



Section News

06 JULY 2021



Reflection

Notices

God's Table

Superintendent's Thoughts

THE PRACTICE OF POWER – MARK 6:14-29



As we approach another significant decision date in the Government's Road Map towards the complete relaxation of the restrictions, there are further consultations about where power lies on which these decisions will be made. It seems that, right through the management of the pandemic, the power over what happens next has sat in different places at different times.

There have been the essential voices of the medical and scientific communities; there have been the voices of the hospitality sector, economists and business and the voices of many other groups and individuals, which all have a contribution to make to the debate. The problem is in such situations that it is difficult to decide which opinion should carry the greatest weight in the course of the discussion. We

will all have our own opinion on that part of the question, I suspect!!

In this week's gospel reading, there is a great deal of power on display – amongst the ruling family of Herod, including Herodias and Salome, but also among the disciples who exhibit great power over the disposal of John's body following Herod's death sentence. They remove the body from the confines of the earthly powers and accord it respect in the presence of the heavenly powers. In this way, John's mission and prophetic words about repentance were given additional poignancy and power.

The images of power coming out of this account in Mark's gospel are at variance with the kind of power that Jesus taught about and modelled in his own ministry. Hence my choice this week of the image of him washing Peter's feet. Power and authority in God's kingdom are partnered by pastoral care and a challenge to see the big picture. The teachings of Jesus make it clear that if one has the benefit of holding power, it is then incumbent upon that person to recognise that with power come accountability and responsibility.

In the same way, as Methodist Conference is over for another year, it is good to be reminded that in the Methodist Church, the final decisions for changes in policy, direction and governance are always made by the Conference. No one person has power vested in them that they can act without reference to another and major decisions about the work and ministry of the church are always taken corporately.

At the end of the newsletter this week, I have included the letter from the President and Vice President that they have asked to be made available to as wide a range of people across Methodism as possible. I commend it to you and would stress that there is still more conferring to be done on this matter and other subjects that were voted on this year. I am hoping that there will be a digest of business transacted by the Conference which I can email you next week!

Peace,
Rachel.

Notices

Dates for the Diary

Week beginning	July 11th	July 18th	July 25th	August 1st
Sunday 4.00 pm <i>Reflection – a short 30-minute gathering using images, music and words led by Revd Rachel Borgars.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235746908	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monday 7:30 pm <i>Discussion Group – originally called the ‘Hot Potatoes’ group, this is an opportunity to discuss current issues with some theology as part of the mix.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84961411119		✓		✓
Thursday 7:30pm <i>Circuit Bible Study – a more formal Bible study which usually meets monthly on the last Thursday in the month.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88651459988			✓	
Friday 9:15 am <i>Prayer Group – an opportunity to pray together, bringing both joys and concerns in prayer.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82103846709	✓	✓	✓	✓

If you would like to join in with any of these gatherings via telephone, please do ring me on 01256 895878 and I will give you the details to dial in via any telephone. I do hope you will join us, even if you haven't felt Zoom is for you up until now!!

Shoemakers

CHRISTIAN BOOKS & COFFEE SHOP

Please be advised that Shoemakers Christian bookshop will be closed from Monday 12th – Monday 26th July inclusive. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause, but we are taking advantage of the summer to refresh the paintwork in the shop. Please visit

www.christophershoemaker.org.uk or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/shoemakersbooks) for more information.

A pastoral letter from the President and Vice-President following the Conference vote on Marriage and Relationships

We wished to take this opportunity to write to you after the Conference voted on the resolutions contained in the marriage and relationships report.

We very much appreciate that these decisions will stir up many different emotions for our siblings across the Connexion. There will be some who will be deeply hurt and others who will rejoice by what has been decided.

Our Presidential theme this year is God's Table: An Invitation for All, and God's invitation is for every single one of us. The Methodist Church has held tension for many years and as a Church and a family, we must do all we can to live with contradictory convictions.

This work was first reflected on back in 1992 and we have been on this journey together since that point. During the past years we have continued to listen to and to pray for each other and remaining true to what God is saying to us. We must remember in all this, to continue to hold each other in prayer, and to support each other as we find a way forward, respecting our differences.

It is perhaps helpful to remember that there are other issues, some of them discussed at the Conference, on which we hold differing and sometimes strong opinions. We live with them and we do not allow them to impair our communion with each other. We respect each other's consciences, we exercise judgment in when to speak and when to be silent, and we hold one another in prayer. We do all this not for our own sake but for the sake of Christ and the sake of the world which urgently needs to know the power of Christ's reconciling love.

Our prayer for you, beloved siblings, is that in joy or sorrow, in pain or excitement, we might continue to live within that reconciling love.

The Revd Sonia Hicks
President of the Conference

Mrs Barbara Easton
Vice-President of the Conference

