

NEWS & CHAT Thursday 21 January 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 24 January, 10am Worship on the CC Facebook page with the Minister

NEWS

This week is the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** – you can use this link to find out more and download prayer resources if you wish: <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2021/>

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The theme that was chosen, “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses the Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family.

Each year Christian Aid provides the [Go and Do action points](#) for each of the daily reflections – linking into the important work of Christian Aid in the relief of poverty and advocacy of justice. “Each day during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we provide a starting point, reflection, questions and a prayer based on the theme.” Use this link to go to the Christian Aid daily prayers and actions. For those who can’t use the link here are a few of the suggestions:-

Day 1 Pray for action on global refugee and asylum issues and campaigns. These are bound up with many other issues, such as the multiple reasons that have forced someone to leave their home, conflict, climate change, Coronavirus etc.

Day 2 Give thanks and pray for the children you know. Pray for the day when children across the world will be given equal opportunities to thrive and live an abundant life.

Day 3 Consider the clothing in your wardrobe and the people who have touched them. Have these clothes been made with fair pay and good working conditions? Continue to raise your voice for the cause of Fairtrade and choose Fairtrade whenever you can.

Day 4 Pray in solidarity with Christians all over the world, brothers and sisters living in diverse situations, experiencing diverse problems and sharing diverse gifts.

Day 5 Read the Beatitudes through slowly (Matthew 5: 3-11). Which of the actions described in the passage are you encouraged to take today?

Day 6 Contribute in any way that you can to a foodbank, food growing scheme or community meal initiative in your area.

Day 7 Pray for **ACT Alliance**, the largest coalition of Protestant and Orthodox churches and church-related organisations engaged in humanitarian, development and advocacy work in the world. It has more than 130 members working together in over 120 countries. It aims to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalised people regardless of their religion, politics, gender, sexual orientation, race or nationality. All its work is in keeping with the highest international codes and standards.

Day 8 Think about how our church expresses care for God’s world in worship and teaching; in how we look after your buildings and land; in how we engage with our local community and in global campaigns, and in the personal lifestyles of our congregation.

Christ Church has now formally been accepted as part of the Inclusive Church Network.

This week nationally is the **Big Energy Saving Week** - a national campaign to help people cut their fuel bills and get all the financial support they are entitled to. The week focuses on raising public awareness of how to switch energy supplier or tariff to get the best deal, access discounts and make homes energy efficient. This is the 8th Big Energy Saving Week and is a partnership between Citizens Advice, the Energy Saving Trust and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy with the support of numerous organisations, charities and companies.

And, today (21 Jan) is **International Hugging Day**! Obviously, a bit difficult in the current lockdown – but maybe give someone a virtual hug – phone a friend, send a text or Whatsapp or an actual handwritten card – letting people know you'd hug them if you could! It's good to share love, even if we can't do it physically!



No, I haven't 'fallen off the wagon' for Dry January! Still doing it! But this cartoon amused me!

And remember Helen Dart's January Challenge: I am walking 31 miles in 31 days for HARP. If you wish to donate, please use the link. <https://homelessactionresource.enthuse.com/pf/helen-dart>

My target is to raise £100. For people not on the internet but who wish to donate please contact me. Many thanks in advance, Helen

CHILDREN'S SPACE – see attached Children's & Families News

DEVOTION

This week's devotion comes from the weekend food magazine – bear with me – it's proof that you can find theology in anything! Grace Dent has written amusingly and with surprising depth for a restaurant critic, throughout the pandemic. It seems that she is now 'holed up' in the north for lockdown, caring for her mother who has terminal cancer. She talks about how 'sweet treats' are alleviating the boredom of both January and lockdown, but rather than paraphrase, here are some excerpts in her own words:

"Each day, I promise myself: "Less sugar, fewer carbohydrates", but I am yet to measure out mam's morphine at 2am and then crave a rocket salad with an oil-free dressing. My mother, 84, and with more comebacks than Status Quo behind her, feels similarly. Occasions such as this need the big guns. Hot buttered toast laden with enough marmalade to make Paddington rethink the chest size of his duffle coat...

I'm unsure what your personal pain is, but there's a lot of it about at present. The sadness seeps quietly from all of us. If you find yourself in an argument, the chances are your opponent is not actually angry with you personally. They were merely carrying their anger when they happened upon your person, and you are merely collateral damage. And in that moment you are the embodiment of another three months of home-schooling or their father's missing second vaccination jab. You are their forthcoming rent, their vanishing career and their dwindling savings...

I often go to Booths [local shop] after 9pm, when I'm almost the only customer in the store... Sometimes I head back to the veg section to languish for a while by the reduced-price brussels sprouts, just so I can shamelessly enjoy a few more moments of music [on her phone with headphones] and hide from terms such as "comfort care" and "palliative"...

Banoffee pie was yellow-stickered down from £3.80 to £1.20 yesterday. So pleasing with tea and *Tipping Point*. I have trouble believing in an interventionist God lately, but I do believe He offers small mercies."

The whole article can be read here: <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2021/jan/15/sweet-treats-are-abbreviating-these-long-cooped-up-january-days-grace-dent>

And this - I don't know if many of you are familiar with the chef Yotam Ottolenghi. If so, probably you have a love/hate relationship with his recipes (I do) – some are amazing (there's a lentil one I make all the time) and some, well, are not...! He was writing about how people might not have much money in January and how to make do with tinned food and things we might have in our cupboards (though along with Nigella

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

Lawson he seems to have things in his cupboard you'd never find in mine, and that you'd be hard pushed to track down in Rayleigh). But it struck me that his idea could apply just as well to life – “making do with what we've got, reaching for those trusted tins, seeing in them a bit of a new light” can lead to new adventures. In other words, taking what we have and know, and doing something a bit new and different with it – that sounds to me like a good challenge for 2021! (but this week's recipes looked disgusting – I won't be trying any of those!!)

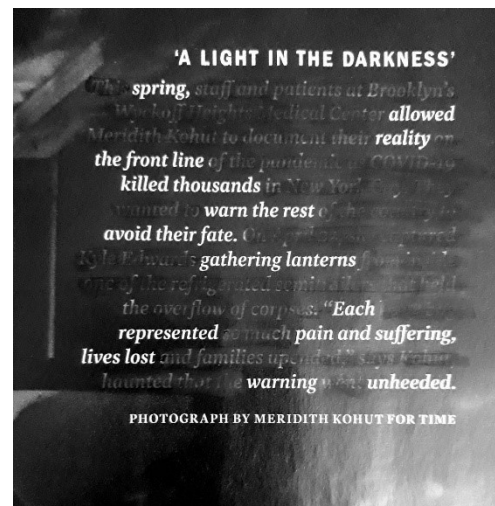


TIPS & IDEAS

From the **#64MillionArtists January Challenge** - artistic challenges every day for a month.

Black Out poem find a magazine article or other text you can write on. Black out words to leave just a few that form a poem. Here's one I made from a page from *TIME* magazine with photos of the year (2020).

Hidden Faces – I thought this one was quite fun. Cue anecdote from my childhood! – The grandmother clock my dad inherited was always in the dining room. It has carved bits on the bottom that made shadows on the wall that looked like faces! Anyway, here's the challenge – Try to find faces in the objects around you by looking for or feeling them. **Search for hidden faces around you, or arrange objects into a face.** What expression is the face pulling? Photograph or describe your hidden face!



RESOURCES

A new weekly reflection from St Paul's Cathedral by Gillian Straine:

<https://mailchi.mp/e60286e5b1bb/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-1384440?e=e30a1f608a>

If you are looking for a more 'ethical' bank account or savings account, why not check out Ecology Building Society: <https://www.ecology.co.uk/>

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 all NHS staff and key-workers.

This week's prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth): **Baptism**. Baptism - an outward public witness to an inner Spirit exchange. Please pray for our church, for our existing areas of witness and for openness to the new ones the Lord has for us to fulfil.

Particular prayer requests this week:

Bill and Jenny, friends of Phil T.
Barbara & Richard

Joy and Steve A
Della and family

XL Mentoring

Sandy will start training new mentors this month.

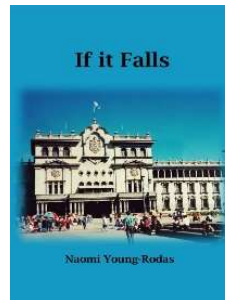
If anyone would like to join the online mentor training please contact Sandy.

It will be over four consecutive Wednesday evenings starting at 7pm on Wednesday 20th January

A review of If It Falls:

'The story of Raphael, haunted by the past and its traumatic injustices, bound by it to stand up for truth in an insidious, cynical undercurrent of cheap life.

A detective story, a murder mystery, a story of love intertwined with a love story! A story of ordinary and extraordinary heroism, of the complexities of life and of a clear simplicity oh, and large quantities of coffee!



Great characters, gripping plot with many twists and turns, well written and with a totally unexpected ending. What more could you ask?! Oh, and no swearing, yay!

Go get a copy!!' GD

For next Sunday, 31 Jan – 5th Sunday

In 'normal' times, on the 5th Sunday of the month we might do something a bit different and more interactive like Café style church. So, I thought we might try something a bit more collaborative:

See if you can tell a familiar Bible story in a new, modern way, e.g. the story of Jonah (from this Sunday), or the gospel reading for the 31st – Mark 1:21-28, or do it in picture form, or in the form of a text message, Tweet or a 'meme' and email it to me **by next Monday (25th) night** so I know if I need to write a sermon on Tuesday morning or not! noemi68_us@yahoo.com

If you are not able to email – you can handwrite your idea, and if you're quick, post it, or call me and tell me on the phone 07555 705530

I will then read out/show a few in next week's online service. THANK YOU! Naomi

The Flowers of Spring

Barbara says that recently, while sorting through some drawers, she came across her uncle's Sunday School hymn/prayer book given to him on 3rd January 1915. Inside was a little book of poetry, 'Beside the Still Waters'. Instead of carrying on with the sorting out, Barbara says she sat down and read the poems and was absolutely enchanted. This one seemed so appropriate for these strange times. It lifted her spirits so it seemed a good idea to share it with everyone..



Up through the cold, damp earth
There peers a tiny blade of green.
A sunbeam sheds its rays thereon,
and lo,
The early plant perceives the world is good
And stretches forth its heart into the sun.
A snowdrop lifts its head and spring is here.
Crocus and daffodil follow in its wake
Until the bluebells pave the ground with blue
And flowers abound in every shade and hue.

So, from one tiny thought of higher things,
Flowers of spirit blossom forth,
So rare and wonderful when tended well,
So worth all sacrifice and effort to attain,
A higher step upon the mountain side
Where pilgrims climb with eager gaze ahead,
Towards the glorious gardens of the Lord.

