

Weekly Prayers, News and Thoughts

Welcome to our condensed Newsletter. We are publishing this in digital format to help keep us up to date with each other during the Corona Virus chaos.

As you know many of our events, services, facilities and meetings are still postponed in order to reduce our contact with each other. The clear and strong advice is that we do not meet for worship or other meetings to ensure appropriate social distancing and protection for those who need it most.

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. A kindness of heart and spirit can bring light into everyone's life, be it a kind word or a simple gesture, a telephone call, an email, an instant message, social media... there are so many ways... seek to share your light with those in need - but do so safely.

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

Prayers

Please continue to pray, either by yourself, or collectively, using one of the many online and social media channels for:

- ***Members & friends of our Fellowship***
- ***People, families & neighbours within your own circle experiencing difficulties***
- ***Those who work for our benefit and welfare in frontline jobs, putting themselves and their families in vulnerable and frequently life-threatening situations***
- ***Supermarket staff and other supply industries***
- ***Carers in Care Homes and Nursing Homes and Sheltered Housing and Hostels***
- ***Carers who look after members of their own families***
- ***Postal Workers and other delivery people who bring us our mail, food and medicines***
- ***All those in positions of leadership, research, development, industrial organisations and new productions, at this traumatic time***

This week We are asked by NBA to pray for our Baptist Hospital Chaplains at this time of great challenge and for our NHS as they support staff and patients who also carry anxieties of their own:

- ***Rev Robert Muir - Wansbeck Hospital, Ashington***
- ***Rev Jim Wright - Lead chaplain at North Tees Hospital, Stockton***
- ***Rev Rodney Breckon - James Cook Hospital***
- ***Rev Graeme Harrison - Lead chaplain, Northumbria Healthcare Trust***
- ***Rev Liz Edwards - North Tyneside hospital***
- ***Rev Dave Etherington - North Durham University Hospital + BAGH***

Please pray especially for all those living and working in:

- ***Kenilworth Avenue***
- ***Berkeley Grove***
- ***Brough Grove***
- ***Lumley Grove***

Pray for those who mourn and have lost loved ones to Covid-19, 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

When so many wonderful people are being lost to the coronavirus, it can be tempting to lose hope, to question the validity of faith, to doubt the goodness of God. But St Paul argues that if our hope only lasts for this life, we are the most miserable people on earth. He says the sting of death is painful, but Christ's victory over death helps us have confidence in a better life beyond the grave. We will grieve and weep, but by the grace of God we need not lose hope. Lord, the sharpness of death is all around us. As we wrestle with the uncomfortable truth about our mortality, help us to consider the value of our souls and to find secure hope in the risen Christ, whose love endures forever. Amen

Jonathan Rea (Part of "PRAYER FOR THE DAY", Wed 29/04/2020 5.45am BBC Radio 4)

Online Prayer

- Northern Baptist Association
Service 3rd May: <https://youtu.be/G3e6LjyeGKw>
- Influence Church <http://www.influencechurch.co.uk>
Services streamed each Sunday at 11.00am and 5.00pm

FareShare Food Scheme

John and Vanessa at Bishop Auckland Methodist Church have been collecting the vast amount of FareShare food kindly donated by a local supplier. They are currently taking the food to Woodhouse Close Food Bank to ensure the most efficient route of distribution. The food bank is open every weekday from 10.00am until 12.00pm.

We have now been offered a second collection from another local supplier which John and Vanessa have also agreed to manage.

The food is being received and distributed to those who need it most and has included a wide range of products such as: store cupboard items; pork pies; pizzas; baked goods and others.

Church Garden

We owe a great big word of “THANK YOU” to one of the good friends of Bishop Auckland Baptist Church, who continues single handed in the upkeep and development of our church garden, and he is still creating contacts with passers-by! (at a safe distance of course). The blog is now on the front page of our website.

Thoughts

“Solvitur Ambulando” (It will be solved in the walking)

And that is just what happened when two of Jesus’ earliest followers encountered Him as they trudged down the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus following the crucifixion and death of Jesus. The two utterly confused and frightened followers are joined by a third man.

Their world had been turned upside down by the events of the past week’s celebration, conflict, violence, and death, and now the possibility that their martyred spiritual leader had come back to life. Resurrection is just as unsettling as crucifixion. It does not fit into any rational world view, including the theology of resurrection of the first century. But, they walked a route that was probably familiar to them, the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus, first sharing their common grief, and then entering into a strange conversation with their unexpected companion, who unfolds the story of salvation through resurrection to them.

Somehow, they cannot recognize their companion as the teacher and healer, Jesus. Perhaps their faith had been broken or was just weak, perhaps it is a bit of divine magic allowing them to gently adapt to a new way of seeing; perhaps, it is the highly energetic body of their companion that both reveals and conceals Jesus’ identity.

Confused and grief stricken, the two companions nevertheless reach out to the stranger. They invite him to supper and come to know his identity as the Risen Jesus by his breaking of the bread during the meal.

Their hospitality led to a *theophany* (“appearance of god” in the appearance of a deity to a human), an encounter with the Risen Jesus, who is suddenly recognised in the simple thanks acts of praying and eating .(i.e. Eucharistic acts –thanks for broken body and resurrection)

Their walking and then their meal led to a revelation and then Jesus vanishes from their sight, but leaving them with warmed hearts, lively spirits, and energetic bodies. They are so

energized that they immediately and rapidly walk the seven miles back to Jerusalem to share, with their friends, the good news that Jesus is risen and on the road.

We really do not exactly know where Emmaus was located. Several possibilities have been surfaced, but perhaps vagueness is a virtue. In not specifically placing Emmaus, we can be opened up to the probability that Emmaus can be everywhere. Wherever we are on life's road and at every mealtime, Jesus comes to us, filled with energy and possibility, and the joy of resurrection. We can have new life, and we can be born again, right now at any venue.

Let's keep moving, and following new adventures, because Jesus walks beside us on the road.

** Theophany (from Ancient Greek (τή) θεοφάνεια theophaneia meaning "The appearance of God in the form of a deity to a human".*

This term has been used to refer to appearances of the gods in the ancient Greek and Near Eastern religions - (I had to look it up too!)

(Compiled from various pages on Google)