



Park Life

May/June 2020

Welcome!

As I write the sun is shining and the signs are that summer is on the way. Of course it's shaping up to be a very different summer to what we're used to, but I cannot help but feel hopeful when the clouds part and we are soaked in the brilliant warmth of our nearest star.

Retaining hope is perhaps more important now than ever before. As the weeks of lockdown turn into months, the separation from loved ones, disruption to our jobs and lack of communal worship together is now taking its toll. Many are finding their reserves of energy (and patience) are wearing thin, and when this happens it is easy to become trapped by our own present circumstances.

Hope is what helps us to move beyond; to escape our bubbles and imagine a different future. However, unlike the kind of 'hope' that someone who buys a lottery ticket might have, or one who simply wishes things were different, the Christian hope is based on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ. This hope is fuelled by the reality of his resurrection and looks ahead to the promise Jesus has made to return and to right the wrongs of our broken world.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:3, Paul commends the church, saying: *"We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus."*

To hope is also to endure through difficult times. Hope recognises our present circumstances, but dares to look beyond them, because in Jesus we have been given a glimpse of the future - and it is a future characterised by the joy of being in God's presence and an overwhelming sense of God's love for each one of us.

To dare to believe this is to demonstrate faith (Hebrews 11:1), and so I pray as we endure these difficult times, that we would each take hope that life will not remain this way. Have faith, for change is coming!

To borrow the words of an old hymn; as you lean upon our Lord ever more, may He give you strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Great is His faithfulness!

Peter

NOTE: There are no services currently at church due to Covid-19

People for Prayer

There are lots of people and situations to be praying into during this difficult time. Here are a few prayer points from our own church family:

- **Martin Frisby** has an operation scheduled to remove the cancerous spots on his liver for 2nd June at Addenbrookes Hospital. After his recovery he will undergo a second operation on his bowel.
- **Lessie Keenan & her mum, Pam** As Lessie cares for Pam during these final weeks of her life, please pray for peace and give thanks for the sense of assurance that comes from Pam's renewed sense of faith. Pray for Rachael and Bella as they come to terms with what is happening.
- **Brian Robinson** who is struggling with what seem to be severe effects of M.E. Pray for a lifting of these symptoms and a renewal of energy for Brian.
- **June Day** following the recent death of Robin.
- **Pat Hillier's neighbour, Tony** who is questioning the point of living. Pray for Pat as she ministers to him and supports him.
- **For Park Playgroup** As it reopens to key worker children. Pray for safety and protection of children and staff and the prevention of any new outbreak of the virus.

NEW! Prayer Wall

We have been working on a new way of connecting with and praying for our friends and community, by developing an online Prayer Wall.

This will be a space on our website that anyone can go to and type in a prayer request, pray for others and respond to existing requests.

Thanks to Gary Saunders and his son, Mike, we are now in the final stages of development, so watch this space for the pilot launch in the next few weeks.

BMS Update

As one of our key mission partners, BMS can usually be found at the forefront of the response to crises around the world. The outbreak of Covid-19 is no different, and the following update was recently released to show what BMS are doing to respond to the virus:

- In Chad you've been helping to provide equipment for the hospital to continue safely operating and temperature screening for patients so any deemed to possibly have Covid-19 can go to the designated hospital
- In Sri Lanka you've been helping to provide emergency food to families
- In Nepal you've helped provide support for hospitals as they face a loss of income, to ensure they are able to respond to Covid-19 and continue providing health care. You've also helped provide 100 essential food and hygiene parcels to the those who have no income
- In Afghanistan you've helped to provide Mental Health Support for those most at risk
- In Mozambique you've helped provide soap and hand washing guidelines to 4644 families of children who attend pre-school education classes and the teachers. You've also helped provide over 16,000 masks for the central hospital in Maputo through a sewing project also helping to provide livelihoods for those who need it most
- In India you've helped to provide 4000 meals a day in Delhi and 400 meals a day from Kolkata
- In Bangladesh you've been helping to provide food for 10 days and soap to 2,500 of the most vulnerable families

On Sunday 31st May (Pentecost) we will be joining with other churches to stand alongside BMS in prayer as part of 'Solidarity Sunday' - a day designed to remember the needs of our world, mindful of the hope that the Holy Spirit brings.

What Next?

As the government begins to alter the restrictions around lockdown and announce plans to begin reopening businesses, shops and public spaces, you may be wondering where the church fits into all of this. Will we be able to reopen any time soon? Will we have to change the way we gather?

These are good questions but not ones we can give any firm answers to at this stage. The earliest date that the government has said places of worship could reopen is 4th July, but there are a number of caveats. This would depend on the rate of infection dropping even further, and may still come with restrictions around social distancing etc.

We began to discuss this as a Leadership Team at our last meeting by considering what requirements we would want to see met before resuming our services, given the nature of our building and demographics of our congregation. While timescales and specifics are impossible at this stage, a number of points were raised, such as:

- Whether services are feasible while the two metre rule remains?
- Is there scope to use St. George's Park for outdoor services?
- Could we begin by meeting in smaller groups as part of a staggered return (and how might Connect Groups help with this)?

We would like to further this conversation by consulting with the church members at a Church Meeting via Zoom on **Wednesday 17th June 2020, 7.30pm** (link and details below).

Part of this conversation will also include reflecting upon some wider questions, including:

- What has been most challenging during this time and what has been releasing?

- What have we let go of that has been a blessing?
- What lessons have we learned about church that we need to take forward into the future?
- And, ultimately, what is God saying to us now?

For those without a webcam or smart phone, it is possible to use audio-only on Zoom using an ordinary telephone. Please contact Peter if you'd like to do this and he will guide you through what to do.

The link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88146335095?pwd=OENDZWdURjNsdXhoUmhtMW0zRndrZz09>

Meeting ID: **881 4633 5095**

Password: **ParkMember**

EBA Prayer Week

The Eastern Baptist Association are organising a week of prayer for the run up to Pentecost (26th-30th May), having sensed that this may be a good time to draw together as Baptist churches across the region.

They are inviting all churches to participate and will be making resources available on their YouTube Channel, including family activities.

Each day has been assigned a focus for prayer:

Tuesday - Focus to pray in our homes, praying for children, families and those on their own.

Wednesday - Focus on our immediate community - taking a virtual or real prayer walk, what do we see, how can we pray for God's Kingdom to come?

Thursday - Pray for our frontline workers.

Friday - Pray for the vulnerable. For those with COVID-19 and those who have lost loved ones.

Saturday - Focus to pray for God's Spirit to break out, in our churches, in our communities, in our nation and across the world.



WHO CARES?

Everybody hurts but not everybody has hope. *WHO CARES?* is a nationwide initiative where churches are working together to listen to the needs of local people and offer compassion and hope.

Following the vision evening last month, there are some planned training dates to equip churches to participate in this mission.

We are really excited to be part of this national initiative and our East Coast Training Day equips you with the right tools to deliver this with us across the East Coast. The training has been condensed to a morning on either Friday 10th or Saturday 11th July via Zoom and the details are below:

IMPORTANT:

Please indicate in your booking which of the following seminars you would like to attend:

Seminar 1: Preaching on the main 'hurts'

Rob Tervet shall share on how to create and to deliver a short preaching series linked to the main hurts identified in your community. Different creative ideas on how to advertise and deliver this series of talks will be explored.

Seminar 2: Analysing and Inputting Survey data

Lorna Bradley will be explaining how to use the online data input tool, how to categorise the 'hurts' and analyse the results.

Seminar 3: Who Cares? In schools

Nick Blanch who works for Youth for Christ, will be sharing about how he has used Who Cares? In schools and youth groups. Nick developed a program linked directly to the Who Cares? question, and he will be sharing more about how your church can use this.

Seminar 4: Top tips on running Who Cares? for the local church

Paige Marrett will be sharing how she has been working with Christ Community Church Attleborough, using Who Cares? as an ongoing rhythm for mission in the local church. She will be giving her top tips for how your church can use Who Cares? regularly, through the groups and activities, your church currently run.

Zoom Login Details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88517821331?pwd=UFdHWFE3K0JadjNEaXgzYjV5M0tTZz09>

Meeting ID: 885 1782 1331

Password: 510472

Have any questions? Please email whocareseastcoast@btinternet.com

