

Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit Facebook Posts April 2024

A very **Happy Easter** to all our followers... Here are clergy and others from different churches in Swaffham at the Butter Cross at 8 o'clock this morning. Christ is risen: He is risen indeed!



Pray with us today:

Hidden God,
you are known to me as absence
more than presence yet
just occasionally the
point of a needle breaks
through the fabric of my life,
makes one perfect golden stitch
and disappears again
into the depths.
It's not much, but
enough to know that
the thread is unbroken
and for that
I thank you.

Please pray for the congregation and community in Mattishall



A beautiful flower arrangement for **Palm Sunday** at Trinity Dereham Methodist Church.



A Thought for the Day from Deacon Jen:

Friends and family from Tittleshall and Litcham Methodist Churches gathered together for the Easter Day service. It was a delight for everyone to share in this special celebration.

During the service we considered all the various emotions that would have been felt on that first Easter Day – from fear and confusion, to gradual belief and understanding, and eventually joy. We made paper chains representing many of these emotions. Then we linked them up and hung the finished chain around the pulpit. This represented our belief that Jesus is always in the centre.

We all carry different emotions at different times so will react to things in different ways. But through all our life, Jesus is at the heart of everything. On the day of resurrection he told his disciples, 'Peace be with you' and then he added, 'As my Father has sent me, I am sending you'. So, during Eastertide and all our days to come, whoever we are, let us be messengers of that Peace, given to us from Jesus.



A thought from Aileen Fox:

Why is Jesus in Plastic?

We were walking down a street in Malta during February. The weather was mild in comparison with the UK. Café culture was alive, people sat chatting to friends, families were meeting up and of course there were many tourists. Suddenly my friend asked, "why is Jesus covered in plastic?" I hadn't noticed! I felt rather ashamed. As I looked along the street at the other statues in the square were of saints, or apostles and all were uncovered. I assumed that it was because we were in Lent and like many Cathedrals and Parish Churches the altar treasures are usually covered up to be revealed on Easter Day. Plastic was a more practical method given that it can rain a lot.

This got me thinking, I had not taken in that it was a statue of Jesus under the plastic. I had just dismissed it as a statue being renovated. My immediate interest had been whether I could find a table in the square for a coffee! My non-Church going friend had spotted the statue and recognised under the plastic who it represented and asked the question. So often we miss the obvious, this was a statue of Jesus in a busy place, amongst people from all walks of life, with the hustle and bustle. Just as Jesus would have been in the midst of crowds and ordinary people. How often do we push Jesus to one side, or limit him to Church on a Sunday? I had been given a sharp reminder that Jesus is or should be central in our lives. (In fact, I had to make a second journey to take the photo!)



Easter Breakfast before the church service
on Easter Sunday - at Trinity Dereham Methodist Church.

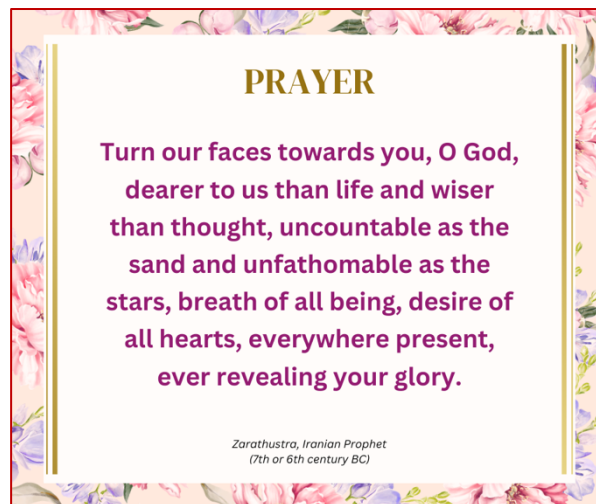
Please pray for the congregation and community in New Holkham



Pray with us today:

Sensitive God, as you hid your face from those who went before, knowing that we cannot grasp the full measure of your glory, thank you that so often in the quiet, hidden places you make your treasures known, teaching patient openness, and revealing depths of meaning and compassion or heights of possibility and hope. For treasures hidden in the gentle smile or kindly act, thank you. For courageous care and generosity of spirit, thank you. For persistent justice-seeking and moments of reconciliation, thank you. For all that illuminates the darkness in our own and others' lives, thank you. Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, enable us to see and share your treasure, guiding and upholding into love and life for all. Amen.

Find more ways to pray at methodist.org.uk/prayer



A thought from Rev Anne:

What do you see in the photo?

The signpost?

The fields?

The farm machinery?

The light?

The resurrection of Jesus changes everything. It's like a ray of light shining on us, changing our perspective.

How does the resurrection of Jesus change your life?

Do you follow or is your 'byway' restricted? What will enable God's light to shine on you and through you?



Please pray for the congregation and community in Saham Hills



We are praying for our Chair of District, Rev Julian, and for the rest of the team who are currently out in Zimbabwe consolidating the District's link with the Harare West Methodist District. To see photos of the visit go to <https://www.facebook.com/eastangliamethodist>.



A Thought for the Day from Rev Jacqui:



This 'Judas Tree' is always a delight when it comes into flower but particularly so this year. It is in a pot and we bring it into a position outside our living room window so that it can give us delight as the bright pink flowers (that grow directly off the stem) give way to heart-shaped leaves. I have reminded myself why it is so named – some think that Judas hung himself from such a tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) which is common in the Holy Land. The more likely explanation is that the name is a corruption of 'Judea's Tree' – Judea being the Greco-

Roman name for Judah, the land of the Jews.

Be that as it may, the tree in flower brings Judas to mind and, even more so for me this year, as I have just seen 'Jesus Christ Superstar' in Norwich where Judas has a starring role. This amazing musical shows Judas as a frustrated, disappointed, disillusioned disciple who works himself up to betray Jesus and then is in agonies of remorse after witnessing what actually happens to Jesus. Poor old Judas, we are tempted to think, although he was undoubtedly the author of his own wrong choices.

An interesting article by one Colin Smith comes up on the internet if you search for 'What can we learn from Judas'. I will just end with one quote from it: "Judas went out into the darkness he had chosen. When you get close to Jesus, one of two things will happen: either you will become wholly his, or you will end up more alienated from him... His claims are so exclusive, and his demands so pervasive that, in the end, you must either give yourself to him completely or give up him altogether. There is no middle ground." Discuss!!

Hingham Methodist Church

We had an exciting afternoon yesterday as a tree (Red Hawthorn) was planted, in honour of last year's coronation, on the village green, having been fundraised for by members and friends of the Chapel.

In the picture are Heather (Senior Steward), Jacqui (Minister), John (Supporter and great help in the matter of trees) and Alison (Clerk to the Town Council). Well done everybody!



Please pray for the congregation and community in Sculthorpe & Fakenham



A thought from Aileen Fox: **Light at the end of the tunnel**



How many times have we trotted out the comment 'there is light at the end of the tunnel' to others and also muttered it to ourselves. As you can see in the photo we were emerging from a dark tunnel into the light. However if you look ahead there is another tunnel coming.

Life can seem very dark at times and we long to be out in the light free from the troubles that crowd in on us. Unfortunately there is no guarantee that we will be free from dark times and even when there is light again, the dark times can still return. I was thinking of those experiencing war, sheltering in dark cellars. Others facing darkness of a different nature through grief, loneliness, depression, or struggling to feed loved ones. There are people living on the streets and many others facing discrimination.

The disciples lived through darkness not understanding why Jesus had died. Their joy when he appeared to them brought light into their darkness. But it came with an instruction to go out, possibly face danger and spread the good news of Jesus showing love.

As Christians are we prepared to offer a listening ear to someone, visit a lonely person, donate to a food bank? Are we willing to try and show Christianity in a practical way and bring light to someone in darkness? Just like the picture, following Jesus brings us into the light, but it can also be just a temporary respite as he sends us out into the darkness again. But we are not alone in the darkness he is with us enabling and encouraging us in his work.

Those who went on the mini-pilgrimage from Walsingham to Wighton yesterday had an enjoyable, and a meaningful walk. Sarah led us in both the route, and in short thoughts and prayers at significant points along the way. Once at the Methodist Heritage Centre we had a short act of worship (thank you Pippa for agreeing to play on the spot!) and there was plenty of opportunity to look at the new season's displays. It was a good day. The Heritage Centre is now open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 11 am to 3 pm until October.



A Thought for the Day from Deacon Jen:



During the Circuit morning prayer time, on zoom, that took place yesterday I was particularly struck by a few verses taken from Psalm 95. There are three phrases that include the same word. They are; 1) in His hands are the depths of the earth, 2) the sea is His - He made it, 3) the flock He leads with his hand.

When hands are used to create something, it becomes very significant and intimate. In an age of ever-increasing automation, where machines can apparently produce everything, we still value the personal touch of an item that has been 'hand-made'. It shows the commitment and focus of the creator. It will be made with care and often it is an act of love towards those for whom the item is made.

And so, when we have the image of God creating the land and sea with his hands, we have an image of this world being made with such care and love. Then, even more amazingly, he made his flock – we his people – with those same hands. Each of us in a unique and special way, each of us created and loved by God just as we are.

So, what does that mean to us now? St Teresa of Avila wrote: "Christ has no body but yours.... Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world." Let us all remember the love and care that can be shown through our hands and use them to share those blessings that God gives to us.

N.B. Circuit morning prayer times on zoom are on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday mornings. Please message us if you would like the link.

A thought for the day from Rev Anne:

It's been a busy week but I had a lovely hour out last Monday in the tulip fields! Colours are stunning - so vibrant even on a cloudy day. They're planted according to colour and type, but I noticed that odd ones of a different colour pop up every so often.

You may not feel you fit, or maybe you're very different from those around you, but don't underestimate the contribution you make!

PS - Tulip fields are open in support of Tapping House, the hospice. I think tickets are sold out.



Pray with us today

Creator God, you separated light and darkness giving us the precious gifts of day and night. You used the stars of the sky to illustrate your covenant promises. You sent messengers to the shepherds as they kept watch by night. Speak to us through the darkness.

Christ Jesus, you often prayed under the cover of darkness, searching for guidance about the next steps in your journey. In Gethsemane we sense you wrestling with questions yet affirming your commitment to God's will. From the hidden darkness of the tomb came resurrection and new life. Intercede with us in the darkness.

Holy Spirit, you brooded over the waters of the deep, calling forth rich treasures where we saw only a void. Elizabeth was filled with your presence as her baby leapt for joy in the darkness of the womb. In the secret depths of sleep, you spoke to your servants through dreams and visions. Show us what is hidden in the darkness. Amen.

Find more ways to pray at <https://brnw.ch/21wJ9tp>.

Please pray for the congregation and community in Sporle

