will wear their feathery fire
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;*

*And not one will know of the war,
not one will care at last when it is done.*

*Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree
If mankind perished utterly;*

*And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,
Would scarcely know that we were gone.*

With us gone, will the rest of creation notice? But we too are part of this planet. We are made of the same stuff, the same stardust. And many of us might add, created out of love, with the DNA of the heart of the creator, who some call, God.

Karen Armstrong in *Sacred Nature* argues that “the great religious and philosophical traditions have all nourished humanity, and they are the ones that developed between the years 900 and 200 before the common era”; all pre-Christian. These great traditions are, “Confucianism and Taoism in China, Hinduism and Buddhism in India, monotheism in Israel, and rationalism in Greece, (Plato, Socrates and Aristotle). Each of these traditions pioneered a new kind of spirituality. These spiritualities, despite their differences, all shared a common ethos and crucially, a similar understanding of humanity’s relationship with the natural world”. Armstrong suggests that, “We have never wholly surpassed the profound insights of this time”. It is not a question of believing religious doctrine; it is about incorporating into our lives, insights and practices that will not only help us to meet today’s serious challenges but change our hearts and minds”.

What about the sacred thread that connects us all; something I often mention here. It is the Qi; from the Confucian tradition. It’s best

described as a trinity, (if you'll allow me to be a Trinitarian for a moment)...together, heaven, earth and humanity form a continuum. It is organic, holistic and dynamic. Humanity and the cosmos are one. (Now I'm back to begin Unitarian). Tu Weiming, a contemporary Confucian scholar would suggest that there is no division between human beings and the cosmos, because the two share the same reality.

Here's a fourth century text from the Daoist tradition which attempts to describe it:

The vital essence of all things, it is this that brings them to life. It generates the five grains below and becomes the constellated stars above. When flowing amid the heavens and the Earth we call it ghostly and numinous. When stored within the chests of human beings, we call them sages, (*Neiye*).

“The vital essence of all things”:

This refers to jing, which is considered the fundamental source of life and vitality. It's not just physical energy but a deeper, intrinsic life force. In Christianity, Judaism and Islam, this is understood as God or the Creator. Aristotle, who had little time for organised religion, used the concept of an “Unmoved Mover”; the ultimate explanation for motion and change in the universe.

“It generates the five grains below”:

The “five grains” are a symbol of sustenance and earthly life. Jing is seen as the source of this nourishment, supporting life on Earth.

“And becomes the constellated stars above”:

This indicates that jing is not limited to the earthly realm but also extends to the celestial. It is the underlying force that shapes and animates the heavens.

In essence, the quote describes jing as a universal force that permeates all of existence, from the smallest cells to the largest stars, and is the source of all life and vitality. It connects the earthly and celestial realms through this singular, vital essence.

No where in this arrangement is the human being the dominant creature. When Confucius declared, ‘do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire’, he suggested that this includes all that is in nature. Why? Because we share the same vital force.

(*Sacred Nature*, Karen Armstrong). I wonder, is this how Jesus understood it when he spoke those words?

The Unitarian Universalists, our cousins in religion across the pond, have as one of their key principles, **Interdependence**: they state: We honour the interdependent web of all existence and acknowledge our place in it. We covenant to protect the earth and all beings from exploitation. We will create and nurture sustainable relationships of care and respect, mutuality and justice.

With that in mind, I want to refer now, to Pope Francis' contribution to the question of our environmental crisis.

Laudato'Si, which is latin for "praise be to you" is his encyclical from 2015. An encyclical is a public letter from the Pope developing Catholic teaching on a topic. This letter focuses on care for the natural environment and all people, as well as broader questions of the relationship between God, humans, and the Earth. The encyclical's subtitle is, "Care for Our Common Home". There is a lot in Laudato'Si that is commendable: it is not simply a treatise of Catholic doctrine. It outlines in easily accessible chapters, all the key sociological and scientific issues relating to our environmental crisis; climate change, biodiversity, water, pollution, global inequality, weak responses from governments, the role of technology, politics, economics and education. And it does a great deal of theology also and I suggest that it echoes much of what I have spoken about...that sacred thread. The Unitarian Universalist Association in the US issued a statement when it was published:

They said: "We wholeheartedly agree with the Pope's statement that, 'We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide...'

They go on: The encyclical repeatedly asserts "the interconnectedness of all life and calls for 'the honesty needed to question certain models of development, production, and consumption.' We in the developed world will need to make difficult choices to effectively address this climate crisis".

Laudato'Si gives some attention to the role of faith. It assumes particular beliefs about God and the Christian scriptures. It is, after all, a Papal Encyclical.

But, for me, in this context, I understand faith as a conviction without certainty, an acceptance of that which I do not understand, but have an innate sense that there is an underlying reality in creation that is greater than I. You may, or may not share my understanding...but let me quote him.

He writes: 'The gaze of science benefits from faith. Faith calls us to an ever widening path of harmony and understanding.' 'Faith encourages the scientist to remain constantly open to reality in all its inexhaustible richness. Faith awakens the critical sense by preventing research from being satisfied with its own formulae and helps it to realise that nature is always greater.

You may say, I do not believe there is an intelligent God behind creation. I do not share this faith that you speak of. If that is the case, then let me rephrase and suggest that the created world requires our empathy, creation requires me to feel it, experience it. Understanding creation and the science it reveals to us is not merely an intellectual exercise.

There is a helpful example from two 12th century characters who would be considered early Christian mystics, Hugh St.Victor and his pupil, Richard St.Victor. They echo what was held centuries before then, not dissimilar from our friend, Confucius. They suggested we use what they called three sets of eyes when we look on creation. First the **bodily eyes** with which we observe the evidence: I look and I see what is right there in front of me. Second, there is the **eye of reason**, with which we think about what we see. Then thirdly, there are the **eyes of true understanding** that enable us, through contemplation, to penetrate deeper, to what breathes fire into the reality we behold. Whether theist, a-theist, agnostic, or none of the above, this third eye enables us to see something wondrous, beautiful, even mysterious.

But of all the early Christian mystics, my favourite is Meister Eckhart. Meister Eckhart viewed creation as an ongoing, dynamic process, not a singular event in the past. He believed God is continually creating and holding all things in being. For Eckhart, creation is an expression of the divine, a kind of divinity itself, with all creatures acting as expressions or "books about God". He emphasised that God is both immanent within creation and transcendent, present yet also beyond human comprehension.

Pope Francis would not have drawn, like us, upon the wisdom of those other great faiths and philosophies I mentioned ear-

lier. I would suggest that while he doesn't directly cite non-Christian faiths and philosophies, he subtly incorporates some of the wisdom I have referenced, particularly regarding the interconnectedness of all things.

Two examples: "Nothing in this world is indifferent to us"; and another, referring to the creation accounts in Genesis he says that the text "suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself". He also describes the creation stories as symbolic and narrative and he says that the notion that humankind would have 'dominion' over the earth "is not a correct interpretation of the Bible". He says that "Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures". I lifted my head from the text, and pondered that sentence...when genesis tells us to fill the earth and conquer it, that humans are given dominion over the earth, how might I interpret differently or better ?

"The Hebrew Bible does not focus on the sanctity of nature, the people of Israel experienced the divine in human events", (Karen Armstrong, *Sacred Nature*). In Islam the natural world is the breath of God and everything in it is an expression of the divine sigh. It should be noted that Genesis was likely written by a people who suffered brutality, living in exile in Babylon after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem: they wished to show the pagan world that their God, Yahweh, was so powerful, that he just had utter words to create the universe. The gods of their oppressors had to engage in terrible wars before the world come into being. Was it a case of my god is better than your god? There is so much more to be said about this...I'll have to come back to it another time.

Laudato'Si has served as a catalyst for broader conversations about environmental ethics, interfaith cooperation, and the shared responsibility of humanity in caring for the planet. Both Jewish and Islamic scholars welcomed Laudato'Si.

Responding to Laudato'Si, Rashied Omar pointed to the Qur'an chapter 55, where it is written:
God has raised the cosmos, and set up (for all things) the balance.
So do not transgress the balance.

Weigh, therefore, (your deeds) with justice, and cause no loss in the balance!

Omar calls upon Muslim scholars to engage with this text “in order to build broad solidarity with meaningful global commitments for the collective good, through responsible stewardship of the earth”.

And a number of leading American Rabbis agreed that Jews “should address the climate crisis in the nearest way analogous to an Encyclical: with a broad-based Rabbinic Letter. ‘Why?’ they asked each other. For three reasons: firstly, to bring unique Jewish wisdom to the worldwide efforts to heal the world from climate disruption; secondly, to remind the Jewish community itself that practical wisdom about the relationships between human beings and the earth is encoded in the Torah, and, thirdly, to connect with younger Jews who are deeply concerned about the damaged world they and their children may inherit, and who have had no idea that Judaism might speak to their strongest concern.

In conclusion, what might I do now? Perhaps I will begin by being wordless as I begin again to encounter the natural world and connect to the oneness of creation. And I don’t need to go to some far flung mountain top or deep forest, miles from civilisation to encounter the natural world. In the words from the Tao Te Ching:

Without stirring abroad, one can know the whole world. Without looking out of the window, one can see the way of heaven. The further one goes the less one knows. Therefore the sage knows without having to stir; identifies without having to see, accomplishes without having to ask.

There is a prayer I like to bring to our services. It features the words: teach us to retain our conviction that what we do makes a difference; that even our smallest act can contribute to the good of a greater whole. Let us help each other to find those small or big acts. Much wisdom is already here...let us share that wisdom and together we might protect our planet earth for all of creation both present and future.

Gavin Byrne

St Stephen’s Green Unitarian Church, Dublin,

Dublin Unitarian Book Club's choice for August 2025.

HAVEN

by

Emma Donoghue

Emma Donoghue's book *Haven* is a great feat of imagination and writing taking the reader back to seventh century Ireland's monastic world. The first location is in the monastery of Clonmacnoise set on the river Shannon. The monks are being visited by a renowned charismatic scholarly priest called Artt. He considers that life in the monastery has too many distractions and in order to get closer to God he sees a more austere way should be sought. He has a dream in which God directs him to seek an island in the sea, to withdraw from the world and to found a new monastic retreat. He is told to take two companions and God points them out to him.

Cormac is an older experienced monk who converted fifteen years previously from paganism. He had lost his wife and children to plague and had suffered and survived a blow to the head during a tribal war. He is pragmatic and a skilled gardener and builder. He is also a great storyteller of the old folklore myths and legends and also of the lives of the saints.

Trian is a young strong lad of about twenty. He was handed over to the monastery when he was thirteen by his parents to keep him safe (a revelation later in the novel explains why he may have needed protection). He is a dutiful monk, a good worker, a dreamer and musician and lover of nature which he experiences first hand as he sails the river as the monastery's boatman, fetching and carrying goods, messages and visitors.

Artt gets permission from the Abbot to set out on his mission to find the island God intended for them and says "Our gleaming rock will be set apart from men and their wiles. Bleak and harsh, it will be a desert place in the ocean".

They set off down the river Shannon in their boat taking only what is necessary. For Artt priority is given to what is needed to set up a monastery including writing materials for the transcription of the Bible. He sacrifices some necessities saying "God will provide", his mantra throughout their expedition, yet it is the hard work and ingenuity of Cormac and Trian that provides the food, water and shelter for their survival.

After an arduous journey they come to the rocky Skellig Islands out in the Atlantic Ocean, the only inhabitants of which are flocks of birds.

The author's descriptions of Skellig Michael transports the reader to this inhospitable place and we are immersed in their struggles to find water, food, and shelter. Cormac and Trian are set to these tasks, Trian fishing and hunting birds for food and fuel, Cormac starting a garden and building a cistern to catch water. Cormac wishes to start building a shelter but Artt has other ideas and priorities. First they have to carve out a cross and to build an altar and desk so they can start their Bible transcriptions. Artt takes all their hard work for granted and arrogantly dreams of what his future legacy would be as a renowned and revered prior who founded a monastery closer to God and where wonderful transcriptions of the Bible were made. He becomes more fanatical and harsh and as tensions rise between them Artt reminds Cormac and Trian of their vows of obedience to him as a representative of God. The themes of duty, faith, doubt and injustices are explored in this novel as each man goes on his own spiritual journey which can be seen through their relationship to the Island, Trian is in awe of the natural world, Cormac respects its resources and works within its boundaries, and Artt's only view is one of dominance and claims it as his and Gods. The mental health of all three suffers. Nature loving Trian hates having to kill the birds daily for food, fuel and fat for candles. Cormac is frustrated by having to forfeit building a shelter and using resources instead to build crosses and altars. He proposes an expedition to the mainland to get provisions but Artt refuses. During a cruel sadistic punishment meted out on Trian because he doodled an animal on a piece of parchment, Cormac realises that Artt doesn't care about either him or Trian or if they even survive. Cormac tries to save Trian as he is enduring this punishment by revealing Trian's secret and reason why he was put into the monastery for safety. Artt shows no compassion and banishes Trian to live separate from him and Cormac on the Island. Cormac has had enough and releases himself from his vows and saves himself and Trian by sailing away from the Island.

The book club readers thought this is a book that is very well written. The characters are deep and identifiable and you become emotionally involved in their world. The author doesn't gloss over what it probably took to live there as the first landing party like hunting birds and the anxiety around food and shelter. Some descriptions are disturbing as they are quite realistic. It is a thought provoking book and well worth reading

Alison Claffey

St Stephen's Green Unitarian Church, Dublin,

Harvest Thanksgiving Lunch

Sunday 5th October 2025

On Sunday 5th October 2025 we intend to have a Harvest Thanksgiving Lunch, We hope to make the day special. The choir will sing at the service. Then with the help of volunteers, we hope to provide a lunch for 50-60 people, we can share in the Damer Hall.

Diners are expected to make a donation which will go to ***Christian Aid***. All charities are in need of support due to the withdrawal of AMAID. The service is to focus our minds on the millions of people who, every day, do not have enough to eat.

Volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed to provide something to eat, for about 8-10 people, either Main course, salad, something sweet.

“Fingers crossed and Hoping we will get a turn out on the day”

Contact:- **Rev.Bridget Spain**

e-mail: revbspain@gmail.com



Dublin Unitarian Church

112 St. Stephens Green Dublin 2.

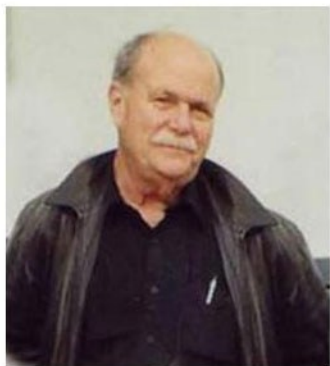
Service 11.00a.m.

Sunday Rota for October 2025

5 th October	<i>Harvest</i>
Service	Gavin Byrne
Reader	Andy Pollok
Flowers	Paula Mills
Welcomer	Valerie Shanley - Gráinne Carty
Coffee	Alison Claffey, Paula Mills
12 th October	<i>No Doubt</i>
Service	Robin Ward
Reader	Maeve Edwards
Flowers	Janet Mulroy
Welcomer	Janet Mulroy - Paul Murray
Coffee	Janet Mulroy, John Leeson, Madeline Stringer
19 th October	<i>So Many Gods, So Many Creeds</i>
Service	Gavin Byrne
Reader	Tony Roche
Flowers	Emer O'Reilly
Welcomer	Mary O'Brien - Emer O'Reilly
Coffee	Mary O'Brien,
26 th October	<i>Are you a Dissenting Thomas?</i>
Service	Paul Murray
Reader	John Haskins
Flowers	Karen O'Connor
Welcomer	Karen O'Connor - Margaret Leeson
Coffee	Maeve Edwards, Alison Claffey, Shari McDaid

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.



It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of Rev. Art Lestor.

Art gave the service at Croydon Unitarian Church on Sunday 14th September but died suddenly on Tuesday 16th September.

Art was regular visitor to Dublin during Bill Darlison's tenure, when Bill went on summer holidays Art would take over for that period.

May he rest in peace.

Tracy O'Donnell
piano



Orlaith Sharkey
piano



David Conroy
bass



Cezar Oranski
clarinet



CLASSICAL MUSICIANS NETWORK CONCERT

12 OCTOBER | 14:00 | DUBLIN UNITARIAN CHURCH

Admission Free

RSVP's via [Eventbrite.ie](https://www.eventbrite.ie)

This concert is part of the 'Sundays at 2' partnership between the church and the Classical Musicians Network.

All donations received will go towards the church's Restoration Fund.