

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

NEWS & CHAT Thursday 10 December 2020

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

Sunday 13 December 10am – Advent III, the Minister with Communion at Christ Church
11am – Revd Celia Whitman, non-Communion at Bridgwater Drive (not live-streamed)
Sunday 20 December 10.30am – Advent IV, the Minister with Communion at Bridgwater Drive

Both services will be live-streamed on the Christ Church Facebook page (as usual) – please note the later start time on the 20th. Please only partake of Communion in church or at home with the church you normally attend – there should be no bread and wine taken in a church building where the minister is not presiding.
Please ‘book’ a place with Pat Botfield for Christ Church, or Margaret Bates for Bridgwater Drive.

NO Tuesday Church, at Bridgwater Drive, or Thursday meetings at Christ Church for the rest of 2020. This will be reviewed in the new year.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who donated to our Christmas Appeal. We raised a whopping £2,838 to be shared equally between Hopeworx and Home-Start. Some people also donated food items which have been delivered to Hopeworx. **If anyone has gifts they would like to donate to HARP – please contact Penny (CC) as she is happy to deliver them.**

You can still give to the Appeal, if you wish to, as it has been agreed that any collection from the Christingles and Christmas Day services would be given to Hopeworx and Home-Start, and people are likely to be very much in need in January after the expenses of Christmas.

Thank you to Val who has raised £778 for church funds at Bridgwater Drive with the sale of plants and Christmas items.

ADVENT

Advent Course – Week three (16th) will focus on the angel's appearance to Joseph in Matthew 1: 18 - 24. We will explore the idea that this is a message of reassurance and encouragement in a situation of change and uncertainty and a call to have faith and trust in God.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87175549560?pwd=ZIRpNUt4a2dZb1JrN3ZyOEZrSXJuZz09>

Passcode: 9JZv06

Advent House Group – The next Advent themed House Group on Zoom will be on **Monday 14 December** at 7pm based on material from *A Strange Christmas*. Here is the link. Questions on page 5 in 'Extra stuff'

<https://zoom.us/j/94694250144?pwd=UEI2bk43UEt6SjdRK2VUM2RFWnFiZz09>

It will be circulated again nearer the time.

ADVENT CANDLES

You are reminded, if you want to, to put a candle, or a picture of a candle, in your window every day during Advent to represent Christ as the Light of the World. If you don't want to do it every day, why not do it at least on the four Sundays of Advent.

CHURCH ADVENT CALENDARS

Look out for each new picture in the windows and doors of the church, and check the **Latest News** section of the website daily for the revealing of the new day, where there will also be a sentence of explanation if necessary: <https://christchurchrayleigh.org.uk/category/news/>

Bridgwater Drive: <https://bridgwaterdriveurc.org.uk/>

CHRIST CHURCH POST BOX

last posting date is this 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. If the church is not open, you can put cards through the letter box. If you can't get to church or to Mark's house, please contact Mark so he can collect them. It would help if you could put them in alphabetical order and in a bundle with a rubber band (easier to sort), and perhaps with an envelope with a small donation – thank you!

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The RSCM Big Christmas Carol Service will take place at 6pm on Saturday 12 December.

If you would like to take part, click here for details:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ej2loXBnSauJPs1Zs5eAZw

Zoom Carol Sing-a-long will take place at 7pm on Tuesday 15 December. Here is the link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/83334513513?pwd=YzZPaVJSRzVkZGFJaWFkV0hEa0tPQT09>

It will also be circulated by email, next week. Please join in – it's just for fun, no singing talent required! The more the merrier! All welcome from either church.

The week the Trussell Trust, who are campaigning for a hunger free future, are holding **Plate Protest Week**. People are invited to put one of their posters in their windows. There is one up at Christ Church, in the manse window and at Sandy's house.

'More than 1.2 million emergency food parcels were given to people by food banks between 1st April and 30th September 2020 – that's a 47% increase on the same period last year.



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

DEVOTION

This year, perhaps more than any other Christmas since the war, we can have a Christmas which is more about the real meaning of Christmas than all the trimmings. Many people won't see family at all, others may only see a few, for less time and no touching. Although shops are open again, due to social distancing and the inevitable queues, more people than usual may choose to shop less. Apparently, there is already a rise in home-made gifts this year. Carol singing will be very different – where it is allowed at all, it is only outside and by a small group – no congregational singing. While our church buildings will be open, things will be different – Christingles online, Carol service online, even services with people actually present will be live-streamed for the majority watching at home. But for many, this year won't be much different to any other year – those who live alone or have no family, people with family in other countries, the homeless, people who don't enjoy Christmas because their family is dysfunctional – and 'playing happy families' for a day is a nightmare, people who can't afford gifts... the people, frankly, that we tend to forget about when we are planning our big Christmas dinner. But it is precisely those people that Jesus cares about. God wasn't born into a nice middle-class family with 2.5 children and lots of grandchildren. God was born into the 'terrible domestic mess... of a young couple in an occupied nation.' 'Suspicion, adultery, a death sentence, shame, disgrace, poverty, exclusion, embarrassment' (Krish Kandiah) – those were the things attendant on the birth of Jesus. God is big enough to handle the mess of our lives and use the most traumatic and strange circumstances to bring grace and redeem the world. Surely, we can overcome this different, difficult Christmas and focus on the real meaning?

Mary said a resounding 'yes' to God's message via the angel Gabriel. What will you say yes to in the coming year? (see Tips & Ideas)

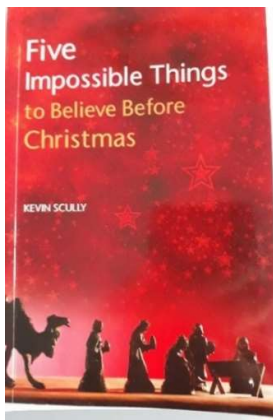
From #64Million Artists: 10th December is Human Rights Day

Could you write a poem that captures what Human Rights mean to you? Or, you could write about your community and any changes you'd like to see! It could be one long sentence, or if it's a poem 10 words, 5 words, 10 words – (Article 25 encapsulates the rights we are entitled to, so write a poem using 25 words)

RESOURCES

New weekly reflections for Advent from St Paul's Cathedral by The Revd Dr Carys

Walsh: <https://mailchi.mp/465c0ed39978/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1371660?e=e30a1f608a>



TIPS & IDEAS

The third exercise from *Five Impossible Things to Believe Before Christmas*

3. "Daring to say 'yes'"

* Locate an image or icon of the Annunciation (there will be 100s if not 1000s of different versions on the Internet). Look closely at the encounter between the angel and Mary. What do the gestures, body language and composition of the picture tell you?

* Using the same image – just contemplate it for a few minutes. Think about how Mary said 'yes'. What might there be that you should be saying 'yes' to? (maybe being Church Treasurer?! (CC folk))

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.

This week's (CC) prayer theme (each week is from a different Gospel): **Mark**. Mark proclaims for us that Jesus is Emmanuel, He's here, He's Messiah, He's God in person. The world has changed and is changing, but God is here, right now. Wow!! Pray with thanksgiving for this precious, indescribable gift.

Particular prayer requests this week:

Barbara and Richard. Surgery was successful and Barbara is now home
Della and Alan
Grace and Phil
Chris, a friend of Sally
Anne, following a fall
Clive & Jan
Linda, Merle Carter's daughter (Merle died last week)

Naomi had a novel published in 2008. It has just been re-released in a new edition. Information was circulated about how to order it online, but for those of you who don't 'do' the internet and might like a copy. Let Naomi know, and she can order you one. £8.20 per copy. She is happy to sign and deliver copies! This is not a completely shameless plug – any royalties received will go to charity. Some copies have now been ordered which should arrive before Christmas. **Makes a great Christmas gift!**

News & Chat was never intended to go on indefinitely, but as the restrictions to church life have continued, so has N&C. There are still likely to be restrictions for some months in 2021.

Would you like N&C to continue until we are completely (or very nearly) back to normal?

Please let Naomi know, by email, ordinary mail, or phone:

minister@christchurchrayleigh.org.uk 07555 705530

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BREAKING NEWS – the Posadas film can now be seen at:

<https://youtu.be/hZ4vZYeJPnM>

and on the Christ Church website – News and Virtual Church pages

<https://christchurchrayleigh.org.uk/>

The link will also be posted to the CC Facebook page

Who knew there was such great acting talent within Christ Church!

Naomi and Sandy definitely have plans to ~~exploit~~, we mean encourage this in 2021!

Thank you to all the wonderful 'inn-keepers' – Michelle, Robert & Helen, Sue & John, Sally, Claudia for filming and of course the 'star' – Dexter the Donkey!



EXTRA STUFF!

House Group 14 December

Based on material from the book *A Strange Christmas* by Krish Kandiah, Session 4 – Strange Wisdom

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Discussion questions:

- Why does your family celebrate Christmas?
- (think how you might explain what Christmas is and why you celebrate to a non-religious person, or someone of another faith)
- Does it sound silly/strange to you when you explain what Christmas is, like that?
- How many reasons can you think of for God sending Jesus into the world? Which is the most significant to you this year? Is it different to other years?
- Does the Corinthians passage help you understand why God came as a baby?
- Do you receive encouragement from the passage?

An article from Elizabeth Pryor on International Soil Day (5th December)

Mountains and hills are nature's water towers.

Water is giver of life.

Trees are the lungs of the planet.

Worms are the intestines of the earth.

Soil is the skin of the earth.

Soil wasn't created, it evolved years after the formation of the planet through the action of wind and rain on the rock and the earliest forms of life clinging to the rock, gradually eroding it. As plant life grew sturdier so their root systems worked at wearing away the rock better. Together with any dead vegetation and basic animal life, soil started to form.

Today, soil needs our help to re-generate it as it is fast disappearing according to some very interesting articles in the 'Guardian' newspaper and on BBC's 'Countryfile'.

Once again, climate, pollution and overuse of chemicals on the soil is damaging its viability to sustain plant life. Healthy soil will support a whole host of bacteria, worms and creepy-crawlies as well as capturing carbon from the atmosphere and rainwater.

Digging soil apparently releases carbon back into the atmosphere so a no-dig technique is advised by some gardeners.

Bacteria and other fungi that actually live around plant roots in the soil pass messages through the soil to alert other plants of being under attack from animals and humans. To protect themselves plants may then release oils into the air as a warning or deterrent to the attacker. Plants can become stressed the same as people can. Pesticides can get into the food we eat and affect us the same as pollution we breathe in from the air.

Soil needs looking after the same as we do.

Peat is a special type of soil that needs looking after as well. A peat moor takes 1000's of years to form, absorbs carbon dioxide and rain fall, supports numerous plant and insect life. Dries to dust and blows away in gardens.

Homemade compost can take as little as 6 months to make, supports creepy-crawlies which eat garden pests.

To help cool the planet down, bring back front gardens and grass. Also, they reduce stress and depression and makes walking down the street more interesting.