

Pastoral note, 7th February 2021

Once again I need to tell you of those who have completed their earthly life. Last week Michael Hampson and Margaret Coville both died. Margaret was a much loved regular worshipper on Sunday evenings, along with her husband Norman, who has cared for her so lovingly at home in recent years when she could no longer leave home. Please hold Norman and his family in your thoughts and prayers. Michael had many difficulties to contend with, but came to greatly appreciate the warmth of our church fellowship. Thanks to all who made a point of engaging with him, and helping practically too. We pray for his brother Phil and all the family.

The Newbold family would like to thank everyone who sent cards and other tokens, and for their prayers, following Sheila's homecall. They felt greatly supported. Brian is being cared for at the MHA home in Muswell Hill for a while, which is close to the home of Peter, one of his sons. It is a very unsettling time for Brian, so please continue to pray for him, and for all the family. However please do not communicate with Brian at the moment – he needs time to adjust.

The February edition of the Circuit newsletter is available with this link. Ask me if you need a printed copy.

https://1fa3c02e-4a7a-4b5f-96a3-f79feed01940.filesusr.com/ugd/9650bb_51553d32a9b4401481f8d4d5196f8ca7.pdf

We are asked to commit to praying regularly, and especially through February, for our world, our nation and our NHS – Barry's prayer would be a good tool if you are not sure how.

Snowdrops have pushed their way through ice and snow – their delicate beauty remind us of God's unfailing love and care – no matter how tough our circumstances are. You continue to be in our prayers, Angela

Please remember: Northgate notices are now only published on the last Sunday in each month and should be sent to Northgate Convener Roger Rowell (rogerrowell.7@gmail.com) for forwarding to the appropriate editor.

NORTHGATE

The weekly notices of
OAKHAM METHODIST CHURCH

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7 February 2021



Oakham Methodist Church – called to worship God and share our faith, we seek to serve and welcome all through the love of Jesus Christ.

Northgate Service for Sunday, 7 February 2021

Call to Worship: “Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness. Enter His gates with **thanksgiving** and His courts with praise.” (Psalm 100)

Let’s pause for a moment and count our blessings alphabetically. I can guarantee that by the time you get to Z your heart will be overflowing with **thankfulness**.

Father God, thank You so much for the amazing world You have created for us to enjoy. Thank You for giving scientists and inventors the gifts and knowledge they need to discover and invent things that help us in our daily lives. Above all, thank You for Your great love for each one of us. Thank You for Jesus. **Amen**

Readings: Isaiah 40:28-31. Mark 1:29-39.

Reflection:

Every day was action-packed for Jesus – even the Sabbath, which was a day of rest. At the beginning of our reading we learn that Jesus had just left the synagogue in Capernaum. He hadn’t just filled a pew. He was up-front teaching with authority and driving out a demon from a man. When he arrived at Peter’s home, He was told that Peter’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever. He immediately healed her.

The hottest part of the day would have been time for siesta, but I imagine Jesus would have spent that time talking with Peter, Andrew, James and John, and answering their questions.

Then at sunset, when the Sabbath day ended, the whole town gathered outside Peter’s house. They couldn’t come before, because they didn’t want to break the Sabbath laws, which prohibited healing and travelling. Jesus healed many sick people and drove out many demons.

By bedtime Jesus must have been mentally and physically exhausted. Even then He couldn’t get away on his own, because everyone slept together on thin sleeping mats, which they rolled up during the day.

The next morning Jesus was up and out well before daybreak, which was probably around 3am. He needed to find a solitary place where He could pray, and commune with His Father before He began the next busy day.

Two verses stood out for me from our readings – Isaiah 40:31 and Mark 1:35. They are very closely linked, because it was during that time of prayer that Jesus received the authority, power and physical strength He needed for the day ahead.

I looked up Isaiah 40:31 in several different Bible versions and found that three said: “trust in the Lord”; one said: “hope in the Lord”, one said “wait

for the Lord” and two said: “wait upon the Lord”. I decided that getting back to the original Hebrew might help. It did! The word used had a root meaning of “bind together” and “expect”.

When Jesus prayed alone, He was “bound together” with His Father, and would “expect” that in that time He would receive all that He needed to face the day. Much of the time I believe, would be spent communing in stillness with His loving Father, enjoying His presence and receiving love, joy and peace – simply being. Through this Jesus’ strength would be renewed.

If Jesus, the sinless Son of God, needed to clear His calendar to pray, then how much more do we need to do the same.

Let’s pause for a few moments and allow God to speak to our hearts. Then respond to Him through the hymn “Dear Lord and Father of mankind”. (Singing the Faith 495)

Dear Lord and Father of mankind
forgive our foolish ways;
re clothe us in our rightful mind;
in purer lives Thy service find,
in deeper reverence praise.

O sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
the silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love!

With that deep hush subduing all
our words and works that drown
the tender whisper of Thy call,
as noiseless let Thy blessing fall
as fell Thy manna down.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our lives the strain and stress
and let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

Prayers for Others

In our prayers I would like to ask God to “circle” the people and situations we pray for. This is a powerful way of praying, because we are asking God to surround people with Himself – with His love, peace, power, wisdom, justice and His purity, so that He can touch their lives, and bring them into abundant life in Jesus. Let us pray for – the NHS, including health visitors, chaplains, carers ... world leaders, especially Joe Biden ... our government ... the children of our nation, their parents & teachers ... the ill & bereaved ... our neighbours.

The Lord’s Prayer

Blessing May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace as we trust in Him, so that we may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Today’s service prepared by Mrs Anne McAlpine)