

Newington Methodist Church

Church Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, ME9 7JT

News and views for the week commencing 20 September

The church building
at Newington
remains closed for
Sundays services.



Notices

- **Sunday on line service at 10:30am** – will be led by Rev Tony Graff. The service can be found on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/e3sC6Vq8q-4> or join by telephone: 020 3481 5237 (charged at the standard national rate); when requested enter meeting ID 742 958 8134 followed by #; press # again when asked for a participant ID
- You're also invited to join in the **Newington social catch-up before the service at 9am** online using Zoom at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fTVH1pk2z4&feature=youtu.be> (or use meeting ID 462 809 8433) ... or join by telephone: 020 3481 5237 (charged at the standard national rate); when requested enter meeting ID 462 809 8433 followed by #; press # again when asked for a participant ID
- **Next Sunday's service on line**, on 27 September will be led by Julien Myles
- **When are we opening our church?** The Church Council decided not to open Newington Church building for Sunday worship until 1st Sunday of Advent.
- **Sunday morning service in Sittingbourne 10:30 (indoor)**, Book on this phone number in advance: Paul **07939604253**
- **Bring your chair and Bible** every Sunday from 3 to 3:30pm in the front garden at Sittingbourne Methodist Church. Margaret Price is leading the service on 20th September.
- **Ride & Stride** Thank you Michael and Allan for keeping our church open and welcoming.

Reflection (taken from the Sunday service sheet, The Methodist Church website)

Gospel Reading: Matthew 20: 1-16

All Christians talk about grace but it seems to me that as Methodists we talk about grace a lot! This unearned, love of God in Jesus Christ freely offered to all people is both the foundation and heart of our worship, the sacraments and our new life in Christ. It is this grace that is expressed in God's saving action toward us and nothing of our faith can ever be outside a response to God's grace.

In turning to Matthew 20 we reach Jesus' parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. The New Testament scholar Charles B. Cousar suggests that the best response a preacher can make to this text is to simply get out of the way of this challenging, perhaps even annoying picture of God's grace. Why annoying? This story is told to Jesus' disciples who have as Peter says "...left everything and followed [Jesus]" (Mt 11:27). It is to these that Jesus tells his story of workers who queue for their wage after a whole day toiling in the scorching sun. We can imagine their eyes popping when the latecomers receive a full day's wage for but one hour's work. If they have stumbled upon such generosity, what then will be *their* reward? Imagine then the knot in their stomachs as they receive nothing but the exact same coin as their colleagues who had hardly broken sweat. What employer would be so foolish as to alienate such faithful workers?

This then is Jesus' answer to his faithful follower's enquiry about their reward. Confronted by the reality of God's grace all legalistic religion, all bargaining with God finds its end. The reward is the work itself for it is carried out in the presence of the master.

As we are confronted by this grace, so it poses a question. Is it enough for us to know that we labour in the presence and purpose of the God who loves us? As our story stands on the threshold of Holy Week in Matthew 21, are we content that we shall gather with last minute arrivals so that even a thief, in the last minutes of his life, finds a gracious promise of paradise?

In our frustration, may we recall with humility, the grace first shown to us.

Grace and peace.

[People and places for prayer](#)

In our weakness, O Christ, let us trust your strength, in our darkness let us see your light, in our doubt let us feel your presence and in our despair, let us cling to your Cross, for your truth and your mercies' sake. **Amen**

Francois Fenelon (1651-1715)

- Beryl and Peter, Margaret N, Peter and Ian, Heather and Stephen, Elena, Val T.
- All those shielding from Covid-19, people in places facing renewed lockdown measures and all those who are suffering from the virus and the medical staff who care for them. We also remember all those living on their own as this has more intense impact on their lives.
- We remember our friends who have died and their loved ones: Audrey, Margaret S.
- Pray for the church in China which faces increasing restrictions on ministry to people under the age of 18, and for its pastors and lay leaders who, despite face these restrictions yet are confident that faith will flourish. *(taken from Day 20 Prayer handbook)*

Riddle

Journey without it and you will never prevail, but if you have too much of it you will surely fail.

(The source from internet)



Answer to last week's puzzler: no

Please send news, prayer requests and any other contributions for inclusion in the weekly newsletter to robert.zachar@gmail.com

Bank details for Offerings:

Newington Methodist Church, HSBC Sittingbourne. Sort Code 40 – 42 – 04, Account 70614696.

If you prefer to send a cheque contact our church treasurer Chris Ch.