

## Focus August 2021



**Northall Baptist Church – 200 years and still going.**

**A little Church with strong local links.**

### Local summer surprises

What heralds summer for you? Is it flaming June? Is it the meteorologists telling us that summer is here? Is it the well-kept gardens and hay fever? Sunstroke then thunderstorms? Are you looking forward to holidays? There seems to be a whole flurry of summer sport - Wimbledon, the Olympics, the Euros.

The farmers begin a very busy period, planting, spraying, watering and then harvesting. We see that the fields start to show signs of considerable growth. Each year we wonder what has been planted in the field next to us. It's often wheat or barley, sometimes rapeseed. One year was corn on the cob.

This year it was a mystery for quite some while. Following considerable flooding, leaving huge puddles, there was little to show for weeks apart from some wispy stems around well-watered weeds. Was anything actually growing there? Very gradually the crop began to materialise. But what was it. Certainly not wheat! We waited some more until we noticed a subtle blue sheen over the field.



**Northall flax fields 2021**

After some investigations a delicate blue flower became apparent but only when the sun shone. When the sun went in the blue hue disappeared and it returned to a green glow. The blue carpet though looks amazing. It is flax!

So what is flax used for. Well linen is made from it as well as linseed oil. How long has flax been around? Is flax mentioned in the Bible? I was reminded that in Joshua the two spies were sent to spy out the land around Jericho – the land that they were later to report was flowing with milk and honey. A prostitute, Rahab hid the spies on the roof of her house under some drying flax. Rahab was rewarded for her faith in this by being saved, along with all her family, when Jericho was captured. Later at the beginning of Matthew's gospel, Rahab is named in the genealogy of Jesus as the great, great grandmother of King David. Jesus is known as King David's greater son many generations later. Rahab's faith was therefore significant and the flax pivotal.

Linen was a symbol of purity in Biblical times, and it is recorded in the prophets that angelic beings appeared, wearing fine linen garments (Ezekiel Chapters 9 and 10;

Daniel Chapters 10 and 12; and Revelation Chapter 15).

It still seems that flax was and remains very useful today.

We are holding our Sunday services in Church at 11 am. If you would like to join in the worship, music and song, you'll get a very warm welcome. For those interested in the history of Northall Baptist Church, a free copy of the booklet, Rebels in Green Pastures can be supplied or downloaded from our website:

<http://northallbaptistchurch.org/>



**The flax flower**