

Newington Methodist Church
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Sunday 14th June

Refugee week starts

Father's Day

The church building at Newington remains closed but as a congregation we continue in worship and prayer.

Bible verse

The Lord watches over you. The Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm, he will watch over your life. The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and for evermore.

Psalm 121:1-8

Prayer

Preferring nothing to you, O Christ, let us hold fast to your love, embrace your Cross and honour your name. Let conviction mark our speech, courage our life and patience our faith, by your own name sake.

Amen

(Cyprian of Carthage c.200-258)



Reflection

Worship John 4:21-24 Joshua 6:1-21

It has been nearly three months since our church services has been moved from our church buildings into our homes. This change must have had a tremendous effect on our worship of God. Positives and negatives have been named, and surely they are very individual.

An act of worship is very much a part of human nature. This cannot be ignored. For centuries and generations we were fighting about it and we still do. So it must be important to us. I would like to offer a few observations about worship.

First we must differentiate worship from veneration. (*I just learned a new English word studying this.*) To pay respect and observe positive examples of other people is important. Although in this past week we have witnessed removals of some respected characters from public places, relating to their involvement in the slave trade. It is a tricky question whether or not this is the right action. When the communist regime fell in my country, people destroyed icons of Lenin and Stalin and it was very much like a ritual. It was important for us to have that experience of victory over evil. The question remains of how much of the communist members remained in control just undercover and continued to influence the politics and economy. It is one thing to remove the icons from our squares, and another from our hearts. Racism is deeply rooted. Only Jesus can change the heart and help us sing "Amazing Grace" to a full extent.

But we are constructed with an even higher aspiration and it is to worship God. Of course even on this level we suffer confusion and it is easy to settle into religious traditions. We can end up just pretending or copying something we never personally encountered. With all respect this can be the experience of many of us and even for a long period of time. But then God shines, speaks, acts in our hearts and that outweighs all the longing and silence of before. I remember one time when I fasted. I needed to hear God more clearly. I fasted, with prayers and reading scriptures but nothing extra divine happened. So I decided to finish the fasting and made the decision. It was a wrong decision and it put me in a very difficult situation. But down there, in those difficult and hard days which followed, God was providing and protecting me in a way I could not explain by any reason. So it is. It is not wrong not to hear God, but it is wrong to get used to it and even worse to pretend that we hear him.

Our souls longs for connection, for hearing that quiet voice, that unexplained joy and peace of our creator, redeemer and the Holy Spirit's purifying presence. In an act of worship, we need to experience that contact, that kind of assurance that God is there and we are in his presence. That is why Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in Samaria about true worship. Real, appealing and experiential.

After years of peace and the comfort of worshiping in our sanctuaries we became a bit spoiled and expect to have things as we like it. But it is not everything. The very essence of our worship is to experience the living God. His divine language speaking to us, his assurance and revealing wisdom of what is going on and where should we stand in the middle of these unprecedented times. This doesn't always happen on Sunday 10:30 am. Yet, thanks to these Sundays and all the times we worship, Gods voice is making its way through the clouds of all other concerns and surely it will arrive in time. Perhaps it is like walking around the walls of Jericho. Day after day in silence, but then the trumpets sound and voices cry and the walls crumble down.

This week we remember to pray for:

Beryl and Peter, Margaret N., Peter and Ian, Heather and Stephen, Elena remembering those who have died, and praying for their loved ones. Audrey, Margaret

Continue in prayers for The Federation of Newington Church of England Primary School and Lower Halstow Primary School. Staff and children in Early Years, Year 1 and Year 6.

We remember in our prayers the world crisis and refugees. See upcoming events at:
<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>



Notices:

- **For Sunday service 10:30 am** follow the link on www.nkmethodists.org.uk worship at home. This coming Sunday circuit service will be led Rev Velma Campbell, next Sunday 14th June, (MHA Sunday) will be led by Rev Robert Zachar
- **A Virtual Church Choir**
The National Methodist Choir want to provide all singers from all denominations, and all corners of the globe, an opportunity to come together and worship God with our voices. See www.nmcgb.org/ for details of how to get involved.

These are on line meetings on ZOOM. You can join in via computer or phone.

- **Sunday morning chat and prayer 9am**
 - Dial 00442034815240
 - Meeting ID 83903061413 Password: 265946
- **Bible study** every Tuesday 2 -3pm, find the link at:
<http://www.sittingbournemethodist.org.uk/>
- **Prayer meeting** Fridays 10 am Meeting Password: 558684
https://zoom.us/join/attendee/tJwuciorTsvO96jEWZmrcTOTzljykLN0w/ics?user_id=HJb3zyuSS5-YIXmq1RLdQw

A question to keep you thinking...
What men began to do in Gen 4, 26 ?

The answer to last week's question: Be imitators of Christ