

NEWS & CHAT 6 January 2022

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.

The wearing of masks is compulsory in churches.

To continue 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 9 Jan. 2022 10am All Age, led by Sandy at CC
 10.30am The Minister at BDC, Communion

THIS Saturday 8 Jan Art Club 10am – 12pm

Sunday 16 Jan. Church Meeting after worship (CC)

A reminder – The new Synod Moderator, Revd Lythan Nevard will lead worship at both churches on Sunday 23 Jan. – 10am at CC. 2pm at BDC

TIPS & IDEAS

At the end of 2020 and 2021, I made a scrapbook of the year as they were such unusual, history-in-the-making years with the global pandemic and the climate crisis. Perhaps you would like to do something similar – look back over 2021 and reflect on the year – globally and/or personally. Or, if it feels too late for that and you're ready to move on and start a new year – reflect on your new year intentions or resolutions; what aims or goals do you have for 2022? Maybe express these reflections in a poem, picture or collage.

RESOURCES

A special Sunday Worship (BBC Radio 4, Sunday Worship) marking the life, work and ministry of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who died on Boxing Day. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00132bz>

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 new beginnings and hope in our lives and we continue to pray for over-burdened NHS staff, pharmacies and carers.

This week's prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth). Two themes this week to fit in the five weeks of January. As today is **Epiphany** – 'a moment of sudden and great revelation or realisation.' The revelation of Christ's awesome life, death and resurrection, the realisation of His love for you. Now that's something to pray about with deep-down praise and gratitude.

And for this week, up to Sunday 9th - **Emmanuel**. 'God with us', in other words we are surrounded by God's care, Jesus in our everyday, the Spirit drawing love within us. Now that's something else to pray about with deep-down praise and gratitude.

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

Particular prayer requests this week:

Bruce, Ian's friend in Canada
Audrey
Phil and Grace
Beth, Bill & Elizabeth G
Peter and Jacquie – friends of Di

Leeann, Pauline D's daughter
Sheila S
Peter C
Joy and Steve A
Melodie S (Concord Club)



Phil is back in hospital undergoing tests. We would appreciate your prayers. Penny

TODAY IS EPIPHANY

A great revelation – in this case of Christ.
Also, the day we celebrate the arrival of the Magi to visit Jesus.

In some countries Epiphany is very much celebrated, with special food and children receiving gifts. Across the continents, Epiphany is celebrated in various ways such as processions of the Three Wise Men, gift giving, a present-delivering witch, jumping into freezing water, and cakes with a hidden secret. Here are a few examples:

- In Spain, and many Latin American countries, children generally receive presents from the Three Wise Men, rather than Santa Claus, and they leave shoes outside the door on the night of the 5th to be filled with gifts.
- Many countries have parades – Warsaw, Poland has Kings on camels, a few llamas, and even a Chinese dragon as part of its procession.
- Much of Latin America also celebrates Epiphany, or Día de los Reyes, and it's often given greater importance than Christmas. On the 6th, there are big processions, such as the one in Lima, Peru where the highlight is three policemen dressed as the Three Wise Men who ride on horseback through the streets.
- In New Orleans, as well as across the south-eastern region of the US, Epiphany is celebrated with the baking and eating of cakes. These round King Cakes decorated with coloured sugar contain a little figurine or token, and whoever finds it in their slice of cake is responsible for making the King Cake the next year.
- The Orthodox version of Epiphany celebrations, involves stripping down to swimming trunks and diving into icy water, such as the Golden Horn in Istanbul. Participants aim to retrieve a wooden crucifix that has been thrown in by the priest. It's believed that catching the cross will bring health and prosperity, and hopefully protect from pneumonia. In Bulgaria, the icy water dip goes one step further. Before the priest throws the cross into the water, a band of pipers and drummers jump in and begin to play. Groups of people also dance around in big circles in the water.



A Sonnet for Epiphany by Malcolm Guite

It might have been just someone else's story,
Some chosen people get a special king.
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,
We don't belong, it doesn't mean a thing.
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,
A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars.
They did not know his name but still they sought him,
They came from elsewhere but still they found;
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.

