

NEWSLETTER

SEEKING GOD'S FACE

One of the most powerful stories in the Bible is the story of Moses; a child saved from infanticide which was sweeping the land; a man-killer who, escaping from his crime, became a shepherd and met with God in a deserted place, drawn by a flaming bush which did not burn. It was the beginning of an adventure where Moses would draw closer and closer to God's presence as he fulfilled the call to lead the children of Israel to the promised land.



“The Lord would speak to Moses, face to face, as a man speaks with a friend.” [Exodus 33 v11]
God told Moses: “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” [Exodus 33 v15].
And, in summary, Moses replied: ‘We can’t do this Lord if You don’t come with us.’”

What does it mean to seek God's Face?

‘Seeking God's Face’ is synonymous in the Bible with seeking God's presence. The Hebrew word for ‘face’ is panim which means a close and personal encounter.

So, when David cries out: “My heart says of You ‘Seek My face!’ Lord Your face will I seek – do not hide Your face from me...” [Psalm 27 v8-9] he is saying, in the words of the song we so often sing, I want:

*to be in Your presence, Lord,
to sit at Your feet
where your love surrounds me
and makes me complete.... this is my desire....*

This is so important that the writer of Chronicles quotes David’s Psalm saying: “Glory in God’s holy name, let the hearts of those who **seek the Lord** rejoice. Look to the Lord and His strength and seek His Face **always**.” [1 Chronicles 16 v10-11]

During the next few months, we’re going to be exploring in our worship how we can go deeper with God in prayer. How we can seek His Face, find His presence and discern what He is doing and wants to do in our lives? In some ways ‘prayer’ has been misrepresented in the past as ‘talking to God’ and that can be very one-side. Us babbling – God listening. Moses and David found that prayer is so much more. It is about finding God’s presence with us, going deeper into what God is wanting our lives to be, getting to grips with His will, His way, and His wisdom which enable us to grow in the Spirit and to grow more like Jesus.

What does Prayer mean?

The word "prayer" is a derivative of the Latin "precari", which means "to plead". The Hebrew equivalent "tefilah", however, along with its root "pelel" or its reflexive "l'hitpallel", means the act of self-analysis or self-evaluation. Prayer is an ongoing process of seeking the presence of God to give us perspective for our daily living. To tap into His ways and works, to know ourselves better as we get to know Him more deeply. It is an alignment of our lives with God’s creative intent which enables Him to work, speak and act through us with His love and compassion. The Holy Spirit is always our enabler in this. The Lord Jesus is always our intercessor.

How to Pray

Jesus disciples came to him with a desire that they should learn **how** to pray. Isn’t that our desire?

He modelled prayer for them through example, instruction and parables. He knew they found it hard, as we do, – they did not see when he asked them to watch; they fell asleep when he asked them to pray. But He demonstrated that His relationship with His Father gave Him powers on earth which can be shared by those who seek the Father’s face. In the next few weeks it’s going to be exciting for us, as a fellowship, to delve deeper into ‘How to Pray’ and so to be received deeper into the Father’s love.

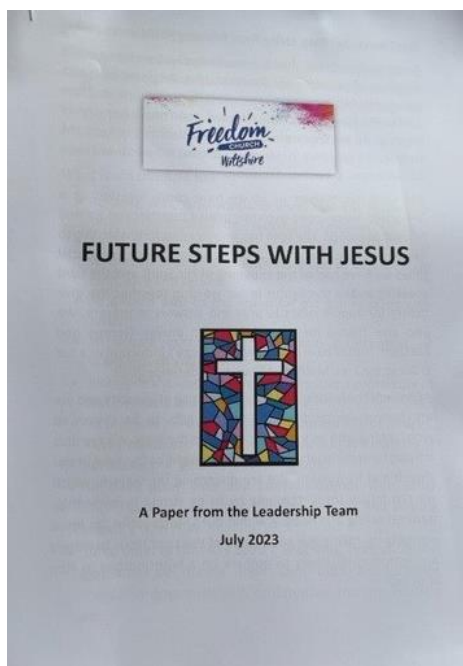
Preaching Plan

The new Preaching Plan, October to December is now published. It includes Harvest worship and lunch on 8th October in Brinkworth. This is again a time of worship when we encourage farmers, friend and neighbours to join us in celebration of God's creation. **Please use the new Freedom Church Wiltshire postcards** as a way to invite others to join us in our worship week by week.

It is always lovely to welcome others into our worship.



The vision for our Church and a part-time pastor



Thank you for the thought and prayer you have put into our vision and the paper "Future Steps with Jesus" since we had our church meeting on 16th July.

The feedback we have received following prayer has been so helpful. The Leadership Team met in Bristol with Rev. Dr. David Hull, pastor of Freedom Church Bristol [FCB], on 1st September 2023 to talk with him on the way forward. He had previously met with Rev. John Townley, leader of the Free Methodist Church UK and was also able to convey to us John's guidance.

This was a very positive meeting in which we explored ways in which Freedom Church Wiltshire [FCW] could become an established Society with greater parity alongside FCB but without being totally independent. This would enable us to apply for two grants from the Free Methodist Church UK to assist in further pursuing a part-time pastor.

The proposals arising from this meeting will be discussed by the leadership team on 28th September and thereafter brought to a **full Church Meeting after worship on Sunday 1st October in Wanborough**. Please do your best be at this important meeting at which key decisions will be made for our future. Please thank God for the supportive guidance of FCB and continue to pray that we will be faithful to God's calling in the resolutions we make.

Mission – The Swindon Food Cooperative

As you will know our focus for mission funds during the last quarter has been the Swindon Food Cooperative providing food for needy families in Swindon and its suburbs. If you were able to contribute to this thank you for your giving.

We sent £ 300 to the Swindon Food Cooperative at the end of August.

Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF)



We were greatly blessed by the visit of Graham and Rosie Bennett at the end of August. Graham works for the Bible Society and represents the work of Missionary Aviation Fellowship which is the focus of our mission giving this quarter. MAF works with many Christian and humanitarian charities, providing a network of flights across the globe transporting pastors and missionaries,

food, supplies, medicines and bibles to locations which are difficult to reach.

Graham sent a message to our church after his visit:

“May God richly bless you and surprise you all”.

He also provided some literature about the work of MAF which is available on our table each week together with envelopes for giving. If, following prayer, you feel that God is calling you to give to this important work please use one of the envelopes and give it to Phil, our Treasurer. We will then send these and a donation from our Mission Funds to MAF, praying God will bless and use these resources for His Kingdom work.

Celebration



The Bible is full of characters with a good few years behind them (Sarai, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Anna to name but a few) and who, through their faithfulness to God, can inspire us and encourage us that age is no barrier to serving the Lord. It was great that on July 23rd we were able to celebrate our own pastor’s eightieth birthday.

Many happy returns!



“God’s compassions never fail. They are new every morning.” Lam. 3v23-23

Phakamisa - Visit to the UK

Bob Mawer, who worships with us regularly, is Chair, Phakamisa UK Trust (Charity Commission No: 1095757) which provides support and education for Aids Orphans and their carers in the Pinetown area of South Africa. Here he writes about the important work of this charity:

The Phakamisa UK Trust is delighted by, and very much looking forward to the visit of Zethu Kuzwayo to the UK in September.

Zethu (not her full name) took over the operational leadership of Phakamisa from Thokozani Poswa, who sadly died in 2021, after contracting Covid. Previously, Zethu had worked very closely with Thokozani, as her administration assistant.



Update from
Phakamisa, South Africa

The purpose of Zethu's visit is to raise awareness of the work of Phakamisa and to generate new funds, as well as meeting some existing supporters and bringing them up to date with the latest news from Pinetown, South Africa, which is Phakamisa's operational base.

Zethu will be in the UK from about 7th September until about the 27th. Her itinerary during this period will be:

- September 8-10: Melbourne, Derbyshire (Phakamisa UK Trust AGM and events)
- September 11-13: Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire (various events)
- September 14: London (rest day)
- September 15-18: Camborne and Truro, Cornwall (District Synod and events)
- September 19: Shrivenham (rest day)
- September 20-24: Belfast, N Ireland (various events)
- September 25 onwards: TBC

Clearly it is not possible for Zethu to visit every area of the UK where we have supporters, but we would ask you to uphold Zethu, the UK Trust and the whole itinerary in your prayers, as this is her first major engagement since taking over the role. She has never been outside Kwazulu Natal and has never travelled by air or sea until now. Whilst we are not anticipating that you will be able to join us for any of the above, if you do wish to do so, please let me know so that I can provide you with any further information you may require.

Prayers for Belarusian Churches



We value the prayers of the seven churches in Belarus for whom we also regularly pray. Our relationship was strengthened by the visit of Matvei Litvenko and his inspiring contribution to our worship on Sunday 2nd September.



Having shared with us Matvei had a three day return journey to Belarus where he was reunited with his wife, Annie, and daughter, Abi.



He took with him our greetings to the churches and a variety of gifts which have been donated. These included a Saxophone, 3 guitars, a violin, and a number of smaller instruments. We have recently prayed for a young boy at Lubyan church. Leonid is very happy to receive his Saxophone. We have also prayed for the youth group in



Valoczyn led by Olga, the pasator's wife. She is training the youth to lead worship. The young people from the churches meet once a month and are following the "GrowUp" programme. Their next meeting is on Saturday October 14th in Slutsk.

Local Prayer

A Week of Prayer

Freedom Church Bristol are holding their next Week of Prayer, to pray across the churches in the week commencing 1st October 2023. They have a Prayer service on the Sunday and are holding an on-line prayer meeting on Tuesday 2nd October. They have generously invited all of us, as members, to join them from 7.30 -9.30 p.m. on that day via Zoom.

The Zoom ID is: 632 632 0632 and no passcode is required.

They are also holding gatherings each evening of that week with a focus on Prayer walking and we know from Rev. Keith Rowbottom (pastor) at Freedom Church, South Lincolnshire that they too will be holding a Prayer Walk.

Please consider this prayerfully and carefully and discuss with our leadership team in the coming days whether we at FCW should meet and/or Prayer Walk during this Week of Prayer. Also, we need to send prayer requests for this week to FCB preferably by Monday 25 September. If there are people, matters or concerns you would like brought to God please let us know and we will both pray and forward them for prayer.

Daily Prayer

Gerard W. Hughes in his lovely book "God in All things" provides a prayer which some of us have found helpful as a day by day, moment by moment prayer which you may like to join us in using:

"God, let my whole being be directed to You, so that You may be the God of compassion and love to me and through me."

Will you also join us in this prayer for our church:

"Abba Father, it is the desire of my heart as a member of Your church, Freedom Church Wiltshire, that, over the coming weeks, You would reveal Your heart to us for our future life and direction, that You may be honoured in all things."

George Elizabeth Lou Mike Phil Andrew Fiona

**Leadership Team, Freedom Church Wiltshire
September 2023**