

Pastoral note, 14th February 2021

Greetings from further afield this week – from Maggie McLester, Margaret Dorrington and May and Peter Tucker. All say how much they appreciate Northgate, for the services and the news. We send them our greetings too. News from Pat Iliffe's son is that she is very well settled in her care home.

Please remember Sue Curtis in your prayers whose mother died peacefully last week, and Graham Stapleton whose brother died on 30th January. Pray too for Tony Morris following the death of Julie Gunton who he used to bring to church in her wheelchair from the Care Village and supported her in so many ways. Julie greatly enjoyed services and the friendliness of everyone.

The funeral for Margaret Coville is on Monday, 15th February, at Grantham Crematorium. The service will be live-streamed and we are due to receive the link to it. If you would like to receive the link, please contact Rev'd Bekkie Wright who will be able to forward it to you.

If you are struggling in these difficult times, please phone someone. And thanks to all who continue to keep a telephone /email link with others. With our prayers, Angela.

Friends,

Thank you so much for everyone who sent in their prayers and words for the Oakham Psalms booklet. If you have words which you would like to share with the church, then please pass them to on to me and I will ensure that we include them in our weekly service sheets. God really is walking with us and that time of joy will come when we can be together again. Until then, know that you are in my prayers each and every day.

Blessings

Rev'd Bekkie

Last Sunday morning's online act of worship for the Stamford Church and Circuit was preceded by a Prayer video put together by Rev Bekkie from the Psalms from Oakham booklet. If you haven't seen it, here is the YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/yxsXt2Z2zw4>

NORTHGATE

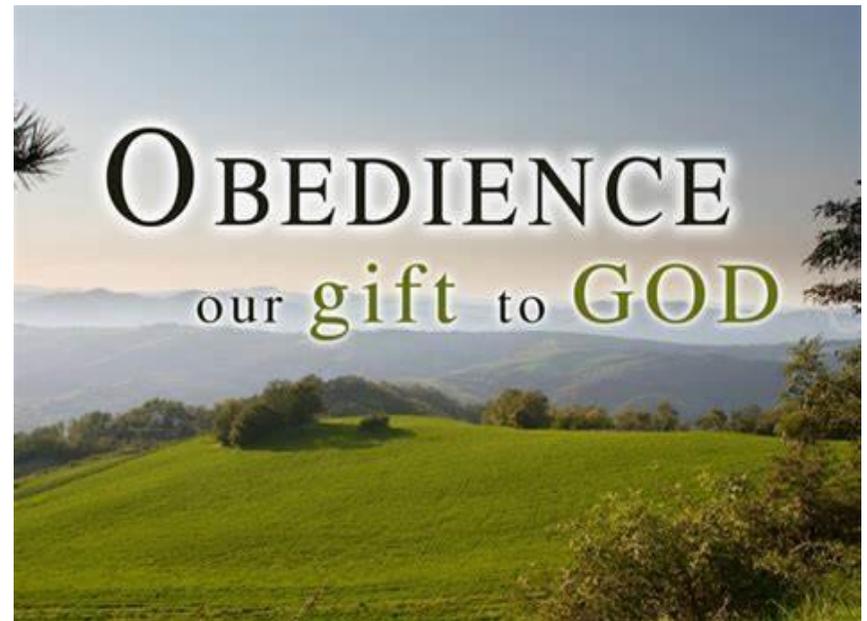
The weekly notices of
OAKHAM METHODIST CHURCH

Rev Bekkie Wright - 01572 720721

bekkie.wright@methodist.org.uk

www.oakhammethodistchurch.co.uk

14 February 2021



Oakham Methodist Church – called to worship God and share our faith, we seek to serve and welcome all through the love of Jesus Christ.

Northgate Service for Sunday, 14 February 2021

Call to Worship Let's pause for a few moments and allow the presence of our awesome, all-loving God permeate our whole beings ...

Prayer Thank You, Lord God, You are always with us. Forgive us that we forget that fact so easily, and allow despair and negative thinking to take over our lives. We are not able to gather physically to worship You, but we are one in spirit, united in Jesus. We come to worship You. **Amen.**

Singing the Faith 36

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| There's a quiet understanding when we're gathered in the Spirit it's a promise that He gives us, when we gather in his name. | There's a love we feel in Jesus, there's a manna that He feeds us, it's a promise that He gives us, when we gather in his name. |
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Bible Readings 2 Kings 5:1-15 Mark 1:40-45

Reflection

Leprosy is the name given to various serious skin diseases that were greatly feared in Bible times. Some of them were highly contagious. If someone thought they might have a skin disease, they went to a priest, who would examine them and place them in quarantine for up to 14 days. If the rash continues to spread and has open sores, the priest declares them ceremonially unclean. The person has to go into complete isolation away from family and friends, and cannot take part in any religious or social activities. They would live in camps right away from towns and cities. They have to cover their mouth, and shout, "Unclean!", if they do come near other people. Anyone who touched a leper was also considered unclean, so people would steer clear of them.

Naaman, in our Old Testament reading, must have had the disease in its early stages because he still held his post in the Syrian army, and lived at home. But everyone would know it was terminal, as there was no cure in those days. It's thanks to a young Israelite girl, and Naaman's eventual obedience that he is healed.

The man who came to Jesus probably had true leprosy (Hansen's disease), otherwise his cure would not have created such a sensation. I imagine that, when the man approached with his mouth covered and shouting, "Unclean!", everyone, except Jesus, hastily backed off to a safe distance. Jesus could have healed the man with just a word or a look, but He chose to touch the leper. He then ordered him to tell no one what had happened, except the local priest, who would declare him clean, and therefore he'd be able to mix socially and worship at the synagogue again.

What stands out for me from these stories? Firstly, some of the COVID rules are in the Bible! (See Leviticus 13).

Secondly, **it's very important to obey God.** Because Naaman obeyed God he was healed, and he came to faith in God. The leper did not obey God, and Jesus' ministry of teaching in that area came to a halt. If He'd entered the towns, He would have been mobbed by people wanting to be healed.

I've realised, while writing this, how easy it is to disobey God, simply by not seeking His will. Something may seem good to do, so I go ahead and then discover months, years later it wasn't God's plan for me. I've wasted a lot of time and energy.

First and foremost, God wants to enjoy a close, love-relationship with us, simply because He loves us. That only develops as we spend time with Him, reading His Word and praying. Then we'll find we'll want to obey Him each day, in order to please Him. It's not easy, but well worth it in the end!

Response

Let's spend a few moments in stillness, then respond to God with the hymn, "**Behold the servant of the Lord!**" (**Singing the Faith 546**).

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| Behold the servant of the Lord! I wait Thy guiding eye to feel, to hear and keep thy every word, to prove and do thy perfect will, joyful from my own works to cease, glad to fulfil all righteousness. | My every weak though good design o'errule or change, as seems thee meet; Jesus, let all my work be thine! Thy work, O Lord is all complete, and pleasing in Thy Father's sight; thou only hast done all things right. |
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Here then to thee thine own I leave;
mould as thou wilt thy passive clay;
but let me all thy stamp receive,
but let me all thy words obey,
serve with a single heart and eye,
and to thy glory live and die.

Prayers for Others

As we pray for our troubled, broken world, let's remember that Jesus is the only One who can bring wholeness and lasting peace. He is the answer and He is in control – loving Saviour, King of kings and Lord of lords!

The Lord's Prayer

Blessing May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

(Today's service prepared by Anne McAlpine)