

Newington Methodist Church

Church Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, ME9 7JT

News and views for the week commencing 12th March 2023

**Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts**

(lectionary, NIV, Psalm 95:7-8)



Notices

- **Third Sunday in Lent 12th March** is Local arrangement. The service will be led by Alan Thorn.
- **Next Sunday with Holy Communion, 19th March**, will be led by Robert Zachar.
- **Circuit live stream 12th March** will be led by Bart Woodhouse
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GBybyN97pl>
- The next circuit live stream 19th March will be led by Oscar Siu.

Calendar back and forth

- **Church council** 13th March 2pm
- **St Luke's Quiz night** 18th March, 7-7:30 start, £5, Tea and coffee
- **Cornerstone Cafe:** 09.00 to 12.00 noon - at St Mary's Church, Newington, every third Thursday of each month
- **Memory Cafe:** This will take place every fourth Monday from 11.00am to 1.00pm at Newington Village Hall.
- **Kosher Crooner evening with Gerry Cohen**, messianic preacher at Sittingbourne

- **Last Taboo workshop 3rd June.** Workshop about death and dying at Gravesend and Sittingbourne, Booking required, see the link or speak to the minister.

<https://www.nkmethodists.org.uk/news/last-taboo.html>

Reflection

Unhappy people of God

“Why did you bring us out of Egypt?” Exodus 17: 1-7

This is from the Exodus story. The Israelites travelled light from Egypt to the Promised Land. The non-existent road led through the desert and there were no supply stations. Imagine a long distance hike without knowing how much longer is it to the nearest lovely rest place to chill out. Nothing, just hostile environment, unknown distances. This was a God led, spontaneous action and a lot of it was about learning to trust that God will provide. By our human standards it was also a recipe for disaster. It inevitably came to the point when people just got angry and desperate. First to blame would be the leaders and then God.

I understand this situation from my own. I get angry with the government, and I can see everybody does. People often blame the leaders for their own misfortunes. Part of it is true but not to the extent we often go to. I get angry even with God! It is because I often feel incompetent. Lacking resources and running out of ideas. To follow him can very often be unpredictable. I often feel stupid too as I do not manage the call to live a holy life. Is it just me?

There are lots of us who often don't feel great about their life and God. The story we read in the book of Exodus actually talks about two types of unhappy people of God. People, many of them are angry with Moses and God and then there is Moses who doesn't know what to do. The first group is clearly that kind of anger we can all afford to experience and it doesn't cost us anything. We complain that others are not doing what they are supposed to do as if we would do better in their place. Hm. . . We are all guilty of that. But imagine being in Moses' shoes. It is the ultimate, no plan B, situation. Moses really needed a good chat with God and finally he found relief and help, but once we get shoved into that corner we often stop thinking and our brain switches of its rational thinking part and instead uses the emotions and we panic. That is often how it is. Sometimes it is friends and close ones who lift us up to God since we are still angry and confused. I must say I cannot count how many times I literally felt that someone, somewhere is praying for me. Sometimes we actually fail and experience total humiliation which after time proves to be part of what God was doing for us. Sometimes we see a miracle, perhaps not like in the Exodus, but little changes, little improvements. Something like Elijah experienced when he prayed for rain and the first couple of days all he could see was clear sky and scorching heat. Elijah prayed and prayed and on the third day a little tiny cloud appeared, and then the massive sound of an approaching storm.

Then Jesus came and he spoke to a Samaritan women at the well. She was full of it. Full of anger, confusion and regrets. Religious outcast, community character everyone avoided. She could not

compare with all the smart, fortunate and successful life presented in public. All the posh Pharisees praying at the corner of the streets and doing all nice things. Yet there he was, talking to her and showing her the respect and compassion she needed so much. She needed and finally had a good chat with Jesus. The anger and frustration eased, her heart could hear the teaching which was liberating and accessible even to her. She eventually felt that someone cares and her case matters. She could see the future in this teaching not like an endless waste of desert with no shelter or rest. I am just guessing what goes on in the heart of a person who kind of messed up his life and everyone lets him know!

Do not be angry with God, come and have a good chat with him. Tell him about how you feel and where you think you are. Let him speak to you like he did to that woman and find out that you can actually enter a place of rest with him.

Prayer

*Almighty God,
You see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves.
Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls,
That we may be defended from all adversities
Which may happen to the body,
And from all evil thoughts
Which may assault and hurt the soul,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN
(MWB collects Third Sunday of Lent, pg 535)*

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