

## NEWS & CHAT Thursday 17 December 2020

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

**Sunday 20 December 10.30am – Advent IV, the Minister with Communion at Bridgwater Drive. The service will be live-streamed as usual on the Christ Church Facebook page, but please note the later start time. If you are not ‘online’ and wish to watch the service at Christ Church please ‘book’ a place with Pat Botfield as usual. BDC people please ‘book’ with Margaret as usual.**

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> at 4pm – virtual Carol Service.** It would be nice if we could all listen to the URC prepared Carol Service at the same time, with your own choice of refreshment (mulled wine and mince pie, Christmas cake, tea and festive biscuits...) Here is the link to listen online:

<https://soundcloud.com/andy-braunston/urc-daily-devotions-carol-service-23rd-december-revd-karen-campbell>

If you cannot listen online, a CD will be delivered to you.

### **Christmas Eve:**

The Minister will lead a short **Communion service** at Bridgwater Drive at 10.30am. This will be live-streamed on the Christ Church Facebook page.

There is a URC prepared **Midnight Communion** Service. You can listen online using this link:

<https://soundcloud.com/andy-braunston/urc-daily-devotions-christmas-eve-midnight-communion-the-revd-dr-kirsty-thorpe>

Or, a CD will be delivered to you.

The Christ Church **Christingle** will be online. The DIY Christingles can be collected from the church on 23rd December between 2pm and 4pm. Please let Sandy know how many you would like for numbers. Thank you.

### **Christmas Day:**

The Minister will lead a short service at Christ Church at 10am. This will be live-streamed on the Christ Church Facebook page. **Please book with Pat.** Margaret will lead a short service at Bridgwater Drive at 10.30am. (not online) **Please book with Margaret.**

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December. There will be no service in either church building or online.** A text only service, prepared by Ian Miller, will be sent out for use at home.

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021** There will be no service at Christ Church (due to us moving into Tier 3). The Minister will live-stream a service on the Christ Church Facebook page at 10am. Bridgwater Drive will be open at 11am for people to watch the service there.

### **Other Christmas services on TV:**

#### **Sunday Worship on BBC1:**

Sunday 20 December - at 11am

Sunday, 27 December - at 9.10am

Christmas Eve – BBC2, 5.30pm Carols from King's



The churches of Rayleigh have produced an online **9 Lessons & Carols**, featuring a children's message from Sandy. This should be released at the weekend. I will put the link in next week's News & Chat and on Facebook.

And of course the Rayleigh Posadas video is still available to watch on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/hZ4vZYeJPnM>

**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.**

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

## ADVENT

### 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. **Last chance this Sunday!**

**ADVENT COURSE** – Week four (23rd) will look at the appearance of the angel to the Shepherds in Luke 2: 8 - 15 and we will consider the idea that this is a call to celebrate a new beginning. Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82985492171?pwd=T2NBVVRYMTkydzExZ245ZWp5UUUV5Zz09>

Passcode: 59YP4H

### 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/>

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

**DEVOTION** less of a 'devotion' this week and more of a 'thought' for the season

Christmas TV is always a bit of a mixed blessing – it can be wonderful, or it can be that you can't find much you really want to watch. This year, it may be more of a saviour from loneliness than in other years.

Another of my little Christmas 'rituals' is buying the Christmas Radio Times. This year's has an article by the new Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell (no stranger to writing Christmas and Advent material) and I share some of his thoughts:

Reflecting on *Gogglebox*, one of his favourite shows, he says, "It turns out that television is not the passive intruder into home life that we sometimes think it is, but a companion. Even a friend. And British television in general – and the BBC in particular – is, like the very best of friends, not just there to entertain you, but also to educate and inform." This "is as relevant today as it ever was. It is also under threat. The echo chambers of social media and the fake news that often goes with it have led us to mistrust and cynicism... Truth itself seems to have become a commodity, bought by the highest bidder."

He says that along with the NHS, public service broadcasters (like the BBC and Channel 4) "are a precious part of our cultural ecology. They help us to see ourselves clearly. ... many lonely, frightened and isolated people have turned to the television (and the radio) for help, companionship, relief and guidance."

"There is one other place this year where we watch other people watching, and that is the Christmas story. When we observe and tell the Christmas story, we watch Mary and Joseph respond to the call of the angels and the birth of Christ. We watch the angels visit the shepherds... we watch the arrival of the wise men. On *Gogglebox* we see a glorious, diverse picture of the United Kingdom... that same glorious, diverse humanity is also invited to the manger. Gathered there, we can look around and discover that we belong to one another. We are one humanity."

### TIPS & IDEAS

The fourth (and final) exercise from *Five Impossible Things to Believe Before Christmas* by Kevin Scully

#### 4. "The crack in the universe"

Scully says that "to love the danger from the nativity story is actually dangerous to our faith: it sells short the disruptive quality of the birth of Jesus." One of the most unbelievable tenets of our faith is that God became human. Yet we run the risk of "being drawn away from the wonder and staggering import of Emmanuel, God with us, to the saccharine and the too-easily-embraced." Over familiarity with the nativity stories can cause us to forget or gloss over the truly amazing act of God becoming human. With this year's very strange Christmas, we have the opportunity to focus again on the real message.

\* "Find an image of the stable in Bethlehem. Find a place in the scene for yourself, imagining yourself as an extra, unportrayed presence. Sit with the scene for some time and then offer the following prayer:"

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

All powerful God, who became helpless in Bethlehem;  
give strength to our weakness, hope to our doubts,  
repair to our brokenness that we may become at one  
as you are at one, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Amen



## RESOURCES

New weekly reflections for Advent from St Paul's Cathedral by The Revd Dr Carys Walsh: <https://mailchi.mp/cb3ff39ec9d9/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1373704?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.

This week's (CC) prayer theme (each week in December is from a different Gospel): **Luke**. Luke makes it crystal clear Jesus is Saviour – but praise the Lord, not just for the Jews but for everyone. If it were not so, we would have no hope but the prospect of hell. Praise God He is Saviour of all. Pray with thanksgiving for this precious, indescribable gift.

### Particular prayer requests this week:

Barbara and Richard	Steve & Joy Anderson
Bill and Jenny, friends of Phil T.	David – Bill and Beth's son in law
Ernie H	Della & Alan
Jan & Clive	Claire, Margaret's daughter

We pray for the family of Ernie Lane, especially his daughters Margaret and Jenny, as Ernie passed away peacefully on Sunday 13 December.

We pray for Tatenda, minister of the CC partner church in Budiriro, and his family, as he prepares to move to a new pastorate.

## THANK YOUs and GREETINGS

'I'm sure I'm not the only one to thank Mark for delivering the Church Christmas cards. It was lovely to keep in touch this way with so many friends. Brilliant idea carried through perfectly. Thank you, Mark.'  
Sheila Smith

**Hopeworx** would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has contributed towards the Christmas Hampers this year. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of local authorities, charities, churches, supermarkets and individuals in donations of both food and finance. This has enabled us to provide 110 hampers this year which have been distributed to those in need via our partners in agencies, charities and churches. This is a 57% increase on last year. As well as 2 bags full of Christmas goodies, this year we have been able to also provide a monetary donation with each hamper.

It is great to see what can be done when the community works together.



A Christmas card from Joan Wilson:

To everyone at Christ Church I wish you all a very happy Christmas and may 2021 be a better year for us all, with God's love and blessings enfolding us closely together.



**A poem from Kate at BDC written after a pre-COVID trip to London**

**A homeless face**

The haunted face and furrowed brow  
The swollen lips and rancid breath  
She looks so sad and helpless now  
As if awaiting for her death

The pavement is her resting place  
She's wrapped around her latest mate  
But as you look into that face  
You want to help the hurt abate

Across the park, streets are ablaze  
Lights dance in shops and in the trees  
I look at her, she's in a daze  
Her silence says, "come help me please"

The contrast of the theatreland  
Such wealth and joy, a splendid night

While here you see the grubby hand  
What can I do to help her plight

Bright lights against her darkened world  
Extravagance, where she's without  
The wasted food that has been hurled  
I wonder, what's this all about?

She shelters from the drizzling rain  
Her blanket is alive with lice  
Her eyes search mine, I see her pain  
What can I do in just a trice?

And so I turn to catch my flight  
Back to my home where I feel safe  
But I am tortured by the sight  
Of that unhappy, helpless waif © KL