



### MINISTER (LPIC)

Julian Smith  
LLB (LSE), A/DBTS (Oxon), FRSA, Barrister

### ASSISTANT PREACHERS

Alex Villanueva-Gordon, DPhil (Oxon)  
Holly Welsh, BA (Oxon)

### MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Chris Dann, BA (Brunel)

### CLERK TO THE TRUSTEES & MAIN CHAPEL CONTACT

Administrator - Sue Young E: [youngsue102@gmail.com](mailto:youngsue102@gmail.com)

### THE TRUSTEES

Chairman & Secretary – Andrew Leonard  
Treasurer – Sue Young  
Warden – Stephen Cowley  
Cynthia McPherson  
Edwin Lerner, MA (Oxon)  
Victoria Hurst

### CO-WORKERS

Ecumenical, Interfaith & Social Action Representative:  
Bruce Bebington, BSc (Manc)

SE Unitarian District Representative & Council Member:  
Rev. Jo James (Leeds), BA (Wales), CTS (Oxon), ADTS (Cantab)  
Principal, Brixton Annexe, Lincoln's Inn Fields Chambers:

Julian Smith

Manager, Unity Contact Centre:

Sue Young

Occasional Caretaker:

Jimmy Larwood

### ADDRESS

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*Brixton Unitarian Christian Church  
Churches Together in Brixton  
Unitarian Christian Association*

Effra Road Chapel

# Brixton

Founded 1839



## Newsletter – January 2015

### JANUARY

Sun	04	10.30	COMM'N & Food Bank Collection (FBC)	Julian
Sun	11	10.30	Assistant Preacher	Alex
Sun	18	10.30	Assistant Preacher	Alex
Sun	25	10.30	Minister	Julian

### FEBRUARY

Sun	01	10.30	COMMUNION & FBC	Julian
Sun	08	10.30	Minister	Julian
Sat	14	-	<i>St Valentine's Day!</i>	-
Sun	15	10.30	Assistant Preacher	Holly
Tues	17	-	<i>Shrove Tuesday</i>	
Wed	18	-	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>	
Sun	22	10.30	LENT 1 (Fast begins)	Julian
Wed	25	18.00	<i>Lenten Reflections &amp; Supper (1)</i> <i>7 Windmill House, Windmill Walk</i> <i>Waterloo, London, SE1 8LX</i>	Julian

### MARCH

Sun	01	10.30	LENT 2 Visiting Preacher	Terri Quaye
Wed	04	18.00	<i>Lenten Reflection &amp; Supper (2)</i>	Waterloo
Sun	08	10.30	LENT 3	Julian
Wed	11	18.00	<i>Lenten Reflection &amp; Supper (3)</i>	Waterloo
Sun	15	10.30	LENT 4 / Mothering Sunday	Alex
Wed	18	18.00	<i>Lenten Reflection &amp; Supper (4)</i>	Waterloo
Sun	22	10.30	LENT 5	Holly
Wed	26	18.00	<i>Lenten Reflection &amp; Supper (5)</i>	Waterloo
Sun	29	10.30	Palm Sunday Service	Alex

### APRIL

Thurs	02	18.30	Maundy Thurs – Comm'n & Agape Meal	Julian
Fri	03	-	<i>Good Friday</i>	-
Sun	05	10.30	EASTER SUNDAY & New Members	Julian
Sun	12	10.30	Minister	Julian
Sun	19	10.30	Minister	Julian
Sun	26	10.30	Minister	Julian
		11.50	AGM	

## MINISTER'S LETTER

I write from home, still in my bathrobe at gone 11:30am on a 'paper day'. I've made a good start, however. For one thing I'm finally getting around to doing the January - April newsletter. I sent Sue a holding newsletter covering January, but in the business of Christmas and New Year she forgot to forward this to you and I didn't give it another thought until poor Alex was put upon to cover a service in my absence. Bless him and thank you for your patience too.

Which gets me thinking. It would have been quite in order for Alex to say, I'm sorry, it's just too short notice. I daresay if he had, life would have been a lot easier for him. Instead, he ignored the unintended discourtesy and helped us out at some cost to himself at a busy time for him when his health was not great either. I was impressed with that, as I am by all those lovely souls around us who we can rely upon to help us out with no obligation to do so whatsoever. These are the helpers. I wonder if we are all in their company. Or are we amongst the grudging helpers or the non-helpers. To be fair, I think we move between all three. It depends on the context we find ourselves in and, of course, what mood we're in. Context is understandable. I'm sometimes asked to provide spiritual support to those outside the chapel. I'm invariably flattered to do this, as in the case of weddings and funerals for family and friends. If this is ongoing or particularly intensive, then I'm obliged to politely explain that is not how it works. Community worship is at the heart of our spirituality and without the congregation there would be no chapel and indeed no minister. However, mood is less excusable; indeed, it is inexcusable. What should our being in a good or bad mood have to do with our decision to help or not? Nothing! The worthiness of the cause should be our only criterion? That said, if we cannot always help with good grace, we might consider not helping at all. Those we help should not feel overly indebted or humiliated by any lack of grace on our part. We must also remember that quite a few people don't want to be helped, actually, however apparently needy. There's an intriguing tramp nearby my home in Waterloo who has resisted all attempts to get him off the street. You also never see him begging and you'd risk unpleasantness if you were to offer him anything. The thing is, we need to appear to be the kind of person who would be ready to receive a request for help. This is helped by an unhurried pace, making time for others, by polite engagement with all who come our way, and by a smile rather than a scowl. How is this done? Well, with a lot of determination and by a lot of prayer. Prayer reduces the need for determination; it makes us graceful by nature. I find a constant remembrance and recital of the Lord's Prayer to be most helpful. You'll recall it begins with 'Our Father ...' Indeed, it's sometimes called just that! Our God is not just mine, not just yours, but *ours*. He is the Father of all humanity, making us all brothers and sisters. I pray the reality of this fact will awaken within us all more and more in 2015, taking us out of our narrow selves and into a broad and rich community where we are not just servants, but the very helping hands of Christ. Amen

## NEWS

Apologies again for the late **newsletter!** We hope nobody in addition to Alex was unduly inconvenienced. Which reminds us, we must get the website sorted so that any change to the usual schedule of services is announced online. Occasional newcomer **Rita** attended on the morning of the Carols' Service to find us closed. There only being a notice on the board caused her a wasted trip. Thankfully she came back in the evening and enjoyed herself. It's of course the case that we're also closed on the Sunday of the church trip. So over to Julian, Sue and Chris! **Christmas** was lovely. There was no play at the Carols Service this year, just a focus on carols and readings, but we were very blessed by the input of our great MD **Chris** and his soprano friend **Sophie**. Their performance of *In the Bleak Midwinter* left us suitably wistful. We were equally blessed by such a large gathering. It seems the Christmas decorations and lights in the illuminated noticeboard on Effra Road did their magic. Thanks also to our residential agent **Jackie** for attending with her extended family after their late lunch. The singing was excellent. So was **Andrew's** hot buffet, making this the twenty third year he's missed the Carols Service! We should really try to do something about that this year. Suggestions welcome (read Minister's Letter). Welcome to newcomers **Inge** (a Canadian of Danish descent), **Katerina** (from Bulgaria) and baby **Borislav** (born here), and **Elisa** (from Italy). We're glad we mean so much to them and they bring much to us too. Which brings us to **membership and Easter**. Inge, Katerina, Elisa, **Richard** and **John** are all formally invited to become members of the Chapel. Those wishing to accept this invitation will be welcomed into membership on Easter Sunday. Julian and John (with a Buddhist background) are working on a midweek service to be held from 6.30pm to 7pm (doors open from 6pm) each Wednesday from April, to be called, provisionally, **Spirit Zone**. This will combine readings, music, mediation, prayer and reflection and will not be quite so explicitly Christocentric as the Sunday Service held on the Christian Sabbath. In particular, there will be no hymns. The service aims to provide a midweek spiritual retreat and get-together for all those who consider themselves 'spiritual', as well as those with religious affiliations who nevertheless appreciate a broader canvas. Your attendance at this midweek service, especially for the first three months or so, would be particularly appreciated. It's not been an easy time for quite a few of us. Edwin's mum has passed away, our late **Cleave's** sister and friend of **Cynthia** has died, and two of **Vicky's** siblings have had diabetes-related amputations! Our prayers are with our members and these families at this time. A few of us have had colds, some of which have taken a long time to shift, and **Stephen** had some worrying mobility issues after being involved in community clearance work. Thankfully he's now fully mended. And there is more positive news. **Sue** is now working closely with Andrew in his painting and decorating and building business ([www.fitchandferrule.com](http://www.fitchandferrule.com)); **Andrew** is to spend one night a week on *The Spectator's* wine tasting course; and **Julian** has passed LTR2 and LRC's Navigation Test, so joining London Rowing Club.