



Link *The*
Magazine of

Morningside United Church



September 2023

Dear Friends,

What are you doing here?

It is a question God asks Elijah twice as he hides in a cave. The prophet is not in a good way after the events on Mount Carmel. He may have been successful in demonstrating that Yahweh was the one and only supreme God of all, but his subsequent actions resulting in the killing of the prophets of Baal has not gone well with Queen Jezebel, who is after him.

Elijah is on the run. After forty days and nights in the wilderness he arrives at Mount Horeb and finds refuge in a cave as God ask him:

“What are you doing here?”

It is a simple question yet how it is asked and the tone that is used to ask it, can have a significant impact on how it is received, and therefore the kind of response it gets. I wonder how God asked it. Was it asked with anger, empathy, surprise, or disappointment? And was it the same both times it was asked?

We don't know, but in response Elijah gives the same three reason defence. What he fails to say in this though, is that he has come to seek Gods help and protection.

As Elijah hides in the cave and the night progresses a great wind forms, then an earthquake is felt, which is followed by a fire. But God was in none of them. It is only after they pass and there was the sound of 'sheer silence' (NRSV) that Elijah encounters the presence of God.

The New International Version and New Living Translation describes this silence as a gentle whisper. The King James Bible describes it as a still small voice. The New English Bible refers to a faint murmuring. The Good News Translation mentions the soft whisper of a voice. And the Message refers to a gentle and quiet whisper.

It was that silence, that whisper, that murmuring, that still small voice of calm, that drew Elijah out of the cave.

In recognising the need for silence to experience an encounter with God Mother Teresa said:

“We need silence to be alone with God, to speak to him, to ponder his words deep in our hearts. We need to be alone with God in silence to be rescued and transformed. Silence gives us a new outlook on life. In it we are filled with the energy of God himself that makes us do all things with joy”.

What are you doing here?

Is it a fair question that we might have been asked in various ways and situations, or even asked of ourselves, especially when things have not turned out as we had hoped or expected; be that positive or negative. I wonder how you would respond if this question was put to you on a Sunday morning at Morningside United?

Perhaps it is a question you have asked yourself? Perhaps it is a question family and friends have asked? Perhaps it is a question our neighbours, and the people who walk past the door and stand at the crossing on Holy Corner on a Sunday, wonder as they watch you enter the building? And I wonder how it should be asked?

What are you doing here?

With all the challenges we face, and the routines in life as well as everything that can compete for attention and priority, it can be easy to forget the value of our time in worship at 11am on a Sunday.

A precious time to step back from the chaos and noise outside to simply be.

A time to consciously still our minds, breathe and find silence; as we listen for that still small voice of calm and seek an encounter with God.

Could this be what we should be telling those who might be asking us the question - what are you doing here?

Let's be honest though, it can take effort and other things can often win our attention and priority on a Sunday morning; but in being in the place of calm that Morningside United offers every week, help and healing can be found if you take time to listen for that same silence, that whisper, that still small voice of calm that drew Elijah out of the cave in the despair he was experiencing.

What are you doing here?

*Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm ;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire ;
speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,
O still small voice of calm !
O still small voice of calm !*

Grace and Peace,

The Revd David M Scott, BSc BD(Min)

Musings from Mary Taylor, Pastoral Assistant, MUC

September already and the Season of Creationtide arrives from the beginning of September until 4 October, St. Francis' Day.

I am just back from having a great time at the Greenbelt Festival which was celebrating 50 years of Greenbelt and its thinking on Christianity, green thinking and the arts. You will probably hear me speak about this again at some future time including the enjoyable experience of glamping!

Northern Synod, United Reformed Church enabled a group of us to be sponsored to attend this special event.



This summer has seen a number of welcome visitors coming to Morningside United Church.

Re Eric Liddell 100 www.ericliddell.org

Red letter day on Wednesday 5 July for MUC when Yvonne Burnett and I entertained Patricia (nee Liddell) and Mervyn Russell and Sue Caton during a most enjoyable visit. Patricia is Eric's oldest daughter. Sue is his brother Ernest's daughter. It was the first time they had seen the Eric Liddell stained glass window in place and they were delighted with it.

The Russells were in Edinburgh for a special Eric Liddell 100 dinner hosted by the Patron, Princess Royal. John MacMillan, CEO, The Eric Liddell Community graciously invited me on behalf of MUC to this delightful meal for about 60 especially invited guests and to say the Grace.

Princess Royal made one of the speeches as did Eilidh Doyle.



Eric Liddell peace garden is developing thanks to the hard working gardening team led by Fi Brown, the Eric Liddell Community on Wednesday afternoons (1-3pm). If you'd like to come along and help you are more than welcome.

Thanks also to all those who have visited the garden or shown an interest in it. The first plant to go into the Biblical herb corner is thyme. In August I also enjoyed visiting the peace garden linked to Jesmond URC and was amused to see they had “Blue Elijah” grass there too.



Peter Rascombe, “Blue Elijah” grass



Fi Brown, planting the first herbs



Edinburgh Spiders

Edinburgh Spiders, and particularly Hanna, featured in a recent BBC Sunday Morning Live programme and I was interviewed on behalf of MUC. The church building and particularly the Ukrainian netting project was the centre of filming for 6 hours. You can see the programme on the BBC Iplayer.

Thanks to all who attended or contributed in any way to the enjoyable August afternoon communion and tea with a Festival theme. There will be another afternoon communion with a Harvest theme in October. The date is yet to be confirmed, but we'll update you on the website and also in the Notices in our Order of Services over the coming weeks.

Speaking about Harvest, I am really looking forward to Rev Sarah Moore leading Harvest worship on Sunday 8 October and hope she will receive a very warm welcome.

Prayer for Season of Creation from EcoCongregation Staff

Dear God and Friend, and Source of wisdom

In this season: blow your Wild Wind

where there's a need

to stir us up

Help us to let be

As also to step in

Whatever serves your will for Sky and Soil, Heaven and Earth

For you, not we, are God;

AMEN

Mary Taylor
(Pastoral Assistant)

Reading and Flower Rota for September

Readers:

3 September	Rose Kambanga
10 September	Maggie McKenzie
17 September	Judy Wagner
24 September	Pam Brindley

Flower Rota:

3 September	Rose Kambanga
10 September	Janet Wightman
17 September	Yvonne Burnett
24 September	Jennifer Gruber

If you would like to help with the Flower Rota in October, or even volunteer to read in one of our services, please get in contact, everyone is most welcome.

Maggie McKenzie
261 4908

Ministry and Mission Fund – Annual letter to Local Churches

To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Dear Friends,

When will normal service be resumed?

As we are writing this letter and closing off the URC's accounts for 2022, the country is still torn with industrial disputes, mostly notably with Health Service workers, rail industry workers, teachers etc. etc. Whatever your view as to the wisdom or justice of such action, we suspect all of us are affected by the disruption to some degree.

In church life too, are we back to "normal life"? Some churches no doubt have returned to something like their pre-Covid level of activity and attendance numbers. Quite a few have recommenced their activity but find their numbers have reduced. Some churches have found re-opening too difficult and have decided to close.

Whatever the "new normal" was to be, we suggest its arrival has (like many trains) been disrupted, delayed, or cancelled all together.

The URC's finance officers had concerns that the late arrival of the return to normality would impact very significantly on the giving to the M&M Fund in 2022. However, the churches responded magnificently and the giving to M&M was £600,000 ahead of budget. It was also only 2.5% down on 2021's result.

So, thank you to all who continued to contribute to your local church, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2022 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as the first priority and paid what they could.

With normal service not yet resumed, 2023 is not going to be an easy year either. We now have the added disruption of high inflation, pushing up wages and overhead costs. As the Spirit directs and as our

means allow, can the churches once more respond to the call of our gracious, loving and ever-generous God?

Again, thank you all!

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter, please speak to your church treasurer who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ,

Ian Hardie (Treasurer)

Vaughan Griffiths (Deputy Treasurer)

A Blessing

New month, new chapter
New page and new wishes.
May the month give you courage,
Strength, confidence, patience,
Self-love and inner peace.
May every day in September
Fill your days with hope, love
Sunshine and energy.
Let there be Joy, Fun and Laughter.

Advance notice

We will be having a congregational meeting, with lunch provided, on Sunday 8 October after the service. Rev Sarah Moore, who we hope will become our new part time minister, will lead the service on that day. (We expect by that time it will be confirmed if the appointment can go ahead).

From St Catherine's Argyle

We're organising a Church social at St Cath's later this month and are keen to extend an invitation outward to all at Marchmont St Giles and Morningside United.

It'll be an all-age social for the whole church family, featuring a child-friendly ceilidh and a bring and share afternoon tea on Saturday 30 September, at St Catherine's Argyle, from 3pm to 5pm.

We'd be delighted to welcome anyone from Marchmont St Giles or Morningside United who'd like to come along. Should be a great time, and a great opportunity to be able to get to know folk from the different congregations.

Church Life at MUC – An Update

Coffee Mornings – Dates to go in your diary for this month are Thursday 14 September and Thursday 28 September from 10.30am to 12 noon in the Small Hall. All are welcome to join us to enjoy some chat, some tea or coffee and maybe even some wonderful home baking.

Timetable for Ministers during September

3 September – Rev Dr Jack Dyce

10 September – Rev Mary Taylor

17 September – Layperson Peter Ranscombe

24 September – Rev Nick Brindley

Clubs and Groups

Now that the summer holidays are over, the various clubs and groups are back using our halls. There are many different groups, the from Zumba to Tai Chi and Yoga, Edinburgh Book Shop book club, Choirs and meditation. If you would like information on any of the clubs, please get in touch at the office.

The Link Magazine is available on our website to view, and in Church. If you would prefer to have it emailed to you, please email churchoffice.muc@gmail.com.

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