



Brighton
Unitarians

BUC Newsletter September 2021

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.



Hello, it's Caroline Drijver here, bringing you our September newsletter.

A couple of weeks ago I went to St James Park in London to meet my three nieces for a picnic. We chatted about feminism, gender and BLM which was stimulating, educational and a great way to get to know each other better.

You probably know that there are many, around 32,000, feral parakeets in London, of which St James Park has its fair share. Nick Hunt and Tim Mitchell have written a fascinating book called *The Parakeeting of London: An Adventure in Gonzo Ornithology* in which they describe the history of parakeets in London. They are escaped caged birds, with the first sighting of a free pair in 1893 in Dulwich, although they then weren't seen again until 1930. Their numbers grew in the last century, and have exploded in the last ten years.

As ever, we are divided in our opinion of them, if indeed we have one at all. Some people find them beautiful and celebrate their diversity, admiring their ability to adapt and integrate. In St James Park people manage to get them onto their hands and take photos- one woman had three on one arm when I was there. People were thoroughly enjoying them and they were a talking point among people from around the world who had never met before.

Some people see the parakeets as unwelcome immigrants, threatening our ecosystem by driving out birds that have been there longer. Some of these other birds are migrants, such as the Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Blackcap.

The parakeets can be found in a variety of trees, but in this park, they are partial to the many fig trees that line the perimeter of the lake. Fig trees are not indigenous either. The first fig tree thought to have been planted in Britain is attributed to Cardinal Pole (later Archbishop of Canterbury) who planted a tree in the garden of the Palace at Lambeth around 1552. Fig trees are helpful to us as they can survive well in polluted air, and so were extensively planted during the Victorian era when London was black with soot from the Industrial Revolution.

In the last couple of weeks we have seen images and heard stories of people who must find somewhere new to live. This is not new, people reach our shores on a daily basis, but it has become overwhelmingly stark. I offer these snippets of information about parakeets and fig trees as a springboard for us to think about our own relationship to the new and unfamiliar, whatever form that may take.

In this month's newsletter you will find:

- Dates for the services for the weeks ahead
- Lunchtime concerts
- From the committee
- Poetry Corner
- Other 'news' items
- A Bit of Fun

Sunday Services

Please note: services are at 11 a.m. You will receive an email in the week leading up to the service about how the service will be held

29th Aug- Stephen Crowther BUC member

5th Sept- Congregational service BUC members

12th Sept*- Anne Mills General Assembly President

(*this service will be live-streamed to the church only, and will not be live-streamed to our homes)

19th Sept- Jane Blackall at Kensington Ministry Coordinator at Essex Church

26th Sept*- Stephen Crowther BUC member

(*this equinox service take place at BUC and will not be recorded or livestreamed due to privacy related to seating layout)

Lunchtime concerts every Friday 12.00 - 1.15 pm



These concerts are diverse, being mostly classically but also jazz and folk. 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 with these affordable concerts in our beautiful church.

Come and have a drink before from our coffee room before the concert starts and get to know your fellow concertgoers.

Wheelchair accessible venue.
£5 Suggested Donation.
Everyone Welcome.

Listings:

3rd September - Fumi Otsuki (Violin) & Sarah Kershaw (Piano)

A Japanese violinist in London will perform a wonderful combination of pieces, including poetic pieces by Parry and Delius.

10th September - Simone Alessandro Tavoni (Piano)

Simone Tavoni is RCM and Trinity Laban graduated. He has been selected as an Aspen Music Festival Fellow (U.S.), Parklane Group Artist and Keyboard Trust Artist (U.K.) Simone has performed extensively in Europe and U.S.

17th September - Yvonne Patrick (Soprano) & Christopher Langworthy (Piano)

Yvonne returns to Brighton Unitarian Church with a selection of songs on the theme of 'Rhymes, Fables & Fairies'. Composers include Kabalevsky, Lehmann, Dvorak and Richard Rodney Bennett. We are delighted to welcome Christopher Langworthy who will be playing piano sols.

24th September - Frantisek Brikcius (Cello) & Christopher Langworthy (Piano)

Cellist František Brikcius chose to dedicate his life to the interpretation of cello compositions written by composers of the 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, giving special consideration to compositions for solo cello. His favourites are cello suites by J. S. Bach, M. Reger and B. Britten. He is particularly involved in performing works by Czech, Jewish & Terezín and contemporary composers playing on a "George Kriwalski" cello made in 1904.

From the Committee

Socialising after services

Tea and coffee and refreshments after the service is back. The guidelines for the simpler new-style 'coffee off the trolley' are in the kitchen cupboard.

We do need you to help make it happen. Please sign up to the rota which is on the office noticeboard or phone Ashleigh on 01273 696022 and he will put you on it. Doing teas and coffees is a good way to get to know people!

Greeters needed

We need people to be on the steps outside the church to meet people as they come in. This means welcoming people, letting them know how we are managing COVID safety and answering any questions. Another great way to get to know people!

Hymn Books for Home Participation of Services

If anyone who regularly watches the services from home needs to borrow hymn books please inform the office and we will try to arrange delivery.

Keeping safe during COVID times

For everyone's peace of mind we aim to keep the chairs in the church distanced at services, open windows and continue wearing masks. Singing with masks has returned.

Bicentenary Plus1 Celebrations

(This was in the August newsletter but it's included again in the hope that more people may have ideas around this.)

Our Bicentenary passed by fairly quietly on August 20th 2020, but this year we see an opportunity to celebrate our Church and all the people who use it and to introduce it to a new crowd, unaware of our beautiful space in the heart of Brighton. Our Church Manager Ashleigh will produce the event, which will be over the weekend of October 22nd to 24th, when people are back from holidays.

Provisional ideas for the programme are :

Friday night: An evening gig, aimed at a younger audience, with different musicians and projection mapping into the church.

Saturday Showcase: We could ask our regular hirers, and members, to give an example of what they do, the dancing, drumming and choirs as well as craft fairs and theatre.

Sunday 22nd A special service in the Church to celebrate our history and our values, to which we will invite anyone who wants to find out about Brighton Unitarians. Followed by History talks and maybe some Yoga and wellbeing workshops.

Anyone who has any more ideas or would like to take part in any way do contact Ashleigh in the Church. It should be a vibrant and affirming weekend, so please put it in your diaries.

Services this month (from Jen Barton)

We're managing to stay with our aim of 3 services held in the church each month and continuing to make these available online for those unable to attend in person as far as is possible. This has been a great achievement made possible by a small group of people working together. We're very grateful to Kensington and Plymouth for letting us make congregational visits in alternate months – a great help with the pulpit rota now we have no layleader/minister of our own to give regular services. Thanks to Trisha for all her hard work and negotiating skills. And to Susie and Stephen for giving regular services for us.

POETRY CORNER

Caged Bird, by Dr Maya Angelou

The free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of the things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill for the caged bird
sings of freedom

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

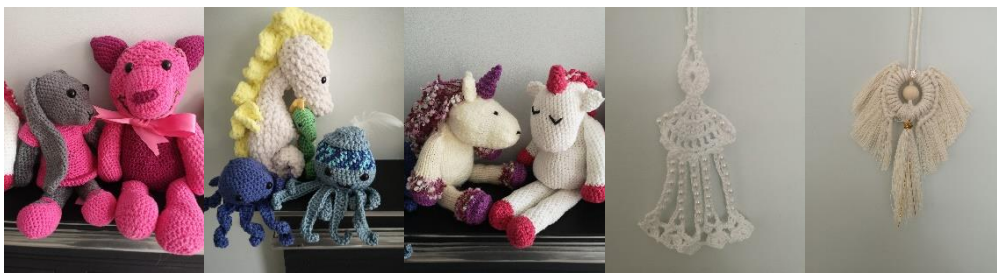
If you have a poem you would like to contribute to the newsletter, then please send it to the church. Let's try to include one each month.

Other News

From Trisha

Trisha is as busy as ever with making angels and crocheting a range of fun and cuddly creatures for us to buy. If you'd like her to make anything bespoke then you can call her on 07710288399. It's a great fundraiser, so do think about the little people in your life, or just treat yourself.

Trisha is still looking ahead to the Christmas Fair and is looking for donations of wool to knit and crochet items to sell. Please drop anything you can offer at the Church with a label that it is for Trisha. Please do also have a think about how you might be able to contribute.



From Francis Clark-Lowes

Francis led our Bicentenary Service on 22nd September and he and Christine have put an enormous amount of work into finding out and then collating the history of our Ministers. Thanks to both Francis and Christine. Francis posed some interesting questions which he has contributed to the newsletter. Here they are with a preface:

It is, I believe, our recognition of this space, of spirituality, which explains our congregation's survival into the twenty-first century. We may not be very numerous or strong, but we have a conviction that 'cold reason' is not enough. How we express this will be an ongoing project, but I would like to suggest we're likely to be guided by our answers to a number of questions. Here is a selection:

- Are humans part of nature, and if so, how should we conceive nature?
- What is the relationship between reason and feeling?
- Is there a way of proving what is right and what is wrong?
- How do we regard Christianity (a) as a faith and (b) institutionally?
- What does loving our neighbour mean, and what might it not mean?
- What is the relationship between spirituality and good works?
- How should we balance freedom of speech with our concern not to offend?
- What is the relationship between the individual and human cultures?
- Is equality an absolute and achievable goal, and if so is it worth any price?
- What is our attitude to atheism?

If you have a news contribution or anything you'd like to share with the rest of the congregation then please do send this to the church with subject "Newsletter". I will be doing the next newsletter on Wednesday 22nd July.

8A Bit of Fun



Do you know where to find this kind little rabbit within about 200m of our church?

Answer next month!

Send me something you'd like to share!!!!