

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>	Nomphelo Kayi – Lay preacher (on trial)

Week 5 Participants in Life

Worship Song: Promises <i>(feat. Joe L Barnes & Naomi Raine) Maverick City Music:</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5m09rqOoxE	Bible readings: Exodus 1:15-2:10 Psalm 124 Romans 12:1-8	The women in the life of Moses. Moses' future did not depend on one hero alone. It was protected by a network of women whose courage and refusal to cooperate with death made liberation possible. The midwives resisted Pharaoh's violence; Moses' mother acted with courage and ingenuity; Miriam watched faithfully from the riverbank; and Pharaoh's daughter responded with compassion across enemy lines. This week invites us to recognise that God's future is often preserved through ordinary acts of protection, especially by people whose names and risks are easily overlooked. Participation begins when we choose life where systems have chosen death.
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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 Nomphele Kayi – Lay preacher (on trial)

In the reading of Exodus 1:15–2:10, we encounter the story of Moses' birth and upbringing. When Moses was born, Egypt was going through turbulent times, and Pharaoh had ordered that every Hebrew boy who was born should be killed. Moses was therefore not born under normal circumstances. Yet, during a system that was determined to take life, we encounter women who participated in preserving it. First, there were the midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, who refused to participate in the killing of Hebrew boys as ordered by Pharaoh. Moses' mother Jochebed, hid him, knowing the dangers and difficulties that came with keeping a baby alive in such circumstances. When she could no longer hide him, she placed him in a basket and set him among the reeds of the Nile. His sister Miriam, stood at a distance and watched over him. Later, Pharaoh's daughter found the child and, despite the command of her father, chose courage and compassion, and decided that Moses would live. Each of these women may have appeared to play only a small part, but their participation gave life, and by preserving that life, they preserved a purpose. They became Participants in Life. Without their courage, Moses may never have lived to become the leader God called him to be.

When we speak of participating in giving life, it does not only mean bringing a child into the world. In our life with God, participating in life can mean gently encouraging someone to encounter God, helping someone grow in their faith, creating an opportunity for spiritual renewal, helping an idea or dream come into existence and flourish, or simply bringing encouragement, hope, love, healing and support into another person's life. The women in this reading therefore remind us that sometimes the people who participate most significantly in God's purpose are not the people standing at the centre of the story. Sometimes they are the people hiding the child, standing beside the basket, watching from the riverbank, or simply having the courage to say, *"Not this life, this life must live."* With many people around us carrying the real weight such as unemployment, the rising cost of living, gender-based violence, grief, loneliness and uncertainty about the future, perhaps the question we must ask ourselves is, *"Are we participants in life?"* Moses had women who answered that question with courage. Perhaps there is a Moses somewhere in our community today whose purpose is still hidden, whose potential has not yet been recognised, or whose faith is barely surviving, and they simply need somebody to stand in the gap.

Lastly, as we come to the end of Women's Month, a significant time in South Africa when we celebrate the strength, courage, resilience, leadership and contributions of women, and as we also celebrate 50 years of women being ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa this year, we recognise that these celebrations are not simply about women being courageous and occupying

positions, it is about lives touched, nurtured and transformed, and purposes being fulfilled. In our church specifically, for 50 years, women have stood in pulpits, preached the Word of God, baptised children, buried our loved ones, prayed with us in hospital rooms, counselled families, carried congregations, mentored young people and answered the call of God. We celebrate not only the women who have participated in ministry, but also the countless lives that have been changed because they participated. As Women's Month comes to an end, the celebration may end, but the participation, responsibility and calling must continue. May we become a Church that gives, protects, preserves, nurtures, restores, and speaks hope into life and makes room for life. May we never underestimate the power of our participation

QUESTIONS FOR INTROSPECTION

1. Who has participated in giving life to you, and how can you honour that by giving life to someone else?
2. In the circumstances facing our country and communities, where is God calling you to stand in the gap?
3. What is the one commitment are you taking with you this week to become more of a "Participant in Life"?

DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER

MONDAY

Memory Verse

"Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." Psalm 34:14 (NIV)

Prayer

Lord, make me a peacemaker who turns away from evil, pursues what is good, and reflects Your justice in every relationship. May my words and actions point others to the Prince of Peace. Amen.

TUESDAY

Memory Verse

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18 (NIV)

Prayer

Father, thank You for drawing near to the brokenhearted. Help me to be Your hands and feet by offering comfort, compassion, and hope to those who are hurting. May they experience Your love through me today. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

Memory Verse

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone." Romans 12:17 (NIV)

Prayer

Jesus, teach me to respond to injustice without bitterness, choosing grace, integrity, and love even when it is difficult. Let my life bear witness to Your transforming power. Amen.

THURSDAY

Memory Verse

"Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21 (NIV)

Prayer

Lord, fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that goodness overcomes anger, forgiveness triumphs over resentment, and love defeats evil in my life. Help me to reflect Your light wherever darkness exists. Amen.

FRIDAY

Memory Verse

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 5:9 (NIV)

Prayer

God, make me an agent of reconciliation, bringing peace, healing, and unity wherever You place me. May others see Your heart through the way I love and serve them. Amen.

SATURDAY

Memory Verse

"Abigail acted quickly..." 1 Samuel 25:18 (NIV)

Prayer

Father, give me Abigail's wisdom to act with courage, humility, and discernment. Help me to speak words that calm conflict, prevent harm, and lead others toward peace and justice. Amen.

SUNDAY

Memory Verse

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." **Matthew 5:6 (NIV)**

Prayer

Lord Jesus, create in me an unquenchable hunger for Your righteousness. May my heart long for justice, my hands be ready to serve, and my life faithfully participate in Your work of restoring the world to Your glory. Amen.

KIDS AND TEENS

Week 5 - We all need each other

Bible Readings: Romans 12:1-8

Context

Paul teaches us how healthy communities work and how why we all need each other. He uses the human body as an illustration showing that each part of the body plays a specific role.

Application

God in His mercy has made it so that we belong to a community. He knew from the beginning that we could not go through life individually, and none of us are meant to do life alone. As Romans 12:1-8 reminds us, each of us is given a specific role to play within the body of Christ.

Belonging to a community means recognising that we need each other to thrive. When we find our place and actively serve using our unique gifts, we fulfil the purpose God designed for us while supporting those around us.

Reflections

Preteens

1. What is the one thing you're really good at?
2. How can you use that as a gift to your friends and family?
3. Why is it better to do things together as a team rather than all by yourself?

Teens

1. Why is it hard to admit that we can't do life alone?
2. What makes it tough to ask for help when you're struggling?
3. What unique role do you feel God calling you to play in the community around you?

Family activity

Each member of the family writes 2 to 3 gifts that you have. Pick one gift from your list and share with the family:

What is the gift?

Exactly how will you put it into action this week, either inside your home or to help someone outside?

Close in prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bestowing these gifts upon us. Help us not to squander them, but to use them faithfully to serve others and bring glory to Your name. In Jesus' name, Amen