

Brooklands Church of the Nazarene

13 June 2021

Issue 64

Pandemic Times

Friends

"In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth." - Psalm 19:4-6

I hope that you have been enjoying the sunshine this week. We are reminded by the psalmist of God's hand in creation in putting the sun in its place. Take a moment to think about that the next time you feel its glow on your skin - the light, warmth and life given off by it is by design! The psalmist uses this as reason to give praise to God. I know that some of you are enjoying time off from work and even getaways within the country. I pray that these times are blessed and filled with much rest and joy!

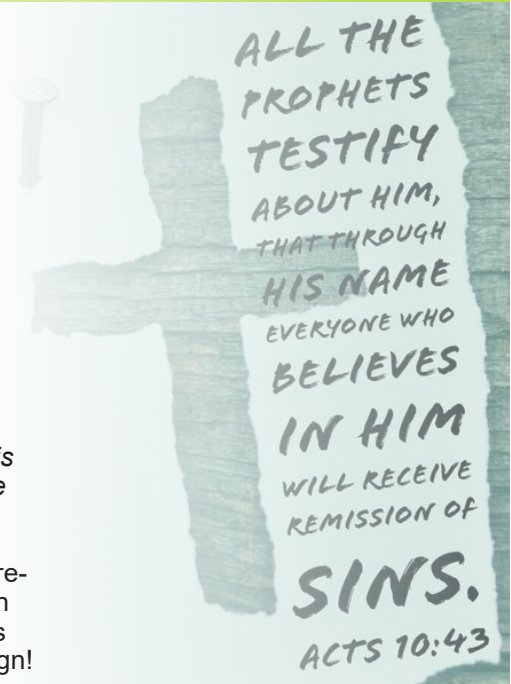
I announced excitedly last week that I've had conversations with individuals about both baptism and membership recently. Isn't it encouraging to know that God is continuing to move in us as a church even amidst these challenging past few months? I would imagine that we will look to bring new members into the church one Sunday in the next month or so. Baptism is a little more difficult with the restrictions, however I'm hopeful we will be able to celebrate this wonderful occasion in the life of some people at the other end of the Summer. Please reach out and speak to me if you are interested or have questions about church membership or baptism.

The Wythenshawe churches who worked together to bless the local community last week have distributed the prayer requests that came in around individual churches. We have been given 11 prayer requests and so I have included these in this week's prayer section. You'll see that some of the prayer requests are anonymous and general whereas some are specific with names given. Perhaps you can commit to praying for one of the requests that came in for the duration of this week.

Join me in praying for the work of the Spirit of God to move among us as we worship together this morning. Although we continue to broadcast our services, places remain available to those who want to be with us in-person on Sunday's. We are hoping to consider what crèche and Sunday school could look like in the upcoming weeks.

Peace,

Mick



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Prayer Page

We continue to remember the situation in India, and other countries that are struggling to overcome the devastating effects of the Coronavirus.

The prayer needs of the church are much as they were last week.

Prayer Requests from Wythenshawe Community Event

- * "The repose of the soul of my beautiful mother Patricia Bracken called to our Lord 9th November 2020." – **Anonymous**
- * "Pray for my own family and other families who may be suffering during this time." – **Leanne**
- * "To break free from a controlling partner" – **Anonymous**
- * "Pray for all of us, for the world - for all children of God." – **Anonymous**
- * "Pray for the Poor." – **Anonymous**
- * "Lord, you know my needs. I trust in you." – **Jill C**
- * "Stress, money, finding acceptance." – **Denzel**
- * "I pray that we can find common ground among our faiths, as opposed to focusing on what separates us. God loves all His creation!" – **Anonymous**
- * "For Health, Family and Finances." – **Anonymous**
- * "To help anybody that needs help or guidance." – **Gwyn**
- * "Please pray for my family." – **Valeria**

Daily Reading and Prayer Guide for This Week

Date	Reading	Pray for
Monday 14th June	John 15:18–16:15	Will Graham
Tuesday 15th June	John 16:16–33	Brenda Hambleton and family
Wednesday 16th June	John 17	Diane Hallam
Thursday 17th June	John 18:1–24	Nathaniel Herbert and family
Friday 18th June	John 18:25–19:16	Peter and Babs Hewitt
Saturday 19th June	Catch up	Anna Holme and family
Sunday 20th June	John 19:17–42	David and Chris Hoolihan and family



Holy Spirit Encounters (4)

Acts 10: 23-48

Pastor Mick Kane

I wonder if you can remember where you were on the day of some significant events. You know the ones I'm talking about. Events that when you become aware of them you understand that things will never be the same again afterwards. Events like 9/11 or the coming down of the Berlin Wall. Or when the UK Prime Minister gave the announcement for the first time that we were to stay indoors. Or when Scotland goalkeeper, David Marshall, saved the final penalty in a shootout against Serbia that secured Scotland's place at their first major national football tournament in 23 years!

Okay, maybe not so much that last one but you know the events I mean, right? Events that change the course of human history. Well, our passage today is one such event. Do you realise that? A major turning point not only in the Scriptural narrative but, I would argue, in human history. The day where it became clear that God's gift of salvation, and indeed the gift of his very self in the form of the Holy Spirit is no longer confined to one particular people group in one particular place. Because of the events of this passage we understand that God has made himself and his gift of salvation available to all people, everywhere! One commentator calls the events of this passage a game changer!

And it is a huge change. God's presence and saving power, which had up until this point it seems, in the eyes of many people at least, been reserved for the Israelite people of God - the Jews. And now, through a sequence of dreams, direct revelation from God and an encounter with Holy Spirit, it is clear that things have changed. The Gentiles (a biblical word for non-Jews) are now to be included in the Covenant community of God. Wow!

But let's reflect on this for a second - what exactly has changed? Has God changed his mind all of a sudden? We know this causes problems for us as we believe that we worship an unchangeable God. So I don't think God changed here. I think what is more likely is that people's understanding of who God is changed. I believe that what God has done here is shown us this: God is and al-

ways has been at work in all the world (and by the world I mean outside of the people of God), and what we need to do is open our eyes to see it more and have a willingness to join him in that work.

Peter had his eyes opened. Cornelius had his eyes opened. All the people who witnessed first hand these non Jewish people receiving the Holy Spirit and displaying the gifts of such also had their eyes opened to the fact that God can and does operate outside of our understanding at times - if only we would have eyes to see it!

And so this passage, I believe, gives us several things to reflect upon. Where is God at work in the world around us? Do we have eyes to see it? Do we have the courage to join him there? God can and does work through the Church, but when the church ceases to be at work in the world God will find other ways! I pray that we would have eyes to see where God is at work that we might join him there. Too often we make our plans and ask him to bless them. Let's join him in what he is already doing around us.

There's a lesson here about barriers too, I think. This was the day when barriers came down in the Church. Something that once limited the participation in worship of certain people groups was taken down and the message that has been clear all the way through the Gospel narrative became a reality - All are welcome! (remember that?). What barriers do we have in our lives and in our church that may seek to restrict others from worshipping God fully? Are there individuals or people groups that we have called unclean or impure when God is reminding us today that no human is unclean because of who they are, their skin colour, their language or accent, the clothes that they wear, the money that they have or don't have or anything in their past. Who are the 'impure' groups in our society that the church must go and bring in because of the truth of this passage?

Let's make no mistake - this is a challenging calling on the Church. As we read the book of Acts in its entirety we see that much persecution followed those who were courageous enough to take a stand for the message that 'All are Welcome.' But there is a central message here that empowers us for such a mission, I believe. And this central message contains a vital truth that if we are not careful we can miss depending on where we place ourselves in the story. You see it can be tempting to read this story from an insider perspective- and maybe I've been guilty of that when I've called us to reflect on barriers and such things. But the trap we can fall into when we ask questions of this text like 'well who is in and who is out' is that we make the incorrect assumption that our starting point was one of inclusion. It wasn't.

In fact, if we are going to take one thing from this text today it should be this: There was a time when you and I, because of who we are, or because of who we weren't more accurately, were considered outsiders, impure, unclean. And it was down to God himself, who initiated the events of this game changing moment in the history of our faith story, that it has been made clear that no matter our past, our skin colour, our accent or language that we too are to be welcomed in to this beautiful covenant community known as the church and welcomed into the very presence of God. And the only way that we can fully know if that truth has really landed in our hearts is that we live it out so that others are welcomed into that same message.

ESPECIALLY FOR YOU

FREE CAR WASH

ran by Churches in Wythenshawe

SATURDAY 5TH JUNE 10AM-4PM

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH CAR PARK



It was great to see so many people attend our free car wash last week.

You will see a list of prayers on page 2, requested by members of the community during the event.

This is a great way to play a part in our community so please take the time to read and consider these prayers.

Church Attendance

We are carefully managing Sunday attendance in line with government guidelines, in an effort to keep everyone safe. Please let Mick, Mark or Lucy know if you would like to attend church on Sunday.

Brooklands Church of the Nazarene

Registered Charity No: 1159881

Wendover Road,
Manchester,
M23 9FN

Pastor: Rev Mick Kane
Email: pastormickkane@gmail.com
Mobile: 07545 622498

Web: www.BrooklandsChurch.uk
Email: 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!

