



TOGETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

New Beginnings for us and our climate?

Revd Nathan Falla

Happy New Year! You may think that I am four months early to begin with that greeting, but I can assure you that I am not in a time vortex and certainly do not think we are already in January! The 1st September in the Methodist Church marks the beginning of a new Connexional year, and is a time of new beginnings and new ministries.

For me personally it marks the beginning of my ninth year in ministry and my fourth year here in the Newark & Southwell Circuit. It is a time when I am particularly conscious of the people that I have travelled with especially as I was reminded of my very first welcome service and first Sunday in circuit when some photos appeared in my Facebook memories.

September is often a time of new beginnings as the schools return and activities resume after the summer break. This September it is particularly pertinent to talk about new beginnings as across the circuit various activities are cautiously re-starting or new projects are commencing. September is a time to look forward in hope to what the year may bring.

September also marks Creation Tide and the Circuit online service for Sunday (premiering at 10.30am) will be part of Climate Sunday with the National Climate Sunday service taking place at Glasgow Cathedral and online at 4pm. Congregations across the country are being encouraged to make a commitment to greater action to address climate change in their own place of worship and community and to use their voice to tell politicians we want a cleaner, greener, fairer future at the heart of plans agreed during COP26.

There is no planet B, and looking after God's world is an integral part of loving God, loving self, and loving neighbour. You may like to sign *The Time is Now Declaration* which calls on the Prime Minister to lead the UK towards a healthier, greener, fairer future. It recognises that we can build back better together if we:

- Unleash a clean energy revolution that boosts jobs across the UK, making our transport, power and housing fit for the future
- Protect, restore and expand our green and wild spaces; allowing nature to thrive, taking carbon from the air and boosting the nation's health.
- Leave no one behind by increasing support to those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change at home and abroad.

You may also consider becoming an Eco Church! We all have a part to play as we make our new beginning and look after our world.

Every blessing

Nathan



Rest for the Earth

Our Sunday Sermon | Reflections from Leviticus 25:1-12 | Revd Nathan Falla



The start of my Saturday sometimes begins with parkrun in Newark at Sconce and Devon Park, with the finish line and funnel being at the top of the hill going towards Rumbles, sometimes we finish to the left and other times to the right. It changes from time to time to ensure that the grass does not get too worn down and the area

doesn't get damaged after it has been trampled on by often over 200 finishers.

In the last online service I took, I preached about the importance of us taking time to rest. Today I would like us to focus on rest for the Earth and our reading from Leviticus chapter 25 offers us lots of food for thought. Leviticus is seen as a book of laws or instructions and here we have instructions about the sabbath year and the year of jubilee focussing on giving rest to the Earth.

Here, the Lord speaks to Moses on Mount Sinai, the normal place where the Tent of Meeting was located, and Moses is given clear instructions to sow the fields, prune the vineyards and gather the crops for 6 years and then for the seventh year to leave the land unworked and let nature take its course. John Goldingay explains: "One of their underlying assumptions is that the land belongs to God. People recognize that the week belongs to God by holding themselves back from one day in seven, and that offspring belong to God by dedicating the first fruits of the womb, and that the harvest belongs to God by giving tithes, and they recognize that the land belongs to God by keeping off it for one year in seven. The idea would be scary. How can one expect to survive on that basis? As happens with those other observances, God promises that they will be provided for. They can't treat the Sabbath year's growth as a regular harvest or store some of it away for the future, but it will provide them with enough to eat. God does not promise that they will do as well as their neighbours but does promise that they will have enough."

I loved history at school and took it to degree level. One of the things that I distinctly remember being taught in secondary school is the feudal system and crop rotation; where land is divided up and used to grow different crops each year with part of the land being left fallow. This rotated so there were always 2 plots that were growing and 1 plot left fallow. Well the Israelites didn't practice crop rotation but the idea of the sabbath year enables the land to recover. How much does the Earth need to recover?

Leviticus 25 also introduces us to the year of jubilee. Following seven sabbaths of years (49 years) there was to be another year the 50th year where the reset button is pressed, and freedom is proclaimed throughout all the land. God the Creator has set a pattern that enables restoration and recreation. God is concerned with new beginnings and we have been offered a new beginning through Jesus. But I believe that God also offers

1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our online Circuit Service which this week is led by Revd Nathan Falla.

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 people are attending face-to-face services but we're also committed to those who can't yet, so we have changed our Zoom coffee time. If you'd like more details and to join the distribution list please contact Richard by email: 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.

3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also [online](#).)
08:10am – 5th September

Back to the Square Mile

The Square Mile's Christian community has been working hard to welcome the thousands of workers from the banking and financial services sector back to this historic patch of the City. Worship is from All Hallows by the Tower and is led by the Area Dean and Vicar, the Revd Katherine Hedderly.

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.)

restoration and healing to the Earth, that the world may be whole. Romans 8 gives the picture of the Earth groaning, longing for that new beginning.

The pandemic, as difficult as it has been, has to a point enabled the Earth to rest. Travel was greatly restricted which in turn reduced pollution, and improved the situation to a point. But it is all too easy to revert to old patterns when long-lasting change is required.

It is important to do what we can to care for God's world, after all we are called to be stewards of creation, it is part of our discipleship! So how can we live out some of the principles contained in Leviticus 25. I think one way that we can enable the Earth to rest is to make small changes. Small changes can make a big difference! We can make small changes; we can reduce our dependence on single-use plastic, use bees wax wrapping instead of cling film, bamboo toothbrushes instead of plastic, buy local and seasonal produce, ensure that our energy is from a renewable source.

When we moved to Newark, we were surprised about the amount of things that we could not recycle, so you can imagine therefore our delight when Co-op stores started to recycle soft plastic; if you can scrunch it up tight and it pings back it is likely to be soft plastic, just make sure it is clean. I also love the concept of re-wilding and have been struck by the natural beauty of parts of local parks which have been purposefully left to become wild meadows.

As good as the small things are, we have an opportunity for big change and it is just months away. COP26 in November is going to be critical. Scientists have warned that if global warming is not kept below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, the consequences are irreversible. At COP26, for the first time each nation will be asked to set a date for achieving net-zero carbon emissions. This is a more powerful objective than previous agreements, as net zero sets out a vision for carbon neutrality. Governments are also required to make explicit pledges about what they will achieve by 2030.

It is a sad truth that those most impacted by climate change are in some of the poorest countries. Now is the time to call for climate justice, now is the time to speak up, now is the time to make a difference. In a spirit of sabbath and jubilee let us work and pray that the Earth, God's world gets the rest that it needs.

Sustaining God in this year of turmoil and challenge when we have learned already that more change is possible than we wanted to cope with we ask for the liberation of your joy in all times and all circumstances and we give thanks for your solidarity even before we grasp the tasks ahead.

Strengthen us to speak boldly and with our fear that we might actually be heard: Laugh with us as we reassess what we held to be wisdom; to enjoy the humility the urgency the pride in your friendship; for all we knew has changed except your faithfulness and your love spoken in flesh for the Earth. Amen.

Prayer Space

Powerful yet loving God,
creative yet dependable,
sustaining yet flexible,
above and beyond yet incarnational.

You have given yourself to your world
through creation
and you have given yourself to humankind
in the person of Jesus Christ.

We cannot thank and praise you enough,
but neither can we say "sorry" enough,
for spoiling both creation and incarnation
through our indifference and greed.
Through our pollution and wastefulness.
Through our carelessness and our pride.

We ask for you Holy Spirit to work in us,
to work in our communities,
and to work on the world stage.
So that all many not be lost,
and so creation may be saved
and redeemed once again. Amen.

*Rev'd Jacqui Horton
Superintendent of the Central Norfolk Circuit*

To work with God we need to learn
each nuance of this earth,
the way the planet shifts and moves,
its treasures, all their worth.
We search out every finite source,
yet sometimes lack the care
to measure out just what we need,
to leave some resting there.

And now we start to comprehend
not just this worldly wealth,
but how its use can build, enhance,
or damage earthly health;
not just the strength of humankind,
but climate's synergy,
the balance on which life depends
for its vivacity.

So now we learn to understand
the calling of our race,
to stand in watch, to call and act,
within each time and place;
not just renewing white bleached bones
or raising dead to life,
but clothing every word with love,
where hatred once was rife.

Rev'd Andrew Pratt

May God bless us
with wonder at creation's glory.
May God bless us
with fury at creation's spoiling.
May God bless us
with courage at this critical hour.
And may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
rest upon us and on all creation,
this day and for the future to come. Amen

Hymns and worship songs

Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service:

For the beauty of the earth – SOF 112, StF 102

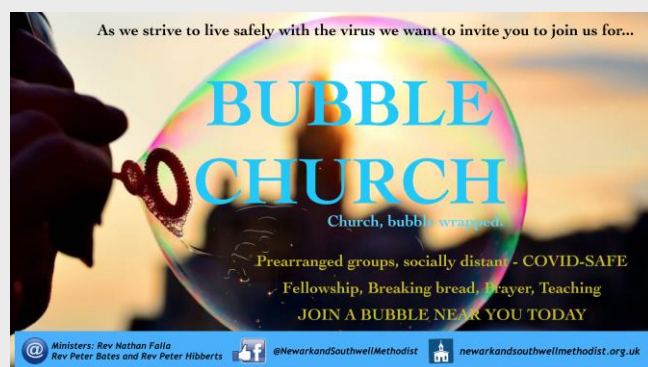
From the highest of heights – SOF 1775, StF 48

Beauty for brokenness – SOF 664, StF 693

Sent by the Lord am I – StF 239

Please click on the song title to access YouTube clip 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.

The following questions are designed to get you thinking and, if you're involved in Bubble Church talking about the topic!

1. What examples have you seen of giving land rest? How did you react when you saw it?
2. What challenges you as you reflect upon the passage?
3. What small changes have you tried, or will you make to reduce your use of single use plastics?
4. How will you speak up as COP26 approaches? Will you sign *The Time is Now* declaration?
5. Have you heard of Eco Church? Do you think this is something that your church could consider?

TOGETHER IS CHANGING

TOGETHER is ready for a rethink. Should we still send it 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 Revd Peter at 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.

Face-to-face opportunities for worship this coming Sunday 5th September across the Circuit...

Balderton

10.30am Revd Kevin Hart (Holy Communion)

Barnbygate

10.30am Joint Service at Hawtonville

Charles Street

10.30am Mrs Jenny Hardy (Songs of Praise)

6pm Revd Nathan Falla

Collingham:

10.45am Revd Peter Bates

Elston (on 12th September)

10.45am Revd David Gibson (Holy Communion)

Hawtonville

10.30am Revd Nathan Falla (Joint service with Barnbygate)

Long Bennington

10.30am Mrs Liz Blatherwick

North End

6pm Mr Ian Mathews

North Muskham

2pm Revd Peter Hibberts (Bubble Church)

Southwell

10am Mrs Melanie Ward

4pm Revd Peter Hibberts

Sutton-on-Trent

10.30am Revd Peter Hibberts (Village Festival)

The full printed preaching plan will be available at your local church, please do pick up a copy if you would like one.

SAVE THE DATE

A Celebration of Local Preaching

A circuit service to include the re-affirmation of Local Preachers and the admission of Tracey West & Val Fowles as Local Preachers.

at Charles Street & online | Sunday 10th October
4pm