

Battle Baptist Church

Being Transformed Together



29th March 2020



A Prayer for Lent

Holy God,
our lives are laid bare before
you:
rescue us from the chaos of
sin and through the death
of your Son bring us healing
and make us whole, in Jesus
Christ our Lord,
Amen*

Have you not known?
Have you not heard?

The Lord is the
everlasting God,
the Creator of the
ends of the earth.

Isaiah 40:28



Blessed be His name

Ages ago, I remember Ed showing a video one Sunday morning which struck me powerfully. It was about Yahweh, the name of our God, which translates from the Hebrew as 'I am'. The film explained that in Hebrew, Yahweh is more correctly written 'YHWH' and that these consonants are not articulated with lips and tongue. The consonants make a sound similar to inhalation and exhalation: in one sense the name of God cannot literally be 'spoken' but is to be *breathed*. This reminds me that at the beginning of our world, God 'breathed the breath of life' into Adam's nostrils, 'and the man became a living person' (Gen 2:7). The great 'I AM' has always been as close to us as the breath we breathe; he is at the heart of our beings – if only we will invite him in - a fact that I find profoundly humbling as well as deeply reassuring.

In Exodus, when God reveals his glory to Moses, he himself declares:
'Yahweh! The Lord!

The God of compassion and mercy!
I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations.

I forgive iniquity, rebellion and sin.' (Exod. 34:6,7a)

These words are echoed throughout the Old Testament (Deut 7:12, Neh 9:17, Ps 103:10,11, Isa 53:3 are just some examples). This mighty creator God, this YHWH, is as available and accessible to us as our breathing: his compassion, mercy, love and faithfulness are offered to us all.

Jesus declares his divinity to the Samaritan

woman at the well using similar language: "'I AM the Messiah!'" (John 4:26). When teaching the disciples how to pray, he emphasises the importance of his Father's name (Matt 6:9). Reflecting on God's name being 'I AM' has made me think differently about the 'I am' statements of Jesus that we read about in John's gospel. I realise that Jesus' contemporary audience would probably have made the connection between the YHWH of the Torah and would have understood that Jesus' declarations were also another way of him claiming his status as the son of God. With the privilege of having access to the Bible in its entirety, I can see that Jesus uses these statements in part to show his oneness with the Father, to point to the mystery of the Holy Trinity. When Jesus says, 'I the way', he tells us that he is the path to the Father. As 'the truth', in him we see the reality of all God's promises; and when he declares that he is 'the life', he is saying that he joins his divine life to ours both now and eternally (John 14:6). What a wonderful Saviour!

After his resurrection, again in John's account, Jesus appears to the disciples who are meeting behind locked doors out of fear and uncertainty as to what the future holds. Jesus greets them, and says, "'As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.'" We then read, 'Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit"' (John 20:21,22). A fresh in-filling of YHWH.

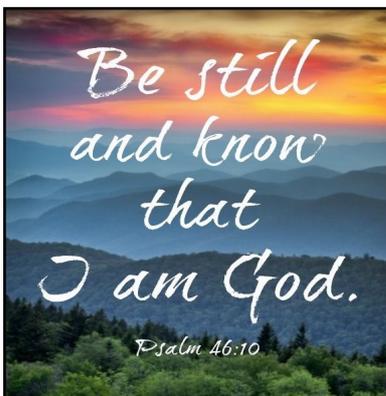
Breathe in deeply. Remember that Jesus said, "'I am with you always, even to the end of the age"' (Matt 28:20). To borrow a phrase, 'When the world says, 'no way', we say 'Yahweh''. Blessed be his name!

Jo

PRAYING FOR...

The health of our world

- We pray for all those who have been, and are continuing to be, affected by COVID-19.
- We pray for those who are particularly fearful at the moment.
- We pray for the most vulnerable and isolated in our neighbourhoods.
- We pray for the medical staff on the front line of care, we pray that they will be sustained physically, emotionally and spiritually in the coming weeks.
- We pray for those leading the response to COVID-19 across the world.
- We pray in the name of 'him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine'. (Ephesians 4:20)



NEWSLETTER

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Battle Baptist Church is part of Life with Hope Trust; registered charity 1134288, Mount Street, Battle,

East Sussex TN33 0EG.

- Website: www.battlebaptistchurch.org.uk
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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nomination of Trustees - A last call for nominations for Trustees for the Life with Hope Trust! So far Rob Hamilton and Chris Doust have both been nominated.

Remember that we can vote in up to three more Trustees. Under the circumstances, we will accept nominations electronically! We are planning how exactly we will manage the vote, which was due to be held at the AGM on 22nd April.

Foodbank - Steve reports that the Foodbank would be very grateful for donations of food items if at all possible. Locally there are collection baskets in Jempons, Nationwide and Tesco Express. Alternatively, please drop donations to the team on Tuesday mornings between 10am and 11am (they are based in the Benedicta Whistler centre at St Mary's). They need everything on their list **except for beans and soup**. They are especially in need of **cereal, milk, and sugar**.

If you are not able to get out at the moment, you could make a financial donation. Get in touch with the office for more details.

Request for contributions - Whilst we are unable to meet collectively, it would be great if we could create and share resources for studying and reflecting on God's word. We would like to get to the stage where we could regularly send out a midweek reflection, for example. If this is something you would be prepared to help with, please get in touch with Jo via email (or phone).

A reminder that the church buildings are currently closed.

** taken from the Church of England website*

Pray for...

Those in our fellowship who are unwell, self-isolating, isolated, fearful, depressed.

40Acts

Every Lent, 40Acts challenges us not just to 'give stuff up' but to be radically generous too. Look [here](#) for inspiration.

Pray for...

All the children and young people with whom we usually have contact. That they will be resilient and resourceful.

A guide to personal devotions

While we are not meeting collectively, why not use this guide for your personal devotions?

Pause, be still and invite God to meet you afresh, filling you by His Holy Spirit.

Pray giving thanks for all God's goodness

Worship

If you have a Worship CD, DVD or the means to go online and listen to something why not play a worship song, you don't have to sing along if you're not comfortable doing so or can't: simply listen to the words

Read a Psalm

The Psalms are a great source of hope and help, written in good times and bad. Pick one; read it through slowly. Pause. Read it through again.

What is God saying?

Give space allowing time for God to speak. What is he saying? Is he speaking to you personally or is it a message for the wider church?

Prayers for others

1) Use the prayer on the reverse side of this. It is taken from the Baptist Together website and their call to prayer in response to the Coronavirus. They rightly encourage us to play in being a Beacon of Hope at the moment. They remind us that our neighbours and communities need love, hope, peace and an eternal perspective and we can offer this in abundance, in the name of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:18).

2) Pray for different ministries of the church, even though they are not meeting at this time. Think of the different people who usually attend and the reasons and aims of the activities.

3) Using the church members' directory take a page a day, and pray through the names.

Lords Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is a great resource that Jesus gave us.

Grace

Why not conclude by saying the grace, as we often do when we gather together, only picture those you would usually be looking at, as you say it?