



January  
2021

## Crazy Christingles and the Revenge of the Radiators

As absurd as it may sound, this is a befitting title for this month's newsletter. Read along and you'll see why. Firstly, what is a Christingle? You really need a picture to appreciate these (*be sure to check out our website for the latest pictures and videos*). What you have is a large orange with a red ribbon tied around it, followed by four toothpicks sticking out of the top like spikes, each with sweets skewered on the ends. Lastly, to top it off, it has a candle (usually with some foil underneath) wedged down into a cut on the top of the orange. It looks a bit strange, for sure, but each of these has a meaning and, ultimately, the Christingle is a picture of Jesus bringing light to the world. Usually, our church would host a Christingle service, having families sit around tables, assembling these together. The service would finish akin to a candlelight service with all the Christingles lit and everyone joining in with Silent Night. Well, that's what would have normally happened, but nothing has been normal about 2020. You guessed it, another lockdown, so no gatherings. So, we had to get our thinking caps on, and Miriam really deserves the credit for this one. She organised about 160 DIY Christingle Packs for families to collect from the church. For a day, our family was a little Christingle-pack-making factory! We used nearly 200 oranges and countless toothpicks! But what was this all for? Well, you might have guessed, our church organised a large Zoom meeting and everyone opened their packs and followed along with the Zoom service in their homes. It went really well! We had nearly 200 people engaged, including many visitors ... Yes, visitors on Zoom! It was spectacular, and the best bit is that it was all about Jesus.

A second highlight from this month was the unexpected revenge of our radiators. Most of you in the States might not know what a radiator is (no, I don't mean a car radiator). Radiators are the most common form of heating in the UK. They are basically flat metal tanks (of water) mounted on the wall that are plumbed into a central boiler. The boiler fills them up, they get hot, and "radiate" heat into the house. They work great until they are 20+ years old and packed full of dust, mould spores, and who knows what else. Fed up of having a house full of sneezers, I decided I was going to clean those dusty old things.

**(Continued on Back)**

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I managed to clean 3 out of 8 when I got tired and said, "I'd do the rest the next day." Well, the next day, I broke out in a full-body rash! The doctors were baffled, and after 2 failed diagnoses, they finally concluded it was an allergic reaction to something... (I knew what that something was...those *dusty* radiators!) As ridiculous as this all sounds, it really did cause me some major grief. For a while I thought I had an infection in my knee (from surgery) and then due to lack of regular rehab, my knee ended up swelling and losing range of motion. Not to mention, this rash I had was very itchy! I hardly slept for two weeks! But at last, I'm now happy to say, both my knee and my rash are doing much better. Praise the Lord!

#### **Other news:**

- Despite the constant ups and downs of being in and out of lockdown, we have kept going faithfully with our youth meetings, namely Shuffle and Shake. We've met in person for a couple weeks when things are calm and then go back to meeting online when we're in lockdown. We've found some really creative ways to play games together from using apps like Among Us, and websites like Boardgamearena.com. It's been great to keep the Light of Jesus on in the dark of the Lockdown. You can really see that the kids need hope, and it's a blessing to play games with them and share the hope we have in Christ.
- This month I met (online) with a group of newly formed trustees that are to become the genesis of "Colwyn Bay Youth for Christ". This is very exciting, as this will greatly expand our youth work here!
- I had my biometric appointment this month (itching and all) and my documents are now on their way to the UK government to be processed. Once this is complete, I will at last have Permanent Residence. (Please pray they are processed quickly).

#### **Prayers:**

- Please continue to pray for a couple specific things. The biggest one is that we really want to move house. At the moment, we're waiting on my Permanent Residency to come through, but then it's a matter of getting a mortgage. Please pray for both of these. We want a house that we aren't allergic to.
- Secondly, due to Covid, our kids are not back in school until, earliest, the end of February. So, this puts a tricky dynamic on trying to juggle working from home and home-schooling.
- Also, I'd appreciate your continued prayers for my complete recovery from ACL surgery and this rash.
- Lastly, please pray for the formation of Colwyn Bay Youth for Christ and that it will be an instrument in God's hand to see many young lives saved.

Thank you for your prayers and support!

God bless,

-The Finches

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