

*Dear friends,*

You can find details of our Sunday services below, including the monthly praise service at North Hillingdon. More information about it is in this week's letter.

9.30 am        **Worship at North Hillingdon** led by the Revd Ian Worsfold  
 11.00 am       **Worship at Hayes End** led by the Revd Ian Worsfold  
 11.00 am       **Worship at Hayes (including Holy Communion)** led by the Revd Ken Kingston  
 6.00 pm        **Praise Night at North Hillingdon (with praise, sharing and a love feast)**  
 (turn over for more details)

Sunday School is restarting at Hayes this week. We remember the children and young people along with those leading.

For those still unsure about returning to 'face-to-face' worship, you can join Ruislip Manor who stream their service ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCjLbCitLuwAJL2wYdzK57EQ](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjLbCitLuwAJL2wYdzK57EQ)) and Christ Church as they share their service on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/christchurchuxbridge](https://www.facebook.com/christchurchuxbridge)).

In the face of still high infections, please continue to take care and stay safe.

*Rev Ken*

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**PS Don't forget that over the next few weeks we'll be celebrating harvest, starting with Hayes on Sunday 19 September, then Hayes End (26 September) and North Hillingdon (3 October).**

## Whose story?

It is easy to spot which actor has top billing in a film. You know it as soon as the film starts. Because in the opening credits before you even reach the title, you get the name like Tom Hanks, George Clooney or Meryl Streep 'stars in'. And only then is the title revealed.

If there was a film story of our lives then we would all take the starring role. But that is not the only film we could be in. There are other similar stories, based members of our family, where we work, or where we live. And for Christians, there is another story – of what God is doing in the world. Although, of course, Jesus would be the main character.

These verses in Mark's Gospel are a turning point (or a hinge) in the story of Jesus' life. Up to now Mark has focused on the powerful activity of Jesus – what he has done, such as the miraculous healings of Jews and non-Jews (with the ensuing opposition from the

religious authorities) and Jesus' interaction with the crowds. But at this point the concentration moves to intense teaching revealing the nature of Christ – who Jesus is.

So, it's not surprising that Jesus begins by asking the questions, "Who do people say that I am?" and "Who do you say that I am?". Peter answers like a shot that Jesus is the Messiah who is going to free people.

But when Jesus tells him and the rest of the disciples that this will mean suffering, rejection and death, Peter is having none of it. That's not the story and life Peter wants his Lord to live. For Peter, Jesus should be living a different story.

"Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things," Jesus tells Peter. And in doing so, Jesus rejects the story that others are writing

for him. And accepts what is to follow: Jesus takes up his cross.

But the cross isn't just for Jesus. Jesus tells his disciples and all his would-be followers, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow" (v. 34). Jesus makes it clear what the story will be.

'Taking up the cross' is a conscious decision. It means that there will be decisions to be made and actions to be done that may create opposition. [It's not the same as facing unpredictable tragedies or suffering ("This is my cross to bear")]. It's about the direction of the story – where the focus is not about ourselves, but about Christ – "However loses their life for my sake ... will save it."

So, in a film of our lives the central character is no longer ourselves, but Jesus. We live out our lives in the light of Christ and the kingdom of God. This plays the central part and is the hinge on which everything else turns. That film plays every day as every day we make and remake the decision to follow Christ, to obey his teaching and follow his example.

But what about those for who still play the main title role in their life story. We have opportunities to be players in the film of their life. By our actions, by our kindness, by our Christian compassion and care we can open up a new-ness and fullness of life that is beyond comparison. It's like the film 'The Wizard of Oz' which starts in black and white, and then moves into glorious technicolour.

So, two questions or challenges:

- Who is the central character in the story (or film) of your life?
- What can you do in the story of other people's lives, to shine the light of Christ in?

In the words of the film director, now is the time for 'Lights. Camera. Action!'

### Prayer for the Week

Jesus, our Lord,  
thank you for being the central part of our life,  
for you gave your life for us.  
Following your lead and example,  
may we share you and your love with others  
that they too may decide to follow you. Amen.

## Sundays on the BBC

**8.10 am Sunday Worship** **BBC Radio 4**

*Finding a voice* – The service is based around the story of the young prophet Samuel, who discovers the potential of his own voice by hearing and responding to the call of God. It includes contributions from the National Youth Choir of Wales.

**1.45 pm Songs of Praise** **BBC 1**

*Pendle Radicals* – Discover the story of George Fox, who began the Quaker movement. Visit the only remaining Inghamite church, founded by Benjamin Ingham in 1750. And learn how one man's faith led him to join for the local mountain rescue team.

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## Where do you feel close to God? Praise, Testimony and Love Feast

At 6.00 pm on the second Sunday of each month, North Hillingdon Methodist Church (UB10 9PB) hosts a praise night.

Starting this Sunday, each quarter one of these will include a Love Feast. Love Feasts can be traced back to early Methodism. They celebrate Christian fellowship, recalling the meals Jesus shared with disciples during his ministry (often using a glass of water and a biscuit).

Like other acts of worship there is prayer, praise and Scripture. But a Love Feast also includes a time of testimony and sharing.

For the first of these services, we'll be thinking about **where we feel closest to God**. Think about where that is for you and what you might like to say about it. Or if you'd prefer, you can prepare a few sentences to read out (or for someone else can read on your behalf).

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## Harvest

This year our harvest services will be focusing on the amazing work of All We Can (the Methodist Church's relief and development charity), especially in Nkayi district in Zimbabwe.



The theme of the service is 'The Next Steps', so please bring a spare pair of shoes with you (if you can).