

NEWS & CHAT Thursday 18 March 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.

The URC Moderators have issued guidance on the re-opening of churches for worship. It can be read here: <https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3750-synod-moderators-issue-new-guidance-on-reopening-of-churches>

In summary, they strongly recommend that churches do not consider re-opening for public worship until 23 May (Pentecost) **at the earliest**. The Christ Church Elders met on 9 March and agreed we should follow the Moderators advice. The Bridgwater Drive Church is also in agreement.

Sunday 21 March, Communion with the minister at 10am on Facebook.

OTHER NEWS

The Christ Church AGM will be held via Zoom on Thursday 29 April, at 7.30pm. If you still wish to make a nomination for the Eldership, please send your completed nomination form to Jean by 4 April, Easter Sunday. If you require a postal vote for the Elders Election (ie you are not online), please contact Jean.

Christ Church has registered as a **Sight Loss Friendly Church**. This means we will receive relevant information and advice and will be added to their national register. If you would like to learn more, please visit their website: <https://www.sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk/>

They have training sessions on Zoom and there are two sessions available in April on Thursday 8th April at 7pm and Thursday 15th April at 2pm. The sessions are interactive and include quizzes, discussion groups, videos and more. They last 90 minutes. **If anyone would like to attend, please get in touch with Naomi and she will find out more details.**

A national day of reflection will be held on Tuesday 23 March (the date the first lockdown in 2020 started) to mark the first anniversary and to remember the more than 125,000 people who have died. **There will be a minute's silence at 12pm, and prominent landmarks will be lit up at 8pm.**

The organisers, which include the British Red Cross, Marie-Curie and the Jo Cox Foundation, hope it will become an annual commemoration. I would suggest, that as we did one day last year, we put lit candles in our windows at 8pm, and try to observe the silence at 12pm.

As in previous years, both churches are taking a **Lent collection for Water Aid's 'Jars of Change' appeal.**

HARP Spring Walk - <https://www.harpsouthend.org.uk/spring-walk>

Simply walk three miles or more along the route of your choice any time during the Easter Holidays to raise vital funds.

**Virtual Coffee or Tea and Hot Cross Buns on Friday 26 March, 10.30am - 12pm
in aid of Rayleigh Combined Churches Refugee Group**

If you feel able to give a small donation, please contact Penny:

**01268 750324, phg7782@gmail.com, or post to 7 Chase Close, Benfleet, SS7 3BU
(cheques payable to Rayleigh Combined Churches Refugee Group)**



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

Next Sunday, 21 March is World Down Syndrome Day, a global awareness raising day.

You can help by wearing #LotsOfSocks socks or other brightly coloured, mis-matched socks. Wear them at home, nursery, school, college, university, work, church... wherever you are and whatever you're doing on 21 March!



www.worlddownsyndromeday.org

Make sure to take pictures and videos and post them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using the hashtags #LotsOfSocks, #WorldDownSyndromeDay and #WDSD20.

Lent House Groups on Thursdays at 7.30pm via Zoom.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87930156610?pwd=dTNITUZJY2JIRIhhb1VWVGdRcW5Sdz09>

Passcode: 112886 Number to phone in: 0203 051 2874

It will be the same link every week.

Open to all at Bridgwater Drive and Christ Church.

The summary and questions for this week were in last week's N&C. Here is next week's:

Week 5 (25 March) Faith, Hope and Love (final session)

It is easy to lose hope when we see what is happening to our planet and that there is so much that needs to be done. Our faith gives us hope:

- that this is still God's world and gift to us (Psalm 146:5-6)
- that Jesus reveals the nature of God which is love (John 1:1-2)
- that through Jesus, God's love has triumphed over evil and death
- that we are made in God's image, God's co-creators on earth

We are all to blame – we are like sheep gone astray! You may like to watch this clip from the TV show Years and Years which sums this up well: <https://youtu.be/IX0kwVLPmD4>

For too long the impression has been given that it is up to individuals to change everything, but there are many powerful vested interests – we have to find ways of bringing pressure on those powerful interest groups.

A future course will use the Joint Public Issues Team - <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/> resource *How Change Happens* that shows the best ways to bring about effective change. This will start in May. More details to follow.

The booklet reminds us that there are a lot of positives in a greener world not only sacrifices:

- new jobs in renewables industry
- cleaner air
- better insulated homes
- sustainable public transport
- living more communally
- reconnecting with God

Questions

1. **Read Philippians 4:12-13** What do you really need to be happy?
2. Is there a difference between optimism and hope for a Christian? How do you keep your hope alive?
3. We are all to blame. But are some more to blame than others for the present crisis? (is blame a useful thing? If we think some are more to blame, what should we do about it?)
4. Climate Change is a major cause of the migrant crisis.
What should be the Christian response to this crisis?
5. we are called to live more simply, that others may simply live. Are there any of the changes to your lifestyle that you made due to coronavirus that you intend to maintain?

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Additional questions if we have time, not from the booklet:

- Has this series encouraged you to do more for the environment/fight climate change?
- As an Eco Church, do you think there is more we could/should be doing?

At the end of the booklet are links to various carbon footprint calculators. You may like to try one. Here is one that I tried, that is quick and simple, but gives you a good overview of how well you are doing and where you might be able to improve:

www.footprint.wwf.org.uk

Solar panels – at last week’s House Group we discussed solar panels and there is currently an Essex-wide scheme for people to be able to install solar panels on their own house for a lower price. Here is the link if anyone is interested: <https://solartogether.co.uk/essex/home>

‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.’ Margaret Mead, anthropologist.

‘If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.’ Shirley Chisolm, first black woman elected to U.S. Congress (1968)

‘Do not think your single vote does not matter much. The rain that refreshes the parched ground is made up of single drops.’ Kate Sheppard, NZ women’s suffragist

**‘Hope is faith in action...hope is what we do today.’
Dr Mitri Raheb, Palestinian Christian**

TIPS & IDEAS

A musical ‘challenge’ from #64MillionArtists this week:

Musical Memories - Tap into the emotion you felt when you first put the record on the turntable, the cassette in the player or the CD in the machine. You could draw, paint or take a photo of an album cover or recreate a live concert setting. Play some music out loud and see where it takes you!

If you have more time – why not revisit your life through music, stopping the journey at the most memorable points and writing down the tracks that are important to you and the memories they evoke. You could choose just one event, or you could think of eight to make up your own Desert Island Discs!

The Faith in Action Group (CC) hope to bring you some personal activities for environmental/ecological support. Here is a good resource from the RSPB to see how green you are, and what steps you can take in your garden to be even greener - <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/community-and-advice/green-living/eco-garden-tips/>

RESOURCES

A new Lent reflection from St Paul’s Cathedral by Richard Springer, the Rector of St George-in-the-East, Dean of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Ministry for the Stepney Area and Director of the Urban Leadership School at the Centre for Theology and Community.

<https://mailchi.mp/69dcf01f4ddd/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-8243980?e=e30a1f608a>

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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 people living with Down's Syndrome and their families and carers.

This week's prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth). **Lessons.** Give thanks for those who have worked so hard to keep our children and young people 'in lessons', educated and active this past year. Give thanks for lessons learned by our leaders, that this time round easing lockdown will be managed wisely. Give thanks for your Bible - Jesus in written form and pray that we may keep ourselves learning its love lessons.

Particular prayer requests this week:

Audrey
Chris, a friend of Sally
Della
Valentina, Claudia's niece
Tim, Bob's nephew
Richard Stokes and family on the death of his father Robin



We give thanks:

that Tom Copeland survived the sepsis and came home from hospital on Saturday. (Doreen's neighbour)
Phil and Penny celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary on 20th March.

One of the 'Little Steps' families at Bridgwater Drive have been enjoying the URC Lent pack. They baked the Easter biscuits from the book with the children and cut them into heart shapes for Mother's Day gifts.

