

<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 contacts 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 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:

- ***Ediscum Garth***
- ***Bamburgh Avenue***
- ***Langley Grove***
- ***Warwick Road***
- ***Walmer Grove***
- ***Grove Road***

Please remember too:

- ***Our Pastor and his family***
- ***Bishop Auckland Baptist Church Leadership Team***
- ***The work of the Zephaniah Trust***

A Question for Lent

*Is it possible for a man to speak
to another man's heart?*

*For a man on a cross
2000 years upon a cross
upon a hill to speak today
to a man's own heart?*

*Is it possible for one man's death
to be another man's life
when that man's death 2000 years ago upon a hill
said death to his friends and desolation to his mother?*

*Is it possible for one man's shadow
to throw light on life and love for over 2000 years?*

Is it?

anon

Thoughts on The Sermon On The Mount
--

The disciples appeared to want the best seats in The Kingdom when it came into being and Jesus was King!

They needed to be reminded of the words of Jesus, that we know as “The Sermon on the Mount”. (see Matthew 5)

And Jesus wasn’t joking when he preached them!

“The meek will inherit the earth”, and Jesus led the way.

“God’s kingdom belongs to the humble”, and Jesus showed how it had to be done.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who suffer, are persecuted and even killed, by following God’s way... and Jesus went ahead of them in that, too.

The sermon was pointing the way to the climax of the Jesus life on earth when Jesus was to be “enthroned” as “king of the Jews” by being cruelly nailed to the cross.

That should be great comfort to us.

If God’s kingdom came the same way that earthly kingdoms come, by force of arms and military victory, the weak and the vulnerable would once more come of worst.

But God does things the other way up, and we should be thankful for that.

In particular, those who of us who struggle from time to time in our faith and discipleship should take heart from Isaiah’s words applied to Jesus:

His task, and his delight, is to gently fan into flames what was smouldering, and to gently strengthen and support the weak, bruised faith, hope, and love that we have at the moment.

Let that be our prayer this Lent.

(Tom Wright)

NBA Praying Together

A CALL TO PRAYER

This Lent we are calling on all NBA Churches to give time to listening to God and discerning what we feel God is saying to us as churches and a Baptist movement in the North East of England.

We recognise that over the past year we have done much praying and seeking God, but in this phase of gradually emerging from (we hope) the final lockdown is an important time when we need the guidance and direction of God.

This week, can you find some space to listen to God and to be attentive to Him?

Can you find a place where you can share with others in your church or the wider Baptist family what God puts into your heart, or what you have discerned over the past year that God is communicating to our churches?

So instead of making prayer requests this week, we ask you to stop, to be still and to listen.

As Mother Teresa once said, "God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer."

The invitation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6YX1DOXZmE&t=69s>

Explanation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EI24gFI9J1E&t=30s>

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."

Dates for the Diary

Mothering Sunday

- Sunday 14th March in United Kingdom (it is also the 4th Sunday in Lent this year)

Comic Relief 2021

- **Red Nose Day 2021** is on Friday 19 March, with fundraising activities taking place around the big day.
- The main TV fundraiser is being broadcast on the BBC and will be hosted by Alesha Dixon, David Tennant, Davina McCall, Paddy McGuinness and Sir Lenny Henry.

(www.bbc.co.uk/newsround)

England and Wales Census

- Sunday 21st March

The census is a survey about all the households in England and Wales. The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. All households are legally required to complete a Census Questionnaire, with accurate information, and return the Census form.

The census should take you about 10 minutes for the Household questions and 10 minutes per person. You can choose to either fill in your census online or fill in your census on paper to be posted.

Your answers to the census questions will help organisations make decisions on planning and funding public services in your area, including transport, education and health care, so helping to decide how services in your area are funded.

All households should complete the census on Sunday 21 March 2021 or as soon as possible after. If you responded before 21 March and things change, you can contact us to let us know.

For more information visit: www.census.gov.uk (Office for National Statistics)

NB: You may have received a post card through your letter box re the census. It says that you will receive soon, by post, an invitation pack. It is NOT an invitation to take part. It is a legal requirement!

Clocks Go Forward

- Sunday 28th March

Lent Reading

Lent is a season that is inspired and informed by the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness at the outset of his earthly ministry. Seeking to determine his purpose and vocation, he was tempted to pursue pathways that did not belong to the way of God's Kingdom.

Yet in those temptations there is more than an echo of the kind of religion that we can all too easily find ourselves pursuing. Lent is a time for us also to free ourselves of such inclinations and be reminded again of their emphatic rejection.

*Turn these stones into bread
Grant us a faith where self is satisfied
And tables are spread at which believers can dine
With backs turned on a needy, hungry world
But bread alone will not sustain
And the food of your word calls us to place others before ourselves;
To seek your Kingdom and speak your truth,
Casting its light upon pathways of hope.
Leap from the temple's highest tower
Grant us a faith that thrills and entertains
Where we can applaud and cheer for more
To take our minds off the crosses that others may bear.
But you refuse the temptation of being shaped by our desires
To willingly dance to tunes of our making.
You call us to capture this world's attention
With refrains of justice and acts of compassion.
Sign up to the agendas of the powers that be
Grant us a faith that leaves their gods and idols unchallenged and undisturbed;
That asks no questions of systems and structures
That leave many behind, oppressed and forgotten.
But you are the one we are called to enthrone
Whose kingdom is founded on justice and right
That nations might rejoice in the light of its coming
And hope can echo when its cause is embraced.*

©2020 faithspace.org.uk

Third Sunday of Lent – Closing Prayer
--

*O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home;*

*O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
still be our guard while troubles last,
and our eternal home.*

(from the hymn "God, our help in ages past" Author: Isaac Watts (1719) usual Tune: ST. ANNE)

In this time of Lenten struggles with temptations, may you know that our ever-present living God is with you in your past forgiving you, and is with you in your present loving you, and is in your future guiding you.

And may the blessing of Jesus, the Source of life, love and hope and Jesus, the Breath of life, grace and truth surround, sustain and surprise you today and all your days.

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.