

Weekly Prayers, News and Thoughts

Wednesday Community Days

- Whilst we are constantly aware of the dangers of Covid we are now open both inside and out in the garden. Lunch is available from 11:30am to eat in or take away.
- Volunteers to help are welcome as are gardeners too.

Church Services

- We are holding fortnightly services in church and continue to use online services in the intervening weeks.
- Next services are:
3rd Oct..... YouTube Service.
10th Oct..... In-church service at 10:30am
- In-church services will need a mask - sanitiser will be available and we will be socially distancing.

Bible Study

- Next meeting is:
Tuesday 5th October 2021 at 1:00pm

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.

Prayers

Please keep in your prayers all local churches and remember those still suffering from the virus plus those whose finances are compromised.

Please continue to pray for:

- All in Bishop Auckland Hospital including Rev David Etherington, Hospital Chaplain.
- Bishop Auckland Market Square and Town Hall, Bishop Auckland Bus Station, Back Bondgate, Newgate Street, South Church Road, Church View Nursing Home, Sandringham Care Home, Lady Eden House, All in Bishop Auckland Hospital including Rev Davis Etherington and the Hospital Chaplaincy Team.

Please give thanks for:

- The organisations and people who contribute food, clothing, and books for us to distribute to others including FareShare (via Asda), Feeding Families, The Auckland Project, Local Donations.

NBA Prayers

We are asked to pray this week for: **Westoe Road Baptist Church, South Shields.**

Thanksgiving

- We are thankful that, as a Church family, we have been able to return to normality in Worship and Church activities.
- For the dedication and commitment of our Pastor Julie, the leadership team and leaders of our Children's groups who have worked tirelessly and creatively, especially during this last year when Church life became very much online.

Prayers

- We pray that as we move forward, into the coming months, that God will surround the Church family with love so that we may be ambassadors for Christ in our local community.
- For those in our Church family who are struggling with 'life' right now, for whatever reason, that they will know the peace and healing only Jesus can give.

(Mike Cross -NBA Prayer Requests Co-ordinator)

Save The Dates

- Sat 2nd Oct 2021Rev Hayley Young Induction (3:00pm)
- Sat 2nd Oct 2021Bishop Auckland Food Festival (10:00am)
- Sun 3rd Oct 2021Bishop Auckland Food Festival (10:00am)
- Sun 14th Nov 2021Remembrance Sunday
- Sun 3rd July 2022BABC 150th Anniversary (All Day)

Sharing A Meal

Last Sunday was our Harvest Festival and following the service, we shared a lovely meal together in our Worship Area and it all looked lovely. So thank you for all the hard work and effort committed on behalf of us all.

In the Bible, meals are a regular feature.

On many occasions the meal is where we pass on information and learn things.

In Luke's Gospel for example in Luke 7 v40-50, in Simon's house, Jesus teaches about mercy.

In Luke 14 v1-14, Jesus challenges self-righteousness.

And then, on the road to Emmaus account, Luke 24 v30-32, the two disciples recognise Jesus as risen from the dead.

But on the visit to Zacchaeus' home, we aren't invited to the narrative at the meal, but we know that Jesus, on choosing to stay with Zacchaeus, has a transformative effect on him (Luke 19 v9).

Zacchaeus, a tax collector for the Romans, was rich because he defrauded his own people and was protected by the authorities.

Zacchaeus was reviled.

However, the visit of Jesus is enough to restore Zacchaeus' integrity and leads him to determine to make amends for the injustices that made him wealthy.

A meal that we share with others is often where we make deep connections.

If you want to tell someone that you love them, if you want to say hello or goodbye, if you need to apologise or appreciate, do it over a meal.

Meals are how we marry, how we celebrate, how we remember, and how we receive Christ.

Our meal with Christ may be the most modest meal that we share.

But THIS is the meal where we learn and remember the most!

Matthew, in his Gospel, reports the words of Jesus (26:26):

While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. "Take and eat it," he said; "this is my body."

And then Peter teaches in 1 Peter 2 v24:

Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. It is by his wounds that you have been healed.

So, a meal may be a banquet or simply a plain meal, but the meal that we share, and we call Communion * is where we receive our greatest and deepest and eternal learning.

** Last Supper · Lord's Supper · Communion · the Sacrament. Eucharist*

A Garden Parable

Our church garden is looking very lush at present due to much hard work and devotion, warmth (until recently) and now lots of rain! The gardening brought to mind one of the parables of Jesus :The parable of the Sower – or the soil?

Mark 4 v 2–9 (NIV): He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said:

"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed.

As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow.

But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.

Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

The Parable of the Sower is one of the best-known of all Jesus' stories. It's graphic and powerful, with a simple message: some people will respond to the word of God, but others will not, because they are hard, shallow, or easily tempted.

It explains a lot about why proclaiming the gospel can be so hard and why we can see so few rewards.

It also raises a good number of questions:

Why are some people 'good soil' – is it their upbringing, or something built in to their natures?

After a quick reading, the parable might be thought of as being rather bleak: people just are what they are, and if they happen to be the kind of person that isn't interested in religion, that's just too bad.

There may be a practical point here about where Christians might direct their evangelistic resources – some audiences are 'warmer' towards faith than others.

But we mustn't forget a broader point: **God never gives up on anyone.**

One of the very first images we have of God is that he is a gardener. Gardeners cultivate the soil to make it more receptive to the seed and more fertile. Hard, unsympathetic, ground can be softened; shallow soil can be enriched; weeds can be pulled out.

We're called to be co-workers with God in His garden. How can we work in our own culture to prepare the ground for his word?

Lord, show me where I can help to ease someone's burden or take away the cares that keep them from Christ. Show me, help me, and lead me to see how I can change a small part of the world to make it more receptive to your words of life. Amen

(This reflection is adapted from words by Mark Woods, Bible Society's Editor)

Closing Prayer

May there always be work for your hands to do.

May your purse always hold a coin or two.

May the sun always shine upon your window pane.

May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain.

May the hand of a friend always be near to you and

May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

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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