

Trinity + Methodist + Church

Rev. J. Howard-Norman ☎ 07809686867



SUNDAY 26th JULY 2026

“We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”

Romans Ch. 8 v 26-27

10.00 am

Mrs D. Harris

Readings:-

Genesis Ch. 29 v 15-28

Romans Ch. 8 v 26-39

Matthew Ch. 13 v 31-33: 44-52

Prayer Diary:-

Church Council Secretary, Church Council Treasurer, Church Council Reps and Group I.

SERVICE NEXT SUNDAY 2nd AUGUST 2026

10am – Rev. J. Howard-Norman – Sacrament - AAW

Prayer Diary:- Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Society of Friends and Group J.

Daily Prayer at 9:00am every day (except Sunday): This is now on Microsoft Teams. Just download Teams and you can go straight on to it or use this link
<https://teams.live.com/join/9414857191536>

EcoShop

The Eco Shop is **open on Tuesdays from 10am to 1pm** and we would love you to come along to try us out. You will be able to buy 10 items for £4. Please bring your own bag if you can.

There are 2 bins in the café area for donations (nothing perishable please) to be sold in the shop.
We look forward to seeing you at the Eco Shop – please support us.

**Angela, our shop volunteer is holding an afternoon tea in aid of the EcoShop
on Saturday 8 August from 12.30-3pm.
At 2a High Rifts, Stainton TS8 9BF**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE NO HANDOUTS DURING AUGUST details of the
services are listed below.**

Middlesbrough and Eston Methodist Circuit

WORSHIP AT HOME – Sunday 26th July 2026

Welcome to this time of worship. Wherever you are today, may you know that God is with you. In today's Gospel reading, Jesus tells a series of short parables about the kingdom of heaven. They remind us that God's kingdom often begins in small and unexpected ways, is worth everything we have, and invites us to recognise the priceless gift of God's love.

Hymn: STF 20 Be still, for the presence of the Lord

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Loving God, we praise you because your kingdom is nearer than we often realise. You are at work in quiet acts of kindness, in lives transformed by your grace, and in the hope you plant within us. We thank you that your love is beyond measure and that your promises are treasures beyond price.

Forgive us when we value other things more than your kingdom. Forgive us when we overlook your work because it seems small, or when fear and selfishness prevent us from responding to your call. Renew our hearts, deepen our faith, and help us to seek first your kingdom and your righteousness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible Reading: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Responding to the reading

What a precious collection of parables we have as our gospel today! This section of Matthew's gospel feels like 'story time' with Jesus, as he offers not one image of the kingdom of God, but several.

A tiny mustard seed.

A handful of yeast hidden in flour.

A treasure buried in a field.

A pearl of great value.

A fishing net gathering all kinds of fish.

It is as though Jesus is saying: the Kingdom is too big, too rich, too surprising to be captured by a single picture. It brings to mind the quote from John Berger: 'It is no longer possible to tell any story as if it was the only one.'

Perhaps that is one of the first lessons for discipleship: God's reign is often found where we least expect it, and if we think we've 'got it', we probably haven't...

The mustard seed is tiny, almost insignificant. Yet it grows into something large enough to provide shelter. The yeast is hidden and invisible, yet it transforms everything it touches. In a world that often celebrates what is big, powerful, and immediate, Jesus points instead to the small, the quiet, and the overlooked.

The Kingdom begins with a conversation, a kindness, a prayer, a protest for justice, a moment of forgiveness, a community meal, a decision to keep loving when it would be easier not to. These things can seem insignificant, but God delights in working through small beginnings.

Then Jesus tells of the treasure and the pearl. In both stories, someone discovers

something so valuable that everything else is reordered around it. This is not about giving up joy; it is about discovering what truly matters.

Many of us spend our lives pursuing things that promise fulfilment: success, security, recognition, certainty. None of these are bad in themselves. But Jesus asks: What is your treasure? What is so life-giving, so beautiful, so true that you would gladly organise your life around it?

For Christians, the answer is not a doctrine or a rulebook. It is the experience of God's love and the invitation to participate in God's work of healing and reconciliation in the world.

Finally, there is the net that gathers fish of every kind. It is a striking image. The net is wide. It gathers diversity. It does not sort people before drawing them in. God's Kingdom is always broader than our assumptions. The grace of God reaches further than our categories and welcomes more people than we might expect.

So today, reflect on these questions:

What small signs of God's Kingdom can you see around you?

- What treasure are you truly organising your life around?

- How might you become more open to the surprising, expansive work of God's grace?

The Kingdom of God rarely arrives with fanfare. More often it grows quietly, like a seed beneath the soil or yeast within dough, but it is growing. And when we glimpse its beauty, we discover that it is worth

everything. May you have eyes to recognise the treasure of God's presence, courage to nurture small seeds of hope, and faith to trust that even the smallest acts of love can help transform the world.

Hymn: STF 255 The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Prayers for Others

God of surprises, we pray for your world. Where hope seems as small as a mustard seed, bring new life and fresh possibilities. Where communities are divided, sow peace and reconciliation. Where people live with poverty, conflict or uncertainty, reveal the riches of your love.

We pray for your Church, that we may never underestimate what you can do through faithful people who quietly serve in your name. Help us to recognise the treasures you have entrusted to us and to use them wisely for the good of others.

We remember those who are anxious, grieving, sick or lonely. Surround them with your compassion and give them strength for each day.

May your kingdom continue to grow in our lives, our communities and throughout the world; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: STF 566 Take my life, and let it be

Blessing

May the God whose kingdom grows like a tiny seed fill your heart with hope. May Christ, the treasure beyond all treasures, guide your steps each day. And may the Holy Spirit give you wisdom to recognise God's work around you and courage to share in it. Amen.

With grateful acknowledgment to The Vine at Home - Twelve Baskets, for the Reflection following the Bible reading.

SERVICE 9th AUGUST 2026

10am – Mrs. D. Pearson

Prayer Diary:- Door Stewards, Keep Fit, Badminton, House Groups and Group A.

Worship at Home - By David Godfrey
Middlesbrough and Eston Circuit - Sunday 9th August 2026

Hymn: StF 455, H&P 63, "All my hope on God is founded"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3LCGh02Vew&list=RDW3LCGh02Vew&start_radio=1

Prayers:

Confession and words of assurance:

Oh Lord, we are so sorry for not seeing things as clearly as we should. We sometimes forget how amazing and powerful you are. It is hard to imagine you creating the heavens and the earth at the very start of time. We forget to look to Jesus as our example and guide, ignoring his love revealed in the cross. We fail to

welcome your Holy Spirit who strengthens us to serve you. Lord we have sinned. Forgive us and set us free. **Amen.** The Lord who reigns for ever and whose throne endures from generation to generation has not forgotten us. He forgives the sins we confess and restores us to himself. **Amen, thanks be to God.**

Reading: 1 Kings 19:9-18

Reflection:

Elijah, the last remaining prophet of the living God was spent. He was exhausted, alone, and abandoned by his people. He wondered if God had abandoned him too. He wished he were dead. Elijah had just triumphed over the prophets of Baal, but his victory only led to trouble. Queen Jezebel wanted him dead, so Elijah ran for his life into the desert until he collapsed exhausted. Here we see him sheltering in a cave on mount Sinai, and speaking to God. These are agonising moments, because it seems at first that God will ignore Elijah. Elijah is on the verge of giving up.

‘All I have ever done’ he says to God, ‘is be zealous for you. I have served you faithfully, but now the Israelites have thrown down your altars and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left and they want to take my life too.’

Although this story belongs to another world, there is something familiar about it. How often have we felt as though we are carrying everything alone? How often have we felt that there is no hope for our future, for our work, or for our Church? How often have we cried into our pillows and said those despairing prayers to God for help, not really expecting any help at all.

In the end God did help Elijah, by setting him out on a new path with a new plan. He is to go from that place and anoint two kings, one for the North and one for the South. He is also to find Elisha and anoint him as his assistant. There is a familiar pattern in this story and a message of hope. Those who fear they are lost and alone and oppressed by overwhelming forces outside their control, discover that if they remain faithful and look to God, he is there all along. He stands ready to give a plan and a purpose to those who seek him. Above all, we need to remember that we are not alone.

Hymn: StF 158, “Lord you sometimes speak in wonders”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M59Khg3ob0s&list=RDM59Khg3ob0s&start_radio=1

Prayers:

Intercessions: Lord in a world that has forgotten you and ignored your still small voice, we come to you with our prayers. We pray for those living through difficult times and pray for those in constant pain, facing difficult diagnoses or who are depressed or anxious. Lift up those who have suffered loss and who feel a great emptiness in their lives. May your church play its part to support those who are in distress. We pray for your world torn apart by the storms of war. We remember those whose homes have turned to rubble and those who have become refugees or internally displaced as a result of war. We think especially of the people of Ukraine and Gaza, but we know that there are many other conflicts all over the world. May the leaders of the nations hear your still small voice and work together for peace and the prosperity of all. Hear our prayers loving God in the name of Christ Jesus our Saviour. **Amen. Our Father...**

Hymn: StF 449, H&P 699, “Lord of Creation to you be all praise”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3jh7sEFHvo&list=RDZ3jh7sEFHvo&start_radio=1

Blessing:

God the Father enrich you with his grace, God the Son make you holy in his love, God the Holy Spirit strengthen you with his joy; the Lord bless you and keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

SERVICE 16th AUGUST 2026

10am – Rev. Coates

Prayer Diary:- Craft Group, Cambridge Road Baptist Church and Group B.

SERVICE 23rd AUGUST 2026

10am – Rev. J. Howard-Norman - Sacrament

Prayer Diary:- Carpet Bowls, Leadership Team, Lay Worker and Group C.

SERVICE 30th AUGUST 2026

10am – Mr. R. Mapplebeck

Prayer Diary:- Vestry Stewards, Cleaning Rota, Trinity Family Friendly Centre and Group D.

