



TOGETHER



NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

It's Christian Aid Week!

Article by Andrew Ayers of Charles Street Methodist Church

What's Christian Aid Week to you? An annual donation perhaps or walking the streets delivering envelopes? For me it's a challenge, a confrontation with the dilemma of "Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger" (Snider, 1978), to which can be added "..... an Age of Climate Emergency and Environmental Crisis". For a Christian Aid service held at Charles Street on May 9th, I revisited a song written for Christian Aid Week 2017 by Martin John Nicholls and Paul Field (he of "A Celtic Blessing") called "The Song of Kingdom Come": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIXDg09IpMw>. This encapsulates what it could mean to usher in God's Kingdom. The chorus: "I have a voice, You have a voice, We have a voice and when we sing together, a line is drawn, and hope reborn; this is the song, the song of Kingdom Come." encourages us to collective action. I believe The Church collectively and individually needs to be more outspoken and engaged with social issues. I understand that the post-millennial generation is known as the "woke" generation, meaning "alert to social injustice". They are also alert to inconsistencies and contradictions. We are keen to evangelise the young, but how does The Church look to those on the outside? "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth....." But when?

It is 75 years since the formation of Christian Aid after WWII. To commemorate this ambiguous milestone, Christian Aid has published a book of meditations and prayers, called "Rage and Hope" (SPCK). Some of these are very raw expressions of the experiences of people on the frontline, the anger and frustrations as well as their indomitable hope. Worth a read.

Practically speaking, even if you've never written to a politician before, now is the time to let them know what matters to you/us. Some politicians (not all) possess chameleon-like properties, adapting to the perceived drift of public opinion. As Christians should we not be prominent features of the tapestry of debate to which our politicians must adapt? With the UK hosting the G7 summit of world leaders in June, you are invited to send a postcard of Newark or Southwell to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street, London, SW1A 2AA, with the following suggested text:

Dear Prime Minister,

I can't be in Cornwall for the G7, but I call on you to make this summit a success for climate justice.

Please:

Increase climate finance to the most vulnerable communities around the world.

Cancel unfair debts so that countries can tackle the climate crisis and other urgent priorities.

The futures of millions of people depend on a just finance deal at the G7 and COP26.

With best wishes,

(remember to leave your name and full address)

Our brothers and sisters around the world who are already living with the impacts of the climate crisis don't get a seat at the G7 table. Let's make sure they are not forgotten in the discussions.

Donations to Newark or Southwell Christian Aid groups using these links:

<https://www.justgiving.com/team/newarkCAgrp>.

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Southwell-Christian-Aid-Committee.



1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our online Circuit Service which this week led by Rev Peter Hibberts.

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 - 9th May 2021

A Name Above All Names

The Rt Rev Jan McFarlane reflects on the Ascension of Christ in live worship from Lichfield Cathedral with the cathedral choir singing Ascensiontide hymns and anthems.

4. Christian Aid Service

If you would like to see Charles Street's Christian Aid service from last Sunday it can be watched back at any time on the following link...

<https://youtu.be/1FYot4nMJ78>

HOLY SPIRIT - THE CHALLENGE

Our Sunday Sermon | Reflections from Acts 2:14-21 | Rev Peter Hibberts

I've said this before but perhaps this week's message should come with a health warning. Indeed, if we take the passages of the last few weeks and next week's seriously, we need to strap in. Do you like roller coasters? There is that part of a roller coaster where the attendant checks your hardness is secure and you know something exciting is about to happen. There's also that last chance to get off and walk away. Please don't! Change may be scary but if God leads it, it's good and for our good and the good of our world.

In the small groups I led this week I asked if people would prefer the ministry of Jesus, with us in the flesh, walking each day, or the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If I'm honest, I think I'd rather have Jesus, at times. But I think this is because I still haven't fully grasped the potential of God's Holy Spirit in our lives, in our church, in our communities, in our world. Jesus said in last week's passage that he needed to go because it is better for us that the Holy Spirit come than Jesus stay! As we celebrate the Ascension (Jesus being lifted up to heaven following his resurrection) let that sink in... The Holy Spirit is better for us as a ministry than Jesus himself! That's not to detract from Jesus' essential ministry but when he said, 'it is finished', on the cross, he was already preparing to hand the baton on! (If that's possible when both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are God!) I wonder if I prefer Jesus' ministry because I haven't fully grasped the power the Holy Spirit's ministry, or perhaps I'm a little afraid of that power.

We pick up here the challenge of the Holy Spirit in the words of Peter, in Acts chapter 2. (I'm aware that we've skipped the important part - Pentecost itself - and it may seem a funny way to do it but it'll be worth waiting for next week!) We have here possibly the most powerful evangelistic sermon ever preached by a mere human. Peter takes us back to where we started in our series, in Joel, where we found the promise but here he is standing at its fulfilment. The challenge of today's passage and the challenge of the Holy Spirit can be found repeated a few times in this passage in the words that Peter takes them back to. The key here that I want us to notice the word 'people' (and indeed other words used in the same way: 'sons and daughters', 'servants', 'men and women' etc.) Perhaps though, before I carry on with this point it's worth noticing what isn't said. What isn't said is that God will pour out *his* spirit on 'the church' or 'mission team' or 'the latest initiative' or even the 'minister'. The point I want to make is that we've perhaps got things the wrong way round in our church(es). I think we seem to want God to pour out *his* spirit on what we are doing but that's not what God does. In Ashley Cooper's 'ABLAZE' notes he refers to the words of Samuel Chadwick, former principal of Cliff College:

"The church is looking for better methods;
God is looking for better people.
He has staked his kingdom on people."

Chadwick goes on to say that we are too busy, as a church, looking for the right methods, plans, buildings, organisations etc. Bear in mind that he wrote those words at the end of the nineteenth century (over one hundred years ago). We haven't learned and if we're not careful, the closure of our buildings and a global pandemic will still not prise us away from our desire to continue in this folly.

As we sit and discuss the reopening (or not) of our buildings and possibly crave an old normal where we can sit in a 'pew', be the passive recipient of a few songs and a sermon and be led by someone else's pre-written prayer, perhaps we're missing what God really wants to do. Perhaps you're looking for your minister or local preachers to provide the act of worship you desire so that you can tick off church for that week when actually God wants to pour out *his* spirit on *you* directly!

Let me hit the pause button and dial back a little bit. I don't want to offend any of you or discourage you in any way, but this challenge has hit me right between the eyes. This isn't about worship styles, or choices of songs, or when we should gather, how we should gather. I'm not criticising any of those styles and choices. What I'm criticising is the effort I (as a minister and church leader)/we personally make to get the formula right and the time we spend talking about ensuring worship gets the right balance to keep everyone happy; the effort we make to create structures and initiatives. If I'm honest I'm both exhausted and disillusioned by it. Perhaps you are too.

The challenge of pentecost is to go direct. If Jesus chooses to ascend into heaven, ending his mission on Earth and all the strategies and evangelistic campaigns he engaged in; end his discipleship strategy with the twelve and even his healing ministry in order to make way for the Holy Spirit, then perhaps we should too. In the words of Chadwick again,

“The Holy Spirit does not come upon methods, but **upon women and men**. He does not anoint machinery, but **women and men**. He does not work through organisations, but **through women and men**. He does not dwell in buildings, but **in women and men**.”

I don't have answers for all the issues that face our church right now: finances and assessments, road maps, timetables of restrictions and speed of reopening except for a complete submission to the power of God in the Holy Spirit - then I believe the rest will follow! You see it is the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit we need more than anything...

“He indwells the Body of Christ, directs its activities, distributes its forces and empowers its members.” (Samual Chadwick)

That's the answer! **His indwelling directly in you!** St. Peter's sermon wasn't the most powerful evangelistic sermon ever preached because he found the right words, it was so because he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

This week I had a telephone call from a lovely woman from one of our churches who told me that she had never heard a minister talk about the Holy Spirit 'as much as' or 'in the way' I did. I apologise for that historical lacking. Those of us who have noticed God's Holy Spirit, first hand, have been failing you and our communities by not elevating the ministry of the Holy Spirit even beyond the Earthy ministry of Christ! We know salvation by the power of the cross and what Jesus achieved when he died and was raised, but Jesus knew that the abiding presence of God, the power of God was to be poured out on his church by the Holy Spirit. It's time we all opened up our hands, let go of our strivings and allowed God to pour out

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his spirit on us. Every one of us. **Come Holy Spirit.**

Prayer Space



Father, we ask You for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Pour out Your Spirit on us! Pour out Your Spirit on both men and women, young and old, slave and free.

Pour out Your Spirit!

Jesus, clean out our ears so we can hear you. Let us move in the gifts of the Spirit.

Pour out Your Spirit!

Holy Spirit, in this outpouring we are asking for a freedom from the mechanics that control, restrict and limit your works.

Pour out Your Spirit!

Holy Spirit, in this outpouring we are ask that you indwell the Body of Christ, direct its activities, distribute its forces and empower its members

Pour out Your Spirit! Amen.

A prayer to receive the Holy Spirit

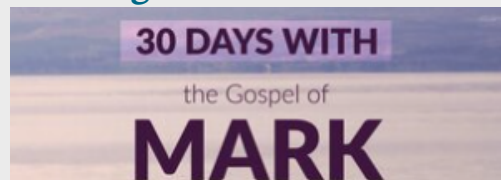
Heavenly Father I thank you for the gift of your son Jesus Christ and what he achieved on the cross to forgive my sins and make a pathway for me to receive you abiding presence in my heart. I open my palms to face heaven, to receive the gift of your Holy Spirit. I surrender to your plan and will for my life. Pour out your Holy Spirit on me.

Pour out Your Spirit! Amen.

EMAIL PRAYER CHAIN

If you would like to join a prayer chain and receive prayer requests or to submit a prayer request (with permission of the recipient) please get in touch with Colin Beckett
colin1244@gmail.com.
 It is for those of any church or none!

Coming Soon...



June each year in the Methodist Church is Bible month which is the church's opportunity to study one book of the Bible for a whole month and really squeeze all we can out of it!

This year we focus on the gospel of Mark and during those 30 days we will be using readings from the gospel of Mark at our services and running small groups in the midweek. For more information, to join a study group or even to receive the material to lead a study group, contact Rev Peter Hibberts by email or telephone: peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk (01636 812166).

Holy Spirit, you are welcome here [LINK](#)
 Breathe on me, Breath of God (StF 370) [LINK](#)
 Come down, O Love divine (StF 372) [LINK](#)
 Holy Spirit, rain down (StF 384) [LINK](#)
 Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me (StF 395) [LINK](#)
 Build Your Kingdom Here (Rend Collective) [LINK](#)

Bubble Church Questions



As things become safer, many of our Bubbles will be reopening. Would you like to be part of Covid-Safe face-to-face church? Join a bubble today by getting in touch with your minister.

1. Take a moment to think about what characterises church for you. Reflect on the structures and patterns that we have built over years. Which of these do you think it is time to let go of? Which of these could be becoming barriers to, distractions from or limitations on the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit?
2. "He indwells the Body of Christ, directs its activities, distributes its forces and empowers its members." (Samual Chadwick) Do you know God's in-dwelling, his abiding presence in you? If you do, spend some time in prayer for your fellow church members (perhaps by name) pray for a fresh (perhaps first) out-pouring of God's Holy Spirit on them.
3. If you have never noticed God's in-dwelling presence, never noticed the out-pouring of God's Holy Spirit, open your hands, still your heart and mind and ask God to pour out his holy Spirit on you. **'Come Holy Spirit.'**

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

Thy Kingdom Come



Ascension and Pentecost are on the horizon and so is the annual 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative. TKC is a call to prayer that this year will happen from 13th (this Thursday) - 23rd May. There are many opportunities to get involved in TKC as a church and as an individual. One central way is to follow the [Prayer Journal](#) which you can access online at thykingdomcome.global. If you would like a paper copy they are also available. There is also a wonderful 'Novena' which prays daily through the Psalms and encourages us to pray for 11 people specially during TKC. Get in touch for more details and watch this space for more TKC activities.

Families:
families4SMC@gmail.com

by Katie Hibberts

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Today we start by thinking about Ascension. Have a chat about the Ascension as a family. This can be really simple if you have young children, e.g. "this was when Jesus said good bye to his disciples and went back to Heaven, leaving them with special instructions to stay in Jerusalem." (Luke 24:36-53)
 Close your eyes and imagine you are one of the disciples; how does it feel to be waiting for something to happen? Explain that the disciples were waiting and ready to find out what was going to happen.
 Read the account of Pentecost together (one good version can be found in the Lion First Bible, Story 60 or the whole account can be found in the Bible in Acts 2).
 Afterwards talk about how it might feel to experience such an amazing event and ask them if they would want to go and do what the Holy Spirit was telling them to do.

Sometimes we are asked to do difficult things or make difficult decisions. The disciples also knew they had a difficult task ahead of them. That is why Jesus told them that a helper, God's Holy Spirit, would come. That same helper is still here and wants to help YOU! How amazing!!! The Holy Spirit helps us to be bold, to be brave and to dare to do what is right.

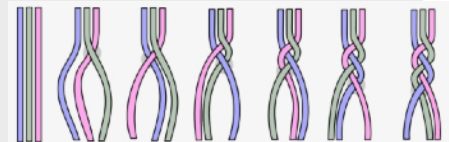
Craft Activity

For this activity you will need 4 strands of thread or wool. 1 strand represents God the Father, another represents God the Son (Jesus) and the third represents God the Holy Spirit. The 4th represents you!

Use the strands to make a plait. If you are a Christian or considering becoming one, your thread can be woven into the plait with the Holy Spirit thread, using them both as one cord.

Keep the plaited threads somewhere to remind you that you are woven together with the Holy Spirit (maybe they could be made into a bracelet or a book mark). If you weren't sure whether to include your thread, why not get in touch with us or ask a Christian friend or family member to pray with you asking God to reveal himself to you through his Holy Spirit.

This is a lovely song to listen to as you make your plaits: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iToIvcEHjM>



TOGETHER contributions needed!

As Nathan is on his sabbatical in the next few months, we need your input into TOGETHER more than ever. Could you write a front page article (around 500 words) for one of our editions? Perhaps you could contribute a prayer, an encouraging or even a challenging piece. **Perhaps you can share an experience of God the Holy Spirit that you've had in your life!**

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.