



TOGETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Christian Action

Article by Andrew Ayre of Charles Street Methodist Church

As I write Christians of various ages are taking part in a relay walk, organised by the Young Christian Climate Network, that left St.Ives in Cornwall following the G7 conference in June and will arrive in Glasgow at the end of October in time for the climate conference. At the same time, members of Christian Climate Action are taking part in Extinction Rebellion's protests in central London. It's quite possible you are unaware of either of these actions as unfortunately neither has yet captured mainstream headlines being eclipsed by the tragedy unfolding in Afghanistan. They are two very different examples of witness, which will no doubt provoke a wide spectrum of reactions. Some of XR's tactics are questionable, but embedded among them will be Christians holding prayer vigils or love feasts in inconvenient places, and I hope their presence acts to attenuate some of the wilder elements. Both responses are motivated by the belief that governments in our rich nations are simply not doing enough to combat the unfolding climate emergency, are not being honest with the public what changes are going to be required. This is not simply to protect ourselves from the impact of climate change at home, but also to enable those countries, by and large from the global South, most vulnerable, but often least responsible for global emissions, to survive and thrive. It is underpinned by the sense of "what Jesus would do", the Jesus who was self-sacrificing, but also not averse to disrupting the lives of the "trades people" in the Temple, when their activities were not in keeping with the world God intended.

Is not the whole of creation God's Temple? This was articulated very well by a young woman from Birmingham, who gave one of the talks at the Newark parish church's recent environment awareness week. She was from an active church of some 400 members, involved with foodbanks, homelessness etc. But of those 400 only 10 members were part of an environment awareness group. We perhaps respond much more readily to those we can see and touch, our neighbours on our doorstep. Surely our brothers and sisters in the global South are even more in need of our help and action. Is it partly because we still don't really recognise the problem we're facing? This isn't either/or but both/and. We can pray, but prayer should spur us to action. Was the church in uproar over the government cutting the foreign Aid budget? It wasn't just wrong, it was the antithesis of equity, kicking away what minimal help people were getting.

To try and bring this down to a more practical focus, here are a series of statements.

We're currently as a circuit exploring how we should move forward.

CoVid is here to stay along with climate change.

We want to be able to gather safely in large numbers and sing again. This needs adequate ventilation.

Our churches are largely heating inefficient.

We will need to modernise our heating, improve insulation and reduce draughts.

This will require additional heat conserving ventilation if we're to minimise infection risks.

This will be expensive.

I leave you to draw your own conclusions. WWJD?

If you have views that will challenge us to seek God's will in current issues, will ask us What Would Jesus Do and could write a 500 word article to lead and challenge us with those views, do get in touch, we'd love to give you the front page!
 (Contact Rev Peter Hibberts: peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk or Rev Nathan Falla: nathan.Falla@methodist.org.uk.)



Behold, I'm doing a new thing

Online Circuit Service Sermon | Isaiah 43 | Rev Peter Hibberts

I often remark on a passage being a favourite but I also love it when I come across a passage that seems to be a word in season; a passage from the living Bible that appears to be speaking something into our current situation as well as one that spoke directly to the original audience. I'm always wary about saying it's for now because that's an interpretation but looking for parallels with the original audience can sometimes give us a steer.

Isaiah wrote during a turbulent time for Israel and Judah (the divided parts of the OT Nation of Israel) Firstly they were divided into two separate kingdoms but they were also threatened by the expansion of the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians conquered the Northern kingdom (Israel) around 30 years before Isaiah writes (around 700 BC) and It was Babylon that threatened the Southern kingdom (Judah) leading to exile in 590 BC. The datings are never exact but Isaiah possibly writes these words in a time of great turmoil, division and exile. God's people cannot be together, they cannot worship together and they cannot be fully together in their spiritual home. Sound familiar?

I can't imagine the emotions associated with being violently exiled. (Though I'm mindful of modern day Syria and most recently Afghanistan. This is not simply a historical phenomenon.) I can, however, associate with being unable to be church in the way we knew it, in our spiritual home, *all* physically together, worshipping as one. Maybe you can too. Maybe, like me, you've been wondering where God is in all this. *Spend a few moments reading Isaiah 43 verses 1-13.*

I wonder for how many of us, in the last 18 months have felt like the waters are high and the fires fierce. Many of you will feel like you've been drowning and perhaps you feel burnt. Or nearly burnt out. I know how that feels. It's at this point that God gently reminds them what his pedigree is.

You may know we've just had a puppy. Wesley. A beautiful Cocker Spaniel. Now I don't know much about dogs and we didn't really do a lot of research but we did know the breeder - a friend of ours, a neighbour! When we took on Wesley she gave us a lot of information. One of which was a five generation family tree for Wesley. (I now know more about his family than my own!) Each member checked and guaranteed to be without ailment or defect. That's his pedigree - five generations of reliability to suggest that he'll be good too.

Isaiah draws us to God's pedigree. The difference, of course is that God's pedigree is his own, not a list of relatives. *He* points to the journey he has already taken them on. Eden, Ark, Egypt,

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. 'Zoom' Opportunities

If you're feeling isolated, are not ready to be face to face yet, or can't, but are happy to meet on Zoom, there is 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.

There is also still a weekly Zoom fellowship called 'The Gathering' which is part of Southwell Methodist Church and run by Philip and Francine Holmes. You'd be most welcome, contact Philip to connect: philipholmes8100@gmail.com.

3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also [online](#).)
08:10am - 12th September 2021

Radio 4's Sunday morning service.

Details available on
WWW.BBC.CO.UK

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.)

Wilderness, Canaan. Including being led by flame and passing through water - at least three times (in the ark, through the Red Sea and through Jordan!)

Where is God's Pedigree in your story. What are the milestones that have already demonstrated to you that God is good to *his* word. Where have you seen and known *him* work, in the past Biblically, in your life, in the life of this, your church. *Take a few moments, in prayer to remind yourself that God has already demonstrated his love and sovereignty, we know he's Good to his word.*

The great thing about Isaiah 43 though is that he ends the chapter not looking back to what God has already done but looking forward in prophesy about Israel's future. *Spend a few moments reading Isaiah 43 verses 14-21.*

God continues to remind them of their past, but this is still not the focus of the prophesy. The best is yet to come. God does not simply want to remind us that he's bigger than all that we have endured and are enduring - though *he* certainly is. God doesn't simply want to remind us that he's with us in this - though *he* certainly is.

God also wants to tell us that he's not finished with us yet! Because *he* certainly isn't.

Don't be fooled into thinking therefore that we need to build back as we did before. Following the exile, Israel would never be the same again. There would be no return to Solomon's temple, actually Jesus was nearly there (just a few hundred very biblically quiet years away) and the foreshadowing of a new relationship is already recognisable with hindsight!

God too wants to tell us that he will build us back, and build us back better! Listen to this...

**"Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the desert
and streams in the wasteland.**

Isaiah 43 vi7-19 (NIV)

Do you feel like it's a desert right now? I sometimes do. It's hard work. It seems like we're wading through treacle, swimming against the tide, digging a channel in the desert.

But know this. God is doing a new thing. We need to be ready to do a new thing. Prepare the new wine skins for God to pour out new wine. For there is to be water in the desert, streams in the wasteland - drink for us, God's chosen people!

Prayers

Creator God, as we gather in a variety of ways this week and even as we worship you from our isolation may our praises rise united to you.

Wonderful Saviour, may we see your face and find strength to face whatever is ahead of us. You are the God whose pedigree is demonstrated in scripture and in our lives, the God who is sovereign over all and loves us all. Enduring presence, may our hearts turn to you and in your presence may our fears and anxieties be washed away.

Amen.

Heavenly Father, we perceive the new thing that you are doing. As you re-create, may we notice your movement and turn our eyes to you. Redeeming Son, forgive our wrong-doings and give us the strength to move away from dwelling on the past, to forget the former things. Empowering Spirit, may the new thing that you are doing in our lives, in the lives of our church families, in our communities, the nation, our world, spring up inside us making a way in the desert, streams in the wasteland. Give your people living water to drink that we may eternally proclaim your praise.

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!

Circuit Vision Team Report

Have you read the Circuit Vision Team report yet? We're listening to your thoughts and would love to hear your response to it.

Your Circuit Rep has been asked to gather opinions from your church so if you have thoughts, do get in touch with them. (If you don't know who your reps are, get in touch with your minister to find out.) The report is available to all (from the circuit website: [CLICK HERE](#)).

Songs...

Praise is rising (StF 64) [LINK](#)

Blessed be your name (StF 41) [LINK](#)

Faithful God (StF 47) [LINK](#)

And can it be (StF 345) [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. How have you encountered the Bible, written for an ancient audience, speaking to you today?
2. How have your experiences of the last 18 months be similar to those of the 8th Century BC Israelites?
3. What have you seen of the exile of Syrian, Afghan and other refugees (exiles) in the news? How have you been praying for, taking action, to reach out to their needs?
4. Read Isaiah 43 verses 1-13. How have the waters felt high and the fires fierce in the last 18 months? How do Isaiah's words of prophesy encourage you today?
5. Take a few moments, in prayer to remind yourself that God has already demonstrated his love and sovereignty, we know he's Good to his word.
6. Read Isaiah 43 verses 41-21. What new thing is God doing in you? In your church? In your community?

'One World One Climate' Display

The Newark based Climate Awareness Week that Andrew Ayre referred to in the front page article will be extended from 18th September onwards (as we approach COP26 - the United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Glasgow, between 1st and 12th of November this year) with an exhibition entitled 'One World One Climate', in the Quaker meeting house, Queen's Head Court, Newark. The five, four foot by six foot collapsable panels (outlining the problem, the effects and some of the possible responses) will be available for churches to display. For more details about any of this, please get in touch with Chris Rose: chrisivyfarm@googlemail.com.

8-9-21

Face-to-face worship across the circuit in September...

| September - November 2021 | | 5th Sept | 12th Sept Education Sunday | 19th Sept | 26th Sept |
|---------------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Balderton | 10:30 am | Hucknall HC / T | Ward | Bates | LA |
| | 6:00 pm | | | | |
| Barnbygate | 10:30 am | at Hawtonville | Dalby | at Hawtonville | Falla HF / HC |
| | 3:00 pm | | | | |
| Charles Street | 10:30 am | Hardy SoP | LA | Falla HC | LA HF |
| | 6:00 pm | Falla | Falla HC | Winnington | Falla HF |
| Collingham | 10:45 am | Bates | Mason / LA | Hucknall HF / T | Bates HC |
| | 4:30 pm | | | | |
| Elston | 10:45 am | | Gibson HC | | Hibberts HF |
| | 4:00 pm | | | | |
| Hawtonville | 10:30 am | Falla HC | at Barnbygate | Castle | at Barnbygate |
| | 3:00 pm | | | | |
| Long Bennington | 10:30 am | L Blatherwick | Bates HC | | Pearce |
| | 3:00 pm | | | Gascoyne HF | |
| North End | 6:00 pm | Mathews | Bates | West | Bates HF |
| North Muskham | 10:30 am | | Falla HC | | Ward T |
| | 2:00 pm | Hibberts Bubble | | LA Bubble | |
| Southwell | 10:00 am | Cozens | Hibberts | Hibberts HC | Hardy |
| | Other | Hibberts 4:00 pm | Hibberts PicC / 2:00 pm | Falla 4:00 pm | Hibberts Fringe / 6:00 pm |
| Sutton-on-Trent | 10:30 am | Hibberts Festival | LA Breakfast / 9:00 am | C Membery HC | United at All Saints HC / 10:00 am |
| | 4:00 pm | | | | Hibberts PicC / PC |

For more information on our Worship Opportunities visit the Circuit Website:
www.NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.Org.UK

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).

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.