

Newington Methodist Church

Church Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, ME9 7JT

News and views for the week commencing 22nd January 2023

**One thing I ask from the Lord,
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all days of my life to gaze upon the
beauty of the Lord,
and seek him in his temple.**

(Lectionary, Psalm 27: 4)



Notices

- **Sunday Worship with Holy Communion 22nd January** is. Joint service with St. Mary. It is a week of prayers for Christian unity. The service will be led by Rev Robert and the preacher will be Lis Wilmet
- **Next Sunday Worship 29th January** we will join at United service in Sittingbourne, 10:30 am. Service will be led by R. Zachar
- **Circuit live stream 22nd December** will be led by Robin Selmes
<https://www.nkmethodists.org.uk/news/worship-from-home.html>
- The next circuit live stream 29th January will be led by Oscar Siu, Chinese Methodist church in Gillingham

Calendar

- **22nd January 3pm** Worship planning meeting at the manse
- **29th January 10:30 am - united service at Sittingbourne followed with lunch.** Please call Robert if you wish to stay for lunch. This also means that there will be no service at Newington that Sunday.

Sunday Service for the Week of prayers for Christian Unity, Day 5 *(edited)*

Readings from 2 Samuel 12:1-12 and Mark 11:15-17

Reflection

In the passages today, both David and Jesus demonstrate holy rage through a strong resistance and anger towards the situation in front of them. Throughout Scripture we are reminded that injustice can provoke strong emotions, anger and even violent responses. These can be heightened when people have been deliberately silenced.

Throughout history we have seen a demand that comes from the oppressor to marginalised people to smile and make merry, to sing the songs of a happy past. Whether it was in minstrel shows, or Geisha dances, or Wild West cowboy and Indian shows, the oppressors have demanded that the oppressed perform happily to ensure their own survival. Their message is as simple as it is cruel; your songs, your ceremonies, your cultural identity, that which makes you sacredly unique, is only allowable so long as it serves us.

Even when the victims of oppression are encouraged to tell their stories they often find that people are only willing to listen to their pain and sadness, but draw back when they articulate angry demands for change.

Martin Luther King Jr said: "...in the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard.... our nation's summers of riots are caused by our nation's winters of delay [on justice]" He understood that the path to true peace lies in the healing of relationships through the work of justice, addressing the barriers that keep people from feeling included as full members of the community.

Are we truly ready to listen to the experiences of those who have been oppressed? Are we open to their tears but defensive against their anger? How might God be calling us to act to address the suffering that prompts this rage?

Questions

- Think of a situation in history where a community was able to channel its rage at injustice into meaningful positive change. What can we learn from this story?
- Who might be most marginalised and at risk of being ignored in your local community? How can the Church help amplify their voice?
- How could you help raise awareness today about a situation of injustice in the world?

Prayer

God of the oppressed, open our eyes to the harm that continues to be inflicted on our siblings in Christ. Give us the courage to stand up and advocate for all who are silenced, even if it means releasing some of our own privilege to do justice.

Prayers for Elena M. and her training for the ministry.

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

A Franciscan Benediction

Attributed to the earliest followers of St Francis

May God bless you with discomfort
at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger
at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears
to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war,
so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them
and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference in the world,
so that you can do what others claim cannot be done
to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

Amen

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