

**Notices for Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021**  
**Ponteland Methodist Church**  
**Minister – Rev Jona Sewell (Tel. 822057)**

**LET THE LOVE OF JESUS BE KNOWN**

**Week after Epiphany and 1<sup>st</sup> in Ordinary time // The Waters of Salvation**

**MESSAGE FROM JONA**

I recently watched one of my very favourite films - The Shawshank Redemption. If you've not seen it then I encourage you to give it a try. It is a thoughtful, thought provoking, and ultimately uplifting and hopeful story set against the backdrop of a man sent to prison for double murder. It's about human nature, friendship and finding life in the darkest of places. The strapline for the film is "Fear can hold you prisoner, hope can set you free."

In this post Christmas season, I read this week **Matthew 2:13-23** which I encourage you to stop and read now. As I read the passage I was struck by that contrast between fear and hope. It was fear of losing power, status and influence that led Herod to search for the child Jesus and to slaughter innocent sons. We don't have to look far in the world today to see what fear of losing power can drive a person to say or do! We may not be national leaders fearing for our position, but we all know the power of fear; it inhibits, stifles and imprisons the soul. Fear steals away possibility and stops us being truly free and all that we can be...

Joseph on the other hand had hope; the hope of safety and the hope of a future. His hope was driven by the message of the angel and by, I believe, love for his family. Hope, especially hope grounded in love, brings freedom, possibility, life and a future! I have no doubt that Joseph would have had many fears about going to Egypt - his ancestors had been imprisoned there after all, but the love grounded hope he had was stronger than any fear, meaning he could overcome his fears and keep his family safe and well.

As we're now in our third lockdown; what fears are at work in your life?  
Where do you see hope? (especially hope grounded in love)

May you know the hope of God at work in your life this week and with it a release from your fears. Please keep in touch with friends and neighbours, speak out if you're struggling (we all struggle at times), and support one another with love-filled hope!

## **Sabbatical Update**

You may be aware that I was due to take my sabbatical last year (March – May) but that it was postponed by 12 months due to coronavirus. Given that it seems likely, we hope and pray, that restrictions will be lifted sometime in the spring then I have again rearranged my sabbatical as I feel it is important that I am around as restrictions are lifted and we move towards ‘normality’ – whatever that will look like. As I have no option but to take my sabbatical this year it has now been agreed that I will split it and take the month of February (4 weeks) and then later take September and October (9 weeks). Though I won't be 'away' in February I will not be working. Whilst I am off next month, **Revs Robin and Pat Brooks** will have pastoral responsibility for our church, **Rev Tim Woolley** will chair our church council, and the stewards can support and direct enquiries too. The first port of call for circuit matters should be either Rev Tim Woolley or Circuit Steward, Mr Melvyn Brown.

*Rev Jona Sewell*

## **LECTIONARY**

**Genesis 1 : 1-5, Psalm 29, Acts 19 : 1-7, Mark 1 : 4-11.**

The following questions are from today's Lectionary using the NIV version:-

- 1) What did John the Baptist eat?
- 2) How did Paul describe John's baptism?

You will find the answers on the back page.

## **MISSION MARKET PLACE**

I organise a monthly Mission Market Place event in Darlington District, which is just a small 'drop in' event for folk in the District. I usually source it from local people interested in the topic. However, I invited along The President and Elizabeth Clarke, the Rural Mission Officer and thought this might be of interest to folk in Newcastle District. The theme is 'Rural Life and Mission' and is taking place on **Sat 16<sup>th</sup> January at 10am.**

You can register for this event by clicking on the following link

<https://forms.gle/RKgLaxSiLnjVf2pKA> You will then receive a link to the meeting which takes place via 'Zoom'

Any questions, please just ask!

Many thanks,

*Helle Sewell*

## **CHRISTMAS BOXES**

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Christmas boxes. They were distributed to local families and also through Lemington food bank. They were all very much appreciated and a huge blessing to those who received them. As per the last update, we have some money left over and will be delivering some Easter boxes too. Thank you so much for all of your generosity and support.

*Kathryn*

## **PRAYERS**

Be to us, O Lord Jesus Christ, the joy prepared for those who are faithful, the vision granted to the pure in heart and the light that shines on the path of those who love your word; now and forever.

*Amen*

Creator God, by whose word the universe was willed into existence and by whose love each one of us is created and redeemed, grant us so to recognise our interconnectedness with all creation that we might live in respect for all that is around us.

May we treat your creation gently and with reverence, respecting the ground on which we tread, that by our nurture and care of all that sustains us we may pass on to others that which we have received so that all might share in its benefits. Help us to recognise that “the earth is the LORD’s and all that is in it” so that with all creation we may honour the Creator and live together responsibly and with love.

*Amen*

Draw us, O Christ, by grace irresistible, to the centre of all faith and to the heart of all sacrifice; to the deepest of all wells and to a work that is not our own; even your holy Cross, to which we cling and by which we are held; for your own name’s sake.

*Amen*

God of field and farm, forest and ocean, you entrust to us the stewardship of this incredible planet. We remember before you those whose work is to husband and harvest it, and pray that you will teach us again, each one, to love your world, to love each other, to love ourselves and above all, to love you.

*Amen*

God of all hope we call on you today.  
We pray for those who are living in fear:  
Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other's reactions to them.  
May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.  
We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.  
For those people who are worried about attending worship.  
For those needing to make decisions in order to care for other  
For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend.  
Grant us your wisdom.  
Holy God, we remember that you have promised that  
Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.  
Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.

*Amen*

Loving God,  
If we are ill, strengthen us.  
If we are tired, fortify our spirits.  
If we are anxious, help us to consider the lillies of the field and the birds of the air.  
Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our larders.  
Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than ourselves.  
Fix our eyes on your story and our hearts on your grace.  
Help us always to hold fast to the good,  
See the good in others,  
And remember there is just one world, one hope,  
One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.  
In Jesus we make our prayer,  
The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life,  
In whom we trust these days and all days,

*Amen*

**Please send your notices to Geoff Lisle by next Friday, 1pm.  
Either by phone:- 01661 822532, by post:- 42, Ridgely Drive. NE20 9BL  
or by E-mail :- [Geoffandangela@btinternet.com](mailto:Geoffandangela@btinternet.com)**

**Bible Quiz Answers**:- 1) Locusts and Wild Honey (Mark 1:6)    2) A Baptism of Repentance (Acts 19:4)