



TOGETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Without Vision the People Perish

Article by Rev Peter Hibberts

When I worked as part of the leadership of the Christian Union at Westminster College, we regularly used to go away as a team to consider where God was leading us. We used to call them planning weekends and often stayed on the floor of one of the CU member's churches. Without fail, every planning weekend we would begin with a blank sheet of paper that simply had the words of Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." It reminded us, each time, that we were not to build on our own understanding but to seek direction from God. We were still fallible human beings but I firmly believe our hearts were in the right place and God did amazing things with that group of people! As a circuit we too need vision, to discern what part God wants circuit to play in God's mission.

We've spent a great deal of time seeking God's will for our Circuit and next Monday is the next step on that journey. We've reported (as a Circuit Vision Team) once already and asked for the people of the Circuit to think, pray and respond. It was a broad brush stroke and is only the first steps on the journey but I'm excited by the direction. On Monday we gather to continue to seek God's will for our circuit.

It's not too late to respond (though it's certainly the eleventh hour) if you would like to, I or your minister would be grateful to receive an email or phone call and add it to our pile of responses (thank you to all those who have already responded). If you still haven't seen the report or the consultation letter, please have a look by following this [LINK](#).

I'd also like to ask you to pray for the folk taking part in the Vision meeting on Monday (all members of the Circuit Meeting, including the reps from your church), for the folk in the Circuit Vision Team and for the Circuit Leadership Team as we seek God's will together. These are challenging times and call for some radical moves but we know that God is with us (or probably more accurately God is inviting us to be with him) in ministry in this area and we're not done yet.

You could pray specifically for direction in two particular areas:

Firstly in how the circuit can encourage, excite and enable the churches and church members across the circuit. In one sense this is about our collective resources as a circuit and how we use them to better church mission. We'd like the circuit influence be one that enriches our church experience rather than being one that is a hoop to jump through, a hurdle to leap or a distraction from local ministry. Methodism has a rich heritage in connexionalism and the circuit is part of that - our churches should never feel isolated.

Secondly in striking the balance between being gathered and scattered. There are clearly aspects of ministry that need to be done locally, in communities. In its most grass roots each of us is church to our family, friends and colleagues, our witness as the hands, feet and voice of Christ is what church is, at its best. That said, church at its best gathers folk together as embers in the fire and ensure that we burn brighter by burning together. The golden question is how circuit can allow our churches to burn brighter together without moving emphasis away from the mission of our churches where they are. What can we better to gathered, stronger together, and what must be done scattered, and how can the gathered circuit encourage, excite and enable the scattered churches.





1. Online Service - 4PM!

This week (10th October) our circuit service will be different and will be broadcast at the later time of 4pm. Join at Charles Street or via our YouTube Channel (Live-streamed) for a service to celebrate and pray for our Local Preachers.

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! (Also available to watch back at any time).

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 - 17th October 2021

A New Song

A celebration of women in church music from Ely Cathedral with preacher, Reverend Canon Dr Jessica Martin and Ely Cathedral Girls Choir directed by Sarah MacDonald.

Will your anchor hold?

Sunday Sermon | Hebrews 6:13-20 | Rev Peter Hibberts

I remember, fondly, my Boys Brigade days. I remember the special handshake, the fun and games, the smell of Brasso prior to a parade service and the anthem 'Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?' I was part of the 3rd North Staffs company (Burslem) and our crowning glory was winning the Bible Quiz which included memorising large portions of Psalm 119! (I think I still know some parts to this day.) I remember the badge which carried the words SURE and STEADFAST.

I have to say those words haven't exactly been on the tip of my tongue in the last 2 years. How about you? In fact I would go so far as to say everything (well almost everything) that I relied upon has been shaken during this time.

I've also been watching the BBC series VIGIL recently, which almost entirely took place on a nuclear class submarine. In the series, at times, we were face to face with the power of the ocean at the same time as the power of human decisions and the effects they have on the lives of others. If you've ever been on the coast during a storm you will know first hand the terrible power of the wind and the waves.

If you've lived for any length of time you'll also know the terrible power of life's metaphorical wind and waves. Jesus said (in John 16:33) 'In this world you will have trouble.' As Christians we are not immune to the way the billows roll. In the last few weeks I've journeyed, albeit it short way, one to one with folk facing extreme, life threatening illness (and the pretty awful treatments endured to battle them) with those separated by illness (physical and mental) with those who find themselves on a palliative care 'pathway', facing ultimate realities and with those preparing services to say goodbye to loved ones. I have to say it's a privilege to be invited into these intimate times and places and to be able to bring words of hope, but it's also a point where you see the height and depth the waves can reach.

I wonder, how high and deep have the waves been for you in the last 18 months to 2 years? The church at any point has supported those in turbulent times often relying on those whose waters are calm to support those whose waters are choppy. Perhaps the difference in the last 18 months is that the waters have been choppy, to say the least, for so many and calm waters have been few and far between (it's exposed the cracks in our church families). So what is your anchor in these times?

In boating terms, you can have many different types of anchor: mushroom, danforth or fluke, plow, claw, grapnel and if we were to delve into history, we'd find even more. The key factor being how well it holds when called upon (balanced perhaps with how easy it is to transport when not needed!) Choosing the right anchor is extremely important!

In human terms we also anchor to many things. Family, friends, support groups, church, property, finance, contracts, insurances, the state, benefits, pensions, healthcare systems and professional and many forms of advice or expertise. Which of these are your anchors?

Whichever of these we look to, you only need to look back a short while to find example of them failing. Advice and expertise is not infallible, healthcare systems creak under the pressure, pensions have black holes, benefits are often short or not responsive enough for the

most needy, states themselves can fail (something we've seen contribute to the many refugee crises) insurances don't always pay out or leave gaps, contracts are broken, banks fail, property crashes and sadly church (live any support group) can fail us as it is made up of fallible human beings. I sure we all know of times when we have let down our family and friends or sadly been let down by them. If you've felt at all let down by the church, at any time, then I'm sorry. We aim to be there for folk but we're fallible too and often swamped. If anything though, the failing of the church may in encouraging folk to make the church their anchor. (We, at times, seem to have created a system that says if the church does not perform or the minister not visit, then God has failed us - which is of course, not true.) What we as church should always do is point to the one who is infinitely more reliable than us. We are not the underwriter but simply a broker.

Listen to the words of Hebrew 6, 'When God made a promise to Abraham...he had no-one greater by whom to swear [so] he swore by himself.' There is no anchor greater than God. God's promise to Abraham was kept in his son Isaac (Genesis 22ff). The Old Testament is full of places where God keep his often miraculous promises. The following words take some reflection to key into. 'We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain.' To understand this, we need to consider the Jewish temple. This temple had many courts, each one more exclusive than the last until the final place, the 'inner shrine' was demarcated by a huge curtain. This 'holy of holies' was the dwelling place of God and only the high priest could enter, on the day of atonement (once a year) after correctly performing atoning sacrifices. So hazardous was this that the priest may have bells attached to his belt to alert his aides to him possibly being killed by the awesome presence of God (should the sacrifice have failed to atone for their sins) and ropes around their ankles to pull them back out. It sounds awful but it simply points to the perfection of God and the relational damage of sin. But that's not the focus of the passage (except to highlight the power of Christ's sacrifice); the focus is the 'forerunner', Christ, whose sacrifice was perfect and atonement absolute. He (the high priest forever) plunges through the curtain into the very person of God, the rope tied around his ankles like the chain that connects the anchor to the boat.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul.

(and it's not any of those listed above - not even our church)

**Steadfast and Sure while the billows roll;
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the saviour's love!**



Prayers

Prayer of adoration:

Almighty God, how wonderful you are.
Creation cries out in awe of your power,
The universe shines with your glory and greatness.

Almighty Lord, how majestic you are. Each atom and molecule carry a tiny part of your plan, Every microbe speaks of your breathtaking beauty.

Almighty Father, how awesome you are.
The mountain ranges reflect your heights,
And the gentle valleys your mercy.

Almighty One, how creative you are. Each tree and flower are filled with your wonder and bounty, Each life resounds with intricacy and miracles.

I will lift my eyes to you, my wonderful, majestic, awesome God. **Amen**

Read more at: https://www.lords-prayer-words.com/prayers_before_adoration_prayer.html

Prayer of blessing adapted from the Boys Brigade Prayer:

Bless O God the churches across our circuit, district and connect and all those of other denominations and give to them greater power to advance thy kingdom throughout the world.

Grant in thy mercy that every member, past and present may prove steadfast in their fight against evil and true in their allegiance to thee.

Help us in times of temptation, make us strong when we are weak, give us courage in difficulty, faithfulness in duty, loyalty in friendship and finally by thy mercy, bring us into thine everlasting kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord. **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](#)).

(These songs will be part of our anniversary celebration, at Elston, at 10:45am on Sunday 10th - You'd be welcome to join us!)

Light of the world (StF 175) [LINK](#)

Will your anchor hold (StF 645) [LINK](#)

Our God is a great big God (StF 61) [LINK](#)

Sweet is the work, my God, my King (StF 90) [LINK](#)

What a friend we have in Jesus (StF 531) [LINK](#)

And can it be (StF 345) [LINK](#)

Will your anchor hold (StF 645) Gospel: [LINK](#) Traditional: [LINK](#)

Click 'LINK' to join a YouTube video and sing along!

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 SURE and STEADFAST have you felt in recent times? How do you feel right now?
2. What is your anchor in troubled times?
3. What encouragement do you take from the words of Hebrews 6?
4. In what ways do you attach yourself to the anchor that is Jesus Christ? Prayer, meditation, bible study?
5. spend some time in prayer thanking Jesus for his SURE and STEADFASTNESS, being before him the billows that you face and cast those burdens onto him. Remind yourself daily of the words of the chorus printed above... 'We have an anchor...'

Who might God be asking you to share this with?

'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.

Face-to-face worship across the circuit in the next four weeks...

September - November 2021		10th Oct Homeless Sunday Prisons Sunday	17th Oct	24th Oct	31st Oct All Saints
Balderton	10:30 am	Winnington	Hardy	Bates	Gibson HC
	6:00 pm	Circuit Service at Charles Street 4pm			
Barnbygate	10:30 am	Falla	at Hawtonville	LA	Bates
	3:00 pm	Circuit Service at Charles Street 4pm			
Charles Street	10:30 am	LA	West	Falla HC	Mathews
	6:00 pm	Falla Circuit / 4pm	Falla HC	Adams	Hardy
Collingham	10:45 am	Ward T	Falla CA / HC	LA	United Service at Parish Church HC
	4:30 pm	Circuit Service at Charles Street 4pm			
Elston	10:45 am	Hibberts HC / CA		Pearce	
	4:00 pm	Circuit Service at Charles Street 4pm			Hibberts
Hawtonville	10:30 am	at Barnbygate	Gibson HC	at Barnbygate	at Barnbygate
	3:00 pm	Circuit Service at Charles Street 4pm			
Long Bennington	10:30 am	Dalby T	Bates HC	Ward T	Cozens
	3:00 pm	Circuit Service at Charles Street 4pm			
North End	6:00 pm	LA	Bates CA	Bates HC	Falla
North Muskham	10:30 am	C Membership HC		Dalby T	LA Bubble
	2:00 pm	Circuit Service at Charles Street 4pm	LA Bubble		
Southwell	10:00 am	LA	Hibberts HC	Winnington	Hibberts
	Other	Hibberts PicC / 2:00 pm	Gascoyne 4:00 pm	Cancelled PicC / 6:00 pm	
Sutton-on-Trent	10:30 am	LA Breakfast / 9:00 am	Hart HC	United at All Saints HC / 10:00 am	
	4:00 pm	Circuit Service at Charles Street 4pm		Cancelled LA PicC / PC	Hibberts Bubble / 2:00 pm

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

**To contribute to TOGETHER in any way, please get in touch with
Rev Peter Hibberts (peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk) or Rev
Nathan Falla (nathan.falla@methodist.org.uk).**