



Brighton
Unitarians

August 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.

04th August - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Stuart Deeks

11th August - Stephen Crowther, Lay Pastor, Hastings Unitarians
Pianist Pamela Nichols

18th August - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Joe Ward

25th August - Anthea Ballam, Interfaith Minister and Member
Pianist Kathy Pitt

Quiet Reflection Circle 7 - 8 pm, Thursday 8th August 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

Most members of our community will have heard that I have recently decided to retire from my post as Lay Pastor at the end of September in 2020. Making this decision has been both a sweet and sad process. Of course I will be sad to be leaving in just over a year's time, but coming to this decision has underlined for me

what a great privilege it has been to do this work since May 2010. Thinking back over the last nine years has reminded me of the value of our spiritual community in the hearts and souls of its members, and in the centre of our city.

We do not generally think of Unitarian churches as having a mission. We think of 'missional' language and ideas as belonging to evangelical Christian churches. Even so our mission statement, now included, as you'll see above, in every newsletter, says clearly and confidently that we do have a mission to preserve and promote a space of spiritual depth, diversity, and welcome in Brighton, and to work toward a kinder world. These positive, religious values have been a blessing in my life since I first came to Church in 2001. I do hope they will continue to be just such a blessing in your life too.

From the Committee

You will have heard by now that our Lay Pastor, Jef Jones, will be leaving his post at the end of September 2020.

Jef's departure is over a year away, but we'd like to reassure the congregation that we will be supported throughout this time of change by the District Minister, Rev Martin Whitell, and by the General Assembly of Unitarian Churches. There is a lot of guidance and organisational wisdom for our church community to draw on. In due time we will, of course, be opening a series of conversations with members about our future spiritual leadership.

In the meantime we'd like to thank Jef for all his work for the church and wish him well for the future.

From the Lay Leader

*I can't stop
my gratitude, which includes, dear reader,
you, for staying here with me,
for moving your lips just so as I speak.
Here is a cup of tea.*

from Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude, Ross Gay

You don't need me to tell you that we are living through unpredictable and unsettling times. I don't just mean the obvious earthquakes wrought by Donald Trump in the US and by the Brexit referendum in the UK. Many of the national institutions which have made our country a generally safe and decent place seem beleaguered. Public libraries, the BBC, the NHS, the police and perhaps even parliamentary democracy itself no longer feel like reliable features of national life. The international scene is also worrying: the United Nations is stretched to its limits by mass migration from war zones and the threat of new wars. Transnational corporations and social media are undermining democracy. And there is urgent question of climate change and species

loss. These are darker days than usual.

At times like this there is a temptation to look to easy gods for easy answers. The certainties of political and religious dogma are always appealing. The leadership of authoritarians and demagogues excuses us from looking at the inequality and prejudice in our own lives. The world of entertainment, celebrity and reality television are useful distractions: but they distract us from the truth; our bitterly divided country could hardly be described as a Love Island.

These dangers are real and present so it might seem a little fey to be talking about joy, and gratitude. However taking time to notice beauty and goodness somehow feels more important than ever. Indeed English professor and poet Ross Gay gently but passionately insists that we do exactly that. He says we should do so not just because of the turmoil we are living through, but because our lives are always more precarious than we imagine, and more precious than we can know. In poem after poem he celebrates, appreciates, rejoices and gives thanks. His work challenges the idea that joy is a privilege or a distraction and affirms it as a necessity. His commitment to joy leads him to look very closely at the world, and without being naive or foolish, he finds beauty, delight and kindness there. This might not bring down the despots, clean up the oceans or resolve global disputes but at the very least it reminds us of the dearness of life itself, and of human goodness too. Moments of joy lift up our spirits, lighten our load and keep our hearts and minds open. They might even inspire our courage and strengthen our resolve to make the world a more just and peaceful place.

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 August

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 7pm on 15th August, 22nd August and 29th August. All are welcome.

Quiet Reflective Circle

Thursday, 8th August, 7pm

On Thursday 8th August 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!



August

There will be no lunchtime concerts in August. We resume on the Friday 6th September with an exciting and varied programme that will delight and entertain us all.

The Friday Lunchtime Team hope that you have an enjoyable summer and look forward to seeing you all again for the new season in September.

Fund Raising

Women of Note Summer Concert

Women of Note were a delight. They were professional, without taking themselves too seriously, and they and their audience loved cake. What's not to like?

They sang us a variety of beautifully arranged songs, some by one of the choir members who is a talented all-round musician. We heard an eclectic mix, from Russian to Pop, all in glorious harmony. They were down to nine women, but they pulled together as only true professionals can.

We entertained a guest of honour, The Mayor, Councillor Alex Phillips and her little boy, who is very cute!

Tea and cake afterwards was awesome. Everyone who came loved it.

Thank you to the BUC volunteers who made or bought cake, it was gorgeous. Thank you for giving your time to help us raise some funds.

The donations totaled £530, of which we received 50%, shared equally with RISE. That's £265!

A great effort, and a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

Dates for Your Diary

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: 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-Urvbyq2AsRRsF9g>