

NEWS & CHAT Thursday 29 October 2020

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

Sunday 1 November, 10am service in Christ Church. The service will also be live-streamed on the CC Facebook page. Please contact Pat, as usual, if you are planning to attend, or Margaret if you are planning to watch the service at Bridgwater Drive at 11am.

Last Sunday, (25th Oct), Christ Church held its usual Remembering Service for families of people who have died during the past year. **The text version of the service is attached**, in case you would like to read it at home or pass it on to a friend or neighbour who may have been bereaved this year. At the service, in addition to candles, there was a tree on which people could hang hearts with the names of loved ones. **This tree will remain in church on Sunday 1 November (All Saint's Day) in case anyone else would like to add a name. Please do so at the beginning of the service, maintaining social distancing rules.**

Upcoming Services – a reminder that:

Next week, 8th Nov. is the **Remembrance Day Service** and **WILL START AT 10.45am** to accommodate the 2 minute silence at 11am. Red and white poppies are available in the foyer at CC.

News:

Christ Church Christmas Appeal launched last week. Please send donations marked 'Christmas Appeal' to Keith by 29 November.

Bridgwater Drive – please continue to give gifts of food or money to HARP.

ADVENT CALENDAR – if you would like to participate in the church Advent Calendar (explained last week), please contact Naomi or one of the Elders. **Advent will be here sooner than you think! If no one volunteers, you're likely to get a very social justice based Calendar!! (ie the Minister will be doing it in her own particular style!)**

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. Next week, **5 Nov. Space for Prayer** led by Gwyneth. This week please participate in the Combined Churches Refugee Group Virtual Coffee.

HOUSE GROUPS: Zoom – Mon. 2 Nov. 7pm We are temporarily suspending the 'in-person' group at Christ Church on Monday afternoons – we will review it in the new year. Please join in the Zoom session if you are able. It is fun and only 40 minutes! (see the 'Devotion' and last page for the theme).

Mini DEVOTION / environmental thought

The autumnal colours have been truly spectacular this year, so I'd like to share part of a letter from Elizabeth Pryor which is very appropriate:

'If we look after nature, nature will look after us' by Matt Ford

'Nature isn't just a bonus. We can now see it as the necessity it is, not just for our health and sanity but for the future of the world.' by Simon Barnes

These two quotes are from the RSPB magazine. The Woodland Trust also is concerned with mental health and recognizes the connection with woodland and health – 'Like so much in nature, it's symbiotic: we need the woods, the woods need us.'

Psalm 19 v.1-6 was the reading from 'Fresh from the Word' the other day and it really made all the connections linking us with seeing God through the creation to knowing God through 'the word' and prayer. I certainly hadn't looked at the psalm with that understanding before and thought how good it was for a passage for an Eco Church.

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

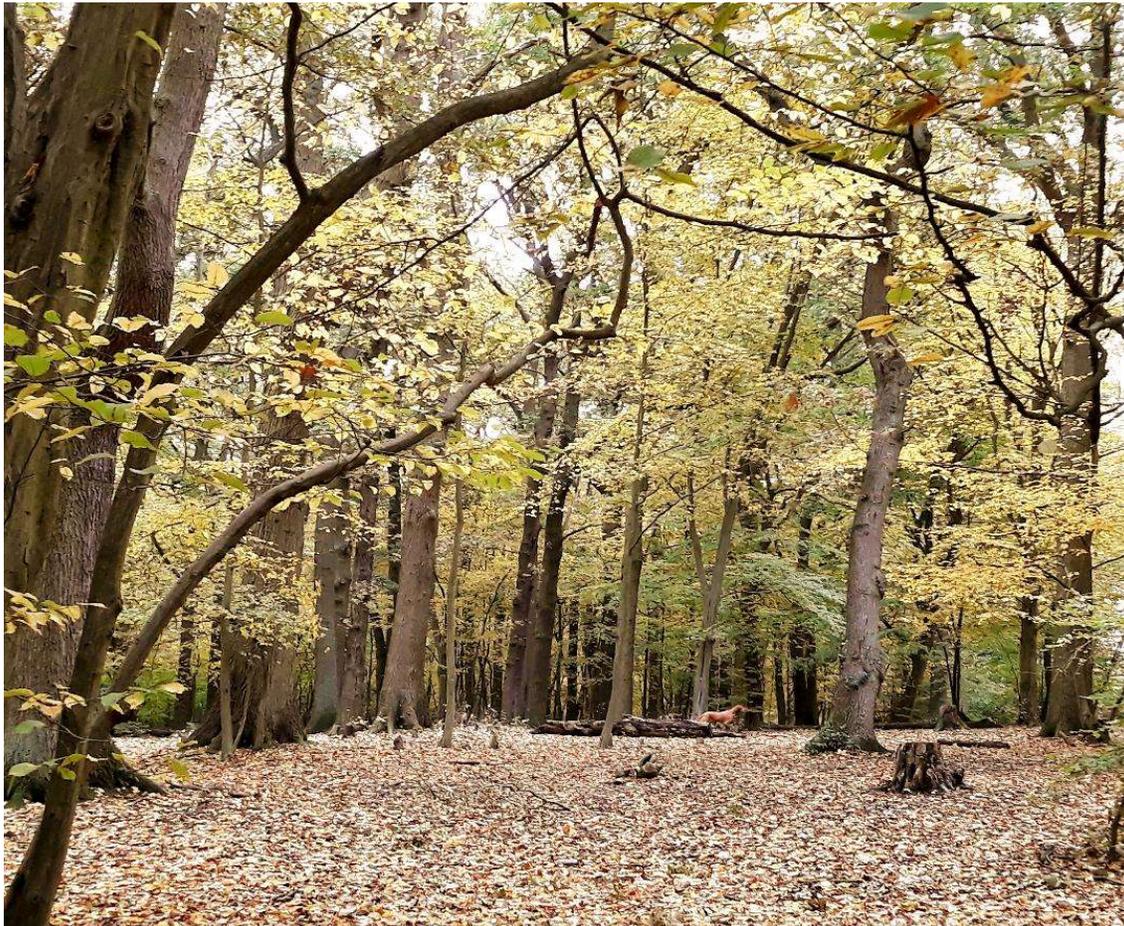
The bible talks about looking to the sky and being in awe and amazement at all the stars covering the sky – when I look up it's not very hard to count the few stars that can be seen! This makes it hard in some ways to relate to the bible and understand the true power and might of God. We have to see that in different things like the force of water and power of lightning strikes, the sight of starling murmuration's.

Elizabeth encourages us to give thanks to God for lifting our spirits with the beauty of creation.



A photo from Elizabeth: Red Admiral enjoying autumn's harvest.

A photo taken by the Minister at Belfairs woods



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

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

TIPS & IDEAS - From 64 Million Artists

Create a collage portrait of someone who inspires you to make steps, great or small, to protect and care for our shared planet. It might be a famous activist, a friend, a teacher, or maybe someone who has not arrived on planet earth yet...anything goes!

Here's the twist! Can you make your collage entirely out of free, found or forgotten materials? Collect items from an outdoor walk, rifle through your recycling bin, see what's lurking at the back of your kitchen cupboard. If portraits are not your thing, make any picture out of 'waste' items. Here is an example from #64MillionArtists:



The autumn colours are so amazing this year – can you create something – a photo, painting, collage, sewing – using the yellows, oranges and reds all around us at the moment?

RESOURCES

New weekly reflections from St Paul's Cathedral: <https://mailchi.mp/2c312f6c6895/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1357496?e=e30a1f608a> 'Darkness and Discipline'

Christian Aid are holding an online service of reflection on **4 November at 5.30pm**. "This special service of reflection is a time to come together in our grief, in what has been a difficult year and to remember as well as celebrate those we love." The service will include a sermon by Dr Rowan Williams. More information and how to sign up here: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/events/service-reflection>

Other Christmas reminders (for Christ Church):

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

The **Christmas post box** will be in the Welcome Area from Sunday, 29th November, with last posting date Sunday 13th December. Strictly church family cards only. Mark is happy to deliver cards if people are unable to pick them up. And he will put a box on his doorstep at 11 Brixham Close Rayleigh SS6 9PG for anyone who can't get up to the Church.

The Christ Church charity for November is the Romanian Crestin Trust

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.

At this time of year, we pray particularly for those who have been bereaved and who mourn. We also pray for the church as it considers whether to register as an Inclusive Church, and for all the Elders, worship leaders, Naomi and Sandy as they start to prepare for the seasons of Advent and Christmas in these challenging times.

Particular prayer requests this week:

Barbara and Richard

Cindy and Les, Sandy's parents

Sandra (BDC)

Janet (BDC), following the death of her nephew Michael

DEVOTION

It has been a while since I mentioned it, but Rutger Bregman's book *Humankind: A Hopeful History* made quite an impression on me. It ends with 10 rules to live by. Many of these, to my mind, correspond to ways of living that we try to undertake as Christians, so in the House Groups we have been looking at his rules and relating them to Bible passages and living the way of Jesus. Next week we will come to the end.

Rule 10, I don't think really is a rule, it is more of a suggestion of an outlook on life from Bregman, though he describes it as the 'most important rule' – a way to view the world, which again I think chimes well with being a Christian. He says:

'Be realistic. Be courageous. Be true to your nature and offer your trust. Do good in broad daylight [this is his rule 9 which we will discuss, see below] and don't be ashamed of your generosity. You may be dismissed as gullible and naïve at first. But remember, what's naïve today may be common sense tomorrow.... It's time for a new view of humankind.' A view where we assume the best of people, ask more questions, rather than thinking we know the best way to help people, show compassion, try to understand others even those with very different views, and we remember everyone is made in the image of God –

Matthew 5:14-16: You are the light of the world... No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

House Group Discussion –from Rutger Bregman's *Humankind* : (Mon 2 Nov, 7pm, Zoom)

Since the House Groups started up again, we have been discussing Bregman's 'Ten Rules to Live By' and how they relate (or don't) to Christian life. We are now down to rules 8 and 9 (rule 10 isn't really a rule, see above!) Rule 8 feeds into rule 9, but is difficult to explain in writing, so I'll focus here on rule 9. For the remaining House Groups of the year, we will probably focus on Advent themes, possibly tying in somehow with Robert's Advent course focussing on angel appearances.

Rule 9 – “Come out of the closet: don't be ashamed to do good”

Matthew 6:3-4 “But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Bregman says this is good advice – who wants to appear sanctimonious or self-righteous? Psychologists have discovered that when people do things 'out of the goodness of their hearts' they often fabricate selfish motives. And this is more prevalent in individualistic Western cultures. He says, if you assume most people are selfish (the whole premise of his book is proving that belief, though widely held, is misguided) then any good deed is inherently suspect. Unfortunately, this cloaking of good deeds reinforces people's cynical views about human nature. If you hide your good deeds, they cannot serve as an example to others. Much better, says Bregman to live by -

Matthew 5:14-16: You are the light of the world... No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

This is not about flaunting good deeds or blowing your own trumpet. Scientists have shown that doing good is contagious. Kindness is catching. When people see someone else do a good act, it makes them also want to do a good act (just look at the Captain Tom Moore copy-cats – there have been at least 2 other very elderly people walking for charity, inspired by his action). Humans are made to find acts of kindness moving. 'Every good deed is like a pebble in a pond, sending ripples out in all directions.'

Matthew's Gospel and the words of Jesus, appear contradictory – should we give in secret? Or should we avoid hiding our light under a bushel and let our acts of kindness and generosity be an example to others?

Is there a way to do both – be an example, without 'blowing your own trumpet'?