

Spring Lane Baptist



Welcome to the November edition of NEWS VIEWS & PRAYER

It's easy to say sorry to Marc now that he will be leaving, especially as I've not been round to see him for ages. It's also disappointing from my personal point of view that we didn't get to finish the music to all my songs. I enjoyed working with Marc, We both have a dry sense of humour, which doesn't always go down well, but like me he wanted to enhance the Kingdom of God in Hockley Heath and would see opportunities others would miss.

People still remember 'Bumps and Babies 'with gratitude, and linked with messy church was an important part of outreach to the community. He would also have liked to grow a family church service at St.

Thomas, and saw the café in the park as a possible avenue for evangelism

My most grateful thanks are for the times we had lunch together at a local pub and found some time for prayer. It was good to be able to talk through difficulties relating to Church Life in Hockley Heath and for support through some of my concerns relating to ministry. This was something I never received from the Heart of England Baptist Association (HEBA).

Marc, I pray that you will find some solace in your retirement, and that your faith in your Saviour is never diminished. With our Prayers from myself and Spring Lane Baptist Church..

The future for us at the Baptist Church in Hockley Heath is looking brighter and closer. We have signed Partnership documents with New Life (Kings Heath) Baptist Church, and Lawrence and Sarah will be in Birmingham by the end of November. Praise God. More information later.

David Barber has worked tirelessly at the administration, to get us this far, and we will remember him this week as he goes into hospital for a 'hip replacement' We will also remember 'New Life' as they continue in his absence for at least 4 weeks.

As for us, we will continue with two afternoon services until December and they will be **Afternoon Tea & Worship**. The first Bring and Share was extremely disappointing; but those of us who were there we did enjoy some cheese and biscuits and a peculiar curry, and an interesting time of discussion and prayer.

I have included some information about Macau Baptist Church on the back page, so you can celebrate their 120th anniversary and at the same time remember our 146 year heritage as:

(Christ Church, Umberslade) (see our website www.hockleyheathbaptist.co.uk/history)

Derrick Hancock

Sunday November 3rd	3.30pm	Afternoon Tea & Service	Baptist Church
Sunday November 17th	3.30pm	Afternoon Tea & Service	Baptist Church
Wednesday November 20th	12.30pm	Wednesday Lunch	Baptist Church
Saturday November 30th	4.00pm	Christmas Lights	Village Xmas Tree
Saturday November 30th	4.30pm	Christmas Event	Memorial Hall
Sunday December 1st	4.00pm	Christmas bring and Share Poems & Carols	Baptist Church
Wednesday December 18th	12.30pm	Xmas Buffet	Baptist Church
Sunday December 22nd	6.00pm	Candlelit Christmas Service	St. Thomas Church

Faith matters

When it comes to accessing published material, blind people have never had it so good - I know: I'm blind. This is especially so for those who are tech-savvy but even those of us who are less digitally tuned-in are better catered for than in earlier decades. When putting out written information, many organisations and publishers offer a choice of 'accessible formats' to meet the individual's need. These are braille, large print and audio.

When we stop to consider, we all know that good visual perception is a wonderful thing and ought to be treasured whilst we have it. Picking up on this, Jesus applies it to our inner (spiritual) lives, by warning that there are none as blind as those who think they can see when in fact they can't! He says that, by nature, men and women are born spiritually blind, unable to see the true God. As with physically blind people, the term 'blind' doesn't necessarily mean no sight whatsoever, but severely incomplete, distorted or very inadequate vision.

When it comes to seeing God, people look for 'accessible formats'. These may include seeing God in creation, in religion, in a specific denomination or in a particular teaching.

I have no doubt that creation portrays the wisdom and power of God, and that a few religions show something of the holiness or 'otherness' of God. Denominations and specific teachings can emphasise a particular aspect about God which can be helpful (though there is the danger of developing tunnel vision here). However, none of these 'accessible formats' are adequate in themselves for us to see the true God as he desires us to see him. So God sent Jesus to introduce us to himself.

Jesus Christ stands at the centre of history and declares himself to be our sole access to the true God. "I am the gate; the way; the truth. I and the Father are one. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus was not a syncretist; he did not teach that alternative religions were simply complementary ways of meeting God. He said that concerning God there is for us only one 'accessible format' and that he is it. This is the challenge that Jesus faces us with: to believe him or not.

Stephen Richards
www.solidrocknews.co.uk

Community Prayers

Week beginning 3rd November

Pray for those who live in:

Blacksmiths Lane

Week beginning 10th November

Pray for those who live in:

Field Way

Week beginning 17th November

Pray for those who live in:

Hazel Grove

Week beginning 24th November

Pray for those who live in:

Lindhurst Drive

Baptist Union Prayer Diary

For nearly 75 years, sisters in Christ have united in prayer for the Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer. The Day is marked annually on the first Monday in November, and all are invited to unite in prayer, hosted by Baptist World Alliance Women. The 2024 theme is "Purposeful Life" drawn from Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

On Remembrance Sunday, and at the beginning of Interfaith Week, we unite across faiths, cultures and backgrounds to remember together the service of people of all faiths and none, and to think about peace. We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world wars and conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away. We commit ourselves to work for reconciliation between the nations, that all people

A prayer on Safeguarding Sunday:

Dear God, Help us to be a church that: Loves, welcomes, protects. Listens, learns, serves.

Repents, restores, transforms. Values, cares, believes.

God of Justice and compassion, hear our prayer. Help us, heal us, guide us, we pray.

In Jesus name. Amen

Prayer taken from materials produced by thirtyone:eight for Safeguarding

Please pray for the Heart of England Baptist Association as they endeavour to stimulate and assist the region's Baptist churches for their God-given task of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ; and nurture values of companionship, generosity,

World in Prayer

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will. — Romans 12:2

O Lord, renew our minds and with that clarity set us toward your perfect will.

The news cycle of manmade events is of this world. War's horror and calamity seems omnipresent and worsening. We hear the alarming news that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has sent troops to Russia. These patterns are old ways of being. At the same time, we receive mundane news in the form of magazine inserts with advertisements for the holidays weeks and months away. We are pressed to focus on Cyber Days and Black Fridays. Forgive us our attachment to things and ways of being, the pattern of this world that harms and hurts, that destroys and annihilates, that deadens the mind, bringing misery and despair. God, help us to discern, to wake up and to seek your will.

Help us to know your perfect and pleasing way. We find it so easy to distance ourselves from one another, from the land, the waters once abundant, pure and nourishing ... from the natural cycle of life. During this week's prayers a full moon shines and is now waning. The Algonquin and Cree tribes call it the Travel Moon. Animals migrate and the geese overhead know the season and do not seem to rush. Also known as the Dying Grass, Sanguine, and Blood Moon, this is the time when native peoples acknowledge the fields as they are cleared for animals to glean and be hunted.

We are tested and asked to discern as the news this week calls us to bear witness. We read and see images from central Gaza, Palestine of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital parking lot in flames. A strike from Israel has caused the burning of huts and tents once sheltering displaced civilians. We mourn for the dead; a youth whose dreams to be a doctor were snuffed out. Entire lineages of families are no longer. Lord have mercy. Transform our hearts.

We mourn as the Hariri hospital, Beirut's main government hospital in Lebanon reports the rising death toll from four to thirteen killed and 57 injured from an airstrike out of Israel meant for a Hezbollah target. Christ have mercy.

We pray for the people of Cuba as they endure a second national power outage in one week due to Hurricane Oscar on their eastern shore. Sustain them through the disaster, and fortify the hospitals and injured and those who give all manner of care. We pray for those impacted by hurricanes Helene and Milton as the long recovery phase of cleanup and reconstruction and the accounting of the losses may exhaust and drain. Keep disaster relief in our minds, renew our benevolent nature.

We hear that Masih Alinejad, a human-rights activist speaking out against Iran's repression of women, was saved from assassination. Members of an Eastern European criminal organization with ties to Iran have been charged. We pray for and raise up those voices calling for justice. Renew our courage to speak out.

We rest in your creation. The pattern of the seasons endures. This is the Dakota nation's Drying Rice Moon to prepare for winter. Also, it is the Falling Leaves Moon of the Anishinaabe tribe, the Freezing Moon time of the Ojibwe, and the Haida's Ice Moon referring to the increasingly cold temperatures.

As we set these prayers before you Creator. Clear our minds. Help us to see a way past the fog of war. Renew our ability to take action in the midst of the smoke and ash of climate disruption. Your Good News from Paul to the Romans is our transforming good news today two thousand years later. May we be eager and joyous in refreshed minds. May we discern with compassionate hearts what renews and restores. Give us eyes to see the pattern of this world. Strengthen our faith as Paul enjoins us to: "... be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Amen.

MESSAGE FROM MACAU

Hello from Macau. Yep, we are still here waiting on the UK Visa process. We did receive a bit of news last week indicating the process is moving forward, albeit slowly. We remain thankful for each day in Macau and trust the Lord knows the best timing for all these matters to be resolved.

One blessing of this season of waiting is being in Macau for the 120th Anniversary celebration of Macau Baptist Church. Around 1904, Baptist missionaries traveled from Georgia, USA to Macau. Through many difficulties and trials the Lord used them to establish the first Baptist church, actually the first Protestant church, in Macau. The church began with the baptism of five locals in 1904, moved into the current building in 1927, and continues to represent Jesus through a variety of ministries and meetings. We have been more or less a part of this work since 1996.

This past Sunday night, over 240 church members gathered together for a banquet to celebrate the many years of blessing the Lord has given us as a church. Young people and children presented a short dramatization of key historical events in the life of our church. What a joy to see the next generations rejoicing in the record of the Lord's blessings and embrace a view to the future. Gathered around the tables were friends old and new remembering and rehearsing stories from the years gone by.

Recently we were asked how much of an impact we thought missionaries had made in Macau. The honest answer is, some. The Lord Jesus is the one who has been at work here for many more years than the past 120. Still, there are many people who have experienced better lives because of those who left home and hearth to come here and be the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus. We count ourselves blessed because we have been a witness to what Jesus has done, and continues to do here in Macau. **Pray with us as we give thanks for the past and hope for a future seeing even more blessings to come to Macau through Jesus' life in Macau Baptist Church.**

If you want to know more about the faithful people who were involved in establishing Macau Baptist Church, you can read about their lives and work in the book ["Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water: The Baptist Church Takes Root in Macao"](#).

