



Ditchling **Unitarians**



Newsletter

Aug - Oct 2023

Open Minds, Kind Hearts, Free Spirits

The Values of Our Community

- Kindness and compassion to guide our actions;
- Freedom and independence of thought, belief and expression;
- Respect, equality and fairness for all people;
- Truth, peace and justice in human affairs;
- Reason and integrity in our search for spiritual meaning;
- Reverence and care for our Earth and all life.

www.ditchlingunitarians.org.uk

SUNDAY SERVICES – 11 am

<i>DATE</i>	<i>SPEAKER</i>	<i>PIANIST</i>
6 th August	Rev Duncan Voice	Phillip Sear
20 th August	Francis Clarke-Lowes	Nicola Lewsey
3 rd September	Rev Duncan Voice	Phillip Sear
17 th September	Rev Jenny Miller – Interfaith Minister	Nicola Lewsey
1 st October	Rev Duncan Voice Harvest Service	Phillip Sear
15 th October	Rev Daniel Costley	Nicola Lewsey
5 th November	Rev Duncan Voice	Phillip Sear

Coffee with the Minister

Duncan will be available for coffee and conversation on **22nd August** and **17th October**, between **10.30 and 12**. Just drop in!

Monday Meetings

Monday 18th September, 2pm

Monday 16th October, 2pm

Join us at this friendly gathering for older people. See newsletter article. All welcome.

Organiser: Jill Clutterbuck



*We come together to celebrate who we are,
to share insights that give meaning to our lives,
to learn from the wisdom of others,
that their truth may contribute to our understanding.*

*We gather,
we share,
we learn,
we celebrate.*

by Ann Peart

Continuing Our Adventure

Thank you to everyone who helped us to celebrate the 325th birthday of our congregation in July. Those who brought cakes or flowers, made tea or cleared up, visitors and old friends. I am sorry I had to rush off afterwards, but it was good to see you all.

It's amazing that our independently managed (and independently minded!) church has survived all these years. Many former churches across the country are now private homes or business premises. As I mentioned in my address, we don't necessarily hold the same views as the old General Baptists, who were the founders of the congregation, but some important ideas have come down to us. One of those is freedom in matters of faith.

The first Ditchling General Baptist congregation believed in the right of the individual to interpret scripture for themselves, and that there should be no creedal test to join the church. We also believe *in freedom and independence of thought, belief and expression*, although we take this further now and draw inspiration from the many wisdom traditions of the world. And there are still no tests or vows a person must make to participate in our church community.

One of the most common things I hear, when people talk about The Old Meeting House, is that it has a lovely peaceful atmosphere. That there is something special there, as if all the hopes and prayers of those that have gone before have somehow soaked into the very fabric of

the building. All those people searching for truth, caring and trying to do some good in the world.

It is good to find a spiritual home I think, and good to offer one too! Somewhere you feel welcomed, comfortable and can find peace, but also sometimes to be challenged. To reflect on your own life journey, but also the difficult issues we humans face, such as poverty, conflict and climate change. Apathy and indifference are great enemies of a spiritual life. Are we doing what we should be doing? Are we doing enough? Do we value truth?

In our lives there are times to journey and times to build. Both are important, both take courage, and we shouldn't ignore the call to do either when the time is right. In a way we are all passing through. As we do so let us travel lightly and gently and kindly. When we settle for a while, let us create and build with love, things and places that benefit all people. Everyone has something to offer I believe.

Benedictine monk David Steindl-Rast says, "*the house that hope builds combines in a unique way the security of love and the adventure of faith.*" May the faith adventure of our community continue and may all people know the security of love.

With blessings

Duncan

The Monday Meeting

We are a group of older residents who meet together on the third Monday each month (except August) at 2pm in the Chapel. This meeting, instigated by Jill Clutterbuck and her late husband Brian, has been taking place for many years, but had to cease when the Covid outbreak began. However, three months ago, Jill decided that the time had come to restart it. I am delighted to report that it has proved very successful with an average of 21 people attending.

We have a speaker each time we meet and this is followed by the social get together. We provide tea and cakes and an opportunity to get to know other people and make friends. All are welcome, there is no charge but there is a plate for voluntary donations towards running costs. We ended this Summer with a talk and a tea party at The Nutmeg Tree which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

We are looking forward to our next meeting on **18th September** when it is hoped that our speaker will be a representative from the Police to speak about the various scams which are taking place, and advising the action to be taken if we are approached.

We look forward to seeing you,

Mary

Meditation Group

Our small and friendly meditation group welcomes new members. We practice mindfulness meditation on selected dates. Our evening together usually consists of a guided meditation, a reading about mindfulness or meditation, a time of quietness and sometimes some sharing. We start at **7 pm**, and each session lasts for about 30-40 minutes. Payment is by donation.

Join us on any of the following dates:

Tuesday August 15th

Tuesday September 26th

Tuesday October 24th



Save the date!



Saturday 18th November

Craft Event

We are planning to hold a craft event where you can join us for some refreshments and make a craft – possibly some Christmas decorations? If you would like a table to sell some crafts, please contact Duncan via our website: ditchlingunitarians.org.uk/where-to-find-us
Space is limited. More details to follow...

Harvest Celebration

Sunday 1st October, 11am

Donations of non-perishable goods for our local foodbank will be welcome. However, if you want to share with members of the congregation, some produce from your garden or something you've made, that would be wonderful too.

"I'm just someone who likes cooking and for who sharing is a form of expression" – Maya Angelou



Food Bank Collections



We are collecting for Burgess Hill Food Bank, 85 Church Walk, Burgess Hill. Donations can be left at The Old Meeting House.

If you are struggling and need the services of the Food Bank, then have a look on their website for details of their voucher system. Vouchers can be obtained from:

Citizens Advice – 0808 278 7969 or **Burgess Hill Town Council** 01444 247726.

The Food Bank offers collection from Burgess Hill, Hassocks, and a delivery service in Hurstpierpoint, but times are limited. See their website for details,

burgesshillfoodbank.org.uk/how-to-get-food

Contact us via our website

www.ditchlingunitarians.org.uk

Autumn Concert

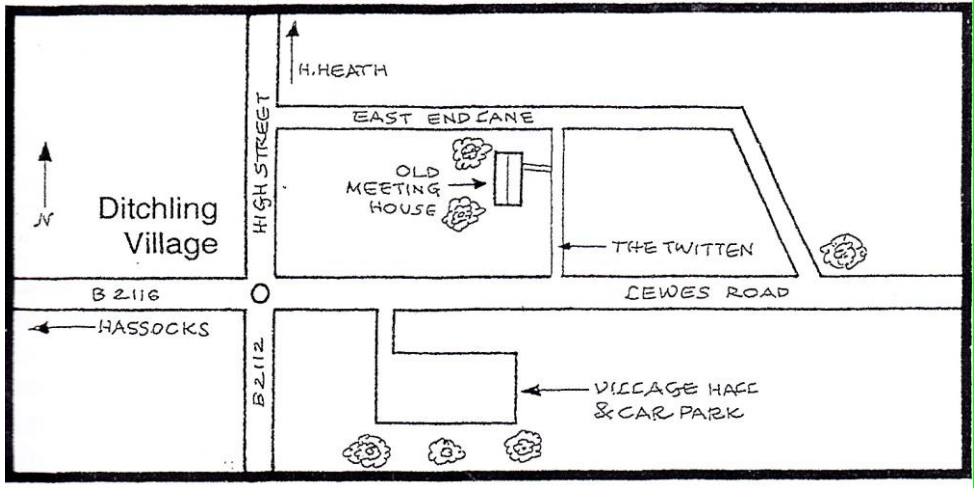
with Elizabeth Hills and Andrew Wickens

Thursday 28th September, 7.30pm

An evening of beautiful music at
The Old Meeting House



Tickets available at The Old Meeting House and the village Post Office
or on the door.



Our congregation has been meeting at The Old Meeting House for over 300 years. We believe that people should be able to reach their own conclusions about what they believe, or don't, and we try to offer a welcoming and supportive environment in which to explore this. We are grounded in the Christian tradition, but we are open to the insights of different faiths and non-religious wisdom. Traditionally we have used reason as a way of discerning the value of religious claims, however we also recognise that faith is a matter of the heart. What is meaningful to one is not always logical to another. We are inspired in many ways and by many sources, such as poetry and nature and art. We greatly value caring community, and we see different lifestyles as valuable and enriching.

Whoever you are, and whatever your journey, we offer you welcome.