

TOGETHER PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S FUTURE

The Other Side Awaits



JOURNEY WITH US AS WE MOVE FROM SPECTATORS TO PARTICIPANTS IN GOD'S UNFOLDING STORY

2 - 23 August 2026

Across Scripture, God repeatedly draws ordinary people into extraordinary work. God's movement has never been a solo performance, but a symphony of unlikely collaborators. So, this month's series invites us as the church to move from attendance to participation, from passive concern to shared responsibility and from isolated effort to communal discernment.

To participate in God's future is to notice where God is already at work and to ask the hard, holy questions: What is my section of the wall? Whose life must be protected? Which outsider is God asking us to trust? What violence must we interrupt? For our context as a society, these questions land with weight in a society marked by inequality, unemployment, violence, mistrust and deep fatigue.

It is easy, in such times, to become spectators, critics, or mere survivors. But Scripture does not give us the luxury of spectatorship. Scripture calls the church to become participants in repair. We are not building from scratch; we are joining a movement already in motion.

This month, we also honour the sacred memory of the more than 20,000 women who marched to the Union Buildings in 1956. The Methodist Church of Southern Africa also marks 50 years of the ordination of women into Presbytery, reminding that prophetic participation is never achieved overnight, nor carried by one generation alone. It has indeed been, in its own way, a glimpse of "the other side". Furthermore, fifty years is not a point of arrival; it is a marker on a much longer road.

The work is not finished. And so this theme invites all of us in our different capacities, from our diverse spaces, across our varied genders and sexualities, to hold firmly to God's call. Together, we are invited to participate in God's unfolding story for God's people, to the glory of God. In each week's text, God opens a future through cooperation rather than individual heroism. The question is not only, "What will God do?" but also, "How are we being invited to participate in what God is already doing?"

Together, the church practises hope by participating in God's future before that future is fully visible. We walk toward the other side together; not in certainty, but in faith; not as finished products, but as co-labourers with the God who is making all things new.

Week 1: Sunday 2 August	<i>Participants in rebuilding</i>	Rev Thabiso Mcinga
Week 2: Sunday 9 August	<i>Participants in hospitality</i>	Ncumisa Willie – Lay preacher (on trial)
Week 3: Sunday 16 August	<i>Participants in Justice</i>	Nqabomzi Besman – Lay preacher (on trial)
Week 4: Sunday 23 August	<i>Participants in courageous partnership</i>	Gcobisa Sigwilli – Lay preacher (on trial)
Week 5: Sunday 30 August	<i>Participants in Life.</i>	Nomphele Kayi– Lay preacher (on trial)

Week 1- Participants in Rebuilding

WORSHIP SONG: Restore. Rebuild. Not Just a Building by Pastor Justin Dailey https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rnn2I3JOq3U&list=RDRnn2I3JOq3U&start_radio=1	BIBLE READINGS: Nehemiah 2:17-18; 4:6, 15-23 Psalm 127:1-2 Corinthians 3:9-11	Story of Nehemiah Nehemiah's vision becomes a community project. The wall is repaired not by one gifted leader, but by a people who accept responsibility for different parts of the work while remaining alert to discouragement, opposition and fatigue. This week calls us to move from complaint to participation: to ask what is broken in our church, our families, our communities and our country.... and then to discern which section of the wall is ours to repair. God's future is rebuilt when shared vision becomes shared labour.
--	---	--

HOME GROUPS AND CLASSES GUIDE:

1. Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.
2. Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.
3. Reflect on the Bible verses and the reflection written by a Minister or Lay Preacher.
4. Connect with each other and take the reflection deeper by answering the Questions.
5. Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).

REFLECTION: WRITTEN BY Rev Thabiso Mcinga

Nehemiah was serving comfortably as the king's cupbearer in the palace when he received heartbreaking news that the walls of Jerusalem still lay in ruins. He could easily have ignored the report. After all, he was safe, secure, and close to the king. But then, his heart comfort did not make him forget his calling. He was a selfless servant who cared more about the broken condition of God's people than about the comfort of the palace. Before doing anything, he travelled to Jerusalem and quietly inspected the walls. Only after seeing the damage for himself, did he gather the people and say, "*You see the trouble we are in... Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem*"

These are the words of someone who remembered Jerusalem in its former glory. God often uses people who know what something was created to be, because they refuse to accept brokenness as normal. The word rebuild simply means to build again. It reminds us that what has been damaged, neglected, or destroyed can still be restored by God's grace. Yet rebuilding is never a one-person task. A building requires many hands and different gifts. You need architects to design, bricklayers to lay the bricks, carpenters to prepare the woodwork, stonemasons to shape the stones, engineers to ensure strength, plumbers to install water systems, electricians to provide power, roofers to complete the covering, painters to finish the work, labourers to carry materials, and supervisors to coordinate the project. Each person has a different responsibility, but every role is valuable. In the same way, the rebuilding of God's Church, our families, our communities and even our own lives require many participants. None of us can do everything, but each of us has something important to contribute.

However, every rebuilding project also attracts opposition. Sanballat and Tobiah criticised and tried to frustrate the work because they did not want to see Jerusalem rise again. Nehemiah responded by ensuring that the builders worked with one hand while holding a weapon in the other which teaches us that we must never become so busy fighting that we stop building, nor become so focused on building that we neglect spiritual vigilance. Like Nehemiah, we must keep rebuilding despite criticism, discouragement and resistance. God is still looking for participants in rebuilding, i.e. men and women who will refuse to settle for ruins, who will inspire others by saying, "*Come, let us rebuild,*" and who will faithfully take their place in restoring what God desires to make whole again.

QUESTIONS FOR INTROSPECTION

1. What '*broken walls*' do I currently see that God may be calling me to help rebuild?
2. What has God given me that I can contribute to the rebuilding work?

3. What practical actions can you or your group begin this week rather than continuing only to discuss the problem?

DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER

MONDAY

Memory Verse

"Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." – **Nehemiah 2:17**

Prayer

Lord, help me to answer Your call to rebuild what is broken with courage and hope. Amen.

TUESDAY

Memory Verse

"They replied, 'Let us start rebuilding.' So, they began this good work." – **Nehemiah 2:18**

Prayer

Father, give me willing hands and a willing heart to participate in Your good work. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

Memory Verse

"So we rebuilt the wall... for the people worked with all their heart." – **Nehemiah 4:6**

Prayer

Lord, unite us in purpose so that we may serve You wholeheartedly together. Amen.

THURSDAY

Memory Verse

"Our God will fight for us!" – **Nehemiah 4:20**

Prayer

God, strengthen my faith to trust You in every challenge as I faithfully do my part. Amen.

FRIDAY

Memory Verse

"Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain." – **Psalms 127:1**

Prayer

Lord, be the foundation of everything I build, so that my work brings glory to You. Amen.

SATURDAY

Memory Verse

"For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building." – **I Corinthians 3:9**

Prayer

Jesus, teach me to work alongside others as a faithful partner in Your Kingdom. Amen.

SUNDAY

Memory Verse

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." – **I Corinthians 3:11**

Prayer

Lord Jesus, keep my life firmly rooted in You, the only true foundation, as I participate in Your future. Amen.

KIDS AND TEENS – compiled by Jenny Blake

August Week 1- Participants in Rebuilding

Bible Reading: Nehemiah 2:17–18; 4:6, 15–23

Have you ever tried to build a giant puzzle by yourself? It can be difficult and take a long time. But when everyone works together, each person adds a piece, and before long, the whole picture comes together. Today's Bible story reminds us that God doesn't expect one person to do everything. God invites each of us to play a part in building His Kingdom.

Read Together - Nehemiah 2:17–18 and Nehemiah 4:6, 15–23.

If you have younger children, explain:

The walls around Jerusalem had been broken down for many years. Nehemiah knew God's people needed safe walls again. Instead of rebuilding by himself, everyone worked together. Some carried stones, some built, and some stood guard. Every person had an important job.

Discussion questions:

- Why do you think Nehemiah asked everyone to help?
- What happened because everyone worked together?
- How do you think the people felt when they saw the wall being rebuilt?
- What are some ways our family can help build God's Kingdom today?

For younger children:

- What jobs do people have in our family?
- How do you help at home?
- How do you think God feels when we help others?

Family Activity (optional)

Build Together Challenge

Using LEGO, blocks, pillows, cardboard boxes, or even cups, work together to build a small wall or tower.

Give everyone a different role:

- Builder
- Supplier (brings pieces)
- Planner
- Encourager

When you're finished, ask:

- Could one person have done this as quickly?
- Which job seemed small but was actually important?
- What does this teach us about God's family?

Read together: *"So we rebuilt the wall... for the people worked with all their heart."* – Nehemiah 4:6

Sometimes we think only ministers, teachers, or important leaders do God's work. But God says something different. God gives every person gifts. Some people encourage others. Some pray. Some help. Some teach. Some listen. Some give. Some serve quietly without anyone noticing. Every gift matters. Our homes, schools, churches, and communities become stronger when everyone does their part.

This week, ask yourself: **"What is my part in helping others experience God's love?"**

Family Prayer

Dear God, Thank You for inviting each of us to be part of Your work. Help us to see where You are already working around us. Show us how we can help, encourage, serve, and love others. Teach us to work together as a family and to use the gifts You have given each one of us. May we build hope wherever we go and point people to Jesus. Amen.

Family Challenge for the Week

Choose **one act of rebuilding** to do together this week:

- Help a neighbour
- Write an encouraging note to someone.
- Pray together for someone who is struggling.
- Clean up a place that needs care.
- Visit or call someone who may be lonely.
- Work together to complete a household chore without complaining.

At the end of the week, ask: **"Where did we see God at work, and how did we get to be part of it?"**