



Brighton
Unitarians

BUC Newsletter June 2022

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.



It's Caroline Drijver here bringing you the June edition of our BUC newsletter.

This month we have had the Brighton Festival, with BUC hosting several events for the Fringe Festival. I have been lucky enough to experience our church as a venue on a couple of occasions, reminding me of what an excellent venue it is, and such friendly bar staff (BUC volunteers)! I can recommend both, and Susie has more to tell us about the festival in this newsletter.

I have also been lucky enough to be part of a team of volunteers working on clearing the vestry, in preparation for its new outfit, so to speak. This has been satisfying on a number of levels- just clearing out clutter feels so much better: clear space, clear mind. It is also a contained way of doing something for the church – no ongoing commitment, once it's done it's done. I'm all for ongoing commitment as well and encourage it, but a discreet job is pleasing. I also enjoyed collecting boxes from local businesses as it gave me a pleasant sense of belonging and purpose in our local area, and I had a chat with new people. More than this I enjoyed the sense of community through working with other people in the church. And of course, we are now much further on in the project of revitalising the vestry which will make using it a better experience, whether this is for a church-related meeting or as a Green Room.

Our Church is very much awake and ready for this month of lengthening days.

In this newsletter you will find:

Details of Sunday services

Details of Friday Lunchtime Concerts

Brighton Unitarian Community

Unitarian Community

A poem

Sunday Services

- 29th May Rev Michael Allured, Chair LDPA
- 5th June Jane Blackall, Ministry Co-ordinator at Kensington - this service will start at 10.30am (10.30 am start)
- 12th June Stephen Crowther, BUC member
- 19th June Eleanor Chiari
- 26th June Fay Barratt, Interfaith Minister

FRIDAY LUNCHTIME CONCERTS



The performers are a mixture of top local talent and touring musicians from across the globe. It's a perfect way to spend your Friday lunchtime.

June 2022

3rd Nicholas Austin, classical pianist and post-graduate of the Royal Academy of Music playing Mozart, Chopin and Liszt.

10th Soprano Mehreen Shah will be returning to Brighton Unitarian to perform a recital celebrating notable women composers, poets and characters across the centuries.

17th Luca Luciano "Clarinet Solo Project": promoting Luciano's latest CD with music by Gershwin, Cage, Vivaldi, Stravinsky along with original material.

24th Katherine Clarke returns to Brighton Unitarian with a programme for solo viola and singing viola player. Music includes a world premiere by Orlando Gough and a new arrangement of Panis Angelicus.

July

1st Evelyn Harrison and Zhanna Kemp-Dashkovskaya recently formed as a Saxophone and Piano duo and will be playing an eclectic programme of music ranging from romantic to jazz.

July continued

8th Elena Toponogova is a concert pianist and chamber musician. Her main interest is Russian repertoire with an especial focus on the work of Nikolai Medtner. She will play music by F.Schubert, S. Rachmaninov and N.Medtner.

15th Ty Jeffries is a composer, lyricist, pianist & entertainer, his compositions span the world of classical music, vaudeville, music hall & golden age Hollywood. His concert at BUC will be a rare, stripped back 'as himself' acoustic performance of his songs & piano music.

22nd Siriol Hugh-Jones (Cello) and Steve Carroll-Turner (Piano) explore works by less well-known 20th century composers in a programme that takes us from Poland via the USSR to Mexico and Argentina.

29th The John Lake Quartet: John Lake (Piano), Elizabeth Bustard (Saxes & Flute), Matt Casterton (Double Bass) & Simon Cambers (Drums) play a selection of Latin jazz tunes by Chick Corea including Return to Forever, Spain & La Fiesta and Rumba Flamenca.

Tickets on the door. **£5 suggested donation**. Tea and coffee from midday.
New Road, Brighton BN1 1UF www.brightonunitarian.org.uk

BUC Community

Thanks to our joint Chair of the Committee, Susie Courtalt, for her contributions to this newsletter:

Congregational Services

Brian led a very lovely congregational service recently on mysticism. We have found over the years that congregational services are very popular and those who take part certainly appreciate the collegiate nature of the preparation and the support it gives one. We would love it if more people volunteered to lead one; while we wait for our new minister it is the perfect opportunity for those of us who feel moved to talk about something that is dear to our heart and to do it in collaboration with others. It certainly feels far less scary!

Please do let any of the committee know if there is a little seed that has been planted in your head, but you need some encouragement and support! We are

not always at every service, but please talk to one of us when you see us - Julia Helen White, Kathy, Susie, Francis or Jo.

Fringe is Still Here!!

The church is buzzing again with sound systems and young people and laughter and fun. The streets around are colourful and it is lovely to see Brighton's creative vibe return. We are delighted that our venue is as popular as ever, and on Friday 27th May at 2.45pm and Saturday 28th May at 1.00pm there will be a charming performance of songs of Bob Dylan and John Lennon called 'When Judas Met John'. Members of the church are cordially invited to come to either of these performances, as a guest. So hope to see you there! John Lennon and Bob Dylan - my all-time favourites!

Music, Debate and Poetry

One final plug for 'Music, Debate and Poetry' on 29th May. The indomitable Caroline Lucas will be chairing the panel on democracy. Again, this should be interesting and fun and 25% of proceeds will go to Ukraine Humanitarian fund. If you want a free ticket to this by helping out on the day, please let me know - scourtalt8@gmail.com

Jo's Play

Some of us are planning to go see Jo our co-chair at the Dome in her latest Shakespeare incarnation. We will let you know when we have a date.

New Minister

Applications for our new minister will draw to a close at the end of May, and then the process of short-listing will begin. We will of course keep you all updated as we continue along this exciting path.

Wider Unitarian Community

Philip Eckstein (Ditchling Treasurer) has written the following to us:

'The congregation of Ditchling would like to extend an invitation to members of your congregation to attend our Anniversary Service. This will be on Sunday, 3rd July at 3pm and be taken by our minister, the Rev. Duncan Voice.

Do let us know if anyone is able to attend. We would very much look forward to seeing them.'

If you would like to make contact to let Ditchling Unitarians know that you would like to come, their number is 01273 844746. Alternatively, you can use their contact page <https://ukunitarians.org.uk/ditchling/contact.htm>

Other news

Thanks to our member Francis for writing about his recent visit to Taunton to attend the **General Baptist Assembly**.

On Saturday 7th May I travelled down to Taunton by train to attend the Annual General Meeting of the General Baptist Assembly. Not many people at BUC know what the Assembly is, and until recently I knew little more than that we pay at £30 membership fee, and get a £300 grant in return. That's the kind of investment return I wish I could get!

I did already know, however, that the General Baptists were, with the English Presbyterians and some smaller groupings, forerunners of the Unitarian movement. The main distinguishing feature of the General Baptists, as opposed to those who split away and were called Particular Baptists (the Baptist Churches we know today), was their belief that all human beings would be saved, otherwise known as universalism, rather than that only the chosen would end up in paradise.

It turns out that a small number of Unitarian churches still see themselves as following in the General Baptist tradition, though quite how this differs from Unitarianism (they are all members of the GA) is still unclear to me. Perhaps they are a little closer to our Christian roots, or maybe its simply a historical attachment. I'm working on it, and will post more in the Newsletter as it becomes clearer to me.

The churches/chapels concerned are Bessels Green, Billingshurst, Brighton, Chatham, Ditchling, Dover, Godalming, Horsham, Lewes (congregation at present not active), Newport IOW, Nottage (part of Porthcawl, S Wales), Portsmouth, Taunton, Trowbridge and Wick (Vale of Glamorgan). I gather that of these, Portsmouth and Brighton have inherited their General Baptist membership from previously existing member chapels which are now defunct. I can't think how this might apply to Brighton unless there was a

General Baptist Chapel at Steyning, for example. We did, however, have Universalist beginnings, and Robert Aspland, our minister from 1812 to 1817, came from a General Baptist background.

The gathering began with a service in the ornately decorated chapel with its enormous pulpit, after which we retired to the manse (now just used for business and functions), where we had lunch, following by the AGM. There were around ten present. Martin Whitell, our retired District Minister who attended, agreed to continue as President, and though Dan Costley is officially standing down as secretary, he has agreed to continue doing some of the work until a successor can be found (why does that sound familiar?).

An important bit of business was a change in the constitution which would allow future meetings to be held online if circumstances made it necessary. There was general agreement that meetings in real space were much preferable, but if another situation arose such as Covid, there would be a need for the option of meeting online. The amendment was agreed.

There was also a discussion about the sale of a piece of land adjoining a now sold-off chapel at Rushall in the Metropolitan District of Walsall, West Midlands. The circumstances were complicated, and it was agreed that further information was needed.

Following the AGM there was a meeting of the Executive Committee which everyone present was invited to attend.

Francis Clark-Lowes

A Poem

I am sure we are all familiar with what might be Mary Oliver's most well known poem. As we have the longest day coming up this month, here it is:

The Summer Day
By Mary Oliver

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean —
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down —
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?