



Brighton
Unitarians

October 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 off your phones before the start of the service.

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

13th October - Rev Maria Curtis, Horsham
Pianist Pamela Nickels

20th October - Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Joe Ward

27th October - Brian Bell & Sophie Wilson, members, BUC
Pianist Kathy Pitt

Quiet Reflection Circle 7 - 8 pm, Thursday 10th October 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

Welcome to our newsletter for October.

We are holding our next Annual General Meeting on January 26th next year. It might seem quite some way off but the committee are already planning the meeting and the various reports and documents which, in law, must be tabled. Formal notifications and invitations to

the meeting will appear in the newsletter over the following months.

Our church can only function because each year some of its members volunteer to join the committee and meet each month to oversee the maintenance and use of the building, our finances and our paid staff and volunteers. When I say that the church can only function because of the committee's work I am not exaggerating. This is just one of the many ways in which we depend on our volunteer but it is crucial.

The committee's agenda is often packed, always varied and sometimes challenging but I hope this won't put you off joining it! If you are interested in doing so you will need to stand in the committee election. This is not remotely as frightening as it sounds and don't tell anyone I said this, but in the 19 years I have been involved in the church, no one has ever stood and not been elected! So if you're considering joining the committee and would like a general chat about what it involves please do talk to Jen Barton, who is supervising the committee elections this year, to any of the current members, or to myself.

With all best wishes, Jef Jones

From the Lay Leader

*You who want
knowledge,
seek the Oneness
within.*

*There you
will find
the clear mirror
already waiting.*

Hadewijch II of Antwerp,
trans. Jane Hirschfield

The mystics of different religious traditions often arrive at strikingly similar conclusions. They tell us that practices of prayer and service can make for a truly fulfilling life. Surrender to a higher power, they say, and you will find contentment and self acceptance. They tell us that disciplines of stillness and meditation can help us develop a sense of perspective and inner peace. They also say that these mystical practices can sometimes lead to joy, wholeness and transcendence. We can encounter the divine, they say, and be changed.

Nothing is known about Hadewijch II of Antwerp beyond 16 poems and the fact that she lived in the thirteenth century. We don't even know for sure how to say her name, although something like *Hedvig* seems likely. Her writings, however, are striking in their clarity. She writes with a cool, kind wisdom that seems also Buddhist.

The words above could not be more challenging of Christian orthodoxy. After all, if we can find knowledge and unity within ourselves why would we need the Bible or the church? The mystics' direct experience of the divine did not require a priest, or a bishop to supervise the priest. Indeed many of the mediaeval mystics were regarded as borderline heretics. They lived and worked on the edge of Christianity.

The mystics' chosen path required rigour and discipline. Their lives were often hard and few of us today would be willing to commit to such extreme self sacrifice. However the mystics have a message of solace for our unsettling and difficult century. There is a timeless realm, a place of perfect ease. Its beauty and wonder are beyond words. This zone exists beyond the trials of daily life and outside of our ambitions and anxieties, and yet it is real. As Hadewijch II says, it lives within us. And Saint Francis Of Assisi reminds us, poetically, that it lives around us too, *Such love does the sky now pour, that whenever I stand in a field, I have to wring out the light when I get home.*

Whatever you believe, what ever your experience of being alive in this turbulent world, I hope you can find some comfort in these wise and radiant words.

Jef Jones

Heart and Soul Gatherings In October

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 3rd, 17th, 24th and 31st October. All are welcome.

Summer School 2019

Hucklow Summer School is an annual Unitarian religious education gathering held each August at the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow, in the Peak District. This year, two of our members, Trisha Purchas and Jennifer Sanders attended and Trisha Purchas writes

OK, I'm a lot calmer now and at least my feet are back on the ground, even if my head is still a bit in the clouds.

The theme of this year's Summer School was Theology in the Flesh - How Might our Embodied Experience Shape our Answers to Life's Ultimate Questions? This seemed challenging to my lazy brain but I was assured by many people who had been on previous years that I would enjoy the experience of being there. And I understood that the school had been set up to help further our understanding of Unitarianism and help develop our spirituality.

Our time there was very well planned. We were given name tags when we arrived (and they spelt my name correctly!) which were extremely helpful as it would have

been impossible to remember who everyone was without them. The daily routine was easy to grasp and followed the same format each day apart from Wednesday when we had completely free time in the afternoon.

Morning meditation at 7:30am. I didn't always make it to that, then delicious breakfast at 8pm. I always made it to that.

The 9am Theme Talk was for everyone and was followed by coffee and then small engagement groups until lunch at 1pm. You stay in the same engagement group all week and each one has a different theme. In the afternoons there was a choice of three or four different activities/ workshops, none of them compulsory. The social hour was at 5 pm, when wine was available to buy. Evening dinner was at 6pm and then later, the magical, silent lantern lit walk through the village to the local Unitarian Chapel for the epilogue, a short evening service. Then I would collapse into bed by 10pm while younger or more energetic folk would stay up talking until the early hours of the morning.

If you are planning on going to next year's summer school it's a good idea to read though the prospectus to understand what the different morning engagement groups are about, and who is running them. It is not usually possible to change groups once you are there. I didn't get to choose as I applied so late that there was only one group with space in it. I did get a lot out of it although I kept forgetting what the theme of the week was and that made it difficult to focus on what was expected of me.

For me the Theme Talks at 9 in the morning were the most amazing, moving talks I have heard in a long time. Rev Winnie Gordon talked about her experience of being Black. Jen Hazel shared her experience of being fat and Eleanor Chiari talked about her journey from magic mushrooms to Unitarianism! Robin Hanford explored materialism and spirituality, and Rev Bob Janis Dillon's final talk was about falling in love with everything. And we all fell in love with him... well I know I did. But only in a strictly spiritual way! The whole experience was so very good and as I said before Summer School, it confirmed to me that I'm a very fortunate woman to have discovered Unitarianism.

Become a Member of Our Unitarian Church

Membership numbers are slowly growing, but we'd like them to grow faster! People say that membership gives them a sense of (even more) belonging and commitment. It also helps raise Brighton's profile in the Unitarian movement. On a

practical level, members elect our BUC Committee. There's nothing too formal about membership, so please do have a word with Jeanette Webb, our membership secretary or Jef Jones our pastor, if you'd like to find out more and are considering becoming a member of the church.

"For me, being a member has meant that at times - and there have been and continue to be many, when I have attended less often - I know that I am still a part of this church and it is still a part of me. I like the feeling of this."

"To be honest, it was a while before I realised there was such a thing as membership! But, once I had, there was no question about it. For me it was about making a personal commitment to our sacred place & spiritual community, and about wanting it to thrive."

Quiet Reflective Circle

Thursday, 10th October, 7pm

On Thursday 10th October 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!



October

4th: To celebrate the 200th anniversary of Clara Schumann's birth, The Kelleth Piano Trio (Rachel Ellis, Siriol Hugh-Jones & Stephen Carroll-Turner) perform her Piano Trio in G minor, alongside the Piano Trio by the wonderful Rebecca Clarke.

11th: Stephen Raine returns to explore one of Schubert's master works, the Piano Sonata in B Flat Major D.960. Music of intimacy, warmth and luminous melodic beauty.

18th: Shereen Godber and Stuart Deeks, violins, and Ben Hess, cello, play duets and trios. Bach and Bartok, Gibbons and Gliere, Purcell, Haydn and Schubert.

25th: Vocalist Lou Beckerman with a 'A Scattering of Jazz Jewels!' Joined by pianist Joss Peach and a surprise guest or two they'll take you on an inspired journey with their interpretations of loved standards through to contemporary originals.

Doors and coffee at 12 noon. Concert 12.30 - 1.15 p.m.
Suggested donation £4.

New Church Manager

After a decade of providing excellent support to our church, during which time she has developed the building into a significant arts and community venue for our city, Marion will be leaving us by the end of the year. We are extremely grateful to her for her dedication and creativity.

We are now actively looking for a new Church Manager. If you are interested in this role then please visit the [Indeed website](#) .

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>