

TOGETHER

only physically apart

Elston | North Muskham | Southwell | Sutton on Trent

TOGETHER IS ...

Taking stock 20 weeks in.

Who would have thought it would have been 20 weeks? I made a fuss at 10 weeks and now it's 20!

What has kept you going in this time?

What's your birthday wish?

Who would you dearly love to be at the 20th birthday party?

What thing have you missed the most and would love to unwrap today?



We've been imagining together what we hope church will be like post lockdown and I'm really excited by some of the discussions we've been having.

Most exciting is the prospect of hitting the reset button on church and returning to a kind of church that we read about in the beginning, in Acts, and can also see in the early Methodist Church. Both the church universal and the Methodist Church began in intimate groups sharing fellowship, breaking bread, praying for each other and devoting themselves to teaching. I'm looking forward to opportunities to get back, face to face and do these simple things. That would be my birthday wish - a church that turns its eyes to God and gathers shoulder to shoulder (or perhaps with a 2m+ gap between shoulders initially) to tackle life together. This early church had no hymns to begin with and no formal routines, just folk who had been impacted by the life of Jesus and the gift of the holy spirit and sought to have their lives transformed by this.

We've also been investigating, as a staff team, the new '[God for All](#)' strategy in the Methodist Church which is, in a way, reimagining an inclusive church that has the fundamentals at its heart and reaches out. We've been looking at the '[Methodist Way of Life](#)' and I've been encouraged by how close to the Acts model of church this is. It's exciting to explore what God might be saying to us and to be part of the church at such a time as this.

Join us, this week - on Monday evening, through Zoom to continue the conversation and hopefully reimagine church...

Let's seek together what God is doing and get on board!

In these unprecedented times we believe we're invited by God to be...

Re-imagining Church

...let's join together in this important process with opportunities for...

<p>PRAYER</p> <p>A series of 'gatherings' for prayer and to seek God's will for our changing church.</p> <p>Prayer 'Gathering' 2: Monday 27th July, 7:30pm - Zoom Meeting ID: 842-4011-0921 Password: Imagine</p>	<p>SHARE</p> <p>A series of 'gatherings' to share informally and imagine what the church could be.</p> <p>Share 'Gathering' 2: Monday 5th August, 7:30pm - Zoom Meeting ID: 842-4011-0921 Password: Imagine</p>
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A recording of the first 'SHARE' session is available on request (for those who missed it).

Ministers: Rev Nathan Falls
Rev Peter Bates and Rev Peter Hibberts

[@NewarkandSouthwellMethodist](#) [newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk](#)

How 'leavened' are you?

Reflections from Matthew 13:33 (NRSV)

Jesus also used this illustration: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough."

Home baking was something of a necessity in early lockdown, when we struggled to find bread on the shelves. I fondly remember those early baking sessions alongside my kids! Perhaps the most exciting thing about baking, for the kids at least, was the proving process. Our most successful 'rising' was definitely when we acquired fresh yeast (back when yeast was hard to come by). Seeing Olivia's face when the dough we had made had doubled in size after leaving it in the airing cupboard was worth the process all on its own - but then so was the amazing smell of freshly baked bread wafting through the house!

This parable is the smallest of all - 1 verse, 39 words - so small that I had space to print it in its entirety on this newsletter! Jesus, and his new testament chroniclers certainly knew how to make a few words count though! What a great analogy. The yeast is so important in the baking process. Without the yeast the bread is heavy, doughy in texture and unappetising in taste. Sure there's a place for unleavened bread but that's not to detract from the amazing effect the leavening process has and the unbelievable transformation it brings. This parable is not about the merits of leavened bread over unleavened, it's about the affect something small can have on its surroundings. In a 500g loaf, it only takes a few grams of the powdered yeast to work through the whole batch and transform the loaf. So too with the Kingdom of Heaven!

What effect does the Kingdom of Heaven have on your life? Has it permeated every part of you?

I find it hard not to liken this to the movement of God's Holy Spirit - to the power of God to transform our faith. Many a time my children have brought me a toy that has been neglected for some time - the most recent was Daisy, my 3 year old, bringing me a toy fire engine which was not working. To her it was most disappointing that the siren would not sound and the light would not flash. 'Can you fix it Daddy?' she asked with all hope in her eyes. I tried the on off switch and pummelled the buttons - to no avail. Then, as she watched on with anticipation, I unscrewed the battery cover and changed the power cells. Instantly the sirens sounded, the lights flashed and her eyes also lit up! 'You fixed it, Daddy!' she exclaimed. (If only all the problems we encounter in life could be fixed so easily!)

Yet many of the problems we face in our faith do have an easy remedy. That's not to devalue our struggles which are complex and often 'unfixable'. We are not here to be fixed but if we find our faith to be flat, heavy, doughy and unappetising, then perhaps what we lack is a divine leavening! Perhaps our spiritual batteries are flat and we are in need of a fresh injection of power to bring us back to life!



Worship Opportunities

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>) Tune in today!

2. Radio Services

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

08:10am **Encountering God in**

abandonment. The Rev Dr Isabelle Hamley, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, charts her walk with God and with Covid-19.

3. Radio Nottingham

Every Sunday, at 8am, you can listen to a live church service on BBC Radio Nottingham. Listen online to BBC Nottingham radio station 95.1-103.8 MHz FM for free.

4. Online Holiday Club!

Southwell Methodist Church will be running (in collaboration with three other churches in Southwell) an online Holiday Club, for children in Reception to Year 6, 3rd-7th August 2020. If you know of anyone who would benefit or can offer to carry this yolk with them, please get in touch! families4SMC@gmail.com

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

We have not long since moved from the pentecost narrative. Much has been made of the disciples in a locked room and parallels drawn with our situation - much has also been made of our God's ability to enter that locked room and reach us where we are but it's what followed that I want to take us back to. When the disciples experienced the Holy Spirit in that upper room, it was as though someone had changed their power cells! It was instantaneous and God's power worked through them like a batch of the most powerful yeast, reaching every fibre of their being and raising them up from a heavy, lifeless bunch into a world changing revolution!

I remember the first time I was filled with the Holy Spirit, 28 years ago. The chap who prayed with me was called Lee - he's been a missionary in Tenerife amongst the clubbers on Veronica's strip since then. He prayed with me because I'd noticed how lifeless my faith was alongside some of my peers. I knew and believed what the Bible said, I was utterly convinced of God's love for me and was undoubtedly 'saved' (if you like that word to describe those who are accepted as followers of Christ) but still my faith was a bit lifeless. That evening I was filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit and life has never been the same since. When describing me, I think it's fair to say, there are often some common words that people use (alongside those I don't care to repeat!) such as enthusiasm, passion, energy. I know they're sometimes misguided - I'm as human and failing as the next person - but what I won't be accused of is being flat! Every time the air is knocked out of me, spiritually, it's as though the yeast knows exactly what to do and before long the leavening process has lifted me up again. Praise God!

I must confess I've had the wind knocked out of me spiritually in the last week or so - who wouldn't when faced with the task of leading a scattered church of confused and hurting people - especially when I'm isolated, confused and hurting myself too. Perhaps you feel like you've had the wind knocked out of you spiritually, during the Covid-19 pandemic - it's understandable. Only trust God and ask God to fill you again with the power of *his* Holy Spirit.

Take a moment now. It's a really simple prayer that I've invited folk to pray countless times and I've invited you to pray it several times in these letters. It really simple, yet incredibly powerful. It's just three words but whatever the situation and whoever you are it will have an impact. Like a small amount of yeast, the kingdom of heaven will permeate every part of you. Just three words, but you have to mean them with every fibre of your being. The words are 'Come Holy Spirit.' Pray them daily and allow God, the master baker, to knead that yeast throughout the batch, lovingly caressing your soul until every lump and bump is smoothed out and ready to rise. Don't delay because when the heat is on, the unleavened bread is fixed as unleavened and so much harder to rise - whereas when the heat is on those who have allowed God to transform them into part of *his*

kingdom, they become the daily bread that this world really needs: feeding and satisfying all around us. **It's time to rise!**

Prayer Space

*For anyone who has spent any time on Zoom,
I'm sure you'll appreciate this version of the
Lord's Prayer:*

Our Zoom Host who art always waiting
Perfect is thy password;
Thy links direct, thy signal strong
Upstairs and in the garden.
Admit us this day to interaction
And mute us when we talk over others
As you mute others when they talk over us
And lead us not into time wasting,
But deliver us from outtakes and indiscretions
For thine is the Pro account,
the recording and the editing
that's stored for ever and ever...
-end meeting.

(Credit @RevCBeckett)

In these unprecedented times we believe we're invited by God to be...

Re-imagining Church

...let's join together in this important process with opportunities for...

PRAYER ...and to... **SHARE**
A series of 'gatherings' for prayer and to seek God's will for our changing church. A series of 'gatherings' to share informally and imagine what the church could be.

Prayer Gathering 2
Monday 27th July 7.30pm - Zoom
Meeting ID: 842 4011 0921
Password: Imag1ne

Share Gathering 2
Monday 30th August 7.30pm - Zoom
Meeting ID: 842 4011 0921
Password: Imag1ne

A recording of the first 'SHARE' session is available on request (for those who missed it).

Ministers: Rev Nathan Fells @NewarkandSouthwellMethodist
Rev Peter Bates and Rev Peter Roberts newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk

Please also keep your eyes open for opportunities for prayer and to share together for the way we **Re-imagine Church** post lockdown - the **second** Zoom session to SHARE is this Monday - 3rd August - between 7pm and 8pm. Please make it a priority if you can! Zoom Details:

Meeting ID: 842 4011 0921

Password: Imag1ne

(Capital I at the beginning and number 1 in place of the second i.)



FREE phone lines for prayers and news from the Methodist Church

Listen to a **prayer**: 0808 281 2514

Listen to **news**: 0808 281 2478

Content is updated weekly on Thursday afternoon

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

Zoom Home Groups

Our Tuesday Home Groups continue this week with the third of a four week teaching series on the parables of Jesus - 'Once Upon a Time! You may have missed the first two but it's not too late to join! The theme will begin each Sunday as a focus for the service and offer deeper discussion each following Tuesday, at 2pm and 8pm via Zoom. Tune into our YouTube Channel for the services - Zoom details available on request.

ALL WELCOME - from any church or none.

Join us for a four week series exploring the parables of Jesus...

ONCE UPON A TIME

...they're no fairy tales.

Sunday worship - 10am, YouTube (see below)
Prayer and News - 8pm (Zoom) and 8.30pm (YouTube channel)
Deeper In Zoom Groups - Tuesdays 2pm and 8pm (Zoom Details Available on Request)
19th-21st July; Seeds; 28th-28th July; Woods; 2nd-4th August; Growing; 9th-11th August; Seeking

Ministers: Rev Peter Roberts @NewarkandSouthwellMethodist
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01636 812146

Reflective songs...

O Lord my God (StF 82) [LINK](#)

Tell me the stories of Jesus [LINK](#)

Give thanks to the Lord (StF 77) [LINK](#)

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

Come down, O Love divine (StF 372) [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.

Dial-a-sermon service now live!

Dial a Sermon

To listen to this week's sermon from Revd. Peter Hibberts please call this number. (Calls cost the same as a local call.)

01636 558871

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



We now have a telephone sermon service. If you have no access to the internet but would like to hear the reading and sermon from the previous Sunday, you can dial up the number above and hear it from the minister's voice! Calls cost the same as a local call and recordings should be around 15 minutes each - you can access them at any time of the day or night! We endeavour to upload the new sermon each weekend so it may be a few days behind this newsletter - don't worry, that's normal!

Do get in touch if you need to on (01636) 812166 or peter.hibberts@methodistorg.uk.

29-7-20

Families:

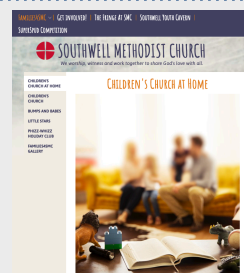
by Katie Hibberts

families4SMC@gmail.com

CHILDREN'S CHURCH AT HOME!

We are providing a 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.



FAMILY ACTIVITIES!

This week's Bible passage is an ideal opportunity to bake with your kids (if you have time!) You could show them the yeast which looks small and insignificant and then show them the dough before and after its had chance to rise.



The attached youtube clip (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lqxwv0mE5jQ>) has a great

explanation for kids too, so it's well

worth a watch: "How does the Kingdom of Heaven grow? Like yeast! How does yeast grow? Yeast, just like the Kingdom, grows on the INSIDE before it shows on the OUTSIDE!"

You can describe the Kingdom of God as letting God be King in our lives and living his way. It starts inside as we ask God to change into how he wants us to live (by praying) but as it grows in us, it makes a difference to how we live on the outside with the kind of good qualities that we call the fruits of the spirit. (You could read parts of Galatians chapter 5 to help with this!)

If you don't have time to bake bread then you can always slice some bread and talk about the tiny holes that make the bread soft and yummy (or show them the picture above). You could explain that the yeast in bread making is a living ingredient inside the bread that may be small (and each hole is small) but these bubbles, made when the yeast 'breathes' make a massive difference to the bread which would otherwise be heavy, doughy and much less tasty! You could finish by making a yummy sandwich with their favourite fillings! Have fun!

PRAYER: Dear Father God, Thank You for including us in Your Kingdom of Heaven. Help us to grow in Your Love, like the yeast, spreading Your love to others. In Jesus' Name, amen.

How are we doing? How could we help?

We're now 20 weeks into lockdown now and we'd like to know how we are doing in support and whether we can do better! Please take the time to let me know:

How have you been encountering church during lockdown?

What have you found most helpful (from this church or any other) in your faith?

What has been missing that would have really helped you?

What has been unhelpful during this time?

What elements of our provision could you live without (where might we be wasting our resources)?

Contact me on peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk and help shape out support of you.