

NEWS & CHAT Thursday 22 October 2020

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

Sunday 25th Oct, will be on **ZOOM** from 9.45am **for a 10am start** – a short service, followed by a Q&A and discussion with Ruth Wilde (National Coordinator) about Inclusive Church. The Zoom link and password are: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87148054623?pwd=UGRtWDVSczZhzRXRMM0dFcW9GYXFvUT09>

Click on the link or cut and paste it into your internet browser.

Meeting ID: 871 4805 4623

Passcode: 821423 **Should you need them**

The link and details for how to phone into the meeting will be emailed out by Sue and Margaret again on Saturday. **If you are not able to Zoom, please contact Pat or Margaret, to arrange to watch the service and discussion at CC or BDC at 10am in the church building.** If you do not do Zoom, and want to ask a question, please send it to me or one of the Church Secretaries and one of us will ask it. This is a **one-off special Zoom service**, so please try to participate.

Services in November:

The CC Elders met and agreed that for November we should continue with services in the church and live-streamed. It is anticipated that all the services in November will be joint and led by the Minister. **IF** Essex (or our local area) moves into TIER 3, **OR** there is any kind of national 'lockdown' services in the church buildings would be suspended with the Elders reviewing when we can re-open. Church services are currently not mentioned in the tier system, but we felt that given the average age of both congregations, if either of these things happen it would be wise to close the building again and keep the situation under review. **IF there is a 'lockdown' the Tuesday and Thursday meetings would also be suspended.** The BDC Elders will meet the first week of November, but it is anticipated that Bridgwater Drive will continue with watching the online service at the church at 11am on Sunday mornings for November.

Please continue to 'book' a place with Pat (CC) or Margaret (BDC). **Please note that if anyone receives a positive COVID-19 test result in the week following church attendance they MUST inform the Minister or one of the Elders so that we can inform everyone to self-isolate.** (Many people are not using the NHS App, and it cannot be relied on). **Please try to keep chatting before and after the service to a minimum and observe social distancing.**

Please note:

8th November is Remembrance Sunday, so the service will start at **10.45am** to accommodate the two-minute silence. Red and white poppies will be available in the welcome area. There will be no Street collection this year.

15th November – will be a **Communion** service. We have now found a way to do it using individually wrapped wine and wafer packs. These will be made available to both churches. The Minister will consecrate real bread and wine as normal.

29 November is the first Sunday in Advent this year.

ADVENT – Robert is planning to run a weekly session for the four weeks of Advent focussing on several of the angel appearances to various people in the run up to the birth of Jesus. This will probably happen on Zoom. **Watch this space for further details!**

We are planning several **new things** for **Christmas**. These will be announced in more detail nearer the time as things are constantly changing with government restrictions and guidelines, but in brief so you can start to get excited, and send in your thoughts, the **new things** are:

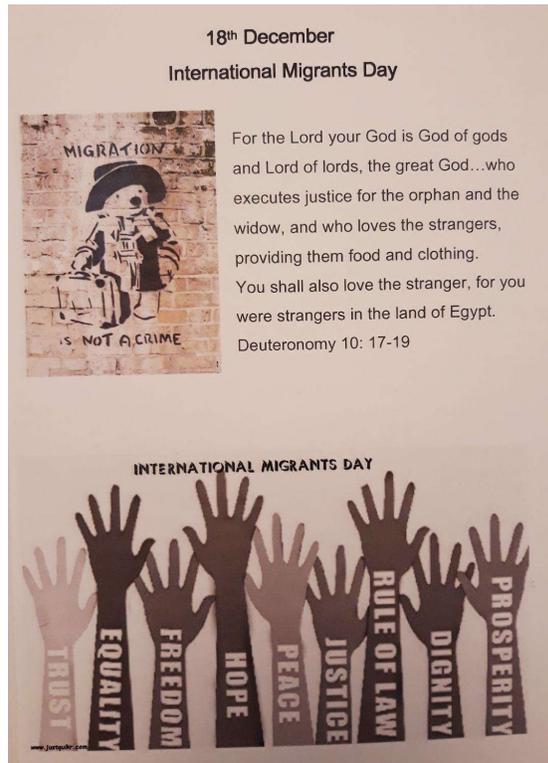
We are thinking of organising a **church-wide Advent Calendar**. We would need 22 volunteers (or less if people do two days – Sandy and I have already agreed to do it) to put an Advent Calendar day in your window at home and take a picture of it. The pictures will be added to both websites, Facebook pages, and

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church noticeboards each day, forming (by the 24th) a complete Advent Calendar. You don't need to be able to take and send a photo – if you want to do this, someone can come and take the photo for you.

If you have an idea for a theme (other than the traditional), **and/or you would like to volunteer to host a day, please contact me or one of the Elders.** (see below)

There are quite a few 'international days' (1st World Aids Day, 10th Human Rights Day, 18th Migrants Day) in December, so one idea for an **Advent Calendar** could be to incorporate them. 2 years ago, I made an Advent Calendar that I posted on Facebook. Here are 2 days from that, to give you an idea (I'm not suggesting we do this, it's just an example!):



Another idea might be to mention local charities we support on some of the days? The 24th should be a nativity scene.



The 'Rayleigh Posada' - Mary and Joseph will be visiting people in Rayleigh during December. Everyone will receive a card explaining the origin of this idea, including a list of Christmas services, at the end of November. A short film will be made in conjunction with this that will be made available on Facebook and the church websites.

We are hoping to hold a **virtual Carol Service at 4pm Sunday 20 December**. We will all listen (online or on a pre-delivered CD) to the recording of the URC Carol Service. If we all watch at the same time, we will feel like we are celebrating together. Everyone can have tea and cake, or mulled wine and mince pies, or whatever you fancy, while listening to the service.

We discussed **Christmas Day**. One idea was that Zoom might be a good, more casual and friendly format for Christmas Day allowing space for people to chat about what they were doing, gifts received, share a Christmas story and so on. But, we also felt that it didn't seem right not to have the churches open on Christmas Day, and some people can't participate in Zoom. In theory, we could combine the two, but that would require some organising!

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PLEASE LET ME OR ONE OF THE ELDERS KNOW WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE, SO WE CAN SEE WHAT WOULD APPEAL TO MOST PEOPLE AND AIM TO DO THAT.

All services and events mentioned above would continue to be on Facebook also, as numbers in the building are limited, and the full texts of services will continue to go out in paper form.

The **Christmas post box** (at CC) will be in the Welcome Area from Sunday, 29th November, with last posting date Sunday 13th December. Strictly church family cards only.

Please send **Christmas greetings for the Church News** to Sue, John or Mark by **10th November**. Donations this year will go towards Church funds.

One final note on Christmas – this year we are not (as a church) doing the **Samaritan's Purse Shoebox** appeal (unless you have already bought items) – see attached letter from Pam and Len.

THE CHRIST CHURCH BIG CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Because 2020 has been such a strange and awful year for people and many more people will have slipped from just coping to really struggling we (Naomi & the CC Elders) thought it would be good to have an extra appeal to help local people with food and gifts at Christmas, especially as it may be more difficult for people to buy gifts this year and we are not having a gift service in the way we usually do. **So, this week, we are launching the BIG CHRISTMAS appeal.** We will partner with Hopeworx and Home-Start as they already have systems in place for delivering support to provide Christmas food boxes (Hopeworx) and volunteers to deliver gifts (Home-start). **You can send money (BACS or cheque, or cash in person) to Keith, marked 'Christmas Appeal'** OR, if you prefer, donate a gift card for an all-purpose shop like Sainsbury's, Asda, Argos, Superdrug, Boots, which can be given out in conjunction with the special food hampers Hopeworx gives out for Christmas. Sent out with this News & Chat is the list from Hopeworx of the particular items they need for the Christmas Hampers (this is not 'emergency' food, but items to make Christmas a bit nicer) if you prefer to **donate food** – please take it to church, or contact one of the Elders if you need it collected. If you prefer to give **toys** as in the past, they can also be used.

Please send your donation (money or food/toys) by 29 November, Advent Sunday, as Hopeworx will be filling and delivering the hampers from 4 December. I'll be sending my donation tomorrow!

Going forward, in 2021, the Elders will be looking into more longer-term ways we can help people living in increased poverty due to the pandemic.

Coincidentally, **next week, 24-30 October, is Good Money Week** (as highlighted in *Reform* in October). It is a chance to start a conversation about money and how it can be used for good. "It doesn't cost extra to choose good banks, pensions, savings and investments. It is just a matter of choice –like where you buy your coffee. If thousands of us join together to take one or more of the suggested Good Money actions we send a strong signal to companies that it matters how they behave." Check out the website for ideas: <https://goodmoneyweek.com/>



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Other News

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. **NO MEETING at the church on 29 October.** You are all encouraged to participate in the **VIRTUAL COFFEE MORNING**, in aid of Rayleigh Combined Churches Refugee Group. **10.30 - 12.00.** Stay at home. Make your morning drink. Have a biscuit (or two). Think of us. Pray with us, and if you are able to, send a donation. Thank you!

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

DEVOTION – no devotion this week as there is a lot of information to digest about November services and Christmas ideas.

TIPS & IDEAS – for Good Money Week

Take the Sustainable Savers Quiz here: <https://www.boringmoney.co.uk/sustainable-savers/>

It takes less than 1 minute (there are only 3 questions)

Maybe sign up for a 'Restoring Hope' event...

RESOURCES

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility has a series of online events for **Good Money Week** - <https://www.eccr.org.uk/news/restoring-hope-a-series-of-online-events-24-30-october-2020-2/>

“**Restoring Hope**”, a series of online events exploring the connections between faith and finance.

The Covid-19 crisis has created a deficit of hope as people worry about their health, jobs and finance. This series of events will help us explore the relevance of the Christian faith to our financial decisions and the wider economy, and in the process help us rediscover hope in these challenging times. Join us throughout the week as we explore what the Bible says about money, how we can connect our faith and our finances, both as individuals and within our church communities, and how we can use the entirety of our resources to restore hope as stewards of God's creation.” Rowan Williams is one of the guest speakers.

New weekly reflections from St Paul's Cathedral: <https://mailchi.mp/989def66ae10/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1354940?e=e30a1f608a>

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 we invite you to pray especially for anyone who has lost loved ones this year as we approach the season of remembrance.

Particular prayer requests this week:

Barbara and Richard *

Sheila

Ernie L.

Phil and Grace

Gerry, Margaret and family

* Barbara (CC) says: “Thank you for your prayers.
Love to everyone.”

