

NEWS & CHAT 9 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.

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

- Where possible, wear a mask at all times (unless you have an exemption)
- Sanitise hands when entering the building
- Keep at least 1m from people you are not in a 'bubble' or live with
- Try to keep conversations 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 12 Dec. 10am Nativity Service led by Sandy Brown
10.30am The Minister at BDC, Communion

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **THIS Sunday 12 Dec. - The Harmonie Concert at 3pm - ticketed event.**
- **Wednesday 15 Dec. – Concord Ladies Carol Service 1.30pm**
- **Saturday 18th Dec.** Messy Church Christmas Party - **ticketed event.**
- **Sunday 19th Dec. from 2pm Posadas and Carols** - Mary and Joseph and some other 'nativity' characters will leave church to walk up the High Street to Home Regal where we will sing a carol or two, then back down the High Street, and to **the church for 3pm, where we will sing some carols OUTSIDE, and then go into the church for refreshments.** There will be chairs in the Welcome Area for those who are unable to stand outside the church to sing carols. **Please sign the sheet at the back of the church to give an idea of numbers for refreshments.**
- **Christingle will take place at 3pm on 24th Dec.** This is a **ticketed event.**
- **Christmas Day, family worship at 10am** – the Christmas Day service is traditionally not particularly well attended, but bear in mind that there will be no service the day after (Sunday 26th) and last year we couldn't celebrate Christmas in church at all as we were in lockdown, so maybe this is the year to make more effort to include the celebration of our Lord's birth in church alongside celebrations with family and food!

TORCH the umbrella organization for Sight Loss Friendly Church are holding **an online Carol Service on Thursday 16 Dec at 2pm.** All are welcome, via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85641163967?pwd=T29lWmVaQ2NKNnFHMIkFmbEYya1V5dz09>

Meeting ID: 856 4116 3967

Passcode: 904610

or via Telephone - Dialling from the UK use one of the following:

0203 481 5240 0203 901 7895 0131 460 1196

and when prompted enter: Meeting ID: 856 4116 3967 Passcode: 904610

OR, via YouTube - <https://youtu.be/YzjFtKzLfAM>

TIPS & IDEAS

This week's creative idea from #64MillionArtists involves reflecting on 2021. It feels a bit early to me, but maybe you would like to be thinking about it to do in the week between Christmas and New Year!

Reflect on your 2021. Can you identify four things that you have learnt this year? Maybe you learnt new words, or a new hobby or have met new people and learnt more about them? Find a way to share your learnings! You could record a short video, take a photograph, doodle a list or record a voice recording.

RESOURCES

An Advent reflection by Revd Dr Cally Hammond who is the Dean of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. <https://mailchi.mp/d1b0394c08f8/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-8251156?e=e30a1f608a>

THANK YOU to all who
helped cook and prepare the
Christmas Dinner on 5th Dec.

ADVENT HOUSE GROUPS

Joint with the Methodist Church – there will be four Advent Bible Study sessions on **Tuesdays**

- **2.30pm in person at Rayleigh Methodist Church**
- **7.30pm on Zoom** – (same link each week)
<https://zoom.us/j/99345651990?pwd=OW45UkVzZVJDN08wM05WY2JNWDYwZz09>
Meeting ID: 993 4565 1990 Passcode: 805792
To phone in - 0131 460 1196

They will be led by Revd Naomi Young-Rodas (URC) and Revd Calvin Samuel (Methodist) using material specially written by Naomi. There are some paper copies at the back of the church or contact Naomi or Jean if you would like one. You may want to use the material for personal reflection at home if you are not able to attend the meetings.

Last one, next Tuesday, 14 December:

Week 4: Matt 2:13-18 Fleeing to Egypt

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). **The Gift.** Our Nativity service reminds us once again of Your incredible gift to us all, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the gift of our Sunday Club children and their leaders, using their talents and enthusiasm to lead us all in praise of Your Son.

Particular prayer requests this week:

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

John, Ian's nephew
Sheila S
Peter C
Joy A
Jenny & Tom



An Advent Devotion from the UCC (United Church of Christ, USA)

Really Ready by Kenneth L. Samuel

"The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. "But who will be able to endure it when he comes? For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes."

Malachi 3:1-2 excerpts (NLT)

Have you ever been ready for something until you got it ... and then found out you were not really ready for it at all? Sometimes what we think we really want comes with changes we didn't expect and are not prepared for.

Everyone who thinks they're ready for a pet may not be prepared to take care of one. The walks, the food, the medical care, the pet-sitting when you're away. All these things and more come along with the advent of pets.

Relationships, too, are much more than sentimental feelings. The constant communication and compromises require much more than sensual romantic episodes.

And many of the professional promotions we are so eager to attain place increased demands on our time and concentration.

With all our eager expectations, it behooves us to pause and consider what will be required of us when those expectations arrive. When our heart's desire is delivered, how will it change our hearts?

Advent is the time of joyous anticipation for the coming of the Messiah. But are we really ready? Are we really ready to be purged from the dross of elaborate but empty religiosity? Are we really ready for a deep dive of the Spirit into our personal contradictions? Are we really ready to be bleached and scoured into a newness of life?

Much more than a glorious expectation, Advent requires real preparation.

Prayer

"Fix me for my starry crown. Fix me Jesus, fix me. Fix me for a higher ground. Fix me Jesus, fix me."

