



Brighton
Unitarians

April 2018 Newsletter

Sunday Services

Please note: services are at 11 a.m. apart from on 15th April which is at 6pm due to the Half Marathon. All are welcome.

1st April	Jef Jones (Lay Leader) Pianist, Kathy Pitt
8th April	Rev Jennifer Sanders, (Interfaith Minister and Member) Pianist, Peter Mansfield
6pm 15th April	Jef Jones (Lay Leader) Pianist, Pamela Nickels
22nd April	Stephen Crowther (Lay Leader, Hastings) Pianist, Peter Mansfield
29th April	Francis Clark-Lowes (Member) Organist, Maurice Rigby

We would be grateful if you would switch your phones to airplane mode before the service.
Thank you.

Please note there will no Quiet Reflection in April due to re-scheduling of one of our Prayer Course sessions.

Parking and Access to the Church

Due to scaffolding at the front of the church there will be no parking from 19th March until further notice. Entrance to the Church will be via the two side passageways.

Welcome from Jef

Of course I want to begin by thanking everyone involved in our wonderful play, *The Prince and the Pillars*. Our member and producer Joanna Haworth brought together an excellent cast

and crew and Janet Sate's script was engaging, funny and moving. The performances were perfectly complemented by Tony Tree's wonderful exhibition of photographs of life in and around our church. What a positive weekend that was and many thanks to everyone who contributed.

I'd also like to thank Derek McAuley, Chief Officer of the Unitarian General Assembly, for his lecture on Friday 16th March, entitled Unitarian Women Who Made a Difference. It was inspiring to hear the stories of some extraordinary women connected in diverse ways to our church. Derek's talk will soon be available on UK Unitarian TV.

A few things to watch out for looking forward: please note that our service on Sunday 15th April is at 6pm in the evening. It is the day of the Half Marathon which makes travel difficult in the morning; there are two more lectures as part of our Heritage Awareness Programme and they promise to be fascinating: details are below. I'd also like to remind you that although there will be scaffolding up at the front of the church we have a programme of events for Brighton festival. You can find more information about this at <http://www.brightonunitarian.org.uk/may-festival.html>

Special General Meeting, 24th June at 12.30pm

This is advance notice of a Special General Meeting of our church membership [on Sunday, 24th June at 12.30pm](#).

The meeting will consider a proposal from the Church Committee to change our constitution. The new constitution will enable us to (hopefully) make a successful application to the Charity Commission to obtain the status of Charitable Incorporated Organisation (C.I.O.). The committee have been considering this for some time and will be contacting members about the proposed new constitution before the Special General Meeting. Some Unitarian churches have already made this change and churches like ours are required by law to do so by 2021.

The Prince and The Pillars

We'd like to thank everyone involved in the Prince and the Pillars, our site-specific play telling the story of the founding of our Church. The weekend of performances went incredibly well with maximum attendance at each show. Janet Sate's script ended with a rousing celebration of our heritage, our future and our spiritual values. The character Phoebe Hessel says: 'Many souls have come here to worship, seek spiritual guidance or find their place in a community. Other souls - adrift maybe - have sheltered from the icy rain under that stout portico, those pillars. The longevity of a building, it remaining constant, is, well, like an anchor. The human endeavours and values ensconced within it - the spirit of this building, shines out and long may that continue. To those who love it, and to those who will, it is as important a place and as much a part of Brighton as the grand and glorious Royal Pavilion'.

Here is some of the feedback comments we received over the weekend:

“It’s so great you got the grant to restore and animate this great building. The play was hugely entertaining, well written, directed and performed. Learned a lot. The photo and sound installation good, too. Well done everyone involved”

“I have lived in Brighton for over 20 years and never been into or engaged with this church. Was fascinating to find out its story and in such an engaging way. The photographs added an extra depth and weight to the whole picture and feel of the people here”

“I loved it – great momentum – just enough variety, gaiety and information”

“Inspirational performance by the cast enticing the audience to be part of it: they succeeded”

“Excellent performance piece, very informative, made me realise how valuable the building is”

“Very clear and interesting story – a great piece of Brighton History”

“Powerful, immersive performance, with moments of hilarity and profundity”

“Entertaining, informative and great fun. Inclusive. Music excellent, loved the Hurdy Gurdy”

“Blimey! That was good! Especially the Pillars and the lighting!”

“Wonderful lively play Beautiful Photographs”

“The young boy in the top hat was AMAZING”

Words used most often in the feedback : Excellent, wonderful, great, entertaining, informative, triumph, fantastic, stunning, brilliant, inspirational, enlightening.

Thank you to everyone who was involved. A great achievement. The Heritage Lottery Fund require that we raise awareness of the heritage of our building and its position within Regency Brighton, The Prince and the Pillars and Tony's superb photos certainly achieved this!

April Quiet Reflection Circle Cancelled

Please note there is no Quiet Reflection Circle in April due to the rescheduling of one of our Prayer Course dates.

From the Lay Leader

Since seeing our excellent play, The Prince and The Pillars, I have been thinking about Universalism. Our founders, portrayed so movingly, were Christian Universalists: they believed that God's grace and mercy are available to everyone and not just the chosen few. Universalism was, in its day, a progressive doctrine and formed the basis on which our free

religious faith was built.

In the twentieth century the term Universalism took on a new meaning for Unitarians. It came to signify that all faiths and spiritual traditions are of value: all have wisdom and beauty and none can claim exclusive access to the truth. This pluralist approach to faith is congruent with modern, liberal values of diversity and inclusion, and leads us to the secular understanding of Universalism as a series of secular principles: human rights, freedom, democracy, science and the rule of law. These values, like Unitarianism itself, grew out of the American and European Enlightenment and that history, of course, invites all kinds of questions.

Which values are universal and more to the point, whose? Is a requirement that all countries honour the same values not so much universal as colonial, perhaps even totalitarian? Are universal values just a way of westernising the universe? Can we claim that our ethos of individual rights and freedoms is in some way a neutral benefit for everyone everywhere? These questions are valid and there are good reasons to approach Universalism with a degree of scepticism and thoughtfulness.

Yet as countries and communities around the world become splintered and isolationist that grand, noble vision of universal rights reminds us of our shared humanity. The unity of humankind is very hard to imagine at the moment. It feels like a dream but it might perhaps be a useful one if it inspires dialogue, cooperation and compromise. This is perhaps what the world needs; a universalism that reminds us that all human beings can do these things: listen to each other, treat each other with respect, share resources and work together.

Jef Jones, Lay Leader



April

6th: Violinist Sophia Bartlette: 'Missing Pieces - celebrating Women of Note'. Sophia will celebrate women composers in an exciting, eclectic mix of genres and great works for violin and piano.

13th: 'A Scattering of Jazz Jewels!' with Lou Beckerman, Sarah Carpenter and Carol Sloman. Three classy women jazzers come together for an intimate hour of song, story, musical mischief and jazz with a twist. "Charming, witty and touching".

20th: Edwin Pitt Mansfield (baritone) & Kathy Pitt (piano) play Haydn/3 Canzonettas. Schubert/Gesange des Harfners. Vaughan William/Songs of Travel.

27th: Nick Andrews, piano, is joined by his old friend, Matthew Wood, baritone, for a lunchtime of Schumann. Nick will play some obscure, late piano pieces and then Matt will join him for "Dichterliebe", Schumann's tragic masterpiece.

Doors and coffee from 12 noon.
Concert 12.30 – 1.15 p.m.
Tickets £3.50 on the door.

BUC Fundraising

We are incredibly happy to report that the Sussex Historic Churches Trust has confirmed that they are going to offer BUC a grant of £10,000 towards the planned restoration work.

Donations received from members of the Prince and the Pillars audiences amounted to nearly £400.

Thank you from Anne

Our member Anne brings the beautiful flowers for our seasonal services and raises money for good causes by selling on unwanted items such as broken jewellery and spectacles. She would like to thank all our members who have supported her by bringing such items into church.

SeeKenya (seekenya.org) is one of the charities Anne supports with the items we have contributed . It's a UK-based charity delivering eye care services to marginalised communities in Kenya. They provide cataract surgery and eye drops for the treatment of trachoma, the leading cause of blindness in children.

So Anne says thank you and invites us to keep donating broken watches, clocks, broken jewellery, necklaces and chains, odd earrings and cufflinks, obsolete keys and coins and postage stamps and old glasses and sunglasses. There is a container in the Vestry marked Items for Anne. Finally Anne says "All the goods I ask for have seemingly no value - but they are treasures and I have fun exchanging them for money!"

Dates for Your Diary

Heritage Lectures

The Heritage Lottery Fund has acknowledged the importance of our building as an integral parts of the City's Regency streetscape and is helping to fund the restoration of our classic facade and portico. As part of the project we will be raising awareness of the heritage of the building and its history, including a series of free lectures:

Saturday 7th April, 2 p.m. - Dr Geoffrey Mead, "History of Brighton Unitarian and the Cultural District of Brighton".

Saturday 21st April, 2 p.m. - Dr Sue Berry – “Amon and Amon Henry Wilds – architects and builders of places of worship and other buildings in Brighton”.

After the lectures there will be a Q&A session, an opportunity to meet the historians, tea and cake.



Death Café

Sunday 1 April 2018

2 – 4pm



Opening up conversations about all matters related to death and the end of life...

Hosted by Frances Tulley - independent funeral celebrant

frances@ftcelebrantservices.com

www.ftcelebrantservices.com

Free event with tea/coffee and cake

(Donations welcome to cover costs)