



Brighton
Unitarians

February 2018 Newsletter

Sunday Services

Services 11 a.m. All Welcome

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| 04 February | Jef Jones (Lay Leader, BUC)
A service celebrating Church membership
and new members.
Pianist, Peter Mansfield |
| 11 February | Jo O'Sullivan (BUC Member)
Pianist, Pamela Nickels |
| 18 February | Rev Anthea Ballam (BUC Member)
Pianist, Kathy Pitt |
| 25 February | Stephen Crowther (Lay Leader, Hastings)
Pianist, Joe Ward |

Quiet Reflection and Candle Lighting
Thursday 8 February 7 - 8pm

Welcome from Jef

Welcome to our Newsletter. There's lots going on in our church over the next few months, including some wonderful events that we're putting on as part of our Heritage Awareness Project. You'll find information below about *The Prince and the Pillars*, a play about the founding of our church, and a series of fascinating lectures about our Unitarian heritage. You'll also see a flyer for Angel Day on Saturday 10th February, which celebrates the unique diversity of our city. This celestial event has been organised by our member Rev Anthea Ballam for the Interfaith Contact Group.

As many of you will know there was a very positive response to our request for volunteers to help with *The Prince and the Pillars*, and the Heritage Lectures. After the service on February 4th I'll be running a briefing session for volunteers on the history of our church and its courageous founders: please do come along!

Finally, a date for your diary in March. We'll be having a potluck lunch in the hall after the Equinox Service on Sunday March 18th. We're planning to do this after each solstice or equinox service. The purpose is simple: to sit down and share a meal together! Please bring food to share as you are able: it doesn't need to be posh! Everyone is welcome.

Jef Jones, Lay Leader

The Prince and the Pillars

We will be posting regular information about the shows on our social networks. If you haven't already, we would be grateful if you would follow our [Twitter feed here](#) and our [Facebook page here](#).

Quiet Reflective Circle

Thursday 8th February 7 - 8 pm

On the second Thursday of each month we gather for candle lighting and quiet reflection. This starts at 7pm and lasts no longer than an hour. There will be readings, time for candle- lighting, stillness and a few simple closing words.

If you've been having a busy week, and could do with some stillness, do come along. If you're looking for a time and place to reconnect with your spirit, do come along. If you'd like to sit quietly in a sacred place, please do come along. All are welcome!

From the Lay Leader

Since Einstein we have learned that there is no centre: or alternatively, that any point is as good as any other for observing the world...there are no privileged locations.

Scott Sanders

The essayist Scott Sanders is referring here to the idea in astronomy that the universe has no centre. The universe is expanding, according to cosmologists, but uniformly and not from a central point. Frankly I can't begin to understand the science behind this theory but I've been reminded of this passage recently by President Trump's sweeping dismissal of developing nations in language too crude for a church newsletter. The President clearly believes that there are such things as privileged locations.

I learnt at school that Mesopotamia was the cradle of civilisation. If there was ever a privileged location on the face of the earth it was here. The cities that developed out of the fertile land between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates were the birthplace of agriculture, the wheel, writing and mathematics. Sadly the cities of modern Mesopotamia are today in ruins - whole neighbourhoods of Aleppo, Homs and Mosul have been reduced to rubble and large numbers of their inhabitants have been driven from their homes by war and starvation. Many of those left behind are traumatised, hungry and afraid.

It is true, of course, that some countries on earth are desperately poor and ruined by conflict but many of them have been made so by the decisions of distant and powerful men, fighting proxy wars and imposing their own political or religious

dogmas. It goes without saying that the human beings who live in these places love their homelands very much. Let's pray for them. Let's do all we can to support them and let's pray for the qualities of wisdom and humility in our leaders.

Gratitude For My Spiritual Path

At her service in November the Rev Jennfier Sanders asked some of our new members to talk about gratitude. Claire talked about her gratitude for our church and has kindly given us permission to share her contribution below.

I've received inspiration from many services here and from church members of which I am grateful for. I also wanted to express gratitude for the support and the openness provided to explore and express my spiritual journey.

Since attending services here and having conversations, I am more comfortable with my not knowing or understanding everything. Mystery is working for me. I am truly grateful for this letting go.

In the past, and till quite recently, I have wanted so many tangible spiritual answers to what life is all about and answers to the why, what and how of everything. The constant questioning, analysing and desperation to understand it all added to depression. I wanted a dramatic, tangible spiritual experience to be sure I could understand God/a Higher Power. Although I was fearful of such an experience and doubtful of it anyway.

Seeking spiritual guidance, I was gently encouraged to look within and to not search solely for an external power.

This change of focus and tapping into intuition (linked to a physical sensation in my heart and stomach) has helped guide me through my days, when I choose to listen.

Also, accepting that I'll probably never get a tangible answer with all the t's crossed and i's dotted has helped me let go of this search and appreciate, in my mind, the mysteries and mystery of life. Paradoxically, this intangible concept has given me a tangible answer, and the realisation that detail is not so important. I'm content, currently, with not knowing the why, where, how and when. It just is.

The seed of mystery in my spiritual path started to grow through attendance here and has materialised in my life through other places too. For that I'm truly grateful.

Claire



February

Friday 2nd: Lucy Mair (soprano) and Joe Ward (piano). From Barber to Bernstein: A century of American song.

Friday 9th: The LIPS Quintet returns to Brighton Unitarian Church and is joined by Steve Carroll-Turner for a concert including the Mozart Quintet K452 and Ibert's Five Pieces for Wind Trio.

Friday 16th: Herschel Quartet will play a quartet written especially for them by composer Barry Mills and the String Quartet by Maurice Ravel.

Friday 23rd: Soprano Jenny McCalmont. A solo recital of early English song, and Spanish and British folk music, including folk songs arranged by Manuel de Falla and Benjamin Britten which will be accompanied by Joe Ward.

Doors and coffee from 12 noon.

Concert 12.30 – 1.15 p.m.

Tickets £3.50 on the door.

BUC Fundraising - Curry and Quiz Night Saturday 10th February

We're holding one of our popular Quiz Suppers on Saturday 10th February. 7 p.m. A quiz night with questions compiled by Kathy Pitt and this time with a choice of curries from Nooris Indian Restaurant. Teams of four - make up your own team or join a team on the night. Donations bar selling wine, beer and soft drinks. Bring your friends. Orders and payment will be taken on Sundays after the services on 28th January and 4th February.

February Diary Dates

February 9th, 7.30 p.m. Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society. Tom Dommett – ‘Heritage on the Edge – Archaeology of the Seven Sisters’

The National Trust has been working over the last two years to investigate and record thousands of years of history along the Seven Sisters coastline before it is lost to the sea. Tom will outline how we have gained a greater insight into this rich cultural landscape - from surveys and documentary research to oral histories and excavations.

Over the next few months we are planning to make a fabric patchwork collage together, depicting what being a part of Brighton Unitarian means to each of us. The finished work will be a 5' x 6' wall-hanging. We already have offers of fabric, cotton, needles and scissors to get started.

No experience needed!

Initial sessions will be:

Sundays 11 February and 25 March

12.30– 3pm (BYO lunch)

Request for Items to be Recycled

Our member Anne, who brings the beautiful flowers for our services, is continuing to raise money for three great causes. She is requesting contributions in the form of items you might usually throw away or forget about.

SeeKenya (seekenya.org) is a UK-based charity providing 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. Please donate broken watches, clocks, broken jewellery, necklaces and chains, odd earrings and cufflinks, obsolete keys and coins and postage stamps and old glasses and sunglasses.

For the Friends of Eastbourne Hospital (www.friendsdgh.org.uk), please donate plastic milk bottle tops, blue, green and red. These raise money for equipment in the oncology department that detects prostate and testicular cancer.

The Aviation Fellowship has planes which fly medicine and relief to isolated communities all over the world. Please contribute old or new postcards.

There is a container in the Vestry marked Items for Anne. Anne herself 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:

Friday 16th March, 6 p.m. - Derek McAuley, "Unitarian Women Who Made a Difference".

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.