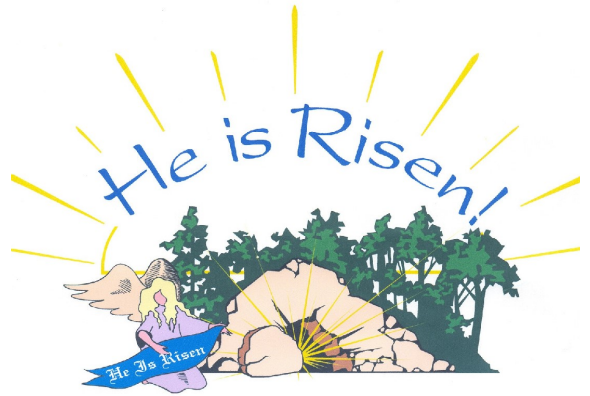


Spring Lane Baptist

Welcome to the April 2024 edition of
NEWS VIEWS & PRAYER



Edited Highlights from the Annual Church review 2023 (with help from AI)

- ⇒ The year began quietly, with people being a scarce commodity. Unfortunately, not many attended Church or other events.
- ⇒ Around Easter, we saw the first signs of life. A joint breakfast Palm Sunday service with St. Thomas was interesting, especially with Mike Keithley and his dog. The shorts were also quite good. We appreciated his message.
- ⇒ On April 4th, we opened the Church Centre for a café and presented a video called "FORSAKEN" on Good Friday.
- ⇒ Despite low attendance, we persevered with our monthly Breakfast/Communion services. Our heartfelt thanks go to Revd. Richard Alford and Gordon Trinder for their invaluable support.
- ⇒ The Wednesday Lunches continued, and the numbers have returned to pre-epidemic levels. Special thanks to Sue, Judith, June, and Caroline for their hard work.
- ⇒ We attended the service for Marc Catley's retirement. While it's sad to see him go, we wish him well in his retirement. (Marc, I still have some songs left; we must catch up before you finally leave!)
- ⇒ Archdeacon Jenny made it clear that in the future, it will be "our house, our rules" regarding worship. Unfortunately, there will be no flexibility between the Churches. It's a bit sad, as it has been good over the years. Nevertheless, I was happy to support June in ensuring the continuity of services during Marc's illness
- ⇒ St. Thomas has a super congregation of lovely, loyal people. They will always be welcome at the Baptist Church. We will continue to collaborate with St. Thomas's in the community. Many thanks to Judith and Sue for keeping the Church clean.
- ⇒ "It was a pleasure to lead the service at the Christmas Tree Lights, something I have done for some years now. We sang the carol 'Come and Join the Celebrations'! (A member of the band wrote the arrangement for me.) Giving 'Celebrations sweets' to the children was well appreciated. The turnout from the village was really good—plenty of families. I've never seen that many!
- ⇒ Some time ago, we agreed to use the 'Shirley Band' for the 'Carols by Candlelight' service. The service on this first occasion was outside the church. Future services have been held inside the church.
- ⇒ This year, I was happy to share the service with Revd Phelim O'Hare.
- ⇒ Thanks to John Glass for reviewing the accounts, which showed that we kept our heads above water.
- ⇒ We will restart our afternoon service in September as we set our hearts, thoughts, and prayers on a five-year plan for the future.

On balance, it was a good year.

Derrick Hancock.

Church Services at the Baptist Church:

Sunday 28th April 10.30am Communion Breakfast with Revd Richard Alford. Service 11am

Sunday 26th May Communion Breakfast with Gordon Trinder. Service 11am

Wednesday 20th March. Mid-day lunch (12.30pm)

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Faith Matters April 2024 (Easter)

Nearly 2000 years ago, the city of Jerusalem was hosting what was arguably its most important annual feast – the Passover. Simultaneously, the occupying power, in the form of governor Pontius Pilate, planned to execute three criminals. Two were guilty of robbery and the third, whose name was Barabbas, had committed insurrection and murder.

Religious enthusiasm had been building up during the course of the previous week and a rabbi by the name of Jesus was causing consternation amongst the official Jewish leaders. It was becoming more and more apparent to the ordinary people that this teacher was more than simply an itinerant rabbi. His teaching, actions, indeed his very life were like a searchlight penetrating into the souls of men and women; like a fire that threatened to burn up all the dross of religious hypocrisy. His radical approach, which showed things as they really are, was often more welcomed by those who recognised their own neediness and didn't have much to lose but was vehemently resisted by those who wanted to maintain the status quo. So it was, that the Jewish leaders used their clout to get Jesus put on trial as one who threatened the stability of the existing social order and might even cause rebellion against the Roman occupiers.

Now it had become the custom that at the time of Passover, the Roman governor would show clemency and release a condemned man. So determined were the religious leaders that they managed to get the governor to release Barabbas and replace him with Jesus.

The executions took place by crucifixion. The Bible tells us that one of those robbers, while hanging there, hurled insults at Jesus, 'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us.' The other robber was contrite and confessed that he was getting his just desserts. Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And Jesus blessed him with complete assurance.

We too may choose to scoff and turn away from Jesus. Alternatively, we can turn towards him and acknowledge where we are at, then give him our heart's trust. If we do the latter, we can anticipate assurance of God's love. Then, similarly to Barabbas, we'll go free from judgement as we discover that Jesus has suffered it in our place.

Stephen Richards
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Community Prayers

Week beginning 7th April
Pray for those who live in
Aylesbury Road

Week beginning 14th April
Pray for those who live in:
Belton Close

Week beginning 21st April
Pray for those who live in:
Blackberry Avenue

Week beginning 28th April
Pray for those who live in:
Blacksmiths Lane

Baptist Union Prayer Diary

This week we pray for the South Wales Baptist Association, which exists to encourage the building and development of healthy churches and to enable them to assist each other in mission in their community, in Wales and in the world.

Please pray for the Support Services Specialist Team as they seek to support churches and associations with financial, legal and pensions issues. There have recently been a number of staff changes within the Team – please pray for the new members of staff and for the whole Team as they adjust to new roles and responsibilities.

This week sees Earth Day on 22 April – a day to raise awareness of the importance of looking after our environment. Please pray for the Baptist Union Environment Network (BUEN) which exists to inspire and enable Baptists Together to recognise the goodness of God's creation and share in God's mission to care for it, seeking justice for both creation and people

Chaplaincy presents great opportunities to minister and bring God's love to a wide variety of people, whether they have a faith or not. Chaplains take the good news of Jesus outside the church's walls to embody it in the public arena. Please pray for all those called to a ministry of chaplaincy.



Taken from World in prayer April 2024

God of us all,
Love lives again.
Love triumphs over the hate, pain, and death.

You were there at the very beginning of time and gave us the beauty of this world: gorgeous flowers and trees, oceans, and mountains, galaxies we will never comprehend.

Yet, you still knew we needed your love.

You gave us everything and yet you also gave your beloved son Jesus.

Death, where is your sting? We glorify you, as you give us life through the power of your love.

As we come to you this blessed Holy Week, remind us, God – as we sit at table with you, as we journey to the cross – remind us that you know our fears, our pain, our hurt, and you cover our wounds with the healing power of your love.

We witness again, the Marys going to the tomb to grieve, to care for the body of Jesus, to do what we all do when we have lost someone we love.

But God, you also turn the world upside down. Love lives again. Love has come again. You have rolled away the stone again for each of us, and you call us to sit at Jesus' feet as the women did that very first seemingly ordinary morning.

God, reveal your love in our hurting, pained world.

* We pray for the 147 victims of the recent terrorist attack at a concert hall in Moscow, Russia. As we witness this tragic event, one of the deadliest in history, highlighting the fragility of innocent lives everywhere, may the departed rest in peace, and may their families and the injured find solace in God's love.

* We pray for the victims of the deadly bridge collapse in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S., where at least six people lost their lives. We pray for those left behind, and give thanks for the first responders who so quickly blocked the bridge to allow for fewer lives lost.

* We lift up the tensions between the U.S. and Israeli governments. May you ease the tensions and help resolutions to be made to stop the extreme loss of Palestinian life, and Israeli hostage lives, in Gaza. We pray that all involved in this conflict may know themselves to be your beloved children. We long for an end to the massive pain inflicted in response to years, decades, centuries of massive pain, mutual fears and threats.

* As the extreme hunger crisis continues, and conflict and disease continue to grip Sudan, we pray for your presence in the face of unknown conditions for your beloved children.

God of love, may you continually live in our lives as we overcome the pain in our own lives. May your love always win in every place of our lives, just as love won over death so long ago on Easter Day.

Amen.

EASTER



Universe
and every universe beyond,
spin and blaze,
whirl and dance,
leap and laugh
as never before.
It's happened.
It's new.
It's here.
The liberation.
The victory.
The new creation.
Christ has smashed death.
He has liberated the world.
He has freed the universe.
You and I
and everything
are free again,
new again,
alive again.
Let's have a festival
and follow him across the skies,
through the flames of heaven
and back down every street in town
There, let's have him come
to liberate our city,
clean up the mess
and start all over again.
You conquered.
Keep on fighting through us.
You arose.
Keep on rising in us.
You celebrated.
Keep on celebrating with us.
You happen.
You are new.
You are here.

From Payers and Shout By: Norman C. Habel
Illustration by: Patrick Mason

