

Dear friends



As we have met together in various spaces over the past few weeks, there has been a lot of talk about workload, and balance...about what we can do, individually and collectively, and what we cannot...

So I begin this letter with a change to the published preaching plan. The eagle-eyed among you may have noticed Holy Communion planned for our zoom evening worship on the Sunday after Easter. Some of you may have presumed this was a misprint, others may have recognised it for what it was – an opportunity for this Circuit to begin to join in the conversation taking place in Methodism between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2024 about Holy Communion in online and hybrid settings. On the basis that Methodism comes to a mind by conferring within all parts of the Church, and we must not complain about a decision we have not participated in making, I think it is really important that we share in the process of discernment about what is and is not appropriate when we gather through electronic means. So I planned us a first opportunity to share Holy Communion in an online setting in the Circuit on the Sunday after Easter...

My confession is that I had not thought through the practical implications of such a plan! And we are really not quite ready as a team to offer this without significant work – which is not best done between now and Easter. So that service just after Easter will be a 'service of the word'...and we will reschedule the beginning of our participation in the wider Methodist process of discernment to later in the year.

In some ways this is 'something and nothing' – I have yet to know a plan which has unfolded exactly as written. Stuff happens! But it is the process of recognising and accepting that we have misjudged priorities, and making the necessary change, which feels so important. Maybe it's the beginning of putting into practice the words of last month's letter...

So we are more than half way through Lent...and I wonder where God is concentrating your focus this year? Mine has been on the 'little things' of life, as some of those who have shared Lenten worship with me will have heard. In partnership with the very big questions of war, pandemic, financial pressure and insecurity has come significant attention on the smallest of gifts, acts and thoughts, and a profound sense of gratitude for the generosity and kindness which can mark each day.

Holy God
as the days become lighter,
but the story we inhabit moves towards dark and difficult days,
help us continue to walk the path you mark out for each one of us this Lent.
May we find courage to watch and wait with Christ,
even as we anticipate the bright dawn of resurrection.
May we have eyes to see your new creation unfolding,
even, and especially, in the smallest of things.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen

Peace, Jo