

TOGETHER

Elston | North Muskham | Southwell | Sutton on Trent



You're a 'work of heart'!

Perhaps one of the hardest things during lockdown is the difficulty in expressing and receiving our love for one another. I've heard many folk say that they are craving a hug, from the grandchildren, a non-cohabiting partner or even a wife or husband that has been separated due to a need for shielding.

Perhaps in recognition of that, about three weeks ago, FaceBook supplemented its 'Emojis' (buttons a user can click onto to show their emotional reaction to something they've read) with two new Covid-19 emojis. FaceBook users are used to the thumbs up (like); heart (love); laughing, shocked or angry faces, but now can choose 'care' (pictured below as a face hugging a heart or a beating heart. I find it interesting that folk (at least in the mind of FaceBook) need ways to express emotions like this - especially when apart. I think it's because we're all a '*work of heart*'. It was *for* love and *by* love that God created us, never to be isolated (that's why the expulsion from the Garden of Eden hurt, God and us, so much - check out Genesis, in the Bible.) We each carry the image of God and because *God* is love, at our best *so are we*.

If you are needing a hug right now (or need to give one!) then I hope during this lockdown you can still find a way. Perhaps it'll be electronic, maybe it'll be over the telephone or perhaps, if you're able it will be a socially distanced act of kindness. (You could send a hug as suggested in the families activities below!) Whatever it is, I hope you'll take comfort in the fact that this need is because:



you are an amazing 'work of heart'!



1. Circuit Services

A variety of worship opportunities will be hosted on the 'Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit' YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCF-CBiFzWL81CUJrKjC1Psw>) and details will also be on the 'NewarkandSouthwellMethodist' FaceBook Page (which can be accessed without a FaceBook account - [Click Here](#)). Tune in today!

2. TV Services

Sunday Worship BBC One, [LINK](#)

The Very Reverend Dr Sarah Rowland Jones leads the service on the sixth Sunday of Easter from St Davids Cathedral in Pembrokeshire, filmed before the closure of all church buildings was announced. With hymns recorded for Songs of Praise in July 2019.

3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also [online](#).)

Discovering the gifts of the Holy Spirit with the Rev Dr Alison Jack of New College, Edinburgh, and Fr Dermot Preston SJ of St Aloysius' RC Church, Glasgow.

4. Festival at Home - SOON!

You are invited to Festival at Home, a free-to-access online festival taking place from May 22nd to 25th 2020. Cliff College will be streaming live and pre-recorded Bible studies, seminars, workshops, preaching, worship and music straight to your home all weekend. Speakers include Rev Dr Billy Abraham, Professor Evelyn Parker and Dr Miguel A. De La Torre; our worship leaders include Sam Taylor and Josh Gillam. We'll also have some all-age worship and activities every day.

If all this this baffles you - call me or email: peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk.



The spirit *alongside us*

John 14.15-21 (NRSV)

The knowledge that God is with us has been a great comfort for many during these times of isolation but when we hear of the relationship(s) that are possible, for those who are disciples of Christ, I don't think it can be overstated!

I've joined many loyalty schemes in my time, some of which have delivered and others haven't been worth the flimsy card you get when you join. With Christian discipleship the benefits far outweigh the commitment we make (and often break, if I'm honest). As disciples of Christ (here described as 'keeping [his] commandments' - meaning it's can be us as well as the original disciples) we get an amazing package: an eternal advocate who abides with us constantly; parenting from the God who created everything; sight of the risen Christ; and the constant love of God, that same creator. More than that we are promised a future point when we will *see* Christ our Lord and redeemer once again. Not bad really!

Here the focus is on the 'Advocate'. But first comes the reality that they will be left; that Jesus will soon be separated from them. I wonder what the disciples made of that. What would they want do with their remaining time with Jesus? What would *we* have done with our final excursions, in the weeks preceding lockdown had we known what was ahead? (Hopefully not spent it stock-piling toilet rolls!) What might we have done with our last pre-lockdown church experience, if we'd known it would be so long before the next one? (Given out hymn books to take away, distributed resources for home worship?)

Then there follows the revelation that they would not be left alone ('not orphaned'). In fact it's more than that: Jesus tells us that *he* will be coming to them in a way that the *world* will not see. In short Jesus' presence will still be there for his disciples (that's us) but in a different way. It's genius really, when you think about it. Jesus, limited geographically, was the greatest teacher of all time and had given himself almost exclusively to twelve chosen individuals; but

now, following his death and resurrection, he could be the teacher and advocate to unlimited numbers! (In fact, as estimates would have us believe, he is now simultaneous teacher to 2.18 billion folk worldwide!) That said, it's definitely different. We don't 'see' Jesus in the same way (though we will). How can we expect this to work then? Well, (spoiler alert) we're about to spend a number of weeks exploring the role of the Holy Spirit, leading up to and beyond Pentecost, and as we look at the New Testament, we see this relationship lived out. The disciples (that's us too) are empowered beyond imagination, accompanied through the hardest of times, joined together in new and incredible ways and (perhaps most importantly) given the toughest of tasks to perform. In essence that's Christianity, that's what we're all called to.

This passage sets us up with an incredible challenge but also encourages us that we're equipped beyond our wildest dreams.

Never before, at least in living memory, have we faced such a lockdown, as communities or as the church and none of us really knows what to do. Some heroic acts are being undertaken both inside and outside the church right now and folk are really stepping up to the plate. Equally, we're all living with a level of disillusionment, it feels like such a long time and like it may be an even longer time yet. But God *is* with us. *He* is our 'advocate'.

Let me conclude, then, by looking into what that word 'advocate' means. In the Greek (the original New Testament language) it's '*parakleton*' which is here (in the New Revised Standard Version - NRSV) translated as '*advocate*'. Parakleton is made up of '*para*' meaning alongside (like a paramedic is alongside a doctor or a parachute alongside a skydiver) and '*kleton*' meaning to call. It's literally '*one who is called to be alongside*' [you]. In various translations it has come to mean comforter, counsellor, helper and, here, advocate. It is one who is called to your aid, to work on your behalf. Imagine that. Amidst all this, and anything else the world may throw at you, there is another constantly working for you, never sleeping, never off-duty and *not* socially distanced. 'He' is *not* off work because he's shielding, he *on* duty shielding you.

Interestingly enough, in law, one of the most basic rights is legal counsel. When you're in the worst of predicaments you can ask for an audience with your lawyer, and if you don't have one, one is provided. Just remember that. This is where translating the Holy Spirit as advocate is at its most powerful. **However bad this gets, however desperate or alone you feel, you always have the right to have an audience with your advocate (who just happens to be the creator of Heaven and Earth). All you have to do is talk walk him.** www.TryPraying.org

Prayer
2020

20:20

hope.together.org.uk

Next Wednesday will be the 20th May and I invite you to join thousands of others praying at 20:20 (8:20pm) for 20 minutes, for our nation. Join me on the [SMC Facebook page](#).

A Psalm of lament and praise in a time of coronavirus. (Précis)

How shall we praise you, Lord, our God?
When we are locked down,
how shall we praise you?
When the doors to your house are barred,
and your people cannot assemble?
When those desperately in need of money and work cannot even wait in the market-place?
When we have to circle round people in the street, and to queue for shops maintaining safe distance?
When we can only communicate by hearing on the phone, or seeing on the screen; or digitally messaging, or even just waving through a window?

Lord, I will try to praise you.
Through gritted teeth,
I will try to praise you.
I will try to remember that you have created all things,
and this virus is part of your creation.
I will try not to hate it
but seek to mitigate its harm.
I will try to keep myself and others safe.
I will work to pray for them
and seek to help in whatever way I can.

The full version of this Psalm is available at: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus/prayers-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/> along with many more prayers.

If you have specific prayer requests, do get in touch. If you would like requests to be shared around the SMC prayer chain contact Colin Beckett colin1244@gmail.com.

Funerals

The Methodist Church has prepared a short act of worship for anyone who is unable to attend a funeral of a loved one. The words offered are a mix of the funeral liturgy and original materials and can be accessed by clicking this [LINK](#). Please contact Revd. Hibberts if you require a paper copy or if you would like prayer support at this time.

Hymns and songs to reflect on...

For kids: Help me be your eyes (online only) [LINK](#)

Crown him with many crowns (StF 346) [LINK](#)

Breathe on me, breath of God (StF 370) [LINK](#)

Holy Spirit, rain down (StF 384) [LINK](#)

Down the mountain (StF 377) [LINK](#)

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

Help for the isolated

Elston residents, if you need support during the lockdown please contact the Good Neighbourhood Group through Sandra Wright on 07773 689736 or Linda Fitzgerald on 0798937115.

The Sutton-on-Trent Buddies Corona Virus Helpline is up and running - for help of any kind the number to ring is 01636 351615. or email suttonbuddy@outlook.com

Southwell Town Council can provide support by calling 07874780931, 07874780932 or 01636816103.

North Muskham's Buddy Scheme can be reached by contacting Andy Willey on 07967138724 or muskhambuddyscheme@yahoo.com.

If you would like to volunteer you should also make contact using the above details.

Can you help?

Video contributions: Could you contribute to our YouTube channel? The staff team are keen involve folk in the online church experience and would love to hear from you if you have something to say. This could be a testimony, a short homily (a thought for the day style contribution based on a Bible passage or circumstance) a prayer or a poem/reflection. If you can record something and send it to me, then I will try to include it somehow (it may be featured in Sunday worship or added to the YouTube channel as a 'stand alone' item.) For more information, do get in touch.

Giving:



Could you make a donation to the Newark FoodBank via your local collection point? Or perhaps you could make a financial donation online at: newark.foodbank.org.uk.

Or could you donate to the Christian Aid Week collection at justgiving.com/campaign/CAWeek2020.



13-5-20

Families:

families4SMC@gmail.com

CHILDREN'S CHURCH AT HOME!

During social distancing we are providing full children's church session for our younger church family members each week. You will be able to download the plan every week here:

<https://www.southwellmethodist.org.uk/childrenschurchathome.htm> so that you can do it at home as a family to help your children explore the theme that Rev. Peter preaches on in his service.

These activities may require some resources but they should be things you can gather up from your homes. There is also a PDF of activity sheets which children can complete during the service. All you'll need for this is a pen/pencil and some colouring pens and to print off the sheets before the service starts. Enjoy!

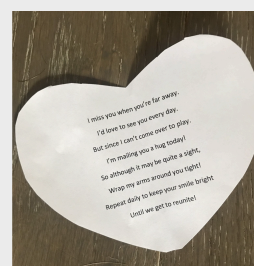
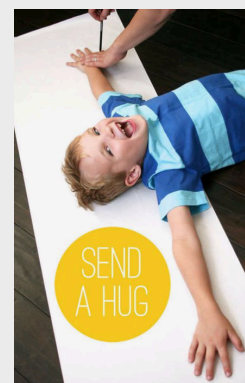
A work of 'heart'

As the lockdown continues, I am sure that you are all missing the social interaction and hugs of friends or family. Reflecting on what Peter said about finding ways to share a hug with others at this time, I want to share a lovely idea (stolen from Pinterest!) for sending a virtual hug to someone who would appreciate one.

This week, why not draw round your child with their arms outstretched (ready to give a big hug!). Let them paint it or colour it in to look like them before cutting it out. This could be posted to the person you want to give a hug to, or (particularly if it is a vulnerable person), you may wish to photograph it and email it to them. This wording could accompany it if you like:

I miss you when you're far away.
I'd love to see you every day.
But since I can't come over to play,
I'm mailing you a hug today!
So although it may be quite a sight,
Wrap my arms around you tight!
Repeat daily to keep your smile bright
Until we get to reunite!

It can't possibly be as good as the real thing but I bet it will bring a smile to someone's face.



Keep in Touch

There will be lots of opportunities to keep in touch during this time, not least by picking up the phone, to each other, or giving me a call (Rev Peter: 01636812166) or sending an email (peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk). Can I recommend the Newark and Southwell Methodist Church FaceBook page to you in particular. It's an open page so it's available to all and you needn't be on FaceBook to view it. You can access it at facebook.com/NewarkandSouthwellMethodist/. Don't worry if you're not a member of Southwell Methodist Church, we're all in this together!

Also, spread the word to anyone you think would appreciate receiving this newsletter. Let them know of our FaceBook pages and if you come across someone who might benefit from receiving it please get in touch.

