

NEWS & CHAT

Thursday 17 September 2020

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

Sunday 20 September, 10am service in Christ Church (please see separate letter for details and how to 'book' as places are limited to around 30). The service will also be live-streamed on the CC Facebook page. I will be using the URC service pre-prepared by Anne Sardeson, who I believe some CC people know from a previous Away Day.

News

Church re-opening

The **Christ Church** Elders met on Monday 14 September and decided that we could re-open the church building for Sunday worship, starting from 20 September and to be reviewed weekly.

You (CC folk) will have already received the letter explaining the restrictions and how to 'book' a place at the Sunday service. **PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY.**

Bridgwater Drive In light of Christ Church doing a trial opening of 4 Sundays, the BDC Elders agreed that we should trial people going to BDC at **10.30am on Sunday from 20th Sept.** to watch the service from Christ Church on the screen, via Facebook. Once the trial period has been assessed, we will see if live services can resume at Bridgwater on some Sundays. **Please 'book' your place with Margaret by Saturday noon, as we cannot exceed the capacity (restricted by social distancing of 2m).**

Tuesday Church, 10.30am EVERY Tuesday at the Bridgwater Drive Church, for a time of prayer and reflection, led by the Minister (MB on 22nd and 29th Sept.)

Thursday Church, 10.30am EVERY Thursday at Christ Church. Next week, **24 Sept. Bible Study**, led by Ian. **1 October, Space for Prayer** led by Gwyneth.

HOUSE GROUPS (CC):

At the Church, Monday **28 Sept. 3pm**

Zoom, Monday **5 Oct. 7pm**

Christ Church has a new website! Check it out! www.christchurchrayleigh.org.uk

The content will be mostly the same, but it looks newer, brighter, and easier for non-church people to navigate. The address remains the same, but it is now hosted by iChurch, the URC website provider and therefore looks similar to the new Bridgwater Drive website.

13-19 Sept. Naomi & Sandy are doing the Ration Challenge. Eating the same rations as a Syrian refugee for a week to raise funds for food and medical supplies for refugees. Funds are taken online. If you don't do online, please give cash or cheques to either me or Sandy and we can pay it in. **THANK YOU!**

<https://www.rationchallenge.org.uk/naomi-young-rodas>

<https://www.rationchallenge.org.uk/sandy-brown>

There is still time to sponsor us PLEASE!



I (the minister!) will be on annual leave 21 Sept to 4 Oct. inclusive. For any urgent pastoral matters during that time, please contact the relevant Church Secretary – Jean (CC), Margaret (BDC).

There will be no News & Chat for those two weeks, nor daily online prayers.



This cartoon doesn't apply quite as much as for our holiday in April (at home during full lockdown), but we're not going too far!

Services & themes, September – October

Some special things are happening in October, so since I will be away for the next two weeks, I thought I would highlight them now. For the foreseeable future, all Sunday services will continue to be online, in some format (probably live-streamed at 10am on the CC Facebook page) and the printed service will continue to be sent out weekly. **Please continue to think of Sunday services as joint (CC AND BDC) regardless of where the minister might be, or what format the service takes.**

The following services in the church will be subject to weekly review as per the letter sent on Tuesday.

Sunday 20 September – service led by the Minister at Christ Church and live-streamed

Sunday 27 September – service led by Robert at Christ Church and live-streamed

Sunday 4 October – service led by Keith & Joyce at Christ Church and live-streamed with a focus on Commitment for Life, particularly Central America, the region supported by Christ Church. Bridgwater people – before lockdown, as part of our 'year of review' which we have been unable to start due to the pandemic, we were going to consider whether the BDC would like to become a Commitment for Life church and which region we might like to support. Maybe take some time in October to think about that and we will re-visit the issue when we can meet properly again.

Sunday 11 October Harvest, led by the Minister at Christ Church and live-streamed, with donations of food and signing of Climate Change letter (see below).

We will be supporting **HARP** and **Hopeworx** with donations of non-perishable food (packets, cans etc, no fresh items). **CC people** – if you are able, please take goods to the church or directly to Hopeworx. If not, please contact Helen who can arrange to collect. If you are not able to donate food, but wish to send money, please send a cheque to Keith, or make a bank transfer, specifying that it is for Harvest and he will split the amount and make the donation to the charities. **BDC people** - harvest gifts of goods and money for HARP can be brought to The BDC on Tuesday mornings from 11.15 - 12.00 (after Tuesday Church). Val will be there at that time if you want to support BDC funds by buying any of her Christmas novelties. Please ring Margaret or Val if you can't get to church on Tuesday mornings but would like to donate to HARP or buy Christmas novelties.

Sunday 18 October, pre-recorded online service with **Communion** led by the minister. The **preacher** (video and text) **will be Ruth Wilde, National Coordinator of Inclusive Church.**

Sunday 25 October, on ZOOM - a short service and **Q&A / discussion about Inclusive Church** with Ruth Wilde.

Next week, in my absence, a paper giving (again) more information about Inclusive Church will be sent out.

DEVOTION – from Monday's URC Daily Devotion by Rev'd Gwen Collins

John 1: 1 – 5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Now is the season to make a step change.

Now is the moment to invent a new humanity.

Now is the hour to grasp the hand of God and move forward courageously on a different path.

Quantum mechanics has opened up our understanding of the material world being shaped through probabilities. Theologically this is tremendously exciting and empowering. The future does not yet exist. God's call to Life, in Christ, is a call to discern together what actions now would be life-giving for the future. Then to commit 100% to that Way. Limiting the rise in global temperature and securing a level of biodiversity which can sustain the earth's ecological systems are key amongst those life-giving actions.

In the beginning - the Word was with God.

In Jesus - the Word was with those who lived in Palestine 2000 years ago.

In the Spirit - the Word was, is and will be, with humanity.

In the 21st century - the Word is with us as dependably, as surely, as truly, as creatively and as radically as it ever was. And as demandingly!

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

In our Kairos moment let us not be found wanting.
God who is the Word, praise, glory and wonder be yours for bringing life into being.
You are our light. Shine in the gloom and murk of our earth-damaging practices.
Illuminate our possible futures. Raise us up to choose the life-giving path.
So may we honour your great gift to humanity in Jesus, the Life Giver. Amen

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

TIPS & IDEAS - From 64 Million Artists

This week 64 Million Artists re celebrating trees! Small ones, big ones, and everything in between - take the time to consider what's around you and get creative. Could you go on an outdoor adventure and photograph what you find?

You could take inspiration from nature and create an Autumnal collage or draw a repeating pattern of tree leaves. You might even like to create a 'family tree' - where are your roots, and where are you growing? Could you take inspiration from the project, and create something that advocates to protect or develop green spaces near you? Anything goes...get creative!

I took this photo of a tree at Maldon last weekend. I was going to write a *haiku* to go with it, but haven't had time. Perhaps someone else would like to take up the challenge of writing a tree-related poem?!



RESOURCES

New weekly reflections from St Paul's Cathedral: <https://mailchi.mp/a1200eab1cfd/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1344348?e=e30a1f608a>

Resources for '**Creation Season**' Observed from September 1 to October 4, the Season of Creation is an annual celebration of prayer and action embraced by the wider ecumenical community to protect and care for our common home. This jointly-produced Celebration Guide provides resources for Christians worldwide to pray, reflect, and respond with bold action as stewards of God's creation :
<https://www.cwmission.org/resources-for-this-years-season-of-creation-are-now-available/>

ENVIRONMENT

After watching *Extinction* on BBC1 on Sunday (if you missed it you may want to look for it on iPlayer), I felt we really need to be doing even more for the environment. The (CC) Elders agreed, and so we have asked the Faith in Action Group to write a letter to the Prime Minister, which all members can sign (in person or electronically – just give us permission and Sue can add your name) at our Harvest service on 11 October, calling for urgent action to help stop climate change.

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. I am praying 'live' with a short devotion every day, Monday – Friday, on the Rev Naomi Facebook Page, then shared with both church FB pages. Due to increasing other commitments, this may not now happen every day, but I will endeavour to do it most days.

This week please pray especially for Naomi and Sandy as they undertake the Ration Challenge, and for all refugees, in particular those who were living in the Moria camp on Lesbos.

Particular prayer requests this week:

Della and Alan
Sheila
Ernie L.
Barbara (CC)

I've heard people saying lots of other churches are opening. I think most (but not all) parish churches are, but the Church of England are taking a less cautious view than the URC. I attended a meeting of most of the ministers of the Eastern Synod this week and we all reported whether we were open for **Sunday Worship** or not. There is a very mixed picture across the region. See box below.

Out of 24 churches mentioned:

13 are open or about to open,

Of which 3 are only open to let people watch the online service and 1 is only open one Sunday per month.

So, excluding those 4, only **37% of churches are open**. And 3 plus us are only opening for the first time on 20th Sept.

6 churches are **not yet open**, with no plans to open – **25%**

5 are **still discussing opening** – **21%**

So, while most are open, it is by no means all URCs in the Eastern region. And **most of those that have opened have only done so in the last 2-3 weeks or start this Sunday**.

A good idea from the Minister's meeting –

Write the Gospel in 50 words!

It will be interesting to see what you come up with. I will try to do mine after our holiday!

A message from Helen:

I have some cross-stitch silks plus rings with stand plus kits and books for cross stitch. If anyone is interested, please contact Helen Dart 01268 781258.

Everything is free