

NEWS & CHAT - Thursday 6 August 2020

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

Sunday 9 August, 10am service will be an **All Age** service prepared and presented by Sandy (on Facebook) in conjunction with the online Holiday Club.

Holiday Club – The Great Bread Bake using material from Synod, is taking place this week, but will be available online for all of August.

House Groups – we held our first ‘in person’ House Group at Christ Church on Monday and 7 people attended. The next meeting at the church will be on **Monday 24 August** at 3pm. Our next Zoom House Group will be on Monday 10th August at 7pm, using the same questions from Monday (printed in last week’s N&C). The link will be circulated nearer the time. **If you are not online but would like to join by phone, please contact Martin for how to do that. If anyone from BDC would like to join by phone, please contact the Minister and I’ll give you Martin’s number.**

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 - **6 August, Space for Prayer**, led by Gwyneth. Next week, **13 August – Needles & Natter**.

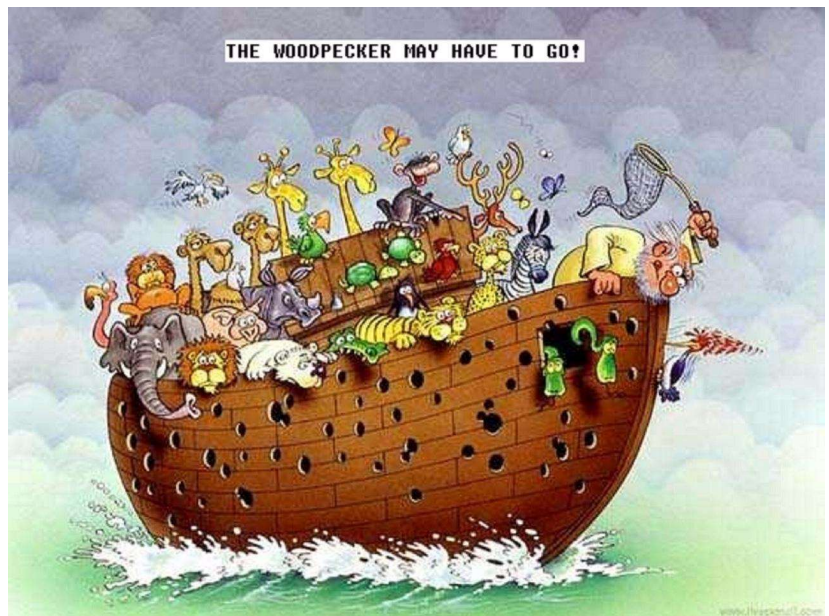
Synod strongly encourages us to wear face masks at these meetings. From 8 August, the government has made the wearing of face coverings mandatory in places of worship, so we will have to wear them from that date. I will wear a visor when leading sessions so that the harder of hearing can see my mouth.

Singing for Joy will not take place on 19 or 26 August as Sandy is away.

I know I preach a message of inclusion, but sometimes...



Thanks Phil!



CHILDREN’S SPACE – see attached Children’s & Families News

DEVOTION – Psalm 39:4-7

LORD, let me know my end, and what is the measure of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is. You have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing in your sight. Surely everyone stands as a mere breath. Surely everyone goes about like a shadow. Surely for nothing they are in turmoil; they heap up, and do not know who will gather. And now, O Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in you.

Reflection from Malcolm Guite

Verse 7 will resonate with many of us in the midst of the COVID crisis, and so perhaps will those verses about our mortality and the frailty of things in this world, verses calling us to set our hope more firmly on God.

For a Christian of course that hope is rooted in Christ, in his death and resurrection. This was all in my mind as I composed my poem in response to Psalm 39, but so were those lines of Leonard Cohen's, that it is just when you begin to perceive the 'crack in everything' that you also perceive that that is 'how the light gets in!' This present plague has prompted me, like many, to reflect that we must not return, afterwards, to our old ways, but must take this *kairos* moment as an opportunity to strengthen the things that remain and renew our true hope in Christ

XXXIX Dixi, Custodiam

Deliver me and raise me from the dead
For I have walked in shadows. Nothingness,
The vanity of things fills me with dread,

The sheer inanity, the pointlessness
Of how we used to live – we can't go back
To that – the rush that masked our emptiness,



All the pretence that covered what we lack
When what we really lacked was always you.
I held my tongue, but I could see the crack

In everything we build and say and do.
And now the crack is widening. I pray
That we will turn and see a light break through

These fissures that so fill us with dismay.
The death we fear is birth, the shell is breaking:
The stone itself will soon be rolled away.

UPDATE FROM SYNOD on churches re-opening (or not!)

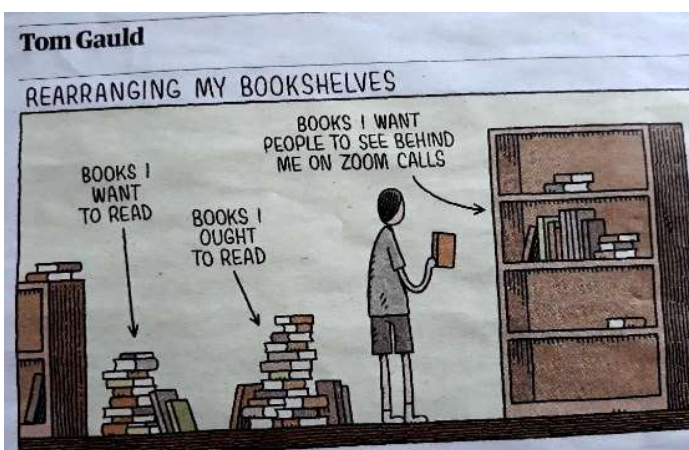
Last week I attended a Zoom meeting of ministers from Eastern Synod. There were 20 of us and since we all serve at least two churches (some serve 5!), it is fairly representative of what is happening across the region, so I thought I would share some of the things we discussed about churches re-opening.

- It seems that most churches are in fact not yet open for Sunday worship and do not plan to be for some time.
- Many churches are doing risk assessments and discussing opening in September or October.
- Those few churches that have opened for worship are all large buildings with a small membership, so can manage the 2m distancing required.
- 30 people attending was the highest any church had been able to accommodate.
- Most churches, like us, are continuing with online services, with most (but not all) providing written services for those not online.
- Only one other person mentioned providing a weekly newsletter.
- The discussion focussed on Sunday Worship, but I did not get the impression that many churches had opened for small group meetings or private prayer yet.
- Quite a few had buildings open to service food banks.
- One church eldership is so risk adverse that the building is completely closed and they won't even let the minister into the building!!

Is anyone else organising their bookshelves?!

I'm not so much re-arranging, as desperately trying to see what books are behind other people in Zoom meetings and on Channel 4 News!!

If anyone can work out the titles of Jon Snow's books – please put me out of my misery!



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:

FOOD/KITCHEN: The kitchen is a zone where it's easy to accumulate single-use plastics.

- Bring reusable bags when doing your shopping
- Choose food with less packaging, e.g. bulk buying
- Properly dispose of packaging
- Switch your sponge and plastic washing-up brush for a natural fibre scrub pad or wooden dish brush
- Avoid single-use coffee pods and individually wrapped tea bags
- **Finish your plate!** by reducing food waste, we reduce how much we need to buy
- Buy good quality food containers or reusable beeswax wrap to avoid reaching for the cling-film



ON-THE-GO: Don't get caught out when out and about – be prepared and refuse single-use plastics.

- Carry a reusable water bottle, coffee cup, and cutlery
- Say 'no straw please' when ordering a drink.

RESOURCES

Via the Slow Marathon project I'm involved with, I came across this: <https://littlesun.com/>

"What started as a humble idea to create a small, portable **solar lamp** for people without electricity in **Ethiopia** is now a global project that has changed over **two million lives** through the awesome power of the sun. Launched in 2012 by artist **Olafur Eliasson** and engineer **Frederik Ottesen** at London's **Tate Modern**, Little Sun's social business brings **clean, reliable, affordable energy** to the **1.1 billion people** in the world living **without electricity** while **raising awareness** for **energy access** and **climate action** worldwide. Our premium solar products are for everyone. Little Sun solar lamps and phone chargers are sold online and in partner stores around the world. Each time you buy a **Little Sun**, we deliver one to someone living off-the-grid at a much lower, **locally affordable price**. On the ground, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa, we work with **local entrepreneurs** to create local jobs and to bring the **power of the sun to everyone**."



We envision a future in which the number of people without access to clean, sustainable energy will drop from 1.1 billion to zero. We believe passionately in energy access for all – improving health, education, gender equality, and environmental sustainability – aligning with the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) as outlined by the UN."

Their Little Sun solar powered lamp makes a great gift, especially for children. And their website has lots more information about their many projects in Africa. It also ties in nicely with Christ Church's support of solar energy in Budiriro!



And here's another gift idea that helps the planet: <https://treecelet.co.uk/>
Buy a bracelet and they plant trees!

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 those who still cannot get out much because of age, or pre-existing conditions, and those who feel more isolated through not having access to the internet. And for anyone actually managing to get away for a holiday in August, and anyone caught up in quarantine. I am praying 'live' with a short devotion every day, Monday – Friday, on the Rev Naomi Facebook Page

Particular prayer requests this week:

Frank
David, Bill and Beth's son in law.
Terry, Jo's husband, Di's son-in-law.
Ernie H and Stella's family
Celia, Geoff & family
Jan & Clive

We give thanks for:

Liz thanks you for your prayer, support and donations to Hopeworx during the Pandemic.
Many families have been helped through the Food Bank. The numbers for April through June are:
Food parcels - Total 202
Individuals - Total 464

And finally, for a bit of light relief... has anyone else tried to grow veg for the first time? Here are the mixed results from the manse garden!!! Please share some of your garden photos.



1st red tomato!



Oh dear!!



Green beans attacked by snails, but the handful we got were delicious!



Chili looking good



Holding out for the potatoes