



TOGETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Journeying through Lent

Revd Nathan Falla

Our Lenten journey begins amidst the heart rendering scenes from Ukraine; rockets have been raining down on Ukraine's cities and hundreds of people have been killed or injured since the Russian military offensive began, the latest data shows that now a million people have fled the country and are refugees. Governments have responded with sanctions, the UN has voted to condemn the action, and people are doing all that they can to respond to the humanitarian crisis. For many it feels like a wilderness, a place that we never thought we would see in the west.

Lent reminds us of the time that Jesus spent in the wilderness to prepare for his ministry and remembering the path that led to the cross. It was when Jesus was at his most vulnerable that Satan approaches and tempts Jesus to take the easy way and to by-pass his ministry and the cross. But Jesus did not give in to temptation.

Temptation is all around us, whether it be the temptation to do something or not to do something. It's a temptation to feel helpless and hopeless right now. It's a temptation to think God is absent or aloof. It's a temptation to give in to despair. But God is faithful. On Ash Wednesday I joined with over 2,200 people around the world praying for peace, we are all called to work and pray for peace. I was also overwhelmed by the response of food, blankets, sleeping bags, toiletries, medicines and clothes received in just 3 hours. There is a real sense of doing all we can in whatever way we can.

Lent is traditionally a time of fasting, prayer and giving. The introduction found in the service for Ash Wednesday from the Methodist Worship Book invites us to: "observe the holy season of Lent, by prayer, self-denial, and charitable giving; by self-examination and repentance; and by reading and meditating on God's word" p.142.

If you are wondering how you can respond to the crisis The Methodist Church and All We Can (the Methodist Relief and Development Fund) have launched an [emergency appeal for Ukraine](#): "As communities face violence, upheaval, and the trauma of war, your urgent support is needed. Working together with the Global Relationships Team of the Methodist Church in Britain, donations will be used to support the response to the crisis happening in Ukraine, and ensure that critical humanitarian assistance is available to those who need it."

Lent is considered a holy season as it is a time where we can particularly draw closer to God through being more disciplined about prayer and reading the Bible, by giving up something so we have time to commit to "holy things" that we may not be distracted but focused on the One who journeyed to the Cross that we may know love, forgiveness and grace without limit!

Let us pray without ceasing and by our actions work for peace.



Justice is a relationship with God!

Online Circuit Service Sermon | Reading: Micah 6:8
Revd Peter Hibberts

1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our online Circuit Service which this week is led by Revd 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 – 6th March

A Passion for Hospitality

Dr Krish Kandiah launches a Lent series from Bath Abbey, 'A Passion for Hospitality.' As the nation emerges from a period of unprecedented isolation how can the disciplines of Lent benefit neighbour, friend and stranger alike? Music: Forty Days and Forty Nights, Blessed are the pure in heart (Walford Davies), Kyrie (Byrd), Thou Knowest Lord (Purcell), Lead us, Heavenly Father, Lead us, When I needed a neighbour, Do not be afraid (Philip Stopford). Reading: Matthew 4: 1-11

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.)

This Lent I'm following the LIVE LENT theme, EMBRACING JUSTICE. It's a challenging theme, though when it was planned first by the Anglican Church and then as I made my own preparations, I could not have anticipated what would unfold on the world stage and particularly in Sovereign Ukraine. We don't need to look at the news for long to see the amount of injustice in our world, in fact it's probably easier to identify the places where we see justice than to list injustices. I asked my churches and study groups last week, what is Justice? The Bible gives us many pictures of Justice and those following the Lent course will explore these over the next six weeks (do get in touch if you'd like to be involved in some way). The conclusion of last week was that Justice is a baseline in creation that God set out by placing *his* image in every human being. Justice is not to be strived for but is innate in us, which is why we find injustice so hard to live with. I challenged those who I was with to see the image of God in everyone and therefore strive for Justice for all. To 'let Justice flow like rivers' (Amos 5:24).

In this week's familiar and short, yet powerful passage we see what this baseline of justice should look like and the key thing to take away from Micah is that Justice is relational. We are called by Micah 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' This is in essence what God requires of us. Of course this is massive and deep: what does it mean to act justly? What does that mean in our personal life? What about on the world stage? What does it mean for our institutions, our church? What does it mean in specific situations such as the Ukraine? Yet in one sense it is really simple. The key is in the last part: 'walk humbly with your God.'

In order to take you back to a time when humanity did 'act justly' I would have to go before the fall, to the Garden of Eden, right at the beginning of time. One thing you notice of that time is that Adam and Eve did just that, they walked with God. Actually, we see this most starkly when they stop walking with God. In Genesis 3:8 we hear the account of God walking in the garden and being surprised (though I'm sure God already knew!) that Adam and Eve were not there to walk with him. In fact, the end of their walk is the very first act of injustice - the rejection of the creator who loved them. What follows is the expulsion of humanity and the divide between God and humanity that takes the whole of the Bible and all of history to reconcile. It all boils down to walking with God.

One of the things I've found most difficult in the way we do church in the last two years is the lack of time we've spent together. It's our

fellowship that keeps up on the same page, allows us to understand each other, how we are feeling, what is affecting us and builds a relationship that allows us to navigate the difficulties and even treat each other correctly. As we stop walking with each other, we find acting justly more difficult. My son and I can have fairly lively disagreements. In fact, at one point we were struggling to relate. I was finding myself addressing behaviour issues (which is no surprise as a parent to a child) but one problem I felt we had was that there was no shared experiences to make the positive aspect of our relationship. We weren't walking together. So, we took up football together. It may seem trivial but a Monday evening training session a Saturday morning match and, when Vale are at home, a Saturday afternoon match to spectate have given us common ground. The two hours each way to Burslem to watch the football also gives us time to talk. Believe me, even when the results don't go our way, none of this is wasted. Actually, as I look back to the 90s when I first started to go to the Vale with my father, I can pinpoint how that was a special time for us to 'walk' together. It's why football is so special to me.

We can debate justice and what it means to act justly until the cows come home. We can have ethical arguments and campaign for justice in all spheres of life. I think it's important that we do. These should be regular discussions as a church - how are we working for justice in God's world? But it will always be a challenge if we are not walking with our God. You see, God is the origin of justice and remains the source of justice, without God we cannot know or achieve the justice that should be our baseline.

As we begin Lent, the time when we remember how Jesus, before he even started his earthly ministry, took time out and walked with God in the wilderness, my challenge to you is to identify where you walk humbly with your God. When are the times that you sit, talk, share? How do you take your cares to God? How do you make space to hear God's voice? It needn't be a complex religion of devotionals, prayers, offices, as they are sometimes called. (Though for some this is exactly how they do it and they can be extremely beneficial to some.) Perhaps it is just finding a common space, a common interest between you and God, something you enjoy doing together. Walking, painting, listening to music, reading. To make that your walk with God all you need to do is invite him to join you in it, to make it your shared experience. Just say the prayer, at the beginning, 'Come Holy Spirit.' At the beginning of your walk, ask God to walk with you (or perhaps as if you can walk with God - humbly!) I'd love to hear what effect that has. Perhaps while you walk you can ask him about the injustices and hear how God wants you to be the change he'd like to see.

Amen.

Prayer Space

Holy and Gracious God
 We pray for the people of Ukraine
 and the people of Russia;
 for their countries and their leaders.
 We pray for all those who are afraid;
 that your everlasting arms hold them
 in this time of great fear.
 We pray for all those
 who have the power over life and death;
 that they will choose for all people life,
 and life in all its fullness.
 We pray for those who choose war;
 that they will remember
 that you direct your people to turn our
 swords into ploughshares
 and seek for peace.
 We pray for leaders on the world stage;
 that they are inspired by the wisdom
 and courage of Christ.
 Above all, Lord, today
 we pray for peace for Ukraine.
 And we ask this in the name of your
 blessed Son.
 Lord have mercy. Amen.

From methodist.org.uk

Heavenly Father,
 I praise and glorify you, my God.
 I thank you for the promises
 and hope of your word.
 Thank you for your promise
 to walk daily with me.
 Lord, I thank you that you will guide and
 teach me, as I let your word and truth turn
 my heart from sin and renew my mind in
 goodness and truthfulness.
 Lord Jesus Christ, I come in need
 to walk in the hope that only you can give.
 My way is unclear.
 So much of the world is confusing and
 seeking justice, your justice, is so difficult.
 The path is sometimes filled with twists
 and turns and confusion.
 Help me to grasp your ways
 so I can walk securely in them,
 even in the valley of darkness.
 Lord, I need to know your perspective.
 Help me, Lord Jesus, to focus on your ways.
 Show me your ways, Lord.
 Show me how you would walk in these
 places. Teach me your paths of grace,
 mercy, integrity, and love. Help me to act
 justly and to love mercy and to walk
 humbly with you, God. Amen

Adapted from ChristiansTT

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!

Hymns and worship songs

Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service:

O Lord my God, when I in awesome – StF 82, SOF 425

Strength will rise as we wait – StF 89, SOF 2034

Give thanks to the Lord – StF 77, SOF 1241

Longing for light – StF 706, SOF 2417

O Lord, the clouds are gathering – SOF 429

God of justice, Saviour to all – StF 699 SOF 1794

Please click on the song title to access YouTube clip of each song.

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 not 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. Define justice from your context.
2. What does it mean to 'act justly'?
3. How might this need to change to align with justice from God's point of view?
4. How do you 'walk humbly' with your God?
5. How does your walk with God change your outlook on the world?
6. What is God revealing to you about the injustices around you? How might God want to use you to change the world?

In person worship across the Circuit during the next four weeks...

March - May 2022		6th Mar 1st of Lent	13th Mar 2nd of Lent	20th Mar 3rd of Lent	27th Mar 4th of Lent Mothering Sunday
Balderton	8:30 am				
	10:30 am	Hardy	Bates HC	LA	Bates
	6:00 pm				Bates 4:00 pm
Charles Street	8:30 AM				
	10:30 am	Hart HC	West	Falla	Mathews
	6:00 pm	Ward	Falla HC	Bates	Falla
Collingham	10:45 am	Hucknall T / HC	Dalby	Hart	LA
	10:45 am			Hibberts HC / 2pm	Ward T
Hope Community	10:30 am	Winnington at B'gate	Falla Breakfast at H'ville / 9am	A Trowbridge at B'gate	Falla HC / at H'ville
Long Bennington	10:30 am	Bates HC	K Trowbridge	Pearce	Gibson
North End	6:00 pm	Hart	Bates	Hibberts	Ward
North Muskham	10:30 am		Morley HC		Winnington
	2:00 pm	Hibberts Café		Falla Café	
Southwell	10:30 am	Hibberts HC	LA	Hibberts	Hibberts
	Other	Bates 4pm	Hibberts PicC / 2pm	Hucknall HC / 4pm	Hibberts Fringe / 6pm
Sutton-on-Trent	10:30 am	Adams	Hibberts Breakfast / 9am	Bates HC	US at Parish Church / 4pm
Lectionary Readings (Year C)		Deuteronomy 26:1-11 Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 Romans 10:8b-13 Luke 4:1-13	Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 Psalm 27 Philippians 3:17-4:1 Luke 13:31-35	Isaiah 55:1-9 Psalm 63:1-8 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 Luke 13:1-9	Joshua 5:9-12 Psalm 32 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

For full plan, visit the Circuit Website:
<https://www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk/newsroom/march-may-plan.html>
 or contact your local church

*Lord make me a channel of your disturbance.
 Where there is apathy, let me provoke,
 Where there is silence, may I be a voice.
 Where there is too much comfort, and too little action,
 Grant disruption.*

*Where there are doors closed and hearts locked,
 Grant me the willingness to listen.
 When laws dictate and pain is overlooked, Grant me the willingness to listen.
 When tradition speaks louder than need,
 Grant me the willingness to listen.
 Disturb us, O Lord, Teach us to be radical.
 Grant that I may seek rather to do justice than to talk about it;
 To be with as well as for the poor;
 To love the unlovable as well as the lovely;
 Lord, make me a channel of disturbance.*