

Sunday May 3rd *For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or at another time*

Prayer

Risen Lord, open our hearts and minds to worship you in this Easter season. Amen.

Hymn StF 295

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord: Alleluia, alleluia, give praise to his name.

Jesus is Lord of all the earth; he is the King of creation: Alleluia, alleluia...

Spread the good news o'er all the earth: Jesus has died and has risen: Alleluia, alleluia...

Come, let us praise the living God, joyfully sing to our Saviour: Alleluia, alleluia...

Donald Fishel (b. 1950) CCL nos. 168415, 495683, 102550, 962013 & others

Prayer of Confession

If we have fallen into despair: Lord, forgive us.

If we have failed to hope in you: Lord, forgive us.

If we have been fearful of death: Lord, forgive us.

If we have forgotten the victory of Christ: Lord, forgive us.

May the living God raise us from despair, give us victory over sin and set us free in Christ.

Worship for the Easter Season from the Methodist Worship Book

Psalm set for today: Psalm 23

Interesting note: most Bible passages appear only once in the three year lectionary. The 23rd Psalm appears at least 6 times including in each of the 3 years on the 4th Sunday of Easter (1st service).

Lectionary Gospel Reading: John 10 v 1 – 10 (you may want to go on to v 11 or even v 16)

For thought

Both the psalm, and the gospel, are good passages for 'lectio divina'. Choose one, and read it through again, slowly. Be aware of a word or phrase that 'jumps out' at you and that will become your word for today. Read the passage one more time and reflect on how the word or phrase or passage impacts your life at the moment. Then turn your thoughts into prayer.

Hymn StF 348

He is Lord, he is Lord.

He is risen from the dead and he is Lord.

Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess / that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He is King... He is Life... He is Love... He is Lord...

Noel Richards (b 1955) CCL licences as above.

For Prayer

We pray that we will hear the Good Shepherd calling our name and will want to continue to follow.

We pray for our world, for our country, for the Methodist Church and for our own Central Norfolk Circuit, for our community, our local church and fellowship, our family and friends, ourselves.

We pray for everyone coping with the present pandemic – those who are ill, those who have lost loved ones, those who are nursing, those who are serving and caring, those who are organising support and help, those who are supplying goods and services, those in government.

We pray with Jill Skinner* in her role as Mayor of Swaffham:

Please give us patience and fortitude during this most difficult time when our freedom and everything we know has changed. Loving God, you have not changed, guide us and keep us safe so we might all meet again and share our lives. Amen.

**from now on we will be praying with a different person in the circuit each week*

We say the Lord's Prayer...

Offer to God your offertory for the week: and, if cash, put it aside in a special place.

Message from a Circuit Friend (a different person each week)

In my second year at University (a long time ago – don't ask!) I decided I wanted to widen my circle of friends and was advised to join one of the religious societies. I knew somebody on my course had something to do with one of them (it turned out he was actually the President of the Christian Union) so I asked him and he invited me along. For the first term all jogged along quite happily – yes there were, I thought, rather a lot of prayers and Bible readings but I assumed that in this sort of group one had to put up with that. I shall never forget the profound shock I felt when at the end of the term I suddenly realised that these people actually meant what they said. The next 60 or so years have been, as they say, history.

At times like these when perhaps we find our faith tested do we really mean what we say (pray, read, sing) every week in our churches? Are we putting our faith on hold until we can get back our churches again (and when will that be – June, September, Christmas) or are we living out our relationship with God in Christ day by day, albeit in very different ways to what we are used to. I think it is wonderful how people throughout the church, here in our Circuit and in every branch of the church, are showing a determination to continue to worship God and share his love with others as we offer help to those in need. The closure of the buildings is irrelevant to our practical faith. 'We mean what we say.'

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

(2 Corinthians 12:9)

Tony Hey (Circuit Local Preacher and member at Holt)

Collect for the day

Good Shepherd of the sheep,
by whom the lost are sought and guided into the fold:
Feed us and we shall be satisfied;
heal us and we shall be made whole;
and lead us, that we may be with you;
for you are alive and reign, with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Methodist Worship Book

Hymn StF 479

The King of love my shepherd is / whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his / and he is mine for ever.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed / but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid / and home rejoicing brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill / with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still / thy cross before to guide me.

And so through all the length of days / thy goodness faileth never:

Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise / within thy house for ever. Henry Williams Baker (1821 – 1877)

May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us (and all those we love) this day and always, Amen.