



Brighton
Unitarians

January 2018 Newsletter

Sunday Services

Services 11 a.m. All Welcome

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| 07 January | Jef Jones (Lay Leader, BUC)
Pianist, Peter Mansfield |
| 14 January | Rev Susie Courtauld (BUC Member)
Pianist, Pamela Nickels |
| 21 January | Jef Jones (Lay Leader, BUC)
Pianist, Joe Ward |
| 28 January | Phillida Simpson (BUC Member)
Pianist, Kathy Pitt |

Welcome from Jef

Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2018 which is full of good news and positive developments. As you will see below we have been successful in our bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which means we will be able to go ahead with repairs to our portico. I'd like to express my gratitude and appreciation to Phillida Simpson, our Treasurer, and Marion Bance, our Administrator, for the great work and time they have put into securing this crucial funding for our church community.

You will see below that all kinds of events, lectures, workshops, courses and performances will be happening here in 2018 . Please do contribute and participate in way you can!

Happy New Year, Jef Jones, Lay Leader

Good News for the Church from the Heritage Lottery Fund

As many of you will know we have been anxiously awaiting news from the Heritage Lottery Fund concerning our application for funds to help restore the church portico, this has now been received.

So, from April to November the church facade will be undergoing extensive renovation and repair. There will be scaffolding and hoarding up over the front of the building. Signage will be prominently displayed directing people where to go. Access to the church will be via the two side passages.

To support the application for funding we have put together a detailed and lively communications programme to help us raise awareness of the building, its heritage and place in the community. We are staging several events during March and April. These include:

- Lectures from respected historians, Dr Sue Berry, Dr Geoffrey Mead and the Unitarian Derek McAuley.
- Photographic exhibition featuring images of the life of the building inside and out which are currently being taken by our good friend Tony Tree.
- A soundscape documenting events and ceremonies which occur within the church and provide a historical archive of memories gleaned from churchgoers and lay preachers.
- A site specific drama running over the first weekend in March, with 2-3 performances each day.

To enable us to achieve all these many activities we will need your help. Lottery funding requires evidence of increased volunteer participation in all the activities that we undertake. We know many of you value the church and will want to play a bigger role in its future. You will have an opportunity to add your name to the list of volunteers every Sunday during January or by calling Marion in the office (01273 696022) or by email (buc@brightonunitarian.org.uk).

If you are available and interested in taking part in the drama as a performer, musician, singer or usher, or have experience of marketing (especially social media) to help us spread the word about the event, please email Marion or Jo Howarth on Jo.howarth@hotmail.com

We have an exciting year ahead, please do make sure that you are part of it.

Phillida Simpson

The Prince and the Pillars

A madcap look at the fusion of events, politics, faith, hope and determination that enable the Unitarians to build their church back in 1820.

The drama takes small audiences on a colourful and light-hearted journey back to a time when our iconic (but now in need of TLC) portico was just a dream, a sketch on paper, and

the land it now stands on was a veggie plot. To a heyday for a rapidly expanding Brighton where Royal visitors practically rubbed shoulders with fisherfolk on the Steyne. A time when the French Revolution sent ripples of insurrection across the English Channel. When the quest for emancipation sparked a new idealism in the breast of the Common Man.

Audiences will wander alongside the ghosts of the Unitarian Church's radical founders, with those who helped them on their way: the Prince Regent, his ladies and the Theatre Royal. A joyful community theatre event with live music and hidden histories of an iconic building at the heart of Brighton's community.

The event will be accompanied by a post-show photography exhibition and sound installation drawing on archives of New Road and its buildings through history.

Tickets are free but pre-booking is advised. To make a booking please contact Brighton Unitarian Church on [01273 696022](tel:01273696022) or buc@brightonunitarian.org.uk

Friday 2nd March	– two performances at 6pm and 8pm
Saturday 3rd March	– three performances at 4pm, 6pm and 8pm
Sunday 4th March	– two performances at 2.30pm and 3.30pm

Quiet Reflective Circle

Thursday 11th January 7 - 8 pm

On the second Thursday of each month we gather for candle lighting and quiet reflection. Starting at 7pm and lasting 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!

Thursday Workshop: Inclusive Communion

January 25th 7pm

Our Thursday workshop will be rather unusual this month - it will take the form of an inclusive Unitarian communion led by Jef Jones and Susie Courtault. We will be breaking bread together and meeting prayerfully and mindfully in the presence of the divine. To modern Unitarians communion may not seem very Unitarian at all; yet it was a part of Unitarian worship well into the twentieth century. Kensington Unitarians hold an Inclusive Communion after all their services: it is open to all who wish to attend and has become an integral part of their church week. Inclusive Communion is ecumenical in the broadest sense in that it seeks to bring people together in a time of division. We will break bread together, drink grape juice together and sit together in a circle of connection and prayer.

A Short Course About Prayer

Starting in February of 2018 I will be running a Short Course About Prayer. This is for anyone wanting to explore and deepen their experience of prayer. The course is based on *Simply Pray*, an excellent book by the American Unitarian, Erik Walker Wikstrom.

Rev Wikstrom identifies four types of prayer practised in the world's major religions; *Naming* the many ways in which the sacred is present in our lives; *Knowing* ourselves by looking inside ourselves, by exploring our strengths and weaknesses; *Listening* to the quietness in each one of us and *Loving* by reaching out to the world in compassion. He uses these four prayer types as the foundation for a modern prayer practice.

Our time together will be about learning and experiencing; we will learn about different types of prayer and practice different ways of praying. Each session will be participative and will take place in a safe and respectful group setting. There will be a small amount of homework each week.

The course is free and will take place on Thursday evenings in the Church. Dates and times are as follows:

Thurs March 22nd 7 - 10 pm
Thurs March 1st 7 -10 pm
Thurs March 15th 7 – 10 pm
Thurs March 22nd 7 - 10 pm
Thurs March 29th 7-10 pm
Thurs April 5th 7 - 10 pm

There will be ten places, which will be allocated to the first ten people who sign up for the course. Participants are encouraged to attend every session if possible. If you are interested and would like to sign up for A Short Course About Prayer talk to me in Church, call me on 01273 6960221 or e-mail at jejjones@btinternet.com.

From the Lay Leader

2018 promises to be a positive and lively year for our church community. We have been successful in our bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and we can now go ahead with the repair and restoration of our portico. This secures our presence in the city as a progressive religious centre and a community resource.

Our building is beautiful. We are stewards of a Grade 2 listed treasure situated in what is now one of Brighton's busiest streets. Our not quite next door neighbours are the Royal Pavilion and its gardens, the Theatre Royal and the Brighton Dome and Corn Exchange. Brighton Unitarian Church is part of our city's Regency heritage.

It is also alive and growing. In 2017 we had 10 new members and that is something to be celebrated. In the autumn twelve people attended a course I ran in spiritual development and Unitarian history. People are drawn to our inclusive approach to faith. They get a great deal from our open-hearted and open-minded sacred space where the tender and creative

questions of the soul can be explored. What we stand for, and the spiritual work we do in our sacred space, also have their beauty.

However we cannot take our church for granted. The sturdy, elegant grandeur of our portico might suggest an establishment with an august national organisation behind it and great reserves of money. In fact we rely almost entirely on our volunteers and part-time staff. Nearly all our revenue comes from lettings, bequests and collections at Sunday services. Over a third of those services are led by our own members. The commitment of our congregation and staff is what makes our Church possible.

Of course our Church has evolved in all kinds of ways over two hundred years but its liberal ethos and the active participation of its congregation have endured. In 1819 the land which the Church now stands on was bought from the Prince Regent. He signed a Trust Deed stating that the land would be for the use of "a Society of Protestant Dissenters established or intended to be established in Brighton." That society grew from a small group of Unitarians who began meeting in a small chapel in Jew Street in 1793. Nearly thirty years later they had raised enough money and gathered enough supporters to buy the land from the Prince and build our Church.

Our predecessors were brave in their beliefs, which at the time were unorthodox to say the least. Unitarians today are proud to inherit that tradition of freethinking independence. Now, as then, thanks to the commitment of our church volunteers and our dedicated staff Brighton Unitarian Church is a place of spirit, conscience and community.

WaterAid: Brighton & Hove Campaign Group

A letter from Ian Hextall, on behalf of the Brighton and Hove WaterAid Campaign Group.

Dear BUC Members,

Thank you for supporting us so generously at your meeting on Sunday 19th November. I enjoyed meeting you and having the opportunity to share with you the importance which we at WaterAid give to having strong local links. As a local group we have benefited over the last 6 years from the generous support and encouragement received from BUC.

It was particularly apposite that I should meet you in November, as I said at the meeting, it was World Toilet Day. On this day our focus is to raise awareness of the importance of sanitation and hygiene in the alleviation of global poverty and in increasing the health and prosperity of communities within which WaterAid works. All of this ties into UN World Goals for Sustainable Development and the global designation of UN World Toilet Day.

Your support is, as ever, greatly appreciated and we were very happy to receive your kind donation. During the course of the weekend we raised over £160 which will be doubled up by DFID and we hope that we have more to come in our current UNTAPPED campaign.

If you wish to know more about our work or have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely,

Ian Hextall (on behalf of the Brighton and Hove WaterAid Campaign Group)

ianhextall92@gmail.com 01273 729398 mob. 07847170503

www.facebook.com/WaterAidBrightonHove



January

No concert on the 5th January.

12th: Contemporary clarinet recital featuring original material from Luca Luciano's last releases and music by John Cage and Gershwin.

19th: Shostakovich's haunting viola sonata of 1975 performed by members of the Brighton Chamber Ensemble- Ros Hanson-Laurent and Steve Carroll-Turner.

26th: Brian Ashworth & Jon Rattenbury play an exciting and eclectic mix of music for two guitars. You will hear Baroque & Classical arrangements, music from North and South America, and more.

Doors and coffee from 12 noon.

Concert 12.30 – 1.15 p.m.

Tickets £3.50 on the door.

BUC Fundraising

The Christmas organ concert, on Sunday 17th December, performed by the very talented Johan de Cock, was a great success. £277 was raised to help maintain BUC's historic Kirkland organ for another year. We are very grateful to Jay, not just for his musical abilities, but also his fabulous cake making skills!

Saturday 10th February 2018 Kathy and Ann will be organising another one of our popular quiz evenings this time with curry rather than fish'nchips. More details to follow.

January Diary Dates

Friday 12th January 2018, 7.30 p.m. Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society. Edwin Wood – *'Finds from the Portable Antiquities Scheme, Sussex, 2017'*. Members free. £3 non-members.

Saturday 20th January 2018, Death Cafe. 2 - 4 p.m. Drop in to drink tea and eat cake, and to share and discuss all aspects of death in a safe and supportive environment. Free event -

donations towards costs and church building appeal fund are welcome. Host Frances Tulley, civil funeral celebrant.

Sunday 21st January 2018, Stitchin' Time. 1 – 3 p.m. £3 donation. Bring lunch. Learn: knitting, crochet, embroidery, patchwork. Or bring your own project.

Dates for Your Diary

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 with 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.

BUC Lecture series - part of our heritage awareness project.

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

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

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".

Free entry.