

<i>Weekly Prayers, News and Thoughts</i>

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 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 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:

- **Compton Grove**
- **Westfield Road**
- **Bell Street**
- **Percy Street**
- **Clevedon Avenue**
- **Woodhouse Lane**

Please remember in prayers too:

- **The Auckland Project**
- **The Feeding Families Initiative**

Candlemas

Candlemas - the Feast of the Presentation – is celebrated on February 2nd each year.

It marks the moment when Mary and Joseph presented Jesus to the Temple as an infant – 40 days old– the traditional Jewish practice in those times - and made an offering to thank God for the birth of their son.

As they entered the Temple, an old man named Simeon saw them, declaring that the infant Jesus would become the light of the world. (Luke 22 v40)

It's a moment of hope and joy, and it's worth celebrating.

This is the day on which many Christian traditions bring out all their new candles for the coming year and bless them.

This, is why the Presentation is also celebrated as "Candlemas."

Candlemas is a time of year when the lengthening of daylight hours becomes noticeable.

The day is celebrated at a time when winter will soon be over, and spring will come. The time of darkness and bare earth is shortening.

In our gardens, Snowdrop (Galanthus), also known as Candlemas Bell, because they often bloom right around the time of Candlemas, are again appearing.

The candles, of course, represent the coming of Jesus as the Light into a world of spiritual darkness and we progress towards the brightness of the Easter Resurrection of Jesus.

Those candles denote the fact that Jesus, light of the world is here, that whatever shadows have darkened our days, they are going to pass.

It's a time of hope and joy, and it's worth celebrating.

It marks the midway point between the winter solstice and spring equinox.

For those of us living in the wintry northern hemisphere, making it halfway through winter is itself, a cause for celebration!

A prayer by Rev Stephen Cottrell (Archbishop of York)

Simeon recognises the infant Jesus as the Messiah, the one who will be a light, not just to Israel, but to the Gentiles, to everyone.

May we bring something of Christ's light to those we encounter today.

Amen

Deuteronomy 4 v7 (NIV)

"What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him?"

Whilst the Israelites were on their journey through the wilderness, they learned a great deal.

One lesson was that their God wasn't like any of the supposed other gods of that time - distant, deaf, geographically bound, reached only by long pilgrimages, or by international post!

No, ***"The Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to Him"***.

- What other people could make that claim?
- This was revolutionary news!
- God doesn't live in Jerusalem.
- God is with us wherever we are!
- Some of us still need to discover this radical truth.

Whatever problems or predicaments or heart breaks you are suffering or whatever thanks and praise you want to offer Him - God is right beside you NOW!

Just talk to Him.

Lord God,

You are bigger than the universe yet closer to us than our latest breath.

Thank You for being so interested in us, listening to our every prayer.

Amen

UCB - OUR DAILY BREAD 29th APRIL 2020

Sexual Abuse & Sexual Violence Awareness Week: 1st – 7th Feb 2021

<https://sexualabuseandsexualviolenceawarenessweek.org/>

For survivors of violence, abuse and neglect, many are in a state of constant loneliness and pain.

Pray that God will be with them in their confusion and pain.

God has the ability to give power to the powerless and His fullness to the empty of spirit.

He also has the power to heal their wounds, free them from fear and restore them to true health.

Jesus was victim of abuse and yet in His resurrection, He triumphed over oppression.

Likewise, we should pray for those who abuse and mistreat others.

We should also pray to turn the hearts of the exploiters from the way of evil so that He may open their eyes to the truth of their conduct and the damage they are causing. Hopefully, this prayer will bring them to repentance and amendment of their lives.

Loving Saviour touch the hearts of those who abuse others.

Heal their thinking, so that they may turn to You and seek Your ways.

Help them to know that every human being is a treasure to You.

Help them to know that You are a forgiving God and can lead them on a path to new life.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

We pray Lord, that You open our ears, our eyes, and our hearts to be more aware, outreaching, and supportive to people in abusive situations, so that they won't feel alone but know that someone cares.

Let us love them as You have loved us.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

<https://www.beliefnet.com/>

The Northern Baptist Association – Who are we?

We are the family of Baptists from East Cleveland to Kirkby Stephen, and from Northallerton to Berwick.

We have had Baptist churches in this area for over 350 years, but far from being static and complacent, we continue to engage in mission and church planting with creative initiatives in Wooler and Loftus.

We are passionate to see God's Kingdom come in power to touch people's lives and shape our society.

We engage together in developing, encouraging and supporting churches to be creative in mission, facilitating effective ministries and seeking ways of strategic collaboration.

Many people give freely of their time and work alongside our Association staff. Our Council is responsible for overseeing our life, but their work is delegated to five groups covering ministry, mission, resources, Home Mission, and Assemblies.

Website: www.thenba.org.uk

Eternal God whose love is ever faithful,

Deepen our love for you.

Inspire our passion for your Kingdom, and

Increase our longing to see your power at work in Your world.

God of mission who has reached out to us,

we give ourselves to working together for your Kingdom.

Help us as we encourage and support one-another
Enable us to be creative in mission and grant
that we may be effective in our ministries.
Strengthen us as we build together for your Kingdom.
In the name of Christ our Lord
Amen

Northern Baptist Association - Vacancies

We are looking for a Transitional Strategic Leader (Regional Minister)
2 to 3-year appointment North East England

To oversee a process of review, seeking to identify strategy and structures within our Association and Regional Team that will serve our churches into the 21st century.

Our vision is to establish this transitional role that will discern and establish an approach which is pioneering & missional to its core.

We want that approach to be strategic, flexible, responsive, visionary, relational, imaginative and creative.

We desire a greater releasing, empowering and an urgency to share the gospel within the life of our Association and to truly encompass the wide range of gifts given by God to the church.

In order to develop that vision, we seek an inspirational strategic transitional leader to oversee an in-depth review and transition period.

We're looking for a practising, committed Christian with an understanding of Baptist principles and with an involvement in the life of Baptist churches.

A person who listens attentively, can be bold, take risks and experiment. Someone with a proven track record and experience of Christian ministry, who is imaginative and creative with an enthusiasm for exploring new initiatives and pioneering activities. Someone who is spiritually mature but still committed to growing in relationship with God.

Are you called to lead the NBA into the future that God has for us?

If you're interested to know more, you can contact the NBA Moderator by email on moderator@thenba.org.uk

A full appointment brief (including role profile, a full list of our selection criteria and further background to the role and the NBA) is available and you will also be able to request an application form for completion.

The closing date for submission of completed applications is 22nd Feb 2021 and it's envisaged that interviews for the role will be held in the week commencing 15th March 2021.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Closing Prayer

In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is suffering and anxious, Lord, we pray to you, seeking to feel Your gentle, almighty and powerful arms around us all, giving us refuge and protection.

May the Light of Your countenance shine on us amid this coronavirus pandemic.

Comfort those who are distraught and who mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times did not receive parting rites, which added to the shock, grief and pain.

Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them.

Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Support and soften the hearts of national leaders, so that with wisdom, kindness and generosity, they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and that they may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity.

Stir consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on supporting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Father in Heaven, we do thank you and praise you for the many blessings and gifts you have bestowed upon us in times past and we know that You will always be faithful to us in the future.

May we always remain faithful to you and be true witnesses to your eternal love.

We make this prayer in the name of Christ, our Lord, Amen.

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

Please feel free to explore the website and subscribe to [our YouTube channel](#) and those of our contributors to encourage them to continue to provide the valuable content from which we all benefit.