

NEWS & CHAT Thursday 21 January 2021

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

There will be no activities in either church building as we continue in national lockdown, including Sunday Worship which will continue online, live-streamed on the CC Facebook page, and text circulated with the weekly News & Chat.

Sunday 24 January, 10am Worship on the CC Facebook page with the Minister

NEWS

This week is the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** – you can use this link to find out more and download prayer resources if you wish: <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2021/>

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The theme that was chosen, “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses the Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family.

Each year Christian Aid provides the **Go and Do action points** for each of the daily reflections – linking into the important work of Christian Aid in the relief of poverty and advocacy of justice. “Each day during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we provide a starting point, reflection, questions and a prayer based on the theme.” Use this link to go to the Christian Aid daily prayers and actions.

Christ Church has now formally been accepted as part of the Inclusive Church Network.

This week nationally is the **Big Energy Saving Week** - a national campaign to help people cut their fuel bills and get all the financial support they are entitled to. The week focuses on raising public awareness of how to switch energy supplier or tariff to get the best deal, access discounts and make homes energy efficient. This is the 8th Big Energy Saving Week and is a partnership between Citizens Advice, the Energy Saving Trust and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy with the support of numerous organisations, charities and companies.

And, today (21 Jan) is **International Hugging Day!** Obviously, a bit difficult in the current lockdown – but maybe give someone a virtual hug – phone a friend, send a text or Whatsapp or an actual handwritten card – letting people know you’d hug them if you could! It’s good to share love, even if we can’t do it physically!



No, I haven't 'fallen off the wagon' for Dry January! Still doing it! But this cartoon amused me!

And remember Helen Dart's January Challenge:

I am walking 31 miles in 31 days for HARP. If you wish to donate, please use the link.

<https://homelessactionresource.enthuse.com/pf/helen-dart>

I have walked 31 miles since 1st January, and I have raised £130 so far. I will continue with the walking and see how far I can get and see how much I can raise. Thank you to those who have donated. For people not on the internet but wish to donate please contact me. Many thanks in advance. Helen

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

DEVOTION

This week's devotion comes from the weekend food magazine – bear with me – it's proof that you can find theology in anything! Grace Dent has written amusingly and with surprising depth for a restaurant critic, throughout the pandemic. It seems that she is now 'holed up' in the north for lockdown, caring for her mother who has terminal cancer. She talks about how 'sweet treats' are alleviating the boredom of both January and lockdown, but rather than paraphrase, here are some excerpts in her own words:

"Each day, I promise myself: "Less sugar, fewer carbohydrates", but I am yet to measure out mam's morphine at 2am and then crave a rocket salad with an oil-free dressing. My mother, 84, and with more comebacks than Status Quo behind her, feels similarly. Occasions such as this need the big guns. Hot buttered toast laden with enough marmalade to make Paddington rethink the chest size of his duffle coat...

I'm unsure what your personal pain is, but there's a lot of it about at present. The sadness seeps quietly from all of us. If you find yourself in an argument, the chances are your opponent is not actually angry with you personally. They were merely carrying their anger when they happened upon your person, and you are merely collateral damage. And in that moment you are the embodiment of another three months of home-schooling or their father's missing second vaccination jab. You are their forthcoming rent, their vanishing career and their dwindling savings...

I often go to Booths [local shop] after 9pm, when I'm almost the only customer in the store... Sometimes I head back to the veg section to languish for a while by the reduced-price brussels sprouts, just so I can shamelessly enjoy a few more moments of music [on her phone with headphones] and hide from terms such as "comfort care" and "palliative"...

Banoffee pie was yellow-stickered down from £3.80 to £1.20 yesterday. So pleasing with tea and *Tipping Point*. I have trouble believing in an interventionist God lately, but I do believe He offers small mercies."

The whole article can be read here: <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2021/jan/15/sweet-treats-are-abbreviating-these-long-cooped-up-january-days-grace-dent>

And this - I don't know if many of you are familiar with the chef Yotam Ottolenghi. If so, probably you have a love/hate relationship with his recipes (I do) – some are amazing (there's a lentil one I make all the time) and some, well, are not...! He was writing about how people might not have much money in January and how to make do with tinned food and things we might have in our cupboards (though along with Nigella Lawson he seems to have things in his cupboard you'd never find in mine, and that you'd be hard pushed to track down in Rayleigh). But it struck me that his idea could apply just as well to life – "making do with what we've got, reaching for those trusted tins, seeing in them a bit of a new light" can lead to new adventures. In other words, taking what we have and know, and doing something a bit new and different with it – that sounds to me like a good challenge for 2021! (but this week's recipes looked disgusting – I won't be trying any of those!!)

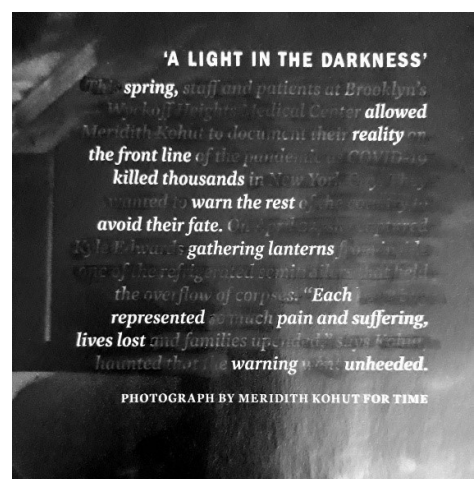


TIPS & IDEAS

From the **#64MillionArtists January Challenge** - artistic challenges every day for a month.

Black Out poem find a magazine article or other text you can write on. Black out words to leave just a few that form a poem. Here's one I made from a page from *TIME* magazine with photos of the year (2020).

Hidden Faces – I thought this one was quite fun. Cue anecdote from my childhood! – The grandmother clock my dad inherited always hung in the dining room. It has carved bits on the bottom that made shadows on the wall that looked like faces! Anyway, here's the challenge – Try to find faces in the objects around you by looking for or feeling them. **Search for hidden faces around you, or arrange objects into a face.** What expression is the face pulling? Photograph or describe your hidden face!



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

RESOURCES

A new weekly reflection from St Paul's Cathedral by Gillian Straine:

<https://mailchi.mp/e60286e5b1bb/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1384440?e=e30a1f608a>

If you are looking for a more 'ethical' bank account or savings account, why not check out Ecology Building Society: <https://www.ecology.co.uk/>

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. Especially this week we pray for all NHS staff and key-workers.

This week's (CC) prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth): **Baptism**. Baptism - an outward public witness to an inner Spirit exchange. Please pray for our church, for our existing areas of witness and for openness to the new ones the Lord has for us to fulfil.

Particular prayer requests this week:

Bill and Jenny, friends of Phil T.

Barbara & Richard

Joy and Steve A

Cindy and Les - Sandy's parents

Della and family. Della has had a fall and broken her hip and is in Southend hospital. She has now had surgery and wishes Alan's funeral to go ahead:

The funeral service for Alan Bearman will be held at Basildon Crematorium **on Monday 25th January at 12.30pm**. Because of the current COVID restrictions a limited number of people have been invited to attend the service. However, if you would like to follow the service online, the details are as follows:

Website: <https://www.obitus.com/> **Username:** Woqo2992 **Password:** 510719

If you would like to make a donation to Southend RNLI please do so via this website:

<http://www.aradams.co.uk/donate>

XL Mentoring

Sandy will start training new mentors this month.

If anyone would like to join the online mentor training please contact Sandy.

It will be over four consecutive Wednesday evenings starting at 7pm on Wednesday 20th January 2021.

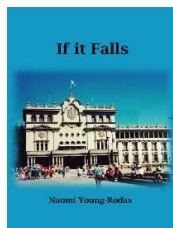
A review of If It Falls:

'The story of Raphael, haunted by the past and its traumatic injustices, bound by it to stand up for truth in an insidious, cynical undercurrent of cheap life.

A detective story, a murder mystery, a story of love intertwined with a love story! A story of ordinary and extraordinary heroism, of the complexities of life and of a clear simplicity oh, and large quantities of coffee!

Great characters, gripping plot with many twists and turns, well written and with a totally unexpected ending. What more could you ask?! Oh, and no swearing, yay!

Go get a copy!!' GD



For next Sunday, 31 Jan – 5th Sunday

In 'normal' times, on the 5th Sunday of the month we might do something a bit different and more interactive like Café style church. So, I thought we might try something a bit more collaborative!

See if you can tell a familiar Bible story in a new, modern way, e.g. the story of Jonah (from this Sunday), or the gospel reading for the 31st – Mark 1:21-28, or do it in picture form, or in the form of a text message, Tweet or a 'meme' and email it to me **by next Monday (25th) night** so I know if I need to write a sermon on Tuesday morning or not! noemi68_us@yahoo.com

If you are not able to email – you can handwrite your idea, and if you're quick, post it, or call me and tell me on the phone 07555 705530

I will then read out/show a few in next week's online service. THANK YOU! Naomi

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## INFORMATION FOR CHRIST CHURCH

As you are aware, we have been unable to have a Church Meeting for most of 2020, and we were unable to hold our AGM in 2020. Depending on the state of the pandemic and government restrictions we hope to hold a Church meeting (possibly the AGM also) in April. So, there are three matters which we need to bring to your attention:

1. Keith Berry completed his second three-year term as treasurer in December 2020; it had been agreed at the Church Meeting in November 2014 that the church treasurer position would be a termed post of three years and a maximum of two terms could be served by an individual, in line with the appointment of serving Elders. It was widely publicised to all the church members in the autumn of 2020 that a new treasurer would be needed from January 2021 but unfortunately no one offered to take on this role. As the current pandemic restrictions made it difficult for the Elders to fully discuss how this work might be covered, it was decided that Keith should continue as treasurer for 2021. This would be ratified at a Church Meeting as soon as one could be held. **If you can think of anyone who might be able to take on the role of Treasurer, please speak to Keith, Jean, or Naomi in the first instance** (not the person you have in mind!)
2. A Quinquennial Survey of the church building was undertaken in June 2020 and a considerable amount of maintenance and repair work identified. The Elders have been considering this matter. A Premises Review was conducted (free of charge) by the Architect Cliff Patten who specialises in church projects, and the Elders will be meeting with Cliff (by Zoom) next week to discuss what other work might be considered to be done at the same time as the essential repairs. Once we have more information, including an idea of cost, we will consult with the congregation on moving forward.
3. Due to the normal rotation of Elders, we need to elect 3 Elders in April. According to the constitution we should give at least 8 weeks' notice of an Elders' election. Electing Elders is something that can be done by a postal vote, so **we are giving notice now**. IF we are not able to hold a physical Church Meeting in April, we will conduct the election by post in the last week of March (Easter is 4 April).

Please start giving prayerful thought as to who might serve as an Elder and **if you would like to nominate someone, please contact Jean in the first instance**, who can explain the process (if you need explanation!) and provide you with a nomination form (or some other way of doing it as getting the signature of a 'seconder' could be tricky during lockdown!)

Please note that Joyce, Robert and Sue are standing down and so are not eligible to be nominated this year.