



TOGETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

ACCESSIBLE

Article by Rev Peter Bates

Accessible is a word that is not used much today but it is so important to us. We get frustrated if we cannot get in touch with people, especially if we need a doctor, a plumber or an electrician. We want to communicate with people but often we get an automated message. We feel helpless and sometimes hopeless. What is it about us humans that we need to communicate? We don't want to live in a vacuum, we want interaction, we want to know that our life has meaning and purpose, and if no one is there to talk to us we begin to feel uncared for.

In an age where the technology is so advanced, we can instantly communicate with people but we often fall down because people, organisations and groups are just too busy to deal with us on a personal level. We are overwhelmed when we come across a group of people or a business that actually wants to deal with us personally and not just as a number or a client. We warm to that kind of group because we feel that they care about us.

In the early days of Methodism, Class Groups were formed. They had various purposes but one reason was to bring people together in mutual support. In John Wesley's time those who responded to the gospel were not used to the Christian way of life and so they needed help. With the Class Meetings difficulties could be ironed out and the appropriate support given. These groups of people became close and tight-knit but they also belonged to a wider congregation that worshipped together on a Sunday and during the week.

If someone needed to share a problem that person could speak to one of the group members, if they needed help, they could ask within the group or the whole congregation. People felt cared for and loved.

This is what we are trying to develop in our churches, whether we call it a Class Meeting or a Fellowship Meeting, we want to grow groups within our church where we can support each other. But not only that, we want to develop groups in our church to support those outside the building as well. In fact, these days it is often by caring for people in the community that people realise what a lovely place church is. We grow as Christians when we are willing to come alongside people and meet with them regularly, and when new people come into the church, they help us grow because we cannot stay as we are, we need to change and move on.

God Bless Peter Bates



Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Circuit Service Message | Genesis 45:3-11, 15 | Sue Watson

When our 2 daughters were little, if one of them did something that we didn't like and she was reprimanded – very often the other one looked with a smile on her face and said, “I didn't do that, did I?” or “I'm being a good girl aren't I?”- whether it was because she wanted reassurance or whether she wanted to rub her sister's nose in it a bit more I'm not sure! But if the situation happened several times, it could harbour resentment “they're the favourite, I don't know why I bother!”

This is typical sibling reaction, so I can understand the attitude of Joseph's brothers. Joseph was the favoured son, had special gifts bestowed on him so the brothers were already unhappy. I'm not sure if Joseph was deliberately provoking his brothers, or he was just naïve or thoughtless, but to say I've had these dreams in a nutshell ‘I will be the important one and you will all bow down to me.’ That's like red rag to a bull – no wonder they'd had enough, but it was a bit drastic to put him in a pit then sell him as a slave. The brothers could make a bit of profit, Jacob wouldn't see Joseph again so they might get a bit of his attention now!

But, back to the reading – what a dramatic rise to power – from a prison cell to the Prime Minister's office – a very important job that he excelled at, heading the country through a famine. He had been re-introduced to his brothers (without their knowledge). They don't recognise him, because he is older, wearing Egyptian clothes, speaking Egyptian and in a surrounding that they wouldn't expect to see him. Now was the crunch time – Benjamin was in trouble for stealing Joseph's cup, Simeon was in jail – this could easily have been Joseph's time for revenge. He had total authority, he could have his brothers put into slavery, jail or even put to death. Joseph's orders would have been carried out instantly with no questions asked. He could have got his own back on his brothers for the wrongs they had committed, - but he didn't.

Joseph didn't seek revenge, he acknowledged that God had worked through all of the bad things that had happened to him, and because of his relationship with God, Joseph can handle the situation in a loving way. Although he remembers what they had done and knows that it was a wicked thing, he will not hold them accountable, because God has turned the effects of their sin into good.

Joseph has heard his brothers talking and knows how the guilt has weighed down on them all of this time. He also sees that they are changed men. He was able to reveal himself. As he recounts things that only he would have known they see that he is their brother.

At this point I believe that they would have been really scared – what was to happen to them? How much trouble were they really in? Joseph was rich and powerful; they were poorer and needy. But they were in for a shock Joseph hugged them and told them not to blame themselves. This was his finest hour, - not the rise to power but this gracious forgiveness, not because he was second in command, but because of love. Wow! What a role model for each of us. What can we learn?

1. Online Service

This week (23rd February) our online circuit service will be led by Sue Watson.

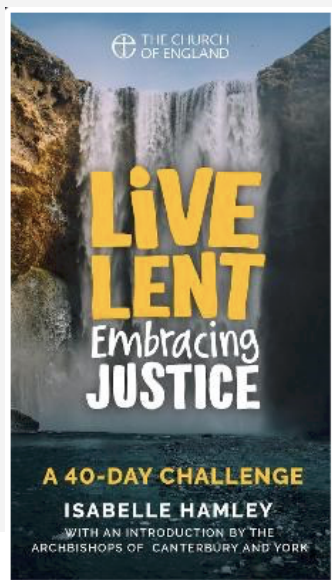
Find it on the 'Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit' YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/NewarkSouthwellMethodistCircuit>) why not invite a friend to watch it with you and share the link with them on your social media or by email! (Also available to watch back at any time).

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:

For your Lent Course Booklet follow this [LINK](https://www.methodist.org.uk) or get in touch (peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk).
For more study group or course details see below.



I'm thinking we're not likely to experience the same disasters as Joseph did, but how easy is it for us to hold a grudge when something goes wrong.

Maybe we had worked hard doing something and another person took the work and passed it off as theirs thus getting the credit that should rightly have been ours. Maybe someone has said or done something that we misunderstood so got huffy with them. Maybe something unpleasant or unkind has been said and we hold onto it, we refuse to talk to them or deliberately avoid them

We are human and we will make mistakes, maybe upset others, and get upset ourselves. As Joseph forgave his brothers and was reconciled to them, we need to forgive and take the initiative to reconcile with others. At the beginning I said that Joseph may have been partly responsible for provoking his brothers in the first place – so remember when we try to take the moral high ground of 'fancy them behaving like that to me' – maybe we should just look to see if we are partly at fault too. But even if not, can we find it in ourselves to smile at them, to continue to speak to them or even to give a hug?

Outside Joe Avila's house is a sign which says, "Please do not drink and drive in memory of Amy Wall". In 1992 Joe was drunk and drove a car which killed teenager Amy outright. Joe fled the scene as he knew that he would be wanted for second degree murder. Somehow, he found himself in a Salvation Army sobriety programme where he was helped with his alcoholism and learnt of the love and reconciliation of God. At court he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 12 years in prison. He worked in the hospice unit and with the chaplain. He was released after 7 years and was encouraged to meet Amy's family. They met many times and Joe learned of the family's pain and they learnt how Joe had changed. They worked together with other people in similar circumstances and on 1 occasion Amy's dad told how much Joe had changed, he hugged him and said, 'I love you Joe'. Joe was amazed, what a testament to reconciliation.

Can we mirror such love in our life? Especially as Jesus' command was 'love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.' Just like Joseph gave his family protection and provisions we have Jesus to protect and provide for us. There are other similarities between Jesus and Joseph.

They were both beloved sons; both saved people from death; both humbled before exalted; both loved and forgave; both went ahead to prepare a place; both were dead to others but came back to be together; Joseph sent his brothers to go and give the good news to their father, Jesus sends us to give His good news to others.

Jesus has forgiven the wrongs that we do and has promised eternal life. He has reconciled us to Him through death and now He wants us to play our part – to forgive others so that we can be reconciled; to live our life of love and caring for others wherever we go. May the lessons that we have learnt from Joseph and his brothers help us in our relationship with Jesus.

Prayers

We have sung of your wonderful love which reaches all of us even though it is undeserved. Thank you for all of the things we have – our homes; families and provisions that give us safety and comfort. God of mercy, your love for us is strong, but our love for you is weak. You call us to follow Jesus, but we are slow to obey. You care for all that you have made, but we ignore the needs of others and misuse your creation. Forgive us and help us to please you by the way we live. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord. **Amen**

Lord, we pray for situations at this time where there is disagreement and conflict. For the tension between countries that could escalate into war. We ask that you will be in the negotiations so a peaceful solution can be found.

We think of situations where there is injustice between individuals and groups whether it be of racial, sexual or nationalistic beliefs. We pray that bigotry may be overcome with love and barriers can be broken down.

We ask for your hand to be upon family situations where unpleasantness is apparent. For those not speaking because of feuds, for those abused by family members. Grant to each of us a listening ear and understanding heart that we can support those in need in whatever way, so they may know that someone cares. Above all, may we be able to show that you care.

We pray for ourselves, that you will give us wisdom to know how to use our time and talents in order to benefit others. To be your hands and feet to help bring about your kingdom in this area of your world.

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!

Songs included in this week's online worship

Come let us sing of a wonderful love (StF 443) [LINK](#)
 My lips shall praise you (StF 430) [LINK](#)
 Lord I come to you (StF 471) [LINK](#)
 Give me the faith (StF 661) [LINK](#)
 Blessed Assurance (SiF 548) [LINK](#)
For YouTube songs click the LINK

Discussion Questions

Church is best done together but we know that this isn't always possible - particularly if you're housebound, isolated or even shielding. But why contact a friend and arrange to watch the church service online or read the newsletter simultaneously and get in touch by telephone afterwards to talk about it. Below are some questions that might help you to reflect together!

1. Do you have siblings? How did you get on whilst growing up? Was there ever any rivalry between you?
2. Have you ever had someone do something that has really hurt/betrayed you? How did it make you feel?
3. Have you ever done something that you know has hurt/betrayed someone else? How did that make you feel?
4. Is there anyone that you need to forgive or be forgiven by? Is there anyone that you need to be reconciled with?
5. Spend some time praying for them and asking God to change your hearts.

In-person worship across the circuit during the next three weeks...

December 2021 - February 2022		20th Feb	27th Feb Sunday before Lent
Balderton	10:30 am	LA	Bates
Charles Street	10:30 am	LA	Falla
	6:00 pm	Bates	Beech
Collingham	10:45 am	Bates HC	Pearce
Elston	10:45 am		Hart HC
Hope Community	10:30 am	Gibson at H'ville	LA at B'gate
Long Bennington	10:30 am	Dalby T	Cozens
North End	6:00 pm	Hardy	Bates
North Muskham	10:30 am		Hibberts
	2:00 pm	Bates HC / Café	
Southwell	10:30 am	Hibberts HC	Winnington
	Other	LA 4pm	Hibberts Fringe
Sutton-on-Trent	10:30 am		United at All Saints HC / 10am
	Other	Hibberts 2pm	
Lectionary Readings (Year C)		Genesis 45:3-11, 15 Psalm 37:1-11 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50 Luke 6:27-38	Exodus 34:29-35 Psalm 99 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2 Luke 9:28-36 (37-43)

For full plan, visit the Circuit Website:

<https://www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk/newsroom/circuit-plan-dec-21-jan-22.html>

Join us this lent as we explore the theme 'Embracing Justice'

"This lent we are called to reflect on the injustices of the world and ask what God is calling us to do about them. Over forty days, we step into God's work in the here and now - and in doing so we move from brokenness towards wholeness."



The Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

Mondays: 7:45pm for an 8pm start, Zoom. Led by Rev Peter Hibberts. (Contact for details.)

Tuesdays or Wednesdays (tbc): 1:45pm for a 2pm start, North Muskham Methodist Church Cafe. Led by Rev Peter Hibberts and Sue Twemlow. (Contact for details.)

Tuesdays: 2pm, Southwell Methodist Church Welcome Area, Led by Geoff Ayers

Also accessible by as daily devotional: booklet (pre-order), App, email or web.

Contact Rev Peter Hibberts: peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk

Or for more information see <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/livelent-2022-church-resources-embracing-justice>