



22nd March 2020

Priory Methodist Church Weekly Newsletter

Our Minister is the Reverend Andrew Hollins

Tel. No. 01234 340167

Andrew has Friday as a rest day.

Please avoid contacting him for routine matters on that day

Rev. Andrew Hollins has annual leave booked from the afternoon of Sunday 22nd March until Sunday 29th March inclusive. Before the coronavirus pandemic escalated, arrangements had been put in place for Rev. Dalwyn Attwell (dalwyn.attwell@methodist.org.uk or 01767 449488) to provide cover for urgent matters requiring a minister during Andrew's absence. Contact details for other circuit staff who may be able to help are in the circuit magazine and on the website (www.northbedsmethodist.org.uk).

Church Office Tel. No. 01234 353523, Email: office@priorychurch.org.uk

Please note office hours are generally 9.00 – 14.00

Church Website: <http://www.priorychurch.org.uk>

You can read Priory News and weekly notices here

Priory Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/PrioryMethodistChurch>

Circuit Website: <http://www.northbedsmethodist.org.uk>

More information and resources can be found here.

**Priory will be
open on
Sundays
10.30-11.30 am
for private
prayer.**

**ALL services
and meetings
are suspended**

**Light a candle of hope
at 7pm this Sunday:
A national call to prayer**



In the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic,
Presidents of CTE are calling all churches
to a National Day of Prayer & Action
on Sunday 22nd March



cte.org.uk/calltoprayer

Reader 1

On our Lenten Journey to the Jerusalem of yesterday, we reflect upon our own communities today. We recall today how Jesus healed a man born blind and reflect on the ways in which our society cares for the sick and disabled. And on Mothering Sunday, we think of the needs of families.

Reader 2

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no-one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

After saying this, he spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. *John 9: 1 - 8*

A walking stick and pair of glasses are placed by the cross

Reader 2

These symbols of disability remind us that Jesus gave sight to the blind man and so often restored the health and vitality of those who were sick or disabled. In the light of Jesus' compassion let us reflect on the treatment of the sick and disabled in our communities. And as Jesus showed compassion to the children, let us reflect on all that makes for a good childhood and for educational opportunities.

What changes can we envisage to enable our society to be more compassionate towards those who are sick, elderly or disabled? We think of the disabled denied appropriate benefits. We think of the National Health Service and give thanks but ask what polices might help it be more efficient and effective. We think of families and all who work with them in schools and social care and reflect on their needs.

Reader 2:

Compassionate God, you came in Jesus that all might discover life in all its fullness. We pray for the communities in which we live.

All: May Christ be known and his love be shown

We remember those who are sick; those who struggle because of disability; the frail elderly; those who feel they receive inadequate care for their needs; that all may have the opportunity to become all that they can be.

All: May Christ be known and his love be shown

We pray for the changes that are needed in our lives, the life of our nation and the policies of our leaders to bring about a compassionate society where healing is seen in the love and care for all in need.

All: May Christ be known and his love be shown.

Help us to be involved in making Christ known in all we are and do as we dedicate ourselves to his kingdom. **Amen**

[Lent 4]

Keeping In Touch

In this difficult and strange time an important thing is we try and keep in touch with everyone, whether by phone or email.

Anyone with news they would like to share please email or phone Sue in the office to include in a weekly newsletter. These are being sent out by email and put on the Church website. If we are aware of people that have not got access to these services a few printed copies will be at Church for pick up.

Sue will be in the office, normal hours.

PRAYER FOCUS for week beginning Sunday 22nd March

Our major focus for prayer is the impact of the Covid 19/Coronavirus pandemic upon so many aspects of life. We are especially asked to pray for those infected by the virus, those being treated and those who are grieving for loved ones who have died as a result of infection. We give thanks for the medical, nursing, emergency, support and other staff and volunteers who are working so hard to respond at this time of crisis. We also pray for those whose levels of anxiety and fear are especially raised at this time, and we give thanks for examples of care and compassion in these difficult circumstances.

Today is Mothering Sunday ~ We give thanks for the positive examples of motherhood which many of us have experienced, recognising that today can also be difficult for people for a wide variety of reasons. In all of this, we give thanks for the assurance of faith in a parent God who loves and cares for all of creation, and who works through the love which we share with each other within and beyond family life.

Church ~ We pray for wisdom to discern and apply different ways of being Church in these challenging times when we can't meet together for public worship. We remember that the roots of the Christian Church were planted in small groups, often meeting in homes, against the background of persecution and fear. Let us remember that we are united as members of Christ's body, even when we can't meet together. Prayer is a powerful reminder of this unity.

People and Situations ~ as we pray for the major concerns of the world around us, let us remember to pray for specific people who are ill or with other particular needs, especially for Barbara Barlow and family as they grieve for Phil who died on 8th March.

A Bible verse to give hope ~ God did not give us a spirit that makes us weak and fearful. He gave us a spirit that gives us power and love. It helps us control ourselves. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Funeral Service for Phil Barlow

Depending on the changing impact of the coronavirus pandemic, it is anticipated that Phil's funeral service will be held at 10.45am on Tuesday 7th April at Norse Road Crematorium. In order to comply with the restrictions around numbers of people attending funerals, the service is to be attended by family plus a small number of others who have been specifically invited. The proposed Thanksgiving Service for Phil's life has been postponed. We recognise that these arrangements are far from ideal and will be disappointing to many. However, please continue to pray for members of Phil's family, especially Barbara, as they continue to grieve for him in these difficult circumstances.

'Hope' Prayer Space

Hope Bedfordshire have been offered an empty retail unit (the former greetings card shop next to Costa Coffee) in Bedford town centre. It was hoped to have this up and running as a pop-up prayer space around Easter time, but we are awaiting updates about how the coronavirus pandemic will affect this.

Contact: pip@hopebeds.org or carmen.rowe753@btinternet.com

Easter Lilies

Sorry, we will no longer be doing these.

Thank you's

Thank you all for the delightful flowers which Liz brought to me for my birthday. They are giving me great pleasure. Della Kemmenoe

It was really lovely to see Paddy Barrett recently with a beautiful gift of flowers from you all. It was very kind of you all to remember me, particularly as I don't worship with you, but to be remembered as part of the Christian family, Thank you for your love and support. I am gradually improving, and although it will take a long time, hopeful of a good result. Love and best wishes to you all. Wendy Hayward- Carter.

Yarlswood Easter eggs

Fr. Wayne has asked us to collect Easter eggs for those held in Yarlswood.

We donated a generous number last year which were very gratefully received by the detainees there. Please donate a small Easter egg, (£1). There will be a labelled box in the foyer for your kind donations. The eggs need to be collected by 1st April.

Many thanks, Jenny Lloyd and Lynne Gound (North Bedford Churches Together)

FOOD AND FUN BOXES

We will not be able to run Food and Fun this Easter, but the need amongst our families will be just as great, if not greater, so we have decided to offer boxes which the families can collect as a sign that they are not forgotten.

For this to happen whilst we minimize contact, we ask:

Please prepare your own box of food at home, using the list below. (We hope that panic buying will slow soon and we can get at least most of this!)

Deliver your box to Priory BY WEDNESDAY 1ST APRIL – Sue will be in the office each weekday morning, or bring it if you come on a Sunday morning for private prayer. Just leave it in the chapel.

We will add a small Easter egg, an Easter activity booklet and some craft supplies.

Families will be able to collect their boxes on a given morning as soon as we have them ready.

For one box:

1 pack cereal	1 carton long-life milk
1 tin of soup	1 small pack pasta or rice or large tin of potatoes
1 tin of fish or meat	2 tins of vegetables
1 tin of fruit	1 pack of cakes or biscuits
1 or 2 snack items:- crisps, cereal bars, fruit which will keep eg apples or satsumas, dried fruit	

Please make sure that all items are within their best before date.

THANK YOU!

Bedford Street Angels Update – For Prayer - 14th March

1.Reasonable number out with a good police presence

2.Gave water to a young woman who had been ill outside Barclays and took her and friend to taxi rank

3.Gave water to a homeless guy

4.Picked up about 10 bottles

5.Came across young man lying on ground near A1, gave him water and contacted his friends who came to pick him up

6.Tried to use phone charger, but not working – **please check**

7.Gave water and sick bags to guy in a stationary taxi who was feeling ill. Amazingly taxi driver still happy to take him

8.Spoke with a lady wanting to provide food for the homeless, suggested she contact Kings Arms

9.Gave out 3 pairs of flip flops and swept up glass

10.Police called to Barley Mow where one of the door staff had been assaulted, BSA checked if he needed help

11.Walked past Six's when a man was being evicted and trying to get back in, called CCTV and police came to deal with it

12.Received donation of £1.50

13.Went to Cashino's at 2.50am but they were closed so had tea at base and then back to streets till 4.00am

Sunday 22nd March 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use if you are unable to attend church. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you

Opening Prayer

As I come before you Jesus, open my eyes that I might truly see you as my shepherd, comforter, and redeemer. I want to be with others worshipping you but this is not possible, yet I know that I am being prayed for as part of the community of faith. Thank you for this time where I remember you are with me. Amen.

Hymn: Amazing Grace (Singing the Faith 440)

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tvt6E9N7AQw>

- 1 **Amazing grace -- how sweet the sound --
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.**
- 2 **God's grace has taught my heart to fear,
his grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!**
- 3 **Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.**
- 4 **The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.**
- 5 **And, when this heart and flesh shall fail
and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
a life of joy and peace.**
- 6 **When we've been there ten thousand years
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.**

John Newton (1725-1807) (alt.)

Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 440

Let us pray together

Lord, I worship you today. Help me to see your calling in my life.

Open my eyes to what is possible when I see things through the eyes of your Son.

Forgive what is passed, protect me from all that is to come

Today's Reading from the Old Testament 1

Samuel 16: 1-13

Today's Gospel Reading: John 9:1-41

"Jesus heard that they had thrown him [the blind man] out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him " John 9:35-38

Time to Reflect

"Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come; God's grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home. The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures; he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures".

When I was a teenager, I went through Confirmation Exercises in the local Anglican Church. I remember thinking how wonderful that Jesus would go through what he went through for the whole world. I was saddened and shocked by the way he was treated by not only his fellow Jews but also by the Romans. It wasn't until several years later that I

realized Jesus died for me personally, not just the whole world. It was for my sin too that Jesus had died. It was as if the scales fell off my eyes and I could finally see clearly. The Pharisees were becoming increasingly hostile toward Jesus, so hearing of this miracle, they cross questioned the man who was born blind. In verse 24 and 25, they summon the man and say, "Swear to God to tell us the truth! We know the man who healed you is a sinful man! Do you agree?" The healed man replied, "I have no idea what kind of man he is. All I know is that I was blind and now I can see for the first time in my life!"

Our youngest grandchild, Theo was diagnosed with many health-related problems. Developmentally he was delayed and although almost two years old now, he is not speaking, although making noises. He is beginning to pull himself up and walk holding on to the sidewalls. However, what made the biggest difference in Theo's life was finding out he needed glasses. My daughter, Joyce sent us a video of Theo donning his red framed plastic glasses. We saw him seeing and focusing on his mother's face. His countenance beamed, as he was able to register what he was looking at for probably the first time in his young life.

The blind man looking at Jesus' face said, "Lord, I believe." He could now see not only others and the world around him, but he could see Jesus clearly. Contemplate on when you have seen Jesus, not just as a good teacher, or as an historical person but as the One who knows you, loves you, and hears your every prayer.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

All seeing, all knowing God I call on you today. May your Spirit give your world a sense of calm and peace in these difficult times.

On this Mothering Sunday, we pray for all

Mums. The good ones and the not so good. We remember all those who would have liked to have children but for whatever reason could not.

We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty:

For those people who are worried about leaving their home and those who cannot.

For those needing to make decisions in order to care for other.

We pray for carers, doctors and nurses.

We continue to pray for those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend and act of worship today.

I especially want to pray for

**Holy God,
Present with us now, guide me in all I do and say – that it might reflect your love for the world.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen**

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father

Hymn: Listen to
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Hrh4IMgn-g>
or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

Lord, I commit myself to you today. At the end of this day, may I see you more clearly and love you more dearly, and follow you closer. **Amen.**