

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.

Wednesdays and lockdown

- Tier 3 measures are currently still in place and face-to-face services are restricted during these measures.
- We are therefore continuing to suspend both Bible Study and Wednesday Community days, but the production of takeaway food will continue where circumstances allow

Church Services

- We will continue to with the creation of online services which will be available via YouTube and our website.
- Audio CD's of the services are available upon request.

Sharing God's Comfort

- If you know of anyone you feel would benefit from our online offerings please feel free to share our website at www.bishopbaptists.co.uk with others so they too can enjoy our weekly online service (also available on our YouTube Channel), newsletters, blog and other items of prayer and interest.

Spreading God's Love

- 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.

Please feel free to contact the following NBA members for additional help and support:

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

Prayers

Please keep in your prayers all local churches in Bishop Auckland area and especially our Northern Baptist Association, and the work they are continuing to do to help the local people cope with the problems caused by Coronavirus and Covid -19, and continue to do the Lord's work in our towns and communities.

As the Anti Covid restrictions and various support schemes, all of which are in a state of flux and constantly changing, we must remember those who will be affected by the onset of major job losses soon across our economy. Many people are only just hanging on financially now, commonly being reliant on food banks to feed their families and who are going to be faced with more hard times. Remember them and "look out" for them

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***

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 – Bishop Auckland and North Durham Hospitals***

Please pray for all those living, working and playing in the following communities:

- **Conway Grove**
- **Byron Avenue**
- **Bamburgh Avenue**
- **Arthur Terrace**
- **Morpeth Grove**
- **Richmond Avenue**

Thoughts

This magazine is being published this week on 6th December.

This reminded me of something - and it took me a few seconds to realise what.

Then it clicked! It was the number 6 what done it!

It reminded me of Boris' 'Rule of Six'! (Other "Rules of Six" are available).

However, before we despair at Boris' 'Rule of Six', or praise it, depending on your point of view, we should remember that some other 'Rules of Six' before this one have had a very positive effect on those that have used them.

Perhaps this is a good time to consider another one, suggested by Darren Blaney, minister of Herne Bay Baptist Church: ~

Achieving More Every Day - Ivy Lee and the Building of A Steel Empire.

Ivy Lee was born in America in 1877, the son of a Methodist minister.

He is considered as the father of modern public relations but started out as a young management consultant.

Keen to further his career, he one day obtained an appointment with Charles Schwab, the founder of Bethlehem Steel.

Schwab explained that he was a very busy man and most of his managers were struggling to get more done as well.

If Lee had any advice on this problem, Schwab would be happy to listen, otherwise he had a company to run!

Lee asked Schwab to take a piece of paper and write down on it all the things he had to do that day. Then Lee instructed him to identify the six most important items on that list. This took Schwab just a few minutes.

“Now”, said Lee, “organise those in priority order from the most important to the sixth most important.”

This took Schwab another minute or two.

“When you come to work tomorrow,” advised Lee, “start with number one on that list and don’t let anything stop you or distract you, but keep working on it until you have completed it or until you can take it no further.

Then move on to number two, and so on. Don’t worry if you don’t get through all six items.

If you could not do them using this method, you would not be able to do them any other way either.

At the end of the day, make a new list of six for the following day.”

Lee invited Schwab to try this ‘Rule of Six’ for 30 days and to teach his managers to use it too. At the end of the 30 days, he could pay Lee whatever he thought the idea was worth.

A month later, Lee received a cheque from Schwab for \$25,000 (approximately £296,809.60p in today’s UK money!)

Schwab said it was the most profitable advice he had ever received and credited the method with helping Bethlehem Steel grow from being a small company to one of the largest Steel producers in the US.

So, if you’re struggling to get everything done, and who isn’t, perhaps Ivy Lee’s Rule of Six is worth a try?

(Baptist Times, 15/09/2020)

(Editor’s comment: Whatever you want to do at any time, don’t forget to kneel and pray first)

Did You Think To Kneel and Pray?

Ere' you left your room this morning
Did you think to kneel and pray?
In the name of Christ our Saviour
Did you pray for loving favour
As a shield today?

Oh how praying rests the weary
Prayer will change the night to day
So when life seems dark and dreary
Don't forget to pray.

When you've met with great temptation
Did you think to kneel and pray?
By his dying love and merit
Did you claim the Holy Spirit
As your guide today?

Oh how praying rests the weary
Prayer will change the night to day
So when life seems dark and dreary
Don't forget to pray.

Composer, Lyricist: Traditional

An Advent thought

The Bible tells us that long before the world began, God had a plan to bring redemption through Christ to all those who would choose to believe and follow Him (1 Peter 1:19-20).

God knew we would need a Saviour. He knew we would need to be set free.

And He made a way, by sending His One and Only Son, so that we could receive forgiveness and find new life and hope through Him (John 3:16).

Throughout the Scriptures, weaving through verse after verse in the Old Testament, are prophecies that speak of the Christ who was to come.

Bible scholars have concluded from much research that, hundreds of years before Jesus was even born, more than 300 prophecies were recorded to tell of His coming, His life and journey to the cross, and the power of His Resurrection.

These prophecies point to the exact location, circumstances, and even timing of Christ's birth.

God alone is the only One who could plan those specific details and ensure they all come to pass.

Jesus is the fulfilment of Scripture.
He is the Word. He is the Light. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

And the whole message of Christmas is wrapped up in Him, God's greatest gift, who came as a tiny baby, with one powerful purpose—to save a lost world.

Debbie McDaniel (I Believe Contributing Writer)

[Thanks to Gavin Fraser for contributing this item.]

NBA

Just a gentle reminder from NBA that Rev Dr John Claydon is taking his long booked and well-earned Sabbatical break to study and to recharge his batteries.

We are asked to respect his time away and for a short while, please do not to try contact him He will be back!

Keep him in prayers and ask that he returns even more invigorated and fortified and refreshed and blessed.

Thank you.

NBA Praying Together – 6th December 2020

This week, as part of our fellowship of prayer, we ask you to pray for:

Upper Eden Baptist Church in Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria

Give thanks for:

- The encouragement and challenges we have appreciated through taking part in the NBA Reimagine course.
- The blessing of being able to meet on Zoom each week, for the provision of speakers and the deep fellowship we have enjoyed together.
- The growth in numbers attending, the new resources we have been able to use and the participation of more people in each service.
- The development of the Two's Company telephone befriending ministry and our connection with the local social prescribing link worker.

Pray for:

- Our church meeting on Monday as we consider options for recruiting a paid worker to support and develop our ministries.
- For imagination and sensitivity as we anticipate moving away from Sunday services on Zoom.
- For opportunities to reach out into the community to share the Gospel message in both word and deed.
- For the Churches Together in Kirkby Stephen to act as Good Samaritan's to the lonely, the left out and the lost in our community.

NBA Home Mission Update

Dear friends,

In May I wrote to you asking for your help in giving to Home Mission as we had seen a 25% fall in giving in April. I want to thank you for your response which has enabled us, at the end of October, to be 1.5% below the level of giving during the same period in 2019.

Your giving has enabled our work as Baptists Together to continue through ongoing grants to churches and projects, funding your Association so that it can continue to provide support to you and your minister, if you have one. It has also enabled the Specialists Teams to be funded and this has been seen particularly through the large volume of advice provided to help you through the Coronavirus as the government has updated guidance frequently, as well as ongoing support.

This year has been a difficult one and I am aware that some of our churches have struggled, particularly where you have in the past benefitted from income from the letting of your church premises.

I am pleased that we have been able to help with extra grants to those churches where their cash resources would have run out and also given help through the Baptist Union Corporation to those churches with loans which would have struggled to maintain repayments. However may I ask you to thank your many members who have maintained their giving through the times of lockdown and closure which has enabled many of you to continue to meet all your church's financial commitments.

One bright area this year has been pensions. The pension deficit continues to fall and we are beginning to see the day when the scheme will be fully funded. The valuation as at the end of last year resulted in a deficit of £18m to which a further £10m was added to cover the uncertainties of the Coronavirus and longer-term changes to inflation measures.

As I write the deficit stands at £13m, very slightly ahead of the original plan pre the extra £10m. The improving position enabled us to request the Pension Trustees to agree to a reduction in deficit contributions for this half year worth about £750 to each church paying deficit contributions.

The contributions will need to revert to the normal rates from January 2021 as this is in accordance with the valuation submitted to the Pension Regulator and cannot be changed without the Regulator's agreement.

Whilst many of you give regularly through the year to Home Mission there are some of you who give in a single amount at the year end, or have extra funds to send in, perhaps part of the savings from the cut in pension contributions.

Now that the Christmas holidays start to disrupt normal services, I ask that you send in your final Home Mission giving by 18 December 2020.

Looking Forward - As we look to 2021, we are all hoping to a return to more normal conditions, particularly now preliminary results from the vaccine developments has been so good. However, things will be different from the past.

As Baptists Together we have adopted the following priorities. I would encourage you to think how these areas will be reflected in your budgets for 2021 onwards. Some may need limited finance in your context whilst others may need a significant financial commitment.

- **Ministry** - We are now putting additional emphasis on Continuing Ministerial Development which may need you setting aside extra budget to support your minister.
- **Developing Leadership** - in all its forms, together with a focus on equipping the whole body of Christ. Are you bringing younger people through to leadership positions in your church? What training are you providing?
- **Children Young People and Families** - a key area where we need to develop and nurture work in an area where sadly a good number of our churches have seen this diminish
- **Emerging Adults** - a similar but separate focus on Emerging Adults aged 18-35 – a group who are largely missing from our churches.
- **Digital Revolution** – the lockdown has driven us to much increased use of technology to stay connected. Some churches have seen people connecting who would otherwise not be in church. You may need some extra investment to enable your church to sustain online ministry longer term.
- **Justice** – in response to “Black Lives Matter” we realise that even more needs to be done across all areas of justice. How are you reaching out to all parts of your community?
- **Hope** - I trust you will also be able to at least maintain your Home Mission giving in 2021.

In Romans 12 v 4 + 5 we read: *“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”*

It is as one body with different members we have been able to support each other through this difficult year. In finishing I would like to pass on special thanks to Treasurers for the work you do, particularly during this year when the role has been that much harder. Whether you choose to meet selected members of your family or stay isolated at Christmas I pray you may experience our Lord’s love coming down at Christmas.

Every blessing in Christ, John Levick (Treasurer)

An Advent Prayer

Almighty and ever-living God

*Help us to overcome the cares of life by the joy
of your coming into the world.*

*May we experience all the happiness our
Saviour promises.*

We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Amen

Author: Fr Denis Carter

Online Prayer

- Bishop Auckland Baptist Church Service
<https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/babc-sunday-service/>
- Northern Baptist Association Service
<https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/nba-sunday-service/>
- Influence Church Service (Services streamed Sundays at 11.00am and 5.00pm)
<http://www.influencechurch.co.uk>

Helpful Links

BABC Sunday Service	https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/babc-sunday-service/
BABC Newsletter	https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/newsletter/
BABC Garden Blog	https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/church-garden-blog/
NBA Sunday Service	https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/nba-sunday-service/
BABC Main Website	www.bishopbaptists.co.uk

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