

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:

- ***Balmoral Grove***
- ***Carlisle Grove***
- ***Barnard Avenue***
- ***Newlands Avenue***

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

In the book "40 Days to Peace – A Daily Devotional" published by SASRA, as part of the VE Day 75th Anniversary celebration, I read some words which are very relevant today in the worldwide battle against Corona Virus (Covid-19). On page 98, Major General Sir Laurence New writes: "*Despite what appeared to be an unbeatable enemy they drew their strength from a great leader...*"

We too face an evil enemy who can often appear to be invincible, but we have a leader in whom we can place complete trust, who promises victory, no matter what the cost: "*Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*" (Isaiah 41 v 10).

When growing numbers of people continue to be lost to the Corona Virus, it can be tempting to lose hope, to question the validity of faith, to doubt the goodness of God. In the New Testament, Apostle Paul later said that the sting of death is painful, but Christ's victory over death helps us have confidence in a better life to follow. We will grieve and weep, but by the grace of God we need not lose hope.

Online Prayer

- Northern Baptist Association
Service 10th May: <https://youtu.be/a5d5YtD7ioE>
- 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 continue their sterling efforts in collecting the vast amount of FareShare food kindly donated by local suppliers. 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.

The food is being received and distributed to those who need it most and includes a wide variety of products across numerous categories from basics to occasional treats.

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

VE Day, Friday 8th May 2020

V.E. Day (Victory in Europe Day) marked the day toward the end of World War Two (WW2) when fighting against Nazi Germany in Europe came to an end. On 8th May 1945, Prime Minister Churchill made an announcement on the radio at 3pm that the war in Europe had come to an end, following German Nazi’s unconditional surrender the day before.

It was an emotional day of very mixed feelings that millions of people had been waiting for and many of them found V.E. Day to be a moment of great sadness and reflection, as millions of people had lost loved ones in the conflict or even lost their own lives .

Many had to continue fighting in other battles and lots of people were being kept as prisoners of war abroad and many did not know if they would live to see the next day. The privations of the war affected everyone and not only were 382,600 military lives lost, including many from what are now Commonwealth nations, but also 67,100 civilian lives were lost, in Britain.

After six long years, WW2 finally came to its end on V.J. Day (Victory in Japan) 15th August 1945 when Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces. **But even so VE Day was a day of massive relief and celebrations.**

Huge crowds with lots of people, dressed in red, white and blue, gathered outside Buckingham Palace in London, extremely happy that the fighting in Europe had stopped and there were big celebrations and street parties all over the country.

This week many people had intended holding V.E. Parties and celebrations, but because of the present Corona Virus crisis and subsequent lock down regulations, the parties had to be drastically reduced or even cancelled. Individuals once again showed their wartime spirit and organised their own *“IN YOUR OWN GARDEN, VE DAY 75TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY”* complete with singalong and remembrance of those to whom we owe a substantial debt of gratitude.

At BABC we also had intended to hold a V.E. Day Garden Party on the lawn but we had to cancel it because of the ongoing crisis, but we each can still remember and celebrate the achievements of our armed forces in WW2, in preventing fascism from triumphing. We hope that by remembering the horrors of war, we can avoid being drawn into more wars. To an extent, this has been successful, as we have had no more wars like the two World Wars, but there has only been one year since 1945 that has not had a British serviceman or woman killed in conflict.

We are now living through another war only this time it's not against an evil regime, but against a virus. We may ask "what is a virus compared to the horrors of war", but in 1918, Spanish Flu caused 50 million deaths around the world, more than all the casualties in World War One.

Is it not amazing, that human beings are able to create weapons that can wipe cities off the map, but are floored by a tiny virus? One wonders if the money spent on weapons to kill millions, had been spent on medical research, would we by now have beaten cancer? Would we be fighting this virus now or would we have already conquered all viruses?

We serve the one who overcame death, the Lord of Life. In His death and resurrection, we have victory over death, as we will receive eternal life in heaven. More people need to hear this Good News, even in lockdown. Our duty as believers, is to tell others of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for us, so they too, may find the peace that passes all understanding, and receive the gift of eternal life.

The saddest part of the Covid-19 period is that many of those who have died from it, have not trusted Jesus for salvation. **Tell others about Him and change their eternal destination.**

(Contributed by John)

Ecclesiastes4 v2

“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.”

“A cord of three strands cannot be easily broken.”

We are not meant to be alone. We were created for community (see Genesis2 v8) and in Ecclesiastes4 v10, Solomon describes how vulnerable we are when we're alone: "Pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up." In verse 12 he added that there's strength in numbers, "For though one may be overpowered, to can defend themselves. A cord of three strands cannot be easily broken."

Spiritually and physically, God never intended us to live alone isolated and vulnerable, without family or friends as many folks are forced to do so at present. We need to have good relationships with others for mutual encouragement, refreshment and enhancement. (see also 1Corinthians12 v21).

Do not let lethargy, indolence, weariness, depression and all the likes stop you from keeping in touch with each other. You may be feeling all the above, but so are many others too. Just a quick 'phone call from you, or the use of "social media" to speak to someone you've not seen for a while and you suspect are alone, may well be a great boost, encouragement and uplift to them in their isolation - **PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH!**

Lord, help us to remember and support someone in need of encouragement.

Amen.