



Methodist Church House,
25 Marylebone Road,
London NW1 5JR

+44 (0) 20 7486 5502

enquiries@methodistchurch.org.uk

www.methodist.org.uk

Registered charity no 1132208

The Revd Gill Newton

President-Designate of the Methodist Conference

Deacon Kerry Scarlett

Vice-President-Designate of the Methodist Conference

17 October 2022

Dear Gill

Greetings in the Saviour's Name!

We are pleased to write as the people designated by last year's Conference to serve as Vice-President and President for 2023-2024. We send you our greetings as we introduce ourselves and share some of the things that we may be able to offer as we travel around the Connexion. We are both looking forward to working with you and hope that you may wish to invite us, either together or separately, so that we can learn about some of the things that God is doing in and through the Methodist Church. We also wish to support you in your ministry, in any way we can.

We are happy to continue the custom of District visits and hope to meet with many of you during the year. Please invite us to events and occasions in your District and we will do our best to support as many of these as our diaries will permit. Our theme for the year is **"Hidden Treasures"** (Isaiah 45:3 NRSV), looking for the work of God in unexpected people, places and ways and considering how we are called to respond.

Gill

As a cradle Methodist, I am so grateful to a whole host of people across the West Country who nurtured and shaped my faith as I grew up and pursued my first career in banking: family members, youth leaders, Girls' Brigade officers, local preachers, ministers, and many friends. As a presbyter I have had the privilege of serving in a variety of contexts from small rural chapels to larger suburban congregations, from deprived ex-mining communities to affluent, leafy towns.

As I reflect on all these influences and experiences, I can recognise how profoundly true it is that God is active everywhere and very often in the most unexpected places and people. This confirms my belief that we, as God's church, need to embrace more fully the unexpected, the new and the unfamiliar. It also challenges me to see how important it is for us to be alert to and encouraging of the gifts that we see in others.

I am keen therefore, to hear about, or visit, those people, and places where you see that God is particularly active. Especially, and arising from my own journey of faith, here are some areas which are of particular interest to me and where I would love to spend some time:

- Vocational development for all followers of Jesus – groups of people, lay or ordained who are exploring vocation and/or formation such as young people's groups, candidates for ministry, probationers and ministers in their early years, Continuous Local Preacher Development groups
- New and emerging Christian communities – examples of new initiatives and pioneering work which is intentional about making disciples and developing Christian community
- Small fellowship groups where accountability and close fellowship are deepening discipleship
- Congregations and projects that are making a difference to the lives of those in rural communities for whom life can be consistently hard
- Uniformed organisations and youth groups where discipleship is evident and training in leadership is bearing fruit
- Projects that are providing support for Christians in the workplace

Kerry

Having come to faith in my late twenties, I find myself drawn to be involved in communities, which seek to reach out beyond the walls of established church, particularly where this is with people who have been marginalised. I was interim pioneer minister (2018-19) for Inclusive Gathering, Birmingham, and currently volunteer as part of the core team for the Birmingham District Church at the Margins NPNP, 'Street Banquet'; a church being built amongst those experiencing homelessness.

My experiences growing up in and around Belfast have shaped my passion for church to be engaged in issues of social justice and transformation. My own experience has been in using faith-rooted community organising practices to enable people to listen to, connect with, and collaborate with their community. My current role with the Learning Network includes supporting the Church at the Margins Connexional work strand to develop resources to enable all churches to use these practices in their context.

My previous appointments have included circuit ministry, workplace chaplaincy, Diaconal Tutor within the Queen's Foundation, and the development of both the West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network, and the Adavu Project, a Birmingham District project supporting survivors of modern slavery. I'm still involved with the work of Adavu in a voluntary advisory capacity. My part time PhD studies explore the ways in which faith stories of survivors can shape our engagement with modern slavery.

Whilst I look forward to meeting with people from across each District, I therefore have a particular interest in the following:

- New and emerging Christian communities/ New Places for New People, and especially those focused on building Church at the (Economic) Margins.
- Places where the church is involved in the work of social justice and transformation- particularly if this is happening in collaboration or partnership with others.
- Community organising/ community engagement – where churches or groups of people are really seeking to listen to, connect with and collaborate with the community of which they are a part.
- Churches and fellowships supporting people experiencing marginalisation /exclusion.

We hope that these thoughts will help you with your planning. If you want to suggest other things that might be useful or helpful, please do so and we will gladly consider them. Invitations and a brief outline of your plans should, in the first instance, be sent to the Conference Office via Rachel Tufnell at this email: pandvp@methodistchurch.org.uk and it would be really helpful if you can send these before Friday 2 December. If you have particular dates you would like to suggest, then please outline these in your invitation.

With every good wish and continuing prayers,



Rev Gill Newton
President-Designate



Deacon Kerry Scarlett
Vice-President-Designate