

Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy

Newsletter February 2021

Welcome to the Town Chaplaincy prayer news for February 2021.

Last weekend's One Church service was inspiring and it was especially good to see the number of Christian organisations associated with the collected churches in Basingstoke. We are called to work together and support one another in prayer and action as we share in God's mission.

You have probably seen that all Debenhams stores will close after the company is sold to Boohoo. It is not known what Boohoo will do but their focus may well be on-line shopping.

Moments of optimism that we will soon get back to some form of normality keep being dashed. The inoculations are being given but there is still some way to go and the impact is still to be assessed. Will they restrict transmission, how long will the protection last?

I don't know about you but I am getting increasingly frustrated with the fears of infection, delays and the unfulfilled raising of hopes. Symptoms raise questions about what infection there may be and there is stress associated with that. (My wife tested negative for Covid-19 yesterday.) And I see the damage that is being done to people who are isolated from their loved ones. Reading the Exodus story in the Bible can gloss over many of the time lags. The Hebrews were suffering and life was becoming harder well before Moses was born. He was at least the third child born to a couple and he disappeared for a number of years, only returning to lead the people to the Promised Land after 80 years more hard labour had passed.

We need time to learn and, like everyone else, patience to endure the situation. But more, we are privileged to be part of God's plan which will be completed in His time. The Holy Spirit shows us our part but we may not see the impact we have made as the plan is fulfilled. We can show patience, trusting in God's guidance and goodness. And we can pray - for patience, and for God's will to be done during this time.

John Hayward

Chair of Trustees

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love.
In Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen

We have now heard of many people who have now contracted the virus, so let us pray for their healing.

Pray for those who have lost loved ones to the disease.

Ask God's blessing on all who care for the sick, especially paramedics, doctors and nurses in contact with patients and other medical staff, all of whom are hard pressed now.

Pray for the Town:

Shop workers are facing an increase in job losses in the town centre. Paperchase is the latest shop going into administration and Debenhams will not reopen. People are under greater pressures at home, financially and mentally. Those we have spoken to are also very worried about becoming ill and of dying; we have the good news to help them!

Others who face different challenges are those working at the GP surgery and in schools.

Pray for those tasked with helping to keep us safe, including the police and rangers.

Remember the other activities of One Church and the other Chaplaincies in the region - at the hospitals and at Winchester and Dorchester.

Pray for the Chaplaincy:

Give thanks that Eric ran a Suicide Awareness course several times that Chaplains and others from different churches and organisations found very helpful.

That Libby's work keeping in contact with people and maintaining the clerical work will continue smoothly.

For talks with the Rail Community Officer Team to arrange for Chaplains to be Platform Pastors. Pray that discussions will go well and speedily and that we will have Chaplains to train and work at the station.

Give thanks to God that He continues to provide for our needs. Financially we are just covering our costs but we do need more Christians to volunteer to become Chaplains, especially as we look to train and start Platform Pastors.

Thank God that we have trained one new Chaplain and are interviewing a recruit, even though current circumstances are difficult.

Pray for wisdom as we look to engage with people in new ways while the pandemic continues.

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