

NEWS & CHAT Thursday 4 February 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 7 February, 10am Worship on the CC Facebook page with the Minister

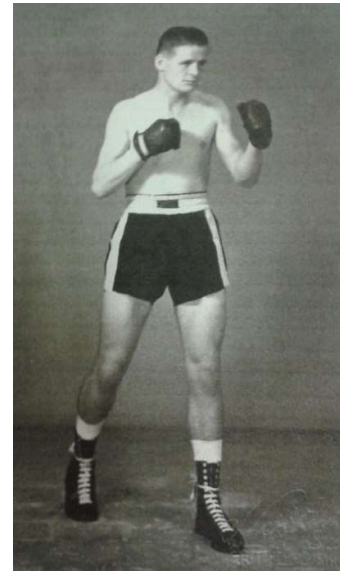
NEWS

Last week we shared a picture of Bill G with his virtual hugs. We didn't receive this in time to go alongside it, but Beth wanted to share this picture of Bill in his prime. "He spent some years travelling in the far East boxing while serving 5 years in the RAF and fought up to '3rd in the world' as a professional boxer at welterweight." **If others would like to send in photos of church friends, recent or old, please do so.**

Helen Dart's January Challenge:

Helen has raised over £170 for HARP. Thank you to all those who have donated.

I (Naomi) completed **Dry January**. The app estimated that I saved around £50, and that sounds about right, so I have donated that to the church (for the future building project) along with a couple of other donations – thank you! No one has suggested a new challenge, so I will have the start of February off and see what I can come up with to give up, on take on, for Lent this year (starting 17 Feb.)



Thank you! The Finance Committee, Elders (CC) and the Minister would like to express our gratitude to everyone who supported the church through offerings and donations during 2020, when for most of the year we could not meet in the building. Most of our income comes from congregational giving and not only was it maintained, but it increased a bit.

Please, keep up the good work as 2021 is going to be another very tough year financially!

Fairtrade Easter Eggs!

Easter may seem a long way off but The Meaningful Chocolate Company who sell their Fairtrade Easter eggs have them available now. There are 5 different Real Easter Eggs: Dark, £5.50; Original (milk) £4.50; White £4.50; Fun Pack (6 mini eggs); Special Edition £9.99. They all contain the Easter Story and activities. You can see more details of these eggs on the website: www.realeasteregg.co.uk If you would like to order any please contact Wendy Norris on 01268777901 or by email: w.windett@hotmail.co.uk

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

DEVOTION

So, we are finished with (dry) January one of the longest months of the year (to me January always feels like THE longest of all) and now we are into February the shortest month. **Action for Happiness**, an organisation that aims to help people be happier and increase well-being, whose patron is the Dalai Lama, have declared it **Friendly February**. From what I know of Action for Happiness (I have been to some of their events), it is rather like church or faith, but without the God bit! Most of the things they suggest to increase happiness are things that we do as part of our faith/church fellowship:

- Be grateful – give thanks to God
- Connect with people
- Live life mindfully
- Help others
- Be part of something bigger – let your life have meaning
- Resilience and acceptance – things I think we find through our faith in Christ and God

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

Their slogan for February is 

While it is a slightly selfish, individualistic way of putting it, I think it's a good thing to promote, for a month at least, if you can't manage it all the time(!), staying connected with others and being 'friendly'.



The best way to cheer yourself up
is to cheer somebody else up.

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS



#FriendlyFebruary

If you would like to look at their daily suggestions for actions during February, go here -

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/february>

They include things like smile at people you see (practice smiling with your eyes if wearing a mask!!), do a kind deed for a stranger, ask someone how they are feeling, share a video or message that inspired you. This February, even though we are mostly stuck at home, let's share the love! And, maybe that should be our goal for Lent this year – rather than give something up (life is hard enough as it is!) let's commit to do a nice, friendly act every day!

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone" Galatians 6:9-10

Or, in the words of the Diana Ross song: <https://youtu.be/KmFnjuFR8TI>

Reach out and touch somebody's hand

Make this world a better place if you can

(obviously we can't physically touch someone's hand at the moment, but there are lots of ways to stay in touch as we saw last week with the 'virtual hugs'.)

TIPS & IDEAS

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

Write a poem that is a recipe for happiness.

Think about the ingredients you would choose - where do you find them, and how much of each ingredient do you need? Write your recipe instructions down, and let's get cooking!

#64MillionArtists have now moved into Weekly Challenges. Here is this week's:

WORD CLOUD - Collect words throughout your day or the week. You could tear them from newspapers, magazines, letters or anything else you find. Collect words you hear or see and write them down.

Choose words you find interesting or pick them at random. When you have a collection of words, choose how to arrange them. Or throw them into the air and see how they fall. Find an interesting way to display and share your word cloud! If anyone makes one – do share it!

See another artistic 'idea' below in **RESOURCES**:

GREAT BIG ART EXHIBITION

Museums and leading artists are inviting the British public to take part in what they hope will be the biggest art exhibition ever mounted. The Great Big Art Exhibition is being launched by Sir Antony Gormley, who is asking people to make an artwork at home and put it in their window or garden. "At a time when all the theatres and galleries are shut it is wonderful to somehow tap into the extraordinary reservoirs of creativity in the country and celebrate the diversity of range and thought and feelings that exist," Sir Antony said. **He has suggested animals as the theme for the first two weeks** of the Exhibition.

Every two weeks, a different artist will choose a subject for the public to respond to in what the organisers hope will be a rolling nationwide exhibition, ending on 30 April. Read the whole article here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-55831841>

More details of how to take part can be downloaded here <https://firstsite.uk/> Here are the key points:

- Display your artwork. This could be on the inside of your window facing out, inside your home to be photographed for social media, or in your garden or outdoor space where it can be seen by other people if possible.

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

- Take a photograph of your artwork and share it on your chosen social media channels. Don't forget to use the hashtag **#thegreatbigartexhibition2021**
- When sharing please tell us your name, the closest town or city to where you live, and provide a one sentence description of your artwork. You can also make a short (30 second) video or audio clip of your description if you'd prefer.
- Visit the Firstsite website to take a look at the artworks shared so far and be inspired to make your own. www.firstsite.uk

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

<https://mailchi.mp/3ee5b91b1335/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1388368?e=e30a1f608a>

LENT COURSE – it has proved too complicated to have joint course with the Methodists this year. Starting on **Thursday 25 Feb, at 7pm for 5 weeks** we will be holding a 'house group' for Lent on Zoom using the York Course material 'Caring for Creation'. The 5 sessions are: Environment, Climate Change, The Age of Humans, Facing the Crisis, Faith, Hope and Love. I will put a brief outline and selected questions in the News and Chat each week, but I highly recommend that you order the booklet for yourself. It is only £3.80 and my copy arrived very quickly. It is an excellent resource for studying these issues even beyond Lent (there is really too much material for only 5 weeks!)

You can order here: <https://www.yorkcourses.co.uk/product/caring-for-creation/> If you are not online, I'm sure you can ask someone who is to order you a copy.

If you want to take part and would prefer a 7.30pm start, please let me know.

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 families of all those who have died from COVID-19 as the UK passes 100,000 deaths.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have issued a call to the nation to pause and reflect to remember the more than 100,000 people across the UK who have died after contracting Covid-19 and all those who know and love them. They are asking the public to pray every day at 6pm from 1 February onwards.

This week's (CC) prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth): **Ministry**. And then Jesus launched into Ministry, a Ministry that changed humanity for evermore. Thanks be to God that He has given us a fabulous opportunity to be part of Christ's ongoing ministry here and now, yes even little us! Let the Lord lead you in your prayers.

Particular prayer requests this week:

Chris, a friend of Sally

Cindy and Les - Sandy's parents

Clare, Robert's sister

Della

Ernie Lane's family

Yvonne & Tony (BDC)

Colin (BDC)

Edie the 7 year old grand-daughter of Martin (Thora's partner) sadly passed away last week. We pray for her parents Lois and Craig and her 11 year old brother Charlie.

We give thanks for:

Claudia's uncle Rubio is now home from hospital. Your prayers were greatly appreciated.

That Robert's sister Clare is much improved, though still in hospital. Your prayers were greatly appreciated.

The funeral of Ernie Lane was last Friday, 29 January at 12pm.

If you were not able to watch the service on the day but would still like to, the webcast should be available for 28 days, here:

Website: www.obitus.com

Username: Vayu3454

Password: 733120

A PDF of the service is sent with this News & Chat.

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

A poem sent in by Kate at BDC:

A new future -

Today, I dared to let myself dream,
That the world will one day open again.
That the locks will loosen, the walls will fall,
The doors will fly open and reunite us all.

I dared to imagine the warmth of a cuddle,
A group of my friends all locked in a huddle.
I felt all the heartbeats, drumming with mine,
I heard all the laughter, I tasted the wine.

I thought of the feelings I've missed for so long,
The room full of music, united by song.
The freedom to roam, to plan and to meet
To hold someone's hand, to meet, to greet.

Just for a moment I dared to dream of,
The flights I would board to the places I love.
The moment those eyes would meet mine at the gate,
The feeling of joy after so long a wait.

Today, I dared to let myself dream,
That the life we once had would happen again.
That we'd no longer fear the danger of air,
That our lives would not depend on such care.

They say that we mustn't wish time away,
But it's hard, my friend, when faced with a day,
So long in blank hours and so wiped of laughter,
It's tempting to drift away to thereafter.

So yes, I dared to dream just a while,
Of life coming back, it brought me a smile.
One day I know, this will be in the past,
And hugs will be free, again, at last.

Donna Ashworth

ALL 50P



Val at Bridgwater Drive has been busy again! Chicks and bunnies all have an Easter egg in them – there is also a £1 rabbit with an extra egg in the basket.
Please phone Val if you would like to buy any of these - 07847 297221