



Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, meeting at Bethesda Chapel, on Sunday January 3rd 2021 at 10:45.

(As you know, we had technical problems at Bethesda and were unable to show the service live on the day, but we have now received recordings from all those involved. They are printed as they have been sent to me, and please accept our apologies for the delay that has been caused)

For those not able to meet in person at present, we hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we all seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

Our service today is led by Colin, with Tim playing the piano for us before the service.

It begins with **Colin giving us a warm welcome:**

Welcome – Happy New Year and all the very best for 2021. If you are watching this by live-stream or by a later recording, then an extra special greeting. May the Lord richly bless us all as we seek to dedicate this new year to his honour and glory, that indeed Christ may be exalted in this place and his kingdom extended. The New Year undoubtedly brings a mixed bag of emotions and memories for many of us. The events of 2020 including a pandemic, racial tensions, joblessness, and the BREXIT battles have undoubtedly created an unprecedented time of unrest, isolation, and anxiety. While some in our fellowship may have just experienced the best year ever, and look forward to an even greater one in the year ahead, others may have just trudged through one deep struggle after another. And yet this fresh calendar year brings with it the hope for things to be better. Whether you've just walked through the greatest year of your life, or are incredibly glad to see this one finally over, one truth still rings clear amidst it all. We are not alone. Not ever. Scripture is filled with prayers of men and women who reached out to God for a fresh start. Praying is the main source of connection to the one who created us and the one who wants us to experience blessings and promises in the future. Our God is a "one with us" God. On the heels of the celebration of the birth of our King, that reminder has the power to carry us right into a fresh, new start. He is Immanuel, God with us. And though things and people around us shift and change, our God never changes, for he is the same yesterday, today and for ever.

Let us Pray:

Our loving Heavenly Father, we thank you that you make all things new. Thank you for all that you've allowed into our lives this past year, the good along with the hard things, which have reminded us how much we need you and rely on your presence filling us every single day. Please forgive us for those times when we have doubted your concern for us. Help us to be more trusting.

We pray for your Spirit to lead us each step of this New Year. We ask that you will guide our decisions and turn our hearts to desire you deeply above all else. Shine your light in us, through us, and over us, we pray, so that we may make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. We pray that you will bless all those who will take part in the service this morning. Inspire their thoughts; grant them the confidence to speak mightily for you. Grant us listening ears, open minds and faithful hearts so that their word will become your word to every one of us. Bless Nigel and Paul at this time, heal them we beseech you that they may once again be among us seeking to exalt your holy name. To you be glory and honour, in this New Year, and forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We now listen (at Bethesda) or read/sing if we wish (at home): In Christ alone

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones He came to save:
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied -
for every sin on Him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain;
then bursting forth in glorious day
up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am His and He is mine -
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from His hand:
till He returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Colin now shares our notices for the week, reminding us again of our virtual “ Coffee Time” at 1pm today, and our prayer meeting on Thursday evening, both held on Zoom, via computers. We have new Zoom details, and you can now access these using ordinary telephones, so if you’d like to try joining in but don’t have a computer, now you can! (It is priced at the cost of an ordinary phone call, and may be included on a “free minutes” package too)

Colin gives an introduction:

In general, people associate the New Year with making personal resolutions, such as going on a diet and being more healthy, or doing more exercise and being fitter. Here are some possible New Year resolutions, I saw on a Christian website, that Bible characters might have made, if they had this noble custom in their day:

Adam: Seems like everyone’s resolution involves eating more fibre. Me, I plan to eat less fruit

Mrs Lot: Longing for the past helps no one! Don’t look back!

Esau: Hereby resolve to draft Fair Trade Act and enforce it!

Ruth: Turning over a new sheaf. Done with multi-faith online dating. Ready for good old-fashioned matchmaking

Haman: More hangin’ with the king in the New Year!

David: Done fighting lions and Philistines. Taking a safer job playing my harp for the king.

Balaam: For starters, booting all ‘Dr Doolittle’ movies from my Netflix queue.

Naaman: Start bathing more. Does wonders for your health.

Bathsheba: Start bathing less. Who puts a bath tub on the roof anyway?

Our theme for our service is ‘Looking Forward’, for I’m sure none of us desires to look back, especially given the year we have just had, fighting the coronavirus. There can be no doubt that 2020 was a year unique to my lifetime, with one possible exception. The last time I remember a public health scare like this, I was in short pants, at primary school. It was the year 1965 and there was a polio outbreak in Blackburn. I remember my mother taking us to the public halls in the town centre to have our sugar cubes that had been injected with the vaccine. I recall seeing endless trays piled up with these pink cubes. All public gatherings were cancelled; schools were closed; and I can remember Rovers were unable to start their season for quite a few weeks, with the result that they were at the bottom of the old Division One table by the time they played their first match and that is where they stayed, resulting in their demotion to Division 2 in 1966.

Given this is the first Sunday of the New Year, our service this morning will be different, for Alec our Pastor, along with five of the deacons, will be passing on their reflections and thoughts, based on readings from Scripture, about how we should prepare ourselves spiritually for this new year. I'm hoping they'll take no more than ten minutes each. Sadly, Nigel White and Paul Carter cannot be with us – Nigel because of his long-term illness and Paul, because he badly hurt his back last week and is struggling to walk. I'm sure that we would all want to send them our united best wishes for a speedy recovery, so that they will be back with us as soon as possible. Paul's contribution, I guess, can be the email he sent to the rest of the deacons on New Year's Day along with his greeting. In it he drew attention to Nicky Gumbel's greeting, Nicky Gumbel being the founder of The Alpha Course. Nicky Gumbel's message was: 'Look back and thank God; Look forward and trust God; Look around and serve God; and Look up and seek God.' This certainly fits in very nicely with our theme of 'Looking Forward'.

Janet: IN GOD'S HANDS

Well what a year we have had: Who would have thought this time last year we would be facing a pandemic throughout the world. In the UK alone nearly 75,000 people have died.

I must admit that I haven't stayed in very often. I've been out most days and I have never felt afraid. That is because I know that "When I put my cares in God's Hands. He puts peace in my heart." I've been anxious and worked up about many things but I have been aware of God's love and peace.

One of my many favourite passages of scripture is: Psalm 139:1-10

¹ You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. ² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. ⁵ You hem me in behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

2 Chronicles 16:9 says

'For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him'.

Colossians 3:3 says we are 'Hidden with Christ in God'

Corrie ten Boom used to show an example of this by putting her left hand over her right thumb, then put her right hand over her left hand.

You are the Thumb, Jesus is the Hand over the thumb and the right hand around it is God's
'HIDDEN WITH CHRIST IN GOD'

Isaiah 49:16 says I have engraved You on the palms of my hands

May we all take courage in knowing that God knows everything about us. We are in His Hands.

'God is good to me, God is good to me. He holds my hand, He helps me stand. God is good to me.

Alec shares a message he has recorded in Germany, entitled 'Continuity and Change

A well-known British cabinet minister said this week on the announcement of the approval of a new vaccine „I am so happy that we can end 2020 with such a moment of hope.“

„Science has delivered to give us all a brighter future.“

„Help is on its way.“

And I am sure we can all understand where he is coming from and genuinely appreciate the thoughts and sentiments that he is expressing.

But I asked myself three questions when I heard and read what was said:

Is this just a fleeting moment of hope?

Are we really dependent on science for a brighter future?

Didn't we celebrate last week that help has already come?

So I want to talk today about real hope, real knowledge and real help.

For these all have the same source.

Joachim Neander was a German pastor born in 1650. As early as 1680, at just 30 years of age, he was called home by his father. He knew where he was going and more importantly he knew who had called him home.

He wrote many hymns in his short time on the earth. Many of us will be very familiar with the song which begins, „ Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation“ but we may know the words of this following hymn which he also wrote:

„All my hope on God is founded,

all my trust he shall renew;

he, my guide through changing order,

only good and only true:

God unknown, he alone

calls my heart to be his own.

Pride of man and earthly glory,

sword and crown betray his trust;

all that human toil can fashion,

tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

Day by day our mighty giver
grants to us his gifts of love;
in his will our souls find pleasure,
leading to our home above:
love shall stand at his hand,
joy shall wait for his command.

Still from Earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done;
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son:
hear Christ's call, one and all –
we who follow shall not fall.“

Dear friends, what or rather who is the foundation of our hope? On what or rather on whom are we building our lives?

On momentary events and feelings? On the science? On help that is temporarily available?

Or on God in Jesus Christ

Creator and Sustainer of the universe

The one who came to the earth he himself had made to deliver us from the mess we got ourselves into.

Is He our Lord and Saviour?

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

My hope comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord. (Psalm 31:24)

May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you. (Psalm 33:22)

May it be true of us as the psalmist wrote in 71:14, „But as for me I will always have hope. I will praise you more and more.“

Its time for another hymn, very often sung at this time of year, and today sung by Esther: Lord for the years

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us -
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

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Morag now shares news of our Christmas Boxes, made for "Operation Christmas Child"

Good morning everyone.

What a challenging year 2020 has been and so I was delighted when I received an email from Samaritan's Purse in the summer saying that God willing, the shoebox collection would still be able to go ahead.

I let you good folks know that I would be preparing shoeboxes as usual and you didn't let me down.

Some of you prepared shoeboxes, some brought items to church to be included in a box and others passed on monetary gifts.

Please sit back and enjoy the short story of your shoeboxes' journey so far.

The first photograph shows my dining table filled with different gifts received from yourselves or bought on line ready to be sorted into gender and age.



At one point I was receiving quite a few deliveries each day bringing things like hats and gloves, stationary items for school use and of course cuddly toys, cars and games. Some of the delivery men wanted to know who I was buying so much for as they called at my door regularly and so I was able to tell them about Samaritan's Purse, what they stood for and the Shoebox Appeal which they organised each year.

The next photograph is one I always like to see. The hard work is finished and our shoeboxes are packed and ready to be collected.

This year we sent 90 which was a great achievement considering our current circumstances.

51 boxes were prepared by The Baptist Church and friends and 39 boxes came from my younger daughter and her friends.



The third photograph shows how we had to prepare our shoeboxes for collection this year.



Early in November I got a phone call asking if I would be happy to pack the boxes into cartons which they would send to me. The idea was that due to the Covid pandemic it was felt safer to spend as little time as possible at each collection point and so these are our 8 cartons awaiting collection.

Sadly soon after that conversation I was contacted again to say that due to lockdown all of the collections would have to be postponed until December.

Finally our collection day arrived and on the 14th December our shoeboxes began the next stage of their journey.

This photograph shows the driver Samantha holding up the Samaritan Purse's logo and our cartons already loaded onto her van.



Sadly I have since been informed that it would be logistically impossible to get all of the shoeboxes from the UK to the countries they were destined for in time for Christmas although they planned to try very hard to get as many delivered on time as possible.

This delay now means that we shall have to wait until February to hear where our shoeboxes went to.

Can I again take this opportunity to thank you for your kind generosity and time spent choosing your gifts especially when shopping became very challenging.

Each child receiving a shoebox is special in the sight of God and to us and I know that you will be praying along with me for the safe delivery of your box and that the boy or girl receiving it will find just what they wanted and be blessed by the thought that someone from far away cared enough for them to send them their own personal gift of love in a shoebox.

God Bless and I wish you all a Happy Healthy New Year

Tim shares thoughts and prayers:

“For my prayers, I read first from Philippians 3, verses 7 to 11, making the point that, whatever else we prioritise as we think about 2021, we should, like Paul, put our relationship with Christ first – if we do that, then we won’t go far wrong and the rest will fall into place. We may think that this is a struggle for us, but we can be encouraged that Paul knew he’d not got there yet either: I read on in verses 12 to 14, in which Paul admits he has far still to go, but his focus is on pressing forward, leaving behind the mistakes and failures of the past and moving on towards the heavenly prize. That led us into prayer, where we:

- gave thanks for God’s provision of his righteousness to us through faith in Jesus
- confessed that, although God has made us righteous, we don’t practically live up to this day to day
- thanked God that he gives us second, third and fourth chances when we fall and restores us to fellowship with him; that he has works prepared for us to do this year; for his practical blessings; and for the privilege of prayer
- asked God to sustain us through the difficult times we’re experiencing; to give our government wisdom; to comfort those who are mourning; to strengthen those working at the front line; for the church of Jesus to shine out the light of hope to a suffering world, even when the church itself is suffering; and to lead our local church in his ways, and for us to be willing to follow faithfully.”

Time for another song, this time Christ our hope in life and death, shown on the screen at Bethesda.

What is our hope in life and death?

Christ alone, Christ alone.

What is our only confidence?

That our souls to Him belong.

Who holds our days within His hand?
What comes, apart from His command?
And what will keep us to the end?
The love of Christ, in which we stand.
 O sing hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal,
 O sing hallelujah!
Now and ever we confess Christ our hope in life and death.

What truth can calm the troubled soul?
God is good, God is good.
Where is His grace and goodness known?
In our great Redeemer's blood.
Who holds our faith when fears arise?
Who stands above the stormy trial?
Who sends the waves that bring us night
unto the shore, the rock of Christ?
 O sing hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal.....

Unto the grave, what will we sing?
"Christ, He lives; Christ, He lives!"
And what reward will heaven bring?
Everlasting life with Him.
There we will rise to meet the Lord,
then sin and death will be destroyed
and we will feast in endless joy
when Christ is ours forevermore.
 O sing hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal;
 O sing hallelujah!
Now and ever we confess Christ our hope in life and death.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oibli1rz7mw>

Songwriters: Matt Boswell / Matt Papa / Keith Getty / Matt Merker / Jordan Kauflin
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Jane shares some of her reflections on **Habakkuk 3: 17-19**

Matthew 11:28-30

"As we approached the end of 2020, I was reminded of these verses in the book of the prophet Habakkuk. God had revealed to him the impending devastation to be brought on Israel by the Babylonians but also their eventual downfall. Habakkuk determines to wait patiently for God's plan to take effect and says: **'Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour. The**

Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.' Habakkuk is determined and his trust in the Lord is absolute.

We have been struggling against another kind of foe, the hidden and silent enemy that is Covid-19. I wonder if we have been as resolute in our faith as the prophet and, as we venture into the New Year, are we walking 'on the heights' or beset by worries. Of course, it is right to be concerned about people and situations, and that concern should lead us into prayer, and practical care and support when we can. Concern is a positive attribute and leads to positive action. Worry, on the other hand, has a negative effect, both on the worrier and the people around; it has no benefit to anyone and makes no difference. By worrying, are we even trying to usurp God's power, thinking that we should be able to change something that is way beyond us? Could it even be seen as a sin? In dying on the cross, Jesus not only took the penalty for all our sin but he also took the burden of all our worries. Why would we want to take them back? In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt.7), Jesus himself talked about the lilies of the field and the birds of the air – if God gives his loving provision to them, how much more will he care for us His children. In fact, Jesus said, **'Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.'** In Matthew 11, he also says, **'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'** We can lay all our burdens and worries at Jesus's feet and He will take care of them, giving us His peace that passes all understanding, enabling us to stand on the heights, so proclaiming His victory in all things, even in Covid. So often, when we are going through difficult times, it is in the little things that we see God at work and His loving care. It's those little things that build our faith and trust, as we realise that He does intimately know our needs, he loves us and He is in control. As we move into 2021, let us look out for those small circumstances that lead us to say with Habakkuk,

'Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour. The Sovereign Lord is my strength.' Amen"

Colin: "Looking Forward"

As Christians, we should be a forward-looking people, with an onward vision, Why is this? Well, in the words of the Apostle Paul, we are **'Looking forward to the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ'** (Titus 2.13). The coming again of our Lord and Saviour is indeed our blessed hope, our great yearning and expectation, which puts everything we see and experience into perspective. We long for the coming of the New Heavens and New Earth, with the New Jerusalem, in which Christ is truly honoured as Lord and King. As Psalm 46 affirms: *'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed'* and then ends with the declaration: *'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.'*

There can be no doubt that we are going through vexing times at present. Many within our society are feeling the effects of uncertainty and bewilderment at everything that is taking place. Some are suffering directly from the consequences of the virus – people have lost loved ones to it – and from the harsh social and economic measures that the government has had to impose to control its spread within our communities. And as Christians we are not immune from such trials and tribulations. But through the eye of faith we look beyond these events, for we know that these are the birth pangs of the time when Christ will come again and take up his rightful place as King of

kings and Lord of lords and he will be exalted throughout the earth. For as the LORD declares in the Psalm: *'I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!'*

Indeed, we are told to expect an increase in such calamities, such as 'pestilences' as the Day of Christ approaches, for this Day will spell the destruction of Satan and everything he stands for, and he knows that and will do everything within his power to disrupt this great finale, as the Book of Revelation tells us. Thus, In his last great sermon, on the topic of the end times, Jesus warned his followers that such climatic events will happen, and increasingly so as that Day approaches, but we must **look up** for these things mean that our redemption is drawing ever closer. That is why in his letter to the Church at Corinth, Paul could declare in the Aramaic of our Lord: 'Maranatha!' 'Our Lord, come!' Surely that is our testimony as we start this New Year with all its uncertainties: 'Maranatha!' Say it out loud to yourself.

Of course, in the meantime, we must be vigilant and pray that God will bless the scientists and medics who are working at the front-line of this battle against Covid 19, and keep them safe from harm and danger, but we must always be willing to look at the bigger picture, for we do live in fallen world, which God, the Mighty One of Jacob, has promised to redeem for the sake of the Lamb who was sacrificed on Golgotha's brow for you and for me. As we read in Philippians 2 last week, it is the will of God that *'every knee should bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'* People in our society will no doubt be packing away the trappings of Christmas today – and possibly even as we speak – along with the symbols of the Christmas story. For many the celebration of the birth of baby Jesus is as far as they go into the Gospel story, and yet as Christians the greatest occasions of the Christian year have yet to happen, and these are what we commemorate at Easter and on to Pentecost. All these world-changing events draw us to the clear conclusion that 'Jesus Christ is Lord'. And our Father God would have it no different.

As Christians, we are called to proclaim the good-tidings of great joy, the message of the angels, of peace and good-will to all of mankind. For as Jesus declared at the outset of his ministry: *'The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the good-news.'* The resurrection of Jesus is the great sign and surety of this message, as Paul declared to his Athenian audience on Mars Hill. And because he lives we will live also; for to the Christian, life is all about Christ and so, too, is death, because to pass out of this world means that we will be forever in his sublime presence, a reality that is beyond our comprehension in its glory and splendour. But we must live for God always **'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.'** And 'looking unto Jesus' means looking directly at Jesus, rejoicing in his presence with us **now**, through the Holy Spirit. For the lines or contours of divine grace through the ages all meet at the point at the cross of Christ, at the point where Jesus died for us that together we might live eternally.

If Jesus is the supreme focus of our faith, then as we move closer to Christ we will also come closer together as a community of his people. For as the Letter to the Hebrews goes on to remind us, our faith-vision must always be one of **'looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled'**. In other words, if we move away from our brothers and sisters in Christ because of 'bitterness', a catch-all term which is shorthand for every form of antagonism and resentment that breeds hostility and therefore is the opposite of 'fellowship', it is inevitable that we will move further away from our Beloved Lord and quench the effectiveness of the Holy Spirit in our lives and collective ministry. We must therefore be united in the Spirit of love and holiness. For as Peter also goes on to remind his readers: *'Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.'* So, as we look forward in anticipation to what 2021 holds for

us, let us at the outset re-dedicate ourselves to the mission and ministry that Christ has call us to as a fellowship of the Lord's people in BBC here at Bethesda Chapel. AMEN.

We bring our service to a close as we listen (or read) to Esther singing **I will trust in you alone**, a new version of **The Lord's my shepherd**. The refrain can be sung in 2 parts, with the ladies voices echoing the "I will trust", but that's rather challenging if we are singing alone at home!

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.
 And I will trust in You alone,
 and I will trust in You alone,
 for Your endless mercy follows me,
 Your goodness will lead me home.

He guides my ways in righteousness,
and He anoints my head with oil,
and my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights.
 And I will trust in You alone...

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
for You are with me, and Your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.
 And I will trust in You alone....

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May the road rise to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face.
May the rain fall softly on your fields.
And until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of his hand.

You are all aware of the renewed lockdown restrictions now in place. If we are not able to meet in person at Bethesda, we will continue to provide paper copies for those who request them or cannot access recordings or YouTube. Please let me know if you have any ideas or suggestions for a more helpful way to involve everyone in the church family.

If you would like to join us on Zoom for our regular 'virtual Community Room' **it is now possible to dial in on an ordinary phone line**, just by calling 02034 815237 from a landline or mobile, then entering Meeting ID: 962 5576 8258, Passcode: 491306 into the telephone keypad.

Likewise, if you wish to listen and join in with our regular prayer meeting on Zoom on Thursday evening **at 7.30 pm you can dial 02034 815237**,. Meeting ID: 923 9680 7071, Passcode: 411034. Again, these should now stay the same from week to week from here.

The calls are priced as a local call, and may also be included in free minutes plans.