

Newington Methodist Church

Church Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, ME9 7JT

News and views for the week commencing 3rd December 2022

**The Lord's spirit will rest upon him,
a spirit of wisdom and
understanding,
a spirit of planning and strength,
a spirit of knowledge and fear of
the Lord.**

(Lectionary, Isaiah 11:2)



Notices

Sunday Worship 3rd December will be led by Martin Smith

Next Sunday Worship 11th December will be Local arrangement led by Chris Chare and Eileen H.

Circuit live stream 3rd December Advent series led by Bonni-Belle Pickard on the theme "Advent Adventures", focussing on the four women listed in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus: Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba, and Ruth.

<https://www.nkmethodists.org.uk/news/worship-from-home.html>

Calendar

- **3rd December – Coffee Morning**
- **18th December** – our last service of the year. It is Holy Communion and Carols with Christmas refreshments to follow.
- **25th December there is no service at Newington Methodists**, please join us at Sittingbourne or St Mary's 10 am. There will be midnight service at St Mary's starts 11:30 pm
- **Christmas Fair at village hall organised by St Mary** – we enjoyed being part of this lovely busy atmosphere, spoke to many people and also made £16 .

Reflection Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the desert of Judea announcing, "Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!" (Common English Bible)

As we approach this Second Advent Sunday, the lectionary guides us from the ancient prophets to the contemporary prophet who was, at the time, John the Baptist.

John declares that the Kingdom of heaven is near! He sounds urgent and quite frankly he is not very kind. Together with the setting – desert, and John's appearance we could easily be put off. John also speaks harshly to some people coming to hear him. Yet all this together created a sacred space, a holy ground or a special moment where people could come and experience that it is not a man talking but God calling.

People will always need this kind of space where the message cuts deep. A place where there is a chance to reflect on our own state in the light of the kingdom John announced and Jesus realised. It is not to discourage us but to energise us in a positive way.

What kind of sacred space or moments can you go to? What amount of energy are you willing to give so these spaces can still be there for others to come to? I mean don't go John's harsh way, let's continue to be kind and welcoming and create safe places, but be aware that if we want to chase the truth and see the change we might need to say hard things and accept hard truths about ourselves or those we serve. Is Advent such a space? It is most stressful, busy and for many quite sad season. Often we are overcome by its commercial side and yet it offers one of the most magical moments and hopes.

John's call to prepare the way for Christ's coming by simply changing minds and lives sounds really like it is going to be a matter of self-discipline, mind power or information empowering. But it never was and never will be. Perhaps you have done all you could imagine for someone to change their lives and yet there is no result. Both kind and hard methods but nothing really worked. Hold on, what is impossible to man is possible to God. It is God's timing and he wants us to persevere and if possible remain kind to others and to ourselves.

Prayer from the Methodist worship book

God of all holiness,
your promises stand unshaken through all the generations
and you lift up all who are burdened and brought low.

Renew our hope in you,
as we wait for the coming in glory of Jesus Christ,
our judge and our Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit

One God, world without end. Amen

(MWB pgs.: 524)

We remember those who died and their loved ones. Audrey G, Margaret S., Peter W., Ernie S, Brian and Joan D.

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.jj