

Sunday May 24th *For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or at another time*

Today is the Sunday after Ascension Day, the seventh Sunday in Eastertide, and also – of significance to Methodists! – Aldersgate Day (when we remember John Wesley’s heart being ‘strangely warmed’ on 24th May in 1738) falls today.

Call to Worship

Alleluia! The Lord reigns! Let the earth rejoice: Alleluia!

Hymn StF 300 / H&P 197

Hail the day that sees him rise, *Alleluia!* Ravished from our wistful eyes! *Alleluia!*

Christ, awhile to mortals given, *Alleluia!* Reascends his native heaven: *Alleluia!*

There the glorious triumph waits: *Alleluia!* Lift your heads, eternal gates; *Alleluia!*

Wide unfold the radiant scene; *Alleluia!* Take the King of Glory in! *Alleluia!*

Cast ourselves before your throne, *Alleluia!* Here our heaven of heavens to own, *Alleluia!*

There we shall with you remain, *Alleluia!* Partners of your endless reign: *Alleluia!*

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

Offer to God your own prayer of thanksgiving and confession.

Reading about the Ascension of Jesus: Acts 1 v 6 – 14

Lectionary Gospel Reading: John 17 v 1 – 11

For thought

Chapters 14 – 17 in John’s Gospel recount words of Jesus spoken at the time of the Last Supper, just before Jesus is arrested. In chapter 17, Jesus prays for first for himself, then for the disciples, and finally for all future believers. It is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus. Count how many times the word ‘world’ is used in the whole prayer. What does this say to you? And in our current situation?

Hymn StF 676 / H&P 764

Christ, from whom all blessings flow / perfecting the saints below,
hear us who thy nature share / who thy mystic body are.

Join us, in one spirit join / let us still receive of thine;
still for more on thee we call / thou who fillest all in all.

Love, like death, has all destroyed / rendered all distinctions void;
names, and sects, and parties fall / thou, O Christ, art all in all.

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

For Prayer

As Jesus prayed in John 17 v 11, pray for Christian unity – that all Christian disciples may be one.

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 present emergency – those who are ill, those who have lost loved ones, those who are nursing and giving 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 Jacky Woor on behalf of all those who would have been involved with the MWiB \(Methodist Women in Britain\) service this afternoon, for all who journey both at home and overseas to bring the love of God to those in most need. We pray especially for Mission Partners, past and present, who have been prepared to travel vast distances to give the Good News of Jesus our Lord and Saviour.](#)

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

‘So when the (disciples) met together, they asked him “‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Jesus) replied: “It is not for you to know the times and dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on to you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

When I was writing this, many people were asking a question not unlike that of the disciples. ‘When are the restrictions related to Covid 19 being relaxed and when can we go back to something approaching ‘normal’? All we know is this; the country is going through a time that has not been known for over a century. There has been a tragic loss of life and there are financial problems that will take years to overcome. Nevertheless there have been countless examples of good – people helping others, going ‘the extra mile’, and generally a superb community effort, and many of our churches have played a part in this.

We have adapted to change. We have joined together in worship electronically where-ever possible, or by written word. Some of our churches have put prayers or posters on their notice-boards.

Many have continued to contribute to the good causes they usually support.

It may not be for us to know when or how we will emerge from this crisis. What we do know is that God is with us, will continue to support us at all times, sad or happy, and that we need to use that knowledge and the power of the Holy Spirit to do what Jesus told his disciples – ‘go and be my witnesses to the world’.

John Hull (Local Preacher and member of Beetley Methodist Church)

Collect for Aldersgate Sunday

Almighty God, you raised up your servants, John and Charles Wesley,
to proclaim anew the gift of redemption and the life of holiness.

Pour out your Spirit, and revive your work among us;

that inspired by the same faith, and upheld by the same grace in word and sacrament,
we and all your children may be made one in the unity of your Church on earth,
even as in heaven we are made one in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Methodist Worship Book

Hymn StF 620 / H&P 374

Thou God of truth and love / we seek thy perfect way,
ready thy choice to approve / thy providence to obey;
enter into thy wise design / and sweetly lose our will in thine.

Why hast thou cast our lot / in the same age and place,
and why together brought / to see each other’s face,
to join with loving sympathy / and mix our friendly souls in thee?

Didst thou not make us one / that we might one remain,
together travel on / and share our joy and pain,
till all thy utmost goodness prove / and rise renewed in perfect love?

Then let us ever bear / the blessed end in view,
and join, with mutual care / to fight our passage through;
and kindly help each other on / till all receive the starry crown.

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

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

