



TOGETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Discerning the way forward together

Update from the Circuit Vision Team | Written by Rev Peter Hibberts

At the June 22nd Circuit Meeting the Circuit Vision Team brought a report on the work it had carried out on behalf of the circuit. In the report we brought a proposed Circuit Purpose Statement, Circuit Values and the beginning of our thoughts on the direction the Circuit may take in the coming months and years. We asked that your circuit rep take away this report, share it with you, the members of your respective churches, and return to the September meeting with some feedback. I hope you've had sight of the report by some means - if not, please seek it out and read it! (The full report is available to all on the circuit website: [CLICK HERE](#))

At the latest meeting of the Circuit Vision Team we felt that this important work needs room to be done well. Therefore, Nathan will be calling an Extraordinary Circuit Meeting on **Monday October 11th at 7:30pm** with the sole purpose of discussing our future direction. We hope that, in preparation for this meeting, your circuit rep will find suitable ways of canvassing your opinions on the report and the future of the circuit, indeed we wrote to your circuit rep last week to ask them to do this. I hope that your rep will find a way of getting touch with you but just in case they can't you may want to get in touch with them (if you're unsure of who your rep is, you can ask your minister.)

We propose that, in whatever way is appropriate to your particular church, you consider the following six questions:

1/. What is your response to the proposed Circuit Purpose Statement?

In God's strength, as a family of churches in Newark and Southwell, our circuit encourages, excites and enables people to deepen their faith in Christ, offer it to all and work with communities for transformation.

The report challenges us to consider how we might gather together across our circuit and scatter to fulfil our mission, the work we feel God is leading us in.

2/. What do you think we, as a circuit, should gather together to do/achieve? What do you think is best done scattered in our various localities?

3/. What are the biggest challenges facing your church at present? How could your church be supported in facing and overcoming these challenges by the collective talents and resources of the circuit?

4/. What questions does the report raise?

5/. What ideas/opportunities are there in your locality for the three priorities (partnering in mission, supporting one another, journeying in discipleship) to be pursued?

6/. What should we stop doing, as a circuit, to free up resources to focus on our aims?

The next step, following the Extraordinary Circuit Meeting in October, will be to move from Vision to strategy and try to put more details and concrete ideas into our vision. Your feedback will greatly help the Circuit Vision Team in this and if you would like to join that team moving forward into the next stage we'd love to hear from you. Also, if you have any further questions for the team or more general feedback, please do get in touch with me (peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk or 01636 812166) and I will share your thoughts and questions with the team.

Please continue to pray that God will lead us forward!



What are you asking God for?

Online Circuit Service Sermon | 1 Kings 3:5-14 | Rev Peter Hibberts

I remember, from my days as a primary school child, hearing many assemblies about Solomon and his great wisdom. Solomon was famous for many things. He was famous for building the first temple in Jerusalem. (Not the same one that Jesus would have walked in which was built years later.) Israel was at the height of its power and influence at this time (So much so that around this passage we have Solomon marrying a daughter of the Pharaoh who was presumably giving his daughter to produce an alliance with a powerful nation.) He was famous for having many wives in fact! He was famous for his wealth, his riches and his finery. (Jesus refers to Solomon's glory in how he was dressed.) But he was perhaps most famous for his wisdom.

If you were face to face with God and he said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." How would you reply? It's a bit like the genie in Aladdin - rubbing the lamp and getting three wishes. The world of fables is littered with stories of people who've had such opportunities and made the wrong choices; King Midas springs to mind - he asked for everything he touched to turn to gold and regretted it when he embraced his own daughter and she was turned to gold!

We're in a difficult time as a church. What would you ask God for our church (either your local church or wider)? Perhaps you'd ask for certain styles of worship, opportunities, the songs you enjoy, the sermons to be shorter (don't respond to that!)

Solomon already had a lot but there were many specific things he could have asked for: greater riches, military success, even happiness or something deeper. The passage tells us, in the NRSV, that he asked for, "a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

I have to say, it's a master stroke! It's this, perhaps, that leads us to believe that he had great wisdom. A discerning heart is, in one sense, a request for wisdom!

What amazing motives though. It's not selfish. It's not about what he wants from it, it's how he can better serve God!

If our motives were the same, they were about making church the best vessel for God's blessing, the best environment to share God's love and disciple us, what would we ask for? We could ask for a better building perhaps, more money in the accounts, even more folk to take on some of the roles in church life that we need folk for. All very practical and they could be asked for with the right motives, I guess. But each of those simply solves a current issue. Solomon doesn't ask God to solve any one of his current issues, he chooses something that is much more future proof.

The classic answer to the wish genie and wish question that I posed earlier is to wish for more wishes. (It's usually against the rules or it certainly was against the Robin Williams rules in the Disney version of Aladdin!) But I think this is exactly what Solomon does! He doesn't ask for a specific thing, he asks for a personality change to make him able to discern and potentially be part of solving all of the other issues himself - he makes himself part of God's plan rather than expecting God to wave a magic wand and solve all the

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

Why not join the 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.

3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also [online](#).)
08:10am - 22nd August 2021

Church Adventures.

Poet Jay Hulme explores St Nicholas' Church in Leicester, the building, the history and the people who make up the community.

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.)

Zoom Study Group Returns

The Monday night, online (Zoom) study group will return on Monday 6th September.

The group are half way through the eight-week prayercourse.org but you can easily join at this stage and if you like to access what's been missed, you can catch-up by heading to the website where the videos from all of the sessions can be found and watched back at any time.

For more info or to join contact peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk

problems for him!

Actually, I don't think it's a very good translation that calls it a 'discerning heart' or even 'wisdom' as the Good News Translation says. If you look at other translations it's referred to as an 'understanding' heart, but that's still not a great translation in my opinion; I'm not really sure why the translators go for those words.

I'm no Hebrew scholar but if you look at the Hebrew that the old manuscripts of this passage carry it's the word shaw-mah (šāma') which *does* mean to understand when referring to language but *more often* it means to hear! Actually when you look at the original Hebrew **what Solomon asks for is a 'hearing' heart.**

What Solomon is really asking for is that he might follow God more closely. Solomon is already wise beyond his years (I'm led to believe that he's only 20 years old when he comes to the throne and very inexperienced) he must have been petrified by the thought of ruling Israel!

To be honest, with only 5 years of ministry under my belt, at a time when the church is in crisis - not just our local churches but much wider (goodness the church in the UK has been in decline for many years and the global pandemic has made it much harder) I perhaps know how Solomon feels. Maybe you too feel the enormity of the task ahead of us. Maybe you've held positions of responsibility and service previous to C-19 and now they feel too heavy - how can we possibly move forward?

But the overwhelmed Solomon leads Israel in the time of Israelite history that it is most powerful, most influential, most glorious and perhaps more importantly, post fall and pre-Christ, the closest point in history for God and humanity; God and God's people Israel.

If only, at this time in our church's journey, we could have a 'hearing heart'. To know where God is leading us. Our Leadership Team to have a hearing heart, our ministers to have a hearing heart, our members to have a hearing heart, our preachers and worship leaders to have a hearing heart, everyone in every position of service - each one of us to have a hearing heart. But there's even more to shaw-mah (šāma') that Hebrew word than just hearing. It also means:

to give heed, to consent, agree, to grant request, **to listen to, yield to, to obey, be obedient.**

Folks, what we need now...what our church needs...what our community needs from the church...what our nation needs of the church, what our world needs of the church, what your families, your friends your work colleagues need of you is **a hearing heart turned towards God; to listen to God and obey.**

How do we do that? Well I can give you some stock answers - to pray and spend time in silence waiting on God to speak, to study the Bible, to talk with each other about what God is doing in small groups (we discern better together, not when we isolate ourselves and try to do it our own way) and study groups to listen together, but as important as all these things are - and I think they are very important - indeed we need to do more of them. Actually, I think we need to do what Solomon did. **We need to ask God to give us the hearing heart.**

Why not do that now; ask God to reveal himself to us, that we will

While you watch and wait

Gracious God,

Above all things grant us a hearing heart. We lift up to you our church, our circuit, our congregations, our ministers, our local preachers, our leadership teams, church stewards, church councils and every member. We lift before you every person in every position of service and those who are contemplating their part in your church. Give each of us a hearing heart that you may reveal yourself to us, that we may notice what you are doing in our lives and the lives of our friend, colleagues; family, community, national and world. That we may join you in your mission and yield to your plan.

May we each, even in these difficult times, hear your call, yield, obey and glorify you.

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!

Environment Awareness Week at Newark St. Mary's Church

Where?

St. Mary Magdalene Parish Church in Newark

When?

22nd - 28th August 11.00am - 3.00pm

What?

Sunday 22nd - Climate focussed worship

Monday 23rd - Series of half hour talks

Tuesday 24th - A number of short climate related films

Wednesday 25th - Communion and Climate prayers

Thursday 26th - Children's Activity Day

We hope this is an initiative by St.Mary's, Newark, we can all support.

In addition, Newark Quakers will be holding an exhibition to draw attention to the Climate Crisis at the Quaker Centre in Queens Court on Saturday September 18th, Wednesday September 22nd and Saturday September 26th.

What could we do in the run-up to COP26?

"We are all in the same storm but not all in the same boat."

More information from Andrew Ayre:
strewb@phonecoop.coop

Songs...

The splendour of the King (StF 15) [LINK](#)

Be Still (StF 20) [LINK](#)

God in my living (StF 497) [LINK](#)

Love divine all loves excelling (StF 503) [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. If you were face to face with God and he said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." How would you reply?
2. We're in a difficult time as a church. What would you ask God for our church (either your local church or wider)?
3. If our motives were the same as Solomon's (making the church the best vessel for God's blessing, the best environment to share God's love and disciple us) what would we ask for?
4. How do you hear God? (Pray and spend time in silence waiting on God to speak? Study the Bible? Talk with other Christians?)
5. 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

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 22nd, 10:30am, Rev Peter Bates

Barnbygate: See September plan

Charles Street: August 22nd, 10:30am Local Arrangement

Charles Street: August 22nd, 6pm Rev Peter Bates

Collingham: August 22nd, 10:45am Mrs tracey West

Elston: August 22nd, 10:45am Mrs Jenny Hardy

Hawtonville: See September plan

Long Bennington: August 29th, 10:30am Mr Ted Gascoyne

North End: August 22nd, 6pm Local Arrangement

North Muskham: August 22nd, 10:30am Mrs Jennifer Winnington

Southwell: August 22nd, 4pm Rev Kevin Hart

Sutton on Trent: August 22nd, 10:30am - Rev Barrie Morley (Holy Communion)

Services for 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	Hibberts	Hart Bubble	Adams
Sutton-on-Trent	10:30 am	Hardy		Morley HC	

TOGETHER IS UNDER REVIEW...

One suggestion for the TOGETHER newsletter is to change the frequency to fortnightly or monthly and to include a local page which could be produced by local churches. Could you take on a local church page on a fortnightly or monthly basis? What information would you like to see in TOGETHER? How frequently do you think we could/should distribute?

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.

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).