



## THE OPEN ROAD

February 2022



*"The richness, beauty and depths of love can only be fully experienced in a climate of complete openness, honesty and vulnerability"* Anthony Venn Brown

## PLYMOUTH UNITARIAN NEWSLETTER

## ABOUT US

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## To find out more about us...

please visit our website: <https://plymouthunitarians.org.uk/> or find us on

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/plymouthunitarians/>

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Facebook :<http://www.facebook.com/plymouthunitarians>

Cover Photo <https://lgbtplushistorymonth.co.uk/2022-resources/>

## Ann's Musings

I've got to catch up with 'The Green Planet' BBC TV show as I only saw one small bit of it which I can't get out of my head.

Did any of you see the fungus that told the leaf eating ants exactly what type of leaves they should go and collect to bring back for the fungus to eat? Absolutely amazing. How clever.

I've been watching pigs play in a field on Dartmoor, normally there are only cows, horses and sheep, but this time the pigs were out. It was adorable.

I have also had eye to eye contact with a deer. I was on the bus which stopped at Marjon bus stop. I turned to look out of the window and a deer was just staring at me. We had a great few minutes of connection just looking into each others' eyes. It was quite magical.

All these have made me happy in the dark, grey days.

Grey days make me miserable but these small things make me feel happy.

I wish you all many small things that make you smile.

God bless, Ann.

*'If you want to be important - wonderful. If you want to be recognized - wonderful. If you want to be great - wonderful. But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. That's a new definition of greatness. By giving that definition of greatness, it means that everybody can be great, because everybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love. And you can be that servant.'*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

## **Whither are we going?**

It was encouraging to see so many folk on Sunday at our latest Congregational meeting. It shows we're at one in wanting to know what's happening, what is needed to enable our church to still have a presence within the City centre and still to be a central focus of our living faith. The two are closely interwoven - we can't have one without the other! Where does our outreach spring from? And the very need to have a shelter in which we're nourished, protected and yet challenged. This reminds me of an Irish saying: "It is in the shelter of each other that the people live".

We want to provide shelter not only for us but for the many that use our building and the many more that we hope and plan that will come - as we all have come in one way or another.

I was conscious on Sunday that somehow, we've been lax and this is an observation not a blaming remark - as I'm probably the very one who has overseen the period wherein the Committee - CMC - is seen as the ruling elite, the ones who know, whatever it is to know, while the rest of the congregation often needn't be involved. This infantilises us all as really we're all the church, we're all involved, we're all part of one another. This is our church, we need to know, we need to ask, we need to worry, and share the responsibility. The CIO has brought this clear and sharp. No individual trustee can be in the role for longer than 3 years. Therefore, the running and maintenance of our church building as well as the paying of our minister need to be understood. We have no magic streams of funding (tho' Sandra has diligently caught some) to assure us of continuing viability.

"Whither you go I will go" came to me as I was reflecting on what to write is a song by L Cohen but also from Ruth in the Old Testament. I want to journey with you all .

Warmest regards

Kathy

## **Trusted until the end**

Question: Why should a church community be like carpet protector?

Answer: because both should be trusted until the end!

Yes, “trusted until the end” is the promotional tag used by the company that makes TAKTEK, the carpet protector currently being used by our decorator as he redecorates the inside of our house. And you might think that it was an obvious part of the covenant that, consciously or not, members of a church community make with each other when they come together. Sadly, in my experience it is not always the case. When my mother lay dying in hospital no one from the hierarchy of her parish church, which she had supported for over 20 years, came to visit her. Perhaps the fact that she was in a coma was a convenient excuse. And the vicar refused to take her funeral, saying that he had just retired. I have heard similar stories involving other denominations. I am sure PUC would never fail so spectacularly...

I have become rather morbid of late. After being diagnosed with myeloma, a form of blood cancer, last May, I started chemotherapy in September. My chemotherapy had to be stopped in November because I had developed neuropathic pain in my hands, legs and (particularly) my feet. In December I met the Derriford stem cell transplant team. After careful consideration of my history, they decided I was not suitable for a transplant. They were concerned about the neuropathy and also my heart disease, since the transplant process puts a huge strain on the heart. Subsequently my haematologist has advised that my neuropathy has ruled out further chemo. She is advising a month or two of rest in the hope that the neuropathy will improve before starting immunotherapy. However, even if I get on with this treatment it will only hold back the myeloma for a while. After that I will just be offered palliative care.

To say this was disappointing is an understatement and one which I and my family are still coming to terms with. Apart from the pain in my feet (which is a side issue) my only symptoms of myeloma are fatigue and sleepiness (though these can be

overwhelming. My wife Jane says I can sleep for England.) The disease has not yet got into my bones or organs. So there is plenty more to come.

What helps? Knowing that members of the PUC community are thinking and praying for me and mine. The occasional e mail or phone call. The chance to meet virtually via Zoom – I am now friendly with people I have never met in person. (Unfortunately, myeloma seriously compromises the immune system, so even though I am triple jabbed meeting people indoors presents a serious risk of contracting Covid.) Above all, to know that that care and concern will continue until the end...

Nick Saunders

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### **Closing words from the outgoing editor**

Some of you may be aware that I've decided to step down as editor of this esteemed publication after, what was it? Three odd years? Doesn't time fly! During that time I was happy enough to have kept things going in 'maintenance mode' with a very light touch and little in the way of 'active' editorial control beyond selecting a suitable (or sometimes totally unsuitable) picture and quote for the front page.

I believe you the reader and contributor deserve more than that, the church deserves more than that and to that end I put the position up for grabs in the hope that someone with drive and enthusiasm and ideas would step forward to take the reins. So, from April onwards, Suzanne will be taking over, she has loads of great ideas which I hope will move TOR on and engage with a wider audience through various outreach and inclusivity projects. Brilliant!

I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed over the years and especially through the lockdown periods, your contributions were always greatly appreciated and I hope you will continue being as creative for Suzanne as you were for me.

And so I bid you adieu...until next time!

Myron

**Services in February**– all services at 11am\*

**Services**

6th - Rev Kate Whyman

13th - Rev Kate Whyman and Poppy Buttons (followed by congregational meeting)

20th - Ann Kader

27th - Jennifer Sanders

**Dates for your diary:**

Cafe every Wednesday 10-12pm

Wed 2nd 1-1.45pm Oasis of Calm in church

Wed 2nd 2-3.30pm Craftism session in church, making green hearts for 'Love your Planet Month'

Tue 8th 2-4pm Poetry group in hall. Topics are; Love!, and your favourite verses from the Omar Khayyam. Poet. John Masefield. There will be a shared reading of "The Pink Parasol" and as always, whatever takes your fancy or intrigues you.

Tea and cake await.

Thur 9th 2-4pm Shakespeare society in hall

Thur 10th 2-4pm CMC meeting in hall

Wed 16th 2-4pm Word games in hall

Wed 16th 7.30pm Congregational Service on Zoom

Thur 24th 7.30pm Heart & Soul on Zoom

NB! The church AGM will take place after the service on 20th March. Please do attend this if you possibly can

The newsletter will probably be on hold until Suzanne is ready to relaunch in April, contributions can be forwarded to me at [puc.myron@gmail.com](mailto:puc.myron@gmail.com) and I will ensure she gets it in good time.