

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

NEWS & CHAT 19 MAY 2022

The online service is live-streamed every week from Christ Church, on the Christ Church Facebook page.

Though no longer legally required by the government, masks must be worn for singing and are strongly recommended to be worn throughout Sunday Worship.

To continue to keep Covid-19 safe, please remember to:

- Wear a mask at all times (unless you have an exemption) **required when singing.**
- Sanitise hands when entering the building
- We will continue to maintain good ventilation

SUNDAY 22 May, 10.30am, the Minister - Morning Worship at BDC
10am, Robert Dart at Christ Church

NEWS AND DATES - THE BRIDGWATER DRIVE CHURCH (from Margaret)

Date for your diary

Next Thursday, 26th May 9.30 – 11.00 'Coffee with the Cops' Our local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), Jackie Twiddell, is coming to the **Coffee Morning** at about 10.00. This is a chance for us to voice any concerns we have, to listen to any advice Jackie may have for us and to meet a police officer in a friendly environment.

What's been happening in the last week

Last Saturday I went to the Arts and Crafts exhibition at Kings Road URC. I was bowled over by the number of artists displaying their work there – it was wonderful. So many different artists with a huge range of skills.



I'm sure you recognise Ted. All the carvings on display are his. It was good to be able to listen to Ted explaining about the different types of wood and telling me about his favourite (best) carving. From all the pictures and paintings on display my favourite was the landscape – I think maybe Derbyshire? I was fascinated by the pin and thread pictures done by Lesley Gillard on small pieces of decking and by the Mandala Art and dotting art done by Margaret Bidmead. I looked up Mandala Art and discovered it can have lots of significance – a circle with shapes all coming from the centre of the circle expressing the artist's thoughts or simply a beautiful design to colour.

I know we have a lot of artists **at Bridgwater Drive** – Could we put on an exhibition some time?

Let's Chat about Books on Tuesday (17th) We really did talk about books this week. The starter topic of well known sayings had generated a lot of interest but we didn't have much time to talk about them – there are copies of the list on the vestibule table plus a list of sayings that can be traced back to Shakespeare. I'd forgotten to take along the book I'm reading at present, 'Talking to Strangers', but luckily other people had remembered so I now have a long reading list. The next book morning will be on 21st June. We have nothing planned for this coming Tuesday 24th or for the 31st

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News from Christ Church - SATURDAY, 21 May - The Christ Church Christian Aid Party - 10.00 am - 12.30 pm at the home of Mavis and Roy Headley. The address is 48 Orchard Avenue, Hockley, Essex, SS5 5BE. There will be a bring & buy stall including books, plant stall, cake stall and a Raffle.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

You may like to do this activity:

Loneliness can be one of the hardest parts of dealing with mental health difficulties.

"loneliness" is the theme for the Spring #KindnessByPost exchange.

Help show someone that they're not alone in the world. Send a card or letter with a message of goodwill to your match and let them know that someone out there is thinking of them.

#KindnessByPost is the UK's leading 'random acts of kindness' exchange. You can sign up for free to send a card or letter to someone you don't know and have someone allocated to send a card to you!

Sign up here -

<https://kindnessbypost.org/register>



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 15-21 MAY

In Zimbabwe, the climate crisis is causing aching hunger for families like Jessica's.



The combined effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, conflict, and drought have robbed her of the power to provide for her children – it's unjust.

This Christian Aid Week:

- * We stand with the resilient women - like Jessica - who are determined to lift their families out of hunger
 - * We raise our voices to call for climate justice
 - * We pray that families will stay strong during times of drought
- Together, we hope to restore justice to our world, and protect the future for our children and grandchildren.**

A Christian Aid Prayer from 1958, sadly still relevant today:

Let us pray for grateful hearts; for sympathetic hearts;
for generous hearts and wills quick to help and persistent in effort.
That our nation and government may give generously for relief of refugees
and be ready to help them find new homes and new homelands.
That all nations may live free from fear and free from want. Amen.

TIPS & IDEAS

This week's creative theme is creativity and well-being, in particular related to nature. The forecast says it is going to be sunny all week, so why not try this:

Go for a wander, wherever your curiosity takes you. Try to see the beauty in everything - that's everything, even what doesn't seem beautiful at first. Take the word 'gratitude' and place it like colourful wallpaper at the back of your brain. Notice how that changes the way you see the present moment. Capture your wander through photos, words, or a sculpture from things you collect along the way.

RESOURCES

New reflections for May from St Paul's Cathedral, by Revd Sharon Prentis *Awakening a hope that inspires*
<https://mailchi.mp/403440e5ce31/coming-up-from-st-pauls-cathedral-8251330?e=e30a1f608a>

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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. This week we pray especially for Christian Aid Week and Zimbabwe.



This week's prayer theme (prepared by Gwyneth). **Youngsters.** Energy, enthusiasm, vitality, simple faith, insightful questions, curiosity about everything, joyfulness, laughter, fun. Thank the Lord for our youngsters. As we nurture them, may we never lose the childlikeness You have placed within each of us Lord, the simplicity of trust, exuberance, and gratitude You love so very much.

Particular prayer requests this week:

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BDC - please pray for Barbara, Pat, Cherry, Barry, Colin, Clive, Celia, Sandra, Tony, Gerry, Yvonne.

Christ Church – Gwyneth and Jeff, Doreen, Audrey, Terry W and James, Frank, Mark E.

Snippets from the URC Minister's Gathering Naomi attended last week:

The overall theme was Jubilee in this 50th anniversary year of the formation of the URC, and as part of daily worship we had Bible study on the biblical jubilee in Leviticus 25.

- Jubilee is a re-set, a return to factory settings. Should it be for the URC also?
- It was a programme of Social Justice – the land was given rest and returned to its original owners; slaves were freed...
- The Land is God's – we are only tenants, 'aliens' in it.

From **Revd David Cornick**, former General Secretary of the URC (2001-2008) and General Secretary of Churches Together in England (2008-2018):

- We are ministers of Word and Sacrament, yet we put most focus on Sacrament. We (as reformed people) place great importance on the Word and preaching is a sacrament, and yet we let anyone do it – often with little training or oversight of what people are saying when the minister is not there (not the case at Christ Church or Bridgwater Drive, I don't think/hope!)
- There is too much 'comfort' church, especially post-pandemic, too much giving people what they want – where is the challenge? Where is the discomfort present in the Gospel?
- Things to get rid of – smallness of mind/possessiveness – 'my' minister, 'my' church, the X donated in memory of 'my' family member.
- Reformed means always reforming, continually seeking change. We need to look to the future more than the past and that may be simply holding what we have so that a future generation can 'grow' the church.
- Church is the event of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God in the present, in the NOW.

We need to remember that the church, all denominations, in all of Western Europe has been in decline since after the First World War (with a slight spike in interest in the 50s), so we should not be discouraged if we see our membership as much lower now than the 'heyday' many remember in the 50s or 60s. We are not doing anything 'wrong' – it is the way the West is moving to a more secular society.

Other thoughts from workshops:

- **Growth is spiritual and missional, not only numerical.** Steps to grow a church:
 - Create a culture of growth through prayer and thinking of positives, not negatives – growth/change doesn't come from a negative (we can't do..., we've never done it that way...)

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- Become an inviting and welcoming church
 - Draw up a plan and implement it, even if you have to change it often
 - Have at least 4 'invitation' events a year to which you invite friends and family, building users, people on the fringes of the church (eg. at The BDC - May Fair, Autumn Fair, Carols Round the Tree, Film Morning, Coffee morning, Book Morning, eg at Christ Church - Messy Church, Toddlers, yoga, Concord (non-members), Needles & Natter, etc)
 - The best way to attract new people is a personal invitation from someone they know
- **Using the building for outreach and 'growth'**
 - Say 'yes' – have a positive outlook to partnerships and trying new things
 - Make partnerships with other organisations and charities – the church is unlikely to have the resources (financial or volunteers) to run certain activities, but we do have a building.
 - Look for opportunities to fix a problem (eg there is no provision in Rayleigh for those living with dementia – that is an opportunity we can do something about)
 - Listen, reflect, review, be prepared to re-assess goals.

The Bridgwater Drive Church (United Reformed)

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