



Brighton
Unitarians

June Newsletter

Sunday Services

Please note: services are at 11 a.m. unless otherwise stated.
Everyone is welcome.

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

02nd June - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Kathy Pitt

09th June - Anthea Ballam, Interfaith Minister and member
Pianist Pamela Nichols

16th June - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Stuart Deeks

23rd June - Summer Solstice Service
Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Joe Ward

30th June - Daniel Costley (Sevenoaks)
Pianist Kathy Pitt

Quiet Reflection Circle 7 - 8 pm, Thursday 13th June.

See below for more information.

Our Mission Statement

Brighton Unitarian Church provides a caring environment, with spiritual depth, without dogma, offering a community resource to diverse groups in congruence with our values, promoting a diversity of Unitarianism nationally, and with a concern for a more compassionate world.

Welcome from Jef

Welcome to our Newsletter for June. At the time of writing, the May Festival is approaching its last week and in June the city gets back to normal - although normal for Brighton is not quite the same as normal for other cities! Our wonderful lunchtime concerts continue through June and looking ahead to July we're hosting what promises to be a great evening: a fund-raising summer concert on the theme of Women of Note. Please see below for details about this and more. With all best wishes, Jef Jones, Lay Pastor

From the Lay Leader

Am I the only one who wants to turn off the news these days knowing that most of it will be bad? I've always believed that it is important to know what's happening in the world but sometimes I feel I can't take in any more news about global warming, religious and racial violence, polluted oceans or knife crime. Moreover the simplistic and polarised nature of today's political debate just gets me down. I'm aware of a temptation to settle into a default attitude of being a bit sad, a bit afraid and a bit hopeless.

There are certainly good reasons to be concerned about the state of the world in 2019 but I don't want to live in fear. Our authentic feelings of sorrow, fear and anger can easily sour into dread and misery, especially when we lose sight of the sacred dimension to our lives. When that happens gloominess and grumpiness can so easily become our way of meeting the world. They become what we think is the truth, a self-fulfilling prophecy if ever there was one. How can we experience beauty and joy if we barricade ourselves in with rage, anxiety and cynicism?

Living with hope is not about pretending that everything is all right or that nothing has changed. Grieving and lamenting are wholesome processes: we can honour those processes and then answer the call to live. Hope is about accepting that invitation. It is about choosing to be open to goodness and possibility and accepting our own power to make a difference - our divine potential. To live in hope is to know that we are alive in a world full of blessings, many of them so ordinary that we don't see them. These ordinary blessings will never be news and it might be that among them is our own capacity to change the world for the better. The changes we make need not be heroic and grand - in fact it may be that small acts of kindness have more real and lasting impacts than spectacular sacrifices. Whether our contribution to the world is ambitious or modest, to live in hope is to know that deep truth of ourselves: that in any one situation we can choose to be creative and powerful and kind.

Jef Jones

Restoration and Repair of Classical Façade of Brighton Unitarian Church End of Project Report

For most of 2018 Brighton Unitarian Church was hidden from view, shrouded in hoarding attached to scaffolding. Our classical portico, with its four pillars surmounted by a triangular pediment, had been found to be in serious danger of collapse. Thanks to support and funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund we were able to embark on the extensive renovation work required.

The HLF grant offer we received covered a little over half the eventual cost so intensive fund raising was required. We received wonderful support, with very generous donations from trusts and from individuals. The trusts included the National Churches Trust, the Sussex Historical Churches Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the John Gregson Trust, the Hackney Trust, and a number of Unitarian churches and chapels.

Now, thanks to excellent work by architect, Mark Anderson, of John D Clarke, Architects, and hard professional work by the builders of Malcolm Charles Contracts Limited, the work has been successfully completed. The Practical Completion Certificate was issued on 18th January 2019. Now, our much-loved portico is restored to its original appearance, recognised as an important part of the Regency architecture of New Road, Brighton.

Heart and Soul Gatherings In June

Heart and Soul gatherings are an opportunity for us to come together as a congregation during the week. There is a time of reflection and stillness and we go on to explore different aspects of our spiritual lives together. Everyone is welcome! If you would like to lead a gathering of Heart and Soul, or suggest a topic for discussion you are also welcome.

Gatherings this month will be at 7pm on 6th June, 20th June and 27th June. All are welcome.

Quiet Reflective Circle

Thursday, 13th June, 7pm

On Thursday 13th June we will gather for candle lighting and quiet reflection. As always 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!

Pride

Members of the church are delighted to announce that we will be walking in the Brighton Pride parade on Saturday 3rd August 2019. We are hoping to be joined by our Unitarian friends in the South East and maybe beyond.

Would you like to march or be involved in the planning of this really exciting celebration? We'd love to hear from you! Please contact Jennifer by email jensanders300@hotmail

Regular updates will come via the newsletter.

Tea and Toasties - a lunchtime cafe at BUC

We have been looking at ways in which we can offer support to Brighton's homeless and rough sleepers. There is a lack of resources at the weekend across the city and having visited Holland Rd Baptist Church in Hove, who provide a monthly cafe on a Saturday lunchtime we are keen to offer something similar at the BUC.

The cafe would run on a Saturday lunchtime for a couple of hours providing a simple hot lunch of cheese toasties, tea, cake in a clean safe and friendly environment offering a chance for a chat and support.

How can you help Tea and Toasties ?

Be part of the working party to get this idea up and running - we already have the support of Holland Rd Baptist Church and Greg Headley who is the local co-ordinator for homeless provision across the city

Become a volunteer for the cafe by:

Helping with planning

Offering time on a Friday eve or sat morning to help prepare sandwiches and set up the cafe

Being a volunteer at the cafe to help take orders or serve tea coffee and toasties

Help clear up at the end of the session

Offer to make some cake or biscuits

Do the shopping at the cash and carry

In the first instance we are hoping to run this as a pilot for 3 months . This is a wonderful opportunity to support vulnerable people in our community for a few hours each month.

Please get in touch with Jennifer Sanders if you can offer some time or would like to know more. (jensanders300@hotmail)

Thank you



June

7th: 'Favourites and Discoveries'. Soprano Mehreen Shah performs a variety of songs and arias, accompanied on piano by Joe Ward.

14th: Pianist Matthew McCombie presents a programme to include Liszt's second Hungarian Rhapsody and works by Chopin and Albéniz.

21st: The Kelleth Piano Trio - violinist Rachel Ellis, cellist Siriol Hugh-Jones and pianist Stephen Carroll-Turner - play the piano trio in E flat major D929 by Schubert.

28th: Nick Andrews is joined by his great friend and local boy made good, Dan James for a recital of cello and piano music, featuring Schubert's glorious "Arpeggione sonata".

Doors and coffee from 12 noon.

Concert 12.30 – 1.15 p.m.

Ticket £4 on the door.

Festival 2019

We had another really full and really exciting programme of events for the May Festival. I know members of the church enjoyed many of the events and performances, which bring new people into our church and raise revenue for us too. I'd like to thank all the performers for bringing their work to our church and as always I'd like to thank our venue manager Marion, caretaker Martin and cleaner Barbara for all their considerable work during such a very busy month.

Jef Jones

Fundraising

WOMEN OF NOTE *Summer* CONCERT

SATURDAY 20TH JULY 2019
3PM

FOLLOWED BY REFRESHMENTS

BRIGHTON UNITARIAN
CHURCH, NEW ROAD,
BRIGHTON BN1 1UF

FREE
WITH RETIRING COLLECTION
IN SUPPORT OF



BRIGHTON
UNITARIAN
CHURCH



Dates for Your Diary

Saturday 8th June, 10 a.m. Brighton & Hove Book Fayre

Come along to this exciting literary event connecting authors and readers, and celebrating books and the written word. It would be a great opportunity for everyone to discover books written by both traditionally published and independent authors - fiction, non-fiction, supernatural, horror, historical, LGBT, teen and children's books, plus much more! Admission is free!

The event is organised by local authors P.J. Blakey-Novis and Richard Gough-Buijs and P.J.'s wife Leanne, a graphic designer and co-founder of Red Cape Publishing.

Sunday 30th June, Brighton Chamber Choir, 3 p.m. A concert of choral dances and piano duets. Tickets £15 (£25 for two) from wegottickets.com. Tea and cake included.

Two messages about General Assembly Weekend Appeal (29-30 June 2019)

Message from Rev Celia Cartwright, President of the General Assembly of Free Christian and Unitarian Churches,

What does supporting the General Assembly mean to you? I hope it means a celebration of the mutual support we are able to offer our Unitarian and Free Christian Movement. I hope it is not just grudgingly the idea that we are supporting an office in London that we are not sure does much! The Assembly is us, all of us, every participating congregation, every member of those congregations, every minister to those congregations, every flower arranger, treasurer, chair of committees and the members, every trustee, tea and coffee maker, garden tender, cleaner of pews, welcomer at the door and chalice lighter. We are the Assembly and never is this so vividly experienced than at the General Assembly Meetings where business is discussed - our business, our financial status, our technological status, our status in the world in general and in particular. Where we can experience the many and beautifully varied things our Movement gets up to: RE Summer School, Peace Fellowship, Psychical Society, Earth Spirit, Unitarian Christian Association, Women's League and Women's Group, Historical Society, Penal Reform Group, Executive Committee, and much more.

One of the things that has long bothered me about our Unitarian and Free Christian Movement is that many members of our congregations often view their congregational autonomy. They see themselves as separate, not connected to anything other than their own congregation and perhaps to a sense of their own heritage and history. What they don't feel is connected to a wider web of Unitarian congregations. This saddens me, for without our connections we lose much of our identity.

In my life I have been a member or attender of, and a Minister or Lay Leader of, eleven congregations and Fellowship Groups, and have been preacher at many, many more. And I can tell you that there is a very definite connection. We are not substantially different from one another. We all care, we nurture, we love, we sing, we share, we seek to make a difference, we welcome seekers after their own truth, and we give. We give of our time and our experience. We give of our skills and our ideas. We give of our selves. As in all life, we have our troubles, our trouble-makers, our stick-in-the-muds and out-of-the-box thinkers, our difficulties and those who find ways out of such troubles, but with compassion and understanding these experiences of such things will make us stronger not weaker.

During this weekend I hope you will look outwards to the whole of this Assembly, and know yourselves as part of a something truly worth being part of. I hope you will be able to see this wonderful Assembly with its many voices, its many colours, its many ideas, its many views as something to be proud of, as something to be shared in. Together our voice will be a voice that continues to bring rational, liberal, tolerant and loving change in our society.

Please support the GA Weekend Appeal!

With your financial support, the General Assembly will: progress the agreed "Next Steps" priorities, develop ministry and local leadership education and training, raise our profile nationally, organise the Annual Meetings, promote religious education and develop the national youth programme, provide resources and advice for congregations, support The Inquirer, support the 2020 Derby Unity growth project, assist congregations in improving Safeguarding, promote social justice and a sustainable and fairer world.

Please send cheques to 'GA of Unitarian & FCC' at Unitarian HQ, Essex Hall, 1 Essex St, London, WC2R 3HY

Message from Elizabeth Slade, Chief Officer

'Leadership is listening to what is most precious in other people.'

Jean Vanier, theologian and founder of L'Arche communities for people with and without learning disabilities

September 10, 1928 – May 7, 2019

This quote from Jean Vanier, who sadly died this week, jumped out at me as being very fitting to the role of the General Assembly. We provide leadership as a central organisation to our movement, by listening to what is most precious in our congregations and members. To me, it seems clear that we must also be listening to those who are not yet members, and have not yet entered our doors if our denomination is to thrive.

Before this year's annual meetings – my first – I hadn't heard of the GA Weekend. I suppose I must have come across it when I was Secretary at my congregation, but I know at that point my focus was much more about the community directly around me, rather than the communities across the country, and the mysterious General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

It's interesting to reflect on how my perspective has broadened since then, seeing beyond to the wider movement as my engagement has deepened.

My connection with my own congregation remains strong. It feels like a sort of home – turning up to friendly faces, feeling instant belonging, and being able to offer welcome to new faces, to share that sense of belonging with others.

When I think about the national movement, the feeling is different. There is still a sense of wanting to offer that sense of home to new people – I know that it is something that many people are missing. Beyond that there is also the feeling of wanting to know one's neighbours – that in all our congregations we are collectively doing the same thing, even if the precise way we do it might differ between church and chapel and meeting house across the districts. That sense of being a collective feels all the more important knowing that showing up to be part of a congregation is something of a niche interest in Britain today.

And there is a feeling of life in being part of something larger than ourselves – individually or as a congregation. This is felt very tangibly at the Annual Meetings of course – not just in the experience of having over 350 people in worship together, but also seeing the threads that cross and link between all the individuals and congregations and societies, whether the stitches have been there for decades or are freshly made. The strength in our movement is made up of these individual connections that we are all part of forming.

And that's what brought me to be doing this role – I feel the benefits of an individual belonging to a congregation; I know the strength in us being part of a wider collective; and I can see the possibilities for our culture overall if our movement grows, if we get our message out to more people, and share that sense of home.

So for this year's GA Weekend, I invite you to consider those different levels of engagement with our denomination – the personal, the collective, and the societal. During my induction, and handover from Derek McAuley I've been learning just how much the GA does at each of those levels. This is of course through the work of the talented and committed GA staff, but

also through the formidable committees and panels and individual volunteers who keep all the cogs turning. I see the GA's role as listening to what is most precious in all those people, to use Vanier's phrase, in order to provide the support and leadership that will enable us all to thrive individually, collectively, and societally.

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