

<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 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 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:

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

Please also continue to pray for:

- ***St. Anne's C o E School***
- ***St. Andrew's Primary School***
- ***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***

Pentecost Sunday – 23rd May

Before Christians started to celebrate Pentecost, Pentecost was an important Jewish festival which marked the time of harvest.

The festival of Pentecost is important now to Christians today because it denotes the beginning of the Christian Church.

It reminds us how Jesus' promise that God would send the Holy Spirit to them was realised.

Pentecost is the festival when Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit to mankind.

It is celebrated on the Sunday 50 days after Easter (the name comes from the Greek pentekoste, "fiftieth").

(It is also called Whitsun but does not necessarily coincide with the Whitsun Bank Holiday in the UK.)

The first Pentecost happened at the time in the Jewish calendar when their nation celebrated their harvest festival, called Shavuot.

The apostles were celebrating this custom, this festival, when the Holy Spirit descended on them.

It sounded like a very strong wind, and it looked like tongues and flames of fire, descending on to their heads.

The apostles then found themselves speaking in foreign languages, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost is regarded as the birthday of the Christian church, and the start of the church's mission to the world.

Today, we Christians believe the Holy Spirit continues to help us to live our earthly lives and tells us to tell others about Jesus Christ and his life and death and resurrection, forgiveness of our sins and love.

The Holy Spirit, which is how Christians understand God.

Celebrating Pentecost

Pentecost is a joyful festival for Christians.

At Pentecost, the clergy in some denominations of Christianity, often wear robes with red in the design as a symbol of the flames in which the Holy Spirit came to earth.

Hymns sung at Pentecost take the Holy Spirit as their theme, and include:

- Come down O Love Divine.
- Come Holy Ghost our souls inspire.
- Breathe on me breath of God.
- Breath of Life, come sweeping through us.
- There's a spirit in the air.
- Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Pentecost Symbols

The symbols of Pentecost are those of the Holy Spirit and include flames, wind, (the breath of God) and a dove.

At the first Pentecost, people passing by thought that the apostles must be drunk, even though it was still fairly early in the day, but the apostle Peter told the crowd that the apostles were not drunk but were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Saint Paul's teaching on the Church

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul writes to the Church in Corinth in Greece and explains what the Church should be like (1 Corinthians 12).

The Church in Corinth at the time was divided and arguing over spiritual gifts given to the Church by God.

Paul reminds the Church that all the gifts are given by the same God and should be used to help the Church, rather than to divide it.

He says the gifts include wisdom, knowledge, healing, miraculous powers and prophecy, and such gifts should be used positively and for the common good.

Paul uses the image of the human body to point the way to how the Church should work together for the good of all its members. For example, Paul says that it is no good if the body was only an eye because it would no longer be able to hear. Alternatively, if the whole body was an ear it would be no good either because it wouldn't be able to have a sense of smell.

Paul regards the Church, which grew from the first Pentecost, as the body of Jesus, who is the head. Therefore, all people in the Church have an important role to play. Different members of the Church may have different roles, but all are vital to make it function.

Paul goes so far as to say that when one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. This shows how caring for each other within the Church is vital as members' lives are so interconnected - just as each person in the Church is connected to Jesus, who is the head.

Acts 2:41

"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day".

Wow! Wouldn't it be great to see 3,000 added to God's people in church today?

Those who accepted Peter's message at Pentecost were baptized and the beginning of the early church started with an incredible bang.

Earlier that day, only a small group of Jesus' followers had met to pray just as they had done for several days since Jesus' ascension to heaven.

As night falls in Jerusalem, the number has jumped to over 3,000!

Acts 2 stands as a hallmark passage showing us the message of salvation, what the response of open hearts will be, and how the Holy Spirit uses this simple message to bring seeking hearts to salvation and community.

Why don't you read Acts 2 today? Jot down what Peter says about Jesus. Notice what Peter tells the people to do to be saved.

The Gospel is still just as simple, so let's not only study it; let's share it, praying for God to bring revival to our times and to our broken land!

Holy and Most High God, please breathe your Holy Spirit out upon us and bring true revival today to our churches and salvation for thousands who are lost. I pray this, in Jesus' name. Amen.

NBA Prayers

We are asked to pray for the celebration and opportunities of Pentecost this week.

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability." (Acts 2:4, NRSV)

- Give thanks this day for God's grace in giving himself to us in the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Give thanks for all that the Spirit is doing in your life, the gifts he has given, the enabling for following and serving Christ, the fruit he is growing within you to transform your character to be like Jesus.
- Give thanks for signs of the Spirit's work in church, community and the wider world.

The Holy Spirit moves the church out into mission and enables the church for mission. We see this on the Day of Pentecost with the gift of tongues which enabled the Gospel to be declared across the different language barriers.

Therefore, let us pray:

- For God's Spirit to equip us to cross the boundaries and barriers to bring the Good News of God's Kingdom more widely: to those of younger generations; to the poor and the overlooked; to the traditional working classes who are largely absent from many of our churches; to all cultures and groups in our communities.
- For God's Spirit to guide and lead us in this time of change as we emerge from pandemic restrictions - that we will be sensitive to the Spirit's leading and open to follow into new ways of being church, new avenues of God's mission, as well as some returning to good ways of the past - wherever he will lead us.
- For God's Spirit to bring new energy, life and transformation to our NBA family of churches; and for Hayley Young as she prepares to take up the role of Transitional Strategic Leader in the autumn, that God will use her to inspire and lead us into the change he would desire for us, and for a deeper life of the Spirit.

- Ask the Spirit to fill you afresh this day and to bring new life into your church. May we wholeheartedly join together in seeking the life and fullness of the Spirit.

*Mike Cross, NBA Prayer Co-ordinator.
[Prayers prepared by Paul Revill our Regional Minister (Missions)].*

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."*

NBA - Raising New Leaders

Northern Baptist Association Online Conference for Church Leaders
RAISING NEW LEADERS

Thursday 27th May 2021, 7.00PM – 9.00pm via Zoom

Guest Speaker: Ian Galloway (Director of the Free Church Track at Cranmer Hall, Durham)

We will also hope to bring a contribution from The Deeper Discipleship School in Sheffield, with whom we hope to be partnering to launch a new year out scheme for younger leaders.

Good leadership is critical for the health of the Christian church. The church is also largely failing to engage with the under 40s. We have a deficit of leaders in many of our churches and mission contexts. Therefore, we need to become more intentional in identifying, encouraging and resourcing new and younger leaders.

Come and find out how you can play your part.
To book your place and receive zoom details please email Paul Revill.

NBA - Environmental Hub

Green Conversion Launching the Association Environment Network Hub

Thursday 10th June 7.30pm Online via Zoom.

Featuring guest speaker Rev Dave Gregory Former BU President and Co-ordinator of BUEN

"Share in God's vision to care for creation."
To book your place please contact Paul Revill.

A Prayer for Pentecost

In you, Jesus, God made a new covenant with us.
You are with us always, until the end of time.
Jesus, you appeared to your disciples after your passion.
Strengthen our faith by your presence in our midst.

Jesus, you sent your apostles to proclaim your
Good News to the ends of the earth.
May the Holy Spirit make us witnesses to your love.

Lord Christ, even though we had faith enough to move mountains,
without love what would we be?

You love us.
Without your Spirit alive in our hearts, what would we be?

You love us.
Taking everything upon yourself, you open for us a road to faith,
to trust in God, who wants neither suffering nor human distress.
Spirit of Christ, Spirit of compassion, Spirit of praise,
We know that your love for each one of us will never disappear.

Thank You Jesus, Amen.

(from a Taizé prayer)

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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