

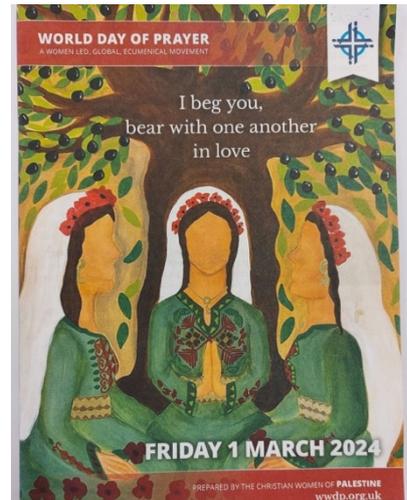
Facebook Posts March 2024

A thought from Rev Anne:

As Rev Jacqui reminded us on Tuesday, today is the World Day of Prayer. There are ecumenical services around the circuit, some in our Methodist Churches and some in those belonging to our Christian brothers and sisters. It's one of the only times in a year that we do this. How wonderful that we can worship with all Christians, all over the world, on a Day of Prayer!

The artwork on the cover of the booklet is entitled 'Praying Palestinian Women'. It is by Halima Aziz, a Palestinian visual artist and design student based in Germany. What do you see in the picture?

An olive tree - a symbol of everlasting and abundant life.
Poppies - that flower everywhere, and also a reminder of those who have died in the service of their countries.
Traditional Palestinian dress - symbolising creativity and heritage.



Art has a way of speaking to us beyond words and you can see the full picture on the World Day of Prayer website: <https://www.wwdp.org.uk/2024-theme-and-country-palestine/>

As we realise that this service and artwork was produced long before the current conflicts began, it seems prophetic. How can we ignore its call to bear with one another in love?

This is how the world will know that you are my disciples, Jesus said, by your love for one another.



Please pray for the congregation and community in Gressenhall.

Pray with us today.
Incarnate God, thank you.
In the hardest of times, you are here.
When we are alone, afraid or sad,
Confused, ashamed or hurt, you are here.
You are with us. You are here. You are.
For your love is always present: stronger than a mighty wind yet gentler than a dove.
You urge, lead and protect us.
You know, embrace and nurture us.
Searching God,
If we turn away or close the door, you will never abandon us.
Our past, future and present are in your keeping.
You are nearer than our own beating hearts and closer than our breath.
You call us by our name and we rejoice that we are held in your love. Amen

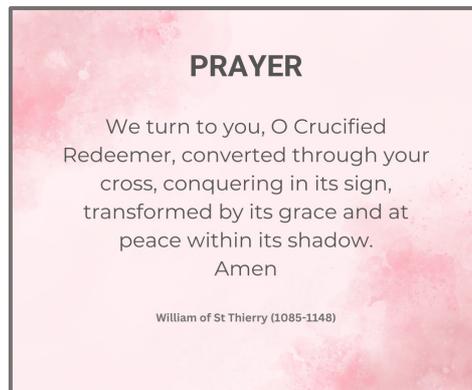
Deacon Jen writes:

Yesterday I had the pleasure of meeting up with this lovely, 13-week-old puppy – and the proud owners of course! There was a great deal of love and care filling the room. The discussion was all about how she behaves now and looking with excitement to the future, knowing that there will a need for much training to be done.



My mind went back many years to when my sister had been staying with me when she acquired a small poodle puppy. Incidentally, it too was black so there was the same challenge with getting the right light for taking a photo. As it was the school holidays, from when I was teaching, it came down to me to do much of the training. As I remember, I committed myself to this completely and spent a week or so doing nothing else but watching a puppy. Of course, it was much smaller than this Labrador puppy and could be picked up with one hand very easily. My lasting recollection was that it was a week of total focus, but it was also such a worthwhile week, with a profound sense of simple joy, and had very positive long-term effects.

Today's puppy was so pretty and alert and just wanted fun – and food. The owners were revelling in every moment. Perhaps that's what we can learn. We may think we know what's in the future and may try to plan ahead in some way. But actually, what really matters is this moment right now. The puppy was totally focussed and excited on what's happening in that very moment she was in. May we also take each moment that we experience as a special gift from God and be thankful for it.



A thought from Aileen Fox:

Cable cars come in all sorts of shapes and capacities. I've squashed in some with room just for 6 people and others carrying over 30. But the one in the picture is a double decker and its an open top cable car. I managed to go up the mountain on the open top deck but coming down I had to make do with the lower tier. Some people find these modes of transport risky and a relative looking at my photos said no way, she couldn't make herself go on one. Risk, every day we are faced with risk, with challenges, we dither over whether we should go ahead with something or not.



At the beginning of Lent we are reminded of Jesus' time of temptation in the wilderness. He could have accepted the temptations offered him which would have been less difficult, he knew the way ahead would be testing, rough, obstacles, but he knew God had sent him and he needed to tread the path his Father had set him on. My answer to my relative over the cable car, was that I forced myself onto them to get to places I couldn't otherwise reach, and I am someone who always struggled with lifts but now use them to get me to my destination. I now love going on cable cars and the double decker was a new type for me.

When life seems challenging it's tempting to stay in a cosy place, not step out of our safe comfortable space. We need to listen to what and where God is directing us to, and be ready to obey. Life is a risk are we ready to take the challenge of following Jesus? "Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."



Please pray for the congregation and community in Hingham.

A Thought for the Day from Rev Jacqui:

I was involved in two work matters away from Norfolk at the end of last week. The second of these was a visit to two heritage chapels in Yorkshire (outside Halifax). Other members of the Walsingham team and myself met heritage workers at Mount Zion and Heptonstall as well as one of the remaining members (before it closed) at the latter. It was a fascinating day. When I first went into the Mount Zion Chapel I just thought 'Wow!' The space is twice the size of Walsingham Heritage Methodist Church and retains its boxed pews downstairs as well as upstairs. They also have an amazing collection of Wesley memorabilia and ceramics. I could go on about both Chapels!

However, our focus is always on the mission possibilities of these heritage places and the fact that, although their weekly congregations are no more, the chapels ooze spirituality out of the prayers and worship of generations past.

Thought for the day! How can Methodism preserve its history in appropriate ways at the same time as drawing on that history and heritage to lead us to contextualise our faith in new ways in the present? God is always God! Each generation responds spiritually in different ways and encounters God afresh - sometimes in similar ways and sometimes in surprising new ways.





A thought from Rev Anne:

When the path gets hidden - what do you do? Turn back? Walk on cautiously? What if you are wearing the wrong shoes?

All dilemmas that face you when walking the dog in winter weather!

Also dilemmas in the Christian life - do you ever get out of your depth? Are you afraid of not being able to see the path ahead? What strategies do you use?

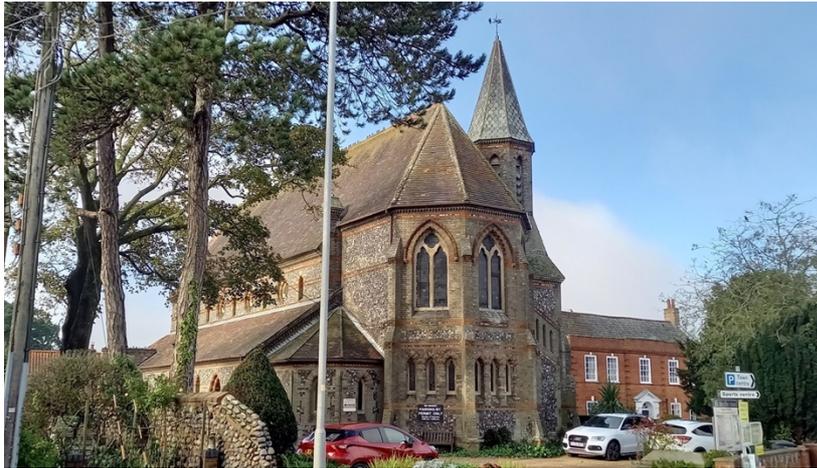
I wonder how Jesus felt as he journeyed closer to Jerusalem?



Pray with us today

Loving God, help us to see the hidden treasure in our communities. People who quietly go about doing wonderful things that make a difference, yet not seeking the limelight. Our churches are made up of individuals who tirelessly try to show your love to others, and so bring hope and help to people in need. Often these 'hidden treasures' are the catalyst behind a new project that encourages others to try something different. We bring them to you in gratitude for their selfless giving of themselves, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Amen.

Please pray for the congregation and community in Holt



Thought for the day from Deacon Jen:

Goldfinch, Blue Tit, Sparrow, Robin, Blackbird, Pigeon and Greenfinch were some of the birds I recognised in our garden at 8am yesterday morning. The first thing I noticed was the sound – it was so loud and all the bird songs mixed up into a glorious cacophony. As there aren't leaves on the trees at the moment, which are in our neighbour's garden, it was easy to see all the birds flying around and landing on the branches. The sun was shining so everything looked bright. It was a joyous moment. [No birds in the photo because I was standing there and they all flew away!]



It was as though each bird was celebrating the sun being out and the arrival of Spring just around the corner. There have been quite a few cloudy days where the sun hasn't been seen so we too enjoy the change in light when the clouds clear and there is blue sky and sunshine – and look forward to more of the same.

At this time of Lent when we reflect on our journey of faith, we may be conscious of times when things seem dark and cloudy. But, we look forward to Easter Sunday when we see the son, God's Son, being raised to new life. Let us always celebrate small joyous moments in our life as markers towards the celebration of the resurrection.

From The Methodist Church: Today we are launching our new website, designed to help people explore faith and discover more about a way of life that follows in the footsteps of Jesus.

You can visit our new website at methodist.org.uk/

The new platform our website is built on lets us do much more than before and we're excited about the opportunities it provides. There's more work to do in building content to enable people to discover a Christian way of life, but this is a first step into the digital parish. 🙏

We know that there will be some bugs and other things to sort as we get going, but we'd appreciate hearing from you if you do come across anything that isn't quite working right. You can get in touch with us using the contact button in the footer of every page on the new website.



A thought from Aileen Fox:

I often listened to the story of the disciples being terrified when the storm blew up on the lake and Jesus was fast asleep.

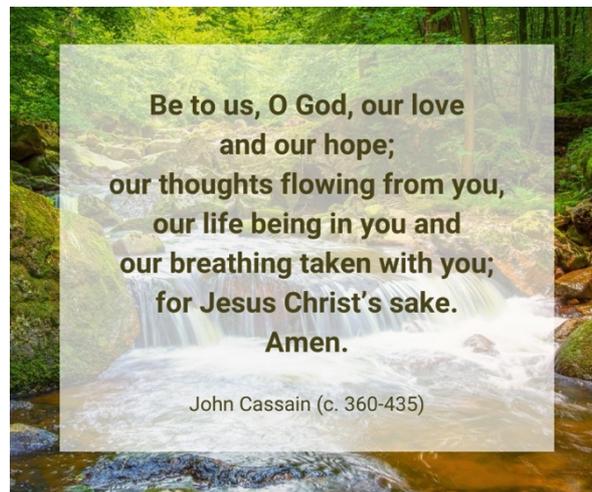
A few days ago I took a fast ferry from Malta to Gozo, it was a big passenger only catamaran and all seemed calm as I got on.

Watching the safety demonstration it seemed far more complicated than being on an aeroplane! All went well until we neared Gozo and suddenly we were tossed around it was very choppy a few people yelled, and I felt very seasick but managed to avoid using the paper bag. I was shaking by the time we disembarked! Plus, there would be a return trip later in the day! As I sat by the harbour to recover the water looked calm and smooth, yet I had been truly frightened.



It's a bit like life, we look ok to everyone and we smile and say we are fine, but no one knows what is going on inside. We may be struggling or grieving, facing difficulties. Prayer is a wonderful way of sharing fears, and struggles that we may find hard to share with others. Praying to God we may not get an instant answer, but he does answer. How many times have you felt down and in despair and then the phone goes and it's a friend asking how you are, or the doorbell rings and a friend calls in for a chat. Even out, meeting a friend unexpectedly can make us feel better. Jesus knew what the disciples needed, reassurance and the fear of the storm removed. We can also be that reassurance to so many people by showing Christian love and help as a friend, by just being there.

Please pray for the congregation and community in Litcham.



**Be to us, O God, our love
and our hope;
our thoughts flowing from you,
our life being in you and
our breathing taken with you;
for Jesus Christ's sake.
Amen.**

John Cassain (c. 360-435)

A Thought for the Day from Rev Jacqui:

Three ecumenical 'stand-alone' events have been organised in Swaffham this Lent. The first two were very powerful and moving. A Service of Repentance at the Catholic Church gave those there the opportunity, at the start of Lent, to kneel at the foot of the cross and make their private confession to Jesus. We gave each other forgiveness as we received the name of one other person and promised to pray for them.

In the middle of Lent, we had a Service of Healing in the Methodist Church and participants were able to receive anointing, the laying on of hands, and/or specific prayer for specific needs. Tomorrow evening, the third event will see a Prayer Labyrinth (made out of scarves) laid out in the Methodist Church and those attending will be invited to walk it as a way of walking to the Cross with Jesus as we continue through Holy Week. This promises too to open up the possibility of spiritual encounter and to enable the Holy Spirit to work in our own journey of life.

My thought? That participating with other Christians in special events is a very precious gift and that the ecumenical journey is one to be pursued whenever possible.

