



TOGETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

We are family

by Revd Nathan Falla

Families come in various shapes and sizes, they have different characteristics and different traditions, some are harmonious and others are full of tension. Families grow together, they support and encourage each other, they cry together and they party together. In a family you can truly be yourself, they accept your good points and your bad points, but they help you to be better too! The Church can be described as God's family, a family where we don't always agree but a family that is called to grow in the love and knowledge of Christ. This is true for the local church but I also believe that it is true of the circuit!

It was wonderful last Sunday to gather in person and online as a circuit family to celebrate with Val Fowles and Tracey West as they were admitted into the office of a Local Preacher. To celebrate with Sylvia Cozens and Marian Mason as they marked the milestone of being a Local Preacher for 25 and 50 years respectively. To affirm all our Local Preachers as they renewed their promises. The service is available on the Circuit YouTube channel if you missed it.

The Circuit is a family of churches, that are all different but are united in mission and purpose, this is why we are spending time thinking about our vision and how we can be a better more effective circuit. We had a positive open meeting on Monday night where we thought about what we could gather for as a Circuit, what we need to scatter for in our locality, and what we need to stop so that we can use our resources as wisely as possible.

I fully appreciate that people's understanding and experience of Circuit are different but I was sent this acrostic by Carol Challender which I find really helpful to explain some of the importance of Circuit :

ConneXion - this is who we are as Methodists, what makes us distinct, our connectivity.

Information – awareness and communication, something that can always be better.

Resources – lay and ordained in partnership together, music, preachers, teachers, technology, money.

Christ – the middle letter and at our very heart, Jesus is our foundation and our motivation.

Unity – working together in our diversity, thinking bigger than the local church.

Interaction – meeting together, sharing, worshipping together, studying, learning.

Telling – telling others about the love of Jesus and being open to being transformed by the Spirit.

We are not there yet, but as all families we are on a journey. Please continue to pray for the Circuit Vision Team as we take the responses from the churches and everything that was shared on Monday night and discern how we can best we can use all of our resources to build the Kingdom.



1. Online Service

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

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

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

A New Song

A celebration of the contribution that women have made to church music from Ely Cathedral.

It's 30 years since the first English Cathedral opened its choirstalls to girls. After the foundation of the girls' choir at Salisbury, choral foundations bringing girls into choral music, have sprung up all around the country.

The preacher is the Revd Canon Dr Jessica Martin with music from Ely Cathedral Girls Choir and Lay Clerks.

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.)

Freedom

Online Circuit Service Sermon | Acts 16:16-34 | Revd Nathan Falla

Have you ever felt trapped? Maybe you have locked a door, and found it very difficult to unlock again, or a lift has stopped suddenly and you wonder if the doors are going to open? Maybe you have felt trapped by a relationship, by tradition, views, responsibilities or expectations?

Our reading this week gives the account of Paul and Silas in prison as recorded in Acts by Luke; the miracle and wonder of chains being broken and prisoners being set free, but others were also being set free, not from physical chains but from invisible metaphorical chains and by being set free entering new life through Christ.

Paul and Silas have reached Philippi in Greece, they have reached Europe. They stayed in Philippi for a couple of weeks and as they were going to the place of prayer saw a woman, a slave-girl who could tell the future and who made lots of money for her owner. The woman would cry out that Paul and Silas were "servants of the most high God, who are telling you the way to be saved." Culturally this was not a problem, as salvation was a popular subject for conversation. But this occurred a number of times and Paul slowly became troubled.

Was he troubled or annoyed because he did not think that she was helping the spread of the gospel message? Was he troubled or annoyed because he could see that this woman was caught, trapped, being used and exploited for her skills? Was he troubled or annoyed because he knew that the source of the woman's ability, was evil and not good?

We do not know why Paul was troubled or annoyed; it could have been one, a combination of these reasons or for a different reason. But what we do know is that Paul's distress made him turn around and put a stop to it. He commanded the spirit to come out of the woman "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!"

Paul saw that the evil spirit had power over the woman, he saw that the owner was holding the girl captive and he set her free. The slave girl's owners however, did not appreciate the transformation and brought Paul and Silas before the magistrate, which led to them being flogged and ended up with them being put in prison.

In prison, Paul and Silas are put in the innermost cell. In pain from the flogging, with aching limbs and lacerated backs, somehow at midnight they burst into prayer and song, praising God rather than moaning. Suddenly there is an earthquake, the whole jail shakes and shudders and prison doors burst open.

The jailer fears the worst when he wakes up, he is personally responsible for the prisoners and if they have all escaped, his life is not worth living; failure would be paid for by his life. In desperation he was going to commit suicide, but then Paul shouts out "don't harm yourself, we are all here!"

The jailer cannot believe the situation and falls down before Paul and Silas asking what he must do to be saved. Paul and Silas reply: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household." The jailer recognised that something was missing in his life, he saw Paul and Silas and in them was something different; there was joy, deep joy and a sense of hope, certain hope.

The jailer takes Paul and Silas and nurses their wounds, then the jailer and his whole family are baptised as a response. They have truly experienced that life begins with Christ.

Our passage from Acts reminds us of the transforming power of God which brings new life. The slave girl is set free from the evil that is dominating her life. The jailer becomes the one who needs to be freed who needs to be released, and the lives of his whole family have been transformed.

In this world today there are people in physical chains imprisoned because of their faith, there are people caught in slavery who long to be free, there are people even in British society who do not feel free to be the people who they feel God calls them to be.

God offers to us all new life in Christ. We have in our reading the reminder of the transforming power of God to free us from the chains that bind us, the slave girl is free, the jailer is free, and we can be free.

What chains are binding you and me? We may not be in physical chains, but what areas in our lives are preventing us from being fully the people that God calls us to be, from fully experiencing the love and grace that God offers to us all, from living life to the full, experiencing new life in Christ? Anything that restricts, inhibits or binds us can be like a chain.

Chains that bind us can be the wrongs that we have done; the things that we have said, thought or done which hurt us, other people and affect our relationship with God, that we haven't surrendered to God.

Chains that bind us can be guilt or hurt from the past, the prejudice or false stereotypes that we face, which can make us feel unlovable and unworthy; preventing us from experiencing the fullness of God's love through the people around us.

Chains that bind us can be addiction, selfishness, and pride. Chains that bind us can be failing to respond to God and following the way that he calls.

Jesus died for us, so that the chains that bind us can be broken, can be destroyed. The cross defeated death, defeated sin, and equipped and enabled by God's Holy Spirit we can be transformed and experience the new life in Christ.

Jesus offers to all a new beginning, to start afresh, claiming the promises of God and recognising that the chains that bind us and that bind our world can be broken in Jesus' name.

Prayer Space

Prayer of Confession

God of compassion and mercy,
we lay at your feet
the times when we have been imprisoned
by words of anger and hatred
rather than liberated by
words of gentleness and peace.

We lay at your feet
the times when we have been imprisoned
by thoughts of jealousy and bitterness
rather than liberated by thoughts of
understanding and acceptance.!

We lay at your feet the times when we
have been imprisoned by actions of
selfishness and thoughtlessness
rather than liberated by actions of
friendship and love.

You alone, Lord, can free us from sin.
Grant us, your forgiveness,
and change our hearts
so that we might dare to be more like you.

In Christ we are set free.
Through Christ we are forgiven.
Amen. Thanks be to God.

Prayers for others

Sovereign God,
we pray for all who are denied freedom;
freedom to worship, to express their
opinions, to vote, to determine their own
affairs.

Lord, we pray for those whose freedom
has been taken away; those who have
knowingly broken the law,
those who have caused injury and hurt to
others, those who are a danger to
themselves and society.

Lord, we pray for those whose spirits are
held captive; poisoned by greed, envy,
pride and selfishness, trapped in a vicious
circle of hatred and bitterness,
crushed by fear and anxiety,
led astray by empty hopes and vain
ambitions, false gods and superstition.

Lord we pray for those who feel that they
are not in control of their lives,
those who are struggling to come to terms
with difficult news.

Sovereign God,
break through everything which denies
your love and frustrates your will.
Reach out to your world in which so many
are held hostage to their circumstances
and, by the power of your Spirit,
grant release from all that imprisons us.

We ask this in the name of Jesus
through whom we are truly set free.
Amen.

Hymns and worship songs

Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service:

Jesus, the name high over all – SOF 307, StF 357

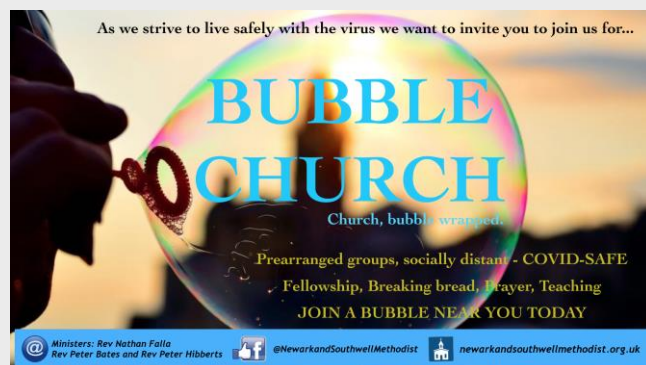
Here I am, once again – SOF 759

I give you all the honour – SOF 210

And can it be – SOF 21, StF 345

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 does freedom mean to you? Has this changed following your experience in lockdown?
2. What physical or metaphorical chains are you aware of?
3. Do you have a story of freedom or liberation to share?
4. How have you experienced the transforming power of God?
5. Is there something that you need to be released from to free you for a new challenge?

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 you even want it? 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 17th October across the Circuit...

Balderton

10.30am Mrs Jenny Hardy

Barnbygate

10.30am Joint Service at Hawtonville

Charles Street

10.30am Dr Tracey West

6pm Revd Nathan Falla (Holy Communion)

Collingham:

10.45am Revd Nathan Falla

(Holy Communion & Church Anniversary)

Elston (on 24th October)

10.45am Mr Terry Pearce

Hawtonville

10.30am Revd David Gibson (Holy Communion
Joint service with Barnbygate)

Long Bennington

10.30am Revd Peter Bates (Holy Communion)

North End

6pm Revd Peter Bates (Church Anniversary)

North Muskham

2pm Local Arrangement (Bubble Church)

Southwell

10am Revd Peter Hibberts (Holy Communion)

4pm Mr Ted Gascoyne

Sutton-on-Trent

10.30am Revd John Hucknall (Holy Communion)

Please pray for all those leading worship on Sunday and all the churches in our circuit family not forgetting our two schools:

All Saints Anglican/Methodist Primary in Elston and Lowes Wong Junior School in Southwell.