

OCTAVE VOL 1

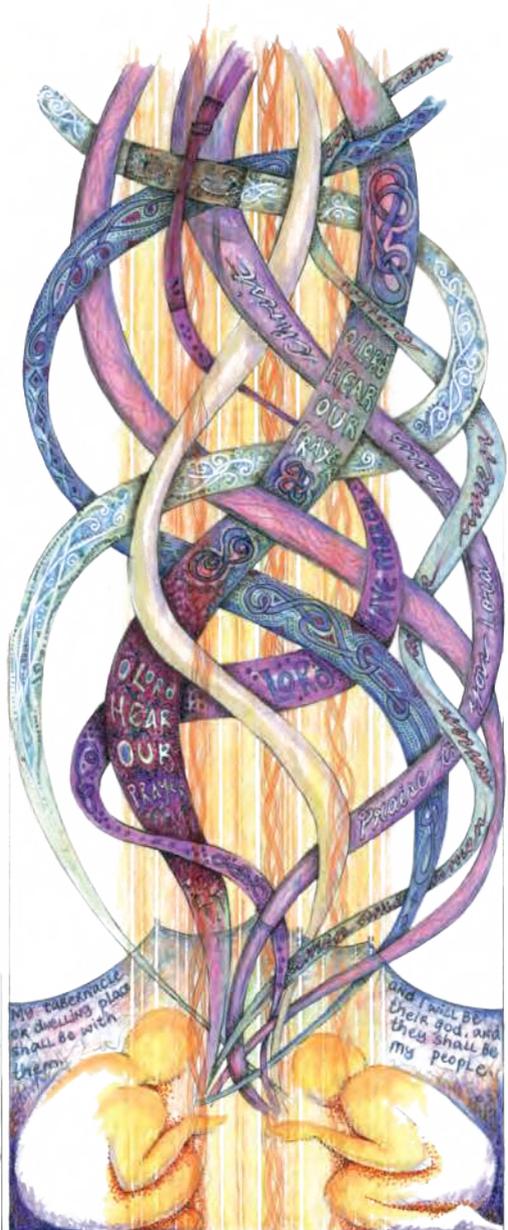
EIGHT DAYS OF PRAYER
WITH THE METHODIST MINISTERS' HOUSING SOCIETY



GLYNN LISTER
EDITED BY CLIVE PRICE



Methodist Ministers'
Housing Society



My tabernacle
or dwelling place
shall be with
them.

and I will be
their god, and
they shall be
my people.

For where two or three
are gathered in my name
there I AM in the
midst of them



The MMHS Octave is a revival of an ancient Christian practice of devoting eight days of prayer for a specific purpose. Other churches and organisations have also returned to this method in recent times.

In this version, we offer the same template for each of our own eight days – a reading, a prayer and an extract from a hymn.

The idea behind such an approach is that if the prayer pattern is the same, then you can ‘wear’ it like a cosy suit or outfit, rather than something you’re not used to wearing. If you’re at ease with the pattern, you can spend more time on the content.

Octave should be comfortable clothing, not a straitjacket. One person might find the reading enough to open up the way of prayer for them. Another person might want to look up the whole hymn and that will expand the prayer topic for them.

Start somewhere and finish somewhere. If you get lost in the middle, that’s fine, too.

Spend as little or as long a time on *Octave* as you feel is necessary. Prayer is all about letting your mind wander in the presence of God.



DAY 1

Today we focus on ministers and families who live in the Society's properties.

READING Acts 4:32-35

Here we find the driving force behind all that the Society does – especially verse 34, *'there was no one in the group who was in need'*.

There are 750 homes occupied by ministerial families. Some presbyters and deacons are newly retired. They are just beginning the adventure of living and ministering as a supernumerary.

Others have been residents for a long time – the longest for 40 years. The properties are all over the UK – Channel Islands, Cornwall, Northern Ireland, the North of Scotland and East Anglia.

Some residents are well and active, still able to support each other. Others have lost their partner. Others live with the burden of ill health and decreasing mobility, and are glad of support from those around them.

PRAYER

We pray for all presbyters, deacons, wives, husbands, widows and widowers who are resident in an MMHS property.

Loving Lord, we thank you for the ministries – past, present and to come – of those who live in a Society property. We ask they may continue to feel the joy of their calling. May those who suffer be strengthened; those in need supported; those who are grieving comforted; those who are broken made whole.

May today bring joys, challenges, support and happiness. May all know that underneath are the everlasting arms.

Amen

HYMN

O loving Lord, who art forever seeking

Those of thy mind,
intent to do thy will,

Strong in thy strength,
thy power and grace
bespeaking,

Faithful to thee,
through good report and ill.

*(William Vaughan Jenkins,
1868-1920, Hymns And
Psalms 798)*



DAY 2

Today we focus on the senior management team and staff who work at the Society's office in London.

READING *1 Corinthians 12:12-27*

We find in this passage – especially verse 27, '*all of you are Christ's body and each one is a part of it*' – a reminder of the complex needs of the Society. Property is bought and sold, budgets are made and accounts are kept, all the houses have to be well maintained and many administrative tasks have to be undertaken to fulfil the Society's statutory and legal obligations.

PRAYER

We pray for the Chief Executive, finance team, property team, operations team and all other contributors and consultants involved in the work of MMHS.

Loving Lord, we thank you for skills in property, finance and administration of those who work for the Society. We ask that they may continue to know how much they are valued, and how much they contribute to the happy lives of the Society's residents. May they have vision to take the Society in new directions, skills to meet the ever-changing needs, strength to cope with difficult situations and a knowledge of work well done.

Amen

HYMN

Forth in thy name
O Lord I go

My daily labour to pursue

*(Charles Wesley,
1707-1788,
Singing The Faith 550)*



DAY 3

*Today we focus on the MMHS Board
and its work.*

READING *1 Timothy 3:1-7*

We are reminded of the holistic nature of being an 'overseer'.

The members of the Board keep in mind the fact that, in order to function, the Society must be run as a business and an accountable charity. It must always be a Christian concern which demonstrates the love of God.

The challenges in 2019 could not have been imagined by those visionary people who established the Society in 1948, and the Board is constantly having to plan for new situations.

PRAYER

We pray for the members of the Board.

The Board is nine strong and includes ministers and those with skills and experience in the worlds of housing, finance and corporate business life.

We pray that they may not be afraid to make challenging decisions and that they may plan and execute policies with a social conscience and an awareness of people's needs. May they work together as a team for the good of the Society and its residents. We give thanks for the time and effort they give to help others in their retirement housing needs.

Amen

HYMN

When a stranger's
not alone

Where the homeless
find a home

Praise the love
that Christ revealed

Living, working,
in our world

*(Brian Wren, b 1936,
Singing The Faith 398)
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air' + © Stainer & Bell Ltd,
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DAY 4

Today our focus is on all retired presbyters and deacons, and older people within our church congregations and communities.

READING *Isaiah 46:4; Psalm 92:12-14*

Growing old is about change of circumstances and the gradual restriction on ability to be as vigorous as we used to be. Around 18.2 per cent of the UK population were aged 65 years or over at mid-2017, according to the Office for National Statistics. C S Lewis said, 'You are never too old to set a new goal and dream a new dream'.

In *The Princess And The Butterfly* we find this bit of insight – 'Those who love deeply never grow old. They may die of old age, but they die young'.

PRAYER

Loving Lord,

We pray for all who have retired.

May they dream new dreams as they look to the future.

May they be able to give to their communities, may they pass on wisdom, may they be tolerant of new ideas and encourage a new generation.

May they rejoice in their good memories and share them with others. When they are lonely, may they have companions and be supported all their day.

Amen

HYMN

Lord for the years your love has
kept and guided

Urged and inspired us, cheered us
on our way

Sought us and saved us, pardoned
and provided

Lord of the years, we bring our
thanks today

*'Lord, for the years your love' by
Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926).*

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and Africa. © Hope Publishing
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*(Singing The Faith
470)*



DAY 5

*Today our focus is on the people who care
for those in need.*

READING *Luke 10:29-37*

Care is given in so many ways. In many instances, it is the person's paid employment. But often care is given by family, friends, and church groups as an outpouring of love. Without those who care, the quality of life of many would be very much worse.

Around 6.5 million people are carers in the UK, according to CarersUK. They save the economy £132 billion every year.

PRAYER

Caring God, we give thanks for all who care, for family members selflessly showing their love, for medical staff who ease our lives, for the Christian love and care shown by local church, ministers, pastoral visitors and others who show love as part of their discipleship.

We pray that the compassion shown may ease burdens and remind all that underneath are the everlasting arms.

Amen

HYMN

A new commandment
I give unto you

That you love one another
as I have loved you

By this the world shall know
that you are my disciples.

*(Anonymous,
Singing The Faith 242)*



DAY 6

Today our focus looks outward, as we remember all who are homeless.

READING *Matthew 8:18-20*

About 320,000 people are homeless, claim the national charity Shelter. People become homeless for many different reasons. There are social causes, such as a lack of affordable housing, poverty and unemployment. Life events cause individuals to become homeless.

People can become homeless when they leave prison, care or the army with no home to go to. Many women have escaped a violent relationship. Many people become homeless because they can no longer afford the rent.

And for many, the trigger can be a relationship breaking down, losing a job, mental or physical health problems, or substance misuse. Being homeless can, in turn, make many of these problems even harder to resolve.

PRAYER

We pray for all women, men, girls
and boys who are homeless,

Those who sleep in the open,
in doorways, under bridges, on benches,

Those who can find shelter each night
but have no daytime home,

Those who are estranged from family
and are without family support,

Those whose lives have crumbled.

We ask that we may not be complacent
because we have a roof over our heads,
but may work for housing justice through
whatever means we can.

Amen

HYMN

In life, no house, no home,
my Lord on earth
might have

In death, no friendly tomb,
but what a stranger gave

*(Samuel Crossman, 1624-
1683, Singing The Faith
277)*



DAY 7

Today our focus looks to the wider world as we remember those who are refugees.

READING *Leviticus 19:33-34, Matthew 2:13-14*

Nearly 69 million people worldwide have been driven from their homes, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency. This includes those who have fled war, violence, political persecution and religious hatred.

These millions not only are without shelter – but also have lost everything and are cut off from their roots.

PRAYER

We pray for all those who long to be settled in a place they can call home,

For those who are journeying from oppression to find a new home,

For those who have arrived at a safe place and wait with trepidation for a decision as to whether they can stay where they have sought refuge.

We pray that in our security we may understand their need, that those who make judgements may show wisdom and compassion.

We pray that those who find a safe haven may live as active citizens of their new home.

Amen

HYMN

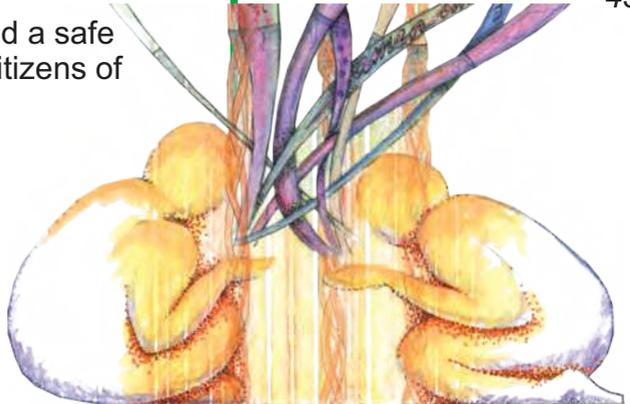
Where cross the crowded ways of life

Where sound the cries of race and clan

Above the noise of selfish strife

We hear thy voice
O Son of Man

*(Frank Mason North,
1850-1935,
Hymns And Psalms
431)*



DAY 8

Our Octave concludes as we focus on those responsible for housing policy and house building.

READINGS *Deuteronomy 16:18-20, Amos 5:14-15, 21-24*

For all to be housed there need to be enough houses and flats. As our population increases, so the need increases. This calls for a mixture of technology, public policy and determination in making choices about what to build and where to build.

PRAYER

Creating God, we pray for our Government, that it may always seek the way forward to give all a home.

We pray for civil servants as they find the most efficient ways.

We pray for councillors and local authorities, that they may be alive to the needs in their area and make the right decisions.

We pray for house builders, for craftsmen and all who keep housing stock in good repair.

Amen

HYMN

Land for the dispossessed
Rights for the weak
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak

*(Graham Kendrick b.1950
Singing the Faith 693)*

*Graham Kendrick 1993
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