Gracious and loving God, thank you for staying close to us in all that we have experienced in recent times.

As your holy people, we ask you to strengthen us with wisdom and understanding as we look forward to the new opportunities you will share with us.

Encourage us to offer rich hospitality: to recognise the individual, welcome the stranger and offer a community of love to all.

Amen.

Andrew de Ville, Southampton District Chair

God of compassion

whose loving care reaches out to everything you have made, we give you thanks for those whose daily work is to care for others.

We pray for all those working in health and care settings, especially those on who the pandemic has taken a heavy toll. We ask for renewal, refreshment and rest for those who are worn out.

We ask for a just wage for those staff who care for the most vulnerable.

We ask for wisdom for those in management and policy roles, that they may exercise compassion and justice in all their decisions. We pray for those, often unnoticed, who care for vulnerable and disabled family members.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

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Spend some time thinking and praying about the shape of your life currently in all it's variety; the life-giving and the challenging. How full is your stress bucket at the moment?

Write down what a full life would look like for you. How close is it to how you live now? Is it realistic or would you be exhausted if you lived like that?

Where is your Sabbath within it?

Basingstoke & Reading Circuit Prayers March to May 2022

Learning and Caring

As far as we are able, with God's help:

We will **care for ourselves** and **those around us**. We will **learn more** about our faith. We will **practise** hospitality and generosity.

May we be a blessing within and beyond God's Church, for the transformation of the world.

(from Methodist Way of Life)

Going before me, You lead me on Full of surprises, You help me see New possibilities, new facets of me.

Leading me gently, You show me the way Challenge my certainties And make me see A glimpse of your purpose, what I could be.

Showing us yourself,
As we seek to obey
You draw us to you
And help us see
Our part in your mission, what we could be.

As we seek you further
You lead us on
As we travel together
You make us see
To learn, we must be still and be.

Hospitable God, when we have made the Church a closed place, where only those who know the unwritten rules are welcome: forgive us and enlarge our hearts.

When we have made our minds a closed place, where only those who think as we do are welcome: forgive us and enlarge our hearts.

When we have made our hearts a closed place, where only those who love as we do are welcome: forgive us and enlarge our hearts.

Thank you for loving us as we are and for calling us to grow into the image of your Son, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

Michaela Youngson, Assistant Secretary, British Methodist Conference and Connexional Ecumenical Officer.

Gracious God,
I praise you
For your goodness and loving kindness
Which you pour out upon me
As I offer the cup of my life to you.
May I allow your love to overflow
To bless the lives of others
With generosity and hospitality
And compassionate care.
In Jesus' name, I pray.
Amen



A prayer as we Dwell in the Word

Loving God,
Although our destination is not yet clear,
May we trust in your graceful promises;
Though we are uncertain of ourselves,
May we be rooted in your loving regard;
Though our attention is inclined to wander,
May we hear the things you are saying;
Though we often neglect your influence,
May we be convicted of your power to change,
In Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Dwelling in the Word text: Hebrews 13: 1-9a (NIV)

13 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters.

² Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

- ³ Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering.
- ⁴ Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.
- ⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

'Never will I leave you;

never will I forsake you.'

⁶ So we say with confidence,

'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.

What can mere mortals do to me?'

- ⁷ Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.
- ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.
- ⁹ Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace.