

Weekly Prayers, News and Thoughts

As you know many of our events, services, facilities and meetings are still postponed in order to reduce our contact with each other. To help keep us up to date with each other during the Corona Virus chaos, we hope to issue, via the mysteries of technology, a weekly version of our News/Prayer Leaflet.

One good thing at least about the present crisis is that industry will be soon be carbon neutral as everything takes a break! We hope you find this leaflet is useful and a help

The spread of Corona Virus (COVID-19) is creating much anxiety and uncertainty. Clearly it is a significant threat that must be taken seriously. We are being told that for many it may be a brief, but uncomfortable illness, for others it is deeply distressing and unpleasant, and for some, fatal. WE CANNOT BUT TAKE IT SERIOUSLY!

The clear and strong advice is that we do not meet for worship or other meetings so as to ensure appropriate social distancing, but closed doors does not mean closed hearts. Church is all about relationship: with God, with one another and with the wider community as we demonstrate that our relationship to God and seek to draw others into it. Those relationships can still be nurtured, but in other ways.

We have a responsibility of care for one another, all who share in the life of our churches and the wider community. Given the nature of church communities, we are normally inevitably in contact, directly or otherwise, with those who are vulnerable. However, in responding to the needs of others we need to ensure that we follow the best advice for each situation. Worship, pastoral care and mission can all be done differently as we seek to live as God's people at this time.

Social distancing means that the natural physical contact we express in fellowship and in care for others must generally be avoided. However, care and support can be expressed in other ways including phone calls.

Clearly, we should pray. Pray for those who mourn and have lost loved ones to Corona Virus, for those who have the illness, for those caring and supporting those who are ill, for those exploring the possibilities of vaccines and for the effectiveness of national strategies and personal practices in overcoming the pandemic.

For help and support. please feel free to contact:

- John Claydon johnclaydon@thenba.org.uk
- Paul Revill paulrevill@thenba.org.uk or
- Elaine Webster elainewebster@thenba.org.uk

Cancellations and Closures (including Bishop's Press Notices)

Weekly Visiting Preachers

Our weekly visiting preacher list has been suspended because of the present situation.

John Froud Concert at BABC (was 2nd April 2020)

This event has been cancelled, but will hopefully be re-arranged.

Bishop Auckland Passion Play (was Friday 10th April 2020)

It is understood that a film comprising all of the One Good Friday 2020 locations is being compiled for a programme that BBC are in discussion to televise on Good Friday, 10th April 2020.

Bishop Auckland Town Team Cancelled Events

- Easter Eggstravaganza (was 11th April)
- VE Day 75th Anniversary (was Saturday 9th May)
- Town Team Public Meeting (was 21st May)

The Auckland Project

All our venues and events are cancelled until further notice.

TAP is now refocussing on providing community food to those in need during the crisis. For a full statement visit (www.aucklandproject.org)

Bishop Auckland Food Festival (was 18th to 19th April)

DCC has contacted traders who had booked to attend and will be refunding their fees. It will also be people who had booked tickets for the festival's workshops to offer refunds.

Bishop Auckland Music Society

We have decided to cancel our 2020 series of concerts due to begin on Friday 3rd April at Bishop Auckland Methodist Church - Subscribers are encouraged to contact Treasurer Brian Varley on 01388-606075 for more information.

This week please pray for all within the Fellowships of:

- Bishop Auckland Baptist Church, Hamsterley Baptist Church and
- Those who live and work in Dene Hall Drive, Pollards Drive, Etherley Lane and Escomb Road

Psalm 139 v 2: "You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar"

In comparison to the galaxy, our earth is no more than a little pebble, and our lives not even as much as a grain of sand. Yet the Scriptures say "the God of the galaxies attends to each microscopic one of us in intimate detail. God saw and knew each of us before we existed (Psalm 139 vs 13-16). God watches over us as we go about our days and listens to our every thought.

Psalm 139 v6: Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. It can be hard to accept and believe sometimes. This "tiny pebble" of a planet has big problems at present e.g. wars, famines, pandemic disease etc. and we question God's care in times of great troubles and personal suffering. But when King David wrote Psalm 139 he was in the middle of great crisis himself (vs 19-20). When Jesus said "God counts each hair on our head" (Matthew 10 v36), he was living in an age of cruelty and crucifixion. But talk of God's caring attention isn't just a naive wish. It is a real-world truth! God knows us in every detail. This can get us through the worst of times!

See you soon. Tony

(Adapted from a UCB Word for Today)

Online Church Services

During his recorded message last Sunday (22nd March 2020) on YouTube <https://youtu.be/ijCx-NVUdUE> Reverend Paul Revill recorded an act of worship for the scattered church of the Northern Baptist Association and other friends too.

Paul suggested that we sing the following two greatly loved hymns:

- **Amazing Grace (NBA Big Sing)** <https://youtu.be/XT0JvdAKTNU>
- **How Great is your Faithfulness (Songs of Praise May 2010)**
<https://youtu.be/dTKIqmdfHSk>
- His closing prayer and Commitment can be found at:
https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/569241/The_gift_of.aspx

Our friends at Influence Church <http://www.influencechurch.co.uk> are streaming services each Sunday at 11.00am and 5.00pm

2 Thessalonians 3 v16 (NIV)

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.