

## Pre-School visits

In January I visited 10 groups. It's always a joy and pleasure and you never know how many might be attending, what the make up of the cohort will be, and how my presentation will be engaged with. These visits all went well and there was a particular interest in the small doll I used to set the scene for the story of Blind Bartimaeus whom Jesus heals.



The simple, yet most effective part of the presentation was to show the doll blindfolded and therefore without eyes! And then with no blindfold and therefore with eyes. Little faces and their carers all lit up with joy to see the doll 'complete' or in the case of the story, healed.

The next time I will be with these groups in March when I will tell the Easter story at it's very simplest.



Jesus died but he came back to life and all his friends told everyone they met!

It has been good to be able to offer households at some of the groups a 'Time 2 Share at Home Box' to take away for free and use at home. Everyone loves a freebie but a gift from someone they know and trust is more likely to be opened, explored and engaged with. We can only hope and pray that as they do, so they will encounter God in some way.

## Diary Dates

### Feb

4<sup>th</sup> Feb North Hillingdon Methodist 6.00pm  
8<sup>th</sup> Feb North Hillingdon Methodist 9.30am  
9<sup>th</sup> Feb Local member of Clergy meeting  
15<sup>th</sup> Feb Ashford Common Methodist 10.30am  
16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> Half Term  
22<sup>nd</sup> Feb Staines Methodist 10.30am  
28<sup>th</sup> Feb North Hillingdon Training am

### Mar

4<sup>th</sup> Mar Laleham Playgroup (am)  
4<sup>th</sup> Mar North Hillingdon Methodist 6.00pm  
5<sup>th</sup> Mar Little tots Toddlers  
8<sup>th</sup> Mar North Hillingdon Methodist 9.30am  
10<sup>th</sup> Mar Hope Church Hounslow Toddlers  
12<sup>th</sup> Mar Towntree Pre-school (pm)  
13<sup>th</sup> Mar Minnows Toddlers  
15<sup>th</sup> Mar Ashford Common Methodist 10.30am  
16<sup>th</sup> Mar Playbox Pre-school (pm)  
17<sup>th</sup> Mar Tiddlers Toddlers  
18<sup>th</sup> Mar Footprints Toddlers  
19<sup>th</sup> Mar Seedlings Toddlers  
20<sup>th</sup> Mar Playtime Toddlers  
22<sup>nd</sup> Mar Staines Methodist 10.30am  
24<sup>th</sup> Mar Ashford Baptist Toddlers 10.30am

In this newsletter I have noted the fabulous support of the volunteers who help produce the Time to Share at Home Boxes. That made me reflect once again on the raft of supporters who receive these newsletters every 2 months and regularly use the information to pray for the work and ministry of FACT. Many of you also regularly financially donate.

To you all, I want to say a heartfelt thank you for your on-going support, care and interest. I don't take it for granted.

Just to make some of you feel old, I realise that a large cohort of supporters have been supporting FACT from its start and in April we will reach the milestone of having been a registered charity for 30 years!

Your selfless, sacrificial support has made eternal differences in more lives than we will ever know.

**Once again, Thank you!**



## Faith Awareness in Children Trust

# Is Waiting a waste of time?

I was struck during Advent, a time of waiting, how today's society sees the act of waiting as something to be endured rather than encouraged and welcomed. We dislike waiting in supermarket queues. We have an ever growing expectation that the item we've ordered online should arrive within milliseconds of us pressing the buy button on our phones or tablets. We don't want to 'waste time' buying and preparing food, we want instant food via delivery riders. We are not willing to live disciplined healthy lives to increase our physical and mental well-being, we want instant health and weight loss and the like, through drugs.

It is all about 'getting there', the destination. The journey feels like a nuisance and inconvenience. We didn't want to be in Advent, we needed to get to Christmas. Having methods to count down the days were seen as helpful as they softened the irritation of waiting.

Lent is another season of waiting. Easter is coming and we long to celebrate the miracle of the resurrection. We aren't too fussed to spend time considering the wilderness, the dry and arid times, the fasting and abstinence.

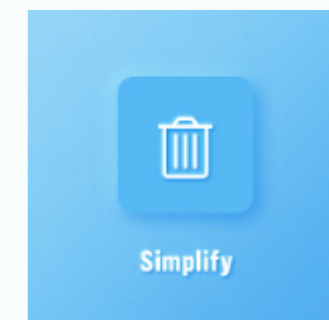
Yet, it is in today's world, where volatility and hostility feel like they are rising at an ever increasing rate, that we have a greater need to find ways to wait well. To be present in the moment rather than continuously straining to get to the end, the good bit.

We need to recognise, allow, and be able, to sit in the discomfort, and sometimes the pain of life. Christian hope is all about recognising the reality of the present, while focusing on future certainties. It is the ability to live lives that are full of the Kingdom of God, while holding the tension that the Kingdom of God is yet to come in its fullness.

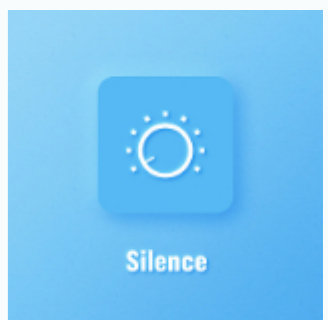
I have set myself a task of waiting in Lent. What am I waiting for is the first question that comes to mind, but I think it's a false question. Waiting is sufficient in and of itself. Yes, Easter will be part of the focus of the waiting but deliberately being present in the now is also very important.

I was pleased to have found some aids that I will be using in the 40 days of Lent. 'Lent Icons' from here <https://engageworship.org/ideas/lent-icons>

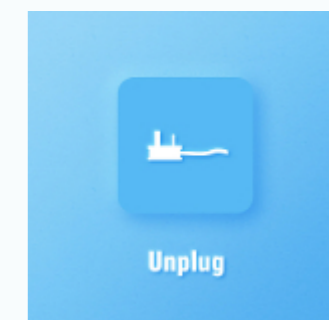
These Icons are based around computer icons rather than sacred religious images painted with deep symbolism on wooden panels. There are 10 of them which I have printed and laminated. I will allow them to be visual prompts and stimuli to aid my intentional waiting. Below are 3 examples.



Simplify



Silence



Unplug

These icons would make excellent aids for a Lenten event on waiting. Download them and use them to offer a space to pause and wait during lent?

I'll let you know how I get on in the next newsletter.

(If I fail abysmally, I'll gently forget I ever said anything and just carry on!)

A newsletter to keep supporters informed, inspired & involved.

Issue number 176 February 2026

FACT enabling children and households to reflect on the Christian Gospel

## Intergenerational Worship

January's theme for the I.W. was 'Jesus was a refugee'. The story, taken from Matthew's Gospel, picked up the final part of the Magi's saga and how the Holy Family had to flee for their lives. The music; some sung, some listened to and used for reflection, focused on the flight and the plight of those who are displaced and God's care for them. The corporate prayers invited a spoken response of, 'Let your kingdom come. Let your will be done', as statements were read out.



For people made homeless in the world  
because of political unrest.

Let your kingdom come,  
let your will be done.

It never ceases to amaze me the way that God nudges and directs. We just need to be listening and ready to step out in faith. When I was creating a plan of themes 9 months ago I had a strong feeling that there should be something on this topic of refugees and migrants. It's a topic that has been around for some while in the press but I had no idea that it would become even more relevant or so divisive in society at this time.

The I.W. covered the challenge to Christians as to what our values and actions should be according to the Bible, as opposed to the mob mentality often portrayed in the media of people shouting for their rights, their country, their borders. Some recent marches of people have gathered under the banner of 'Christian Nationalism', using the symbol of the Cross while calling for migrants to be stopped and expelled. The godly approach is contrary to the mob's voice and God's command to care is set out over 30 times in scripture. My favourite is;

**Numbers 15:15 (NLT)**

**Native-born Israelites and foreigners are equal before the Lord and are subject to the same decrees. This is a permanent law for you, to be observed from generation to generation.**

It has been good to show that I.W. can be a vehicle to engage with hard issues as well as those we might see as easier or more straightforward.

### News about the 3 churches with whom I'm currently working.

In November I attended the Harrow and Hillingdon Methodist Circuit Meeting. I was the guest speaker for this group of churches on the subject of Intergenerational Worship. It gave an overview of what it is, what it isn't and why we need it today. It was well received with many questions, both from the floor and in one-to-one chats afterwards.

I have been working with North Hillingdon Methodist, which is part of the circuit, over the last 12 months. They wanted the circuit to benefit from what I have been doing with them. It was quite a compliment to be paid.

Further training for North Hillingdon will take place at the end of February. This will delve deeper into the components that make up I.W. and the thinking and theology that undergirds it. The embryonic team is moving forward and I'm starting to let go of more and more of what I have prepared for them to present. There is a core group who are keen to develop a good understanding of what it's all about and equally keen to take I.W. on after I finish with them in the Summer.

The other 2 churches I've been working with, Staines Methodist and Ashford Common Methodist, are in similar places to Hillingdon. Embryonic teams are starting to emerge and discussions at Circuit level are taking place as to how / what / when will I.W. move forward without me after the Summer.

It is hoped that further training for them as a circuit will take place in Summer.

My work load has increased with 2 out of the 3 churches as I know meet up with their teams once a month to share the planing for the I.W. Every element of the service is open to them to take and present, including the simple talk! It does make me feel slightly vulnerable to be offering people my thoughts and scribbles for them to use and present, but each time they do a brilliant job with it and it is a good part of their ongoing training. I look forward to the day when I will be sat in the congregation at a table being able to take part fully with others, even if I recognise all the material being offered!

Work will start soon on cataloguing past services so that they will be able to access ideas when I have finished my time with them.

## Time 2 Share at Home



In the run up to Christmas our 3 'Mega Volunteers' each gave half a day a week to lead the production of the materials for the boxes. As the weeks rolled by the productivity levels soared and by the time they downed tools for the holidays 50 boxes were neatly stacked on the shelves waiting to be given away in the New Year. **Wow and thank you** to those 3 laminator and trimmer warriors!

January saw them all return to duty and more boxes are now in production.

At any one time, I now have 10 boxes in the back of my car so that if / when opportunities arise I can, not only wax lyrical about them, I can offer a box in that moment to the person I've connected with whom I've engaged in conversation.

In February the Intergenerational Worship at the 3 churches I am currently working with will be based around the theme of 'Aids for new ways to worship at home'. During the activity around the tables there will be opportunities to experience the materials in the boxes and then to take a box home to use with their household or another one they are a part of.

Guess what? One of the volunteers has already prepared all the materials I will need for those church visit!

I have spent a considerable amount of time contacting clergy that are known to me and making arrangements to catch up with them to share and offer boxes to them, either for the Junior Churches or for households known to them that they think would appreciate a box to try at home.

If, as a member of clergy, you have been missed and are feeling left out, be bold and get in touch. I'm always up for a coffee and choccy biscuits while we chat and view these awesome resources.

An email arrived recently from someone who has used the boxes and wanted to be an encouragement to me and the team. I have shared part of it below.

When you have read it, you will understand why you should get in touch to get a box for your household or even your church groups.

To set the scene. One box was given to a Junior Church leader who occasionally uses it instead of their usual material. They kindly sent me some feedback from a recent session using one of the 8 sets of cards. He wrote:

*I wanted to let you know that I used the T2S box again for today's junior church. We went through the deck based on John Chapter 8 (the adulterous woman). The children were once again very engaged throughout - they couldn't believe that the illustrations were by someone local.*



*The story and activities resonated with them and, at the end of the session, two of the girls asked to write a prayer off the back of it which they then took back and read to the whole congregation.*

*However, my favourite part from today's session is that one of the young girls, who struggles with reading (English isn't her first language), was so taken with the cards that she asked to read some of them. She was hesitant and stumbled from time to time but she gave it her best and came back for more. That's the first time she's been willing to do so - I think it says a lot about the inclusive nature of the activities.*

**So I say to my readers, don't miss out, get in touch!**

# Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!