

NNE

Nottingham North East Circuit

"Equipping Transformation Through God's Love"



@NNEMETHODIST

WWW.NNEMETHODIST.ORG.UK

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Introduction:

In September 2016 I was appointed as the Youth Worker for the Nottingham North Circuit of the Methodist Church. Since then the Nottingham North and Nottingham East circuits, as well as part of the previous City Centre Ministry, have merged to become the Nottingham North East Circuit, with the intention of being better at mission. In September 2022 my role changed, so now I am part-time Youth Worker, and part-time Vision Co-ordinator, with the primary role of the latter being to share, promote and facilitate the implementation of the vision statement and hopes that we have discerned as being our priorities and reason for being as a circuit in this place.

The following is a service that is being delivered across the circuit to share what having vision means, to share the process we have been through as a Circuit Leadership Team, and to begin to encourage churches and individuals to know what their vision is as disciples of Christ across the Nottingham North East Circuit.

Call to Worship:

Today I awake and God is before me.

*At night, as I dreamt, he summoned the day;
for God never sleeps but patterns the morning
with slithers of gold or glory in grey.*

Today I arise and Christ is beside me.

*He walked through the dark to scatter new light.
Yes, Christ is alive, and beckons his people
to hope and to heal, resist, and invite.*

*Today I affirm the Spirit within me
at worship and work, in struggle and rest.
The Spirit inspires all life which is changing
from fearing to faith, from broken to blest.*

*Today I enjoy the Trinity round me,
above and beneath, before and behind;
the Maker, the Son, the Spirit together --
they called me to life and call me their friend.*

JOHN L. BELL | GRAHAM MAULE. STF 139

Let us Pray:

God of all blessings, I bring you my praise
God of all goodness, receive my praise
God of glory, you alone are worthy
God of mercy and grace, I offer my thanks.
Breath of God, reveal the Creator to me
Spirit of God, reveal Jesus through me
God of all time, be with me in this moment
God of all wisdom, let me discern your heart

AMEN

Morning Routines:

What does your morning look like?

The Beatles famously sang:

*Woke up, fell out of bed
Dragged a comb across my head
Found my way downstairs and drank a cup
And looking up, I noticed I was late...*

Three out of four lines from the Beatles generally work for me... Though my hair disappeared a long time ago!

But what does your morning routine look like? Do you start with tea or coffee? Are you an early riser or do you like a lay in? Do you make time to have a

sit down breakfast, or do you "grab and go" on the way out of the door?

Routine is one thing, but "Reason" is another. During this service we will be considering our "why"... "Why do we get up in the morning?"

Reginald Heber's hymn reminds us that God is there in the morning, and that our song should rise to the three persons of the Trinity:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee:

holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,

God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

*Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.*

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!

All thy works shall praise thy name

in earth and sky and sea;

holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,

God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

REGINALD HEBER. STF 11

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=AGHRNNM23P8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGHRNNM23P8)

Why do you get out of bed in the morning?

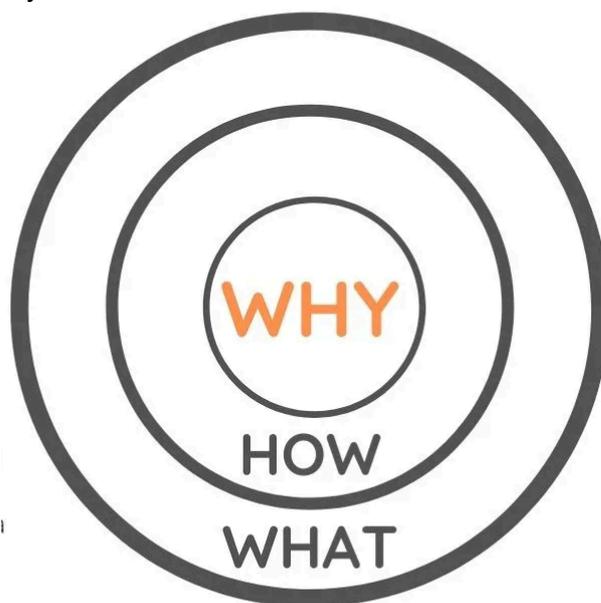
Some days are easier to answer that question of than others aren't they!? Some mornings we know our reason and purpose, we know that we need to get ourselves, the kids, the dog, or any number of other people to any number of different places. If we're lucky it might be that we're off on holiday and so need to be out the door in time to be at the airport for our 7am flight.

But some days it's more difficult to get out of bed isn't it? There are days when we don't know our reason, we don't have anything that's getting us excited, perhaps when we're beyond tired and just can't find the motivation for yet another day of the same.

Sundays can sometimes be different. It might be that Sunday is about getting to church, the timings depending on what responsibilities we have. But I wonder when our churches last stopped to ask the question "why do we get out of bed in the morning?"

Simon Sinek is a motivational speaker, leadership expert and business advisor. In his thinking he introduces the idea of "The Golden Circle."

The image is one of three concentric circles. The outer circle is labelled "what", the middle circle is labelled "how", and the centre circle is labelled "why."



He says that "every organisation on the planet knows WHAT they do." The "what" is the products they sell, or the services they offer.

He goes on to say that "some organisations know HOW they do it." The "how" is what makes them different to all the other options on the market.

But he states that "very few organisations know WHY they do what they do what they do." The "why" is where you discover what the purpose or belief or cause is, what is at their heart.

Whilst Simon Sinek appears to be primarily talking to businesses, what he says is actually really important for us as churches and as individuals. I think that many of us who look at our churches and at our own lives could easily articulate what we do and could reasonably describe how we do it, but I wonder if all of us are as prepared to state WHY we do what we do?

Nigel Pimlott from the Learning Network in the Methodist Church led a number of us in the circuit through these circles when we were considering what our vision is as a circuit. Personally and collectively we were encouraged to work out what motivates and drives us, what our contribution and impact is supposed to be. Knowing our "why" is what will enable us to best discern the "whats" and "hows" of the process. Nigel led us to consider that our "WHY" should be able to fit in a single, memorable sentence that looks like this:

*"I get up in the morning TO
(This is the Contribution)*

*SO THAT
(This is the Impact)."*

If you had to complete that sentence for yourself, what would it look like? You don't have to rush the process, but I'd encourage you to reflect on it as you go about your day.

Equally we should be considering the same thing for our churches: Why do we get up in the morning? Why do we open our doors? What's it all about? To that end, how would your church finish the sentence:

*"WE get up in the morning TO
(This is the Contribution)*

*SO THAT
(This is the Impact)."*

More to ponder, perhaps!

Let us Pray:

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden;
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
so that we may truly love you
and worthily praise your holy name:
through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Happy are those whose sins are forgiven,
whose wrongs are pardoned.
I will confess my sins to the Lord,
I will not conceal my wrongdoings.

SILENCE

God forgives and heals us.
We need your healing, merciful God:
give us true repentance.

Some sins are plain to us;
some escape us,
some we cannot face.

Forgive us;
set us free to hear your word to us;
set us free to serve you.

God forgives us.
Therefore forgive others;
forgive yourself.

SILENCE

Through Christ, God has put away our sin:
approach your God in peace.
Hear the word of God to all.
God shows love for us
in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

Amen.¹

Make your ways known upon earth, O God,
your saving power among all peoples.

Renew your Church in holiness,
and help us to serve you with joy.
Guide the leaders of this and every nation,
that justice may prevail throughout the world.
Let not the needy, O God, be forgotten,
nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Make us instruments of your peace,
and let your glory be over all the earth.²

And, as Jesus taught his disciples, so we pray:

Our Father, Who art in Heaven

Hallowed be Thy name

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done

On Earth as it is in Heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil

For thine is the Kingdom

The power and the glory

Now and forever

AMEN

As a further act of prayer, consider the words of
Frances Ridley Havergal's hymn:

¹ <https://anglicanprayerbook.nz/729.html>

² <https://anglicanprayerbook.nz/030.html>

Take my life, and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet, and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
always, only, for my King;
take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect, and use
every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart -- it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure-store;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL. STF 566

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=H0ZCXUWQX8U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0ZCXUWQX8U)

What about Jesus?

Have you ever stopped and considered how Jesus would answer the same question? "Why did Jesus get up in the morning?"

I've spent years trying to answer this question in my prayers, reading, studying for my degree in theology, in sermon preparation and delivery, in listening and singing and generally doing life. Others more educated than me have spent millennia creating libraries in order to come up with the definitive answer to what the Christian life is all about.

Perhaps you've been answering a variation on the same question in your personal discipleship journey for even longer than I have, or perhaps this

is the first time. But as you consider what you already know about the person, life and work of Jesus, as you call to mind anything you might already think you know about the Bible or the Old Testament, or as you continue to read because you aren't sure you know enough to have an opinion, I wonder what that sentence looks like for Jesus:

"Jesus got up in the morning TO
(This is the Contribution)

SO THAT
(This is the Impact)."

I wonder what you came up with? It may well be better than what I came up with, but for all the years and all the reading and all the study I think this is where I have landed in my understanding of Jesus' "why":

Jesus got up in the morning to "Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God"³
So that the people he met "may have life, and have it in abundance."⁴

It might sound like a cop out to have picked two relatively familiar bible verses to complete my sentence, especially when in John it particularly states "I have come so that", but it says it all!

I think this is how I understand Jesus, and more than that I think it's how I understand who we're meant to be.

I believe that Micah 6:8 is the lynchpin of everything God called and created humanity to be through everything in creation, that God calls his people back to through the law, the judges and the prophets, it's what separates the good kings from the bad, and it's modelled in Jesus. It's the very thing that brings life in all its fulness to every person who comes into contact with it!

And it's the very thing that is possible in and through us as disciples of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

To that end I'd say there's a strong argument that Jesus should be the centre of our focus, our vision, our guide to live life and bring life to the world:

³ Micah 6:8

⁴ John 10:10

Jesus, be the centre,
be my source, be my light, Jesus.

Jesus, be the centre,
be my hope, be my song, Jesus.

Be the fire in my heart,
be the wind in these sails;
be the reason that I live,
Jesus, Jesus.

Jesus, be my vision,
be my path, be my guide, Jesus.

MICHAEL FRYE. STF 447

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=LGBHGLLGR8U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGBHGLLGR8U)

The Methodist Church

Now I might be teaching my grandmother to suck eggs, but whilst we're thinking about our "why", and the "why" of our churches, I think it's important to consider the "why" of the Methodist Church (I know it's a question that is asked often in different states of exasperation!). To think about the why, it'd be worth refreshing your knowledge of the structure of the Methodist Church...

The Methodist Church is a non-hierarchical entity (there isn't a power structure) that starts with individual members who come together to form churches. Those churches are then grouped into Circuits (This service has been written in the Nottingham North East Circuit, a grouping of 15 churches and an emerging city centre work, currently). Those Circuits are (at the moment) grouped into Districts (NNE is one of 12 Circuits in the Nottingham and Derby District). And the Connexion is the term used for the grouping of Districts from across Great Britain (29 Districts, at time of writing!). Each grouping is accountable to and shaped by both the larger units and the smaller units for the purposes of mission and Kingdom building, being a Christian witness in the world around us.

Are you still with me!?

Well at each grouping "level" (remember, non-hierarchical!) there is a "why". These vision statements are the measure for discerning what

the church should be doing, and how it should do it. These are the reasons the church gets up in the morning.

The Methodist Church

At a Connexional level the Methodist Church is all about "Our Calling", and states that we exist for "Worship, Learning and Caring, Service, and Evangelism". The following has become the basis for vision setting for organisations and individuals across the Methodist Church:

Our Calling

WORSHIP: The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love;

LEARNING AND CARING: The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care;

SERVICE: The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice;

EVANGELISM: The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ.⁵



The Nottingham and Derby District, from the starting point of "Our Calling" have narrowed that down into six words: Love God, Love Others, Make Disciples.⁶ Again, these three principles are the benchmark by which the District seek to make their decisions to support the work of circuits and churches to share the love of God with the communities around them in worship, learning and caring, service, and evangelism.

⁵ <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/our-calling/>

⁶ <https://www.methodist-nd.org.uk/>

And again from the starting point of "Our Calling", our Circuit vision is to "Equip Transformation through God's Love."⁷

We believe that there are specific areas where we can invest our gifts and resources to support our churches and people in sharing the love of God with those around them. Specifically these are through:

PRAYER AND WORSHIP:

As followers of Jesus we seek to be or become...
A Circuit of people and churches who pray.
A Circuit of people and churches who know and celebrate God's love in worship.

DISCERNMENT AND CALLING:

As followers of Jesus we seek to be or become...
A Circuit of people and churches who know our value and live out our calling and purpose.

DISCIPLESHIP AND EVANGELISM:

As followers of Jesus we seek to be or become...
A Circuit of people and churches who intentionally grow in breadth and depth in our faith, and make new disciples.

SERVICE AND CARING:

As followers of Jesus we seek to be or become...
A Circuit of people and churches who welcome, value and care for all, and actively respond to the needs of those around us.

COMMUNICATION AND RESOURCES:

As followers of Jesus we seek to be or become...
A Circuit of people and churches who communicate well, and who are good stewards of our resources.

We want to equip our people and churches to fulfil what they perceive to be their mission in living out "Our Calling" in their local contexts. We want to be a resource that facilitates and empowers mission to happen locally.

Some of the churches and congregations in our circuit already have a vision, and are well on their way to seeing it become a reality, and that's great! Others are less sure of their "why", and that is OK

for the time being, but isn't positive in the long-term. In the coming months the Circuit Leadership Team will be looking to help our churches work out their vision for their communities in line with who God has called them to be.

The next song is one that I wrote a few years ago when I was considering "Our Calling", the stated vision of the Connexional church. As you read or listen to it:

I wonder whether you know what your "why" is?
Do you know what the "why" of your church is?
How do we communicate and action our vision with the people and communities around us?
What support do you need in either discerning your "why" or in seeing your vision come to life?

***This, this is our calling:** To come before our God,
To lift our hands, and praise his name,
And celebrate his love.
So we come with expectation,
And we come with Holy fear
To the presence of the one who draws us near*

*This, this is our calling: To come before our God,
To open our hearts and minds to him
And marvel at his love.
So we come with expectation,
And we come with Holy fear
To listen to him speak, that we might hear*

*This, this is our calling: To go into the world.
To know God's heart for justice
And act upon his love.
So we go with expectation,
And we go with Holy fear,
To love and serve our neighbour far and near.*

*This, this is our calling: To go into the world
To open our mouths and speak of God,
And the wonders of His love.
So we go with expectation,
And we go with Holy fear,
To share good news,
Proclaim: "His Kingdom's here"*

MARC WILLIAMSON

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=IPYVXSVXVOO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPYVXSVXVOO)

⁷ <https://www.nmethodist.org.uk/aboutus.html>

Let us Pray:

*Beyond these walls of worship
in the stress and joy of life,
can we offer you our bodies
as a living sacrifice?*

*Will we keep you at the centre
far beyond the Sunday call?*

*Will we turn to you, be transformed by you;
still declare you God of all?*

*Beyond these walls of worship,
in the times of work and rest,
will we display your love for all
when our faith's put to the test?
When the people that surround us
deny that you are there,
will we display our faith in you --
in life, in praise, in prayer?*

*Beyond these walls of worship
may your Spirit strengthen us
to make the whole of life our worship
as we witness to your love.
From this hour in your presence
send us out now to proclaim
that we'll live our life as a sacrifice
to the glory of your name.*

IAN WORSFOLD | PAUL WOOD. STF 547

*Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise:
thou mine inheritance now and always;
thou and thou only the first in my heart:
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.*

*High King of Heaven, my victory won,
may I reach Heaven's joys O bright Heaven's sun;
heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.*

MARY ELIZABETH BYRNE

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=XIUkM6WHQEQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIUkM6WHQEQ)

Blessing:

And so:

May we know why we get up in the morning;
May we share in Jesus' vision and mission;
May we see transformation through the sharing of
the love of God,
In the name of Jesus,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit

AMEN

I think I would struggle to share a service on the subject of vision without finishing with this final hymn. It is a prayer, a commitment and a plea for God to be in all that we are, have and offer. May it be our prayer as we journey on together:

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
*naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
thou my best thought by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.*

*Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word,
I ever with thee, and thou with me, Lord;
thou my great Father, And I thy true son;
thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.*

*Be thou my battle-shield, sword for the fight;
be thou my dignity, thou my delight;
be thou my soul's shelter,
and thou my strong tower:
raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.*

We've said "**AMEN**" but don't let the conversation end there. Perhaps you could pick up the phone and call someone about the things that have challenged or excited you this morning. Perhaps you could meet up for a coffee with one or two people you trust to pray with you and help you to think more about your "why" as a disciple of Jesus.

Maybe you could talk to your minister, stewards or church council about what your church's vision is and are wondering how you can feed into it or help it be a reality.

Or maybe you want to learn more about the Circuit's vision than you can find in the links in the footnotes. In that case, try calling the circuit office to speak to Cath on 07988 538420, or emailing marc@nnemethodist.org.uk.