earlsfield baptist church

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www.earlsfieldbaptist.org.uk

Thursday 28th January 2021

To all members of the congregation of Earlsfield Baptist Church

Dear Friends

> "For I am certain that nothing can separate us from His love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below — there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord."
> Romans 8 v38-39

These words give us such reassurance, don't they? As Christians, we are certain of God's love but, as humans, we do, of course, experience so many different emotions. In these difficult times, we worry, we grieve, we are lonely, we may feel resentful, we feel trapped on a treadmill which we can't get off – every day seems just like the last and we can't make plans for the days ahead.

At our Deacons' meeting last night, we prayed for all members of our congregation in all their different circumstances and, at the end of our prayers, Doreen asked the Lord to give us 'hope' – it's a small word isn't it? There are many passages in the Bible about hope:

> "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40 v 31

> "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
> Jeremiah 29 v11

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So, as we are told to ‘stay at home’, how can we share this hope with others, particularly when we know they are feeling low and despondent? Perhaps we ourselves are feeling this way – what can we do?

We have now held three services by Zoom – it is a brilliant way to join together to worship our Lord and to see each other’s faces or hear each other’s voices. It has been lovely having the children joining in too.

Amie Buhari from The Hebe Foundation led our service last week and will be leading again on Sunday 31st January with the second part of her message “Endure the battle, Enjoy the blessing”.

Rev Richard Humphrey from St Mary’s Church, Bitton (near Bristol), will be leading our service on Sunday 7th February – Richard and his wife, Christine, are friends of John and myself and have been to Earlsfield Baptist on several occasions – I am sure you’ll recognise them when you see them!

Members of our own congregation and other guest speakers will lead future services so please continue to ‘attend’ whenever you are able (details on how to join in are later in this newsletter).

If you would like to take part in any services by doing a reading, leading our prayers or bringing a message, please let me know.

You might think this to be a daunting challenge but remember some of the first disciples were fishermen and one was a tax collector – I’m not sure what jobs the others had but, regardless of their experience, we read in Mark 6 v 7-13 that “Jesus called the twelve disciples together and sent them out two by two. He gave them authority over the evil spirits and ordered them, “Don't take anything with you on the trip except a walking stick – no bread, no beggar's bag, no money in your pockets. Wear sandals, but don't carry an extra shirt.” He also told them, “Wherever you are welcomed, stay in the same house until you leave that place. If you come to a town where people do not welcome you or will not listen to you, leave it and shake the dust off your feet. That will be a warning to them!” So they went out and preached that people should turn away from their sins. They drove out many demons and rubbed olive oil on many sick people and healed them.”

Later, in Luke 10, we read "After this the Lord chose another seventy-two men and sent them out two by two, to go ahead of him to every town and place where he himself was about to go. He said to them, "There is a large harvest, but few workers to gather it in. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest. Go! I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Don't take a purse or a beggar's bag or shoes; don't stop to greet anyone on the road. Whenever you go into a house, first say, 'Peace be with this house.' If someone who is peace-loving lives there, let your greeting of peace remain on that person; if not, take back your greeting of peace. Stay in that same house, eating and drinking whatever they offer you, for workers should be given their pay. Don't move around from one house to another. Whenever you go into a town and are made welcome, eat what is set before you, heal the sick in that town, and say to the people there, 'The Kingdom of God has come near you.' But whenever you go into a town and are not welcomed, go out in the streets and say, 'Even the dust from your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. But remember that the Kingdom of God has come near you!'

So, whether you are speaking to a family member, a friend, a neighbour or someone in the street **or even if you offer to take part in a Zoom service or a service at EBC when we are allowed to physically get together again,** remember that YOU are one of Jesus's disciples – YOU have received His love and his gift of eternal life, His gift of hope. As Christians, we each have a mission, a responsibility, to share Jesus's Love with everyone we meet. Not everyone will be willing to listen to you but perhaps they will. As Paul said, "For I am certain that nothing can separate us from His love" – what right have we got to keep this to ourselves? Are you ready for the challenge?

> "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15 v13

In Christian Love,

Julie

Mission Focus for February: Earlsfield Food Bank
Communion service: Sunday, 21st February 2021 at 11.00 am
Please have a biscuit or small piece of bread and a small drink ready.
If you are able, please keep your Communion gift until we can meet again.

NEWS

Church Services

Please note that, whilst we remain in Tier 4, our church will be closed and St Andrew's Church will also be closed. As mentioned earlier, **we will continue to hold weekly services by Zoom on Sundays at 11.00 am**. It is helpful to download the free Zoom app onto your laptop or device so that you can access the service easily. **Those without access to the internet** can still join the services by phone – they just can't see the smiling faces of others attending!

We encourage everyone is 'come along' to these weekly services – the log-in details remain the same and a reminder will be sent by email each week. Log-in details are set out below:

- **Join Zoom Meeting from computer or device**
  - https://zoom.us/j/98894345143?pwd=eUdkNWJFakl2Q044V1JBZEdrMFh1dz09
  - Meeting ID: 988 9434 5143
  - Passcode: 769098

- **Dial in using mobile phone**
  - +442034815237,,98894345143#,,,,*769098# United Kingdom
  - +442034815240,,98894345143#,,,,*769098# United Kingdom

- **Dial in from landline phone** – standard rates apply
  - 020 8080 6591 or 020 8080 6592
    - After dialling in, you will be requested for the following:
      - Meeting number: 988 9434 5143 (plus '#')
      - Participant number: this can be bypassed with '#'
      - Passcode: 769098 (plus '#')

News of the Fellowship

The funeral service for **Joyce Blackman** was held on Monday, 25th January but many were able to 'attend' by a website link. Joyce's family are hoping to obtain a recording of the service that can be shared with those who were unable to log in – more details will follow when they are available.

Our Moderator, Rev Jim Sutton, will be conducting the funeral service for **Doreen Croucher** on Thursday, 11th February at 11.45 am. This will be held at Lambeth Crematorium, Blackshaw Road. Due to travelling constraints, a small number of Doreen's cousins will be attending. If you would also like to attend, please let Julie know (07505 041873).

There are a number of our own congregation who have been poorly with the virus and are coping with the after-effects as they walk the slow road to recovery. Others have suffered the loss of family members or close friends.

Some of our congregation have had to continue to go out to work throughout the past difficult year doing their own jobs and covering for colleagues who have to self-isolate. Others are working from home doing longer hours than usual and dealing with home schooling and the uncertainty of when schools and colleges will reopen.

Please keep all these people in your prayers.

Study notes

Two sets of study notes are attached continuing our series of "**Heroes and Heroines of the New Testament"**. Our thanks to David for providing these

PRAYERS

Renewed call to persevere in prayer across Baptist churches in the UK

As Covid-19 threatens to overwhelm our health service and continues to inflict pain and loss, we stand together with many others and renew our commitment to sustained prayer. You may like to join virtually with friends to pray or you might like to spend time in solitude praying for our nation at this time of crisis.

Here are some pointers to help you as you pray. These have been written by a senior A&E nurse in a large teaching hospital:

- Pray for all the NHS staff for their own safety, energy and peace in dealing with each and every patient.

- Pray for those in hospital leadership, for wisdom and for good decisions to give the best outcomes for patients.
- Pray for patients; for healing, for peace and ultimately to fight this disease and get home and pray for their relatives who feel helpless.
- Pray for the vaccine, that it will and is working against this latest strain of Covid-19.
- Pray for a reprieve and an end to Covid-19.
- You may know people who are currently working in the NHS in your area or someone who is working in a healthcare setting, please let them know you are praying for them and ask them how you can pray specifically.

We continue to ask you to stop for a short time at 5.00 pm on Sundays to pray for yourself, your loved ones and your church family.

- Please to pray for
    - all members of our congregation,
    - our local community,
    - our country
    - members of God's family around the world
    - people being persecuted for their faith
    - people living on the streets

<u>Offering Envelopes</u>

We are very grateful to all who continue to give their offerings by standing order or bank transfer. Others have chosen to deposit cheques when they visit the bank. If you would like to receive the weekly offering envelopes, please let me know.

Account name: Earlsfield Baptist Church

Sort code: 20-90-69

Account number: 30345784