

<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 CDs of the services are available upon request.

***Bible Study***

- *Takes place on Tuesdays 1pm.*
- Please use the front entrance on Cockton Hill Road, but if you are physically unable to enter that way, you may use the side entrance on Westfield Rd.
- We will be using the Sanctuary and will be socially distanced.
- Please wear a face covering, unless you have an exemption and sanitise your hands, on entering.
- The only toilet to be used, is the one by the front doors.
- No refreshments will be served, so please bring anything you need, for your own use only.
- No Church Bibles or Hymn books will be available, so please bring your own.
- ***Sorry to give so many rules, but it is so we all keep safe. Very much looking forward to seeing each one of you - John Gaines***

***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:*

- ***Kenilworth Avenue***
- ***Brough Grove***
- ***Berkley Grove***
- ***Lumley Grove***
- ***Balmoral Grove***
- ***Carlisle Grove***

Please also continue to pray for:

- ***The Fellowship at Hamsterley Baptist Church***
- ***A successful transition to the ending of lockdowns***
- ***The people who have received food through our Community Food Share***

Please give thanks for the organisations and people who contribute food, clothing and books for us to distribute to others:

- ***FareShare (via Asda)***
- ***Feeding Families***
- ***The Auckland Project***
- ***Local Donations***

**"If we want perfect politicians, there won't be anyone sitting in the House of Commons".**

It is a "golden-age myth" to assume that politicians are more corrupt now than they used to be, the Archbishop of Canterbury has said.

In an interview with the BBC journalist Nick Robinson for the Political Thinking podcast, posted on Friday, Archbishop Welby said:

"They [politicians] get things wrong; they mess up. Politicians are human beings. If we want perfect politicians, there won't be anyone sitting in the House of Commons. We'll never have another Prime Minister. We can't have a Royal Family. There's nobody who can rule if we insist that they're to be faultless and flawless."

The "vast majority" of politicians whom he had met privately showed "a passion about trying, despite all the grit in the system, to make some good progress".

Asked whether he was reluctant to attribute motives to politicians, but to focus instead on their mistakes, Archbishop Welby replied: "I'm perfectly keen on attributing motive occasionally... I spent 20 years on reconciliation work in the middle of conflicts and I've met some very evil people indeed. And I had no doubt at all who they were in it for, and it was themselves and what they got out of it, and it was terrible... Of course, there are people like that, and sometimes they get to the top, and that is really worrying."

Mr Robinson asked the Archbishop how he would respond to those who said that politicians now thought "you can break the rules without consequence, help your chums, and lobby for them. They fear that morality in politics... may be dying."

Archbishop Welby responded: "Isn't this the golden-age-myth syndrome? Churchill was given huge sums of money by his mates. He helped people out; they helped him out. It's how politics worked. We have raised our standards and raised our standards, and, of course, it's not right to help out your chums or lobby inappropriately or whatever it happens to be.

"But the standards now are at a level that no 19th-century politician would have survived for one week. So, it's not that morality has disappeared; it's that morality has got much more sting and bite than it ever used to. Good, that's great. But let's not pretend that politicians are worse: if anything, they're better."

Archbishop Welby also spoke about the publication of the report by the Anti-Racism Taskforce (News, 23 April), which was published shortly after the interview took place.

"Will we get all that they [the Commission] are going to say done quickly? No.

Are they going to challenge us painfully and properly? Yes,” he said. “Is every Anglican [every C of E member] racist? Absolutely not. But, in the Macpherson sense, does the Church have an institutional bias towards white people and against the global majority? Yes.”

The changes required to make progress on racial justice in the Church would require “everything from soup to nuts”, the Archbishop said.

“Changing our training. Changing our deployment and development. Changing the way we interview, so interview panels are diverse — for that matter, including disability, which is another failure. Changing the way we appoint and select people for bigger jobs and wider jobs. More black bishops.

“And being really conscious of how we train and educate. There are areas like critical race theory which are very controversial indeed.

There are areas of theology which are very controversial. We don’t shy away from teaching them. We teach people to think hard about them and come to their own conclusions.”

Regarding Cathedrals’ and churches’ reviewing their statues and monuments in view of last year’s Black Lives Matter protests (News, 19 June 2020), the Archbishop said: “As a historian, I’m deeply committed to contextualisation... 99.99 per cent [of statues and monuments] will stay, but they will continue to stay in many cases saying ‘At that time, this was believed. Set this against the good news of Jesus Christ and what Christ says about the equality of all people, and then reflect on whether this person was wholly bad, worth a statue, or just a normal human being who lived in his time, her time, and got things wrong.’”

Archbishop Welby agreed that society was engaged in an “unhealthy” culture war. “We are in a time where culture and historic inherited culture is questioned very, very deeply, where culture’s power and privilege are in question very deeply, as we’ve seen with the Church and many other bodies on things like safeguarding as well as race,” he said.

“Good. Let’s question, let’s be suspicious, let’s ask the hard questions.

But let’s do it... in a way in which we learn to disagree well, and let’s avoid saying that someone who disagrees with me is unfit to be called a human being, or heard, or published, or whatever it happens to be.”

*(from an article by Ed Thornton – 23rd April 2021, Church Times)*

<b>Thought: "It's not good to be alone"</b>
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Personal relationships are very important.

In this country at least, Lock Downs are cautiously being loosened and very soon; in the not-too-distant future perhaps, we shall be able to mingle with each other again.

On a morning walk I saw young children going back to school.

They were happy, smiling and singing. They were looking forward to seeing their friends and teachers again.

Soon elderly people living in care homes will be able to see close relatives face to face after, for many, having had no physical contact with loved ones for a year.

Mothers teaching their children at home have experienced real loneliness. People working at home are feeling the loss of regular contact with their colleagues in the office.

Protecting life is important, but life without warm relationships with family and friends can feel very empty.

In the Bible's account of the creation of human beings we read, "Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness". So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

It is the first insight into who God is. There is only one God, but there are three persons within the Godhead – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – who are united in an eternal relationship of love.

God's image is seen equally in both men and women who long for and find fulfilment in warm personal relationships. When those relationships are lost or spoiled, life itself is diminished and people are impoverished.

God's supreme revelation of himself is in a person, his eternal Son, Jesus, who shows us what God is like. His gracious life and death for our sins reveal God's love and compassion for us. Jesus' disciples walked and talked with him. They experienced his warm love for them and witnessed the compassion he showed to all who came to him need.

The Apostle John wrote about Jesus, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life."

Recently a good friend died of Covid-19. In an attempt to save his life, the doctors put him into an induced coma. Just before he went into the coma my friend said, "God is good." He was separated from his family, but he was not alone.

Like David, who wrote Psalm 23, he trusted in the Lord, who was his shepherd, and he could say, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."*

*Peter Milsom writing for "Thought for the Week."*

Every week an article is published which relates the teaching of the Bible to daily life and current events.

We invite you to read the articles each week and pray that they will enable you to find real help and encouragement in God's Word and especially in his Son, Jesus Christ.

The articles are also published every week in newspapers throughout the UK.

<b>Dates For The Diary</b>
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**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 - Local Government Elections**

Election of councillors to DCC

Election of councillors to BA Town Council

Election of Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham police area

- **BA Baptist Church building is to be a Polling Station on that day, therefore only election officials, people who are going there to vote and myself as designated person, are allowed by law into the Church. Strictly, no admittance for any other purpose or reason.**
- **The Polling Station entrance is through the side door on Westfield Road and the exit is via the Garden door.**

*John Gaines*

<b>NBA Prayers</b>
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We are asked this week to pray for:

*Marsden Road Baptist Church, South Shields*

**Please thank God:**

- For the way He has looked after us during the pandemic. We have experienced God's faithfulness and goodness to us in so many ways. Praise the Lord! Please thank God for the technology that enabled us to continue to hold services during the second and third lockdowns.

**Please pray that:**

- We could continue to embrace new things as a church! We are about to start the Pete Greig prayer course.
- We get a good turn-out, that the technology runs smoothly and that God blesses our time together.
- As we come out of lockdown ask God to give us wisdom to know which activities we should restart and when to resume them.
- We could be open to the Holy Spirit's leading in our individual lives and our life as a church as we look to the future. Let us be open to new things and ask God to give us new opportunities to witness for Him.

*God bless you all. Thank you for praying for Marsden Road.  
(Mike Cross, NBA Prayer Co-ordinator)*

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***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."*

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<b>NBA Regional Minister Appointment</b>
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Dear Friends

It is my joy and delight to announce today the appointment of the Rev Hayley Young as our Transitional Strategic Leader (Regional Minister).

This decision was taken at our Assembly last Saturday with overwhelming support by those present and is more publicly made known today.

Hayley comes with gifts that fit her for this role and will compliment those of Paul Revill as they share in leading our Association.

In between her interview and our Assembly, Hayley was also elected to be President of Baptists Together for 2022-2023.

This enables both local and national strategic influence to work together.

We believe this juxtaposition of appointments has resonance with the word that Lynn Green gave to the minister's conference last year. (a portion of this is this is at the end of this email.)

Hayley comes to us from the South Wales Baptist Association, and we appreciate that for them and Rumney Baptist Church her departure will have mixed emotions. We pray that they will find much blessing in their new future in God's plan.

You can find out more about Hayley by going to the NBA's home page <http://www.thenba.org.uk> and watching her short videos.

Please pray for Hayley and our team as we make all the necessary arrangements and in developing deeper relationships with each other and yourselves.

It is our intention to purchase a home for Hayley to live in and we ask that you consider as churches, individually or have any suggestions to help us raise the finance for this.

The possibilities are a one-time gift, a pledge over time, an interest free loan, or one with very low interest for an extended period. Perhaps even transferring some investment form elsewhere to help the NBA at this time.

But please ensure that in doing this you do not divert any money from the giving towards Home Mission.

Yours with thanks to God for His provision so far.

*(Rev. Anthony Ruddle, NBA Moderator)*

**A portion of Lynn Green's word:**

*"...God knows that you (the NBA) are small, you are the smallest association we have.*

*God knows that you are on the margins.*

*I want to prophesy this over you: the new stuff that God wants to do across Baptists  
Together is going to start in and through the NBA.*

*He has anointed you to listen attentively, and to be bold and to take risks and to experiment,  
because you haven't got very much to lose, and you're small and you can.*

*And we need you to do this.*

*You are going to show us and you are going to lead us into new ways.*

*You are going to show us what's possible when we set our sails to catch the wind of the  
Spirit, and you are going to be the first fruits of the new thing that God wants to do in terms  
of renewing our movement.*

*So don't think of yourselves as insignificant or overlooked.*

*That's not what God is saying over you.*

*Don't think of yourselves as at the mercy of secularism or decline.*

*Today, God is appointing you to embody and enact something prophetic in our movement.*

*And I want to say to you today: Have courage and let the wind of the Spirit take you and be  
bold in these days."*

<b>Attentive: around and within</b>
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*"What is in your hand?"* said God to Moses as God prepared to show His power and prepare Moses to return to Egypt.

It was a simple question, but it was calling Moses to a particular attentiveness.

We become familiar with so many things and take them for granted and can fail to be attentive to the situation or task as we would wish. We can be attentive through all of our senses and through that intuition that is born of experience.

As we listen, see and feel, we gain attentiveness to the situation which leads to comprehension and then potential action. Our attentiveness to the Spirit is enhanced by being still before God, but it is more than that. We may sense what God is stirring within us, but we also sense what God is up to by observing what he has done and is doing, by what He is saying through the actions and words of His people (present and past) and even in the movements of wider society.

To help us become more attentive to the Spirit we must read the Scriptures as they reveal the heart and mind of God and His purposes for humanity.

Allowing God's Word to dwell in us increases our attentiveness and with it the wisdom to understand what God is saying and how we might best respond. Not every inclination, hope and desire, is of God, and we need to be ready to acknowledge that to be the case. However, when the Spirit speaks, we need to be those who hear with understanding and then act with faith.

*John Claydon*

<b>Prayer Pointers</b>
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- For the end of the Pandemic: strength for those who suffer around the world, comfort for those who grieve, resilience for all and patience with one another and we emerge from lockdowns and restrictions.
- For churches and ministers as we seek to work out how we best engage together as the lockdown restrictions are lifted.
- For all engaged in Council elections in England in May and all who serve us in politics.

*(From NBA's "Around the NBA", Spring 2021 Edition.)*

## Closing Prayer

*Lord,*

*We pray for our own weakness and failings,*

*for those times when we have failed you,*

*for the times we have justified a  
reason for looking the other way,*

*for the times when we have kept our hands  
tightly on our money avoiding the needy hand,*

*for the unkind words we have thought  
and the deaf ear we have turned.*

*Lord forgive us and make us whole again.*

*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

<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>

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.