

ASTCOTE METHODIST CHURCH

SHARING GOD'S LOVE WITH ALL

Welcome to our

February 2021 Newsletter

There are no church services at the moment but the Chapel will be open for a time of private prayer and prayer for the community on

Sundays 14th & 28th February, 10-10.30am

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Weekly services are available via the Northampton Methodist Website, together with podcasts and other information:

<https://methodist-churches-northampton.org.uk>

**Ash Wednesday Service : 7.30pm**

**17th February—details will be emailed to you**

If you need to speak to a Minister, for any reason, please contact our Pastoral Minister

Rev Phil Snelson on 07906 627650



## ***Welcome to another Lockdown Newsletter !***

We hope that you are coping with the continuing situation across the country. Do join in our weekly Methodist Service shown on the front page or find some other way of refreshing your faith in services that are available on the radio, websites etc.

The Northampton Methodist Circuit will be running a **Lent Bible Study Course starting on 22nd February** based on the Christian way of life in the Methodist Church. Some of you will have already received a copy of the book 'Finding the Way' and there will also be Zoom sessions each week for 4 weeks that you are welcome to attend. If you would like to receive a book or join in do let me know. Rev Phil speaks about the course in the Minister's Letter.

We continue to have a regular 30 minute Zoom meeting on Monday evenings at 7.30pm to keep up to date with each other, and plans for the future. Do let me know if you would like to join us.

**'Prayer for the Community'** Prayer requests can be placed in the Prayer Box on the wall outside the Chapel, or given to Kate on 830115 or [kate.stretton@btinternet.com](mailto:kate.stretton@btinternet.com)

Next Zoom meeting for the Well Group is 1.30-2.30pm on Thursday 25th February.

Stay Safe,  
Every blessing,

Ann

[ann.atkin51@btinternet.com](mailto:ann.atkin51@btinternet.com) : 830907

### ***Inside you will find .....***

Page 3—Ministers Letter

Page 5—How to access Towcester Foodbank

Page 6— Astcote member Steve Boenke shares his experience at the Hope Centre in Northampton

## ***Minister's letter from Rev Phil Snelson***

Dear Friends,

This month we arrive at Lent – already! Traditionally we start by thinking about Jesus and his temptation in the wilderness. I guess we could be forgiven for feeling that the current times are something of an extended “wilderness experience”.

I wonder if you find it strange, at least unexpected, that the wilderness is the first place Jesus ends up having been so powerfully affirmed at his baptism. We know the story and so it is in that sense what we expect, but having been filled with the Holy Spirit and reassured of God's love for him as his Son, is that really what you would expect to happen next?!

My experience is that quite often after a spiritual high point comes what feels like a bit of a low and temptation begins to gnaw away, raising doubts as to whether that's what really happened etc. “Could God really be calling me... to do that?” Thankfully, when God does make a significant call then he tends to help make it clear through the discernment of others, through His word, through the situation, by the sense of the Spirit within.

It may be that temptation comes in the form of fear; fear of failure or that God will not follow through having called us to do something we feel is beyond us; fear of being hurt emotionally or physically perhaps; fear of appearing foolish or maybe just plain fear and we don't really know why. All of these are natural human feelings and reactions, and we can be tempted to do a *bit of a Jonah* and run in the opposite direction. When God says, “Don't be afraid”, he doesn't mean “don't feel afraid”: what it means is “don't let your fears stop you from doing what God is calling you to do.” That's where faith and courage come in, to do it in spite of our fears with the help of God's Spirit... *before He has to resort to storms and giant whales to get us there!*

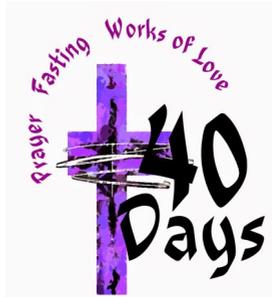
Perhaps temptation comes in the form of our attachment to our earthly “treasures”, those things that give us comfort in life, like the rich young man in Luke 18. He was a religious leader and living a “good life”, a religious life, “not doing anyone any harm”. When Jesus challenged him to sell his possessions, give the proceeds to the poor and come follow... he became sad because he had a lot to give up. “How hard it is for those who are materially comfortable to enter the Kingdom of God!” says Jesus.

This Lent we are following a course called “Finding the Way” which is about personal discipleship and how that affects every part of our lives. It is based on “Our Calling”, the Methodist vision, and offers opportunity for us all to reconsider and renew our commitment to following Jesus. It is quite practical too. Do join in either through one of the ZOOM / phone sessions (Mon 13:00, Wed 11:00, Wed 20:00, or Thurs 19:30) or even just by working through the booklet for yourself – more details available from Ann—[ann.atkin51@btinternet.com](mailto:ann.atkin51@btinternet.com)

This Lent go a bit deeper than “giving up chocolate” (or sprouts as my son tried once!) What earthly comforts are really holding you back from trusting God more fully? Is there a fear that stops you taking the next step? Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit and do it anyway! The more you do, the more you will see God doing good things, exciting things, amazing things as you keep on seeking to follow Jesus calling for you.

May God bless you this Lent, in Jesus name and the power of the Spirit,

*Phil*



## TOWCESTER FOODBANK

**Are you struggling to buy food due to money problems?**

**Phone 07724 832043 on . . .**

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday between  
10.00 am and 11.30 am.**

**For urgent cases outside these hours go to  
[info@towcester.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@towcester.foodbank.org.uk) and leave a message.**

**We can arrange a delivery of free food  
to your door**

Our service varies the free food given to meet your needs. A family could get 4 carrier bags full (about 30kg). You can request more whenever it is needed. We can alter contents for diabetics, vegetarians and those with allergies and may also be able to offer non-food items such as toiletries, pet food and baby products.



Towcester Foodbank is part of Britain's biggest foodbank network, The Trussell Trust which is aiming to end food poverty.

Charity commission number 1157338

**Please be aware of  
anyone you know who might be in need of this  
help so that you can pass on the information.**

**(Currently in short supply: Sponge Puddings,  
Custard, Pasta Sauce (not pasta), Toilet Rolls)**

## **My first few weeks volunteering at the Hope Centre**

Firstly, you may or not know due to Covid etc, the Nightshelter has now closed permanently due to Covid and new arrangements for rough sleepers, as the Hope centre has picked up some of the responsibility, I thought I'd put my name forward to volunteer, there were a few roles available, so I'm currently training as a "signposting advisor" which helps guests who use the centre access services such as GP's benefits, passport applications, accommodation possibilities and employment help.

The Centre itself is split between semi permanent guests with accommodation and a "walk in walk out" facility for rough sleepers which means guests have access to toilets, showers, food, toiletries and clothes, whereas before Covid they could come in the morning access these facilities and sit and socialise.

The first few weeks have been really busy. I seem to have spent a long time in the clothes storage area trying to put it in some order and also been tested to the limit with a couple of guests who I knew from the Night Shelter and think it's a branch of Harrods!! :-)

For those who didn't know the centre was founded in 1974 by Michael Mulligan and since that time have worked with tens of thousands of people in the town. They have provided services on an unbroken basis to people since that date, originally through the Catholic Church, although they have no specific religious focus today. They welcome and support people from all faiths.

I'm hoping that God will guide me, in helping in any way I can! 🙏

If you have any good quality clean clothes or sleeping bags that are suitable for the streets (no evening wear!) I'll gladly drop them off for you.

Miss you and bless you all.

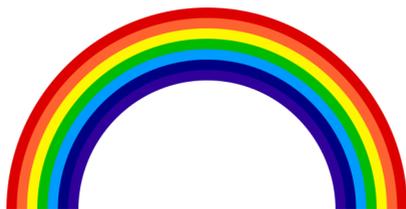
## ***Prayers for the consequences of Covid-19***

God, we trust in You, our very present Help in trouble. Grant continued strength and endurance as we continue journeying through Covid-19. May we grow in love and grace and draw close to you despite disappointment, uncertainty, grief and concern for ourselves and others. Amen

Lord our Healer, we pray for people who are currently ill with Covid-19, those who have recovered but have lingering symptoms, and anyone who has developed medical complications. Grant wisdom and success to those who administer and distribute vaccines and effective treatments. Amen

We give thanks for the courage, skill and tireless service of NHS staff caring for patients and those giving behind-the-scenes support in the fight against Covid-19. Please restore the mental and physical health of those who have been badly affected by the strain of doing this and bring help to them. Amen

***Prayers from the CARE prayer diary***



## **Astcote Methodist Church**

If you need to speak to a Minister, for any reason,  
please contact our Pastoral Minister

Rev Phil Snelson on

07906 627650

**Methodist Online Service—Sundays at 10.30am**

Or at any time convenient for you

<https://methodist-churches-northampton.org.uk/worship-at-home/>

**God Bless you and**

**keep you safe**

For items or suggestions for this newsletter  
please contact::

Ann Atkin, Church Secretary on 830907

ann.atkin51@btinternet.com