



TOGETHER

only physically apart

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Stop, go, wait.

Reflecting on life in Lockdown | Pat Ayers of Southwell Methodist Church

Life in lock-down has been like obeying traffic lights stop, go, wait. We now have traffic lights at the end of our lane at the railway crossing, many who know where we live will be very surprised and so are we!

Our youngest grandson thinks they are exciting, he loves watching trains.

During lock-down many of us have been waiting – standing still and sometimes feel we will never meet together. There will be time to join together on our journey of faith when the green light is given.

We have many dog walkers, joggers and cyclists along the lane during lockdown. If the lights are at red we will have a dog queue! (All keeping socially distanced!) Time to serve coffee and dog biscuits in a hurry before the lights change again!

I have received many cards and letters from church friends for which I am grateful and it has been good to also communicate by phone although conversations are shorter because we cannot always discuss vaccine appointments, not much news!

My mother would have been saying to everyone “keep on keeping on” so let us do just that and wait patiently for the green light.



As we wait patiently for the green light in so many areas of our lives, do remember in your prayers those who are making important decisions, our politicians, our scientists, businesses, schools, local authorities. These are complicated times.

Amongst those reading this will be those who feel we are reopening too fast and others who feel it's too slow. Perhaps we need, most of all, to be gracious and compassionate to each other - empathising with the many different boats that are trying to navigate this storm in different ways.

Please also pray for church leaders as they desperately want to be back together, face to face again, but must also protect their congregations.

Rev. Peter Hibberts



1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our Circuit Service which this week is hosted by Collingham Methodist Church and led by Revd Gaynor Hall.

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 - 21st March 2021

Lost Years

A moment of remembrance led by the Archbishop of York marks the loss of over 120,000 lives as the nation prepares to mark the anniversary of lockdown.

Leader: Debbie Thrower.

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.)

Finding echoes of the story of Jesus in our world today.

Our Sunday Sermon | Reflections from John 4:1-29 | Revd. Gaynor Hall

Through Lockdown many of us have found ourselves watching more TVs films and boxed sets than usual, also, if you love books, there's been time to loose yourself in a good story. These have provided distraction, entertainment and a talking point with our families and friends when we run out of conversation. What did they think about such and such a series? Can they suggest a good film? Was this book a real 'page-turner'?

It is important that as Christians we pay attention to what is going on around us in the media because what people watch or read can be a good insight into what interests or concerns people today. Not just whether they like films about spies or detectives but what are the underlying themes that are being examined. If you like ghost stories or zombie films, what does the film say about life after death or the meaning of life? What does a particular film say about what are considered the most important things in life. How do the choices that the characters make affect others or the future? These can be an opportunity to discuss what people believe and what questions about life they have.

Looking at our Bible reading today: Paul is in Athens. A place known for its great knowledge, renowned philosophers and thinkers. It's a good place for Paul as he does not feel out of place he's been schooled in philosophy as well as being a well-educated Pharisee. At first he's distressed to see the place full of idols but it doesn't put him off, he wants to delve deeper. He speaks about Jesus in the main meeting places as well as the marketplace - a place a bit like 'Speakers Corner' arousing some interest as well as derision. He ends up at the Areopagus, a court that dealt with moral and religious matters, the seat of Athenian government and full of the elite.

Paul has been listening and observing the city closely during his visit and he begins by tailoring his message to connect with the Athenians in a way they can understand the Good News he is about to share. He commends them for being religious and starts from where they are: "I've seen this inscription in your city which says 'to an unknown god' "

He then goes on to preach about the God who made the world and everything in it and will one day judge it. This God cannot be made by human hands, and then Paul refers to Jesus. He does not refer to him by name, but says he is the man whom God had raised from the dead and appointed to judge the world.

Paul used what he observed and heard in the city in his speech to the Athenians. His approach was different to the words he would have used in the synagogue to Jews, well-versed in the Scriptures. He started from where they were in their understanding of life and its meaning.

Paul uses a quote from the Greek poets to show God as PERSONAL, as well as creator of the world, one who is present and active at all times and in all places. The 'unknown god' they have been searching for is within

them. “in him we live and move and have our being”. He is the source and supporter of all

He is concerned that their idols will prevent the Athenians from making a connection with the living God he is telling them about. Our culture is no less littered with idols than Athens was and I wonder what Paul would make of our 21st century world if he came to preach here today. Our idols are less literal than the statues and altars Paul found in Athens, but they serve the same purpose, they are our markers of our search for meaning, but all of them in some way fall short of this goal.

So how can we pick up on the hints in the world which point towards God and Jesus? The beauty of the created world and its fragility are things many have come to appreciate during lockdown. The goodness and self-sacrifice of so many people from the NHS, to those of all ages and beliefs raising money or volunteering time and resources to those in need. The desire for justice and hope for the future are all pointers to God and his Son.

Many people today are, in their own way searching for a meaning to life. They are trying to make sense of what is happening in the world and why it is happening and where their place is in all of it.

In Hannah Steele’s book “Living his Story” she suggests 4 important questions which are addressed by the Gospel: Who are we? What is wrong? What’s the solution? And What’s the future?

To put these very succinctly. We are made in the image of God, capable of loving and doing good but we are also drawn to wrongdoing and evil, to want to be gods in our own right regardless of the consequences.

God’s Son, Jesus Christ came in human form to put us back on track, to make it personal, to show us just how much God loves us whoever we are, rich or poor, sick or healthy, powerful or lowly and paid the price by dying on a cross

His death showed us that love is stronger than death itself and that it is not the end. Jesus says that this eternal life begins as soon as we start to follow him and that forgiveness for whatever we have done is freely given when we take him into our lives.

Those 4 questions listed above can be used when we are looking at films or books. We often do not have to look very far to see the themes of the bad person who changes their ways or good overcoming evil, self-sacrifice of the one for the many, themes of rescue or the destruction of the powerful.

What some film recommendations? Hannah Steele suggests “Les Miserables” “Bridge of Spies” “Parasite”.

If you are interested in the theme of forgiveness try Tom Hanks in “A beautiful Day in the Neighbourhood” but I would suggest you find out a bit about the main character Ted Rogers, who was a real person, well-known in the USA as a children’s tv presenter - not well-known here.- but a really inspiring man. **Happy viewing!**

Prayer Space Written by Rev Gaynor Hall

LOVING GOD, in you we live and move and all we are is known to you - the depths of fear and the heights of hope and the endlessness of our need for love. In you is space and breadth and room for each of us to be ourselves - to stretch and breathe, to laugh and weep, and sound the songs we long to sing. In you is time and strength to wait, to be patient; for each of us to dare to dream and trust our hope that you are love which does not end, but for ever holds us close.

*In the name of Christ, **Amen.***

Loving God you call us to speak to you in prayer even when the places we would usually go to are not available to us. Help us to know your Spirit’s presence wherever we pray.

Today we especially pray for those who are living in fear of what the future may hold. Those who live with anxiety and bereavement. Draw near to those who mourn lost conversations and meetings. Those who are finding separation from loved ones increasingly hard to bear. Those who fear that their jobs may be lost. Help us to turn from what has been to what might have to be in the future, knowing that you go before us.

We pray for young people who fear for their future, the careers they want to plan, Give them your hope and patience we pray.

We remember all places where people are suffering from tyranny or lawlessness. We continue to hold before you places like Syria, Yemen and Myanmar where governments make idols of power and have lost their sense of humanity and kindness.

Lord of light, we give thanks for all the many instances of self-sacrifice, kindness and compassion we have seen over the past months. For the way people have begun to appreciate the beauty of this planet and the desire to reach out to one another regardless of colour or creed. We pray that these will be lessons we learn and remember from lockdown.

Teach us, good Lord to be good listeners and to fully engage with the hunger in our world for whom ‘the unknown god’ is a reality.

*In the name of Christ, **Amen.***

Living His Story

*‘Revealing the extraordinary love of God in ordinary ways.’
2021 Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lent Book by Hannah Steele
From SPCK: <https://spckpublishing.co.uk/living-his-story>*

The companion book that runs alongside the Live Lent series is available and I would heartily recommend it. It’s a beautifully written, down to Earth and accessible which is described as ‘reminding us of things we already know, reinforcing things that we may know and providing new insights into sharing God’s Story with others.’



Reflective songs...

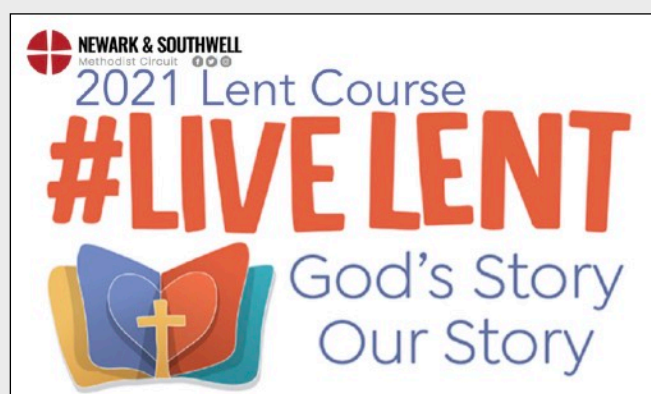
Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service...

God beyond all names (StF 496) [LINK](#)

Christ be our light (StF 706) [LINK](#)

All my hope on God is founded (StF 455) [LINK](#)

Click [LINK's](#) to access YouTube clips of each song.



Zoom groups are meeting throughout lent (with opportunities to join group on any night of the week) and you'd be welcome to join a group if you'd like - it's not too late!

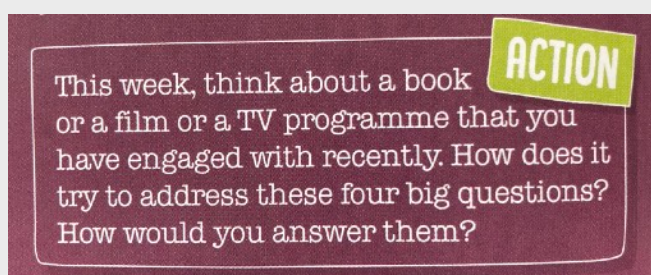
Easter Escape (Zoom) Room:

If you know of anyone, aged 10-16, in the life of our circuit that would enjoy and Easter 'Escape Room' on Zoom, Southwell Methodist Church are running one this Sunday evening, 21st March, at 7pm. The event is for young people aged 10-16 and the challenge is to solve the puzzles that lead to freedom! Help solve four mysteries that all relate to the resurrection of Jesus.



This week's Lent Action:

This week our Lenten reflections ask us to consider four big questions: 'Who are we?' 'What is wrong?' 'What's the solution?' and 'What's the future?' She argues that by listening for the echoes of those questions in our own culture, and ways in which culture tries to address them, we can find creative ways to share the story of God. This week's Lenten challenge is...



Families: by Katie Hibberts
families4SMC@gmail.com

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

The following activities accompany this week's Live Lent course that the circuit are following over Lent. We hope you find them helpful as you journey through Lent as a family.

Monday 22 March - In Athens (Part One) - Acts 17.16-18

Find Athens on a map. (If you haven't got a map, do an online search.) St Paul wanted the people who lived there to know about Jesus. He went to the busiest places to find people to tell. Do an online search for Street Pastors. They go to busy places to show people God's love and tell them about Jesus. Pray for them and the people they will meet tonight.

Tuesday 23 March - Who Are We? - Luke 7.36-50

Count the number of mirrors in your home. Make a banner that says, "Made in God's image". Put it over one of the mirrors. Each time you look in the mirror, remember that you are made in God's image and loved by God - just as you are.

Wednesday 24 March - What's Wrong? - Rom 8.19, 22-23

Think about some of the things that are wrong with the world. Use some chalk to write them either on a blackboard or outside on the path. Think of one thing you could do to help change the world. Pray "Gracious God, help us to work for your kingdom of justice and peace. Amen."

Thursday 25 March - What's the Solution? - John 12.31-33

We can show our love for God's world and begin to help change it by working with other Christians. Do an internet search for Christian charities that work for justice or environmental issues. How could you and your family get involved?

Friday 26 March - What's the Future? - 1 Cor 15.21-24

Sing (or find online) your favourite Easter songs or hymns. Listen out for the words which remind us that God is stronger even than death.

W/end 27-28 March - In Athens (Part Two) - Acts 17.32-34

This weekend go for a walk. Take photos of things which are signs of hope (like spring flowers, baby animals, a beautiful sunset). Create a slide show or montage from them. Choose a title for it which talks about the hope God gives us. Share it with someone from church.

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.