

CROSS STREET BROADSIDE

Cross Street Unitarian Chapel, Manchester, Newsletter – July/August 2017

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Services: **Wednesday** 1-1.30pm; **Sunday** 10.45-11.45am ~ All are welcome, Come as you are

VIEW FROM THE VESTRY ~ *Rev. Cody Coyne (Minister@CrossStChapel.org.uk)*

A year ago I needed surgery on a finger, after it had been trapped in a door. This was followed by physiotherapy to test its reflexes, and exercises to build up its sensitivity. A year on, it looks fine and works fine; the feeling is somewhat different but I can still manage, and it doesn't bother me most days.

I write this without want of sympathy or concern, but to illustrate a point: just over a month ago our city was assaulted, and with it we have become more aware of the world's pain. Whether it has been further attacks elsewhere, injuries against others, or tragedy both deep and preventable, I am sure our hearts have reached out in empathy to those affected. As an artist told me yesterday, "There is a sadness in my heart."

There is a sadness in mine as well. The past month has left many feeling hurt, angry, numb, lost amongst the swells and breaking of life's waves. And in this vulnerability, we face a grave risk: Naomi Klein, writing in "The Shock Doctrine" argues that our numbness presents a condition ripe for exploitation. Looking for a simple explanation, we may lean towards those who present a future of easy answers, who fail to adequately address the issues in society with compassion and care.

In time, however, we regain our senses and capacity. Klein notes that as people become aware, they learn to recognise exploitative behaviour and guard themselves from further injury. But to do so requires remaining open to the world, an inherently vulnerable, and emotionally taxing, option.

After a period of injury, it is our natural drive to withdraw, to numb ourselves, to seek scapegoats and easy answers. But with our prayers and meditations, our grieving and communing, may we not forsake our deepest convictions, that there is a worldwide community to which we belong, more fundamentally than any class or creed or race. May we remain strong against those forces that would seek to divide us amongst crude lines and hatred. **May we choose love.**

Thank you to all who have contributed to the July/August 2017 Newsletter. If you wish to contribute to future editions, please contact Catherine at Newsletter@CrossStChapel.org.uk.

Manchester Peace Garden ~ Ann Peart

When the Peace Garden in St Peter's Square was demolished to make way for the enlarged tram stop, the City Council did not indicate where and when it was to be reinstated.

In December 2013 a group calling itself The Friends of Manchester Peace Garden was established to promote a suitable space in the city centre where significant local and world events connected to Manchester's radical peace history can be commemorated. I represent Cross Street Chapel on this group, and currently the chapel hosts the bi-monthly meetings of the core group. We have investigated several potentially suitable sites, and after meetings with various officials and councillors, we hope that Lincoln Square, off Brazennose Street will be chosen. In May we held an event there to mark Conscientious Objectors Day. We heard from a second world war CO, and read a letter from the wife of a CO from WW1. (We were also delighted to hear Cody play the euphonium, in spite of the rain!).

As a temporary measure, the group helped to plant a pop up peace garden in temporary beds outside our Percival Suite. The six beds show the colours of the rainbow, and an explanatory notice in the window shows how this represents our openness to people in all their diversity. After the bomb attack at the arena, while St Ann's Square was filled with flowers, one family left a card and a citrus tree in our peace garden, and I have planted it in the orange section. It is clear that now more than ever, we need a space for quiet contemplation and for gatherings to promote peace issues. We hope that a larger permanent space will provide a welcoming space for all people to reflect on issues of conflict and peace, and to seek reconciliation and social justice.

My Experience of Unitarianism ~ Adam O'Leary

Having been raised a Catholic, I have always found a need for religion in my life. In my early years, the Catholic Church provided a reassuring certainty, and its churches and cathedrals provided a sense of awe and wonder that mesmerized me. The stories of Saints and martyrs, and the hymns that we sang at school, provided a landscape of religious imagery that kept me sustained in the faith until my teenage years. That was when I started to realise that something was different, that I was growing up to be gay. Increasingly I found that, although the talk of God as love was a beautiful message, there was an overt discourse that described LGBT people as sinners, unwelcome in the Church. Or, that sinisterly 'kind' phrase: 'hate the sin, love the sinner' – I began to feel fundamentally unworthy of religion. I turned to atheism for a while, but felt a need for some spirituality in my life. Having always had doubts about the truth of any single religion, I had often entertained the idea of a 'universal religion' and imagined a temple where elements of all the faiths were venerated and celebrated. In the ignorance of my youth, I thought I had created something akin to Unitarianism all by myself! But in my exploration of what I called 'pantheism', I discovered the website of the Unitarian Universalist Association in the USA, and they in turn provided links to British Unitarians. Noting that the Liverpool congregations were all in south Liverpool, while I lived in the north, I didn't actually encounter real life Unitarianism until I moved to Manchester. While taking part in my first LGBT Pride Parade, I noticed a minister waving to the parade, stood in front of an LGBT Unitarians banner – none other than the much-missed Reverend Jane Barracough. I never actually met her, but her presence at that parade welcomed me to Unitarianism, and showed me that there was a religion where I was welcomed in my entirety. I curiously began attending services at Cross Street, and in the past four years I have become part of a wonderful spiritual community, where we explore our faith together, enriched by our individuality and difference. **What a breath of fresh air Cross Street has been!**



DIARY DATES

7-9 July ~

Tracing Paths

(ticketed event -

www.greatermanchesterfringe.co.uk)

Wed 26 July ~ Prague Unitarians visiting

(Tour of Manchester after service for all)

Fri 28 July, 1pm ~ Friday Recital Series

(Lithuanian Concert Pianist Lauryna Sableviciute – please take posters and flyers) – **sign up** for our **music mailing list** at Music@CrossStChapel.org.uk

Sun 30 July ~ Flower Communion & shared lunch (please **sign up** to bring a dish

– on the notice board or email Minister@CrossStChapel.org.uk)

Sat 26 Aug ~ Pride March (**sign up to**

march with the Unitarians at Events@CrossStChapel.org.uk)

Sun 27 Aug ~ Pride Service (led by Rev.

Cody Coyne)

"Grief. Solidarity. Defiance. Compassion. Warmth." ~ Tria Hall

Those were the words that came instantly to my mind, when I was first asked - by an international reporter - how the people of Manchester felt in the aftermath of the terrorist attack of May 22nd. He asked the question in the midst of the first city vigil we held together, on the evening of the following day, Tuesday, May 23rd.

He wasn't the first to ask that, nor I the first person to answer it, nor were either of us the last - which is why I'm writing this, in fact. The answers seem to be fairly similar when the person giving them is a resident Mancunian, though (whether born here or "adopted", like me).

I'm glad of that. I'm glad, because I believe that it means most of the city's population are thinking along similar lines, and that we have a good chance of holding together and surviving anything else that may be thrown at us in the future.

I have to wonder whether those same words were what came to mind for people who were asked how the city felt about the IRA attack that happened here in 1996, which involved Cross Street and its congregation just as closely as the recent attack. I was only 10 years old at the time and still living in the Midlands, but even then I remember seeing the reactions and the response of the city as a whole to what happened, & admiring the spirit of it all.

So whether or not you remember that day first-hand, remember this: solidarity held us all together then, and it's showing the same capability now. We are one city. Whatever our religion, race, ethnicity, gender, orientation or the many other differences between us, we are all part of Manchester, and we will all make a difference in how this city responds to such awful events - and how we continue to live after them.

I was lucky enough to attend the vigil on the 23rd. It went on long beyond the hour (6 to 7pm) it had been intended for, well after dark: there were still a few people at the little shrine that had been set up by the time I left at 22.30, and throughout all that evening, total strangers who had never met before, many of whom had apparently nothing in common but our city & their shock at what had happened, kept speaking to each other in comfort and support, and kept exchanging hugs with people of all different backgrounds & appearances. I'm grateful to have been a part of that.

It didn't stop at that day, either. I've seen strangers hugging each other in the square, outside St Ann's, where the shrine of flowers, toys & candles had been moved to. I don't know where the shrine is now, but I've seen people continuing to be unusually demonstrative to others all around the city centre, and more generous than usual to local homeless people - I'm glad and grateful to see both, the latter especially. I hope it continues.

I am proud to be a Mancunian, and as I told that reporter when he interviewed me, "Manchester survived the IRA; we will survive Daesh." I have no doubt of that. **Thank you all, for being who you are.**



Left: Cross Street congregation laying flowers in St Ann's Square (photo by Douglas Dodd); **Above:** Tria's sign in Albert Square after the Manchester Bombing vigil

The Ritual of Smelling Roses ~

John Christey-Casson

Only smell one rose at a time.
But before inhaling the scent
Set time aside.
Stand still.
Take time to be in the garden,
Take time to stop all else,
Take time to stop.

Clear the lungs,
Letting this clean air
Refresh the nose.
Breathe peace and wait before you
Choose the bloom.
See the flowers.
Look into the nestled petals:

The velvet crimson cushion;
Whipped cream curls tinged with
Blushing peach, flesh pink;
Bruised mulberry purple;
Singing sunshine yellow;
A glowing ember of gamboge;
Cool moon white.

And only then bend to breathe in
The perfume.
Inhale just enough to catch the scent,
Lest too deep a breath exhaust the fragrance.
Savour the aroma.
Pause, letting the sensation swell,
Catching hints of memory, association, wonder.

Resist the temptation to greedily sniff another -
To gourmandise on bouquets.
Don't gobble the wine.
Just sip and appreciate,
Letting the taste find new pathways.
Rushing from rose to rose reaps
An emptiness of desire.

Broadside Word Search, no. 1 ~ 14 Words →

You cannot name the wave washing the shore,
Before it fades, leaving just a trace,
An echo, vanishing like a rainbow.
Indeed it's better not to know,
Not to engage the finicky intellect
Curious to catalogue and stick
A Latin label on the pinned butterfly.

There is a mystery in
The name of the rose
Not so easily discovered.
There are no dictionaries of odour.
Simply be there as the diffusing scent
Recedes like mist
Rising from the glowing lake at dawn.

R	E	L	I	G	I	O	N	F	H	N	K	C	H
Z	G	M	Q	L	U	X	O	J	D	A	T	U	D
J	Z	O	G	K	O	K	F	X	V	K	V	C	D
W	K	D	H	H	L	V	L	Y	H	R	N	Q	W
O	E	E	O	P	Z	R	E	A	S	O	N	T	H
R	C	E	W	E	C	N	A	T	P	E	C	C	A
S	I	R	E	C	N	E	I	C	S	N	O	C	V
H	L	F	X	Y	T	I	S	R	E	V	I	D	Z
I	A	T	S	U	W	D	X	F	D	W	U	I	F
P	H	Y	T	I	L	A	U	T	I	R	I	P	S
T	C	Y	U	P	I	H	S	D	N	E	I	R	F
N	V	C	O	M	P	A	S	S	I	O	N	L	C
U	L	D	C	T	O	L	E	R	A	N	C	E	H
S	S	E	N	R	E	H	T	E	G	O	T	Q	S