



Prayer Focus

ROZ ADDINGTON

Along with a new season and a new look magazine, there has been a refreshing of the 'Praying Always' section. Rather than the whole of 'Praying Always' being together at the back of the magazine, it was thought good to separate it into four sections and place it in the body of the magazine – as a 'Prayer Focus' section after four of the main articles – four monthly Prayer Focus points.

After four of the key articles, there will be suggested prayer topics relating to that article, followed by some points on national and world issues. Prayer remains very much an integral part of the magazine, for we are all called to pray continually with all kinds of prayers and requests (Ephesians 6:18). How it is used will be different for each person, and that's fine; the important thing is that we pray.

We are living in dark and volatile times, causing in many great uneasiness and anxiety. Though things may look chaotic and uncertain, we have faith and hope in a wonderful God, who behind the scenes is in control. The words of the Graham Kendrick song *O Lord, the Clouds Are Gathering*, have come into sharp focus; I feel they have special significance for the times in which we are living. The first verse and chorus are as follows:

*O Lord, the clouds are gathering
The fire of judgement burns
How we have fallen!
O Lord, you stand appalled to see
Your laws of love so scorned,
And lives so broken*

*Have mercy, Lord,
Forgive us, Lord,
Restore us, Lord,
Revive your church again
Let justice flow
Like rivers
And righteousness like a never
failing stream*

Graham Kendrick Copyright © 1987 Make Way Music

REVIVAL: As God continues to shake the country, an awakening to the need for God; a hunger and thirst for prayer and Bible study; for godly values and a return to our Christian roots in government and other institutions; a conviction of sin and repentance across the nation resulting in an outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 3:19-20; Revelation 2:5).

CHURCH: Biblically based teaching; the spread of scriptural holiness; the voice of evangelicals to be heard and acted on; the President and Vice-President of Conference, Rev Gill Newton and Deacon Kerry Scarlett in their last weeks of office; the President and Vice-President designate, Rev Helen Cameron and Mrs Carolyn Godfrey; the Secretary of Conference, Rev Dr Jonathan Hustler, and all in positions of leadership in the Methodist Church (1 Peter 1:14-16; Acts 20:28-30).

MET: Pray for Rev Dr David Hull as he prepares to step down as Chair, and for Rev Chris Briggs as he prepares to take over as Chair in January 2025. Pray for the trustees and executive; for wisdom and discernment for the future work (Isaiah 41:9-13; Hebrews 10: 22-24).

NATIONAL ISSUES: Christians in the workplace: especially in the media and those working in schools. Pray for courage and strength to stand against unwholesome teaching and the spread of immoral content; protection against false accusations and lies (Isaiah 43:1-3a; Luke 21:14-15).

WORLD ISSUES: Planet in Crisis: Concern over the changing climate and the effect on wildlife: on land and in the ocean. Pray for the cleaning up of polluted environments; how we can mitigate the loss of habitat and extinction of wildlife and destruction of ecosystems due to human activity. Pray for effective government intervention (Isaiah 24:4-6; Revelation 4:11).

LOCAL CHURCH: Seek and pray earnestly for God's vision for the church. Pray for identification of local church strengths, bringing them before God, seeking to be blessed and used. Pray for the needs of the local community and ways in which these can be met; for the resources to reach out – whether people or material (Proverbs 8:17; James 4:8).

THE METHODIST CONFERENCE (27 JUNE – 3 JULY 2024): Pray for the truth of God's Word to sink deep into delegates' lives, for all policies to be based on biblical values, a purging of all that is not holy and pleasing to God; a spread of scriptural holiness; voting in of those whom God wants as President and Vice President for 2025/26 (Titus 1:6-9; Romans 12:1-2).

NATIONAL ISSUES

Government: For all MPs in Westminster, and the devolved nations; the coming General election – the

election of those whom God wants in power. Pray for wisdom, strength and resilience for Christian MPs to speak out against wrong policies. Pray for Rev Patricia Hillias, Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons (Zechariah 7:8-10; Proverbs 28:2-3).

Loneliness: For people to reach out to those who are isolated and house bound, particularly elderly people. Pray for the marginalised, those released from prison, and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pray for communication of the hope of the gospel and for lives to be transformed. (Psalm 82: 3-4; Philippians 2:4).

WORLD ISSUES

Russia/Ukrainian war: Pray for a de-escalation of the conflict; for Russian people detained for speaking out against the invasion. Pray for strength and resolve for Ukrainian troops and people; for resources needed by Ukraine to be forthcoming (Psalm 55:16-19; Psalm 31:14-15).

HOLY HABITS: for churches to seek a deeper relationship with Jesus based on early church principles; a desire for the transforming power of the Holy Spirit; a greater up-take on the adoption of Holy Habit principles (Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 6:1).

CLIFF COLLEGE: Ashley Cooper, Principal of the College; spiritual growth in the student population; opportunities for students to share their faith and the gospel message with others (James 1: 22-25; Mark 16:15 - 18).

NATIONAL ISSUES

Prison system: Prison chaplains; openings and opportunities to share the gospel with prisoners; forming of programmes which will help transform the lives of prisoners and the resources to enable this to happen (2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Isaiah 61:1).

NHS & Social Care: The backlog of patients awaiting treatment and the resources needed to deal with it; doctors and nurses on the front line struggling to cope; better communication between the various departments - children's services, social services & mental health; care packages for the vulnerable (1 Peter 5:7; Philippians 4:13).

WORLD ISSUES

War torn areas of the world: Israel/Gaza; Russia/Ukraine; those fleeing war and living in refugee camps; adequate resources for relief and aid agencies: to tackle the suffering, famine and disease; for Christian Aid and other relief organisations – that they also may offer hope through the redemptive love of Jesus (Psalm 46:8-11; Proverbs 14:31-32).

RENEWAL: Individuals and churches to take seriously the need for prayer; the equipping of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit; pray for the Holy Spirit to flow into a dry and barren church (Ephesians 6:18; John 14:26).

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY: Being aware of where God is at work in each of our lives; seeking God through the power of the Holy Spirit to discern what he wants us to do. Courage to step out into possible new forms of ministry; recognising the need to be 'polished' by the transforming power of God and the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

NATIONAL ISSUES

Royal Family: Healing and wholeness through adversity - especially for King Charles and Catherine, Princess of Wales; for members of the Royal family to find strength and transformation in a relationship with Jesus (Isaiah 40:29-31; Psalm 51:10-12).

Children and young people: For all teaching to be biblically based; for all to come to know Jesus as their

Lord and Saviour; all youth and children's workers, school workers; raising up of more Christian people to reach out to a lost generation of youth across the nation, bringing them a fresh hope and wholeness in Jesus (1 Timothy 4:12; Mark 9:42).

WORLD ISSUES

Persecuted Christians: Recognising the darkness of oppressive regimes, pray for justice and fair treatment for detainees and their families. Pray for protection for churches. Pray for organisations working to bring to public awareness the plight of the Persecuted Church across the globe, such as Barnabas Aid, Open Doors and Release International (James 1:12; Romans 8:32-39).

Israel: Pray for the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. Pray about the worldwide rise in anti-semitism; the War with Gaza; leaders of opposition groups - Hamas, Hezbollah, PLO & Fata. Pray that adequate aid will reach civilians in Gaza. Pray for all who are living in Israel and the Palestinian Territories to come to a living faith in Christ Jesus; for God's will to be done (Matthew 24:6-9; Psalm 122:6-9).