

T GETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Hope for Ukraine

Revd Peter Bates

The people of Ukraine must be in despair as their country is ravaged by war. Not a war of their own making but a war which is thrust upon them by a foreign nation. It is so sad that people who are neighbours are in such terrible conflict. Their lives are in turmoil, their cities are being turned to rubble and they have a choice to flee or fight. We cannot imagine what life must be like to live under such bombardment of artillery fire. No longer are the Russian military targeting opposition forces, they are bombing indiscriminately, trying to wear down the resistance from the Ukrainian people. The reporters have said the Russians used the same tactics in Syria in supporting Assad's regime. Humanitarian corridors are now being negotiated to allow civilians to flee to safe areas.

As Christians what do we make of all this? In what way can we act to support the people of Ukraine and also to try and stop the war itself. We can certainly pray, as we have done over the last three weeks. We can give generously when we have the opportunity, whether that is money or items of bedding, clothing etc. One idea that has been suggested is to use less energy. This can be to turn our thermostats down by one degree. If we are cold then it will help us to realise what it is like for those who are fleeing to safety with just the bare essentials. Another idea is to travel less and save the petrol or diesel in our cars. There must be other ways that you can think of to lessen the consumption of oil and gas. The little sacrifices we make may not seem as though they will make much difference but if each person in our town or village did the same, if each person in our country did the same, if each person in Europe did the same, what effect would this have in the days and weeks to come?

Sadly, we are paying for the war in the gas and oil we buy from Russia, the less we buy the more pressure this puts on the Russian economy. What has amazed me in the last three weeks is the way the western world has acted together to put real pressure on Putin. To me it is a miracle, a work of God. The people of the world have seen what the terrible effects of war are and I am so grateful that despite tremendous provocation from Putin the leaders of the West have been measured in what they have done. We Must continue to pray for the Western leaders that God will give them guidance and wisdom in the decisions and actions they take. God Bless Ukraine

Note from Revd Nathan: This week the British Government has launched the *Homes for Ukraine* scheme, inviting individuals within churches and communities to host a refugee or family from Ukraine. The scheme is currently for individuals to sponsor a person seeking sanctuary to enable them to live in the UK. There will be a scheme for groups (including churches) to sponsor a person or family, which will be announced at a later date.

If you do register for the scheme please do let me know. The Methodist Church nationally are hoping to link up Methodists who have volunteered, to enable them to receive support.



Repentance: Changing Direction

Online Circuit Service Sermon | Revd Nathan Falla
Readings: Isaiah 55:1-9 & Luke 13:1-9

1. Online Service

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

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 – 20th March

A Passion for Hospitality: I was a stranger

During Lent Sunday Worship is considering how, as the nation emerges from a long period of isolation, we can better reach out both to neighbour and stranger, and especially to the most marginalised and disadvantaged. On the third Sunday in Lent Father Dermot Preston leads a service from St Dominic's Priory in Newcastle, taking the vision of the bridges across the River Tyne as a parable of building links between strangers both personally and globally.

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.)

We live in a fallen world, a world of greed and selfishness, where people go hungry and have nowhere to call home. A world where there is corruption; where power is abused and promises are made one day and broken the next. A world where a price is put on love and life when it is a priceless gift.

We live in this world, and feel and acknowledge the pain but we also play our part. We are perpetrators for we contribute to the pain of this world recognising that there are things that we say, think and do that we should not.

In our Gospel reading today there is no escaping the call to examine our lives, to turn away from sin and turn to God, to repent, that we may not perish. Prior to this passage Jesus had been addressing the crowd; preaching about judgement and division, and recognising the signs of the times but this is disrupted by some breaking news from within the crowd; a terrible atrocity had taken place in Jerusalem: Pontius Pilate had ordered the killing of some Galileans when they were in the temple courts offering sacrifices.

We are not sure who these Galileans were. No other Gospel writer or historian of the time mentions them. They may have been rebels, they may have been pilgrims caught up in the wrong place at the wrong time. Pilate certainly had a reputation for barbarity and being unconcerned for religious sensibilities. If this event happened exactly as reported it would mean not just murder but the desecration of the temple.

Everybody who heard the news would have been jumping to the wrong conclusion because people thought that disaster was punishment for sin. But Jesus responds to the news by challenging the status quo and 'makes the point that these Galileans had not been singled out for a horrible death because they were worse sinners than others.'

There is certainly no correlation between sin and suffering. The fact of the matter is the crowd and we are all sinners and are all in need of repentance. Sin is sin, is sin, is sin, and Paul reminds us in his letter to the Romans All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Sin causes us to be alienated from God, from others and even ourselves! Sin leads to death – death of relationships; people not being fully alive and not knowing the saving love and grace of God.

This is why Jesus gives the stark warning: "But unless you repent, you will all perish as well." This warning is also repeated a second time after Jesus has given the example of those people who died when the tower

of Siloam in Jerusalem fell down. Another example of the truth that no-one knows when their life on earth will come to an end but we need to ensure that we are right with God!

Jesus then tells the story of the fig tree that is not bearing fruit. The owner of the vineyard has observed the tree for three years and still there is no fruit, the owner sees it as a waste of space and he is losing profit from it, he asks the worker to cut it down. But the worker asks for a second chance. We have a God of second, third, and four hundred and ninetieth chances. A God who longs for us to be fruitful. A God who offer us a way back through Jesus but we need to take it.

To turn away from sin, means to repent, to say sorry. The Greek word used is metanoia which means to change direction, to turn 180 degrees; it is about reorientation; turning away from sin, and turning towards God. We can change direction, we can turn to Christ. We can give God our all, every part of us, and be truly devoted to God. Today are we right with God? Do we need to turn to God?

Our reading from Isaiah reminds us of the amazing invitation that we can come to God and find the resources that we need, a God who is generous, merciful, and loving. A God who longs for us to listen that we may know God's ways. A God who is holy and awesome yet loves us unconditionally, whose arms are outstretched to welcome us home.

Do we need to return to God that we may know his love and mercy? Isaiah reminds us that God thinks differently from how we do (vv. 8–9). Presumably because no human being would have been faithful and merciful when faced with Israel's rebellion, Isaiah appeals to the transcendence of God, not to frighten, but to explain just how much more generous and merciful God is than we could ever have imagined. And what amazing love, generosity and sacrifice God displays when Jesus, the son of God, dies on the cross so that the great chasm caused by all the wrong that we do, can be bridged by the love and grace of God.

Lent is a time for self-examination and repentance, as we come today, are we prepared to look at ourselves honestly, to examine our lives before God, our motivations and our actions? Are we mindful of our sin? Knowing that our lives do not always reflect God's love, knowing that we miss the mark, knowing that we limit God's love for others by what we say, think and do.

We have a God who loves us, and who longs for us to be closer to him, but the rubbish in our lives gets in the way. Are we willing to be open before God that we may be reconciled to him, that the broken relationship may be restored. No one is beyond God's grace there is always more grace in God, than there is sin in us.

Let us therefore orientate our lives on God and know the depth of God's love and forgiveness.

Prayer Space

Loving God as we come to worship
we come just as we are.
We bring our pain and suffering
and the pain and suffering of our world,
praying for healing, praying for peace.
We bring the burdens we carry
and the burdens of our world,
praying for strength.
We bring our grief and sadness
and the grief and sadness of our world,
praying for comfort.

God says: Incline your ear and come to me;
listen so that you may live.

Loving God,
we seek your presence, we long for you
as those in the desert long for water.
We see your glory and power,
and are humbled by the greatness
of your steadfast love.
You are our strength, you are our help –
in you we place our trust, on you we rely.
We come to you in worship.
We come to you in praise.
We come to you in humble adoration.
Amen.

Loving God,
your Son Jesus Christ, wept over Jerusalem.
Today, we weep over Ukraine.
We weep for those uprooted
from their homes and lives.
We weep for those cowering in basements.
We weep for those who have witnessed
death and destruction on their streets.
We weep for those separated
from parents, from children,
from spouses and siblings.
We are amazed at the resilience of people
seeking to comfort those in need
and so we pray for Governments
opening up borders so that Ukrainians
can have safe passage.
We pray for churches and individuals
providing food, clothing and shelter.
We pray for medical workers
ensuring that shattered bodies
are put back together again.
We pray for ordinary Russians
demonstrating and voicing their
disapproval of the military actions in
Ukraine.
May the Holy Spirit give us the willpower
to turn our tears into action also.
May we, through our words, prayers and
example pursue the things that make
for a just peace in the world today and
especially in Ukraine.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.
Amen

Hymns and worship songs

Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service:

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us – StF 238, SOF 321

All who are thirsty, all who are weak – SOF 1164

Almighty God, we come to make confession – StF 419

Over all the earth – StF 63, SOF 1498

Ukrainian blessing

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. What do you think of when you hear the word "repentance"?
2. How important is confession to you?
3. How have you experienced God's love, grace and forgiveness?
4. What does it mean to be fruitful?



the National Methodist Youth Brass Band
In Concert

at

Hope Community Methodist Church
Barnbygate

Saturday 2nd April | 7.30pm

Admission Free

Retiring Collection for

Afghan Welcome &

All We Can Ukraine Emergency Appeal



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

| March - May 2022 | | 20th Mar 3rd of Lent | 27th Mar 4th of Lent Mothering Sunday | 3rd Apr 5th of Lent Passion Sunday | 10th Apr 6th of Lent Palm Sunday |
|------------------|----------|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| Balderton | 8:30 am | | | | |
| | 10:30 am | LA | Bates | Dalby | Gibson HC |
| | 6:00 pm | | | Bates 4:00 pm | |
| Charles Street | 8:30 am | | | | |
| | 10:30 am | Falla | Mathews | JS with Hope at B'gate | Falla |
| | 6:00 pm | Bates | Falla | Falla | Bates |
| Collingham | 10:45 am | Hart | LA | West | Bates US |
| Elston | 10:45 am | Hibberts HC / 2pm | Ward T | | Hardy |
| Hope Community | 10:30 am | A Trowbridge at B'gate | Falla HC / at H'ville | Falla with NMYBB at B'gate | Winnington Breakfast at H'ville / 9am |
| Long Bennington | 10:30 am | Pearce | Gibson | Bates | Morley |
| North End | 6:00 pm | Hibberts | Ward | Bates | Falla |
| North Muskham | 10:30 am | | Winnington | | Hibberts |
| | 2:00 pm | Falla Café | | Hibberts Café | |
| Southwell | 10:30 am | Hibberts | Hibberts | Hibberts | Ward T |
| | Other | Hucknall HC / 4pm | Hibberts Fringe / 6pm | Hart 4pm | Hibberts PicC / 2pm |
| Sutton-on-Trent | 10:30 am | Bates HC | US at Parish Church / 4pm | Hucknall T | LA Breakfast / 9am |

For full plan, visit the Circuit Website:

<https://www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk/newsroom/march-may-plan.html>

or contact your local church

*Lord God, we acknowledge that all have sinned
and fallen short of your glory
and that all need to be saved from their sins.*

*We rejoice that through the life, death and resurrection
of Christ all may be saved: this is the gift of your gospel.*

*We rejoice that through the witness of the Holy Spirit
all may know themselves saved:*

this is the gift of your grace.

*We rejoice that through the work of the Holy Spirit
all may be saved to the uttermost:*

this is the gift of your glory.

*Lord God, for this, your great work of salvation we give you
thanks and praise. Amen.*

Derek Balsdon

Methodist Prayer Handbook 2021-22

Based on "The Four All's" of Methodism