



Brighton
Unitarians

November 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 off your phones before the start of the service.

03rd November - John Naish, Member, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Kathy Pitt

10th November - Remembrance Service
Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Organist Maurice Rigby

17th November - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Joe Ward

24th November - Stephen Crowther, Lay Pastor, Hastings Unitarian Church
Pianist Stuart Deeks

Quiet Reflection Circle 7 - 8 pm, Thursday 14th November 2019.

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 November.

You will find below several requests. If you would like to donate a book to our library in honour of a loved one, please read my piece below. If you are interested in joining the church committee please see Jen's piece below. If you would like to contribute to our Tea and Toasties project for homeless people, please see Trisha's piece below. If you would like to contribute any bric a brac or unwanted items to charity then see the short article below too.

Finally, one last request. As usual our Service of Remembrance on Nov 10th will begin with a two minutes silence. Please do arrive in good time for this.

With all best wishes, Jef Jones

From the Lay Leader

Unitarians are notoriously bookish. If, according to an old Islamic term, Jews and Christians are *People of the Book*, perhaps Unitarians should be called People of the Books. Of course it is not compulsory but a lot of Unitarians read an awful lot!

My own religious journey began with a small book titled *Natural Grace, Dialogues On Grace and Science* by Rupert Sheldrake and Matthew Fox. I wouldn't quite say that reading it changed my life, but it did open up a world of new ideas to me. Both Rupert Sheldrake, a biologist and Matthew Fox, a theologian, have worked for most of their lives outside of the mainstream in their chosen fields. Their little book of conversations introduced me to new and original ways of thinking about religion. It enabled me to begin thinking in terms that had not featured much in my life until that point ~ terms such as *praise, soul* and *prayer* for example. This book might not have changed my life but I am hugely grateful for it.

Since then other writers have shaped my religious life. The scope and depth of Karen Armstrong's majestic surveys of religious history have taught me to be wary of ever making assumptions or generalisations about faith. In books such as *The Case for God* and *A History of God*, she is scrupulously fair, learned and very readable. Mary Midgely's philosophical works on science and culture have led me to understand that reason and feeling are not separate or opposite. In *Science and Poetry*, for example, she asserts that the kind of wisdom we can derive from poetry, art and theology is as valid a way of understanding the world as scientific information. Like Karen Armstrong her writing is insightful and accessible.

And then there are the anthologies; Roger Housden's collection of poems by the Christian mystics, *For Lovers of God Everywhere* is a book I have returned to over and over again. A few years ago our member Grace Blindell gave me two wonderful and diverse collections of poems and prayers, originating in California, *Earth Prayers* and *Life Prayers*. To mark the beginning of my work as Lay Pastor, the late Rev Jane Barraclough gave me a copy of *Soul Food*, edited by Neil Astley and Pamela Robertson Pearce. It is subtitled *Nourishing Poems for Starved Minds* and it has been a blessing in my life. It is full of wonderful and inspiring poetry from around the world, both contemporary and classical.

Our church library has some venerable and ancient books in it but very few contemporary works. Over the next few months I plan to sort out some of the more obscure volumes to be stored in the gallery. I wondered, though, if you would like to donate a book which has enriched or inspired your spiritual life? You might like to contribute such a book to the church and dedicate it in honour of someone you would like to memorialise. Such a book doesn't have to be a work of theology...it might be a book of poetry, philosophy, natural history or simply any work that has touched your life in some meaningful way.

If you would like to contribute a book do let me know, just in case someone else has already donated it. If you would like to give to the church in this way but are not sure which book you might choose do have a chat with me about it.

Jef Jones.

By Karen Armstrong

A History of God, (Vintage, 1999)

The Case for God, (Vintage, 2010)

The Battle for God, Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam (HarperCollins, 2010)

By Mary Midgely

Evolution as Religion, (Routledge, 1985)

Science and Poetry (Routledge, 2001)

The Solitary Self (Acumen, 2010)

Are You an Illusion (Acumen, 2014)

Natural Grace - A Dialogue on Science and Spirituality, Rupert Sheldrake and Matthew Fox (Bloomsbury, 1997)

Earth Prayers from Around the World, *365 Prayers, Poems and Invocations Honouring the Earth*, ed. E. Roberts and E. Amidon (Harper, 1991)

Life Prayers, *365 Prayers to Celebrate the Human Journey*, ed. E. Roberts and E. Amidon (Harper, 1996)

Soul Food, *Nourishing Poems for Starved Minds*, ed. N. Astley and P.R. Pearce (Bloodaxe Books, 2007)

For Lovers of God Everywhere, *Poems of the Christian Mystics*, ed. R. Housden (Hay House, 2007)

Your Committee Needs You!

Following Jef's encouraging piece in last month's newsletter, it's time to gird our loins!

As Jef highlighted: “our church can only function because each year some of its members volunteer to join the Committee and meet each month to oversee the maintenance and use of the building, our finances and our paid staff and volunteers.” There are discussions to be had and decisions to be made, but – as Unitarians - we’re a nice bunch and support each other. The Committee is made up of between 6 and 9 people.

So, please do seriously consider if you could contribute to our church by becoming a Committee member. Or perhaps there’s someone else you think would be good in this role.

If you’d like a general chat about what serving on the Committee involves, then do talk to Jef or to any of the current committee members (photos on the wall by the kitchen!).

The Formal Bits:

To nominate a person for election to the Committee please fill out the nomination form on the website (‘Community’ tab) or use a paper copy from the foyer.

Note that both the person nominated and the person nominating need to have been a church member for 12 months.

Please submit nomination forms by 15 December 2019. Elections will take place at the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 26 January 2020 after the service.

Heart and Soul Gatherings in November

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 on Thursdays at 7 pm on 7th, 21st and 28th November. All are welcome.

An Update on Tea and Toasties

As many of you know we have been thinking of setting up our own tea and toasties cafe one Saturday a month. So following Jennifer Sanders example I went with Jo and Julia to the Baptist Church on Holland Road to see how they organise their lunch time offering to the homeless, needy and lonely. It was a very very well organised event. Steve, the man who organises it and who was extremely helpful to us learning the ropes, is very keen that we also offer a sheltered place in the winter for the homeless to have a warm place to eat lunch and have some care taken of them. They were fortunate in having many volunteers and an extremely well

equipped place to run their little cafe. They can offer far more than we can given that they have a games room and a shower. The large hall with numbered tables were invitingly set out and many of the sandwiches prepared and labeled waited in the kitchen to be toasted when the orders were sent in by the designated waiters, Jo, Julia and myself in this instance. Each guest was greeted as they came in and given a name tag. In fact we all wore name tags which is such a good ice breaker. They offer a choice of filling for the toasties (as not everyone wanted cheese, ham, onions and tomato) and cake to follow with tea or coffee almost on tap. The guests were also given a little goody bag with fruit and biscuits etc when they left. The two hours passed so quickly and really was enjoyable. If you are thinking of helping with our plan to help offer something similar please do let any of the committee members know. And if possible go to volunteer at the Baptist Church on Holland Road one Sunday. Steve has happily agreed to come to talk to those of us interested Unitarians after church one Sunday. We will keep you posted. So watch this space and thank you

Trisha

Invest in Peace

The Invest in Peace event has been touring the country over the last 2 years. Invest in Peace provides the opportunity to hear the stories of two peace activists, one Palestinian and one Israeli. This event is organised by *Solutions Not Sides* and is supported by *The Board of Deputies of British Jews* and *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland*. Senior representatives from these two communal organisations speak at the event.

The Invest in Peace event is coming to a Central Brighton location on 18th November 2019 at 7pm and will be jointly hosted by Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue and Dorset Gardens Methodist Church. Tickets are free and are bookable via *Eventbrite*. After registering for tickets *Eventbrite* will send you details of the venue.

<http://peacebrighton.eventbrite.co.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/700373330480534/>

Quiet Reflective Circle

Thursday, 14th November, 7pm

On Thursday 14th November 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!



November

1st: Pianist Ivan Hovorun will play Ludwig van Beethoven's, Piano Sonata No. 29 in B \flat major, Op 106, Hammerklavier.

8th: Composer and guitarist Matthew Sear performs a selection of music from around the world. Includes music by Lauro, Satie, Albeniz, Heitor Villa-Lobos and original compositions.

15th: The LIPS quintet is delighted to return to Brighton Unitarian Church for the sixth time in four years. Once again we shall be bringing an action-packed programme of playfully virtuosic contemporary wind quintet music.

22nd: 'Odes to Autumn'. A recital of opera and Lieder with works by Respighi, Donizetti, Britten, Copland, Duparc and Berlioz, celebrating melancholic folk elements in English, French and Italian music. Ingunn Gyda Hrafnkelsdóttir and Veronika Rettich (sopranos), Siobhan Mooney (mezzo-soprano) and Joe Ward (piano).

29th: Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter and a soprano sings - Olive Murray sings a varied and entertaining selection of songs encompassing the four seasons accompanied by Christopher Foreman.

Doors and coffee at 12 noon. Concert 12.30 - 1.15 p.m. Suggested donation £4.

Fundraising

Christmas is definitely coming and Christine Clark-Lowes' up-cycled Christmas cards will be on sale in the Church from the beginning of November. Please do have a look through her collection. Every purchase adds to our Building Appeal Fund.

Once again our thanks to Christine for all the work she does in creating these unique and lovely cards.

Request for items to be recycled

Our member Anne brings the beautiful flowers for our seasonal services and raises 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. 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!"

To keep up-to-date with all that is happening at Brighton Unitarian visit our website www.brightonunitarian.org.uk or follow us on:

Twitter: @BrightUnitarian

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BrightonUnitarian/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/brightonunitarianchurch/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT1m35I-Urvbyq2AsRRsF9g>