

Friends,

I write to you with such joy today because on Sunday, 18th July, we welcome two new members into Oakham Methodist Church. Edward and Angela Wilks first joined us during lockdown and have been worshipping with us since the church re-opened. As existing members of the Methodist Church, they are transferring their membership to Oakham.

We will not be repeating the vows made in the Methodist confirmation service, but I thought that this was a lovely time for us to remember those vows that were spoken by each of us who are members:

The words of the confirmation: By your power and grace, Lord, strengthen these your servants, that they may live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Increase in them your gifts of grace, and fill them with your Holy Spirit; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of discernment and inner strength; the Spirit of knowledge, holiness and awe.

The promises we make:

Will you commit yourself to the Christian life of worship and service, and be open to the renewing power of God?

Will you seek the strength of God's Spirit as you accept the cost of following Jesus Christ in your daily life?

Will you witness, by word and deed, to the good news of God in Christ, and so bring glory to God?

The Promise of the People: Will you so maintain the Church's life of worship and service that [all] may grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord?

A prayer for us all: Generous God, touch us again with the fire of your Spirit and renew us by your grace, that we may profess the one true faith and live in love and unity with all who follow Christ. Amen.

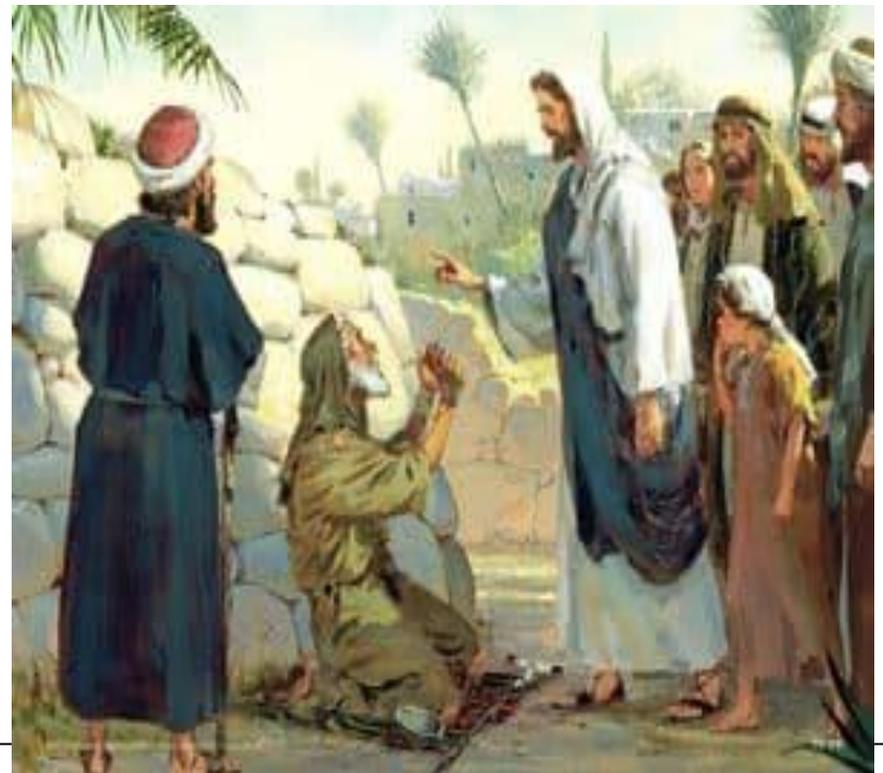
Let us take this opportunity to think back to our confirmations and to reflect on how we continue to live out these promises in our lives.

Blessings, Rev'd Bekkie

NORTHGATE

The weekly notices of
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Sunday, 18th July 2021
Oakham Methodist Church Service led by
the Rev Bekkie Wright



Call to Worship: God of wholeness, we bring to you all within us that needs healing: that which is visible and that which is hidden; that which we have shared with others and that known only to you. Stretch out your healing hands and give us the courage to believe that you can use our weakness and our strength in your service, and that it is never too late to begin again.

Adoration: Steadfast God, you deserve all our devotion and trust. You bind yourself to promises that defy our imagination, but guarantee us a part in your providential care of all creation. You see to the heart of every matter, touching needs visible and invisible, summoning old and young, revered and outcast to wholeness of life. You see to the core of our hearts, challenging us when we use shallow rituals as a smokescreen to hide our selfish indifference to the needs of others. But even the transience of our faltering love does not discourage your devotion to us. So, in this time of worship when we remember your constant love for us, we offer you our praise and thanks, bringing with them our hope that by your power we might grow in the faith that gives glory to you. Through Christ our healer and shepherd,
Amen.

Confession: *Today we look at the affect we have on the crowd when we actively live as disciples. Take this time to place before God the times when you have struggled to act in his love and grace. Take this time to place before God the worries you have about discipleship and speaking your faith. God knows you and loves you and God hears you. As you pray your sins are forgiven. End with the **Lord's Prayer.***

Reading: Mark 6:30-34 and 53-56

Reflection: Here we have the crowd which has followed Jesus throughout Mark's gospel. I have referred to it many times already, the crowd that gets bigger and comes from even further distances, the crowd which watches everything that happens to Jesus. The crowd, which we know, will turn against him at the end, but for now they need Jesus and they flock to him.

This crowd teaches us something special today because the two parts of the reading show us different parts of the crowd. The first are Jewish people, living in the area where the disciples have been out and about, healing, anointing people and casting out demons (v12). Our reading tells us that they recognise Jesus AND the disciples. The crowd

knows where they are going and so get there first. These are people who have experienced the wholeness offered by God and are desperate for more; sheep without a shepherd. So, Jesus begins to teach them.

The second crowd is on the opposite side of the Sea of Galilee. Gennesarat was a Gentile town, deep within Gentile territory. Mark tells in chapter 5 that Jesus has already performed one miracle there and that news has spread. Our reading tells us that these people recognise Jesus NOT the disciples. They are not prepared but they rush to get the people who need healing and wherever Jesus goes they lay the sick in front of him. They are at the start of a journey of faith.

Mark is showing us that, before the deep teaching of God can begin, the crowd needs to be in the place where they are ready to hear that teaching. What comes first is the experience of God either through sight, testimony from other people, or a brief touch, like the fringe of a cloak, which brings the potential of healing to an area of life. The disciples begin this passage as apostles, because they have helped people to reach that stage. This is our calling too, to live the healing love of God in our world so that others find themselves in a place where they can meet the shepherd.

Hymn 654 Singing the Faith

The love of God comes close
where stands an open door,
to let the stranger in,
to mingle rich and poor.
The love of God is here to stay,
embracing those who walk his Way.

The grace of God comes close
to those whose grace is spent,
when hearts are tired or sore
and hope is bruised and bent.
The grace of God is here to stay,
embracing those who walk his way;

The peace of God comes close
to those caught in the storm,
forgoing lives of ease
to ease the lives forlorn.
The peace of God is here to stay,
embracing those who walk his Way.

The Son of God comes close
where people praise his name,
where bread and wine are blest
and shared as when he came.
The Son of God is here to stay,
embracing those who walk his way;

Blessing: Walk with others when they are weary, be still with those who need rest, and be strong in the knowledge that you are cherished, empowered and cared for by Jesus the good shepherd, today and always.
Amen.

Prepared by Rev'd Bekkie Wright