

Sunday May 17th *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 148 / H&P 575 (tune is the Sussex Carol: 'On Christmas night, all Christians sing')

Come, let us with our Lord arise / our Lord, who made both earth and skies:
who died to save the world he made / and rose triumphant from the dead;
he rose, the Prince of life and peace / and stamped the day forever his.

This is the day the Lord has made / that all may see his love displayed,
may feel his resurrection's power / and rise again, to fall no more,
in perfect righteousness renewed / and filled with all the life of God.

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

Prayer of Confession

If we have fallen into despair, if we have failed to hope in you, if we have been fearful of death, 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.

Based on a prayer from Worship for the Easter Season from the Methodist Worship Book

Epistle set for today: 1 Peter 3 v 13 – 22

Lectionary Gospel Reading : John 14 v 15 – 21

For thought

What does the Gospel passage say about the Holy Spirit? (Try and name at least 3 things!)

Hymn StF 435 (suggested tune: Amazing Grace StF 440)

We come to you with no pretence / yet nourished by your grace.

We come as people needing love / within this time and place.

We need your spirit to be strong / your risking, leaping faith,
that brings the love of God to bear / in every aching space.

Then from this point, restored, renewed / we pledge to take your way;

To live responding to your call / with each succeeding day.

Andrew Pratt (b. 1948)

For Prayer

We pray for those with no hope, those who despair, those who are fearful of death.

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

We pray for everyone coping with the pandemic – those who are ill, those who have lost loved ones, those who are nursing or giving with medical treatment, those who are serving and caring, those who are organising, those who are supplying, those who are responsible in government.

We pray with **Sam Parfitt** (in her job as rural planter at Blakeney & Walsingham) for all those who are working from home, especially those who are negotiating the challenge of finding new ways of working at the same time as embracing home learning with their children. In particular, we pray for parents who are supporting children who have SEN (Special Educational Needs) for whom the challenge is greatest, especially at a time when many additional support services are impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.

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

When I receive a new plan I look at the readings for my upcoming appointments to see if a theme jumps out at me to start me thinking. I read in Peter's letter – 'Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you, an account of the hope that is in you.' 'Hope.' This has become more of a challenge as the weeks have gone on! What is the hope I have in me?

In the gospel reading, as Jesus prepared his disciples for his departure – it was the hope that they would continue to know him and his Father's love through his Spirit and through the enabling of the same spirit show that love themselves to the world. It has always struck me how when that spirit came it was 'when they were altogether in one place.' (Acts 2:1)

We cannot be together in one place physically but we can be together in hope. We may still be in 'lock down' of some sort for fear of spreading Covid19, but we can still spread the hope that is in us – and what an amazing number of ways people are finding to do that! Hope or hopefulness can be catching – even from a distance!

We might all have heard the words in song recently - 'walk on with hope in your heart – and you'll never walk alone.' Paul in his big three (1 Corinthians 13:13) places hope between faith and love. Faith is the journey. Love is the destination. Hope holds the two together. Walk on (in faith) with hope in your heart (in love) and you'll never walk alone.

And to answer the question - my hope is in a God of love, manifested in Jesus his son – and through us by his spirit. The challenge is how to demonstrate that today.

Barbara Winner (Supernumary in the Central Norfolk Circuit)

Prayer

God of love, through the enabling of your spirit help me in these times of isolation to find meaningful ways to share the hope that is in me. The hope I have experienced through the love of your son Jesus Christ and through the love of many people of all faiths and none. Help me to travel in faith in the hope that you give me to come at last to know your love in all its fullness. Amen.

Rev Barbara Winner

To consider

Ascension Day is this coming Thursday and we will be thinking about it in worship next Sunday. In recent years, the Methodist Church (in conjunction with the Church of England) has marked the days between Ascension Day and Pentecost (i.e. 21st – 31st) as a 9 day special known as 'Thy Kingdom Come'. The original idea from the Archbishop of Canterbury was to pray during this time for friends who are not Christians, but the 9 days have been used in a more general way as well to pray for local communities, our country and the world and, indeed, for God's kingdom to come. If you would like to use a very simple prayer scheme during this time period, a suggested one accompanies this sheet.

Hymn StF 398 / H&P 326

There's a spirit in the air / telling Christians everywhere:
'Praise the love that Christ revealed / living, working in our world!'

Lose your shyness, find your tongue / Tell the world what God has done:
God in Christ has come to stay / live tomorrow's life today.

When a stranger's not alone / where the homeless find a home,
Praise the love that Christ revealed / living, working in our world.

May the Spirit fill our praise / guide our thoughts and change our ways.
God in Christ has come to stay / live tomorrow's life today.

John Mason Neale (1811 – 1866)

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

