

Newington Methodist Church

Church Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, ME9 7JT

News and views for the week commencing 30 August

The church building
at Newington
remains closed for
Sundays services.



Notices

- **Sunday service at 10:30am** – will be led by Rev Robin Selmes and can be found on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/0qAfw5T1UY0> 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://us02web.zoom.us/j/4628098433> (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 6 September will be a special welcome service for our new part-time ministers Rev Gill le Boutillier-Scott (Hextable) and Rev Paul Lau (Medway Chinese church). Rev Helen Hollands (Circuit Assistant Chair) will give the sermon.
- **When are we opening our church?** The Church Council decided not to open the Church building for Sunday worship until 1st Sunday of Advent. This is to be confirmed nearer the date.
- **Bring your chair and Bible** every Sunday from 3 to 3:30pm in the front garden at Sittingbourne Methodist Church. Rev Robert Zachar is leading on 23 August.
- Christian Aid is seeking donations for its **Lebanon Crisis Appeal** for the more than 750,000 people who have been affected by the explosion in Beirut on 4 August, which destroyed homes, hospitals and grain stores. You can give online at: <https://donate.christianaid.org.uk/Donate/Step/1?ApproachCode=A036027>
- **Newington Garage Sale**, Sunday 6 September – as the event starts in the morning while the Sunday service is on, we'll only be open from 12noon-3pm. Our intention is to offer refreshments and have bric-a-brac on sale in the car park or from the foyer if the weather is not good. If you have some things to sell you can bring it. You can also stay and help. Contact Michael.

- **Kent Ride and Stride**, Saturday 12 September, 10am-6pm. We will be offering refreshments and registering visitors from the car park.
- **Church garden** – Wednesday 2:30 - 4:30pm. Weeding, sweeping, clearing our church garden. Join in if you can, but bring your own tools and coffee. RZ
- **Weekly Monthly Offerings**

If you wish to do this the bank details are as follows

Newington Methodist Church Bank details

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

If you wish to send a cheque to me made payable to the Church that is fine and I can bank it and provide a receipt. My Address to send to is 10 Millfield Sittingbourne Kent ME10 4TR.

Thank you.

Reflection

Exodus 3, 1-15, Matthew 116,21-28

Moses was about 80, when he met God by the burning bush (*Exodus 7:7*). That is just to put this great event into human perspective. We may not expect life changing revelations and calling at that age. He was over 1600 years old when he met Jesus, Elijah, Peter, James and John (*Matthew 17:3*). That is also to put Moses in realities we may not see with our physical sight, yet so significant we can hardly overestimate them. As Moses was chosen to lead God's people to freedom, so was Jesus, but in a different style. In Moses mission many people died, in Jesus mission only one person had to die and it was Jesus himself.

In the time of Moses God demonstrated his character by focusing on a particular community –Israel. They became a witness to all other nations. They became like a letter to read about what is the true God like. They were given the law (*Moses 10 commandments*) and preserved it throughout generations until Jesus came. Then things took an unexpected course. Jesus acted a bit “strangely” when it came to the questions of the law. The apostle Paul explained it in his letter to the Galatians. (*Gal 3:24 “the law became our custodian until Christ”* This resounds the promise which some of the prophets foresaw. Jeremiah 31:33 “*I will put my instructions within them and engrave them on their hearts*” and Ezekiel 36:25-27

These two eras of history, when Moses and Jesus acted, could resemble the lockdown of this recent year 2020. First when humanity is locked down under Moses law of 10 commandments. Infected by sin, we need this law to keep us under some level of order. Most of the population today respects this moral and ethical code and keeps it as standard behaviour. It is a matter of discussion as to how well we are doing. Second era does not start until Jesus comes. He breaks the chains and frees us from the power of the corrupted nature dwelling in us. It does not happen automatically, we have to choose Jesus.

When Jesus spoke to his disciples about writing Gods law onto people's hearts Peter did not like the way it is going to happen. We do not like that way either. We still tend to think that we could save our souls by intelligence. And it is a good and important belief. We have to live in a hope that what we do is good. The quality of life has improved tremendously, but when it comes to the matters of our souls or minds we are so fragile. It is an uncharted world and so damaged by false hopes, expectations, fears, guilt, etc. Yet most would respond today to Jesus: “*you do not have to die for me, I can manage my life... “*

But Jesus did not give up. Thanks be to God. Although it must have been one of the most discouraging parts of his mission - to see that people do not understand how much they need God. They approached

him for healing, feeding, listening to good stories, but when he said John 6:53-60: *“that they have to drink his blood and eat his flesh”* many left him in disgust. Even Peter who just a few days before declared Jesus to be the Messiah was now talking him out of the very essence of his mission.

Jesus rebuked Peter and came up with a beautiful speech, which was really only a few sentences, but can have a tremendous impact on our everyday life perspectives. He said, that the human soul is the most precious and valuable thing in the whole universe. That is what God thinks of each of one of us?! That is beautiful. In comparison we do not value life much. In words perhaps yes, but in reality not. God does. He wants it to last forever and he designed us for eternity. We do not take this much into account. We live like this is it and there is nothing to follow. But God says differently. Look at Moses, how old would he be now? Imagine the “burning bush” that it is still burning in the hearts of God’s people.

Recently in one of our prayer group we shared a video. It said that the church is not a community centre but a hospital. Let’s think of the church as a hospital with its different departments, with one difference, it heals people’s souls. We will remain under lockdown until we let Jesus heal our souls.

People and places for prayer

- Beryl and Peter, Margaret N, Peter and Ian, Heather and Stephen, Elena
- Pray for Val Trice. She is still in hospital, but doing well. Robert has spoken to the chaplain. Val has received a lot of cards which have helped to cheer her up. The contact for sending the cards is: *Mrs Val Trice c/o Rev Lynda Cooke Medway Maritime Hospital, Windmill Road , Gillingham, Kent, ME7 5NT*
- For churches considering how and when to reopen; and for Gill and Paul as they prepare to join the Circuit
- 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
- The people of Beirut and all those who are in mourning, those who have lost their homes and livelihoods, those who are suffering through a lack of food and medical supplies
- We remember our friends who have died and their loved ones: Audrey, Margaret S.

Riddle

I kept him steady and others away
I kept them safe and showed the way
Once thrown down upon the ground
I came alive with a hissing sound
I hit the rock as he was told
And that was when the water flowed
What am I?

Answer to last week’s puzzler: 1. You are the Christ, the Son of living God 2. area of Caesarea Philippi 3. Rock 4. keys of the kingdom of heaven

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