

JOTTINGS

FROM THE MANSE

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The Methodist Church

Bishop Auckland & Shildon Circuit



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Dear Friends,

Thanks for the feedback on the first issue of Jottings and for its onward distribution to a wider readership. This week I am taking a leaf out of the practise of magazine publishers by releasing the issue before its date! This is to facilitate copying for distribution in the case of one of the church communities.

The US election - they think it's all over, but is it? It has taken a good while to get this far, but there may yet be challenges to the results. Let us continue to pray for stability and peace in this world-leading nation and for wisdom and discernment amongst its leaders.

The positive news of a vaccine breakthrough this week has been enthusiastically received, quite rightly. However, it is still going to take some while to get things moving. We give thanks for the efforts of scientists around the world to reach this stage, but we each still need to take great care in our own conduct to keep ourselves safe and those around us. Please keep praying for those who work in health and social care environments and others whose work keeps the country going.

I continue to be available to you by telephone or email and will be happy to support you with a pastoral visit. Please do not hesitate to be in touch. Meanwhile, do keep safe - my thoughts and prayers are with you.

Blessings to you all, *David*



Readings for 15 November

RCL Proper 28 Year A:

Zephaniah 1: 7, 12-18
Psalm 90: 1-8, (9-11), 12
1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11
Matthew 25: 14-30



Worship at home – there are a number of opportunities to share in worship:

- By phone: Sunday service **01388 436815**; daily reflection **01388 436810**
- Zoom - 18.00 each Sunday evening - hosted by different congregations and featuring different preachers. **This is open to everyone - please contact Jenny at the Circuit Office for the Zoom link -** (basccircuitoffice@gmail.com) - join friends from around the Circuit and beyond - sing at home if muted!!
- Bishop Auckland Methodist Church Thursday morning service is recorded and can then be accessed:
 - through the internet - on Bishop Auckland Methodist Church Website (or YouTube on that site);
 - on the radio: 105.9 BishopFM - on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m.



Websites:

www.basmethodistcircuit.org.uk
www.bishopmethodist.org.uk

Bishop Auckland & Shildon Circuit - Charity number 1162844

If I were leading worship this weekend ...

... these are some of the thoughts I might include:

The readings share a focus upon accountability.

Zephaniah - Zephaniah was probably a contemporary of Jeremiah, looking towards the imminent disaster of the conquest and destruction of the nation and holy city of the people of God. The leaders of the nation do not see as the prophet sees, however, and certainly not the threat of divine judgement. To them it appears that God could be ignored. The prophet knows better.

1 Thessalonians - By contrast, the letter writer sees that the judgement of God is to be taken seriously, although not to worry about. The community seemed to have been worrying about when judgement might happen, but the teaching of the church from Jesus to the present day urges us to be prepared at all times. We are each personally accountable to God. We should never cease in our efforts to reflect the light and the love of Jesus in our everyday lives and this also means encouraging one another.

Matthew - There may be a temptation to feel sorry for the one-talent man, but we need to take note of the original decision that: "the man gave to each according to his ability." This third man was already reckoned to be less able to use and grow a monetary sum. However, unlike the first two, he made no effort at all and took no risks. He simply gave back the sum with which he had been entrusted. No effort = no reward, and what he had was removed from him. In contrast, the others took risks and received rewards. God is not hard on us when we take risks and do our best on behalf of God. This is a relationship of trust. We are accountable to God. Consider the difference between timidity and humility in the light of this story. Then ask yourself, what are your gifts to offer in God's service? What gifts might you encourage others to offer?

Hymns: Life and light and joy are found in the presence of the Lord

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

The Methodist Church Prayer Handbook Day 13

Give to us, O Lord God, a heart that is teachable, that we may know what is pleasing in your sight; a life attuned to your Spirit, that we may be guided in your ways, and a mind ever watchful, that we may rejoice in the coming of your kingdom; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Elizabeth I (1533 - 1603)

Lessons from life ...

The finger nail is a great invention, not least for its ability to prevent me slicing off the top of my finger!!!

Fork handles ...

or rather, five candles!

Do you like to count down to Christmas with an Advent Candle? I usually struggle to get one but this year I have found a supplier and will have 5 spare when my order arrives. The size is 12 inches high, seven-eighths of an inch diameter, with gold lettering on a red candle. Each candle costs £2.75.

Email me if you would like one — first come, first served. If I am overwhelmed with requests, I should be able to get some extra ones in time for December.