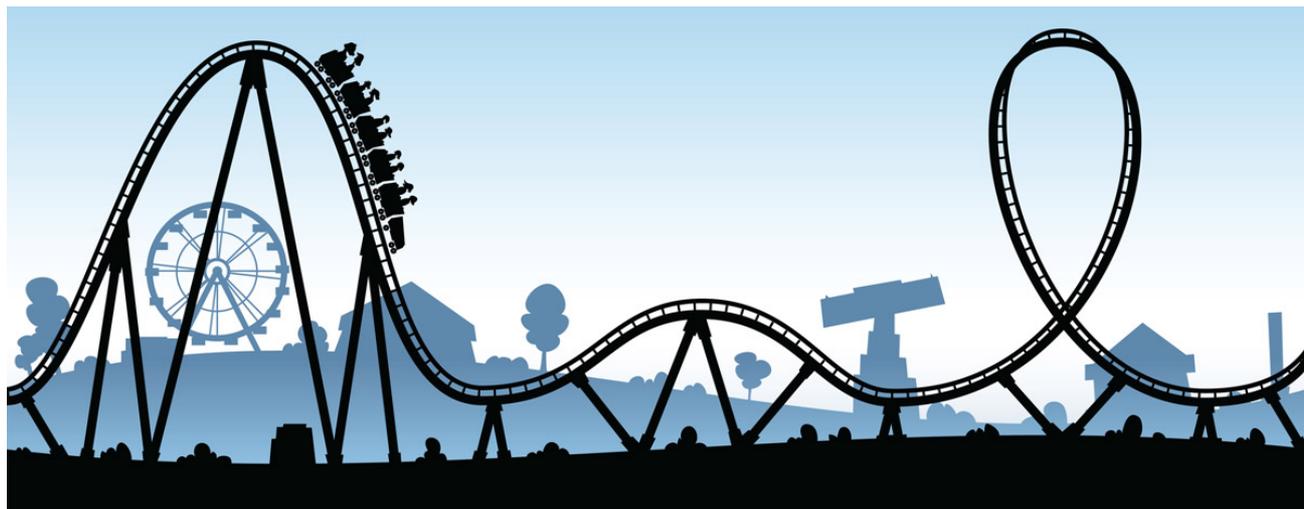


TOGETHER

only physically apart

Elston | North Muskham | Southwell | Sutton on Trent

Are you on a Coronacoaster?



I'm told that several new words are entering the English language under the category 'Lockdown Lingo'! Perhaps you're suffering from a 'Caronadose' - an overdose of bad news during the crisis; perhaps you're developing 'Le Creuset wrist' - a complaint that results from carrying large times of kitchenware into the street to bad on a Thursday evening in appreciation of key workers? Maybe you're developing 'Blue Skype thinking' - developing wonderful ideas from the comfort of an online meeting (also known as a 'Zoomposium'). Maybe you're noting a 'Covid-10' - that's the ten extra pounds in weight that you've put on by comfort eating in the absence of exercise! And have you noticed all the new 'Quentin Quarantino's who have emerged as online film-makers during the lockdown. Is it all becoming quite a 'Carona-coaster'? (You're loving lockdown one minute but suddenly weepy with anxiety the next.)

This crisis is certainly the midwife of a lot of new things. For the Hibberts family, it's given rise to a family meeting. We've been starting each day together, around the kitchen table, with a look ahead to the day and a time of prayer together. (It may shock and disappoint you to know that we didn't do that anyway but we are just a normal family!) Olivia and Joseph have also started to read with their Nana in Stoke on Trent (via FaceTime - video calling). I have to say we could have easily done the online reading time with grandparents prior to the lockdown but somehow this time seems to have galvanised some new behaviours. Nationally we've started valuing our key workers (we have signs on our bin lids thanking our refuse collectors; we have a sign on our letterbox thanking the postie; and going out of our way to show gratitude to those previously taken for granted).

What new things are you doing as a result of the crisis? I think birthing is an interesting concept to think about right now. Birth is painful (or so I'm told - and indeed have observed) and we don't chose that pain, but out of the pain of childbirth comes something amazing. We haven't chosen this virus and I'm not suggesting it's a good thing, but it could be the midwife of some amazing transformations. Crisis and trauma are often transformative and we have every reason to have hope,

1 even in these difficult times. **God is in control, God has a plan, God is faithful. There is hope.**



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](#) 10:45am, The bishop of Dover, the Right Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin, leads the service for VE Day from Hereford Cathedral, filmed before the closure of all church buildings was announced. Featuring hymns recorded for Songs of Praise in 2017.

3. Radio Services

Sunday 19th April (Also [online](#).) BBC Radio 4: 8:10am, On the 75th anniversary of VE Day Dr Rowan Williams asks how our nation can rise to its present huge challenges as it seeks to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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



Which way now?

John 14:1-14

This week we focus on one of the most famous passages of scripture for Christians. It speaks of direction, truth and life and the answer to all three is Jesus! At a time when we are looking for the way to tackle this virus, we are surrounded by conflicting claims - perhaps finding truth a rare commodity - and where our very lives are threatened, this passage perhaps speaks of fundamental questions now more than even.

It's ironic that, right now, I'm in need of directions less than I ever have been. I haven't accessed my maps app for around five weeks (I have barely found myself behind the wheel of the car in that time). That said, I have been considering, at great length, the way forward for the church both in lockdown and following lockdown. Indeed we all need to consider our direction as what was normal has gone and will likely never return - indeed do we really want to go back to the way things were after our eyes have been forced open to so much! We need to reflect now on what we want life and church to look like when we are able to move freely again. I think we also each need to consider our values, personally, following this transformative experience. We will all be different, so what do we want to be?

The disciples were facing a transformative point. It was an acid test. After years with Jesus they were to be without him and the truth would be known as to how much they had changed as a result. Would they know the way without Jesus? Jesus is rightly annoyed when they seem to have learned nothing! Jesus' aim was to lead them to the father, directly, and in doing so create a body of disciples who could be the foundations of the church that we know two thousand years later. Discipleship breeds disciples who can continue the work when the teacher is no longer present.

This experience has made me wonder what church has been achieving. How long have you been a churchgoer? In that time, what effect has it had on you? I hope that the church has sustained you spiritually during your time, and in one sense that is a great accomplishment, but when the support of the church is removed,

are you left with nothing, or do you know how to worship, serve and walk with your God even when you can't do it *at* church? If you're a new Christian, then perhaps this lockdown came at a bad time (Is there ever a good time?), a fledgling bird is not pushed from the nest until it is ready to fly. However if you are a lifelong churchgoer then, as a disciple of Christ, you should be able to continue in faith without the church building as a scaffold. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying the church (community) is worthless - it's through church that we mutually support each other, challenge one another and hold each other accountable to discipleship. But if you find yourself unable to pray, worship God or deepen your faith in scripture without a Sunday service then I'm sorry, we've failed you as a church. If in all your churchgoing you have not connected with 'the Father' then we've not fulfilled our primary purpose.

The way, in all this, and for us as a church is *Jesus*. We need to each connect with *Jesus* directly and if you've never done that, can I encourage you to stop reading this and ask Jesus to show you the way to the Father, even now. The truth is *Jesus* - not the latest mission strategy, the latest area of service or the latest worship fad. It is *Jesus'* example that we follow and it is only through *Jesus* that we find life.

Fortunately, if you've not connected directly with Jesus through Church, it's not a problem. Even in lockdown, Jesus is with you and you don't need an 'alter call' (to put it in old fashioned terms) to respond. Spend some time now, and if you need further support have a look at the song suggestions or pick up the phone and I'd love to pray with you. But don't be like the disciples, asking to be shown the father, look at Jesus and see all you need to see.

I for one intend to reassess the way I do church, post lockdown, and I invite you too to reflect on what church is and should be. I intend to build a church that takes seriously its mission to lead people to God first and foremost. No-one will be part of our church forever and so we should not be dependent on our church or our church leaders for our spiritual health. Instead we each need to connect with God directly and as a church we must make that our primary focus. I invite you to pray for the church to emerge from this chrysalis as the butterfly God created us to be.

Finally, take heart from the last line of today's passage. Jesus is with us and says, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." This is a quite remarkable thing for Jesus to say to his disciples - let's not miss it! Let's ask that God transform the church and reach out to heal our nation.



Prayer space

This space is designed to unite us in prayer. Why not spend a little time in prayer at 7pm each evening and light a candle in a prominent window to show the community that you are praying.

Prayers for a pandemic

There are a great number of prayers written for specifically for this time on the Methodist Church website at: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus/prayers-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

Prayer points:

Please pray for the work of Methodist Homes (MHA) at this time. There has been an appeal from the Chief Executive, Sam Monaghan, for the Methodist people to stand alongside MHA in the current crisis. When he wrote an article for the Methodist Recorder published 24 April more than 250 residents and 2 members of staff had died as a result of Covid-19. He has been interviewed a number of times on television about the vulnerability of the residents and the need for staff to be adequately protected with PPE. Also, the many Live at Home schemes like our own here in Southwell are working hard to combat the increased loneliness and isolation at this very difficult time. Please remember the work of this Methodist founded charity in your 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. peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk or 01636812166

Hymns and songs to reflect on...

All hail the power of Jesu's name (StF 342) [LINK](#)

All my days I will sing this song of gladness (StF 343) [LINK](#)

When the music fades (StF 437) [LINK](#)

And can it be (StF 345) [LINK](#)

The UK Blessing (online only) [LINK](#)

(If you can, please follow this link and be blessed by the church of our nation - [then share it!](#))

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?



The Newark Foodbank remains open but, as you can imagine, is experiencing something of a crisis at present with donations harder to come by and demand growing. Perhaps you could make some donations to the FoodBank via their local collection point. If you are unable to make physical donations, financial support is welcome and donations can be made on the Newark Foodbank website: <https://newark.foodbank.org.uk>.



This Sunday marks the beginning of Christian Aid Week and would normally be marked by the distribution and collection of donation envelopes in most locations. This year, due to the lockdown, it is not possible

to raise much needed funds in the same way and so we are asking if folk can donate online. You can donate at <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/CAWeek2020>. Christian Aid has launched its Coronavirus Emergency Appeal and is already on the frontline working with some of the most vulnerable people. We need your help.



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!

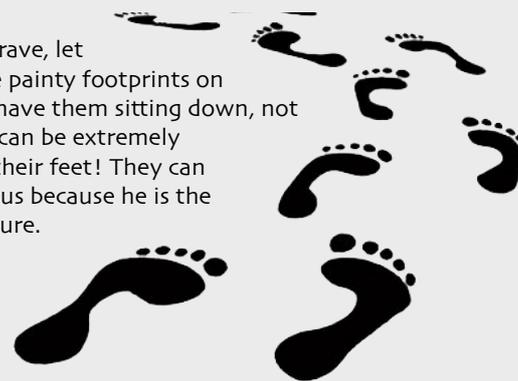


Storytime!

Read the story, 'We're going on a Bear Hunt' with the children (it is available on Youtube if you don't have the book!), encourage interaction! Ask your child what they would need if they wanted to get somewhere a long way away. Hopefully one of the suggestions would be a map or sat nav! We need to know how to get where we're going and a map or sat nav might help us but there's something that might be even better. Can you think what? The best thing to have is someone who's been there before! When climbers go up Everest, they take a guide with them - someone who's done it before - who knows the best way to go and where the dangerous bits are. All of us are on a journey of getting to know God better. It's a journey that can last forever! But we need to make sure that we know where we're going. In the Bible, Jesus says this: "I am the way." He knows God better than anyone - because he is both completely God and completely man so he knows how to help us to know him too. If we make Jesus our personal guide, he'll show us the way on the journey and we'll get closer and closer to God. What kind of things might Jesus show us on the way? (Risks, danger points, things to learn from...) That's why we talk about following Jesus - you only follow someone if you're sure they know where they're going!

Craft Activity:

If you're feeling brave, let the children make painty footprints on a piece of paper (have them sitting down, not standing as paint can be extremely slippery!). Clean their feet! They can write "I follow Jesus because he is the way" on their picture.



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.