

# Connected

Sunday 24th January 2021  
3rd Sunday of Epiphany

## Verse For The Week

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

(Acts 2: 17a)

## Sermon Snippets

Acts 2: 1 - 21

### Free for All

It seemed like a Bank Holiday riot at first. The Early harvest of Pentecost seemed to have been hijacked by a bunch seemingly out of their minds.

Yet the many foreign pilgrims there began to realise that this bunch were speaking their language and offering a message to all. The explanation given was that through Jesus the presence of God in the form of the unseen Spirit was now available to everyone.

This was the beginning of a vast speedy roll out of divine grace, they said, that needed to go to every country in the world.

But it raises questions about how each of us experiences this Spirit and how we can talk in our day in a language people can understand.

## Watch Sunday's service

at [www.ccwsm.org.uk](http://www.ccwsm.org.uk)

Go to the 'Church Life' menu and click on the 'Sunday Services' page.



You will be aware that education has been hit hard by the current lock-down restrictions. Children of key-workers are still attending school but many are being 'home-schooled'.

Let's give thanks for the hard work that teachers and other school staff are putting in to try to cope with these two forms of education happening at once, and also for the technological resources available to help the children with their education.

May we pray for the children themselves who are missing their friends and trying to learn in difficult circumstances, for the parents who are trying to cope with overseeing their children's education, and for those who are at a disadvantage because they don't have a computer at home on which to learn.

Do have a look at the UN website for some thought-provoking information seen from an international perspective, and let's hope and pray that schools can return to normal soon.



# Prayer Pointers

## Sunday

As if to emphasise the plight of Christians in Northern Nigeria (see Sunday's Prayer Pointer in last week's *Connected*), the front page of the Church of England Newspaper prints a horrific photograph of five Christians, including one woman, with hands tied behind their backs, forced to kneel on the ground, whilst behind each of them stands a hooded gunman. Each in turn was asked if they were a Christian and those who answered 'Yes' were instantly shot. All five were executed. As we enjoy the freedom to worship today, let us consider our own commitment to Christ. How does it match up to these brave people?

## Monday

Pray for those affected by the present severe weather across much of central England and Wales, especially those whose homes have been inundated with flood water for the second time in a year. Many people in flooded areas are faced with the dilemma of having to remain isolated in dark and unheated homes or breaking the Covid restrictions by moving to refuge with friends or neighbours.

## Tuesday

Give thanks for those you know who have taken the first step of immunisation towards gaining protection from Covid. Pray that this may prove to be the way the pandemic will be overcome. Grant patience to those still waiting for their 'Jab' during the next few weeks.

## Wednesday

Give thanks that the inauguration of President Biden passed off peacefully. Grant him the physical, mental and spiritual strength to oversee what many commentators regard as the most difficult time faced by any incoming President in American history - namely, to re-unite the country, strengthen international ties, and get on top of the Covid pandemic. Pray too for Vice President Kamala Harris, who is 'within a heart beat' of the Presidency.

## Thursday

Pray for our political leaders in Westminster, and the First Ministers in devolved regional Governments and Assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, who are faced with complex issues following the withdrawal from the European Union.

## Friday

Pray for any who are unwell, lonely or who may be anxious about their health. Pray for those members of the congregations of Christ Church and Emmanuel who are involved in any way in the Health Service (there at least four or five of them). Pray especially for those working in Intensive Care Units, that their own health may stand up to the pressures.

## Saturday

Pray for the Virtual Service tomorrow morning and give thanks for the technology which enables many to join in. Grant that those presenting the service may be encouraged that they are ministering to a large and appreciative 'congregation'.

# Notices

## *Laptops for School*

Do you have an old laptop or tablet? Christ Church School are asking for any donations in order to help the more disadvantaged children with home-schooling during the current lockdown. Please contact Phil in the Church Office if you have something to donate, or if you would like to make a financial contribution to help a child's education. Thanks.

## *Private Prayer*

Even though our two churches are closed for public worship, Christ Church will remain open for private prayer between 9am and 12noon, Monday to Friday. You won't need to book a time, but you will need to wrap up warm!

## *Practical help*

North Somerset Council, in partnership with various other agencies, have re-launched the North Somerset Together Network. [Please click on this link](#) for information on how you can ask for help for yourself or on behalf of someone else, or you can phone the Council's Contact Centre on 01934 427437.

Don't forget, however, if you are a member of either of our two churches and are in need of some practical assistance, you can call our own Crash Team:

Liz Cole (782886)

Jane Milsom (417776)

## *Bible Notes*

Grateful thanks to all those who have sent past Bible Notes notes for making into packs for re-use. Barry is glad to say that he now has sufficient of these and is unable to use any more for the time being.

# Coffee after the Service...

## Hope for the New Year

*Many thanks to Sandra for sending this piece in.*

### HOPE

Many years ago now Dave found a new job in Weston. At first we were going to stay in Bristol and not move here. However Dave found the commute tiring, especially in the Summer months on a train with lots of day trippers! He began to feel we should move to Weston but then had to convince me that it was the right thing to do. I did not want to leave our church, my friends and our neighbours.

We prayed about it very much. Dave was still convinced that God wanted us in Weston. I wasn't, but certain things happened, and I became convinced that we should, indeed, move. We set about selling our home that we had lived in since our marriage and found a house in Weston. Everything was very straightforward with no problems whatsoever. This appeared to confirm that we were making the right move. BUT I was still really quite anxious.

One day I was reading the passage of Scripture set for the day in my Bible Reading Notes. Now I can't say that verses usually 'jump' out at me but one did that day: 'I know the plans I have for you, plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a HOPE.'  
(Jeremiah 29.v11. RSV)

I felt so much better and knew this was from the Lord. We have now been in Weston for 34 years, love it here and have no regrets, and are still in touch with friends in Bristol. It took us a while to find Christ Church but when we did we felt at home very quickly.

HOPE for the future — just what we need now.

*Sandra*

*The snowdrops are out in the Donkey Field at Uphill, a sure sign of HOPE that spring is on its way*



### A God of Hope

*I just want to say thank you  
For this life you've given me,  
For all the wondrous blessings,  
For setting my spirit free*

*You are such an awesome God  
Who only gives the best,  
Giving us a life of hope  
When we face all kinds of tests*

*For often we face in life,  
Struggles of every kind,  
Little things can get us down  
And peace is far from our minds*

*But you give hope to carry on  
No matter what we face,  
When we feel like giving up,  
Unable to finish the race*

*You step in just in time  
With angels heaven sent,  
To encourage us to carry on  
And to give us extra strength*

*So I praise you, Lord, for who you are  
And for all that I can be,  
For I'd never have a better life  
Apart from your life in me.*

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# Another coffee, anyone?

## *Things I have learned from my cat*

### Always live life in expectation

Puss has a simple philosophy she lives by: Mummy feeds me, my food is in the kitchen, Mummy is in the kitchen, she must be about to feed me. (Not necessarily true...)

### Don't hold grudges

When she is told off – which isn't often, as she is a well-behaved cat - after a couple of minutes looking at me with that look with which parents will be familiar (defiance with a touch of "it wasn't my fault"), she forgives, forgets, and moves on.

### Cuddles are good

She revels in being stroked, having her back scratched, having her neck massaged and being cuddled. We are all suffering from withdrawal symptoms as far as hugs go; we know how much good they do us. Covid doesn't exist for Puss; she will take cuddles as often as they are given.

### Sometimes aimless darting around the lawn is actually good fun

For no reason other than a delight in being out in the sunshine she darts here and there on the front lawn and sometimes chases her tail. We could all learn from seeing the joy it gives her to be silly at times, old as she is (14).

### Sitting doing nothing is also good

When she moved in with us fairly recently (having left home in protest at a rather boisterous puppy being added to the household) she ignored the windowsill. Of late she has taken to sitting there, motionless for ages, watching life go by outside. We all need to sit and reflect, taking time out from the busyness of our days.

### Always go to welcome home those you live with

When we've been out, Puss comes when she hears the car on the driveway, miaowing a welcome. If I've been out walking she will come to meet me in the street when she hears my walking stick. She doesn't always want to come in; she just wants to say "I'm glad to see you".



*Puss checks the morning newspaper*



Everyone is welcome to log in and watch the annual Deanery Service of Light. This was to have been held at Christ Church this year, but for obvious reasons will now be online. Please click on this link to the [Locking Deanery's website](http://www.lockingdeanery.org) to view the service.

## Contact Details

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(Day off - Tuesday)

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