

This guide is used at the monthly online lunchtime prayer meeting, but is also commended for use in personal prayers, and in leading intercessions at a service in church. Our July prayer meeting is on Thursday July 6th, 1 – 1.30 pm.

This month our prayer guide begins with an extract from a sermon preached by Revd Shaun Armstrong on Trinity Sunday, June 4th, at a special service of celebration and thanksgiving for the work of chaplaincy held at Trinity Methodist Church, Kidderminster, and organised by the Kidderminster Market Chaplaincy team - Albert Wilkinson, Barbara Pugh and Shaun. The team regularly visit traders in the lively street market in the centre of the town.

The work of the Spirit and the call to chaplaincy : Stepping into other peoples' spaces.

Trinity Sunday presents particular challenges to the preacher – how to convey something of the mystery of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Athanasius, that brilliant theologian of the 4th century, once vividly described the Trinity in a letter using this image: *The Trinity is like a fall of water. The Father is the source, the Son is the pool into which it flows and the Spirit is the river that takes it out into the world. All three are the same substance'.*

Another image is to speak of the Trinity as three persons – literally three faces or personas – in the perfect relationship of love. For God is Love.

As human beings, relationships and love is what makes us human – made in the image of God, and able to step into other people's spaces. Which is one way of speaking about the work of chaplaincy.

We also see that happening in the Gospels with Jesus – as he stepped into other peoples' spaces. One of the Easter stories I really love is found in Luke chapter 24, when two disciples are on their way to Emmaus, and Jesus comes and walks with them.

We don't know why exactly they had decided to leave Jerusalem. Maybe it was all getting a bit much for them, seeing their friend Jesus die or even the extraordinary claim that he was now alive. And what does Jesus do? He walks with them, and talks to them, and listens. And they end up sitting and breaking bread with him.

Similarly, the encounter of a chaplain with those they visit often starts with a 'How are you?' or 'How's things?' The conversation that comes after is never predictable. There might be the sharing of joy and laughter, or the confiding of experiences that are sad and filled with disappointment.

Chaplains journey together with people and often find themselves in new places, spiritually speaking, that they may have never found themselves in before. Ultimately, the role of a chaplain is to discover, in the journeying with another, what God is up to in that person's life, to pray for them and, filled with the Holy Spirit, love their neighbour as Jesus commanded.

Almighty God, in Jesus,
you step into the spaces of this world,
bringing healing, hope, love and life;
help us to see you in all places and people,
especially in the work people do;
and guide us as we step into the spaces of those we meet,
that we may share your compassion, care, forgiveness and mercy
as we seek your Kingdom on earth, as it is in heaven.
Amen

Please see over for specific items for prayer.

Especially we give thanks for:

- The FWW Spring Seminar – ‘Meeting the Challenge’ at Pershore Baptist Church, on June 8th as chaplains, trustees and supporters came to share experiences and mutual encouragement.
- FWW trustees who are retiring over the summer, for their contribution to our mission – for Peter Levitt, representing the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District of the Methodist Church, and Sarah Leeson, representing chaplains.

And we pray for:

- Traders in Pershore indoor market, as they accept the news that the market will close - to make way for a new budget supermarket - and make plans for the future; and for their chaplain Carol Sandys.
- Those most vulnerable from interest rates rises as the cost-of-living crisis continues and squeezes already tight pay packets.
- For those under pressure at work and vulnerable to mental illness as a result of stress.
- Those moving from education to employment at this time of the year.
- Businesses and workplaces that are neighbours to our own churches.
- FWW as it develops and shares its plans for sustaining and expanding the work of Workplace Chaplaincy across Worcestershire, aiming to be a volunteer-led organisation by January 2026.
- Linda McRoy and Lucas Allmark, new chaplains in the Redditch Town Centre team, as they are commissioned this month, and for more people to volunteer as chaplains.
- For those whose work is made harder due to climate change – those working outdoors, or in poorly designed offices and factories in hot weather, and in farming and food production in times of drought.
- In our cycle of prayer this month for:
 - Chaplains in Kidderminster – Barbara Pugh, Albert Wilkinson, Shaun Armstrong.