

## NEWS & CHAT Thursday 28 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 31 January, 10am Worship on the CC Facebook page with the Minister

This service will be a bit different to usual. If you plan to watch on Facebook, it may work better if you don't read the text version before! Though please have the penultimate page handy to play Worship Bingo!

### NEWS

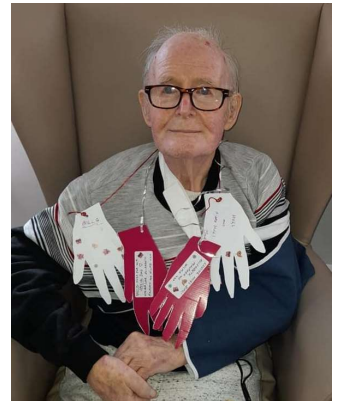
Last week I mentioned **International Hugging Day!** Sweyne Court were on top of it – Beth G writes:

"I am sending you a virtual hug, which is all we can do now. I have never heard of it and I only know about this day because Sweyne sent me a paper hug from Bill a few days ago. They suggested it would be nice if I could return one for Bill. We traced round our fingers and cut out round the shape, wrote a message to Bill on all of them and took them to the Home."

### 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 nearly 49 miles since 1st January and I have raised £170 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



**Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup>, was Holocaust Memorial Day.** The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 is **Be the light in the darkness.** It encourages everyone to reflect on the depths humanity can sink to, but also the ways individuals and communities resisted that darkness to 'be the light' before, during and after genocide. There is some good material for reflection here: <https://www.hmd.org.uk/what-is-holocaust-memorial-day/this-years-theme/> which also ties in with the next House Group session – see below.

Last Sunday's BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship was on this theme and I thought was very good: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000rm8p>

**HOUSE GROUP – Monday 1<sup>st</sup> Feb, 7pm.** Details on last page. Link here:

<https://zoom.us/j/96514267539?pwd=ZjUyYzlhYkVlVWZlbnRk5LcWxxbmE5QT09> Passcode: NukPF0

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

### DEVOTION

"Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes." James 4:14

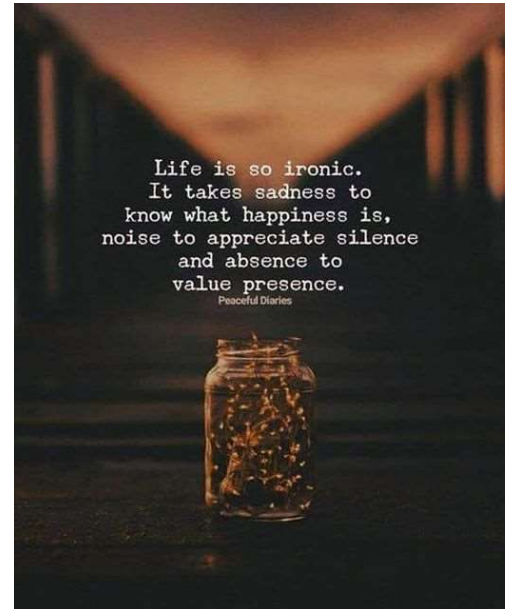
As we had two funerals this week, this phrase in a book I've just finished struck me: "How pathetic it was to try to relegate death to the periphery of life when death was at the centre of everything." (*10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, Elif Shafak)

And I think it is true. Without being overly morbid, death is what makes us savour life more. It is when you lose someone close to you or get a diagnosis of a terminal illness that the maxim 'life's too short' really rings true. We seem to be surrounded by death and have been for months. Every day the daily death toll is announced along with the huge rolling total. For the sake of our sanity, we have to almost ignore that news, gloss over it, otherwise it would be overwhelming. And, the numbers are too large to contemplate – they become meaningless. It is only when we lose someone close, or know someone with COVID-19, that it has

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any meaning. But there are other signs to the greatness of life and the speed of it, if we look for them. In nature – this morning there was a glorious orange and pink sunrise, but it was gone in a few minutes. Many insects and butterflies have short lives, yet our planet could not survive without them.

We also watched a film this week – *The Bucket List* (50p from a charity shop, back when non-essential shops were still open). Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman both have terminal cancer diagnoses and are given a maximum of one year to live. Jack's character happens to have a lot of money, so they decide to together do their 'bucket list' which include things like skydiving and driving fast cars, but also doing a kind act for a stranger and seeing something truly amazing. During their adventures, they both realise what is most important – their families – his wife in the case of Freeman and his estranged daughter in the case of Nicholson. Morgan Freeman's character dies first, and it seems Nicholson's character lives quite a few years more, before his assistant fulfils the last act on the 'bucket list' to see something amazing, as he does what they could not do because of bad weather – goes up a mountain in the Himalayas, to leave Nicholson's ashes in a coffee can next to Freeman's!



So, my point is – remember that life is short. Try to make the most of every moment. Not necessarily by doing a wild bucket list, but by cherishing the people and things which are most important to you.

**Psalms 90:12** “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.”

## TIPS & IDEAS

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

**A picture tells 1000 words** **Create an image that sells an idea!** It could be a small idea, a big idea - anything that you feel passionately about, or want the world to see! Use whatever you have - draw or paint a picture or take a photograph. You might add words to your image. **In particular, CC folk might like to create an image of how they envision the future of our church (in terms of outlook, or actual changes to the building)** – see the February Newsletter for a better idea. I had a go – see the last page!

## RESOURCES

A new weekly reflection from St Paul's Cathedral by Gillian Straine:  
<https://mailchi.mp/c320e578f369/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1386436?e=e30a1f608a>

This has been circulated round among some people – a beautiful rendition of the Hallelujah Chorus set in the Basilica de Santa Maria del Mar in Barcelona: <https://youtu.be/9jynUQjIXxM>

Two interesting documentaries last week on the BBC (now on iPlayer):  
'Silenced: The Hidden Story of Disabled Britain' - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000rh1g>  
The Truth about Improving your Mental Health - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000rhg8/the-truth-about-improving-your-mental-health>

I've just signed up for this – **Art from Crisis** – I like art and I like helping the homeless. For a minimum subscription of £8 a month, you receive an A5 card each month with an original artwork. Perhaps others would be interested: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/get-involved/art-from-crisis>

**Art can change lives – and help rebuild them. It tells past stories and opens new beginnings. It can heal, motivate, comfort and strengthen.**

## 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 the bereaved. We also remember the Holocaust, and all the people who were killed – Jews, disabled people, gays and Roma (Gypsies).

This week's (CC) prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth): **Spirit**. Jesus went forth in the power of the Spirit. We can have no lasting, positive effect, we can make no life-enriching difference in our community unless we do the same, as individuals and as a gathered church. A time to renew our service to the Holy Spirit and His leading perhaps.

### Particular prayer requests this week:

Neil (Ian's stepson) and Vicki  
Grace and Phil  
Cindy and Les - Sandy's parents  
Clare, Robert's sister

Rachel R's mum  
Della and family  
Ernie Lane's family  
Rubio, Claudia's uncle

**The funeral of Ernie Lane will be this Friday, 29 January at 12pm.** Because of the current COVID restrictions a limited number of people have been invited to attend the service. However, if you have not received an invitation but would like to follow the service online, please contact Jean Hall for the link. As Ernie was so well-known in Rayleigh, it may be that many people will want to watch the service and the system could crash. If you want to watch 'live' on Friday, please contact Jean, otherwise the details will be in next week's N&C to watch afterwards. It will be available for 28 days.

As with his wife Beryl, **the hearse will process through Rayleigh High Street at 11.25am.**

### HOUSE GROUP, Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February:

We have decided to use material from Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries. It was designed for Advent, but focuses less on the birth of Christ and more on the pandemic and our responses to it, moving from Lament, through Reflection to Gratitude. **It is designed to be used by individuals, so anyone can use it, even if you don't want to attend the House Group sessions** – we will meet to chat informally about what we thought and found helpful.

Unfortunately, you will need to go to the website and 'subscribe' (its FREE) to access the material:

<https://www.sanctuarymentalhealth.org/subscription/finding-light-in-the-deepest-dark/>

We are now at section 2, **Reflection: Looking for Light:**

One of the challenges of this period [the pandemic] is coping with change that is imposed on us. Times like this make it hard to plan, and it can be difficult to know what we can hope for. The structures and rhythms of our lives have changed and have not yet been replaced by anything permanent or familiar. As we wait to see if our freedoms will return, this impacts our relationships.

God's people experienced displacement throughout the Bible. The book of Isaiah, written during a time of exile, offers us this:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." (Isaiah 9:2)

During a time of oppression for a nation, there comes a word of hope.

Think about the light and hope that Christ brings.

### Reflect:

- Is it possible there are already lights shining in the darkness of this time?
- Could these disruptions also offer moments of grace?
- Are there good things in your own life/experience that have come out of this time?  
(maybe you have re-connected with distant friends, had more time to read or be creative, learned new skills)



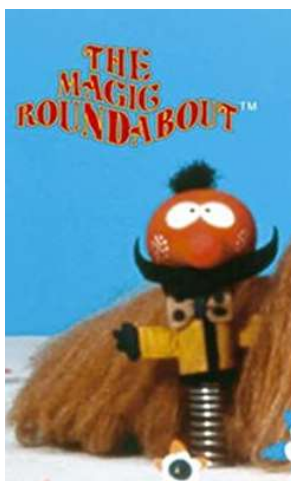
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**A bit of fun for Sunday.** As mentioned last week, despite the restrictions of doing the service live on Facebook, I'm going to try to do things a bit differently it being a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday. So, we are going to play Worship Bingo! No prizes I'm afraid, just for fun.

Listen out to the Bible readings and see if you can tick off these items:



And bonus item from last week's Gospel reading (sorry, I couldn't resist)!!



**GOOD NEWS JUST RECEIVED:**

Sue & John are grandparents again.

Bertie was born last Friday, 22 January.

Mother and baby are doing well.

Next page, my 'picture tells 1000 words' – an idea/vision for Christ Church – reaching out to the world!

