

NEWS & CHAT 20 January 2022

The online service is live-streamed every week from Christ Church, 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 23 Jan. The Moderator of the URC Eastern Synod, Rev. Lythan Nevard, will lead worship at The Bridgwater Drive Church at 2.30 p.m. followed by tea. Everyone welcome Note – There will be no morning service at Bridgwater Drive this Sunday but Rev Lythan Nevard will lead a service at Christ Church at 10.00 a.m.

This week is the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**. <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2022/> Materials have been prepared by churches in the Middle East.

“The story of the Magi visiting the Holy Family in Bethlehem is one very familiar to us. The Magi have sometimes been seen as a symbol of the world’s diversity – different religions and cultures – come to pay homage to the Christ child. The story might therefore represent the unity of all created people that God desires.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2022 has been prepared by the churches of the Middle East, the history of which was, and still is, characterised by conflict and strife, tainted with blood and darkened by injustice and oppression. The Christians of the Middle East offer resources for prayer, conscious that the world shares many of the travails and much of the difficulties that it experiences, and yearns for a light to lead the way to the Saviour who is the light that overcomes darkness.”



CHAT FROM THE BDC (Margaret)

*Sylvia has sent me a copy of the programme for the Spring Term for our Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Crystals (a group of older Guides). Just planning activities for 4 groups for one term must take the leaders ages, not to mention the time needed for assembling all the things for craft activities, booking visits, carrying out risk assessments etc all in addition to the actual meetings every Tuesday evening. The girls who attend are really fortunate to be part of 2nd Westcliff and we, as a church, are really proud to have such a great group as part of our church family. It looks a very full programme with lots of fun but also lots of learning. I hope it goes well. I'll try to get along sometimes to see how it's all going. I understand that the Girlguiding programme asks for a mixture of the following 6 themes, **KNOW MYSELF** / **EXPRESS MYSELF** / **BE WELL** / **HAVE ADVENTURES** / **TAKE ACTION** / **SKILLS FOR MY FUTURE** This term's programme definitely includes all of these. I hope the girls (and the leaders) have a great time.*

One thing I'm sure they're all looking forward to is 'The Gang Show' 16th – 19th February at The Palace Theatre. 6 of our Guides are in the cast and have been rehearsing since September. Come along and spot Aimee, Anna, and Annie in Junior Gang (their first show) and Daisy, Megan, and Ruby in Main Gang (their second Gang Show). The show is on Wednesday 16th at 7.30pm,

Thursday 17th at 2.30pm and 7.30pm

Friday 18th at 6.00pm

and Saturday 19th at 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

TIPS & IDEAS

An idea from #64MillionArtists January Challenge (a creative suggestion for every day in January):

Word Recycling - Collect the words that you find today. You might find the words in your house, at work, or outside. Take those words and turn them into something brand new. You could take a series of photographs, or manipulate written words by cutting them up and adding them to a collage. Use them to create a poem, story or any other ideas you have.



← Be creative before the coffee gets cold
Dream
Love to the stars (and back)
And try to be kind

NYR

RESOURCES

New reflections for the season of Epiphany from St Paul's Cathedral, by Patrick Craig - a countertenor and conductor. He is a Vicar Choral at St Paul's Cathedral. *Gifts and Stars: You too are beloved* <https://mailchi.mp/356a1101a441/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-8251192?e=e30a1f608a>

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 Christian unity and peace and unity among all peoples.

This week's prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth). **Exaltation**. This world is dark, Jesus is our light. There are lies everywhere, Jesus is the truth. Society focuses on 'I', **Jesus** includes 'us'. Now that's something to pray about in exaltation and worship.

Particular prayer requests this week:

The BDC

Barbara: Barry: Cherry: Clive: Marlene's daughter, Christine: Janet: Colin: Celia: Sandra: Margaret and Ted: Gerry: Yvonne: Margaret's friends, Jean and Peggy:

Christ Church

Audrey: Sheila S: Joy and Steve A: Phil and Grace: Mark E & family: Phil and Penny: Frank: Eve J: Judy H.

The Joint Public Issues Team – JPIT (URC, Methodist, Baptist) and the URC nationally have written to express their dismay at the proposed Nationality and Borders Bill. Over the next few weeks, the Faith in Action Group will be sharing information about the Bill and the JPIT **Show Your Heart – Together with Refugees** campaign. Please educate yourselves on this matter and **pray for refugees and those opposing this Bill**.

A campaign from the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is calling on churches and local groups to take action, to **Show Your Heart** for **refugees and asylum seekers** in the UK.



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

It is in response to the **Nationality and Borders Bill** which has been introduced to Parliament by the UK Government and, among other measures, seeks to differentiate between the way asylum seekers are treated depending on how they reach the UK, including making it a criminal offence to knowingly arrive in the UK without permission.

Many Church leaders and Christian organisations have expressed concern about these proposals because many of the measures in the bill risk creating more injustices in the system, which will increase the trauma and pain experienced by asylum seekers attempting to reach safety in the UK.

We will be sharing aspects of the **campaign pack**, which aims to equip congregations to:

- **Prepare:** Learn about the Bill and its consequences.
- **Pray:** Make the safety of refugees part of your prayer life.
- **Participate:** Publicly engage with the Bill.
- **Persuade:** Start to change the wider narrative.

The Bill is currently being debated in the House of Lords and is at the 'Committee Stage'.

To help you **PREPARE**, here are links to some interesting recent articles in the media on this issue:

the government's new bill explained <https://theconversation.com/stripping-british-citizenship-the-governments-new-bill-explained-173547>

Nationality and Borders Bill: Why is it causing protests? <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-59651523> "if the British government wants to remove someone's citizenship it will no longer need to tell them."

Leading UK charity heads condemn the Nationality and Borders Bill as "overtly racist"

A letter opposing the legislation has been signed by 100 civil society figures, including the CEOs of the Runnymede Trust and Samaritans <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2022/01/exclusive-leading-uk-charity-heads-condemn-the-nationality-and-borders-bill-as-overtly-racist>



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