



TOGETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Stir us up

Revd Nathan Falla

My Dad is absolutely lovely, he is known in our family as someone who tells really bad jokes (the sort that you really groan at) and is also known as a bit of a stirrer. The phrase “Dad, stop stirring” was heard as he playfully teased us as we grew up, seeing if we would react. Sunday sees the last Sunday in the Church Year before we change the lectionary year (moving from Year B and a focus on Mark’s Gospel to Year C and a focus on Luke’s Gospel) and before we begin the journey of Advent. It is known as the Festival of Christ the King but it is also known as Stir Up Sunday.

Stir-up Sunday gets its name from the collect (the prayer set for the day to accompany the lectionary):

*Stir up, O Lord the wills of your faithful people,
that they, bringing forth the fruit of good works,
may by you be richly rewarded;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

But it is also associated with another tradition that started back in Victorian times, where families would come together to get their fruit puddings stirred up, steamed and stored ahead of Christmas. Each member of the family would take a turn to give all the ingredients a good mix and help tick off the first task of the festive season.

For me *Stir up Sunday* is the reminder that sometimes our spiritual lives and the life of the church can get a bit stagnant. We can very easily get stuck in a rut; we can think that because we have always done it this way, this is how it will be forever, we can become complacent or even apathetic. It may even get to the point that we are unsure why we are doing something. Stir up Sunday reminds me that I always need to be open to the stirring of the Holy Spirit that I may be changed, renewed and transformed. We are not called to remain the same, but we are called to learn, grow, change and be transformed that we may be the people and the church that God calls us to be.

God has never finished with us, we are always works in progress. What in you, what in me, what in the local church, the circuit, the national church needs to be stirred up, needs to change. Everything we do should point to Jesus, everything we do should build relationship, everything we do should open us up that God’s will may be our will, that through our worship and witness, our service and our mission the love of God may be known, and the light of Christ may be seen.

In the words of Charles Wesley in the hymn *O thou who camest from above*:

*Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up thy gift in me.*



Is Jesus King?

Online Circuit Service Sermon | John 18:33-37 | Rachel Dalby

Being a king really meant something in Jesus' day. A king was the most powerful human being on earth. A king speaks, common people tremble. For nations, the king was the only means of securing order and peace. The king was, civilization and domestic tranquillity personified in one person. He was to be honoured and respected and served. He was to be revered and feared and obeyed. A king was everything and everybody rolled up into one. He was of upmost importance - so much so that time itself was calculated on the basis of when the King began his reign. In the fifth year of the reign of Julius Caesar, in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of King David, in the year of our Lord, two thousand.

The question I am struggling with is: What does it mean for us to name Jesus King? Especially when you consider what we have done to kings in our day and age, indeed what we have done to all sources of authority. There is no respect, there is no honour, there is no reverence in us, for those who rule over us in the political realm. We regard no-one as better than us. No-one as ultimately more important than us, no-one really, in the end, is worthy of our unquestioning obedience and our unflinching dedication. We have reduced our royalty to the status of soap opera stars; we almost universally regard our politicians as corrupt and uncaring and out of touch; we condemn as ineffective; any laws when they are applied to us, and we often call them unfair and arbitrary, and we seek to get around them.

The image of Jesus as King, is an image that is hard to get our heads around and when we have, it is an image that is hard to take seriously. It is, I believe for most of us, a fantasy image, an image that belongs to stories that begin with the words "Once upon a time, in a land far, far away..."

What does it mean to call Jesus King? In our scripture reading Pontius Pilate clearly wondered this - albeit for different reasons than we here many wonder today. Pilate, who served the most powerful king in the world, knew what a king was. He knew about the power that a King has, the authority that he wields, the unquestioning obedience that he demands, and the power that he has to compel that obedience should it not be volunteered.

Pilate was a creature of his time, one who knew and accepted the rules, one who in fact was charged with making and enforcing the rules, and while he, like people today, sought to use those rules to his advantage, he knew what the consequences of ignoring or scoffing the rules were. One of the rules that Pilate was called to enforce was the rule that anyone who claimed to be a king, anyone who dared to set themselves up as an authority over and against the lawful authority of Caesar, was to be executed. It was a rule that Pilate had no scruples about enforcing. It was a rule that he had enforced thousands of times throughout Galilee. And so when Jesus is brought before Pilate the charge that is laid against him is that he is a revolutionary - that he is one who unlawfully claims to be the Messiah, the King of the Jews. The very idea

1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our online Circuit Service which this week is led by Rachel Dalby.

Find it on the 'Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit' YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/NewarkSouthwellMethodistCircuit>) why not invite a friend to watch it with you and share the link with them on your social media or by email!

2. Circuit 'Zoom' Coffee Time

If you're feeling isolated, are not ready to be face to face yet, or can't, but are happy to meet on Zoom, there is a weekly coffee time at 3pm on a Monday run by Charles Street but open to all, email Mel Watson for more details: mellwatson42@gmail.com.

There is also still a weekly Zoom fellowship called 'The Gathering' which is part of Southwell Methodist Church and run by Philip and Francine Holmes. You'd be most welcome, contact Philip to connect: philipholmes8100@gmail.com.

3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also [online](#).)
08:10am – 21st November

Hope in the Winter Garden
Baptist minister the Revd Richard Littledale seeks out the heart of the Winter Garden, and finds it to be a 'thin' place, where hope and faith may be found in the short, cold days and the dormant soil.

4. Radio Nottingham

Listen every Sunday, at 8am, to a live church service on BBC Radio Nottingham. (Online or on 95.1-103.8 MHz FM for free.)

that the bruised and beleaguered man that stood before him could be taken for a king must have seemed ridiculous to Pilate. He knew what Kings acted like. He knew what they looked like. He knew what even those who pretended to be kings acted like and looked like.

Nevertheless Pilate does his duty. He asks Jesus if the charge against him is true. He asks Jesus if he is, or if he claims to be, King of the Jews. Jesus answers Pilate that he is a king - but that his kingdom is not of this world, and then he says: "If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish authorities." Pilate understands this - he knows what a King is, and after checking Jesus once more by asking him "So you are a king?" and hearing Jesus respond with some mumbo-jumbo that he was born to testify to the truth, he tells Jesus' accusers that he finds there is no case against him. Pilate cannot imagine Jesus as a King, just doesn't fit Jesus. And so - while in the end Pilate allows Jesus to be crucified with the word's "King of the Jews" posted over his head in three different languages, Pilate himself does not believe what he has caused it to be written. And today I wonder if it is the same for us? I wonder if we, like Pilate, name Jesus as King but for one reason or another just don't believe it, or take it seriously, or understand what it means.

Jesus is not a worldly king. His power is not from this world, nor is it meant to be exercised in the way that the world exercises power. Jesus exercised his power by serving others, by forgiving others, by healing others, by giving to others, by sacrificing himself for others. His power is the power of truth, the power of faith, the power of hope, the power of love - the power of life itself. On the other hand, Jesus' kingdom is not something that is in the sky by and by. It is real, it is present, and it makes demands upon us. Jesus calls us to obedience, to faith, and to love here and now. But Jesus does not force or compel us. He calls us to allow God to enter into our lives and to rule our lives. He invites us to walk by the light he himself has shed. And he shows us in his own person and in the lives of those who follow him that when we turn to him that there is healing and wholeness to be found.

Pilate's question to Jesus - are you a king - remains a fundamental question. It is a question about sovereignty, about rule, about who is in charge when it is dark and the world is falling apart, about who we can turn to when we are in need or when others are in need, about who we should go to when we seek justice for others and when we look for mercy for ourselves. Jesus answered that he is in charge - not in the way of the world - not with force and violence, but with love and with life. He answers that he has control over the darkness - that he is the one that, because of the faithfulness of God to him, vanquishes death and brings healing and peace to all who follow him.

It is this king that I name today and seek to follow. It is this king that I pray you will also name and follow, for in him is life, life that is abundant and everlasting.

Prayer Space

Prayer of Praise

Lord Jesus Christ, king of all creation, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all things, we worship you.

When the universe began, spiralling outward, the newborn stars reflected your glory, for you are the beginning of all things.

When you walked along the shores of Lake Galilee and healed broken hearts, touched lepers and gave tax collectors and prostitutes self-respect, your kingdom came near.

When you were betrayed, mocked, beaten, crucified, you revealed the kingdom of the servant king - a kingdom not of this world.

And when, beyond all our imagining, there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, and tears and death shall be no more, all people will see, all people will know that you are the Everlasting King.

Lord Jesus Christ, king of all creation, alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of all things, we worship you. Amen

Prayers for others

We pray for your kingdom to come to the worldwide communities of those who believe in Jesus Christ - may our lives enthrone him.

We pray for your kingdom to come in the nations of our world and in their leadership; for God's values to take root and grow; for each person to be respected as a beloved child of God.

We pray for your kingdom to come in our homes and families, our neighbourhoods and places of work, in all thinking, all speaking and all action.

We pray for your kingdom to come in all hospitals and surgeries, and in every place of pain and sadness.

In a time of silence, we bring in our hearts those people we are concerned about at this present time and pray that God will be close with them.

We pray for your kingdom to come in the final stages of earthly life, in the journey through death and in the awakening to eternal life. Be with those who are feeling the grief of the loss of a loved one.

We thank you for making us and redeeming us, opening wide to us the gates of heaven.

We pray that you will accept these our prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour and King, Jesus Christ. Amen

Hymns and worship songs

Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service:

Jesus is King – SOF 289, StF 327

Lord, I lift your name on high– SOF 897, StF 332

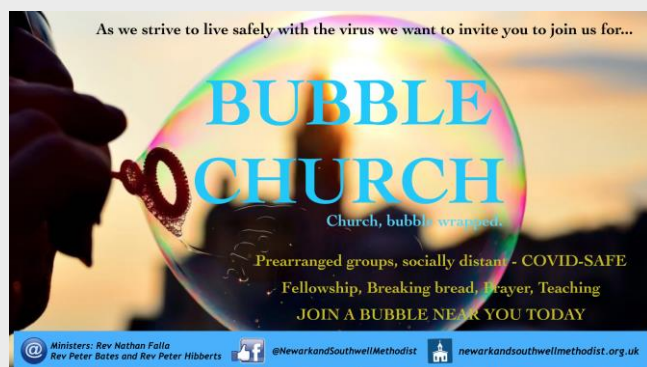
Rejoice, the Lord is King– SOF 482, StF 335

Majesty, worship his majesty – SOF 379, StF 333

Sing we the King who is coming to reign – StF 185

Please click on the song title to access YouTube clip of each song.

Bubble Church Questions



The following questions are designed to get you thinking and, if you're involved in Bubble Church talking about the topic!

1. What are your thoughts and feelings about our Queen?
2. Is Rachel right to express the disregard for authority in our country?
3. Do we believe that Jesus is King? King over us?
4. If Jesus is King then in what ways do we submit to him?
5. Do you understand the contrast that Rachel is making about Jesus? If Jesus does not compel us to obey him, how does this reflect on our attitude to others who do not follow our way of life?

TOGETHER IS CHANGING

TOGETHER is ready for a rethink. Should we still send it out weekly? What should we include? Could we have more information specific to local churches? What elements don't we need? Do you even want it? Do let us know so that we can get it right...

If you have a view on the future of the newsletter, please do get in touch (email Revd Peter at peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk).

If it is to continue, we need to find a way for it to be sustainable. This may well include having a circuit editorial team who can put the newsletter together. Without this, it may not be possible to continue. If you can volunteer, please do get in touch.

Face-to-face opportunities for worship this coming Sunday 21st November across the Circuit...

Balderton

10.30am Mrs Rachel Dalby

Charles Street

10.30am Revd Nathan Falla (Holy Communion)

6pm Mr Ted Gascoyne

Collingham:

10.45am Mrs Sylvia Cozens

Elston (28th November)

10.45am Mrs Liz Blatherwick

Hope Community

10.30am Revd David Gibson at Hawtonville

Long Bennington

10.30am Revd Peter Bates (Holy Communion)

North End

6pm Revd Peter Bates

North Muskham

2pm Local Arrangement (Bubble Church)

Southwell

10am Revd Peter Hibberts (Holy Communion)

4pm Mrs Melanie Ward

Sutton-on-Trent

10.30am Mr Terry Pearce

