

**Chair of District: Rev Gill M Newton**

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April 2020

**To all members of the Representative Session of the Sheffield Methodist District Synod**

Dear friends

As you are aware, we should have been meeting at Banner Cross Methodist Church in Sheffield on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020 for our Representative Session of Synod. However, because of the “lockdown” we are prevented from gathering as we would wish and I am sorry that we don’t have our usual opportunity to meet face-to-face in order to worship together, encourage, support and challenge one another in the mission in which we are engaged and simply enjoy each other’s company.

I hope that you are all managing to stay safe and well in your own particular circumstances and that you are all experiencing connection of some kind with your local church and community. It has been immensely impressive and encouraging to see and hear about the amazing variety of ways which many of you are developing in an attempt to remain connected so that you might worship, study and pray together and continue to have an impact on the communities around you.

Whilst we are unable to meet as expected, there is still information to pass onto you and some important decisions to be made. So I’m writing to you all now in order that we might continue to share in these matters.

As you will be aware, the major item of business that we would have discussed at the Synod is the “God In Love Unites Us” report. Because the Covid-19 pandemic has made it impossible for the necessary conferring to take place in all local churches, circuits and Districts, for the conferring and voting to take place at Synods and for the Methodist Conference to meet in its usual way, the decisions regarding the report have all been deferred to the Conference of 2021. Please do continue to pray for these ongoing conversations and for the whole church as people feel the impact of this delay in different ways.

The usual booklet of Synod reports is being prepared and we had hoped that it would be ready to circulate to you with this mailing but these challenging circumstances under which we are all working has resulted in a delay in the production of that material. So, we will circulate those to you at some point in the not too distant future for your information and prayers.

The following information would also have been shared with you at the Synod:

- Following successful completion of the probationary period, the District Leadership Team has been pleased to confirm the appointment of Sam Roberts as our District Communications Officer. Sam has made an enormous contribution to the life of the District already and her skills are really coming to the fore in our current situation as she helps us to explore new ways and develop new skills for staying connected. Please do be in touch with her if you need any help or support – [comms@sheffieldmethodist.org](mailto:comms@sheffieldmethodist.org)
- Cliff Festival is being held from Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May and this year is going online as “Festival at Home.” You may access the worship, teaching, seminars and all-age activities on this year’s theme of Global Vision by following this link <https://cliffcollege.ac.uk/cliff-festival/festival-2020>
- A report from the Presbyteral Synod would have been shared with you, so is enclosed with this letter for your information and prayers.

Part of our time together would have been spent in celebrating the matters that are mentioned in the Presbyterian Synod report and also saying goodbye to those who have already moved on from roles within the District in recent months or are expecting to do so at the end of this Connexional year. As things remain uncertain at the moment, it is my intention to hold some kind of online gathering later in the summer (if we are still unable to physically meet) in order to share in worship and to mark these important milestones.

There are, of course, other matters on which the Synod still needs to make decisions. These are listed below and a voting paper for your use is enclosed. I should be grateful if you would complete and return the voting paper to Katrin Hackett at [admin@sheffieldmethodist.org](mailto:admin@sheffieldmethodist.org) or use the stamped addressed envelope that is enclosed with this mailing if you have received it by post. **Please ensure that your voting paper reaches Katrin by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May at the latest.**

- The members of Great Longstone Church in The Peak Circuit have taken the decision to cease worship and close. This request has been unanimously supported by both The Peak Circuit meeting and the District Leadership Team. A report which outlines how this decision has been reached is attached and the final approval of the Synod is now required.
- The District Leadership Team (DLT) recommends approval of a revised constitution for the LEP at Loundsley Green in the Chesterfield Circuit and a report with background information which was provided for the Circuit Meeting and DLT is attached. The Synod is now required to offer final approval.
- The Bolsover & Staveley and Chesterfield Circuits have been journeying together over recent times and have now reached the point where they wish to create a new Circuit with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. The report received by the DLT in January 2020 is attached for your information and the Synod is now required to vote on the following resolution:  
"The DLT acknowledges the journey taken by the Bolsover & Staveley and Chesterfield Circuits and the positive votes taken in each Circuit Meeting in support of the creation of a new Circuit. The DLT therefore recommends to the Synod that the Circuits be supported in the formation of a new Circuit to be known as the Derbyshire North East Circuit with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020."

We look forward to receiving your completed voting papers as soon as possible and you will note that on the voting paper there is also space in which you can make any additional comments about any item of business or request that a letter of greeting be sent to someone from the Synod. If you have any questions about any item of business that you wish to raise before submitting your votes, please do be in touch with me as soon as possible.

In the meantime, I encourage you all to continue to avail yourself of all the opportunities that are being offered to you by the local churches, circuits and District for engagement in worship, prayer, study and learning during this time. I am truly grateful to you all for all that you are continuing to do in the name of Christ and assure you of my continuing prayers for you all in these days.

Yours faithfully



Gill Newton  
Chair, Sheffield Methodist District