



TOGETHER

only physically apart

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

From your Leadership Team

A letter from your Circuit Leadership Team | written by Ann Lyne

Dear All,

We hope that you and your families are keeping safe and that you are coping with our second period of lockdown. Everyone's lives have changed out of all recognition compared to this time last year. Who could have predicted that our methods of shopping, working, socialising, exercising, holidaying and worshipping would change so much? All eleven churches in our Circuit have had to face a number of challenges, and there no doubt will be more to come. One of the most difficult of these challenges has been to maintain contact with every member of our congregations. Each one of you is an important and valued part of our Newark and Southwell Circuit. TOGETHER is one attempt to keep us connected .

The CLT (Circuit Leadership Team) has been meeting every month to try to keep business happening as normally as possible. One of our achievements has been to have finally sold Brough Chapel. This was so difficult and took three years to complete. Another is that we have appointed Nick Fairfax as the new circuit administrator to replace Jill Meakin. Also a representative from each of your churches joined with us as the Invitation Committee to offer Peter Hibberts a five year extension to his ministry here.

Every time we meet as a CLT there are discussions around caring for our congregations, budgets and how we can move forward and plan for the future. A crystal ball would be so useful as we try to imagine what normal will be like in a month, or a year or even further ahead. This pandemic has highlighted that we are probably never going to return to how things were. So we have been trying to re-imagine church . Thinking outside the box is not easy, but we are all becoming used to behaving in ways that we never imagined a year ago. As the lockdowns have progressed, we are looking at things through different eyes. Technology has come into its own and some of the least likely people are now on WhatsApp or using Skype and Zoom to keep in touch. Those mobile phones that used to be left at the bottom of handbags, switched off and often flat are now frequently used to keep in touch.

We need your help to visualise what the future can hold for us as Methodists in Newark and Southwell. When you talk to each other you can you mull over...

How can your own church or the circuit make itself more inclusive and community focussed?

How do we deepen discipleship within our own church and within the circuit?

The Leadership Team will be discussing these questions over the coming weeks; they will be explored in the Circuit Meeting; and we would like to invite every Church member to consider them and each Church Council to engage with them at their next meeting. Then, in the Spring, we will be devoting special time to bringing all your ideas forward, seeking God's will and formulating a vision for our circuit. Neither question is easy to answer, but we really would appreciate any suggestions however small or large.

When our lives return to "normal" we hope that we can look back on a time that gave us the opportunity to reaffirm the calling of The Methodist Church "to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission".



1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our Circuit Service which this week is hosted by Southwell Methodist Church and is Advent Sunday!

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

Join folk from across the circuit from 11:30am each Sunday morning - you provide the coffee - we'll provide the fellowship! pop in for 5 minutes or half an hour - we'd love to see you!

Please join us afterwards

Come with a drink and a biscuit to share in conversation after the service.

www.zoom.us
Meeting ID: 885 3100 7185
Password: Tog3ther
Phone: 0131 460 1196
Meeting ID: 885 3100 7185
Password: 48647472



If you'd like help to 'Zoom', please get in touch!

3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also online.)

08:10am - Sunday 29th November

Cities of Promise - A place for good news

On the eve of St Andrew's Day theologian and scholar of Celtic Christianity, Gilbert Markus, sees the spiritual pilgrim's vision of a heavenly city.

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 any of this baffles you - contact your minister and we can support you!

Are you watching?

Our Sunday Sermon | Reflections from Mark Ch 13 v 24 -37 | Val Fowles

Spend a few minutes thinking about when you are waiting for someone to arrive. Visitor, baby, neighbour, health professional, friend, minister, salesperson etc

What preparations have you made? How will you know when they have arrived? Are you watching, listening out? How are you feeling? Excited, nervous, tired.... What are you looking forward to about their visit, the time you are going to spend together?

During this strange year many of us have been longing to reconnect with loved ones. In Isaiah 64 v 1 the prophet is begging with God that he descends to earth,

"Oh that you would tear open the heavens and come down".

The season of Advent is when we remind ourselves that God did indeed come down!

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1 v 14 NIV)

Or as The Message a modern version says:

"The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish."

Advent is a time when we look back; reminding ourselves of the wonderful news that Jesus, the Son of God, was born as a human baby in Bethlehem, born into poverty, homeless and, by the world's standards, powerless. Yet this little baby turned the world on its head and continues to do so. In Advent we also look forward, to the excitement of celebrating Christmas day, but also to the adventures that we will have on our journey with Jesus. If Jesus is the visitor for whom we are waiting; where will we meet? where will he take us? How will he care for us? Adventures take us to new places, they are sometimes challenging, often awe-inspiring, and usually life changing as we see the world with fresh eyes.

Many of you will know that Steve and myself travelled back from Australia, trying to minimise our carbon footprint. We flew to Indonesia and then travelled by train, bus and riverboat across the World to St Petersburg. We needed good guidebooks, written by people who had already been to these places, we sometimes needed an actual guide to walk beside us, we tried to be well prepared but sometimes things changed and we had to adapt those plans (our ferry in St Petersburg was frozen in, a storm had washed away a railway bridge in Malaysia!) . Can you see the similarities to our walk with Jesus? To our church life in a Pandemic? If I can trust my safety to a Russian guide whom I discovered on an internet search, surely I can walk with Jesus and trust him to take care of things. I must be

prepared to meet him and follow him, sometimes to unexpected places.

Do you know the Tolstoy story of Papa Panov? (You can watch it here <https://youtu.be/ovztqF6jIYk>). Papa Panov is an elderly shoemaker who lives by himself in a small Russian village. His wife has died, and his children are all grown up. Alone on Christmas Eve in his shop, he decides to open the old family Bible and reads the Christmas story about the birth of Jesus.

That night, he has a dream in which Jesus comes to him. Jesus says that he will visit him in person tomorrow, but that he will have to pay special attention and keep watching out since he may not recognise him.

Papa Panov wakes up the next morning, excited about Christmas Day and meeting his potential visitor. He notices that a street sweeper is working early on a cold winter morning. Touched by his hard work and dejected appearance, he invites him inside for a hot cup of coffee.

Later in the day, a single mother with a worn face too old for her young age walks down the street clutching her baby. Again, Papa Panov invites them in to warm up and even gives the baby a beautiful brand-new pair of shoes that he made.

As the day goes by, Papa Panov keeps his eyes peeled for his holy visitor. But he only sees neighbours and beggars on the street. He decides to feed the beggars. Soon it is dark, and he settles indoors with a sigh, believing his dream was only a dream. But then the voice of Jesus speaks, and it is revealed that Jesus came to him in each and every person he helped today, from the street sweeper to the local beggar.

This week's bible reading is from Mark Ch 13 v 24 -37 It is quite probable that Mark wrote this gospel about the time of The First Jewish- Roman war AD 66-73. In Jerusalem and surrounding areas there were protests and attacks on Romans by the Jewish people, prompted by unfair taxes and laws. This escalated and the Romans responded culminating in the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, there were casualties on both sides and huge suffering amongst the civilian population. (so many parallels throughout history).

Into this context Mark wrote his Gospel, Mark is looking forward to the arrival of Jesus into this terrible situation(v 26)' and we still, in this troubled world, look forward to what we term as The Second Coming. As we wait, we must look for signs of Jesus' presence, just as the buds on a tree herald the summer (v 28). Are we watching out with anticipation? Watching as a child waits for their grandparent's car to turn into the street? Watching for Jesus to appear in the here and now? Eager to journey with him appreciating his wonderful creation. Do we bring peace, joy, and the love of Jesus into the lives of the people we meet?

Prayer Space

Prayers

*God of hope,
who brought love into this world,
be the love that dwells between us.*

*God of hope,
who brought peace into this world,
be the peace that dwells between us.*

*God of hope,
who brought joy into this world,
be the joy that dwells between us.*

*God of hope,
the rock we stand upon,
be the centre, the focus of our lives
always, and particularly this Advent time.*

*Draw us together in unity,
despite our separation,
that our praise and worship
might echo in each of our walls, as they
would in the walls of your house,
and also through our lives.*

*Draw us together in mission,
that the hope within
might be the song we sing,
and the melody of our lives, despite not
being able to sing together.*

*Draw us together in service,
that the path we follow
might lead us from a stable
to a glimpse of eternity.*

Amen

EMAIL PRAYER CHAIN

If you would like to join the prayer chain and receive prayer requests or have a prayer request (with permission of the recipient) please get in touch with Colin...

Colin Beckett colin1244@gmail.com.

Dial-a-sermon

Can't get onto the YouTube Service? Want to hear the Sunday sermon? Dial up at any time of the day or night at the cost of a local call.

Press option 3 for the Sunday Sermon (Sermons go live each Sunday.)

Dial a Sermon

01636 552255

Listen to the circuit sermon
each week.

Newark and Southwell
Methodist Circuit
helping you stay connected
whilst we're apart.



Reflective songs...

Songs chosen for inclusion in the YouTube service...

Longing for Light - Christ be our light (StF 706) [LINK](#)

Light of the World (StF 175) [LINK](#)

Hills of the North Rejoice (STF 172) [LINK](#)

Click 'LINK's to access YouTube clips of each song.

Bubble Church Resources



Our face-to-face Bubble Churches have had to close again, with the second lockdown (for the entirety of November) but some have made the transition to Zoom. If you would like to join a Zoom bubble (online) then contact your minister or why not telephone another church member and have your own mini telephone bubble using these discussion questions...

1. Are we waiting eagerly for Jesus?
2. When we meet Jesus (welcome him to our house) what difference does he make?
3. If we had been a friend of Jesus when he was on Earth, where would he have taken us, whom would we have met?
4. On our journey/ adventure with Jesus
 - a. What is our guidebook and why?
 - b. Who is our guide?
 - c. What do we do when things don't go to plan?
5. As we watch for Jesus this advent whom might he send?

For more information checkout the Bubble Church guide with risk assessment on the Circuit Website: <https://www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk/newsroom/bubble-church.html>

Next time...

Next week we continue our Advent journey with a service from the church family at Collingham for the second Sunday in Advent.



For Advent this year the Methodist Church nationwide are launching a campaign on 1st December. The message is centred on the truth that God is with us at all times. It will feature 24 stories sharing people's experience of God being with them over the year. If you have a story that you would like to share, please be in touch.

A very different Christmas

25-11-20

Christmas Eve

Christmas is going to look very different this year, restrictions and guidance in place for our safety will have an impact on who we can meet with and which of our traditions can take place.

It is important to take time to prepare our children for a very different Christmas this year, but this can also be an opportunity to have some meaningful conversations about what Christmas is really about.



What is your favourite part of Christmas Day?

Which is your favourite thing we normally do at church for Christmas?

How is Christmas going to be different this year?

What are you going to miss the most this Christmas?

Family

Spending time with family is an important part of Christmas for many of us. This year you may be unable to meet with family members or you might find yourself having to be socially distanced from them.

Why not encourage children to write letters or create special Christmas cards to relatives. Fill them with messages of love, taking the time to let them know some of your favourite things about them. You could even take time as a family to wait on God and ask for a message of encouragement or a picture from God for each member of your family.



Presents

When asked, most children will say that their favourite part of Christmas is the presents! During these strange times many families will be struggling with finances. Don't be afraid of sharing honestly with your children and managing their expectations.

Why not get creative and crafty, working together to hand make some presents/editable gifts for others. You could pray for those you are making presents for and include a message of encouragement or a favourite Bible verse with their gift.

What is the best present you have ever given?

God's love is a free gift for everyone - how can we share it this Christmas?



Food

Christmas has become a lot about indulgence and food, a far cry from the baby placed in an animal's feeding trough over 2000 years ago.

This year why not think about those who might be alone or without food at Christmas. If you're able to why not buy extra food to drop off at a local food bank or community fridge.

Even if you can't invite them into your home why not offer to share Christmas lunch with somebody locally who lives alone - package up a meal for them and drop it off. You could even invite them to join you at your dining table via zoom and all eat together.

What is your favourite Christmas food?

If you could invite anybody to Christmas lunch who would it be?



Church

Church leaders around the world are coming up with creative ways to celebrate Christmas this year. If your favourite church tradition is missing this year why not just hold your own family service together at home - invite your children to plan the service, choose the carols, share Bible readings and celebrate Christmas together.

You could even invite another family to join you via video call and be part of your service!

Which is your favourite Christmas Carol?

What is the most important thing to include in a Christmas Service?



Shining a Light

Jesus came to be a light for the world and we can be a light too. From the shining star above the stable to the host of angels appearing to the shepherds the Christmas story is full of images that remind us that Jesus came to be a light in a dark world.

How will you share God's light with others this Christmas? Why not decorate your windows with lights or pictures and share a message of Christmas hope with those passing your home.

If your church is running services online you could include details in Christmas cards and deliver them to neighbours and those in your community.

How can we be a light in the world this Christmas?

How many sources of light can you find in the Christmas story?



Can you contribute to TOGETHER?

We're looking to produce this Newsletter as a Circuit and would like to widen the team as far as possible. Perhaps you could contribute a prayer, a short article, an encouraging piece. Maybe you would be willing to be part of the editorial team? Perhaps you'd like us to advertise something in your church.

If you would like to join the team or make a one-off contribution, please get in touch with Revd. Peter Hibberts by email (peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk) or telephone (01636812166).

Contributions must be received by Monday of each week for Tuesday editorial and Wednesday distribution.