

## Sunday 4th – 10th October

### Prisons

Philippians 1: 12–14 *“Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear”* (TNIV)

Paul, when he wrote his letter to the Philippians, was in prison. Paul, because he proclaimed Christ, often found himself in prison. Yet Paul was not disheartened whilst in prison. In fact as he writes in his letter, he sees being in prison as a God-given opportunity to share the gospel to people who were in a difficult place.

Today prisons play a big role in many people’s lives. Recently, in August 2009, numbers in English and Welsh prisons reached an all-time high – with 76,897 people currently in prison. Perhaps you know of someone; a friend or family member, who is in prison.

**Let’s pray for our prisons now, and let’s pray that the light of Christ may shine in our prisons. Pray particularly for...**

- \* Prisoners from the St Helens area. Pray for them as they are separated from the family and friends and who may be placed in a prison many miles away from St Helens which makes visiting harder for them. Pray for their family and friends, particularly in situations where young children are separated from their mum or dad in jail.
- \* Pray for those who work in prisons. Pray for their safety. Pray for those who, often because of protocol, are unable to help prisoners who need help.
- \* Pray for young people who are imprisoned. Pray for them that being in prison would be an opportunity for them to turn their life around.
- \* Pray for Christians in prisons. Pray for Christians; prisoners, employees, volunteers and chaplains as they live and work in prison. Pray for them as they seek to be like Christ in our prisons and as they seek to proclaim Christ.
- \* Pray for Christians abroad who, like Paul, are put in jail today for being open about their faith.

### **Please pray for the town centre churches**

- 4<sup>th</sup> October – Christian Life Centre and the Salvation Army Hostel
- 5<sup>th</sup> October – Barton Street Mission and Bethel Mission
- 6<sup>th</sup> October – St Helens Baptist Church and Wesley Methodist Church
- 7<sup>th</sup> October – Holy Cross and St Mary’s Lowe House
- 8<sup>th</sup> October – St Helens United Reformed Church (Ormskirk Street)
- 9<sup>th</sup> October – St Helens Parish Church, St Mark’s North Road and St Thomas’ Eccleston
- 10<sup>th</sup> October – Redeemed Church of God

# Sunday 11th – 17th October

## The Local Church

Philippians 1: 27–28a *“Whatever happens, as citizens of heaven live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together with one accord for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you”* (TNIV)

Live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, and stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together for the faith of the Gospel. It isn't always easy though, is it, to live our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. But that is the challenge to us – as individuals and churches, to live our lives in such a manner. When we do this, it shows the unity that we share with one another, as we commit ourselves daily to Christ and as we daily receive God's Spirit.

This week let's pray for ourselves as churches, that wherever we are in St Helens, we may live our lives worthy of the gospel of Christ.

### **Trevor Prescott – West St Independent Methodist Church, has asked us to pray for...**

- \* Their Annual Conference Weekend on the 31<sup>st</sup> October – 2<sup>nd</sup> November at Grange over Sands.
- \* Pray that friendships and fellowship would grow through the various groups
- \* Pray for David Moulson as he leads the adult sessions and for Lisa Green as she leads the children's sessions on the weekend.
- \* Pray that through the weekend, people would grow closer to God.

### **Please also pray in particular for....**

- \* Churches in St Helens currently without a minister. Some churches have been without a minister for a while now – pray particularly for them and the members of those churches who have taken on extra responsibility.
- \* Pray for continued good relationships between the churches of St Helens – that we may continue to work together for the sake of the gospel and to support one another.
- \* Pray for the churches of St Helens as we seek to be Christ-like within our borough.

### **Please pray for the churches in Billinge, Blackbrook, Haresfinch and Carr Mill**

- 11<sup>th</sup> October – Billinge Family Church
- 12<sup>th</sup> October – St Aidan's Billinge and St Mary's RC Church
- 13<sup>th</sup> October – St David's Carr Mill
- 14<sup>th</sup> October – St Patrick, Clinkham Wood and St Peter & St Paul RC Church
- 15<sup>th</sup> October – Haresfinch United Reformed Church
- 16<sup>th</sup> October – St Mary's Blackbrook
- 17<sup>th</sup> October – St Paul's Blackbrook

## Sunday 18th – 24th October

### Education

Philippians 2:5–11 *“In your relationships with one another, have the same attitude of mind Christ Jesus had: who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human being, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (TNIV)

In St Helens we are very lucky that many educational institutions very much welcome input and partnership with local Christians and churches. But although we thank God for the many relationships between churches and educational institutions, we should also pray for Christians who go into schools, that they may be like Christ (as outlined by Paul above).

#### **Please also pray in particular for...**

- \* Christians who work in schools and educational institutions; teachers, assistant teaching staff, kitchen staff and so on. Pray for them as they live out their faith in their workplace
- \* Pray for all who work in education. Schools and colleges are often a very demanding place to work in with many pressures.

#### **Mike Balmford has asked us to pray for the Gideons' work in St Helens...**

- \* Pray for the Gideons' placements in schools as they work with all 20+ secondary schools throughout St Helens and the surrounding areas as they give out New Testament Bibles to all young people in Year 7.
- \* Thank God for the continued good reception received by the Gideons from the schools.
- \* Pray particularly for Keith Anderton as he plays a leading role in this work.

#### **Paul Johnson, St Helens College Chaplain, has asked us to pray particularly for...**

- \* As you may be aware, St Helens College is currently undergoing a major redevelopment of its campuses. Phase 1 of the new build in the town centre opened in September and has been very well received by staff and students. Phase 2 was one of only thirteen nationally to be given the go ahead, and work begins in earnest very soon to demolish the rest of the old buildings on the town centre site to make way for the second batch of new buildings. Please pray that all goes smoothly with this work and with the correct allocation of funding to give the people of St Helens a world class, state of the art learning environment. Please pray for Pat Bacon (Principal) and the rest of the Management Team as they work to ensure that the right funding is

secured. Please also pray for Shaun Anders (Head of Estates) who is project managing the town centre redevelopment. Pray that the workload will be manageable and that the stress levels will be low!

\* Please pray for Paul Johnson, College Chaplain, as he seeks to develop a multi faith Chaplaincy Team which will offer care and support to staff and students of all faiths and beliefs and none.

\* Please pray for Craig Lawrenson (CLC) who is the first volunteer Associate Chaplain to join the team. Pray that he will settle into the role quickly and that he will enjoy meeting new people and be able to form good relationships quickly. Pray that more people will join the team so that staff and students have easy access to a Chaplain or Associate Chaplain on all sites within a suitable timescale.

\* Please pray for the 'Faith Fair' on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. This will be an event for staff and students to visit stands which give the basic beliefs of various religions. These will hopefully be staffed by people who practice the particular faith and the day will culminate in a question and answer panel where students can explore their own beliefs.

\* As you can see, the Chaplaincy at St Helens College is thriving and is preparing to move to the next level. Please pray that God's hand will be upon it and that it continues to be a help to all staff and students.

### **Please pray for the churches in Eccleston and Windle**

18<sup>th</sup> October – Christ Church Eccleston and St Luke's Eccleston

19<sup>th</sup> October – Eccleston Methodist Church

20<sup>th</sup> October – St Julie's

21<sup>st</sup> October – St Andrew's

22<sup>nd</sup> October – St Teresa's

23<sup>rd</sup> October – Newtown United Reformed Church

24<sup>th</sup> October – St Thomas of Canterbury.

## **Sunday 25th – 31st October**

### **Local Issues 1**

Philippians 2:19–20 *"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I may also be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no-one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare"* (TNIV)

It is clear from reading Philippians that Paul very much cared for the Philippian church. Even though, because he is in prison, Paul is unable to visit the Philippians, Paul seeks to send Timothy and Paul knows that Timothy will share the same concern for the Philippians as Paul himself would.

As Christians we have a duty to care for those whom we know. Let's take the time now to pray for the issues in our own area, and may our prayers lead us into action as we seek to show the same concern for the welfare of St Helens.

**Carole Hudson, the chief executive of St Helens Council, has asked us to pray particularly for the following local issues...**

- \* At the moment many victims of crime are increasingly afraid to come forward as witnesses in court, which means the perpetrators of crime cannot be brought to justice. Pray that victims of crime, many of whom are elderly or vulnerable, have the courage and protection they need to come forward in helping the police bring about justice.
- \* Pray for local people who are currently unemployed. Pray that new jobs will come available in the area
- \* Pray for young people in particular who struggle to find employment.
- \* Pray for the many local people from St Helens who at the moment are serving in the armed forces, particularly those in Afghanistan. Pray for their families who live each day anxious for news from their loved ones.

**Please also pray for....**

- \* Pray for the many elderly and infirm people in our area, who have many struggles with day to day life. Pray particularly for those who do not have family to help them.
- \* Please pray for those who are suffering from dementia. Dementia is becoming increasingly common and it is a devastating illness which also places huge demands on families and friends of sufferers.

**And finally...**

- \* Safety for the people of St Helens, particularly as this time of year is well known as a time for mischief. Pray especially for older people who often feel intimidated at night by what goes on outside.

**Please pray for the churches in Haydock and Earlestown**

- 25th October – Earlestown Baptist Church
- 26<sup>th</sup> October – Blessed English Martyrs RC Church
- 27<sup>th</sup> October – St James the Great, Haydock
- 28<sup>th</sup> October – St Mark’s Haydock
- 29<sup>th</sup> October – Christ Church United Reformed Church
- 30<sup>th</sup> October – Haydock Independent Methodist Church
- 31<sup>st</sup> October – Haydock Methodist Church

**Sunday 1st November – 7th November**

**Young People**

*Philippians 3: 7–9 “But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them all garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of*

*my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith” (TNIV)*

Paul lost so much when he decided to follow Christ. Paul was very respected and well thought of as a Jew. He was a Pharisee, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. He held a prestigious position in Jewish society. He had money and very good career prospects. When Paul lost all that by deciding to follow Christ, you would think that Paul would at least have a small inkling of regret. Paul now is in prison, he’s been beaten, he’s had to work long hours to make a living and he’s lived life on the road. Yet Paul has no regrets because as he writes – everything is rubbish compared to gaining Christ.

Across St Helens, much work is being done to tell children and young people about the worth of gaining Christ. Let’s pray for that work this week.

**Craig Lawrenson, on behalf of Youth Aflame, has asked us to pray for Youth Aflame and in particular the monthly youth café venture at St Helens Parish Church. He writes...**

“Following on from our Youth Aflame outreach events this year we feel God is leading us to try and further engage with the young people who attend our events. We regularly meet the same group of young people at our events but feel we need to try and develop more relationships and offer more than just our outreach events.

With this in mind we are working with Parish church to offer a café come chill out area for the young people of St Helens. We see this as a way of developing relationships and community and building to café church. This will be a Pilot programme and run monthly until Christmas.

Our dates will be Friday evenings 20th November and 11th December

**Please pray for...**

- \* God’s peace and protection.
- \* God’s Spirit to be working with the young people who attend.
- \* Divine appointments with young people who need our love, support, and ultimately need Jesus.
- \* Wisdom for all our leaders when faced with difficult issues, or challenging behaviour.
- \* God’s continued favour with St Helens council and the local Police.
- \* God’s direction and leading as we seek Him for the next step beyond our initial trial.
- \* Blessing and encouragement for Parish Church as they continue to support us with all of our efforts to reach the young people of St Helens.
- \* God spoke to me clearly after our spring Youth Aflame event regarding the group of young people we are currently reaching out to. The word he gave me was revolution. Please pray a revolution for all of the young people we encounter from the kingdom of darkness into the wonderful light of Jesus Christ.

### **Please pray in particular for....**

\* All of the children and young people's groups run in our churches that teach the Christian faith. Pray for our Sunday groups, mid-week clubs and after-school clubs, that they may be able to communicate effectively the worth of gaining Christ.

\* Pray that more children and young people join the groups that are run across St Helens

\* Pray for the leaders of these groups, that through their words and actions, children and young people may see Christ.

### **Please also pray for...**

\* Finally, as it is Bonfire Night this week, please pray for our emergency services at this very busy time of year. Pray for safety for our emergency services as they seek to keep St Helens a safe place. Pray particularly for the fire service. Thank God for the services they provide to St Helens and the local area.

### **Please pray for the churches in Newton-Le-Willows**

1<sup>st</sup> November – All Saints C of E Church and Emmanuel, Wargrave

2<sup>nd</sup> November – Newton Christian Fellowship

3<sup>rd</sup> November – St David's RC Church and St Patrick's RC Church.

4<sup>th</sup> November – St John's C of E Church

5<sup>th</sup> November – St Peter's C of E Church

6<sup>th</sup> November – St Mary and St John RC Church

7<sup>th</sup> November – Newton Methodist Church

## **Sunday 8th – 14th November**

### **Local Issues 2**

Philippians 3:12–14 *“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and Sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus”* (TNIV)

We now live in an age where we set ourselves goals and targets to achieve in all areas of life. Many of the agencies that work in our locality have set themselves specific goals to reach in order to make St Helens and the local area a better place to live. This week let's pray for some of those agencies, that they fulfil their goals, as they seek to make St Helens a better place.

### **The new Saints chaplains, Gaz Tracey and Paul Day, have asked us to pray for Saints and in particular for...**

- \* Pray for Mick Potter, Kieron Purtill & Mike Rush as they recover from the climax of this season and as the planning and building begins for next season.
- \* Pray for Gaz Tracey and Paul Day as they continue to settle into the chaplaincy roles they have recently taken up.
- \* Pray for those players who are moving in the closed season period either to come to play for Saints or those moving on.
- \* Thank God that doors continue to be open and our ministry within the club both requested and welcomed.

### **Please also pray in particular for...**

- \* Pray for the Ward Committees that go on across the borough. Pray that these committees will be well attended by members of each area and that the forums will be a springboard for improving life in the areas we live in.
- \* Please also pray for the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) groups, which aim to get the various agencies who work in the borough to work together.
- \* Please pray for the many agencies, statutory and voluntary, who seek to solve some of the problem issues within our borough. Pray particularly for them as they continue to tackle the problem of drug addiction – and to help those who suffer from drug addiction.

### **Please pray for the churches of Parr and Rainford**

- 8<sup>th</sup> November – Holy Trinity, Parr Mount
- 9<sup>th</sup> November – Parr Methodist Church and the Salvation Army, Tickle Avenue
- 10<sup>th</sup> November – St Vincent de Paul RC Church
- 11<sup>th</sup> November – St Peter's Parr and St Philip's Derbyshire Hill
- 12<sup>th</sup> November – Corpus Christi RC Church, Rainford
- 13<sup>th</sup> November – All Saints Rainford
- 14<sup>th</sup> November – Rainford United Reformed Church and Rainford Methodist Church

## **Sunday 15th – 21st November**

### **Family Issues**

Philippians 4:6 *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God”*

Families are at the heart of all our lives. Being part of a family often can bring great joy. But sometimes, because families are so important to us, or if there are problems in the family, families can bring much worry too. Even though we are often very much concerned for our families, we need to remember that God is very interested in families and that he has a heart for family life.

This week let's bring the lives of families in St Helens before God in prayer, and present our requests concerning the families of St Helens.

**Please pray for...**

\* Last week was National Adoption Week (10-16<sup>th</sup> November). Pray for the children and young people from St Helens who need a foster family. Pray that as a result of National Adoption Week more foster families will come forward in order to give these children and young people a home.

**Fact**

*In 2008, Almost 60,000 children were 'looked after' by the 150 Local Authorities in England and Wales, nearly 15,000 in Scotland and 2,500 in Northern Ireland. Children in care are four times more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and take drugs. Many are frequently moved from one home to another. (taken from the CARE.org.uk website)*

\* Thank God for your own family. Remember them before God one by one. Pray for those, particularly the elderly, who have little or no family around to support them.

\* Pray for families where there is conflict at the moment, or where families are separated, or where members of families have fallen out and refuse to speak to one another. Ask God, who is the God of peace, to bring peace to those families.

\* Pray for families with very young children. Often young families bring a lot of added stress as well as a lot of joy. Pray especially for the parents of young children, that God would give them strength.

\* Pray for parents. The following prayer may be helpful: "Father God, please grant parents the wisdom, patience, love and strength that they need to bring up their children. Draw near to those who find the task of parenting demanding and difficult, and bring others alongside who can help them. Amen" (taken from the CARE.org.uk website).

\* Pray particularly for families who are going through financial difficulties in St Helens at this time and families affected by rising unemployment.

**Please pray for the churches of Prescot and Thatto Heath**

15<sup>th</sup> November – Our Lady Help of Christians RC Church and St James', Eccleston Park

16<sup>th</sup> November – Prescot Methodist Church and Whiston Methodist Church

17<sup>th</sup> November – Prescot Salvation Army and Prescot Community Church

18<sup>th</sup> November – Balmer Street Methodist Church, Nutgrove Methodist Church and West Street Independent Methodist Church

19<sup>th</sup> November – St John's Ravenhead and St Matthew's Thatto Heath

20<sup>th</sup> November – St Austin's

21<sup>st</sup> November – Toll Bar with Prescot United Reformed Church

## Sunday 22nd – 28th November

### The Local Church

Philippians 4:13 *“I can do all this through him who gives me strength”*

There are times in churches, when everything seems to go really well. For instance when a new venture seems to be successful, or when new people come along on a Sunday. There are other times in churches, when everything seems to be going wrong. For instance when the church is vandalised, or when despite our efforts nothing seems to be working.

In both those times, it can be very tempting to forget about God. When things are going well, it is easy to forget about God and think we can do it by ourselves. When things are not going well, we start to try harder and we try and rely on our own strength.

But Paul knows that all he does, he does because God enables him to. As this week we pray specifically for local churches – may we too be aware that whatever we do as churches across St Helens, we do through God who gives us strength. That’s why it is so important to pray for the work we do as local churches.

#### **Janet Roberts – St Paul’s Blackbrook has asked us to pray for...**

- \* Pray for increased funding and better finance for St Paul’s playgroup, so that it can continue to provide a valuable and needy service to the community.
- \* Give thanks for the very successful Holiday Club at St Paul’s which ran at the end of August. Give thanks for the new leaders that came forward to help at the holiday club and give thanks that some of them are going to be leaders at the midweek kids club – TJs.
- \* Give thanks for the Senior Fellowship that meets on a Monday afternoon. Thank God for the way it helps bring people together and pray that new members would join too.
- \* Pray for the Parr Team as they seek to employ a student children’s/youth worker in Sept 2010.

#### **Please also pray for...**

- \* The new youth club at Holy Trinity, Fingerpost – the Beacon Y Club. Give thanks for the number of young people it attracts and pray that the young people continue to enjoy themselves.
- \* Pray generally for the protection of all church buildings in St Helens. Pray also for guidance for all those entrusted to look after the church buildings in St Helens.
- \* Pray that all of us, as churches in St Helens, would rely on God’s guidance and strength as they continue to serve the people of St Helens and the borough.

**Please pray for the churches of Sutton and Rainhill**

22<sup>nd</sup> November – All Saints Sutton, St Michael's Sutton and St Nicholas' Sutton

23<sup>rd</sup> November – Clock Face Methodist Church, Sutton Methodist Church and Sutton Village Church

24<sup>th</sup> November – Church of the Nazarene and Peasley Cross United Reformed Church

25<sup>th</sup> November – St Ann & Blessed Dominic, and St Theresa's

26<sup>th</sup> November – St Bartholomew's RC Church and St Anne's Rainhill

27<sup>th</sup> November – Trinity Church, Rainhill

28<sup>th</sup> November – St James' Methodist Church, Rainhill