

TOGETHER

He is risen! He is risen indeed, Hallelujah!

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

‘We believe in life before death’

An article on Christian Aid Week 15-21st May 2022 | by Rev Peter Hibberts

Did you have to read the headline twice? We’re perhaps more familiar with the statement, ‘We believe in life after death.’ (Which of course is also true!) That’s why I think the Christian Aid strap-line that I’m quoting in the headline is so powerful. Yes Christ came to bring eternal life, but he also came to teach us how to live this side of death, to care for one another and bring God’s Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven.

This week (15th-21st May) is Christian Aid week. You may have received an envelope through your door as armies of volunteers seek to raise funds for the many important projects that Christian Aid supports. This year the theme is to **‘Turn Hunger into Hope.’**

I was chatting yesterday with one of the organisers in one of my communities and she said that with the Ukrainian appeal (which in and of itself is incredibly worthy and understandably grabbing our attention) many of the other plights are being overshadowed and risk being forgotten.

“This Christian Aid Week the story of Jessica Mwedzi from Zimbabwe is being told. She smiles with love for her children as she stirs a single bowl of porridge for them but she knows they’re hungry for more. This one bowl of porridge is all she and her family can eat today: ‘My children crave a decent meal, but I can’t provide. We often go to bed on an empty stomach. It pains me to send them to bed hungry.’

For Jessica, drought means every day is a struggle for survival. Like many women in rural Zimbabwe - 7 out of 10 rely on farming for income and food - she toils on her farm, but nothing can grow on her ashen, dry land. Drought starves. Intensified by the climate crisis, and the effects of war in Ukraine on global food production, it drives families into hunger. Jessica recalls that ‘One year, we had no rain. The scorching sun burnt my crops just as they were about to bloom. It was so painful and disheartening.’

It’s unjust that drought - exacerbated by the effects of conflict and the global pandemic - robs Jessica of the power to provide for her family. Her husband is unwell, so she’s the only breadwinner. Her children look up to her, but she has nothing left to give. Once before, when things were desperate, Jessica asked

her neighbours for food but she came home with nothing. But we can help, we can stand with Jessica and we can support the work of Christian Aid.” (From christianaid.org.uk)

Christian Aid is asking those who are able to give whatever they can to support families like Jessica’s. If you are able and would like to give, you can respond to the envelope through your door or give online at christianaid.org.uk. You may even find that your local church can handle your donation. If you’re not able to give, please support in prayer,

**May Your kingdom come and
your will be done, on Earth
as it is in Heaven, Amen.**





'Who are you?'

Circuit Service Message | Exodus 3:1-14 and John 6:29-35 | Rev Peter Hibberts

1. Online Service

This week (22nd May) our online circuit service will be led by Rev

Peter Hibberts and will be broadcast 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 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 - 22nd May

"My delight to learn or to teach or to write..."

A service marking the 1,000th anniversary of Durham Cathedral receiving one of its most precious artefacts of pilgrimage, the mortal remains of the Venerable Bede, the greatest of Anglo-Saxon scholars.

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.)

If, like me, you're a football fan, the headline above will carry a familiar chant like pattern and tune as it has at many a stadium with one set of fans goading the other... "Who are ya! Who are ya!" Identity is a huge thing. The BBC made great profit out of this very truth when they commissioned their celebrity ancestry series 'Who do you think you are?' In fact the ancestry industry in the USA alone was valued at \$3 billion in 2019 and is projected to be worth \$8 billion by 2026! Who we are is important to us. But should it be? Actually, if you ask John, the gospel writer, he would tell you that there's a more important question - who is Jesus! It's no secret that I've found the last two years difficult, in life, in ministry - generally really. One of the things I've found hardest is unkind and judgmental words that still ring in my ears. Some may have been true, some were certainly not, but the devil uses these words to undermine us and pull us away from God. I'm resolving in the next seven weeks (along with some of the groups and congregations I lead) to pay less attention to the undermining words of the world and who they tell me I am, and more attention to who Jesus is and who he says I am. I'm going to ground myself in John's gospel where we are directed to seven key truths about Jesus. Will you join me?

Before I delve into John, let me just take a few moments to think about the common point in all of these... 'I am.' To understand the magnitude that these two simple words carry we need to go all the way back to Moses in the desert and to the burning bush. If you were asked who you are, what would you say? If you were asked to say who God is, what would you say?

Moses found himself in this position as he faced the burning bush. God meets Moses and reveals to him that he will send him to bring his people out of captivity. What is Moses' response? Understandably he feels inadequate for such a task and replies "Who am I?" Interestingly enough, God doesn't follow this by listing Moses strengths and gifting (that's what I might have done to encourage someone into service). Instead God says, "I will be with you." Genius.

God knows that Moses success will never be about who he is or what he can do but it's about who God is and what God can do. That's true for you also. What are you facing? Is it, at times, overwhelming? Me too. Choose, instead of focussing on what lies ahead, or how you're not up to the task, look around and notice that God is with you.

Maybe, like Moses, you need a little extra reassurance. Moses at least accepts that this is his task because he next says, "Suppose I go...who shall I say sent me." The response is so incredibly powerful that for millennia it has been used as the actual name of God. It's so special that the Jews dared not speak it aloud and when it was written, the vowels were omitted to keep it sacred - in fact we cannot be sure of the vowels now as there is no written record of them!

God simply says, "I am."

In Hebrew is it YHWH and when we speculate at the missing vowels we get Yahweh, from which, as a Latin version, we get Jehovah.

It's an incredible statement though. God simply *is*. And that's all we need.

One of my favourite Christian tracks is the Casting Crowns track, 'Who am I'. If you get chance, listen to it. It holds the brilliant lyrics: *Not because of who I am, But because of what You've done, Not because of what I've done, But because of who You are.* This is how we face life.

And with that in mind, let's press on. Who is this 'I am'? Well of course, it's God the trinity, of whom the embodiment is Jesus. Jesus who also said 'I am,' seven times:

I am the bread of life (John 6:35), I am the light of the world (8:12), I am the door (10:7), I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14), I am the resurrection and the life (11:25), I am the way the truth and the life (14:6) and I am the true vine (15:1).

Could you have named them without looking? Which is the one you find the most powerful?

I am the bread of life (John 6:35)

Perhaps we start well with this one, especially if this message comes as a lifeline in a time when you are hungry, or thirsty. If you are spiritually malnourished at this time, here Jesus say I am the bread of life.

Few things are more of a crisis than the Hibberts family running out of bread! We have so many bread products that are always on our shopping list (wraps, pittas, sliced - white and wholemeal, bagels, muffins...) and bread is rarely thrown away. It's a staple food throughout the world. It's the food (unleavened) that the Israelites took with them when they fled, it's the food that God provided in the wilderness, it's the food that many an army has marched on and it's the food that represents the body of Christ in the most sacred of our rituals, communion. When we meet, we literally and figuratively break bread.

One of the most beautiful words we have in the English language is the word companion. 2022 has been dubbed the year of loneliness; isolation or loneliness has been one of the hardest parts of the last two years, many of you may still feel alone or isolated. You will probably know that during lockdown, we got a dog (many did) and this week Wesley is 1 year old. He is a wonderful companion. (As I prepare this, he's curled up behind me in my study at SMC.) I find his mere presence lifting (when he's not stealing my slippers!)

Did you know that companion literally means 'one who breaks bread with another.' 'Com' is from the Latin meaning together and 'panis' from the Latin for bread.

Let me tell you then, from these truths, that the most fulfilling food we can encounter is the presence of Christ. It is by the literal breaking of Christ's body, figuratively the breaking of bread as Jesus is the bread of life, that Jesus seals himself as our eternal companion. You are never alone. When Jesus chose to come and walk the Earth, as God taking on flesh and humanness, he was the ultimate manna (bread of heaven). Then, when he chose to walk the way of the cross and was crucified he took all of the things that separate us from him and isolate us from God (we often call these sins - the mistakes we've made in life) and he took them into the grave. When he rose again on the third day, from actually, physically dead to actually, physically alive again, he left those separators behind. We are forgiven. We are reconciled - one again with God! Hallelujah!

Here we come full circle. You see Yahweh is with us! God, the I am, goes with us, just as he did with Moses. When you struggle, look around and know that God is with you, God has got you. But just remember - like the Manna in the wilderness, it needed to be collected daily, we need our daily bread - daily tome with Jesus in prayer, worship, study. How will you break bread today? Have you stopped, noticed and communed with Jesus today?

Prayers

Great 'I am', May we know that you are with us whatever we face, that you walk alongside us in all that you call us to. Help us to remember that our walk with you is not dependent in who we are or what we have done, but it built upon who you are and what you have done.

May we know you as the bread of life, know your companionship day by day and grow as we feed on you as our daily bread. Help us to make space to commune with you daily. Lead and guide us by you spirit, in the name of Jesus and for your eternal glory. **Amen**

A prayer from christianaid.org.uk

God of all peoples and nations,
Who created all things alive and breathing,
united and whole,

Show us the way of peace that is Your
overwhelming presence.

We hold before you the peoples of every
country.

Every child and every adult.

We long for the time when weapons of war
are beaten into ploughshares, when nations
no longer lift up sword against nation.

We cry out to you for peace;

Protect those who only desire and deserve to
live in security and safety.

Comfort those who fear for their lives and the
lives of their loved ones.

Be with those who are bereaved.

Change the hearts of those set on violence
and aggression.

And fill leaders with the wisdom that leads to
peace.

Kindle again in us a love of our neighbour,
and a passion for justice to prevail and a
renewed recognition that we all play a part in
peace.

We also pray for all those we know are in
particular need at this time.

Creator of all hear our prayer and bring us
peace.

Make us whole.

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

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder (StF 82) [LINK](#)

Give thanks with a grateful heart (StF 78) [LINK](#)

I am yours by Casting Crowns [LINK](#)

Guide me O thou great Jehovah (StF 465) [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. If you were asked, 'Who are you?' How would you respond? If you were asked to say who God is, how would you answer?
2. Can you list the seven I am statements? Which is the one you find most powerful?
3. Can you think of a time when the words of others have pulled you down?
4. When have you found the words of others built you up?
5. Who might God be speaking to you about, who might need to be built up with your words - why not call someone?
6. If you're feeling low, reach out to someone and tell them.

In-person worship across the circuit from June...

June-August 2022		5th June Pentecost	12th June Trinity Sunday	19th June Sanctuary Sunday	26th June Conference Sunday	3rd July
Balderton	10.30am	K Trowbridge	Ward T	N Falla HC	Dalby	Hart
	Other	LA SoP 2pm				LA 4pm
Charles Street	10.30am	Mathews	N Falla HC	Winnington	Mathews	N Falla HC
	6pm	Beech	Gibson	N Falla HC	West	Hart
Collingham	10.45am	A Trowbridge	Gibson	Dalby T	Hall HC	L Blatherwick
Elston	10.45am	Jubilee at All Saints US / 10.30am	LA		Hibberts CA / HC	
Hope Community	10.30am	N Falla HC at B'gate	Winnington Breakfast at H'ville / 9am	Ward at B'gate	LA at H'ville	Beech at B'gate
Long Bennington	10.30am	Hart	United Service at Parish Church	LA	Morley HC	Ward T
North End	6pm	Hart	Hibberts	Mathews	Morley	Hardy
North Muskham	10.30am		Hucknall HC / T		Pearce	
	2pm	LA Café		N Falla Café		Hibberts Café / HC
Southwell	10am	Adams	Hardy	Hibberts HC	L Blatherwick	Hibberts
	Other			Hucknall 4pm	Hibberts Fringe	N Falla 4pm
Sutton-on-Trent	10.30am	Morley US	Hibberts Breakfast / HC / 9am	Hibberts at Old England 4pm	United Service at Parish Church HC / 10am	Hibberts SoP / 6.30pm

The new Circuit Preaching Plan is now available from the circuit website (where you will find all service details): www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk or contact your local church.



We believe in life before death

- We seek to follow the teaching of Jesus Christ, who commanded his followers to love their neighbour and work for a better world.
- We stand with the most vulnerable and excluded people of the world – both in times of crisis and for the longer term. We give people survival essentials when they are without shelter or refuge, and help them find the strength and resources they need to flourish and protect themselves from shocks and disasters.
- We support people to stand up for their rights and to build stable, secure lives they can enjoy living.