

World day of Prayer 5th March. Please note that the local service is postponed until later in the year when hopefully it can be offered under more normal circumstances!

This link will introduce Vanuatu – from where this year's service entitled 'Build on a Strong Foundation' has been prepared.

<https://www.wwdp.org.uk/2021/01/13/introducing-vanuatu/>

Thank you for your gifts for Leprosy Mission Sunday. So far, I have received over five hundred pounds. As things are, this is a great result, especially since it will be doubled by the government, who will continue their grants till April 24th. So, if you want to give, please give now. This year the Mission is again making a special effort to reduce leprosy in Mozambique. Allister du Plessis has sent me a link to an interesting service he has prepared - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1H9VemS-aD4G5VutZiSxbDOBq5nTr1seQ/view>

For more info please email or phone me. Barry Gent

A beautiful yet challenging version of 'Beauty for Brokenness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kVHKuldZyw> Angela.

Thanks - Norman Coville would like to thank everyone who has supported him with messages, cards and prayers, following the death of Margaret, as well as those who were able to attend her funeral. It was greatly appreciated by all the family.

Dear Friends,

It is with regret that I write to you to advise that, although we had planned to reopen Oakham Methodist Church for worship on Sunday 7th March, we have once again had to postpone the reopening. This means that **the church will not be reopening for a little while longer.**

Church Council is due to meet on 9th March and we will talk through the issue of reopening there and make a decision as to how we want to progress. This decision will take into account government advice, advice from the Methodist Church and what we as a church feel is the right thing to do morally at this time. Once that meeting has taken place, we will update you on the decision. In the meantime please pray for those who have to make the decisions.

Blessings, Rev'd Bekkie

NORTHGATE

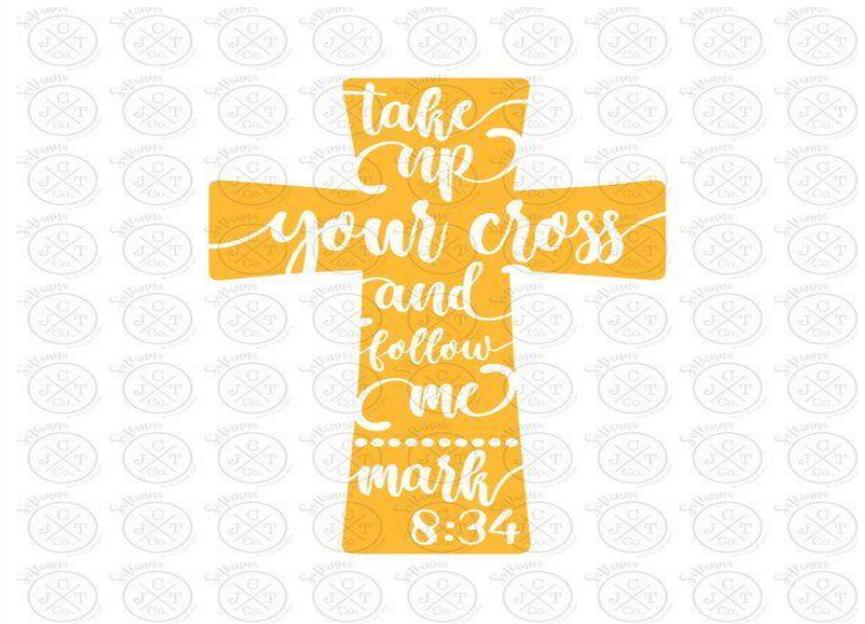
The weekly notices of
OAKHAM METHODIST CHURCH

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28 February 2021
Second Sunday in Lent



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

Second Sunday in Lent

Reading: Mark 8:31-38

Reflection: I hate the term “we’ve all got our crosses to bear”. When we say it we mean something along the lines of a responsibility or burden, misfortune, guilt or suffering that someone must handle on their own and that they must tolerate because it can never be changed. The reason I hate this is that it only tells half of the story of the cross. This phrase focuses on the cross at the point of crucifixion and completely misses out the cross at the point of resurrection. And both parts of the story are needed if we are to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus.

We know from the gospels that from Jesus’ birth right through to the crucifixion the cross was a responsibility and a burden that Jesus would have to handle alone. The world had pushed itself to the brink that if Jesus did not tolerate and accept this burden then we would all be lost because our lives would be dominated by sin rather than by the love which comes from God. And then came the resurrection, the transformation of the cross from a place of sin and death to a place of atonement, of love, of forgiveness of healing and of transformation.

With that complete story of the cross our reading today challenges us. It begins with Peter, taking Jesus aside and rebuking him for even talking about the possibility of the crucifixion. I love that moment when Jesus looks at the disciples as he says to Peter ““Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” Jesus looks at the disciples, those who show him the love that is the reason for our salvation and he condemns the voice of temptation which on this occasion comes from Peter.

And then comes the message given to the disciples and the crowd; to the whole of humanity. Make your choice. The cross becomes the place of crucifixion because of the actions of the world. The cross is therefore the shame and humiliation of a world which has turned from God. When it is held up it as a sign of condemnation of our sins as well as a call for us to transform. At the same time, the cross is the place of resurrection, the transforming power of God’s love. When it is held up it is the sign of forgiveness and reconnection with God.

As we face both of these images of the cross we face the question: will you keep your life as it is in the world or will you take up your cross and hold it high? To take up your cross is to hold up the symbol which shows the world its shame, but also to take up the symbol that the old life of shame need be no more. To take up your cross is to agree to work on your transformation, shedding your worldly life and accepting resurrection into a new Godly life. It is costly but it is worth the cost.

The Methodist Church has liturgies for the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Faith and a Celebration of Christian Renewal. Whilst we are not enacting these services today, the following commitments and prayer are taken from them. Sit with the commitments and pray over them. They set out what it means to take up our cross and follow Jesus, what do they say to you today?

Commitments: 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 give glory to God?

Prayer of Christian Commitment: Almighty God, in the power of your Spirit we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Strengthen us to serve you, and gather us and all people into your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.

Hymn: 276 Singing the Faith

Lift high the cross, the Love of Christ proclaim, till all the world adore His sacred name.

Follow the path on which our Captain trod, our King victorious, Christ, the Son of God.

Each new-born soldier of the Crucified bears on their brow the seal of him who died.

Led on their way by this triumphant sign, the hosts Of God in conquering ranks combine.

Set up thy throne that earth’s despair may cease beneath the shadow of its healing peace.

Blessing: We go into the world in the power of the Spirit to fulfil our high calling as servants of Christ. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

(Today’s service prepared by the Rev’d Bekkie)