



Dear friends,

I very much enjoyed reflecting with congregations at Headingley and Hyde Park last week, inspired by Numbers chapter 11. There we read about the moaning which spreads from the people, to Moses, their leader, and about what God does next. The passage begins something like this...

"If only we had meat to eat!" said God's people wandering in the wilderness...We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but manna, manna, manna...."

What God does next is not to moan back...or fix the problem of the manna...or tell Moses to pull himself together. God spreads the load of leadership...from one to a team. God says "you don't have to carry the whole thing alone"

I'm mindful this month of 'Methodist meeting season'. It's tough at the best of times, and this year, I think, is tougher than most. There are lots of reasons for that, some which relate to our local churches and some of which are being felt across the whole of Methodism or the whole of society. In many places leadership falls on a very few, and that alone provides a significant challenge. I'm not saying we're moaning (though we might be!), but the principle that God intends that we share the weight of leadership among us applies. This may require us to listen very carefully to God and to one another, and to be creative as we respond. God works within and outside the boundaries as we understand them. We have some significant decisions to make together in the coming weeks and months, and I pray that our Methodist habit of 'conferring' will stand us in good stead as we do so.

To get us back 'on the road' with the *Together Travel On* review process which was part of our work together as a Circuit pre-Covid, we are inviting our Circuit meeting reps to ask their local churches **what they feel they have gained, and what they have lost**, in terms of church life during the past 18 months or so. This brings up to date some of the responses we have from the questionnaire of Summer 2020 (when we dared to think that Covid was pretty much all over!). Please do ensure that your voice is heard as we gather thoughts in response to these very simple questions. If you don't know who your Circuit Meeting representatives are, this is a good time to find out! In most churches they will be your Senior Steward, Treasurer and one other member (usually another member of your Church Council).

So please continue to pray for one another, and particularly for those who offer leadership in your place. My prayer at this time is particularly for wisdom as we seek creative and life-giving patterns of working that will enable those in leadership, and those they serve, to flourish. Amen.

Peace, Jo