



Brighton
Unitarians



December & January Newsletter

Sunday Services

Please note: services are at 11 a.m. All are welcome.

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

02nd December - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Stuart Deeks

09th December - Jo O'Sullivan, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Pamela Nickels

16th December - Carol Service
Francis Clark-Lowes, Brighton Unitarian Church
Organist Maurice Rigby

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

30th December - Rev. Jennifer Sanders, Interfaith Minister
Pianist Kathy Pitt

06th January - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Stuart Deeks

13th January - Rev Anthea Ballam, Interfaith Minister
Pianist Pamela Nickels

20th January - Rev Susie Courtauld, Interfaith Minister
Pianist Joe Ward

27th January - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Kathy Pitt

Quiet Reflection Circles 7-8 pm, 13th December and 10th January

Please note our Annual Meeting is on Sunday 27th January 2019 after the Sunday Morning service.

Welcome from Jef

Welcome to our packed double Newsletter for December and January. This issue of our newsletter is filled with thank-you's!

As most readers will know, the repair works to our portico are very nearly complete and I would especially like to thank our Treasurer Phillida Simpson and our Administrator Marion Bance for their commitment to bringing this about. Without their dedication we would not have been able to afford the work or see it through. Phillida and Marion have spent many long hours on the complex, delicate task of applying for grants, filling in long and demanding application forms. They have been to many, many meetings; with representatives from the Heritage Lottery Fund and with architects, surveyors and builders. They have put in hour after hour, day after day, of hard graft on this project. We owe Phillida and Marion a great debt of gratitude.

I would also like to thank the film-maker Sarah West and the photographer Tony Tree who have used their superb skills to document the process we have been through, and helped us to see and share with our community and the wider community of which we are a part. I'd like to thank Sophie Wilson for her great work publicising and promoting the church in the press.

Thanks are also due to our friend Joe Ward who has organised a wonderful Gala Concert to raise funds for our church. You can read more about this below.

Finally our Grand Re-Opening was a great night. Thank you Fanny, Pete, Martin, Phillida, Marion and all our volunteers and supporters for all the work you put into making the evening so special.

Grand Re-Opening of Brighton Unitarian Church

Our Grand Re-Opening event was a great success and although the stonework at the front of the building is not quite finished, nobody noticed thanks to Ali Bangoura and his drummers. Inside, invited guests enjoyed canapes and bubbles and the Reverend Martin Whitell, our District Minister, eloquently guided us through the evening and presented a film made by our member, Sarah West, which charted the restoration work from up on the scaffolding! A photograph exhibition, with images taken by our friend Tony Tree also gave everyone a wonderful insight into what has been achieved. A very well deserved presentation was made to treasurer, Phillida Simpson, acknowledging all the amazing work she has done to ensure the future of this wonderful building for us and for the whole city.

It was a very positive and uplifting evening and the opportunity was taken to say thank you to all the people who have supported us through the restoration work, and we cannot say it enough, THANK YOU!

To learn more about the restoration project please watch this mini documentary, filmed behind the hoarding and up on the scaffolding, following the work to restore this 200 year old building. <https://vimeo.com/302808564>

Gala Concert

The repairs to the portico and pillars are now complete and the last remaining pieces to be replaced are the cracked flagstones in the front of the building under the arches. The workmen are carefully fitting new Portland Stone slabs, in time for our Gala Concert on December 8th. We are still raising funds to pay the contractor's bills and all proceeds from our Gala Concert will go to the Brighton Unitarian Building Appeal Fund.

The concert which has been organised by our very good friend and wonderful musician, Joe Ward, will feature music from musicians and vocalists we know well. The selection of beautiful songs, arias and duets is taken from a repertoire including Mozart, Schumann, Manuel De Fallo and many others. Please come along and join us, doors open at 7pm.

From the Lay Leader

As I write a storm is blowing around our city. It's one of those November storms, not especially cold but wet and very windy. The air is full of leaves and noise and movement and I rather like the energy of it.

It feels like the whole world is tempestuous at the moment and that is a hard storm to enjoy. There is tension within and between nations. Xenophobia and prejudice seem to be on the increase more or less everywhere. There are some leaders whose approach is based on thoughtful listening and a positive, generous view of human beings, but these are not generally the leaders winning elections.

Each year as Christmas approaches I find myself thinking of Mary and the turbulent circumstances in which she gave birth to her son. Herod was an insecure and brutal king, Israel was occupied and a Roman census had forced Mary to travel to her husband's hometown of Bethlehem. She had her baby and a group of shepherds, who had been told by an angel that her son was the Messiah, were wild with excitement. They rushed around the town telling everyone what had happened. In the Gospel of Luke Mary, seems to enjoy this moment, but quietly; *But Mary treasured these things and pondered them in her heart.* (Luke 2:19)

I know Mary is problematic to the modern reader: her story that of a real woman who is really pregnant, is not recorded in the Bible. Yet there is something touching about her inwardness, about the way she keeps her own counsel as the world rages on around her. She is the still centre of the Christmas story.

In times such as ours places and practices of stillness are precious. I am grateful to our congregation and our staff at Brighton Unitarian Church for working so hard over the last few years. I'm moved by our collective insistence that our church - a place of quiet contemplation, open minds and mutual respect - matters enough to be worth maintaining. We have secured a place for the city centre that is not primarily about entertainment, profit or pleasure but whose focus is the inner life. There is something hugely encouraging and positive about what we have achieved.

I wish you a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Jef Jones

Quiet Reflective Circle

13th December and 10th January, 7pm

On the second Thursday of each month we gather for candle lighting and quiet reflection. This starts at 7pm and lasts 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 Evening Gatherings in 2019

Six people responded to my invitation to meet on Thursday 22nd November to explore the possibility of holding weekly spiritual gatherings in the church. There was a very positive and creative quality to our meeting and we are holding one more meeting to do some further planning. We are planning these gatherings to be held on Thursday evenings and to be led by members of the congregation. Meetings will be publicised in church notices and by email. Watch this space!

Welcome Jen and Mark

Two of our regular attenders have become members of the church, so welcome to the membership, Jen and Mark. I asked them both if they'd like to share with us what the church means to them and their responses are below:-

I greatly value our church as a place of light and stillness where I can explore connection to the mystery and wonder of existence. It provides an environment where I can explore and honour this mystery without prescription or judgement. Our church is also a community of amazing people and gives companionship on the search for meaning and the desire to live a better life.

Jen Barton

I have been attending the Unitarian church in Brighton for more than 5 years. I'm not sure what drew me in but I was surprised at what I found. I would suggest that despite the traditional layout and structures of Unitarianism, the ethos and attitude can be quite radical.

I think what made me stay was how accepting the congregation was. No question about what I believed in or whether I agreed but just a kind encouragement. There was no sense of me having to fit in or compromise my self or my own belief system. I enjoy being gently challenged, educated and inspired.

I realised this summer that not only am I a religious being - as opposed to simply spiritual - but that my religious world has to find its roots in the world, and has to include different faiths and perspective. No one place has all the answers to my questions and I suppose that could make me polytheistic. I would call myself religious because I can't carry out a practice of connecting with the invisible, ancient, sacred otherness of life without help and guidance, and without ritual and community. And this practice is crucial to my well being, providing a sense of belonging in a world where I can so easily get lost.

I decided to become a member because I realised that the Unitarian church is worthy of some commitment. To step a little closer to that which provides me with inner nourishment. I have come to value the church and the community and it has found a place within the religious infrastructure of my life. By becoming a member I hope to invest more of myself into the church and engage more fully to the practice of Unitarianism.

Mark Denson

If you are interested in becoming a member of the church please do ask me about this. Joining our church membership gives you the right to vote at our Annual Meeting, at which our church committee is elected. For most people their membership expresses a deepening commitment to our church community and Unitarian values.

Jef Jones

Church Services Survey

Thank you to those of you who completed our survey in the summer. Your contributions have been collated and a summary will be sent out prior to the AGM on 27th January.

Committee Election: Call for Nominations

Our next election for the Committee will take place at the Annual General Meeting on 27th January 2018. If you are a member then now is the time to think about whether you would like to be considered for the committee or whether you know someone else who you think would be good to join.

Please email or speak to our member Caroline Drijver if you would like a nomination form. Each nominee needs two people to back the nomination. All forms need to be handed in to Caroline by 6th January.

Contact details for Caroline:

07791 781 022

caroline.drijver@btinternet.com

Thank You Pinocchio's Restaurant...

We are extremely grateful to the management and staff of Pinocchio for arranging a fundraising event on the 9th November. Lots of people enjoyed a lovely meal at the excellent Italian restaurant next door to our church and at the same time contributed to our building appeal fund. It was a great success and great fun. At our Grand Re-Opening, Sue Addis, Managing Director of Pinocchio's, presented the Church with a cheque for £2,030. Thank you so much, Pinocchio's Restaurant.

...and Thank You Kathy...

Thanks are also due to our member Kathy Pitt whose Curry and Quiz Night raised a magnificent £472.50 for our building fund. Thank you Kathy for your creativity as quizmaster and thank you Ann for keeping score.

...and Thank You to the Congregation from the Clock Tower Sanctuary

The Clock Tower Sanctuary have sent their thanks to everyone in the congregation for their support and for the donation of £101. from the collecting jars on the tables for tea and coffee after services. The Clock Tower Sanctuary is a day centre providing warmth, useful facilities, advice and support to homeless young people, aged 16 – 25 years, in Brighton and Hove. They say "This will go a long way to help homeless young people in Brighton & Hove get their lives back on track."

You can find out more about the Clock Tower Sanctuary and how to support their important work at www.theacts.org.uk



December

07th: Pianist Jon Byrne returns to Brighton Unitarian with a programme of baroque,

classical and romantic music.

14th: Guitarist Paul Richards performing the guitar music of South America and Spain.

21st: Please join Nick Andrews and some of his lovely friends for what is becoming a BUC tradition - A festive Christmas lunchtime concert.

January

4th: In her first public concert, young pianist Megan Stevens takes us on a journey from the 18th to the 21st century. Including works by Haydn, Debussy, Bridge and Einaudi.

11th: Maggie Grimsdell (piano) and Caroline Collingridge (flute) celebrate women composers to include Jane Mary Guest, Lili Boulanger, Anne Boyd, Cecilia McDowall, Lara Netzel and first performances this century of two pieces by Avril Coleridge-Taylor.

18th: Jazz pianist Joss Peach returns to the Unitarian with his wife Josie and daughter Poppy; Josie Peach; saxes, clarinet, Poppy Peach; guitar, vocals. The trio will perform as a variety of combinations of solo duo and trio, playing a diverse mix of instrumentals and songs from various styles rooted in the jazz tradition.

25th: Luca Luciano: Contemporary clarinet recital featuring music by Stravinsky and Gershwin along with original material from Luciano's last releases.

Doors and coffee from 12 noon.

Concert 12.30 – 1.15 p.m.

For 2019 our ticket price will rise to £4.

Brighton Gay Men's Chorus Offering Support for BUC's Building Appeal

We are honoured to be a recipient of the generosity of the Brighton Gay Men's Chorus who are performing at the prestigious Brighton Dome Concert Hall on Saturday 8th December. The show is called 'Pull a Cracker' and is an evening of laughter and song infused with the spirit of Christmas and they will be raising funds for our Building Appeal Fund.

Dates for Your Diary

Saturday 8th December, Gala Fundraising Concert, organised by Joe Ward. Doors 7 p.m. Concert 7.30 p.m. Tickets £15 (£12 conc) on the door or call 01273 696022 to reserve.

Wednesday 12th December, 6.30 - 8.30pm Stitch n Time at Jeannie 's house in

Kemp Town. The main idea is to continue working on a Patchwork Banner for the Church. For more information please contact Jeannette on 0776 289 5901.



The poster for the FUSE Festival of Unitarians in the Southeast 2019 features a teal background with a central image of people worshipping with their hands raised. The text is arranged in a structured layout with various colors and fonts.

FUSE
FESTIVAL of UNITARIANS in the SOUTHEAST

15TH-17TH FEBRUARY 2019

CHATSWORTH HOTEL
17-23 The Steyne, Worthing BN11 3DU

FIND TIME FOR YOUR SOUL • INSPIRING WORSHIP

EXPLORE, DISCUSS, CREATE

COSTS (per person) Some bursaries are available on application

Single occupancy full board	£275
Double occupancy full board (double or twin)	£229
Child under 12 yrs old in shared room per child	£64
Day delegate rate (includes lunch, drinks and Conf. fee)	£70
Friday Seminar with Jennifer Kavanagh	£20

For registration and more info
www.fusefest.org.uk
Deadline for registrations Thursday 31st January

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/>

Share images of your experiences in our beautiful building using the following hashtags. #bucpeople #brightonunitarians