



TOGETHER

only physically apart

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Covid Vaccine Equity

Is it time for a change of perspective? | Dr Andrew Ayre

For all of us this has been an unprecedented, difficult, indeed tragic year. Now there is hope in sight (it was always there!), and we are being buoyed by the prospect of the vaccine to get us back to something approaching normality. But hang on a minute. Whatever personal crises we may have had, and the awful death toll, there has always been the NHS in very large part and the Welfare State to mitigate those problems, praise God. We have had a lot still to be thankful for. But now I find myself with a growing sense of concern over the roll-out of that vaccination program, not with the science or the safety, but the morality.

Over the past month our worship together has focused on aspects and meaning of Discipleship: Service through Helping Others, Caring for Creation, Challenging Injustice, and now Evangelism – Leading by Example, being Salt & Light. This sits awkwardly with being part of a nation, which has cornered enough vaccine to immunise us all three times over, is aiming to vaccinate all adults this year, while our immediate neighbours, let alone the majority world, are struggling to access vaccine for health workers and those at very highest risk. On present projections some sub-Saharan countries could be waiting until 2024 to be on a par with us! This shouldn't be down to who gambled on which vaccine. Vaccine production is the result of years of international collaboration. This is a matter of justice and equity, and I believe the Church as a body should be speaking out about it. No-one should be able to control global supply other than on fair and equitable grounds. Whatever the moral case, the science alone suggests "no-one is safe until everyone is safe".

I feel very diffident as I write this. I belong to the Baby-Boomer generation, and have enjoyed the privileges of that generation. I am more than aware of the huge gulf between my words and deeds. However, we really do stand at a crossroads. This truly is the first time we have the opportunity and incentive to put national interests to one side and work towards a global common good. If we could achieve this, the respect so engendered would significantly improve our chances of successfully co-operating to tackle the greater problem of climate change. Coronavirus is not God given, but the opportunities undoubtedly are. We have been given a world with limited resources. What else are we prepared to give up and share? You cannot take salt out of the food, so as Christians I believe we have a responsibility to be intimately engaged with society both as individuals and collectively, advocating for and supporting those at a disadvantage. What more powerful evangelism? We are infinitely more effective when we act corporately, plus we all need support for taking personal actions. Conversely: "Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing" (John Stuart Mill, 1867). So what are God's priorities for 2021?

Revd Dr Jane Leach offered a very helpful [Radio 4 Thought for the Day](#) on the above subject and there is also the WHO Covid19 Solidarity Response Fund "Arm in arm" which encourages those who have already received their appointment or vaccine to donate (minimum donation of £5) to support people worldwide

<https://www.arminarm.net/why-support>

Andrew is a retired GP and member of Charles Street Methodist Church.



1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday 21st February where Revd Nathan Falla leads our service with friends from Barnbygate for the first Sunday of Lent.

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!

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

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



3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also [online](#).)
08:10am – 21st February

Lent 1 | Jesus and the Father: United

Marking the first Sunday in Lent, with Father Dermot Preston of St Aloysius' Roman Catholic Church in Glasgow, and spirituality guide, Mary O'Duffin.

During Lent, Radio 4 Worship programmes take inspiration from Jesuit spirituality – an ancient form of prayer and bible contemplation pioneered in the 16th Century by St Ignatius of Loyola and used widely today.

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 – please contact your minister

Lost and found

Catching up with God

Our Sunday Sermon | Reflections from Luke 15:1-7 | Revd Nathan Falla

I wonder how good are you at searching for things? Are you the type of person who turns a room upside-down and you just cannot rest until something that you have lost is found? I must confess that growing up I was not particularly good at looking for things that I thought were hiding in my bedroom, once I had attempted looking there was often the call to my Mum to come and find something, it seemed that she had a special radar and could find something almost instantly, always in the place that I had looked but not seen!

Our reading this week is the parable of the lost sheep, and it is all about the person who leaves the 99 sheep to find the lost sheep. Jesus tells this story followed by two others (the parable of the lost coin and the parable of the prodigal son) because the pharisees are grumbling about the company that he is keeping; he is spending time with the tax collectors and those who fall short of the pharisees ideals, the lowest and the least.

Within this parable Jesus uses the very contemporary imagery of sheep. It could be argued that Jesus was having a little dig at the pharisees as the people of Israel were sometimes called sheep with the shepherds being the pharisees. Whenever I read this parable to my mind there seems to be something reckless about the shepherd as he leaves the 99 to go searching for the 1 lost sheep, because I can't but help think what happened to the other 99, were they safe first or does this show the outrageous, radical and extraordinary love of the shepherd?

I believe this mirrors the outrageous, radical and extraordinary love of God, who actively seeks us, it is God who takes the initiative and often we need to catch up. The theological term for this is prevenient grace, the grace that comes before, that searches for us, and longs for us to be in a relationship with God.

Whenever we read the Bible it is important for us not to just read the words on the page but to be an active participant, and I think today as active participants our reading encourages us to look in at our own lives and to look out to those all around us. As we *look in* it prompts us to ask the questions: are we lost now? What is our story of being found? As we *look out* it challenges us to think about where is God inviting us to join in, to catch up? Are we looking for the lost?

Are we lost now?

At this time it is very easy to be disorientated and weary, to feel like we are in a fog or lost. But this is not the type of lost that I am thinking about, are we lost, feeling far from God, weighed down by all the wrong things that we have done and continue to do? Maybe we think that God could not possibly love us. Hear that God is searching for you, inviting you to come back, or longing for you to enter into that relationship for the first time. As part of the journey of God finding us, we need to recognise the wrong things that we have done and say sorry, to repent.

We entered the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, a time when we can specifically think about our relationship with God, to look at our lives openly and honestly. All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; all of us say, think or do things which create a barrier between us and God, we can all be lost in sin, but do we know that we are lost and that we have a way back. Jesus came to earth to die on a cross, to restore the broken relationship between us and God caused by our sin, Jesus made it possible for us to know God's love, grace and forgiveness, but we need to regularly say that we are sorry.

What is our story of being found?

Our story may be dramatic and miraculous, or it may be much more everyday but if we have said that we are sorry and accepted Jesus into our lives then we have a story of being found. A story of how we have encountered the Good News of God's love and the story is still being written as God continues to work in our lives by the Holy Spirit as we are changed and transformed to be more like Jesus. However, do we share our story? There is nothing quite like personal story that can connect with where people are at. The story of God's love and grace in our lives today; the story of God breaking through the darkness, our story from death to resurrection.

Do we need to catch up with God?

Our reading powerfully reminds us that God takes the initiative in seeking the lost, God's heart is for the lost. The church is called to be a hospital for sinners not a museum of saints. God reaches out that we may be known and we might know that we are loved. God invites us to join in, to show his love, to give an invitation for people to know Jesus, that by our words and by our actions we may draw people to Jesus. We are loved by God and we are called to share that love with others. We are called to live the story and to be the story for it is God's story and our story!

Are we looking for the lost?

Throughout Jesus' ministry his concern was for those on the margins of society, Jesus was constantly meeting people where they were and revealing God's love and forgiveness to them. We are called to show God's love and to be God's love. We are not called on our own, but we are called to partner with God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Hannah Steele in her book *Living his story* writes "mission Dei (the mission of God) reminds us that we are never on our own as witnesses to the risen Jesus. Whenever we point people towards Jesus in word and deed we are part of that which God is doing within the world."

As we journey through Lent let us be more aware of God's searching love, that we may always be found in God, and share our story. May we be attentive to God's call that we may catch up with God and may we seek the lost that by the sharing of our lives and stories more people would come to know of the saving love and amazing grace of God.

Amen.

Prayer Space

Opening Prayer

Lord, as we come to worship in our homes,
may we know you with us journeying God.

In the wilderness of unknowing and waiting
may we know you with us journeying God.

When we feel lost and alone
may we know you with us journeying God.

In the strangeness of this time
may we know you with us journeying God.

When we feel stuck and static
may we know you with us journeying God.

**Lord, may you lead us and guide us,
ever moving us onwards
writing your story in our hearts and lives
this Lent and everyday.
Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

God of love and grace,
we come before you
and we know that sometimes
we are lost, we stray from the path;
we say things, do things and think things
which damage our relationship with you
and with other people.

We restrict your love for us and others
by our action or inaction.
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

We fail to tell the story of your
transforming love and grace in our lives.
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

We do not seek the lost, the broken, the
marginalized.
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord, may we know your searching
and forgiving love.

May we know your grace in our lives
and your Spirit transforming us.
May we be bold to share and invite
that more people may know you.

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

01636 552255

Listen to the circuit sermon
each week.

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



Hymns and worship songs

Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service:

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us – H&P 68, StF 238, SOF 321

Amazing grace (My chains are gone) – SOF 1412

I will sing the wondrous story – H&P 223, StF 323, SOF 278

Please click on the song title to access YouTube clips of each song.

Live Lent | God's story our story

On Ash Wednesday some people started to follow the book *Live Lent God's Story Our Story*, you can still share in this and receive a daily email with the material via [this link](#). Please scroll down to the bottom of the page and fill in the details.

There are also Zoom Lent groups to go deeper, some start this week and others next week, it is not too late for you share in the journey, please contact the respective person leading the group:

Monday 8pm Revd Peter Hibberts from **22nd Feb**

Tuesday 2.30pm Sue Twemlow & Revd H from **23rd Feb**

Tuesday 7.30pm Revd Nathan Falla from **23rd Feb**

Wednesday 8pm Val & Colin Beckett from **24th Feb**

Thursday 7.30pm Revd Peter Bates from **18th Feb**

Friday 7.30pm Revd Peter Bates from **19th Feb**

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peter.bates857@yahoo.com



This week's Lent Action:

As part of the Live Lent series that we are following we are all encouraged each week to take up an action:

This week, take time to read one of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark or Luke) and reflect on the love that Jesus shows there. You might like to use a journal or notebook to record your observations.

ACTION

Families:

by Katie Hibberts

families4SMC@gmail.com

FAMILY ACTIVITIES!

During Lent, our circuit is undertaking the 'Live Lent' course. As such, we will be using this Families slot each week to share some families activities that accompany the daily readings so that you can all share in this Lent journey together. If you are not following the Live Lent course, I am sure that you will still enjoy selecting some of these activities to do each week anyway!

Monday 22 February - Jesus the Storyteller - Matthew 13.34-35:

Jesus was a great storyteller! We call his stories "parables" – stories to help people learn more about God and God's Kingdom. Set a timer for one minute. How many of Jesus' parables can you and your family call out in that time? Which is your favourite?

Tuesday 23 February - The Banquet - Luke 14.16-24:

Tell the parable of the great banquet using emojis. As you decide which ones to use, wonder together about why Jesus says God's kingdom is like a huge banquet with invitations for everyone. When you're happy with your emoji parable, send it to one of your church leaders. Can they guess which parable it is?

Wednesday 24 February - The Lost Sheep - Luke 15.3-7:

Get everyone in your family to draw and cut out one or more sheep (use an internet search if you need a template). Have each person hide their sheep somewhere in your home. Gather back together and on the word "Go", hunt down the "lost" sheep that aren't yours. Read the story of the Lost Sheep together.

Thursday 25 February - The Lost Coin - Luke 15.8-10:

Think of someone you haven't seen for a long time. Imagine you saw them walking down the road – and they are coming to your house! Design a poster (on paper or online) with the things you'd like to do and the food you'd like to share.

Friday 26 February - The Lost Son - Luke 15.11-32:

Go on a hunt round your home. Look under chairs and beds, down the back of the sofa, behind cupboards and in drawers. Did you manage to find any lost "treasures" (apart from dust!)? Think of a way to celebrate. (If you didn't find anything, celebrate anyway because God loves you.)

27-28 February - Compelled by Love - 2 Cor. 5.14-15:

Cut out seven hearts from paper or thin card. On each heart, write the name of a person that you don't see very often – it might be someone you used to see at church, or friends and family who live far away. Fold the hearts in half and put them in a clean jar or bowl. Each day this week, pick one heart out of the jar or bowl. Think of a way to show Jesus' love to that person – maybe pray for them, or surprise them with a phone call, letter or small gift.

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 (01636 812166).

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