

We Start With...

A two minute period of silence - a moment of peace.

From the ‘Chair’

Our November meeting, in our new premises, was very comfortable. Members had brought some savouries to celebrate our last meeting of the year, and these proved very successful. We’ve decided to continue to do this; it is easy to do and will add only \$1 to our meeting charge (from \$4 to \$5). We hope this will be a welcome ‘half-way’ house between our former ‘light meals’ and the recent tea/coffee only. So come at 5.30 pm, if you can, for tea/coffee and a bite to eat before our meeting at 6pm.

Gretchen

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What does ‘community’ mean?

At our final meeting each year we choose a topic and then each contributed from our own experience. In November we discussed ‘what does Community mean to us?’ We came up with a wide range of contributions and stories that, together, became a most powerful whole. Once again, we found the strength of Sea of Faith is in the contributions of its members.

I continued to think about what I had heard for some time after the meeting, applying the thoughts to my own life and times. What or who were my parents’ community? New to this country, and with a six-month old child (me), they lived in Careys Bay for four years. They enjoyed living there, but it can’t have been easy. The 1952 waterfront strike affected almost every

other family in the community. My mother said, much later, she had no idea at the time what was happening to and within those families, how hard it must have been for them. So my early life was without nearby family or any strong community for support. That was less usual then, but is more often the case these days as young people travel for work or to be with their partner.

Community is delicate, precious, yet it is strong and often of great support; it provides for many of our most human needs.

Universal Basic Income & The Right to Work

Thursday, 23rd FEBRUARY

NEW VENUE

**St John’s Church Hall,
Cnr Wright St and Highgate**

**Tea and Coffee
will be available from 5.30pm**

**The programme will start at
6.00pm**

Contribution - \$5

Universal Basic Income

We have heard a lot about “Making America Great Again” and about creating lost jobs in the old industrial areas (the “rust belt”).

I have watched a YouTube TEDxHaarlem talk “Basic income and other ways to fix capitalism” by Federico Pistono
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2aBKnr3Ep4> (just copy and paste this into Google).

He makes the point that just now, corporate profits are at an all-time high, but that employment is weak and many jobs are vulnerable to competition from robots and automation. This was further brought home when I saw the driverless bus in operation at Christchurch airport and when I thought about the driverless trains on some subways in England and at Canary Wharf.

Given that there is an ageing population as well, how is society to manage? The new jobs being created by the rise of high technology are very highly skilled and there are not a great number of them in relation to jobs at (say) fast food outlets.

Federico argues that the present situation is more unequal than in medieval or feudal times and there is need for a redistribution of wealth to encourage a thriving middle class. Germany and South Korea are good examples where this has been done.

His suggestion is a Universal Basic Income (UBI) for everyone, rich and poor, with no strings attached. This, he reminds us, is not a new idea (Thomas Paine 1802) but it fits with Article 25 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other

lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

There have been small trials of the idea but not on a large enough scale to draw clear conclusions. The small scale trials and one in which a London charity gave money to a number of homeless people and monitored the outcomes, have all had surprisingly positive results.

Will people work less? Here is what Wikipedia records about an experiment in USA in the 1970s

However, in studies of the [Mincome](#) experiment in rural Dauphin, Manitoba, in the 1970s, the only two groups who worked significantly less were new mothers and teenagers working to support their families. New mothers spent this time with their infant children, and working teenagers put significant additional time into their schooling. Under Mincome, "the reduction of work effort was modest: about one per cent for men, three per cent for wives, and five per cent for unmarried women."

This meant that often children had fewer jobs outside school and get improved grades, mothers spent more time with their children – both positive outcomes.

This concept is one which we shall visit during this year in Sea of Faith.

Teaching Self Control to Children

Six Sea of Faith members attended Prof Richie Poulton’s brilliant talk on 31st January. There’s another topic for this year.

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