

PERSONAL & CHURCH RENEWAL

Reaching out to God for a deeper awareness of his life in us

“Revival is a work of God by his Spirit through his word bringing the spiritually dead to living faith in Christ and renewing the inner life of Christians who have grown slack or sleepy. *In revival God makes old things new, giving new power... and new spiritual awareness to those whose hearts have grown cold, blind or hard.* Revival thus animates or re-animates churches and Christian groups to make a spiritual and moral impact on communities”. (from J.I. Packer, ‘Among God’s Giants’)

Reflect on this passage and pray:

for your own spiritual revival

for any you know who “have grown slack or sleepy”

*for revived “spiritual power and spiritual awareness” for your friends at TBC
for a revival that “animates” us to make a difference in our everyday lives.*

SALVATION

Praying for those we long to see come to faith

Lent 2017 runs from March 1st to April 13th, essentially covering six weeks. It is a season in the traditional Christian calendar of self-denial, reflection and recommitment in the lead up to Easter. Typically the fast of Lent includes abstaining from certain food or drink, but how about this year, choosing to give up *the fear of sharing Jesus*?! **Here’s a challenge for you to consider. How about praying for the opportunity to share your faith in some appropriate way in each of the six weeks of Lent: one share a week for six weeks?**

This could mean, for example,

offering someone a Gospel or Christian leaflet (there’s stocks of both at the church)

inviting someone to a service or event at TBC (invitations will be being printed for Easter services)

sharing something of your own story of knowing Jesus with someone.

offering to pray *with* (not just *for*) someone.

If you’re up for the Lent Challenge, ask your small group or a friend to pray for you and let them know how it’s going.

HEALING

Seeking God’s healing and wholeness for those with health problems

Pray for . . . All those known to us, in our fellowship, our neighbourhood and in our families, who are troubled by physical or mental illness

Pray for . . . Those in our community suffering financial hardship and insecurity

Pray for . . . All those known to us who have recently been bereaved.

following the way of Jesus

*loving God, one another
and the world*



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IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT CHOCOLATE

In this period of Lent many of us will be thinking about giving things up – chocolate, alcohol, television etc. Many of these things are good to give up, but to approach Lent with just this thought in mind misses the point a little. Lent calls us to remember the period of time that Jesus spent in the wilderness, in prayer and fasting whilst facing great temptation (Luke 4: 1-13). Therefore, during Lent let us draw on this rich picture of Christ praying and fasting and allow his example to inform us. Richard Foster in his famous book *Celebration of Discipline* highlights some of the key purposes of fasting.

The First statement that Jesus made about fasting dealt with the question of motivation (Matt 6: 16 – 18). Foster says how easy it is to take something like fasting and try to use it to get God to do what we want.

Fasting must forever centre on God. It must be God initiated and God ordained. Like the prophetess Anna we need to be ‘worshipping with fasting’ (Luke 2: 3-7).

More than any other discipline fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image Jesus Christ.

Fasting reminds us that we are sustained by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt 4: 4). Food does not sustain us God sustains us.

Fasting helps us keep our balance in life. How easily we begin to allow non-essential to take precedence in our lives.

If you have never practised prayer with fasting before I would encourage you to put your foot-in-the-water - begin in a small way. If you would like to know more, please do talk to us and we will help point you in the right direction. Perhaps a focus of your prayer and fasting could be for your friends and neighbours. Check out the salvation section of this leaflet.

Paul

FRONTLINE MISSION

This month: Those who have retired

Each month we pray for an individual and for all those who share the same area of life and work. Their Frontline!

I retired during my fifties from the Aerospace industry and so I have had plenty of time to adjust and reorder my life; at some point however, retirement means filling a lot more time with less spending money and diminishing physical and mental capabilities and that is a challenge.

Having studied Art when I left school, at retirement I suddenly had an opportunity to return to my first love – fiddling with paint all day! which I continue to do. I also give one-to-one painting tutorials and so my student and I get to know each other quite well, exposing what it is that moves us and what we are like as people.

I also volunteer in the church café and in Spiritual Direction, two different ways of helping people to see Jesus Christ with greater clarity, and revealing the real meaning of loving our neighbour to people who may never have been in a church before and never received ‘love’ unconditionally.

Then there is the frontline we all experience; meeting people in supermarket queues, walking around town, looking for a car parking space; all these opportunities to remain calm and offer a smile to people driven by strict timescales, difficult demands and countless frustrations. Old people are either the only ones who do this or the only ones who get away with it.

Please pray

- *for the health and wellbeing of older people because failing health affects every aspect of life, and for those on low incomes who lack the benefits of occupational pensions*
- *that there will be opportunities for you to engage more meaningfully with older people because as they age, their old friends become fewer and their last years can be a depressingly lonely time.*

Robie Hirstwood

connect

March

2017



CHILDREN & YOUTH

Helping to grow a faith that lasts

Please pray for

- SNG (year 10 to age 19) on their weekend away on 17th—19th March as they discover more about the Holy Spirit
- The new castle School Christian Union, that it will grow into a place that provides useful frontline support
- All those who work with TBC Children and Youth, that they will be refreshed, inspired and feel part of something special as God works within the lives of our young people



NATIONAL & GLOBAL ISSUES

Crying out to God for the deep needs of our nation and our world

Please pray for

- Countries where there is famine, particularly Nigeria, South Sudan, Yemen and Somalia
- The building of bridges rather than walls, in our communities, our national life, and internationally

WORLD MISSION *This Month: Jews for Jesus*

*Touching the world through praying for our wider mission links
and for the persecuted Church*

For some years TBC has supported this organisation, mainly through our links with Stephen Pacht, now directing the work of Jews for Jesus in Switzerland.

Jews for Jesus “exists to make the Messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people worldwide”

The following is a report from one of their missionaries in the UK, Ziggy Rogoff:

One of the conversations in our chatroom caught my attention. Shlomo [an alias] is a secular Jewish man living in Australia and came to chat ... Shlomo mentioned that he had read the New Testament.

“So, what did you learn from the eyewitness accounts about Jesus there?” I asked.

“As a cop for many years I learned never to trust eyewitness accounts alone”, he confessed.

“OK, then let me ask you, what to you make of Elie Wiesel’s eyewitness accounts of Auschwitz? Why do you believe Elie?”

“It still must depend on corroborating eyewitness testimonies with preferably evidence that does not depend on what people say” Shlomo insisted.

So I decided to challenge him: “If we burn every eyewitness account ... we will know nothing about Auschwitz, true? It all does depend on eyewitnesses! And when it come to Jesus, we have plenty of eyewitness testimonies. Why are you so opposed to taking Jesus seriously?” I said.

“I really don’t believe in a creator of the universe . . . getting incarnated as an itinerant Jewish preacher 2000 years ago” Shlomo admitted. “I’d need a lot more than a few ancient manuscripts. The claims Jesus is purported to have made don’t make any sense to me. I actually thought this was a spoof site but it turns out you’re for real”.

Since Shlomo’s interest continued, I offered to put him in touch with our missionaries in Sydney who can meet with him and help him discover the truth. **Please pray** that Shlomo’s interest does not wane and the Spirit does the convincing.

TBC MISSION

This month: Dad’s and Children’s mornings

Soaking our many outreach activities in prayer

From time to time, normally before Mother’s Day or Valentine’s Day or on another appropriate occasion, we have organised mornings for dads to bring their children to an activity-based event at the church building. These are held on a Saturday morning: we have the soft play equipment out, the bouncy castle, some craft activities and most importantly bacon rolls and a nice cup of tea.

These have proved to be popular and successful. The main aim is to provide a fun morning for the dads and their children but also to build friendship with them. Many of these men are the partners of the women who come to the coffee shop during the week.

Please pray

- For the Dad’s & Children’s morning coming up on 18th of March
- Pray that it will be well attended.
- That good conversations will spring up between the church men and the chaps who come along.
- For the growth of an ongoing work to develop and continue with non-church men.

LOCAL & UK MISSION *This month: Changing Tunes*

Soaking our many outreach activities in prayer

Changing Tunes is a voluntary-funded registered charity that uses music teaching, rehearsal, recording and performance to aid the rehabilitation of prisoners and ex-prisoners, working in a number of prisons in the south of England, including those close to us at Eastwood Park and Leyhill.

Music is a valuable resource to help reduce re-offending—the therapeutic effects are widely known and participation in musical activities also fosters good relationships and aids personal development.

Sessions are facilitated by a Musician-in-Residence who can play at least two instruments to a high standard and who is also able to give tuition in other instruments. A number of players will record and perform together, and give concerts within the prison.

After release the charity will continue its work with those who wish it: some Changing Tunes musicians visited TBC in July 2015 for one of the Sunday Night Live events.

Please pray:

- That donors will continue to support this work, by giving and by prayer
- For all those in prison that they may benefit from these activities and help them not to re-offend; and for all those who give their time to assist them