

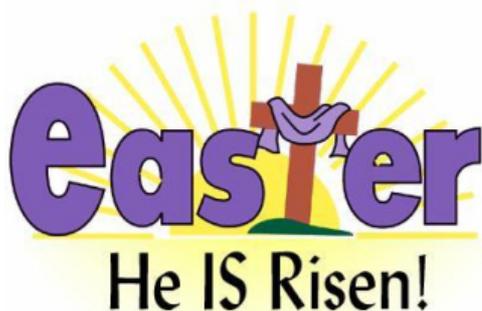
# Wonford Methodist Church

## Contact Newsletter

April 2020

(No: 487)

Special Edition



Minister: Rev Ben Haslam (01392 256716)



Wonford is a Fairtrade church  The **Methodist Church**

[www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk)

 @WonfordMethodistChurch



# A Message From The Minister

Dear Friends,

## ***Revelation 2. 12-17***

“Write this to the angel of the church in Pergamum. : These are the words of the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. I know where you live – where satan has his throne! You have clung on to my name, and have not denied my faith, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed in your midst, in the dwelling place of satan. But I do have a few things against you: you have some people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who instructed Balak to cause the children of Israel to stumble, making them eat idol-food and indulge in sexual immorality. So, too, you have some among you who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. So: repent! If you don't, I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To anyone who conquers I will give secret manna, and a white stone, with a new name written on that stone which nobody knows except the one who receives it”.

For a very long time, we in Britain had what we liked to think of as a broadly Christian culture. We used to say we were a ‘Christian country’. Well, if that was ever true, it certainly isn't now. We may find that ourselves, as Christians, finding ourselves more and more out of step with society because of our faith. If this happens, then it's nothing new so do not panic! It will mean however, that we need to make difficult choices: do we compromise our faith in order to fit in (or be ‘relevant...’) or do we hold on to what our faith tells us to be true, as we would to precious treasure?

The church in Pergamum must have felt like a little island in a sea of paganism. Some within the church had succumbed to ungodly influences and their devotion to Christ had consequently suffered. Christ's ‘double-edged’ sword hovers above them, ready to separate truth from error and bring clarity where confusion is creeping in. Sexual immortality is a symptom of this: sexual expression as God intended has become more of a free for all, leading people away from the fruitful, devoted life that is God's will for them. This is idolatry, and the message is clear: Idolatry is toxic and Christians should steer clear. Those who hold firm, are promised a ‘white stone’, with a new name written on it. I find this white stone quite mysterious and I have come across several different explanations for it! I love the idea however, of being given, personally, a white stone, a stone that is particularly ours, with a unique name. Something special shared between

us and God. It seems the rewards of faithfulness far surpass any temporary inconvenience we might suffer in holding firm to our faith and our Lord.

**With every blessing**  
**Ben Haslam**

## **Coronavirus - Update from the Methodist Church**

The Methodist Church has announced the closure of all its church buildings for the foreseeable future. The only exception will be for churches that are offering essential social outreach such as foodbanks, soup kitchens and night shelters, but these must be carried out closely within Government guidelines. The Methodist Church suspended worship services last week with some churches still opening for quiet prayer and reflection. This must now also be suspended. We would encourage people to use our online resources at home which include downloadable services and links to online worship services - see link at end.

The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Conference said: “We are asking people to change their way of ‘going to church’ to help to protect themselves and others. We have put in place measures that will enable Methodists still to be part of the worshipping community, whilst for everyone’s sake staying away from church buildings. There is a range of resources available for people to use at home which we hope will help them to continue their cycle of prayer and worship. The Methodist Church is more than its buildings and if in these unprecedented times we can continue our life as Methodists without using our buildings we will help to reduce the chances of transmission of the virus.”

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/seasons-and-themes/worship-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

## **Advance Notice - “South West Awake!”**

For 30 minutes, 2pm – 2.30pm, on Saturday 30 May 2020 all around the 630 miles of the South West Coastal Path, folk from churches will stand and pray and praise. The website is [www.southwestawake.com](http://www.southwestawake.com) for more information. *Please keep checking this website since the event may be cancelled. If there is an update it will be published in the May newsletter.*



# Prayer Focus for April

## Pray without ceasing

In last months Prayer Focus we were encouraged to pray for China with the serious outbreak of the Coronavirus. As we know from our media news the virus has spread too many more countries. In Europe Italy has been hit the hardest. There is much to pray for in relation to this virus.

1. The people for whom the virus has taken the lives of their loved ones.
2. The medical staff who are nursing so many, that they will have the knowledge & skills needed & that they will be protected from catching the virus themselves.
3. All cleaning staff that they too will be protected in order to keep everything sterile to help stop the spread.
4. For those who are responsible for testing samples, that none will be mis-diagnosed or missed.
5. For those working to find vaccines to protect against future outbreaks.
6. For Governments to work together to protect each Nation as necessary.

This month pray also for those who have lost their jobs due to the collapse of Flybe especially those affected here at Wonford. Pray for all the events that will take place this month as we celebrate Easter.

*May you all be richly blessed as you pray for all the activities at Wonford, surrounding area & the wider world.*

***If you have anything that you would like included please let Julie Rothwell know so that it can include it here.***

### **Our Prayer Phone Link**

Should you, or those you know, wish to be supported in prayer, the first contact is now Rev Alan Rothwell (01392 926840). Your request will then be passed to members of the Prayer Link who will pray for your need. If the first contact is unavailable, please contact Margretta Bowstead (01392 437329) or Rose Smith (01404 510853)

### **The Prayer Team**

## **Creating Safer Space**

As I “sit down” as Wonford’s SO/Safeguarding Officer, I want to commend to you Bill Noronha, who will be our next SO from 1st May. He already has served us as Church Steward & Senior Steward – roles I have never had – so he brings extras to his new role. Over the 6 or so years that I have been our SO the whole spread of the work and information has greatly increased. I give thanks that the Methodist Church has at times led the way in investigating past wrongdoings or omissions, and is constantly improving the training in this area.

On 7th March Bill & I attended a full day’s Plymouth & Exeter District Safeguarding training, “Creating Safer Space”, with significant speakers on the damaging effects of human trafficking, modern slavery, county lines and sexual abuse. It certainly gave me plenty to think about; and I invite you also to ponder this quotation from our programme for the day:

*Creating safer space: safeguarding; sanctuary; safer to be different;  
safer to explore; safer all around.*

*Creating safer space.*

*Not just the name of a report or a theme of a presidential address.*

*It’s a task, a role and a challenge for the Church,  
and for each person today, every single one of us.*

*Creating safer space.*

**Margretta Bowstead**

## **Prayers During the Coronavirus Pandemic**

God of all hope we call on you today.

We pray for those who are living in fear:

Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other’s reactions to them.

May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.

We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.

For those people who are worried about attending worship.

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

For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend.

Grant us your wisdom.

Holy God, we remember that you have promised that  
Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus  
Christ.

Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.

**Amen**

Loving God,

If we are ill, strengthen us.

If we are tired, fortify our spirits.

If we are anxious, help us to consider the lillies of the field and the birds of  
the air.

Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our  
larders.

Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than  
ourselves.

Fix our eyes on your story and our hearts on your grace.

Help us always to hold fast to the good,

See the good in others,

And remember there is just one world, one hope,

One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.

In Jesus we make our prayer,

The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life,

In whom we trust these days and all days,

Amen.

***The Revd Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference***





## ON THE ROAD TO EASTER WORD SEARCH



Ash	Holy Week	Palm Branch
Wednesday	Holy Thursday	Forty Days
Sacrifice	Good Friday	Jesus
Almsgiving	Holy Saturday	Passover
Prayer	Easter	Foot Washing
Fasting	Palm Sunday	Resurrection
Lent	Purple	Love



The deadline for items for the May 2020 Newsletter will be Sunday 19th April 2020. There is no guarantee of inclusion, but they may be given to:

**Andrew Jackson - 19 Hills Orchard, Martock, Somerset. TA12 6DF.**  
 Tel: 01935 826072 or e-mailed to [andrew.m.jackson@me.com](mailto:andrew.m.jackson@me.com)