

Dear all,

Greetings to you whatever tier you currently find yourselves in.

This has really been the strangest year hasn't it. I don't know about you – I have at times found myself in the depths of despair, I also know many have found themselves deeply lonely and cut off from the world, yet also seeing so much good coming out of the strange situation we have all been in, people helping others and working together. There have been some amazing stories too.

Life has continued in the hospital, it has been hard on staff, their jobs have remained very difficult and tough at times, but all the coping mechanisms have been taken away largely, which has had a huge effect, so we have been doing more staff support than ever before I think. Tough too on families, only being able to have 2 designated visitors, hard for short term patients and families but really really tough on those longer term and facing more serious illness etc. We have remained very busy in chaplaincy and it remains a privilege to walk with families through whatever they are walking through.

I am sure it has been hard for you all as well in different ways, and hope that you have managed some self care in amidst the pressures of zoom services (not to mention other meetings!) and ensuring all your church are safe and cared for and all the other usual – and not so usual things I know you will have been doing over the last year or so.

In the midst of all this – thank you for continuing to support me and the work at BCH! Chaplaincy continues to be seen as an integral part of hospital life and we continue to be invited to different events and meetings etc, as well as continuing to receive referrals for patients, families and staff. It has been tough, and in some ways we too have struggled, but we have also – like you – come up with a number of different approaches to things! I would like to share with you our Christmas imaginations and invite you to use them and share them as you can with your congregations.

This is the generic weblink for all our Christmas resources. <https://bwc.nhs.uk/celebrating-christmas/>

May I draw your attention to two items in particular. Joy to the world – which really is full of joy with staff and patients from around our hospital (all appropriate permission given and of course strict measures in light of the pandemic on them all – and I do apologise for the cheesy Mrs Santa grin!!!)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87uyNHlHSQ&feature=emb_logo

and the one we are most excited about – The Virus who Tried to Steal Christmas – a short story written in rhyme and celebrating some of our amazing staff.
<https://youtu.be/yrvPTMiCiz8>

Please do share these around your congregations as you see fit.

Many thanks once again, please do keep me updated with what is happening with all of you, I do love looking at the emails and Facebook posts of you all etc.

Take care, and may you have a hopeful, peaceful Christmas,

Ruth