

## NEWS & CHAT Thursday 3 December 2020

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

### Sunday 6 December 10am – Advent II, All Age, already fully booked.

Following the announcement of the end of lockdown and the return to tiers, the CC Elders met (via Zoom) on Tuesday. And the BDC Elders consulted via email and phone and decided that for the rest of 2020 there should be **no week-day meetings** in the church buildings. But I am pleased to say that both churches agreed that Sunday worship should take place in both church buildings. **BUT:**

We are in Tier 2, which is now stricter than it was pre-lockdown and it is very important that people **do not socialise inside the building before or after the service. If people cannot stick to that rule we will be forced to close the church again. Full details of all the December services, the restrictions, advice on attendance and how to 'book' your place are in the church specific notice (separate for Christ Church and Bridgwater Drive) attached to this N&C. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.** Most people, even the Prime Minister, and especially the scientists are saying that there is still a great deal of risk and while there will be a relaxation of restrictions for five days over Christmas, people should act responsibly and limit interactions and/or meet people outdoors as much as possible.

**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.** For this week's (CC) Space for Prayer, please pray at home – prayer theme in the Prayer Corner.

### ADVENT

**Advent Course** – Week two (9<sup>th</sup>) will focus on the appearance of the angel to Mary in Luke 1: 26 - 38 and will explore the idea that this is a call to partnership with God in bringing about God's saving love for the world. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84856723394?pwd=cDN6WIBGMVBm9Rdnc5dklzYXA3QT09>  
Passcode: 2ikW2e

**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*. The link will be sent out next week.

I know Zoom is not everyone's cup of tea, but I would encourage you to join in the Advent Course and Advent House Groups if you can – it is only 40 minutes, and is fun and a good way to chat with people you wouldn't otherwise be able to see at the moment. The links will be sent out 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

The first few days are now up! 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

The Christmas post box is now in the Welcome Area with **last posting date Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>**

**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!

**If anyone (CC) has gifts they would like to donate to HARP – please contact Penny as she is happy to deliver them.**

**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\\_ej2loXBnSauJP1Zs5eAZw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ej2loXBnSauJP1Zs5eAZw)

**Zoom Carol Sing-a-long** will take place at **7pm on Tuesday 15 December**. The link will be here next week and circulated by email. Please join in – it's just for fun, no singing talent required! The more the merrier! All welcome from either church.

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

**DEVOTION** this week's 'devotion' is interactive

The two House Group meetings in Advent are discussing Advent related questions from the book *A Strange Christmas* by Krish Kandiah. Advent is four weeks long and we only have two sessions. So, here are some questions from the book's session 3, which are quite fun and you might like to reflect on at home (possibly while playing/singing Christmas music).

**Read Psalm 98:1-9**, which was the inspiration for Isaac Watt's carol *Joy to the World*

What is your all-time favourite Christmas song/carol and why?

Why do you think the Bible records so many 'songs' as part of the Christmas story?

Mary's *Magnificat*, Zechariah, angels singing to the shepherds, Simeon's *Nunc Dimittis* – they each have a unique song. Which do you most closely relate to?

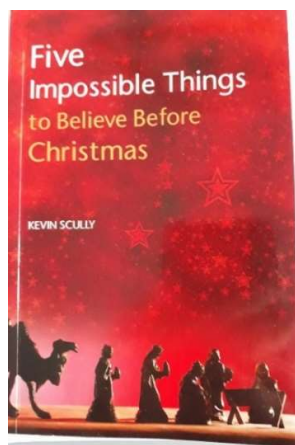
If you were to write your own Christmas song, what would your inspiration be? (snow, food, family, angels, the nativity...)

In our house, it isn't Christmas until we've listened to Handel's Messiah. This is my mum's influence – growing up, she used to sing it in her church choir every year. And growing up, it wasn't Christmas until dad and I put the lights up round the front door (usually about 2 weeks before Christmas, certainly not before).

**Finish this sentence for yourself: It isn't Christmas until....**

**TIPS & IDEAS**

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



2. "Threats to society"

"The Bible includes many instances of the subversive call of God. God repeatedly selects the seemingly weak for powerful roles. While much of the prevailing culture in the West today is based on celebrity and attainment – positively at odds with much of Christian faith."

\* Find a song, film or section of the Bible that has challenged you or led you to change your behaviour. Listen, watch or read and reflect on it.

\* Photocopy an image of yourself, where you live, or the church. Draw on it changes you would make if you could. Then ask yourself why you would make those changes. How might God have guided you? **If you choose the church, share your ideas – they may be changes others want to see too!**



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

Last week's 'tip' from that book was about angels. Gwyneth did the angel exercise, and says, 'angels are living things, so this is a 'live' list too, which will change with time. I have been and continue to be in the company of so many wonderful angels, each one a message of love from the Lord. I am so very, very blessed.'



From #64MillionArtists:

[Stories & Supper](#) is a project based in East London, which aims to challenge the myths surrounding the migration crisis. Refugees, migrants and local volunteers work in partnership to produce great food and inspiring stories.

Sometimes the smells and taste of food can remind us of stories, places and people. Can you think of a meal or snack that reminds you of home, or of a time that you remember fondly?

Capture this meal in a creative way. You could write up the recipe and illustrate it, you could cook the meal and photograph it – or share the recipe with a friend. You could even try and recreate the meal with just five ingredients from your kitchen, experiment with flavours and come up with your own version.

## RESOURCES

New weekly reflections for Advent from St Paul's Cathedral by The Revd Dr Carys Walsh is a priest in the Diocese of Peterborough, and formerly taught Christian Spirituality at St Mellitus College, the training college for Anglican clergy. <https://mailchi.mp/78621631c894/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1369872?e=e30a1f608a>

And you may like this 15 minute reflection from St Paul's: <https://youtu.be/sObgn14Xqxl>

## 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): **Matthew**. Matthew's gospel tells us of God's promises to His people and His fulfilment of those promises – that He would be our Saviour, that He would be with us, and in Jesus we have both and so much more. Pray with thanksgiving for this precious, indescribable gift.

Thank you to Gwyneth for providing our prayer themes.

## Particular prayer requests this week:

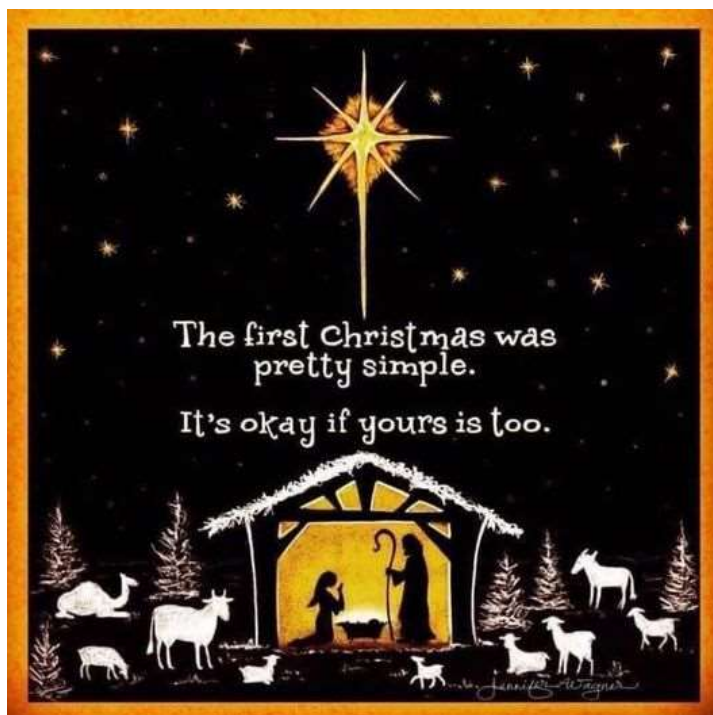
Barbara and Richard, as Barbara goes into hospital this week

Audrey

Michelle, Sophie and family

Naomi, Sandy and all church leaders making hard decisions about our church this week and preparing services and events for this very strange Christmas.





Donated food taken by Helen  
to Hopeworx

#### If it Falls



Naomi Young-Rodas

Naomi had a novel published in 2008. It has just been re-released in a new edition. Information was circulated last week about how to order it online, but for those of you who don't 'do' the internet and might like a copy (I know there is at least one person!) 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.

**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?**

**Also, for those of you who follow it, would you like the Daily Prayer on Facebook to continue in 2021?**

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

[minister@christchurchrayleigh.org.uk](mailto:minister@christchurchrayleigh.org.uk) 07555 705530