

<b><i>Weekly Prayers, News and Thoughts</i></b>
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Welcome to our condensed Newsletter. We are publishing this in digital format to help keep us up to date with each other.

***Wednesday Community Days***

- Whilst we are not currently holding our indoor events due to Covid and the need to protect everyone's safety, we will continue to provide takeaway food at lunchtime each Wednesday whilst observing the appropriate safeguards.

***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.

***Bible Study***

- We are continuing to suspend face-to-face Bible Study for safety reasons. Electronic solutions are available. Please contact us if you would like to be included.

***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](http://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](mailto:paulrevill@thenba.org.uk) or
- Elaine Webster [elainewebster@thenba.org.uk](mailto:elainewebster@thenba.org.uk)

<b>Prayers</b>
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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:*

- ***Dene Hall***
- ***Pollards Drive***
- ***Etherley Lane***
- ***Escomb Road***
- ***Bolton Grove***
- ***Deerness Road***

Please remember too our NBA Regional Minister/Mission Enabler

- ***Bishop Auckland Baptist Church Leadership Team***

<b>Hamsterley Baptist Church</b>
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Hamsterley Baptist Church have been holding a socially distanced Sunday Service, once a month. Due to the current situation with new strains of Covid, they have now, reluctantly, decided not to hold any more, until further notice. Please continue to support the fellowship of Hamsterley in your prayers.

<b>BMS World Day of Prayer – Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021</b>
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**Please join us in prayer:**

- *Pray* for those who suffer under the injustice of poverty. Pray that their short-term needs will be met and that the Lord will grant them dignity and freedom from poverty in the long term. Pray also that the systems that put them in poverty would be challenged by those who God empowers to do so.
- *Pray* that God will stop the spread of the Coronavirus around the world. Pray for all those across the world struggling under this new normal, that we will be able to lay our burdens on the Lord and know his peace.
- *Pray* for BMS World Mission's new strategy and vision. Pray that God would be preparing paths for all those involved in implementing this, and that this new strategy will be pivotal in carrying out God's work.
- *Pray* that God will lead BMS' senior management team well over the coming year.  
Pray that he would guide them in wisdom to make BMS the organisation he wants us to be.

- *Pray for the partners, churches and organisations BMS works with on the ground. Pray that they would become self-sustaining, that BMS would partner with them in a helpful and encouraging way and that God would continue to guide and bless them.*
- *Pray for all those in the areas where BMS works who do not yet know Jesus. Pray that God would make himself known to them, through BMS and directly, and give them the hope only he provides.*
- *Pray that more and more individual supporters will come to support and pray for BMS as we journey forward together.*

*Ephesians 1: 15-16 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.*

<b>Expressing Feelings</b>
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As the UK's Covid-related death count has now exceeded the appalling 100, 000 count, it's hard to find words that expresses the feelings of many people.

However, here is a poem that may go some way to helping:

**The Song Thrush and the Mountain Ash**

Through the Hospital window  
she said to me

She'd forgotten the name  
of her special tree

and forgotten the name  
of her special bird

Through the hospital window

I mouthed the words:  
The song thrush and the mountain ash.

Through the hospital window  
she asked again  
  
why I stood outside  
in the wind and rain  
  
and said she didn't understand  
why I didn't want to touch her hand.  
The song thrush and the mountain ash.  
  
She said she liked  
the flowers I sent  
  
but wondered why they  
had no scent,  
  
and why the food had lost its taste,  
and why the nurse had covered her face?  
  
And why the gates of the park were shut?  
And why the shops were boarded up?  
  
And why the swings were tied in knots?  
And the music...why had the music stopped?  
  
Through the hospital window  
I called her name  
  
and waited a while  
but she never came,  
  
then I saw reflected  
in the glass  
  
the song thrush  
and the mountain ash.  
  
The song thrush and the mountain ash.

*Simon Armitage (Poet Laureate) [One of two song lyrics commissioned by Huddersfield Choral Society in response to Covid-19, inspired by members of the Choir and set to music by composers Cheryl Frances-Hoad (We'll Sing ) and Daniel Kildane (The Song Thrush and the Mountain Ash) ]*

**Psalm 1:3 NIV**

*"That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
whose leaf does not wither—  
whatever they do prospers."*

Some kinds of earthly delight can feed our hearts for a short time, but when difficulties come, our hearts will wither in the drought.

Delighting in the Lord and in his will for us, however, provides us with ongoing and ever-fresh joy.

Out of this lifestyle comes both short-term and long-term benefits and a resiliency that withstands life's worst droughts.

***Loving Lord,***

***I do find my delight in you and your ways and find refreshment in your abiding Spirit.  
Please give me the wisdom to seek your will every day of my life. In Jesus' name I pray***

***Amen.***

*phil@verseoftheday*

<b>Are you ready to be Happy?</b>
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We're starting to see a little more day light each day as 2021 gradually gets itself stirred up.

We've just past, supposedly, the most depressing day of the year, snow drops are sticking up out of the earth and birds in our gardens are gathering nesting materials, and this week, and I had to look twice to believe my eyes, I've just seen a postman wearing shorts!

All these are signs of optimism for the future and promises for us to think about and cheer us up somewhat.

Here's a few other thoughts to make you smile a little too in these hard times:

- If you take an Oriental person and spin him around several times, does he become disoriented?
- If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?

- Why do women wear evening gowns to nightclubs? Shouldn't they be wearing nightgowns?
- When someone asks you, 'A penny for your thoughts, 'and you put in your two pennies worth, what happens to the other penny?
- When cheese gets its picture taken, what does it say?
- Why are a wise man and wise guy opposites?
- Why do "overlook" and "oversee" mean opposite things?
- Why isn't 11 pronounced onety one?
- If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked and dry cleaners depressed?
- Why is it that if someone tells you that there are 1 billion stars in the universe you will believe them, but if they tell you a wall has wet paint you will have to touch it to be sure?

Well, God wants us to be happy and joyful and there are lots of verses in the Bible, that encourage us to smile and be happy and enjoy life as well as our having times of grief and sadness.

Here are just two examples to try to keep in mind:

**Psalm 98:4-8 NIV**

*"burst into jubilant song with music;  
make music to the LORD with the harp,  
with the harp and the sound of singing,  
with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—  
shout for joy before the LORD, the King.  
Let the sea resound, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it.  
Let the rivers clap their hands,  
let the mountains sing together for joy;"*

**Psalm 100**

*"Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.  
Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.  
Know that the LORD is God.  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.  
Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.  
For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations."*

It may be cold and dark just now, with more sadness and pain in the world than many can bear, but ***when God makes a promise then He keeps it!***

Easter isn't far off now and that's when ***God kept the ultimate promise for us all through the Faithful, Courageous, and Obedient love of Jesus.***

**Closing Prayer**

*God of Heaven and Earth,  
you created the one human family and endowed each person with great dignity.  
Support us, we pray, in overcoming the sins of discrimination and racism.  
Grant us your grace in eliminating this blemish from our hearts, our communities, and our  
social and civil institutions.  
Fill our hearts with love for you and for our neighbour so that we may work with you in  
healing our land from prejudice and injustice.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the  
Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
We have prayed and now, with changed hearts, let us move our words to become actions.  
Amen*



<b>Online Prayer</b>
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- 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>

<b>Helpful Links</b>
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<b>BABC Sunday Service</b>	<a href="https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/babc-sunday-service/">https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/babc-sunday-service/</a>
<b>BABC Newsletter</b>	<a href="https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/newsletter/">https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/newsletter/</a>
<b>BABC Garden Blog</b>	<a href="https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/church-garden-blog/">https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/church-garden-blog/</a>
<b>NBA Sunday Service</b>	<a href="https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/nba-sunday-service/">https://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk/nba-sunday-service/</a>
<b>BABC Main Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bishopbaptists.co.uk">www.bishopbaptists.co.uk</a>

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