

Stockton Road Church News June 2024



Mark 12: 30-31

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your mind, and with all your strength, and you shall
love your neighbour as yourself”.*

We are a union of Presbyterian and Congregational churches at the heart of Sunderland city life, growing from a past rich in mission and hospitality. We embrace this heritage utilising the Five Marks of Mission to guide and enable us to take forward current opportunities for mission and service.

JUNE REFLECTION: 1 SAMUEL 3: 1-10 (11-20)

The desolate state of Israel is highlighted at the beginning of this chapter: the word of the Lord was rare. By the end, the word of the Lord is abundant through the prophetic ministry of Samuel, and Israel is back on course as a people in close relationship with their God.

What caused this turn to the good? This story is set in the old temple at Shiloh, where the Lord chose to speak to the boy Samuel. In the first place, Samuel's inexperience meant that he did not realise this. Eli, the old, disgraced priest, played a key role in helping him to respond to the Lord. The previous chapter (2:27-36) recounted the words of an unnamed prophet who pronounced God's doom on Eli and his sons for corruption, and Eli's poor sight (v.2) symbolises his failure to recognise the responsibilities of his role. Despite this, he gave Samuel the insight to respond appropriately to God.

The repeated visits to Eli highlight Samuel's uncritical enthusiasm to obey the old priest's call, and Eli's dismissal would have been confusing for him. The boy's life as a prophet began with equally enthusiastic acceptance of the Lord's call – other prophets showed greater reluctance (see Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 1:6). When Samuel realised that he was hearing the word of the Lord, he named himself as 'your servant'. Yet he quickly discovered the challenges of his new

role and the ways in which it would change his relationship with Eli. The Lord's ear-tingling word focused on the disaster coming upon Eli, and Samuel was afraid to pass this on (v.15). As a young boy, dependent on Eli for his place in the temple, he was vulnerable to Eli's anger. He did not yet have the trust in God's faithfulness that would allow him to take risks in proclaiming the Lord's word. Again, it was Eli's encouragement that gave him the confidence to speak out, and Eli found the resources to accept God's hard words to him, coming from one he called 'my son'. Samuel was no longer the child Hannah had left in the temple; he was on the way to becoming the prophet and king-maker God intended him to be.

Our name – our personal identity – is so important to us. It allows us to hear someone calling us. In the hymn 'I, the Lord of sea and sky', the response 'Here I am, Lord' is followed by a question, 'Is it I?'. That stage probably comes for most of us before we say 'yes' to God. Understanding our calling may be a long, drawn-out process, and a decision comes only after testing. We have to be open to the prayerful counsel of those in whom we trust. We have to be open to the possibility that God's call may not lead where we expect or desire. It may demand hard things of us. But sometimes hearing hard things can move us out of our comfort zone, and that may be exactly what we need.

Let us pray

Lord God, we thank you for speaking to Samuel;
and for speaking to us.

We thank you for the Elis in our lives; how they point us to

God and listen, even when the message is uncomfortable. Thank you for each one of us here in church; as we are open to you and each other, we can do great things in your name.

Amen.

Lectionary Readings

26 May – 1 June - God: a glimpse behind the curtain

Trinity Sunday: Isaiah 6.1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8.12-17; John 3.1-17

2 - 8 June - Being open to God

Proper 4: 1 Samuel 3.1-10, (11-20); Psalm 139.1-6,13-18; 2 Corinthians 4.5-12; Mark 2.23 - 3.6

9 - 15 June - Choices and consequences

Proper 5: 1 Samuel 8:4-11,(12-15),16-20, (11:14-15); Psalm 138; 2 Corinthians 4.13-5.1; Mark 3.20-35

16 - 22 June - Changed and being changed

Proper 6: 1 Samuel 15:34–16:13; Psalm 20; 2 Corinthians 5.6-10(11-13)14-17; Mark 4.26-34

23 - 29 June - Confident in God and ready for anything?

Proper 7: 1 Samuel 17:(1a,4-11, 19-23),32-49; Psalm 9:9-20; 2 Corinthians 6.1-13; Mark 4.35-4

Church Services June

Services at 10.45am in the Sanctuary unless indicated otherwise

- June 2 Heritage Event. God of Creation
- June 9 Barbara Ledger. Coffee & Croissants in
the **Lower Hall**.
- June 16 Elisabeth Meikle
- June 23 Revd Dr David Whiting – Communion
- June 30 Revd Jane Rowell. Joint Pastorate
Service at Stockton Road at **10.30am**

Weekly Church Activities (all welcome)

- Bible Study Group Tuesdays at 10.30am
- Food Cycle Lunch Tuesdays at 12.30am
- Gardening Group Thursdays at 10.30am

Diary Dates

- Church Meeting Thursday 20 June at 10.30am
- Elders Meeting Tuesday 20 August at 2pm

Barbara is bowling to success

I think that most of us are aware that when she isn't preparing services as a Lay Preacher or carrying out her duties as a Samaritan, Barbara can be found playing lawn bowls. She has had considerable success in the last couple of years, retaining Sunderland City titles in the pairs format and in the rinks (four players) format. 2024 has seen even more success, with the rinks team of which she is part winning through to the Durham County Final, to be played in July. The opponents will be Houghton Dairy Lane, who also play in the Sunderland League, indicating how high the standard of bowling is in our city.

The significance is that both teams in the County Final qualify to play in the National Finals to be held at Royal Leamington Spa in August. The rinks at Leamington were the venue for the bowls events in the 2022 Commonwealth Games, and an appearance there is likened by bowlers to an amateur footballer getting to play at Wembley.

I am sure our church members wish Barbara every success in the County Final and then the National Finals (and I'm sure she will make sure you know how she fares!).

Jeff Ledger

Flower Fund

June 2nd Barbara Ledger and her sister Judith. To mark their parents' 68th wedding anniversary.

Wishlist June 2024



BOYS & GIRLS CLOTHES:

- Newborn / first size
- 2-16 years - all season appropriate clothes
- Small & Medium mens clothes (suitable for teens)
- Scratch mitts
- All age underwear (new only please)

PRAMS

- Double Prams
- Travel Systems prams (no car seats please)
- Strollers



SLEEP EQUIPMENT:

- Cots (120x60) / Cotbeds (140x70)
- Moses basket stands
- Children's Single Bedding Sets & Sheets
- Duvets & pillows

HYGIENE

- Nappies - size 4, 5 & 6
- All baby / child toiletries
- Nappy sacks
- All adult toiletries



OTHER EQUIPMENT:

- All age small toys
- Sterilisers - cold water or microwave only
- Highchairs
- Baby Bottles - all sizes (new only)
- Safety gates (pressure fit only)
- Breast pumps (new only please)



We kindly ask to please only donate items on wishlist as space and resources are very limited



Thank you for your support



You may also like to check out their website for more information. www.loveamelia.org.uk