

NEWS & CHAT - Thursday 20 August 2020

Welcome to the joint weekly newsletter of Christ Church and the Bridgwater Drive Church.

Sunday 23 August, 10am service will be our 'usual' service posted on Facebook for 10am. It will be a communion service so please have bread and wine/juice ready.

A reminder that Holiday Club – The Great Bread Bake using material from Synod, is still available online for all of August, in case you missed it.

House Groups – our next 'in person' House Group at Christ Church will be on **Monday 24 August** at 3pm. The next Zoom session will be on the same day at 7pm. The link will be sent out nearer the time. Please see the questions/topic we will be discussing at the end of this N&C

Singing for Joy will not take place 26 August as Sandy is away.

Tuesday Church, 10.30am EVERY Tuesday at the Bridgwater Drive Church, for a time of prayer and reflection, led by the Minister

Thursday Church, 10.30am EVERY Thursday at Christ Church. This week - **20 August – Taize**, next week **27 August**, Bible Study led by the Minister.

From 8 August, the government has made the wearing of face coverings mandatory in places of worship, so we will have to wear them for all group meetings from that date. I will wear a visor when leading sessions so that the harder of hearing can see my mouth.

CHILDREN'S SPACE please see last week's Bumper Issue while Sandy is on holiday

BUILDINGS:

Good news – Bridgwater. The ramp, railings and new doors and windows have now all been fitted!



Not such good news – Christ Church One of the fluorescent tubes above the communion table fell and exploded due to the heat and sent tiny pieces of glass all over the place. A BIG thank you to Sue & John who did most of the clearing up and helped me move some of the chairs that had been stacked there. Fortunately, no one was in the building when it happened, so no one was hurt. (pics next page).

Christ Church Quinquennial Survey this survey has now been conducted and the Elders have reviewed the findings. As the next step, we have agreed to conduct an electrical survey. Once we have the report on that we will be sending out more information on plans and proposals for the refurbishment work recommended in the survey (both required and desired) and how it might fit into longer-term mission and outreach plans. **Watch this space, as they say!**

CC folk, please remember to bring/send your coins for the Lent Appeal by 31 August, thanks!



DEVOTION

On Sunday, someone posted a video of the actress Emma Thompson reading a poem by Naomi Shihab Nye on Facebook. Emma dedicated it to our collective future, to who we will be after all this, because it is clear we cannot go back to normal. It is called *Kindness* and seems a good thing to reflect on:

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.
Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.
Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to gaze at bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

www.poets.org/poem/kindness



Naomi is an Arab-American poet. Her father was a Palestinian refugee.

ECO-CHURCH & THE ENVIRONMENT

The Faith in Action Group commend to you the Ideas for Reducing Plastic use from A Rocha, the Christian environmental organisation. Here is the next section to consider:

COSMETICS / HYGIENE Make your bathroom a plastic-free zone

- Avoid buying products containing microbeads by using the product lists on www.beatthemicrobead.org and avoiding the following ingredients
 - Polyethylene
 - Polypropylene
 - Polyethylene terephthalate
 - Polymethyl methacrylate
- Reduce packaging by
 - buying shampoo and soap in bar-form rather than liquid form
 - bulk buy
 - choosing brands such as *Lush* cosmetics (where you can bring back pots for reusing) and *Who Gives A Crap* toilet paper. (Cheeky Panda also use all recyclable packaging)
- Avoid plastic in short-life products. You can now find paper-based Q-tips, bamboo toothbrushes and silk dental floss
- Go reusable! There is so much out there, from reusable wet-wipes, feminine hygiene products, nappies, make-up removing pads and safety-blade razors. (Cheeky Panda have biodegradable wet-wipes)



REMEMBER: REFUSE, REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE!

A reminder that in 2 weeks, on Sunday 6 September, we will celebrate Climate Sunday.



I found this too late for last week's N&C, but still something we can do (I've already signed):

Christian Aid's Demand a New Deal for Climate Justice Campaign

"We believe every person is made in the image of God, steeped in inherent dignity and worth. And that every single one of us has a role to play in bringing about a fairer, more just world where all can flourish."

"We are seeing the world waking up to the enormity of climate change. From the global youth strikes to the Extinction Rebellion protests, people of all ages around the world are demanding action on a massive scale. We must keep up the pressure on the UK Government to act with urgency for climate justice both at home and abroad. **It's time to create a just system that rebalances our earth.**"

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/climate-change/climate-justice-eaction>

Christian Aid also currently have an appeal to help Lebanon.

TIPS & IDEAS

A few weeks ago, I told you about a project I am taking part in – **Slow Marathon: Under One Sky**, which is an attempt to walk around the globe - hundreds of different people, logging their adventures and contributing to a huge collective journey. There are 313 registered walkers from over 40 countries, and we have now walked over 22,000 miles. To mark this achievement, there will be a special event on **Sunday 23 August from 2pm – 49 Million Footsteps Together**. All the walkers will walk at the same time, and those that are doing it together in person (in Scotland) will be posting live to their Facebook page from about 2.30pm.

Christ Church, Rayleigh (CC) and the Bridgwater Drive Church (BDC)

During the walk we are invited to consider the borders that surround us – physical, mental, or metaphorical; think about what solidarity means; and at 3pm observe the sky above us. You may also like to take a walk on Sunday afternoon and think about these things.

From It's Not Your Birthday (<https://itsnotyourbirthdaybut.com/> if you want to learn more), who are champions of the lost art of letter writing. They connect people through letters, words and visual arts. They work in community settings such as schools, prisons, care homes, hospices and hospitals to encourage people to explore their own creativity, challenge assumptions that may be made about them and to share what's important or helpful to them.

The Challenge: Get creative to share your 'Sanctuary', and what it means to you. Where do you think of when you hear the words 'a place of extended rest'? Reflect on a space where you feel safe and happy, calm or at peace. It might be a place that you've spent extended amounts of time in during lockdown, or it might be somewhere completely different. Recreate your sanctuary - You could sketch it, describe it in prose or poetry, or you might like to make a short video.

PRAYER CORNER

I invite all of you to set aside time daily to pray for our churches and members but also for the whole nation and world, in particular at the moment all the young people who have received or are receiving exam results this week and those looking for university places or further training. I am praying 'live' with a short devotion every day, Monday – Friday, on the Rev Naomi Facebook Page

Particular prayer requests this week:

Chris, a neighbour of Judy C
Audrey
Grace and Phil

Barbara
Celia, Geoff & family
Colin

House Group Topic/Questions:

You may remember that at the end of his book *Humankind* Rutger Bregman has 10 Rules to live by. I think these are very much based on Christian thought, so I have tried to pair them with at least one Bible text to spark discussion (with slightly mixed results so far – one group was just too enlightened so simply agreed! One group had a lot to say; and BDC went off on a complete tangent!) We have already looked at Rule #1, and some of us at #2 a bit, so we are jumping to rule #3:

3. Ask more questions

The Golden Rule – do unto others... (positive) or Do not do unto others...(negative) is enshrined in virtually every philosophy and religion. Some neurobiologists even think it is the product of millions of years of evolution and is programmed into our brains. **Do to others as you would have them do to you.**

Luke 6:31 (Read verses 27-31 – does that make us push-overs?)

This is the BIG ONE, pretty much THE rule of Christianity, and all other religions, but **do we agree with Bregman's view?**

Bregman thinks this rule falls short because we [humans] are actually not very good at sensing what others want, and what I would like is often not what someone else wants. How many times have you said something to someone thinking that it is a nice thing, or what you would want them to say or do for you, and they get upset because it is definitely not what they would say or do? Far better he says, to start with a question – to let others have their voice; to let employees rather than managers direct their own teams. The variation he favours, the 'Platinum Rule' is from George Bernard Shaw:

"Do *not* do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Their tastes may differ."

How do we incorporate that into a Christian life? Is that just too modern and secular, or are there words or actions from Jesus that do go with this idea?

If this doesn't go too far, we'll move onto Rule 4 – there's a cliff-hanger for you!!