

# Brooklands Church of the Nazarene

23 May 2021

Issue 61

## Pandemic Times

### Friends

*"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below." (Acts 2:17-19)*

So states the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, quoting the Old Testament Joel and declaring that a new day had dawned among the people of God. God had poured out his Spirit in a new way which birthed a new movement—a movement which spread throughout the city, region and, just as Jesus promised, even to the very ends of the earth. It's a movement which has lasted the test of time and as such we gather here today as a part of said movement - the Church! Today is our birthday! Happy Birthday!

You'll have heard us mention that we wanted to do something special to mark Pentecost. We are hoping that following this morning's service, at 12 noon, we will gather outdoors on the grounds of the church to sing and pray together. I know how many of us have longed for the opportunity to sing together again! Now, I use the word 'hope' because we'll want to keep an eye on the good old Manchester weather. As such, we will make a final decision on whether to go ahead on Sunday morning and this will be announced as part of the morning service - so be sure to tune in if you plan on joining us.

As we continue to navigate restrictions and find ways to safely meet together throughout the week I'm pleased to announce that Tim and Alison Ingram are running 'afternoon tea' for groups of six on some Tuesday's in the upcoming weeks. As numbers are so restricted it's important that you let Tim and Alison know that you would like to attend this and they will assign you a date. They can be contacted on 07773 317212.

Thank you for your giving to the India Covid Crisis appeal. We will be sending off our contributions as a church this week and I'll have a report as to how much we have managed to collect for this next week.

See inside also important information for those who continue to want to be with us in person on Sundays. We are so grateful to the whole team who are able to make this both possible and safe for us.

Peace,

Mick

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## Prayer Page

### India

We continue to pray for the situation in India, where the Church of the Nazarene continues to work on the front line, caring for those with Covid-19.

- ◆ Pray for strength and courage for our brothers and sisters in India. Remember those in the marginalised communities, that they might claim and receive the support they are entitled to.
- ◆ Pray for the protection of doctors, nurses, carers and other healthcare workers who risk their lives each day to heal and look after the sick .
- ◆ Pray that the church will be able to help the most vulnerable people in their communities.
- ◆ Pray for people across the world who rely on precarious work, that they may be sustained and not lose hope in times of scarcity.

### Church Family

David and Jean Walker would like to thank the church for all their support and prayers over the last few weeks following the death of David's mum, Marie. We continue to uphold them in the days and weeks that lie ahead.

We continue to pray for Jon, John and Ann, Claire, Isobel, Phil and Mick. Let us know if you have any prayer requests.

## Daily Reading and Prayer Guide for This Week

Date	Reading	Pray for
Monday 24th May	John 6:1–21	Josh, Molly, Miley-Rose, Jonah and Ezra Jenkinson
Tuesday 25th May	John 6:22–59	Katie and Scott Cameron
Wednesday 26th May	John 6:60–71	Isobel Cave and family
Thursday 27th May	John 7:1–24	Christine Clarke
Friday 28th May	John 7:25–52	Enid and James Collins and family
Saturday 29th May	Catch up	Luis, Miriam and family
Sunday 30th May	John 7:53–8:30	Heather Critchley



## Sermon Notes for 23 May 2021

A few years ago I was in holiday, I was in Spain. And I had an encounter with a local waiter at a restaurant who was having trouble with my English - well, maybe not so much my English but my Glaswegian accent. And as he struggled to take my order of cheeseburger and chips after 3 attempt I did what many of us do in that situation thinking it would help but it really doesn't - I started to shout louder! Eventually Debbie stepped in and pointed to the menu. I wonder how you are all doing with my Glaswegian accent? Believe it or not this is it toned all the way down!

We have mentioned before about the benefit of taking a step back and seeing the big picture of the Scriptures as a way of shedding new light on the truths of these incredible stories, haven't we? Pentecost is a stunning story in and of itself - God's power and presence is now available to everyone, everywhere - but there are clues in the grand narrative of the Bible that point us to to what else is happening here.

And one of our first clues to the truth of Pentecost is to be found way back in Genesis chapter 11 where you find a peculiar story of the people of the earth, who at that time had one language and common speech - no Glaswegian to be found! And with that, the people, we are told, build a tower to reach heaven in order that they might make a name for themselves - remember that! And this strange but selfish action has consequences. As a result of this, God scatters them and they are no longer one in language or common in speech. Their selfish actions resulted in division.

But here, in today's passage, the Pentecost narrative we find that one of the implications of God's spirit is this ability to communicate in such a way that all can understand, all can respond, all can be invited. And this, it seems, reverses the consequences of Babel. Selfishness results in division, seeking God and receiving his Spirit resulting in inclusion, invitation, communication of a message, the Gospel, which is a message that brings life and peace and community.

## Sermon notes continued...

And the fruit of all of that is this new community, the Church. The was born on that day - today is our birthday! The Spirit of God gives birth to the Church and the church is the vehicle for God's message of the Gospel to be carried outward and forward. Outward as it reaches those around us and continues to move outward but also forward as it is passed from generation to generation and as a result exists today, over two thousand years later! What a joy it is to be part of God's church!

But it is good for us take this annual reminder of our roots and the way in which the Spirit empowered the church back then and also empowers us today to continue this beautiful legacy. And the reason it's good is that if we are not careful we can sometimes make the mistake of those who sought to build the tower of Babel. Let's make for our selves a place of safety, a place of comfort, a place of security. And what we end up with is something which Lucy reminded me this week is what Tony Compolo described as 'country club church.' Where we sing our favourite songs, and sit in our favourite seats, next to our favourite people week in week out and think to ourselves, 'this is nice.' And it is nice, but it isn't the church.

Do you know what makes the church unique? What makes the church unique is that it is one of the very few movements that exist entirely for the benefit of those who are not yet a part of it. And the church is at it's best when it is Spirit empowered and seeking to exist purely for those who are not yet a part of it.

And so when you look back through the history of the church (the global church, that is) here's what you will see. I'll be really honest with you - you'll see some really ugly truths in there. There are times when the church has made some really bad mistakes - supporting war, corruption, abuse... it's hard to look at sometimes. But here is what else you'll see. You'll see a history where the church has lived into the truth of Gospel, that Jesus offers life, and in the power of the Spirit has built and run hospitals and schools and fed the hungry and clothed the naked and welcomed the stranger and the immigrant. All of this, I hope you can see is the work of Jesus continuing to serve the world through His church which is filled and led by the Holy Spirit.

The day of Pentecost presents us with a choice. A choice of two towers, if you like. The first is a tower built on selfishness and pride and seeks security and comfort and results only in division. The second is not so much a tower that reaches to heaven but instead a structure that is built because heaven has reached down and for those who respond to this invitation of grace and mercy and love all embodied in a saviour called Jesus we get to be a part of something that isn't necessarily tall but is as wide as the whole earth as God's love and power goes out from it.

That's what we celebrate today, the church! The church us how God has brought the message of Grace into our lives and that's how we continue to participate in his grace; by being a part of the community which offers that same grace to everyone around us.



## Community Car Clean

On Saturday 5 June, we are joining together with the other churches in Wythenshawe to bless local car drivers with a free car wash. Why not take your car along for a treat, to St. Luke's Church car park.

## Church Attendance

Well, we are almost at capacity for church attendance. Those that are attending this weekend, please bring your face covering, which should be worn when in church, unless you are talking from the pulpit. Please maintain social distancing whilst in church. In practice, this means remaining seated from when you enter to when you leave church. Don't forget we hope (weather permitting) to be able to exercise our vocal chords with a bit of singing, outside, at 12pm. So pray for sunshine, and bring your cardi just in case.

Let Mick, Mark or Lucy know if you would like to attend church on Sunday. We might need to start a rota to make sure everyone is included, and to keep you all safe.

## Brooklands Church of the Nazarene

Registered Charity No: 1159881

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Wendover Road,  
Manchester,  
M23 9FN

Pastor: Rev Mick Kane  
Email: [pastormickkane@gmail.com](mailto:pastormickkane@gmail.com)  
Mobile: 07545 622498

Web: [www.BrooklandsChurch.uk](http://www.BrooklandsChurch.uk)  
Email: [info@BrooklandsChurch.uk](mailto:info@BrooklandsChurch.uk)  
Correspondence: 5 Ashcroft Road, Lymm,  
Cheshire, WA13 9HX

At Brooklands, we are big enough to be part of a world-wide denomination, yet small enough to invite you to make our church your home. Please visit our website and contact us if you would like to get in touch or need more information on any of our events.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, we are holding weekly services on our YouTube channel, starting at 10:30 am each Sunday.

We look forward to welcoming you to our fellowship!

