

NEWS & CHAT Thursday 11 February 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 14 February, 10am Worship on the CC Facebook page with the Minister. Communion. Racial Justice Sunday

With a few changes, I will be using the material provided by the URC Global and Intercultural Ministries team. It starts with some questions, that may be good for us to reflect on before Sunday:

- What kind of love does God call us to embody and demonstrate?
- What kind of love does the Church embody and enact?
- What kind of love enables injustice to continue and even flourish?
- What kind of love can engender change?
- What kind of love do oppressed and marginalised communities strive for?

What are the questions, reflections and responses which occur to you?



Advance notice of services coming up:

21 February – Church Action on Poverty Sunday

28 February – Ecumenical (video) service for Fairtrade fortnight which is 22 Feb to 7 March.

More information to follow, but if you want to be looking for activities you can do during Fairtrade fortnight, look here: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight/>

You can also sign up for lots of events during the Fairtrade Online Festival

Friday 5 March, 10.30am – World Day of Prayer – is online this year:

This year's service will be held via Zoom (with telephone access available). **If you wish to take part in this service you will need to register**, www.rayleighbaptist.org.uk/worlddayofprayer/ or by calling Rayleigh Baptist Church Reception on **01268 745730**, Mon-Fri 9am-3pm, as soon as possible, as numbers are restricted. Orders of Service will be available nearer the date of the service. Please ask for a copy if required.

Lent Collection as in previous years, Christ Church will make a **Lent collection for Water Aid's 'Jars of Change' appeal**. Obviously, a collection of silver coins will be more difficult at the moment. BUT, you could either collect your coins as usual and at the end of Lent, bring them (or send them with a friend) to church, OR maybe count how many times you turn on the tap each day during Lent and make a donation by cheque of 5p per use.

NEWS

Next Wednesday, **17 February**, is **Ash Wednesday**. Calvin and I are producing an **online Communion Service for 11am**. I do not yet have the link to include here, but I will post the link to the video on both Facebook pages, and it will be on the Christ Church website here:

<https://christchurchrayleigh.org.uk/virtual-church/live-streamed-services/>

Predictably, the day before is Shrove Tuesday or **Pancake Day**! I wondered about trying to have a virtual pancake party, but the logistics of that are a bit beyond me! But if anyone makes any unusual pancakes, please send in photos for next week's News & Chat!! Or post pictures to our Facebook page.

And that brings me to Lenten fasting! I have decided that this year rather than give anything up, I will try to do something creative every day – drawing, painting, writing poetry, singing, dancing, sewing, knitting (not me, but you might like to!) cooking something new... **I invite you to join me!** In the spirit of The Big Art Exhibition, let's



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see what we can create – just for fun! Please send in pictures for N&C or the Facebook page and if we create any actual objects, once we are back at church perhaps we can auction them off for charity.

That said, **IF anyone (or group of people) agrees to give at least £120 (6 weeks x £20) to the Trussell Trust** <https://www.trusselltrust.org/> to help end hunger and hunger poverty in the UK, then I will give up crisps for Lent! **Please let me know, if I need to prepare myself for that challenge!** (I think I mentioned before that of all the things I have given up for Lent in the past, this was by far the hardest!)

Thanks from Helen: “I have completed the walk for HARP. I walked 49.1 miles in total and **raised £310 plus £21.25 in gift aid.** Thank you to all who donated. The total raised is just over £7000 and their target was £5000.”



Fairtrade Easter Eggs!

Easter may seem a long way off but The Meaningful Chocolate Company who sell their Fairtrade Easter eggs have them available now. There are 5 different Real Easter Eggs: Dark, £5.50; Original (milk) £ 4.50; White £4.50; Fun Pack (6 mini eggs); Special Edition £9.99. They all contain the Easter Story and activities. You can see more details of these eggs on the website: www.realeasteregg.co.uk If you would like to order any please contact Wendy Norris on 01268777901 or by email: w.windett@hotmail.co.uk



Val at Bridgwater Drive has been busy again. Chicks and bunnies all have an Easter egg in them – there is also a £1 rabbit with an extra egg in the basket.
Please phone Val if you would like to buy any of these - 07847 297221

HOUSE GROUP – The third, and final pre-Lent House Group in the Sanctuary series will be at **7pm, next Monday, 15 February on Zoom.** Details on page 4. The link is here: <https://zoom.us/j/99576014325?pwd=THkxMkJDTEVaMlFIT2xQV0Z5dm1DZz09> Passcode: JG18V8

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

REFLECTION

Next week Lent starts. I've been thinking about that quite a lot with organising a Lenten House Group series and an online Ash Wednesday service. I'm also getting much more excited about Pancake Day than normal!! I think it's the lockdown – since we can't go out or see anyone, I'm trying to make even small things more interesting or exciting! But using up eggs and flour and so on, is not just fun (since most people do not now abstain from rich foods, dairy and meat during Lent) but shows a good Christian virtue of not wasting things. 'Waste not, want not' was an often-used phrase in our house when we were growing up and wasting food was a big no, no. So, I am all in favour of Shrove Tuesday and Mardi Gras and any excuse to make pancakes. This year, rather than the traditional thin ones with lemon juice and sugar, I'm going to attempt some really fat American style pancakes! (watch this space!!)

But there is a serious point in all of this, also reflected in the Great Big Art Exhibition in which Antony Gormley encouraged us to use rubbish and things from our recycle bins to make art – the idea that we should try to waste as little as possible – make pancakes, make recipes from leftovers and soup from wilting vegetables, make art from the stuff you'd otherwise throw away. Do not use up the resources of the world, because they are finite, and soon, much sooner than we think, the day will come when those resources start to run out.

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Here for a laugh, or for inspiration, depending on your viewpoint, is my Recycle Bin Chinese Dragon in honour of Chinese New Year this week.



TIPS & IDEAS

This week's **#64MillionArtists** Weekly Challenge fits in well with the environmental theme of the Lenten House Groups: **Create an image of a landscape using natural or recycled materials!**

It could be your favourite place or somewhere you have visited in the past.

You could use materials from outside, like leaves or sticks, or items you would put in the recycling bin like foil or cardboard, maybe it could be a mixture of both!

GREAT BIG ART EXHIBITION

Museums and leading artists are inviting the British public to take part in what they hope will be the biggest art exhibition ever mounted. Every two weeks, a different artist will choose a subject for the public to respond to in what the organisers hope will be a rolling nationwide exhibition, ending on 30 April.

The first two weeks (animals) finishes on today. A new theme will be announced on Friday.

RESOURCES

A new weekly reflection from St Paul's Cathedral by Revd Winnie Varghese is a Priest at Trinity Church Wall Street in New York City,:

<https://mailchi.mp/da9d6d7fc991/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-8235592?e=e30a1f608a>

LENT COURSE reminder - Starting on **Thursday 25 Feb, at 7pm for 5 weeks** we will be holding a 'house group' for Lent on Zoom **using the York Course material 'Caring for Creation'**. The 5 sessions are: Environment, Climate Change, The Age of Humans, Facing the Crisis, Faith, Hope and Love. I will put a brief outline and selected questions in the News and Chat each week, but I highly recommend that you order the booklet for yourself. It is an excellent resource for studying these issues even beyond Lent (there is really too much material for only 5 weeks!)

You can order here: <https://www.yorkcourses.co.uk/product/caring-for-creation/>

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 young families struggling with home-schooling, young people missing their friends, and teachers.

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This week's (CC) prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth). Somehow, I managed to miss last week's (first week of February) theme, so a bonus of two themes this week!

The Americas. The USA has a new President faced with many divisions in his country to begin to heal, and an ignorance towards climate change to redress. South America has areas of outstanding wonder, a wealth of natural resources yet chasms of poverty and political corruption. Our world is one world, what one person does affects it all. Prayer is the greatest force for change, please use it for these nations.

Vaccinations We thank the Lord for those who worked tirelessly to create the Covid vaccines, those who are working tirelessly to deliver them here, and those making them available to the peoples of our world, rich and poor alike. Praise the Lord for their efficacy and the hope it brings to our suffering peoples.

Particular prayer requests this week:

Bill and Jenny, friends of Phil T.

Bill and Beth G.

Norah mother of Kim, a mentor (XL Mentoring programme)

Della

We give thanks:

That Robert's sister Clare is now home from hospital. Helen says: "Robert and I would like to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers for Clare, Robert's sister who contracted COVID and spent two weeks in Colchester hospital. She was discharged last Friday and we took her back to her care home. She is getting stronger every day."

We have heard from Marion, Olive Kemp's daughter, that Olive will be celebrating her 98th birthday on February 18th. If you would like to send a card, please contact John P, or Jean, for the address. (Norman Kemp was Minister of Christ Church from 1981 to 1983.)

Claudia's 1st Snowman!



HOUSE GROUP – third and final session from the Sanctuary 'Finding Light in the Darkness' series:

Having moved through Lament and Reflection, we now come to **Gratitude**.

For some of us, the practice of giving thanks is a daily activity. In Thessalonians, Paul instructs his readers to "rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). All of life is a gift and God is the giver of all goodness. This truth can be a reliable compass point in turbulent times. And some will be aware that the practice of gratitude has psychological benefits when incorporated into a daily routine.

- Write down some things you're thankful for. How does being grateful make you feel?
- Are there ways in which being a Christian helps you overcome hard times?
- Consider the ways you can offer some light in the dark, either to yourself or those around you.
- What might be some ways the church could offer light in these hard times?