

TOGETHER

only physically apart

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk



Rhythm of Life

Reflections on what song to sing | Revd Peter Bates

I miss my music. Before we had the restrictions of Covid-19 I used to get in my car and play my cd's as I travelled to Collingham, Long Bennington and North End for services and meetings. For the last five months, I haven't had many services or meetings in church buildings, and so I have missed the relaxation of travelling in my car and listening to my music. I have just started to venture out more, and so it has given me chance to listen to my 60's CD and sing along to the 'classics' of that era, and also one of my Christian CD's, 'O Church Arise; there are some wonderful uplifting songs on this CD which help me focus on God and the mission he has called us to. My favourite on this CD is 'You're the Word of God the Father'. The chorus is "You're the Author of creation. You're the Lord of every man. And your cry of love rings out across the land." We need the music and the words to speak to us, to lift our spirits and to be reminded that God is the creator of all but he also loves us and values us for who we are.

At home I have a cd player in my office and this gives me chance to listen to music when I am doing the mundane tasks like printing the weekly Newsletter/sermon. Two of the CD's I have listened to recently are Bruce Springsteen and Amy Winehouse. Some of the songs they recorded are brutal in their reality. I think of 'Badlands' by Springsteen, which speaks of dashed hopes and broken hearts. And then there's Amy Winehouse singing 'Rehab', describing her struggle with life. These songs remind us that life is hard, that we have to work at it and even then, things don't always work out. It is similar to the words of the psalmists who wrestled with the injustices of life, and the struggles they had to endure, especially when God seemed silent and unwilling to act. But the psalmists always returned to the theme that God would answer their cries for help eventually. He would be true to his nature of love.

What is the song in your heart today? What song will you be carrying around as you go about your daily tasks. Is it a song of praise and adoration to God? Are we focusing on the wonders of nature and God's amazing love to us? Certainly, if we have these thoughts in our hearts then our stride will be quickened and our resolve strengthened. It makes a difference to our whole outlook when we have songs on our lips that glorify God, that thank him for all he has done. Of course, we can question God, when we are going through troubled times. Jesus said to his father, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But later on, in Psalm 22, the writer says, "But you Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength, come quickly to help me."

Our focus needs to be on God. We do not always choose what happens to us but we can choose what song to sing.¹



1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our Circuit Service which this week is hosted by North Muskham Methodist Church.

Find it on the 'Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit' YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/NewarkSouthwellMethodistCircuit>) why not invite a friend to watch it with you and share the link with them on your social media or by email!

2. Circuit 'Zoom' Coffee Time

Join folk from across the circuit from 11:30am each Sunday morning - you provide the coffee - we'll provide the fellowship! pop in for 5 minutes or half an hour - we'd love to see you!

Please join us afterwards

Come with a drink and a biscuit to share in conversation after the service.

www.zoom.us
Meeting ID: 885 3100 7185
Password: Tog3ther
Phone: 0131 460 1196
Meeting ID: 885 3100 7185
Password: 48647472



If you'd like help to 'Zoom', please get in touch!

3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also online.)
08:10am - 11th October 2020

The priory and the pottery

Canon Edwin Counsell and the Rt Rev June Osborne with a service from Ewenny Priory and Ewenny Pottery.

4. Radio Nottingham

Listen every Sunday, at 8am, to a live church service on BBC Radio Nottingham. (Online or on 95.1-103.8 MHz FM for free.)

If any of this baffles you - contact us:
peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk

'Rate This Bench'

Our Sunday Sermon | Reflections from Philippians 4:6-7 | Revd Peter Hibberts

Sam Wilmot from Bristol has been rating benches on Instagram (a social media network) since June 2019. (You can find him by searching for 'Rate This Bench'.) It started as a joke between himself and his college friends whilst he studied for his masters degree at Swansea University but has now led him to international fame. CNN writes, in an article about Sam's pursuit, "A pandemic is raging. Political rancor is festering across the globe. Wildfires are eating away our precious natural resources, and the grocery store is still out of paper towels. Everything is, in a word, terrible. [But] let's forget all of that for a moment. Come, take a seat on this bench, and breathe." Why rate benches? Actually, I think it's more than just rating benches, I think Sam has discovered that the time to think, rest and, if accompanied, offload on a park bench is an extremely valuable thing - perhaps more so now than ever. For Sam, this resting, reflecting and offloading has become *A Way of Life*.

Today we begin our new series which explores Christianity as '*A Way of Life*' and we begin with the commitment to *Pray Daily*. Under the heading of Worship, we consider how daily prayer should be part of every Christian's life - it's certainly a challenge - are you up for it?

Where do you pray? When do you pray? How do you pray?

You may have heard the story of the man who was late for a meeting and was circling a car park in his car, looking for a space. He prayed to God, "Lord if you find me a parking space, I'll go to church on Sunday." At which point, to his amazement a space appeared. He called out to God, "It's okay God, you don't need to, I've found one!"

In a Radio 4 poll nearly 70% identified as non-religious and yet as little as 1 in 7 said that they never turn to prayer. In a similar poll 80% of Britons believe that prayer can be answered. Interestingly enough the poll discovered that teenagers and people in their twenties were more likely to pray than their parents' generation but also more likely to describe themselves as non-religious. I wonder how Covid-19 has affected these trends? It has certainly resulted in more people interacting with church (online). Perhaps despite folk not identifying with religion, they are still reaching out to God.

When chatting to two of my golf friends this week, about prayer, I got two very different responses. One said that he rarely prays and hasn't ever really had a pattern of prayer - despite spending most of his life as a church-goer and church warden - he described himself as more of a do-er than a pray-er (though he did say he turns to prayer in times of crisis). The second said that he prays daily and indeed it's the first act of every day (alongside a daily devotional).

I have to confess, I have no pattern to prayer but, for me, prayer has become something of a constant thing. There have been some times in lockdown where my prayers have been frenzied and desperate calls for help with others being greatly relieved uttering of gratitude. I find myself most

recently praying a lot in my Hot Tub - perhaps it's become my space, a place of solitude, a place of rest, a place of relaxation both physically and spiritually. I often begin simply by thinking, reflecting, which often turns into a few sentences of praise (I've been known to sing worship - even aloud - though not very loud!) and has, on more than one occasion resulted in a minor revelation. It has certainly become a place of comfort, spiritually, and I'm immensely grateful for that opportunity, without which, I think I may not have got through lockdown in one piece! It's not the only place I pray but perhaps it my only regular space for personal prayer and it's become almost daily. This is *my* bench.

One thing that has certainly increased in the last six months is levels of community anxiety. A poll in the third week of June recorded 49% reporting feeling anxious about the Pandemic though the same poll, back in March had recorded it 62% higher - perhaps as we see cases rise, anxiety is also rising again.

Paul, writing to the Church in Philippi at a time when he and Silas were imprisoned, writes the words of scripture on which we focus this week. He directly addresses anxiety at a time of imprisonment and, though our imprisonment does not necessarily involve prison bars as his did, his words are relevant to us today. Paul calls us not to be anxious about anything, 'Easy to say!' you may think, but remember where Paul is, as he says it. What is the secret to this release of anxiety? Prayer!

When we chose the songs for this Sunday's service one that independently occurred to myself and David (the North Muskham organist) was 'What a friend we have in Jesus.' It includes the timeless words,

*"O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer."*

How beautiful for the song writer, Joseph Medlicott Scriven, to bring prayer down friendship - the kind of demystifying of prayer that I think we need in our church. There is certainly a mystery to prayer - I'll be the first to admit that I don't understand how it works, but I know it works. Prayer changes situations and prayer changes people (normally the pray-er themselves). William Temple, the former Archbishop of Canterbury famously said, "When I pray, coincidences happen. When I don't, they don't"

I wonder what would happen to our lives, our contexts, our world, if we all (every Christian, every member of our circuit, every reader of this newsletter) prayed daily. What if we invested in our friendship with Jesus and, on a daily basis, we all 'took it to the Lord in prayer.' I started this sermon by talking about Sam Wilmot (the bench rater) I wonder what would happen if we took a leaf out of Sam's book, found a bench to sit on, with Jesus by our side and poured out our heart to him. It needn't be a bench - just find your own space, daily; offload and then listen.

"Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrow's share?"

3 *Jesus knows our every weakness: take it to the Lord in prayer."*

Prayer Space

This week I challenge you to find a bench somewhere (or a quiet space) to sit in God's presence. Try starting with the prayer, 'Come Holy Spirit.' Allow your thoughts to wander and commit each one to God. Call to mind any worries you may have for the world, our nation, our church, our community, your family and yourself. Spend some time in quiet listening to what God may be saying about each one.

Prayer for 11th October

Taken from the Methodist Prayer Handbook, available from methodist.org.uk

O Lord of majestic mountain and
roaring sea

O Lord of astonishing beauty and
outlandish loveliness,

O Lord of the minuscule, the
overlooked and never seen,

O Lord off the extraordinary and
everyday,

open our eyes to see your presence,
our ears to hear the whisper of your
voice and, realising you in every place
and every moment of our existence,
may we live with justice, peace, acre
and hope. Amen.

EMAIL PRAYER CHAIN

*If you would like to join the prayer
chain and receive prayer requests or
have a prayer request (with permission
of the recipient) please get in touch
with Colin...*

Colin Beckett colin1244@gmail.com.
It is for those in any church or none!

Dial-a-sermon:

Can't get onto the YouTube Service? Want to hear the Sunday sermon? Dial up at any time of the day or night at the cost of a local call.

Press option 3 for the Sunday Sermon
(Sermons go live each Sunday.)

Dial a Sermon

01636 552255

Listen to the circuit sermon
each week.

Newark and Southwell
Methodist Circuit
helping you stay connected
whilst we're apart.



Reflective songs...

Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service...

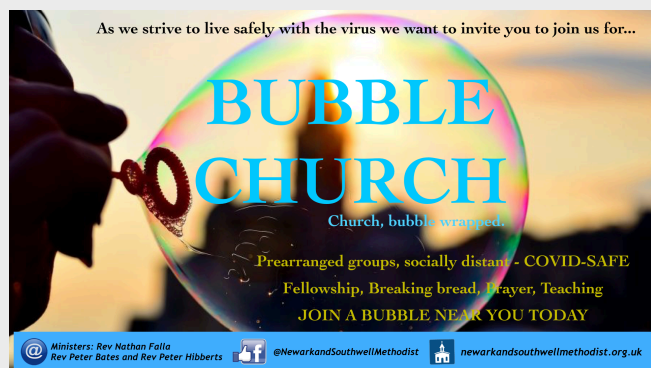
Be still and know that I am God (StF 18/SoF 41) [LINK](#)

What a friend we have in Jesus (StF 531/HP 559) [LINK](#)

Father I place into your hands (StF 519) [LINK](#)

Click 'LINK's to access YouTube clips of each song.

Bubble Church Resources



**Would you like to be part of Covid-Safe face-to-face church?
Join a bubble today by getting in touch with your minister.**

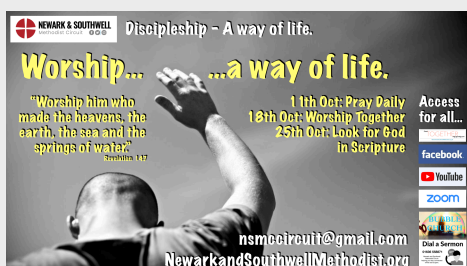
The following questions are designed to get you thinking and, if you're involved in Bubble Church talking about the topic!

1. Where is your favourite bench (or perhaps your favourite place to sit)? What makes it a good place to sit and what can you see from your 'bench'?
2. What struck you about this week's sermon? What questions do you have after reading or hearing it?
3. Where do you pray? When do you pray? How do you pray? What kinds of things do you pray for?
4. Do you have any testimonies about answered prayers?
5. What tips would you give to a new Christian about how to develop a pattern of prayer?

For more information checkout the Bubble Church guide with risk assessment on the Circuit Website: <https://www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk/newsroom/bubble-church.html>

Worship...A Way of Life.

This week we begin our new 'Discipleship...A way of Life' series with a three week focus on worship. Each week we will focus on a different aspect of our worshipping life and how we can make it our Way of Life. Join in over YouTube, FaceBook, Zoom and Bubble Church. Find out more on the Newark and Southwell Circuit Website.



7-9-20

Families:

by Katie Hibberts

families4SMC@gmail.com

FAMILY ACTIVITIES!

This month has been declared 'Joytober' by the team at Godventure (<https://godventure.co.uk/news/joytober/>) and they are encouraging us to think of things we are thankful for everyday. You can visit their website and download a poster for your family to use with daily prompts to help you!

In 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 we are told to, "Pray continually and give thanks whatever happens. This is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus." So today, let's take time to thank God for all the amazing things he does for us!



Thank you for friends and family

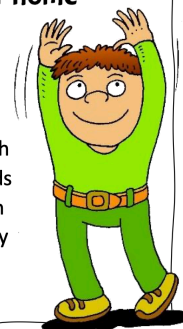
Visit all the rooms in your house – every time you come across a photo of a friend or family member stop and say a thank you to God for them.



Thank you for our home

Some things we use every day without thinking about them.

Pick a room in the house – stretch out wide with your hands towards the walls, stretch up tall between the floor and the ceiling – and say thank you to God for the house you live in.



Thank you for Music

Put on some worship music and dance as a thank you to God!



Thank you for creation

Look out of a window at the beautiful creation that God has made – thank God for all the different plants and animals you can see.



Can you contribute to TOGETHER?

We're looking to produce this Newsletter as a Circuit and would like to widen the team as far as possible. Perhaps you could contribute a prayer, a short article, an encouraging piece. Maybe you would be willing to be part of the editorial team? Perhaps you'd like us to advertise something in your church.

If you would like to join the team or make a one-off contribution, please get in touch with Revd. Peter Hibberts by email (peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk) or telephone (01636812166).

Contributions must be received by Monday of each week for Tuesday editorial and Wednesday distribution.