

NEWS & CHAT Thursday 25 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.

Sunday 28 March, Palm Sunday with the minister at 10am live on Facebook. If you have a palm cross, now is the time to find it and keep it handy!

Next week is **Holy Week**. There will be a five-minute, daily reflection available each day from 10am, by a different Rayleigh clergy person via YouTube:

Monday – Rev Scott Williamson, Megacentre - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3A5r9hQzL2s>

Tuesday – Rev Ricky Rew, Baptist <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Jvrqn4ogsY>

Wednesday – Rev Naomi, URC <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOsX1h9IVYM>

Thursday – Rev David Oxtoby, Holy Trinity C of E <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fk70PBj7Uw>

Friday – Fr Paul Fox, Our Lady of Ransom, RC <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvJkEk7LqFQ>

Saturday – Rev Calvin Samuel, Methodist <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtV2WmfCFoU>

There will be a 'live' reflection/short service with the minister on Facebook at 11a.m. on **Good Friday**.

There will be a **Zoom Easter Breakfast with Communion at 8.00am on Easter Sunday**. We will start with a time of family-friendly fellowship and sharing our breakfasts (optional!) followed by a very short service with communion. If you can't manage to get there for 8am, do join us at 8.30am for the worship!
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84430618330?pwd=akVpeTdZR1E5M01UTGFuZTVPUiBSQT09>
Meeting ID: 844 3061 8330 Passcode: 166927

Our 'normal' **Easter Sunday Worship with Communion will be at 10am live on Facebook**.

OTHER NEWS

As in previous years, both churches are taking a **Lent collection for Water Aid's 'Jars of Change' appeal**. Next week is obviously the last week, so keep collecting your coins or counting how many times you use the tap!

This week is the final Lent House Group meeting on Thursday at 7.30pm

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 on Thursday evenings in May. More details to follow.



News from BDC: A BIG thank you to Val and all the people who bought her knitted Easter novelties. They have raised £200 for church funds. Sorry, but she now has none left!

#LotsofSocks for World Down Syndrome Day:
Phil G joined in!



DEVOTION

I write this on Tuesday 23 March, which has been declared a National Day of Reflection on the 1st anniversary of the start of the first lockdown in 2020 and it struck me that today's URC Daily Devotion by Revd Dr Matthew Prevett is appropriate for today, and for the run-up to Easter:

"When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, 'You will all become deserters; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.' Peter said to him, 'Even though all become deserters, I will not.' Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' But he said vehemently, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And all of them said the same." St Mark 14: 26 - 31

One of the most fascinating aspects of behavioural science is how humans behave under stress. Good, righteous, inclusive, law-abiding citizens, when faced with a moment of stress behave in ways which do not reflect their intention or their character. This can most often be reflected in what we say in the heat of an argument, where we desperately want it to finish, either with a concluding blow or a defensive swipe. We can be surprised at how we respond, what we come out with, what pushes our buttons and shapes our response.

History has shown us that evil prevails when the good do nothing. When we allow discrimination or hate speech to be applied to people within our community, we stand by while evil prevails. We see how people are dehumanised. We see how people are scapegoated and vilified. We see how people of different backgrounds and ethnicities, different sexualities and genders, different ages and abilities can be pushed aside, treated as second class, made victims of abuse or violence. We would never wish our friends or family to suffer such treatment and would want people to stand up for good and against evil.

"I will not deny you," Peter promises Jesus. These are the words of a good and righteous man who knows how he wants to respond. These are words of commitment and honour. Jesus would not be left subject to betrayal, to being left alone, with no one to support or protect. Peter knew he had words to say. He knew the words that were strong words, standing alongside the hurt and the broken, standing up for good over evil.

God of good,
in the moments of stress in our lives,
when we are conflicted or shocked,
help us to act as you would want.
Bring us your peace at times of distress,
and give us the courage to speak out for good,
that we may not deny your Son or your Gospel
but live for your truth and your love. Amen



Friday 26 March is the Reset the Debt day of Prayer and Action.

People are joining together in prayer for just and compassionate solutions to the debt crisis in our communities.

Find out more at <https://resetthedebt.uk/prayandact>

And if you haven't already done so, please consider signing the Petition to the Chancellor:

<https://e-activist.com/page/77548/petition/1>

TIPS & IDEAS

This week's challenge from #64MillionArtists:

Word Search - Pick ten random words from some written material around you - it might be a book, or a letter, a prayer or text from the Bible, or a Word Search. You can find a Word Search in a newspaper, magazine or online. Pick out ten words at random that appeal to you. **The challenge is to use each word in a short story or poem, on a subject of your choice.** Here's an example:

10 words from Rowan Williams poem *Gethsemane*

light dropping through
unreadable palm trees
a cracked voice
pushed messages
forwards

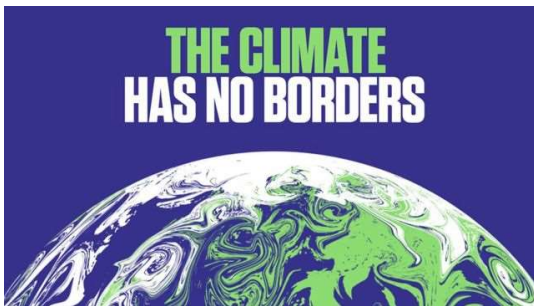
The Faith in Action Group (CC) hope to bring you some personal activities for environmental/ecological support in the coming weeks. This week is an awareness raising activity, related to climate change and the COP26 conference hosted by the UK this year.

Speak Up for Climate Change - <https://www.climatesunday.org/speak-up>

Churches, alongside other faith and civil society groups, can play a key role. Together, we can raise our voice to encourage national leaders to be ambitious and courageous in using this opportunity (COP26) for change. Find out how you can join with others to speak out for climate justice.

There is a form to complete to add your name to the Time Is Now Declaration. Naomi has completed this for Christ Church. Please consider signing as an individual -

<https://thetimeisnow.uk/declaration?partner=106>



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/2a490e6ae0ec/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-8246064?e=e30a1f608a>

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 in which the first anniversary of the first lockdown falls, we pray for the family and friends of all those who have died in the coronavirus pandemic.

This week's prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth). **Laud.** Give thanks, laud, and honour our Saviour Jesus. Pray that our offering to Him may not just be a symbol, like a palm branch, but a heart, soul, mind and strength given to glorify and worship the giver of life, Jesus.

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

Particular prayer requests this week:

Audrey
Norah, mother of Kim, a mentor
Della
Valentina, Claudia's niece
Tim, Bob's nephew
Richard Stokes and family on the death of his father Robin
Raymond, Trevor's brother (BDC)



Thanks: "We would like to express our thanks to all for the good wishes we received and love shown by our wonderful Church Family on our Golden Anniversary." Penny and Phil

And for a bit of light relief, some church signs from the USA, courtesy of www.bordedpanda.com



DON'T FORGET clocks spring forward to British Summer Time on Saturday night!