

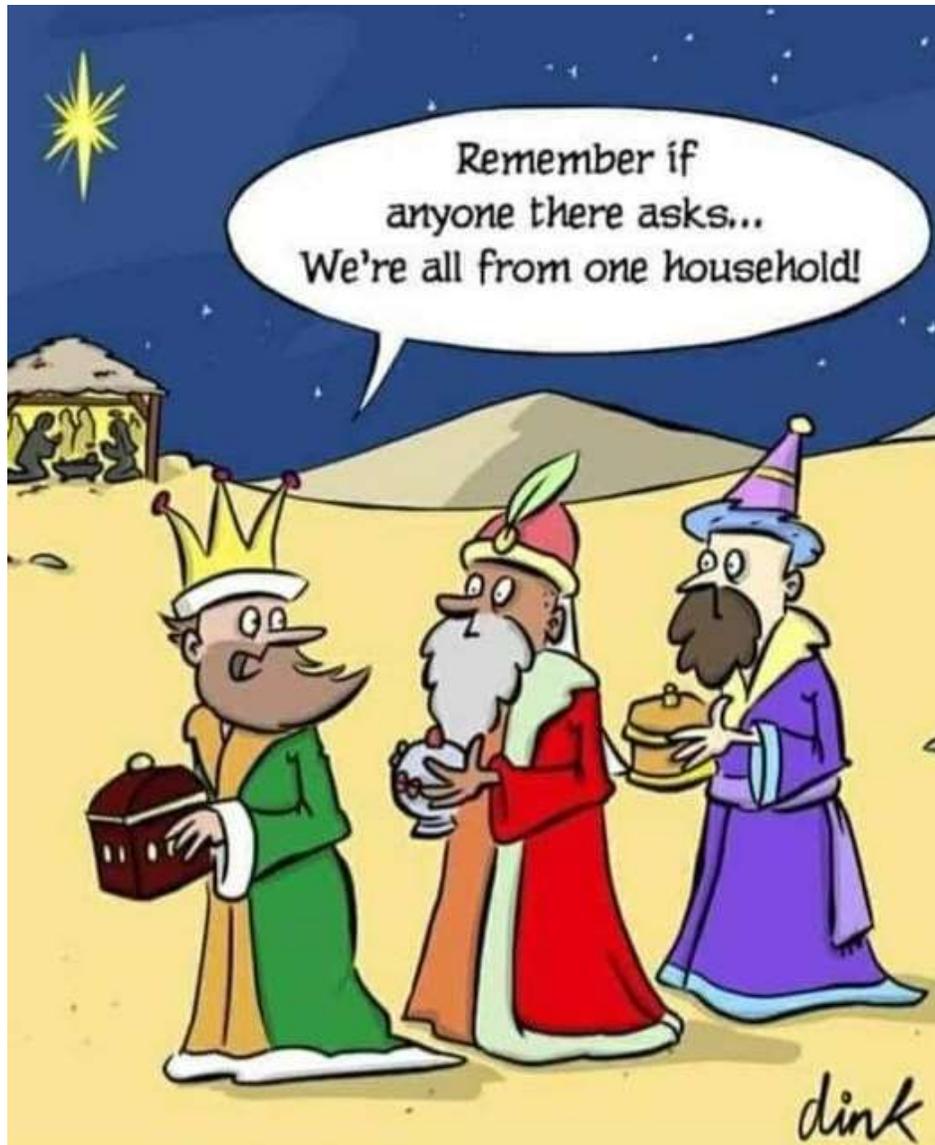
NEWS & CHAT Thursday 7 January 2021

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

There will be no activities in either church building now that we are in a national lockdown (as was previously agreed for Tier 4), including Sunday Worship which will continue online, live-streamed on the CC Facebook page, and text circulated with the weekly News & Chat.

Sunday 10 December, 10am Worship on the CC Facebook page with the minister

NO Tuesday Church, at Bridgwater Drive, or Thursday meetings at Christ Church at least while we remain in Tier 4/Tier 3.



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

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

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The season being of course New Year, new beginnings (secular) and Epiphany (liturgical from 6th Jan - Twelfth night). New Year is naturally a time for looking back over the previous year and looking forward to the year to come. A time to take stock and maybe take up 'resolutions' or commitments.

I have to admit, I was a bit miserable on New Year's Day, thinking that despite vaccines now being available, the first part of 2021 will be as bad, if not worse than 2020, and probably there won't be a relaxation in social distancing and mask wearing until well into the summer (and since I wrote that sentence another national lockdown has been announced!). But then, looking back on 2020 (my first year in ministry) I realised how much I had achieved, not just in managing the pandemic, but the Ration Challenge, writing a book of poetry, my first funeral, wedding and baptism...

And I read two articles which inspired me. One was about resolutions and how to have a better chance of achieving them and not giving up. One aspect is to make them specific – not just I will do more exercise, or eat more healthily, or be kinder to people, but one thing that is specific and a challenge, yet achievable.

Another aspect to 'success' is to be accountable – tell other people you are doing it and give to charity (or earn a treat for yourself). The other article I read was how to be happier (backed up by scientific research). All five things I already knew, and I think I already do (see the end if you are interested in the 5 things), but one is doing things for others or the greater good.

So, with all that in mind, I have decided to undertake a specific challenge – I'm doing Dry January, i.e. not drinking (alcohol) for the month of January. Not that I drink that much, but in an attempt to lose a few pounds (lbs) and save a few pounds (£)! Anything I save, I will give to church funds. If anyone would like to support me by donating something to church funds, or your chosen charity, when I complete the challenge, that would be great! I don't anticipate raising much money, but knowledge of your support will be helpful. I find it is much easier to complete a challenge if I am doing it for others.

Also, I can't share the details yet (we're still very much at the beginning), but as a result of the Quinquennial Survey of Christ Church, some building work will need to be undertaken, both mundane stuff like fixing leaks and damaged brickwork, and hopefully some more exciting elements to make our church more welcoming and beneficial to the wider community. If you would like to make a donation specifically for that, please give to the usual church account with the reference 'building'.

I may well undertake more challenges during the year – going vegetarian for a month? Giving up crisps for Lent (very tough!)? Working a specific word into the sermon each week?! (that was done at my home church in Cambridge, just for fun!) If you have suggestions for any challenges you'd like to see the minister take up (within reason!) – let me know!

It seems that great minds think alike – **Helen Dart is also doing a 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>

My target is to raise £100. Many thanks in advance, Helen

And if anyone is interested in the 5 things guaranteed to make you feel happier, they are:

1. **Be Social** a bit tricky at the moment! But keep connected – phone calls, Zoom, Whatsapp, walks with your 'bubble'
2. **Give thanks** something we do daily in prayer. Write down 3-5 things each day that you are grateful for and feel happier! Write thank you letters.
3. **Be in the moment** try to focus on now, not the past or the future.
4. **Rest and Move** get enough sleep and regular exercise
5. **Be kind** happiness is greatly increased by doing nice things for others, even if it is only indirectly by giving money to a good cause.

TIPS & IDEAS

Two years ago, I signed up for the **#64MillionArtists January Challenge**, in which you are sent an artistic challenge every day for a month. I didn't sign up this year, but because I am on their mailing list, they are sending me the challenges anyway! Here are a couple people might like to try:

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Lost and Found - What do you want to leave in 2020, and what do you want to find in 2021? You could think of this challenge like a time capsule - gather all of the things you would like to leave behind in 2020. You could put things in a box, you could write a list, or you could make an illustration. Now, gather all of the things you want to find in 2021! They could be physical things or memories, ambitions or experiences you are hoping for – gather those too in a box, list or picture.

Pocket of Hope - Make a Pocket of Hope. Decorate a piece of paper with words, images, marks or colour that will give you or someone else hope or joy. Keep it in your pocket, purse, wallet, bag or somewhere to find whenever you like. You could make one for someone you know to carry with them and include things you know they like or enjoy. Think of it as a visual or written pick-me-up that can be used repeatedly as needed! Here's a short video showing how to make the 'pocket' - <https://youtu.be/sbzRmBx0Jus>

RESOURCES

A New Year reflection from St Paul's Cathedral by Paula Gooder:

<https://mailchi.mp/47138cda3f8d/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1375532?e=e30a1f608a>

If like me, you are a lover of words – an interesting article about the new words created in 2020:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-glossary-covid-terms-dictionary-2020-b1766827.html>

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 prayer for staff at Southend Hospital, teachers and all those struggling with the current increased isolation.

This week's (CC) prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth): **Epiphany**. The manifestation of Christ to the gentiles represented by the Magi; a moment of sudden and great revelation or realisation. Is Christ manifest in our church? Have we had the revelation of God's plan and purpose for our church? Now there's a couple of meaty topics to pray for!

Particular prayer requests this week:

Kim & George Searle

Lee, Gill H's relative

Cindy and Les - Sandy's parents

Audrey

Della and family

Ernie Lane's family



We give thanks:

Barbara's surgery was very successful. She continues with further treatment.

Joy & Steven Anderson are now recovered from COVID.

Mark has had a scan recently and the tumour is reduced.

Linda and Chris Lee – celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary

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 have not received an invitation but 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>

The funeral of Ernie Lane is to be held on Friday 29th January at 12 noon and there will be a live web-cast. Details to follow. Jenny and Margaret send their grateful thanks to all Ernie's Church friends for their prayers and kind messages of condolence on his passing.

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'Happy Birthday' to Dexter who was adopted and came to join us as assistant minister (!!) last year on 5th January!



And finally, in this season of Epiphany, when Mary, Joseph and Jesus escaped to Egypt, we remember:

" every day somewhere in the world the nativity scene is alive."

