

# TOGETHER

[NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk](http://NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk)



**A**fter 3 months on sabbatical I am back! I have been deeply blessed by my time away and without doubt it has been a time of refreshment and rest. I believe I return to circuit ministry re-energized and refocused, ready for the challenges and opportunities that are before us. I am thankful to those who have

specifically supported the circuit over the past 3 months, especially to my ministerial colleagues Peter and Peter, to Revd David Gibson and Revd Colin Membery, and to all of you who have been supporting me with your prayers.

I am also thankful to the Methodist Church for the gift of sabbatical, after nearly 8 years of active ministry (5 in Stafford and nearly 3 in Newark & Southwell) it was incredibly helpful to stop and to honestly look at my ministry and my leadership. It helped me to process further all that has happened (especially over the past 18 months) and has enabled me to understand both myself and my leadership better. I believe that it has been a time of considerable development and formation and I look forward to putting some of the things that I have learnt into practice.

The course *Leading in anxious times* introduced me to Family Systems Theory, this was first applied to my family of origin and then to my ministry setting. At the heart of Family Systems Theory is self-differentiation; staying connected and present within the system whilst being distinct and a non-anxious presence. The journey of self-differentiation is seen to be tied in with discipleship, becoming truly what God has called me to be. Jesus is the best example of someone who was self-differentiated.

I also did some reading, though not quite as much as I had intended. However, what I did read has stirred change within me that I am keen to put into practice especially choosing courage over comfort, being more physically present and ensuring that there is intentional space for reflection and reading to nurture sabbath principles.

Throughout my sabbatical I have taken the opportunity to process much of what I was reading and reflecting on by jogging around Newark and going for some walks. I have really valued quality time with the family especially the opportunity to alternate bedtime routines with the children.

I am seeing my return from sabbatical as a new beginning and an ideal opportunity to refocus and do ministry differently. I am aware that I have developed some unhelpful habits and I am looking to maintain a more sustainable approach to ministry. I think this summarises it:

Time for quiet and reflection,  
 time for people,  
 time for reading, growing, nurturing,  
 time for exercise, for music, for family.

Choosing courage over comfort.  
 Nurturing sabbath.  
 Remembering call.

My sabbatical was a very personal experience but I believe that it will deeply impact my ministry. I have tried to be open and honest in what I have shared as going forward this is what we all need to be. I pray that individually and collectively by God's grace and through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we can become the people and the Church that God is calling us to be.



## What are you watching and waiting for?

Online Circuit Service Sermon | Psalm 130 | Rev Peter Hibberts

It feels like a real limbo stage at the moment. Told to lockdown we looked forward to being unlocked. Lockdown ended we were told to restrict: masks, socially distance, keep to six, stay outdoors, no singing in church. Then as restrictions are lifted we're told cases are rising and instead we must exercise social responsibility - whatever that means; and many have been shielding since before we locked down, they've never been 'free'. For many this has been the longest night ever. What we're waiting for is to feel safe but no one can announce that. It depends who you are, how you feel, what your circumstances are. The idea of a universal freedom day was always a red herring.

I was personally looking forward to the re-opening of church, then to the lifting of restrictions on worship (being able to sing). I'm still looking forward to being able to mingle together - have tea and coffee at church. But in one sense I'm waiting for church unity. Whilst we have congregations meeting separately, simultaneously, I think we're still disunited. Whilst folk are not here because they don't feel safe yet, we're still disunited.

We've done a lot of waiting. Two weeks ago my eldest daughter's school bubble burst, a COVID case in her class, they were all sent home to self-isolate for 10 days. She waited. She planned her escape - a sleepover on the night she was freed! Then on the day she was freed, we received a call to say our 11 year old's bubble had burst more isolation in the family! (And Eleanor couldn't have friends round despite being personally free.) More waiting.

Psalm 130's analogy is, I think, a wonderful one for this liminal space, this limbo, this waiting game. It talks of 'watchmen'. The Hebrew word translated "watchman" means "one who looks out," "one who spies," or "one who watches." Watchmen were guards responsible for protecting towns and military installations from surprise enemy attacks and other potential dangers. Ancient Israelite cities often stationed watchmen on high walls or in watchtowers. Their job was to keep watch.

It must have been a nervy job, constantly on edge - what's coming, is it threat or blessing? No relaxing, no closing your eyes, no stopping or looking away. Have you felt that way? At the beginning we watched 5pm briefings daily - keen eyed, attentive. But then the days became weeks...months - even the BBC stopped broadcasting them. I wonder if part of the fatigue we may feel is from the watching. How long could you be a watchman before your attention would waver?

As an undergraduate I had many campus jobs, one was a pool lifeguard. Fun swim was engaging. Was anyone running, jumping in, diving where they shouldn't...? The worst were the trim swim. Lanes of swimmers going up and down, up and down, up and down... How do you stay alert at that point? It's like hypnosis! I profiled the swimmers - age, risk factor...pacing up and down, counting the bricks in the wall opposite, the tiles in the deep and shallow end...there's only so many things you can do to stay alert. Eventually, you were left watching the clock - longing for the end of the shift! Are you a good watcher - a good waiter?

We've recently had a puppy. You may have heard. He's named Wesley (good name for a manse dog). My children are not good waiters. How many sleep until we get him, Daddy? 14, 13, 12... Now we wait for his

### 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

More and more folk are attending face-to-face services but we're also committed to those who can't yet, so we changing our Zoom coffee time. From July 4th the coffee time will be run by Richard Miller and will not just involve Sunday's but also some midweek sessions. If you'd like more details and to join the distribution list please contact Richard by email: [richardjmiller17@sky.com](mailto:richardjmiller17@sky.com).

There is also a weekly coffee time at 3pm on a Monday run by Charles Street but open to all, email Mel Watson for more details: [mellwatson42@gmail.com](mailto:mellwatson42@gmail.com).

### 3. Radio Services

**BBC Radio 4** (Also [online](#).)  
08:10am - 8th August 2021

#### Human living and stories.

Led by Rev Richard Frazer of Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh, at the start of the city's festivals. Richard explores the wonder and enchantment to be found in human living and stories. With Rev Ruth Halley and Gillian Cooper.

### 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.)

second jabs so we can take him on walks (he's self isolating until he's double jabbed!)

How much longer can you wait for an end to this pandemic? For a feeling of safety. What it doing to your mental health as you wait. Perhaps you're watching the clock. The trouble is, there's no clock - 'it's not about dates - it's about data', we're told! That's probably true for you - you'll feel safe when you hear cases drop, infection rates drop, herd immunity, vaccination rates at 90%, lower numbers of cases in your community. There's no clock to watch.

Actually for an OT watchman there was no clock to watch for, for the end of their shift. In the deep, impenetrable darkness they could simple watch for the morning - the glimmers of light on the horizon. Can you imagine watching for that? How dark does it feel to you right now? How light has it become? Perhaps you are still in the depths and just want to cry out as the Psalmist does in verse 1.

The Psalms are wonderful for this, walking us through every season of the soul in a faithful example; deeply honest and completely God centred, wonderfully descriptive - especially of the despair of the soul, and yet they bring us the opposite of despair - hope! Psalm 130 is described as, 'A testimony of trust in the Lord.' It's post exilic - Israel was scattered, not together, not united and so they long for, wait for, watch for when they will be reunited as a nation. Sound familiar? And what do they do as they wait? They cry out to God for they know that best of all, God is with them. It's a prayer for mercy. It's penitent and we too would do well to be penitent for what we've made the church, perhaps God is using this time to turn us to him, challenging us to change, to forge a new normal, to look back to him and worship him in spirit and in truth. But there is forgiveness. Israel will find a way back - God is not finished with them yet!

And we wait. But we don't wait in despair for we know that the morning will come. The certainty for the watchman is that his shift will end! The sun will rise, the morning will come. Not just that but for Israel, there is still his word, in which they can hope. The word that tells them that God has a plan for them, that the world will be saved through a messiah from their nation - one to save all humanity. A future.

What I want you to hear amidst this, in the words of the Psalmist, is the rallying call to faith in God no matter how dark it feels, how long it's been, how long it seems...

"O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem."

I know it's hard, but your wait should be expectant. You can wait knowing that your wait is not futile. Cry out, declare those promises, for God is listening, God is sovereign, God is powerful and God is coming.

This nation waited and the Messiah came, he came in an unlikely form, a baby, in a manger. He came in an unlikely way, a suffering servant, he came through unlikely events, death on a cross. But he came for you and me and when he did he declared, it is finished! He declared the morning, he declared the light, he declared freedom, he declared safety. He declared victory. So hold on because morning's coming.

## While you watch and wait

What promises of scripture are holding you in the darkness?

God is all you need... "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

Matthew 6:26

God has got you... "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

You are not alone... "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39

Rewards are coming... "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded." 2 Chronicles 15:7

God is working for your good... ""For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

—  
Creator God, we know you are sovereign, in control.

You are all we need. You sustain your creation, the birds of the air have all they need.

You are with us wherever we find ourselves, whatever our season of the soul. Give us strength when we are surrounded by our fears and anxieties.

Wonderful Saviour, because of your death and resurrection there is now nothing that can separate us from you, may we, in our darkest times remember that you are with us.

Holt Spirit, we look for your movement, lead us in spirit and in truth. Reveal your plans to us that we might join you in building your kingdom.

**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](mailto:colin1244@gmail.com).  
It is for those of any church or none!*

## Circuit Vision Team Report

Have you read the Circuit Vision Team report yet? We'll soon be looking get your responses to it. Look out for our questions coming soon - and get in touch with your Circuit Meeting Rep to have your say! The report is available to all (from the circuit website: [CLICK HERE](#)). Please pray for our circuit and if you'd like to discuss anything, do get in touch!

[Peter.Hibberts@Methodist.Org.UK](mailto:Peter.Hibberts@Methodist.Org.UK)



## Songs...

When the music fades (StF) [LINK](#)

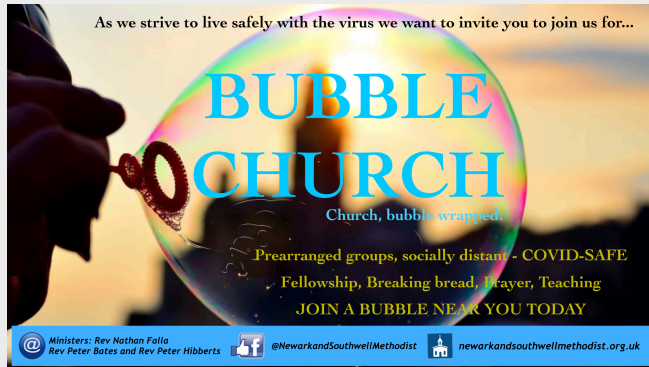
What a faithful God (StF) [LINK](#)

Living Hope (StF) [LINK](#)

Thine be the glory (StF) [LINK](#)

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

## Bubble Church Questions



**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. What's the longest you have had to wait? How did you cope with the waiting time?
2. What is the thing you have been waiting for the most during C-19, what are you still waiting for?
3. What do you find the hardest about waiting?
4. Read Psalm 130, aloud if you can. How did reading Psalm 130 make you feel about your current situation?
5. What has given you hope during times of waiting?
6. Have a look at the passages on the right of page 2. Which of these gives you greatest comfort during times of waiting?
7. Please pray for all our churches in these challenging times.

## Global Hunger Appeal

More than 41 million people in 43 countries are teetering on the brink of famine. Without immediate action, women, men and children will lose their lives.

This is a global hunger emergency. The Covid-19 pandemic, violent conflict and the climate crisis have all increased global hunger. Now, people in countries including South Sudan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Burkina Faso are facing the very real threat of starvation.

Families desperately need food and clean water to survive. If we act now, we can prevent unnecessary deaths.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION](#) or visit [ChristianAid.org.uk](http://ChristianAid.org.uk)

4-8-21

## Next face-to-face opportunities across the circuit...

See below for the next face-to-face opportunities in your local church or churches around the circuit - this week's service are shown in red.

**Balderton: August 8th, 10:30am, Ms Bridget Castle**

**Barnbygate: August 15th, 3pm Joint Service at Hawtonville**

**Charles Street: August 8th, 10:30am Local Arrangement**

**Charles Street: August 8th, 6pm Rev Nathan Falla (Holy Communion)**

**Collingham: August 8th, 10:45am Mrs Melanie Ward**

**Elston: August 8th, 10:45am Rev Gaynor Hall**

**Hawtonville: August 15th, 3pm Nathan Falla (Songs of Praise)**

**Long Bennington: August 8th, 10:30am Rev Peter Bates**

**North End: August 8th, 6pm Rev Kevin Hart**

**North Muskham: August 8th, 10:30am John Hucknall (Holy Communion)**

**Southwell: August 8th, 10am Rev Peter Hibberts (Picnic Church)**

**Southwell: August 8th, 4pm Rev Peter Hibberts (MWB Holy Communion)**

**Sutton on Trent: August 8th, 10:30am - Jenny Hardy**

## Services for the August

July - August 2021		8th August	15th August	22nd August	29th August
Balderton	10:30 am	Castle	Hart HC	Bates	Dalby
Barnbygate	11:00 am		Joint Service at Hawtonville 3pm		
Charles Street	10:30 am	LA	Cozens	LA	Falla HC
	6:00 pm	Falla HC			
Collingham	10:45 am	Ward T	Bates HC	West	Bates
Elston	10:45 am	Hall		Hardy	
Hawtonville	11:00 am		Falla SoP / 3pm		
Long Bennington	10:30 am	Bates	Falla HC		Gascoyne
North End	6:00 pm	Hart	Bates	LA	Falla
North Muskham	10:30 am	Hucknall T / HC		Winnington	
Southwell	10:00 am	Hibberts PicC		Hibberts	
	4:00 pm	Hibberts Bubble HC		Hart Bubble	
Sutton-on-Trent	10:30 am	Hardy		Morley HC	

## TOGETHER IS CHANGING...

TOGETHER is ready for a rethink. Should we still send out weekly? What should we include? Could we have more information specific to local churches? What elements don't we need? Do let us know so that we can get it right...

If you have a view on the future of the newsletter, please do get in touch (email Rev Peter at [peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk](mailto:peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk)).

If it is to continue, we need to find a way for it to be sustainable. This may well include having a circuit editorial team who can put the newsletter together. Without this, it may not be possible to continue. If you can volunteer, please do get in touch.