



Brighton
Unitarians

July 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.

7th July - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Kathy Pitt

14th July - Jennifer Sanders, Interfaith Minister
Pianist Pamela Nichols

21st July - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Stuart Deeks

28th July - Rev. Martin Whitell, London and District Minister
Pianist Joe Ward

Quiet Reflection Circle 7 - 8 pm, Thursday 11th July.

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 July. It's packed with information about all kinds of positive and inspiring events.

I've written in my piece below about some of the challenges and rewards involved in developing and maintaining a regular spiritual practice. On Saturday 31st August I'll be running a one-day workshop looking at this theme - how can we grow and maintain a regular practice. The workshop will last from 10am - 5pm. Then on the afternoon of Sunday 1st September I'll be running a workshop for anyone wishing to lead prayers or meditations in service and workshops. If you are interested in either of these please let me know- everyone is welcome.

From the Lay Leader

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? Psalm 42, Verse 2.

Lots of people have some sense of the spiritual aspect of life, a sense of depth perhaps, or a feeling that there is a dimension to existence that cannot be easily described. This is the case for many Unitarians but it begs a question. Having arrived at this feeling what do we then do? How do we live and where do we find our guidance? How can we grow our relationship with what is sacred to us? How can we be changed? For many Unitarians, attending church and thinking about how we can be our best selves is enough. Some of us, however, want to deepen our spiritual lives: some of us want to develop our relationship with what the Psalmist calls the *living God*. We want to bring the divine into our everyday life. Developing a regular spiritual practice is one way of doing this.

That said, a large number of Unitarians believe that the ultimate truth is mysterious. For sure we come to it with our reasoning minds; we investigate, explore and debate ideas about the divine but we accept that it will always be, in some way or other, unknowable. We accept that we won't ever know the whole of it and this surely must make prayer problematic. How can we pray when we don't know for certain to what or to whom we are praying? Speaking for myself, I would say that this kind of intellectual questioning is an important part of my faith but only one part of it. Praying is, for me, another way of knowing, and if I had waited until I had a perfect, mental concept of God before I prayed, I would have waited a long time. As it is, like many Unitarians prayer has become a rich, challenging and creative feature of my spiritual life.

Of course prayer is not the only kind of spiritual practice. Some people find meditation, contemplation, reading sacred texts or chanting suits them better. Some find spiritual nourishment in simple stillness, in listening to music, or in getting outside and being in nature. Anyone of us might find that some combination of these appeals to us at different times in our lives. Even so, a regular practice of any sort will, at some point, be hard and will require commitment and discipline. It must also require sacrifice. Like playing an instrument or learning a new language, developing a regular practice can often feel dull, unrewarding and tiring. This inevitable sense of frustration might remind us of the original meaning of the word *sacrifice*. It didn't mean simply to give something up but to make something sacred or holy by doing so. In spiritual practice we sometimes surrender a sense of ease and convenience in order to know better what the Psalmist calls *the living God*.

I think it's healthy to be realistic about the challenges of spiritual practice but I hope,

that in doing so, I haven't put you off! The benefits of a regular practice are varied. We might discover a sense of stillness, a way of being truly alive in the present moment. We might find ourselves able to see more clearly who we really are, how we make decisions and what our choices mean for ourselves and others. In spiritual practice we can develop our capacity for compassion: for ourselves, for the people around us and the wider world. Calling ourselves into the eternal presence we might find comfort and perspective or we might find ourselves feeling refreshed, inspired and challenged. Breathing meditation is one of the most simple spiritual activities and it can centre and calm our noisy, anxious minds. Another simple practice is to count ones blessings at the end of day - some people write them down and after a while report that they feel more positive, and more satisfied with their lives.

If you don't have a regular practice I'd like to encourage you to begin one. If you do and are struggling with it I wish you courage and hope. Finally I'd like to invite you to a workshop I'm running at the church on Saturday August 31st - details are below. And finally if you have a practice of prayer and can't come on that day please pray for us as we explore the life-enhancing gifts of a regular spiritual practice.

Two Workshops for the Autumn

Exploring Spiritual Practice
Saturday August 31st 10am - 5pm

A one day workshop exploring how we can develop and maintain a spiritual practice. At this workshop we'll explore two practices in particular - prayer and meditation - and how we can integrate them into our lives. There is no correct way to pray or meditate but there are useful habits and approaches that can help us deepen our spiritual lives.

Leading Prayers and Meditation in Church
Sunday Sept 1st 1.30 - 4.30 pm

A skills workshop for anyone interested in leading prayers or meditations in workshops and services, or for anyone who already does this and would like to develop their skills. We will practice in the church and you are invited to bring a short prayer or meditation you might like to work with.

Both of these workshops are free and will be led by Jef Jones at Brighton Unitarian Church. If you would to book a place please email buc@brightonunitarian.org.uk

Heart and Soul Gatherings In July

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 4th July and 25th July. All are welcome.

Quiet Reflective Circle

Thursday, 11th July, 7pm

On Thursday 11th July 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!



July

5th: Violinist Fumi Otsuki and Pianist Sarah Kershaw. "Fjords and Fiddles". With a programme that will include Edvard Grieg; Gabriel Faure; James MacMillan; Ralph Vaughan Williams and Frank Bridge

12th 'On wings of song'. Soprano Alice Bishop with a varied and delightful programme exploring the theme of 'Birds, Bees and Butterflies' and including songs by Brahms, Grieg, Mendelssohn, Strauss, Faure and Debussy.

19th Piano recital by Ingrid Cusido with works by Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and Granados.

26th The John Lake Trio plays Camilo. A concert of compositions by the legendary Michel Camilo. Matt Casterton on bass, Simon Cambers on drums and John Lake on piano.

Doors and coffee from 12 noon.

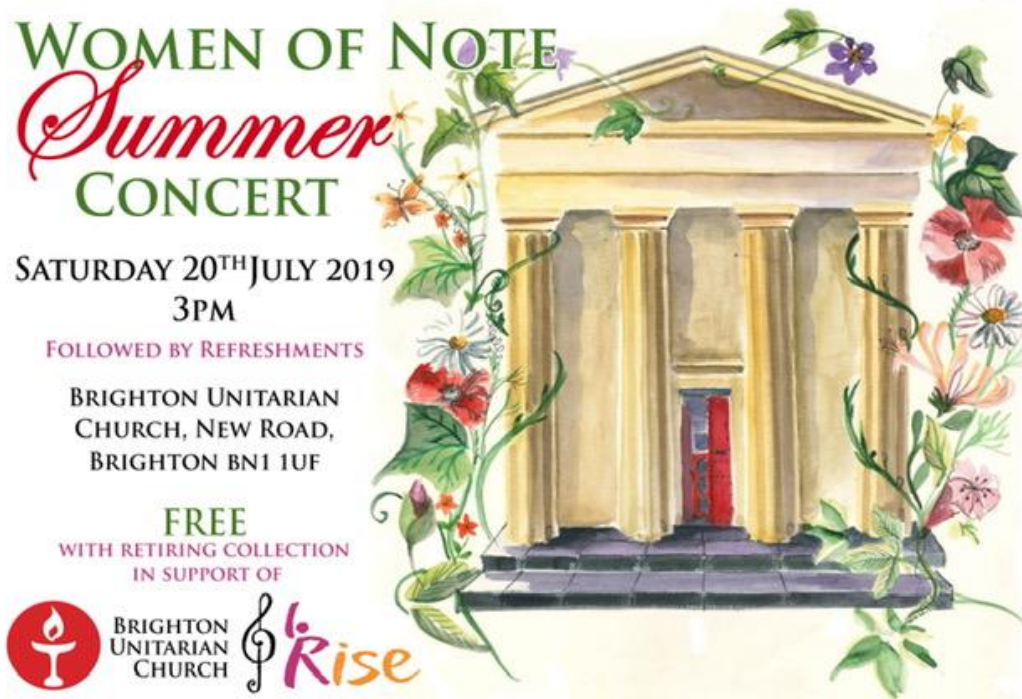
Concert 12.30 – 1.15 p.m.

Ticket £4 on the door.

Fund Raising

Up-Cycled Cards

If you have any cards that Christine Clarke-Lowes could up-cycle and re-make into beautiful greetings cards please do bring them into the church office. All proceeds from the sale of these cards goes to the Building Appeal Fund.



Women of Note Summer Concert Saturday 20 July, 3pm

Women of Note, a Brighton-based choir, are performing a summer concert at Brighton Unitarian Church to raise funds for RISE and for the church. The ten-strong group sing multi-part arrangements of music covering all styles and genres.

In the six years since Women of Note formed we have raised over £4,000 for charities including The Smile Train, Grace Eyre, Sussex Nightstop and Blind Veterans UK.

Brighton Unitarian Church is such a warm and welcoming venue to perform in and we are delighted to be raising funds to help maintain and restore this beautiful building. We will be singing for an hour, with music ranging from Russian folk song to popular classics, medieval early music to show tunes, classical to a cappella, and then we invite you to join us for tea and cakes afterwards. We don't charge people to come to our concerts but if you have enjoyed our singing we do ask that you please make a donation as you leave.

This year our chosen charity is RISE – a Brighton-based organisation helping people affected by domestic abuse, offering practical help ranging from direct advice to refuge accommodation for those whose lives are at risk. You can read about the charity and the important work they do at: <https://www.riseuk.org.uk>

Women of Note's Musical Director, Cara Barseghian, a local professional singer and choir leader, joined us in 2017. As well as leading several groups, she runs workshops in the community for all ages, from babies to octogenarians and beyond! Cara performs as a solo recitalist, is one third of satirical cabaret trio *The Cocktail Party* and is a member of Early Music choirs *A Bunch of Daphs* and *The Harmonia Trio*.

Accompanist Zhanna Kemp, a frequent performer at the Brighton Unitarian Church, joined us in 2018, taking over from another BUC regular, Joe Ward. Zhanna is originally from St Petersburg in Russia is frequently to be heard on the stages of East Sussex, and has performed at the Brighton Fringe many times.

Highlights of our six years together as Women of Note include performing in a brand new rock opera *The Reincarnation of Trim Tab Jim* in the Brighton Fringe (we were particularly pleased with the Fringe Guru's four star review that referred to us as "fallen angels"!) which we later took to Union Chapel, London. Last November we marched with Caroline Lucas, MP, singing Ethel Smyth's *March of the Women* to open the *Vote 100: Women Composers* concert at St George's, Kemptown during Parliament Week. Since then we seem to have cornered the rent-a-suffragette-choir market, being invited to attend local blue plaque unveilings and receptions to sing suffragette anthems. We are regularly booked by local Women's Institute and church groups, as well as performing in local care homes and for weddings and parties.

To find out more about us please see our website: <http://womenofnote.org.uk/>
You can also find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter [@WONBrighton](#) or email: womeonofnotesing@gmail.com

NOTE - if you can bring cake, either home-made or shop bought, please let Fanny Tulley know in advance. Thank you.

Dates for Your Diary

Unitarianism in the Great 9th Century Novel
Saturday 6th July, 2 - 5 p.m.

Hastings Unitarian Church, South Terrace
Led by Valerie Purton, Emeritus Professor of Victorian literature at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge.

This workshop will examine the place of Unitarian thinking in that great vehicle for social reform, the Nineteenth-century Novel, and in the work of three radical reforming novelists, Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell. Gaskell was the wife of a Unitarian minister; Eliot's passionate belief in recognising 'the otherness of the other person' seems a recognisably Unitarian impulse; while Dickens praised Unitarianism as 'that religion which has sympathy for men of every creed and ventures to pass judgement on none.' The power of the Nineteenth-century Novel, as I will hope to show, depended heavily on the power of Unitarianism.

All welcome. Participation by donation

For more information, please contact: Stephen Crowther
tel: 07791120387 email: srcrowther52@hotmail.com

Interfaith Group Prayers
First Wednesday of every month 6-7pm 2019
Brighton Baha'i Centre, 19 Stanford Avenue, Brighton, BN1 6AQ,
United Kingdom

Many feel the need to express feelings of solidarity and support for those communities that have suffered at the hands of terrorists and political groups. The IFCG holds monthly peace vigils at the Baha'i Centre at 19, Stanford Avenue, Brighton BN1 6GA on the first Wednesday of the month from 6 to 7 pm. You are warmly welcome to join us. Upcoming dates: 3rd July, 7th Aug, 4 Sept, 2nd Oct, 6th Nov, 4th Dec.

The Tree of Life: Celebrating Together

Sunday 8 September 2019, 2 – 6pm
Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue
6 Lansdowne Road, Hove BN3 1FF

Free entry, all welcome.

Please register in advance via members@interfaithcontactgroup.com

In response to recent terrorist assaults against Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities, the Brighton & Hove Interfaith Contact Group is dedicating an afternoon to bringing together community groups across Brighton and Hove to express solidarity with synagogues, mosques and churches across the world that have been attacked during the past year and to explore the positive images associated with the Tree of Life in different faith traditions. The afternoon will include commemoration of those killed in terrorist attacks from Pittsburgh, USA to Christchurch, New Zealand to Colombo, Sri Lanka to Florida USA. We also wish to

celebrate the work of many within our own community who work tirelessly all the time to help people thrive together.

For more details of this inspiring event please go to
interfaithcontactgroup.com/news-and-events/

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-Urvbyg2AsRRsF9g>