



TOGETHER

only physically apart

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Journey in the wilderness

Reflecting on Lent and the pandemic | Revd Nathan Falla

Last week we entered the season of Lent, a season where we traditionally reflect on Jesus' journey starting in the wilderness by looking at the temptations and going on to prepare to remember and mark the events of Holy Week leading to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and onto Easter Sunday. The concept of wilderness is one that is found in several places in the Bible; the people of Israel wandering in the desert for 40 years and Jesus being driven into the wilderness for 40 days and nights are most probably the two best known examples.

The wilderness is a place of discovery and learning, it is not always a comfortable place and it can also be dangerous, but it is a place where we are faced with the reality of the situation. It may feel that we have been in a wilderness in this time of lockdown, that we have been in exile and not able to do what we have normally done and now the end is near, the promised land is in sight. We have a roadmap that is meant to be driven by data, and I would urge us to be cautious but to look to the future with hope.

I wonder what have we learnt from the experience? What have we discovered? Has it been a time when we have been able to openly and honestly look at ourselves and to re-examine our priorities? What permanent changes do we know that we need to make? I believe that the pandemic has made the Church stop and re-think what it means to be church and do church; remembering that the church is the body of Christ, the family of God and not the building.

I believe that we are being called to deepen our discipleship and to enable mission. To go deeper on our journey, to take a risk. For at least two church families this time of the pandemic has been a time of soul searching and discerning what the next part the journey with God is, knowing that God journeys before us to guide us, beside us to be our companion and behind us to be our support.

Hawtonville and Barnbygate Church Councils after some prayerful discernment and exploration believe that they can be more effective as one church family and can work out the practicalities of what this means as they journey together. They are looking to bring two families together into a new church family with a new identity. They are not closing two church communities, those communities are coming together to make a new one. Yes, there is much unknown, and the journey ahead will not be easy or straightforward, but together they can be more effective in mission, service and worship and be faithful to the call of God. Please hold the families in your prayers as they continue on this journey, a journey of exploration, discernment and trust.

But what about you on your journey? What is God calling you to? As part of the Lent group that I led this week, Archbishop Justin Welby talked about Lent being a time where the barnacles, the things that are attached to us can be stripped away, to be left with the basics which he defined as worship and witness. What will you look like as you emerge from the wilderness at the end of Lent, and the end of lockdown? Will you have been changed and will you expect or accept that the church may have changed too?



Stories of Transformation

Our Sunday Sermon | Reflections from Mark 5:1-20 | Ted Gascoyne

When Peter Bates asked me to lead this service he told me there was to be a title to the service and he had a small – 70 page booklet !! – for me to read, which he delivered a fortnight ago. The brochure was headed 'Jesus was in the transforming business'

In my school days I had learned about electrical transformers, I don't know why, as at the time I was anticipating becoming a professional footballer or a refuse collector. I started to read the booklet and soon realized that Jesus didn't appear as someone on Homes under the Hammer, - transforming property, but his job was that of transforming lives. So the challenge I'm offering is, 'Are you and I partners in this business of which Jesus is the managing director?'

Last week, Nathan, in what Rosa and I thought was a wonderful service us to look inward at ourselves and outward at what we do for others to see how our relationship in this transforming business was being carried out. For a few moments I would like us to look at some people Jesus met: Simon Peter and Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. As we progress through the gospel story we see Jesus transforming the lives of them and the other disciples he called with just two words 'follow me'.

As Jesus moved into his ministry he began with his healing service. The sick, the blind, the lame – even the dead. No doubt you each have your favourite story, the man lowered down into the room through the roof, the beggar at the gate, the ten men with leprosy and/or perhaps my all time favourite, the woman who touched the hem of his garment.

I'd like to continue with those words of Jesus in verse 19 – 'GO HOME TO YOUR FRIENDS AND TELL THEM HOW MUCH THE LORD HAS DONE FOR YOU' The booklet invited me to talk about the 'personal' relationship I have experienced with JESUS.

Born into a Christian family, I attended the Methodist Chapel Sunday School where my uncle Charlie was superintendent, my mother was organist. Mrs Tetley and Auntie Pat were the Sunday School teachers. 'Jesus wants me for a sunbeam', 'When he cometh, when he cometh to make up his jewels' and 'Jesus loves me this I know' were hymns I've never forgotten, Happy days, but there came a time in my teens when I allowed other things to come into my life., cricket, football....

In 1960 I travelled to Hilsea barracks in Portsmouth to do my two years National service. One Sunday afternoon I had been on guard duty, when I returned to my billet I found a lad changing into his civilian clothes. 'where are you going Hank? I asked. 'I'm going to the Methodist Church on Cosham Road he said. 'Can I come with you? I asked', 'yes' he replied. I heard those lovely words that Jesus spoke to James and Andrew...follow me, called back into the fold to be with Jesus.

When Hank and I got back to barracks I wrote a letter home telling my parents what had happened and where I'd been. The next time I went

1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday 28th February where Ted Gascoyne leads our service from Long Bennington for the second 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 – 28th February

Lent 2 | St David's Day

The Archbishop of Wales, the Most Reverend John Davies, marks St David's Day in a service for the second Sunday of Lent, recorded under lockdown conditions at Brecon Cathedral.

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

home my mum showed me my letter and told me how when she read it she cried! Jesus the transformer? Yes.

Tell them what God has done for you. Loving parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.

I had heard again the words of Jesus 'follow me' I remembered Sunday school stories told to us by our teachers. My favourites:- the woman who touched the hem of our Lords garment, The story of the man who was attacked by robbers and....

In 2012 Rosa and I were living in a hamlet near Brecon in Wales. We had a black Labrador dog named after the captain of my favourite football team 'Pearce'. One spring afternoon I took Pearce a walk up the lane where we lived.

We came to field full of sheep and lambs. As I watched the lambs gambolling I noticed one lamb standing on its own bleating. A Sheep was lying motionless a few yards away. Putting Pearce on the lead I ventured into the field. The mother sheep was dead, so I walked slowly towards the lamb which made no effort to run away. Luckily I had an old anorak on because as I picked up the lamb and put it on my shoulder the first thing it did was... yes you've guessed.

As I walked back towards the farm next to where we lived I found myself recalling that wonderful story 'there were 90 and 9 that safely lay. The Sankey hymn book has other hymns that tell of Jesus and how gently he carried the lost sheep. In the quietness of the lane I recalled the many times Jesus had carried me, brought me back, loved me.

Edward, it is by His Grace that you are saved.

In 1992 after 36 years in banking I was made redundant... part of God's plan?

I was fortunate to find employment and went to work at Derby County Football Club where I spent the final seven years of my working life as the clubs Disabled liaison officer. They were the happiest days looking after 450 disabled supporters who needed help and care. It was here that my Christian faith was allowed to flourish as I shared joys and sorrows in abundance.

Yes, Jesus was in the transforming business, he transformed me time and time again, His love and grace surrounded me and in so many ways even today Jesus continues to encourage me to be part of His business.

Are you, or will you, join me as a partner in Jesus' Transforming business?

Dial-a-Prayer



FREEPHONE numbers for prayers, reflections and news from the Methodist Church

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514

Listen to a pastoral message from the President and Vice President: 0808 281 2695

Listen to our Podcast: 0808 281 2478

Prayer updated every Thursday, Presidential message updated every Monday, Methodist Podcast updated fortnightly on Thursday.

Prayer Space

Loving Lord, thank you for Jesus.
We thank you for his example,
his love and all the blessings
we receive each day.
Please forgive each one of us
for those occasions
when we have let you and our faith down.
We are so grateful that Jesus came
to save us from our sins,
as we join in saying the words
that he taught us,
help us to be transformed into better,
faithful and loving people.

The Lord's Prayer

Ted Gascoyne

God of love, God for all,
your purposes are more beautiful
than we can possibly imagine.
Fill us with your Holy Spirit.
Help us let go of all that holds us back.
Open our lives and our churches
to new seasons of humility and faith,
of change and growth.
Shake us up with the Good News of Jesus
and show us the way. Amen

Methodist Break-through Prayer

This is the prayer that concludes the weekly Methodist prayer meeting held on a Tuesday at 12.45pm for 15 minutes

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.



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!

Hymns and worship songs

Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service:

Blessed assurance H&P 668, StF 548, SOF 44

Tell me the stories of Jesus H&P 153

Make me a channel of your peace H&P 776, StF 707, SOF 381

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

The Real Easter Egg

Have you heard of 'The Real Easter Egg'? Out of the 80 million Easter eggs sold in this part of the world every year, The Real Easter Egg is the only one which has an Easter story book in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and supports charitable projects. It is made by The Meaningful Chocolate Company.



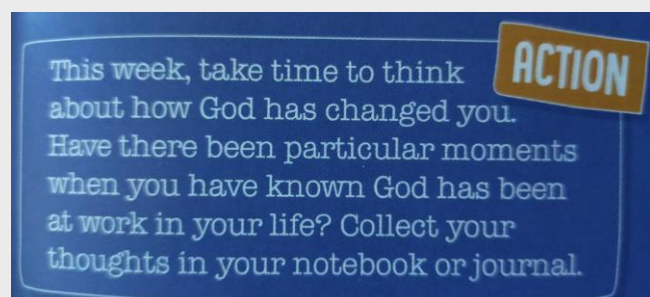
Normally The Real Easter Egg can be found in supermarkets, but this year supermarkets year supermarkets have been cutting certain lines, and this includes these eggs.

To find out more please go to

<https://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/collections/real-easter-egg>

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 it is:



FAMILY ACTIVITIES!

Here are the family activities as part of Live Lent to explore stories of transformation more:

Monday 1 March – Go Home and Tell – Mark 5.1-20:

“Go tell it on the mountain” is a song about telling the good news of Jesus. Either sing it together or do an internet search and listen to it together. Try making up some extra verses to tell more of the story of Jesus.

Tuesday 2 March – The Power of a Personal Story – Acts 4.1-22:

Ask one of your church leaders (or youth group leader) to tell you the story of how they knew God wanted them to do what they are doing.

Wednesday 3 March – Sharing Our Story – John 4.1-42:

A cross reminds Christians of Jesus. Have a “Cross hunt” around your home. How many can you find? If there aren't any, make or draw one and place it where everyone can see. You could use twigs, pipe cleaners, construction toys or tear one out of paper.

Thursday 4 March – Attentive Listening – Acts 17.16-34:

St Paul loved telling people about Jesus. Who tells you the stories of Jesus? (It might be someone at church, or school, a member of your family or a friend.) Send them a card or text to say “Thank you”.

Friday 5 March – Be Prepared – 1 Peter 3.13-16

Find the hymn “Amazing Grace” in a hymn book or online. John Newton wrote it to tell people about the difference being a Christian made to him. What difference does following Jesus make for you and your family?

6-7 March – Living Your Story – 1 Thessalonians 2.4-8:

Do something loving or kind for someone this weekend as a way of sharing Jesus' love.



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.