**Chat from the session**

Very concerned about the laxness that comes with the sense of vaccination! Just because you have been vaccinated doesn't mean there isn't still risks...

Some thoughts from Martyn Atkins - Church Leaving and Returning I attended a zoom circuit staff meeting this week and the topic of who and how many local Methodists would 'return to church' as the (present) lockdown ends was discussed. At the church I'm currently ministering in, a good number, probably a little more than half the overall membership, have not been in the building at all for over 14 months. About 30-40 folk have regularly watched zoom services, and much the same group of people have regularly attended socially distanced worship in person when that has been possible. Other circuit staff shared variations on this same theme about the churches in their pastoral charge. I suspect our circuit staff are not alone in having no clear idea how many folk will return to the life of the church over the next period of time? My mind went back to Phil Richter & Leslie Francis' book, 'Gone but not Forgotten' and the revamp, 'Gone for Good?' about church leaving and returning. Cont....

More from Martyn - There were many helpful insights in those books. Unsurprising statements such as the fact that some leave church because the vicar won't baptise their baby, or someone was rude to them. Significantly, they noted that relatively few people leave church because of a sudden crisis of faith. Few regular churchgoers wake up one Tuesday morning and declare themselves atheists and henceforth give church up. Perhaps most importantly at the current time was the observation that church-going is essentially habitual. The majority of people who leave church do so because the habit is broken, usually because of a house move, or job change, or life event. And if so, we must wait and see, possibly with some warranted trepidation, how many folk - and not only Methodist churchgoers - have got out of the habit, and don't or won't choose to get back in it. What do you think?

I've just submitted some tentative plan dates. As a shielder this feels huge!

I recently heard of zoom / other forms of service streaming as a comfortable sofa behind the pews.

Hmm I would like to think its more equal than that, paul

back row has always been the most popular one!

as in a safe space for people to come into church but without the pressure of having to socialise straight away (or being roped into the coffee rota)

I do miss travel time where I talk to myself in the car.

In the car is the only time I get to myself at the moment...…..

I get more done because catching the bus across Leeds can take a lot of time, but the space to stop and think was good - whereas for a while I was having almost back to back meetings. I'm now putting coffee / walk breaks into my calendar.

I have really missed the travel time, when I was on site at work, it meant during the drive to work I could leave home at home, and then on the way home leave work at work

for clarification - I get more done working from home. (also re-discovered the other day that people come in 3D)

is it because a lot of "meetings" are things that would normally be dealt with as you bump into someone?

There is a call in some of the churches I work in for business meetings to continue online because they are much more focused, and people don’t seem to get as caught up on the trivialities

(e.g. not getting so caught up in a discussion about what new vac the church needs)

Or the colour the new bathroom in the manse should be painted...

And good for the environment as well, Laura, and cutting down on cost to the circuits/ district by people not needing to reclaim expenses.

totally agree, zoom is also often more adaptable to meeting needs of people who may have disabilities or commitments such as children etc.

Having taught 1st year undergrads I can safely say that most of them already come to uni with knowing their limits

I know what you are meaning Paul, but for young people heading off to uni in the next year or two, they won’t have had the same opportunities to explore those limits with their friends in safe spaces, compared to undergrads in previous years

and, as workers, we haven’t had the same opportunities to explore safe risk taking with young people because we haven’t had the face to face opportunities to pick up on risk taking behaviour with a specific young person quietly on one side of the main group

definitely true - I probably learnt most of my lessons in Scouts before ever going near uni

A few people have spoken about mental health. Its mental health awareness week this week. I've written a blog for York Disability Rights forum that I thought could be relevant <https://ydrf.org.uk/2021/05/10/mental-health-awareness-week/>

Tim Jansen is also running a MHFA Youth course (physically) in Sheffield on 7 & 8 June and has a couple of spaces left if anyone fancies doing it

Here are some resources from a Digital Theology conference on Hybrid church - some interesting reports and ideas if you have the patience to read them :) <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zscWQz-2isHkx057IMTadusMTNsSRZQJ?usp=sharing>

BBC Rethink (podcast)

This was National Churches Trust research last year <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/news/churches-and-covid-19-opinion-poll>

Ebor Lectures '2020 Vision: Sharpening our Focus'

Thanks, this has been SO helpful to talk to other people going through the same things. Thank you so much for enabling this space!

I do have to keep reminding people that I'm a mission enabler not a mission doer.

Same - my job title is also enabler

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-40ac92b1-1750-4e86-9936-2cda6b0acb3f>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gO7Q1uCzguM&t=73s>

<https://www.cpas.org.uk/browse-everything/resources-recovery-phase?r=%2Fbrowse%2Finfo%3Fk%3DCOVID-19>