

Newington Methodist Church

Church Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, ME9 7JT

News and views for the week commencing 7th March 2021

The church building
remains closed in March
and until further notice.



Notices

- **Sunday on-line service at 10:30am** will be led by Rev. Bonni Belle Pickard. The service can be found on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDgCscdkQII&feature=youtu.be>

- **Newington social catch-up before the service at 9am** online using Zoom at:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4628098433>
(meeting ID 462 809 8433) ... or join by telephone: 020 3481 5237; when requested enter meeting ID 462 809 8433 followed by #; press # again when asked for a participant ID
- **Next Sunday's service on-line**, will be led by Bart Woodhouse from Ebsfleet Community Church
- **Newington Coffee morning** Quiz by Jenny G.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4628098433>
Meeting ID: 462 809 8433, or by phone dial 020 3481 5237 (alternative number 020 3481 5240) When requested, enter the meeting ID (4628098433) followed by #
You don't need a 'participant ID' - just press #
- **AGM Annual General Church meeting** will be on **15 March, Monday 2pm** via Zoom. Please put this in your calendar. We will be talking about our church life. The agenda is attached to these notices. Please send your reports by email to Chris Chare by Tuesday 10th March. Part of the meeting agenda will be election of the church stewards and offices. The nomination list is included in agenda. The link for AGM :

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89605523185?pwd=ei9NaDM2dldXS1A1ZDIEVllkMGFQdz09>

Meeting ID: 896 0552 3185

Passcode: 537839

By Phone dial +441314601196 When requested enter the meeting ID 89605523185 and press # and you should be in the meeting.



“Breaking Day” passion play by **Riding Lights Theatre Company**.

Possibility to watch online. Available to stream 19 March - 15 April.

Up to 60 households will be able to view the play ‘Breaking Day’ across a 4 week period, the usual cost would be £10.00 per household, however, we have a sponsor who is willing to cover the total cost, but it would be good if all households or individuals participating felt that they would like to make a donation to defray part, or all of the cost please send your payments to Chris Chare Treasurer of Newington Church. To book your ‘seat’ please email paul@greenapplegraphics.co.uk once you have booked a link will be sent to you

Click this link to see a short clip of the play

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPJ4BIDgTkc>

Other activities you can join in during the week via Zoom

- **Bible study** During the Lent season we will explore Biblical texts supporting spiritual practices of fasting, prayer, Holy Communion and others. Tuesdays 2pm. Look for the poster for more details.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83665077649?pwd=SzQyQjZnTGRxeFNEOUUxMENla1d3Zz09#success>
- **Prayer meeting** Wednesday 11 am. On Zoom:
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4351397999?pwd=eHZFVGJXdj9QeGFZdnhtMFdIT3BuUT09#success>
- **Prayer and Share** 9:30 am led by Elena Markova (every first and third Friday of the month)
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87438656633?pwd=QUNhNWVjZHBQTUF5am1YMy9xTjhZZz09>

Speaking Truth to Power

A Reflection on John 2:13-22 *by Gillian Collins*

You know, Jesus wasn't always Mr Nice Guy! Actually I think he must have been a difficult person to have around if you wanted a predictably quiet life and preferred to keep the peace. We know little about his early life, except for one story which suggests he was a handful to his parents at the age of twelve. He leaves home at around 30 and embarks on a preaching and healing ministry, consorting with "sinners", those on the margins of society. He rejects the tears and entreaties of his mother and siblings imploring him to come home and behave like a good son. He insults his close friend, Peter, saying "get behind me Satan", and in exasperation tells the others they have closed minds. Then he starts to gain public notoriety and comes to the attention of the authorities for all the wrong reasons.

This Sunday's Gospel Lectionary story about Jesus overturning the tables of the money-changers and driving them out of the Temple Court is often quoted as a counterbalance to the "gentle Jesus, meek and mild" (Charles Wesley's words!) we meet in some of our best loved hymns. In fact, it's one of several occasions where Jesus is recorded as having spoken truth to power – challenging those in positions of privilege and authority, especially where it was the poor who suffered as a result of their attitudes and activities.

While all the Gospel writers include a version of this event, they each set it in a different context and give it varying significance. John places the incident near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry as a marker of the beginning of a campaign of opposition by the religious leaders. But where Matthew, Mark, and Luke say that Jesus' reason for driving out the merchants is because they are making the Temple 'a den of thieves' (implying an ethical issue concerning unfair business practices) John says the merchants are turning God's house into a market place – the problem is a spiritual one concerning the profane use of holy space.

So what was John's purpose in telling this story and placing it at this point in Jesus' ministry? He uses this story to flag the suggestion that Jesus' criticism is going to get him into serious trouble and the rest of his account is really about why and how. Jesus has tackled the authorities head on and challenged them in their seat of power and authority, the Temple! John is saying to his readers and hearers, "Remember this clue I have given you. Jesus' life and teaching is about challenging and reinterpreting authority and its priorities, and violence will be done because he dares to criticise."

There is also a more complex "theological" reasoning. The temple will be 'cleansed', ultimately, not by being cleared of merchants, but by being re-imagined (re-built) as a sign of the promise of new life. Remember that John's Gospel, the last to be written and thus blessed with the perspective of greater hindsight, was addressed to new communities of Jesus' followers, seeking to make sense of all that was known of his life and teaching, and especially his death at the hands of their very own leaders and people (whom John is beginning to "other" as "the Jews").

So yes, Jesus **was** a trouble maker. His protest was against a religious and social system that discriminated against and excluded the majority of ordinary people.

There is no way to explain away Jesus' behaviour, though many Christians today continue to have difficulties with protested anger, or "direct action" against injustice. How far should we go, when violence or lawlessness may be involved?

We may see this as an isolated event in the life of Jesus, yet many of his loyal followers have and still do choose the path of "direct action" and face the consequences, impelled to "speak truth unto power" for the sake of God's justice. It is fair to assume that the Temple leaders did not hear Jesus' criticism as good news. He was bound to get into trouble with the leadership. And living all his life in Galilee, Jesus would know full well the power of the Temple leaders, who operated hand-in-glove with the Emperor's representative. As a result, the outcome of Jesus' decision to mount a defiant symbolic demonstration in Jerusalem was bound to be tragic and violent.

Is "direct action" – possibly with violence and law-breaking – justified for Christians, if the alternative is that injustice prevails?

If Jesus were to cleanse the temples of our society today, what would that be like?

Overturning Tables: a Prayer

Truth be told, Jesus,

There are lots of tables that need overturning in our lives;

Beneath the veneer of respectability the tidy rows and neat regulations

hide dark addictions and angry judgements hungry greed and heartless rejections

We know the pain, and so do those around us, of keeping up the facade;

What a relief it would be to have it all upset, smashed, scattered, destroyed

So Jesus, perhaps today you could pay us a visit

and help us to radically rearrange the furniture of our lives. **Amen**

(By John van de Laar, posted on sacredise.com, Liturgical Resources for Progressive Communities)

People and places for prayer

- Val Trice still in care home.
- Beryl and Peter W.
- Michael and Ro and their new home.
- We remember our friends who have died and their loved ones: Audrey, Margaret S.

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.