

NEWS & CHAT 16 December 2021

The online service will remain 'joint' while each church has its own service as pre-pandemic. For the foreseeable future, the online service will be live-streamed from the church where the minister is leading, but always on the Christ Church Facebook page.

Following the introduction of Plan B by the government, the wearing of masks is now compulsory in churches.

In order to keep Covid-19 safe, please remember to:

- Wear a mask at all times (unless you have an exemption), including at groups meeting at church.
- Sanitise hands when entering the building
- **Keep at least 1m from people you are not in a 'bubble' or live with** including at groups meeting at church.
- Try to keep conversations after worship to a minimum

During services and other events, we will endeavour to keep the Church as warm as possible whilst maintaining good ventilation, so please dress accordingly.

Sunday 19 Dec.	10am	The Minister at CC, Communion
Advent IV	10.30am	Christingle at BDC, led by Margaret
	Posadas and Carols	meet at the church (CC) at 2pm to walk up the High Street, or at 3pm for Carols at church and refreshments
Christmas Eve	3pm	Christingle at CC – ticket holders only
	6pm	Christmas Eve Communion at BDC
CHRISTMAS DAY	10am	Christmas Family Worship at CC, the Minister
	10.30am	A short service of carols, readings & prayers at BDC, (Margaret)

Sunday 26 Dec. **NO service at either church.** You can listen to the URC Daily Devotions service for 26 Dec. here: <https://soundcloud.com/andy-braunston/urc-daily-devotions-sunday-service-for-26th-december-2021-the-revd-james-church?si=b580218acf9b44bb8f7632857788a96e>

Or read it here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZYvupFuVbCKxScw19vXKq_ubq75pTZ51/view
If you would like a paper copy of this service, please contact Jean or Sue.

The Christmas Day worship service will be circulated with next week's N&C (in lieu of Sunday worship). If you would like a paper copy of the (adult) Christmas Eve service, please let Naomi, Jean or Sue know. Christ Church folk are warmly invited to this Christmas Eve service.

There will be **NO** News & Chat for the week between Christmas and New Year (30 Dec), so if you have any news that cannot wait until January, please let me have it by next Monday (20 Dec) for inclusion in next week's Christmas News & Chat. Thanks, Naomi

Used Postage Stamps

Don't throw away your used postage stamps. If you don't already give them to someone, then please give them to Penny who collects them to send to The Leprosy Society.

TIPS & IDEAS

No particular creative tip this week. See how creative you can be with wrapping gifts or making (instead of buying) Christmas cards. Maybe use paper or cards from last year to minimise waste!

RESOURCES

An Advent reflection by Revd Dr Cally Hammond who is the Dean of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. <https://mailchi.mp/18d2bc9de2b9/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-8251160?e=e30a1f608a>

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

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell in conversation with the theologian Paula Gooder about Advent and Christmas: <https://youtu.be/MpPyv3keef8>

This may be of particular interest to those of you following the Advent Bible Study, though it makes some excellent points about the importance of observing Advent, and about the real meaning of Christmas.

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. We pray especially this week for children and young people.

This week's prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth). **Singing Gifts.** We pray for Your sweetness to our voices and joy to our faces and fun, as we sing our carols of celebration to the people of Rayleigh.

Particular prayer requests this week:

Mark E and his family
Audrey
Phil and Grace
Beth, Bill & Elizabeth G

Judy H
Sheila S
Peter C
Joy and Steve A



An Advent Devotion from the UCC, based on last Sunday's Gospel reading

Good News? by Marilyn Pagán-Banks

"John answered, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people." - Luke 3:16-18 (NRSV)

Good news?! I guess it depends which side of the fork you are on. This is certainly not a vision of the baby born in a manger and wrapped in swaddling cloth. John's idea of the Messiah was all about power and might and control. It is what the people wanted after centuries of oppression and colonization. "Finally, some justice!" I imagine some thinking. But instead of a winnowing fork, Jesus comes with open hands, inviting all into right relationship. A relationship grounded in a love so expansive it became flesh so we can feel it. Touch it. Allow it to transform us. Jesus comes and offers living water to all. He offers the bread of life to all. Jesus reminds us that we, too, are sourced from this love. Made from it. And can live into it more fully. This love will make us free.



Prayer

This is good news in this season of Advent, Immanuel, God with us. Thank you for this season of remembering, sharing the story, and inviting others into the possibility of your love. Amen