



Revd. Gordon Gresswell

608 Chepstow Road

Newport

NP19 9BZ

[g.gresswell@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:g.gresswell@yahoo.co.uk)

Home: 01633 272066 Mobile: 07570992890

June 1<sup>st</sup> 2020

Dearest folk of the Newport and Lower Wye Methodist Circuit.

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. Grace and peace be with you all.

June arrives after the sunniest May on record. Hope your gardens look lovely and your homes sparkling as we have needed to stay in them. It has now been twelve Sundays since our last opportunity to be worshipping God together in our church buildings. We have guidance about the safest way to open once the go ahead is given, and, as a Circuit Leadership Team, we have been working hard on many differing aspects of Church life. This letter is an update of where we are.

### Worship

We have tried to keep us all connected in sending out, electronically, a daily worship sheet, and by post a Sunday worship sheet. A thank you to all who continue to contribute to this venture.

Different Churches in the Circuit have also provided on-line and paper worship, as well as blogs, prayers, insights, and stories.

Chepstow have a weekly on-line Service you can access through their website, and regular prayerful blogs.

St. Julian's have a weekly Service you can take part in on a Sunday through You-Tube.

Monmouth have a weekly Service on-line as does Trinity. All of these are accessible on the internet, and please feel free to check these out. There are also many others from around the whole world you can find in this on-line universe.

When collective worship is available there are several things we will need to consider:

**Church /Chapel safety:** We have guidelines on how to make our worship spaces as safe as possible and these general guidelines will be sent to every Church/Chapel to follow through, as well as possible local knowledge that maybe required.

**People safety:** We recognise that there will be worries about resumption and that there may be other considerations such as we are not allowed to sing. In light of this we will be keeping, initially, any worship events as local as possible. Ministers, Local Preachers, Worship Leaders, and Stewards will be in their own Churches/Chapels, as much as possible to minimise risk. We will be working with Churches/Chapels to find solutions where this is more difficult.

The consequence of this is no Plan again for this summer quarter. We await guidelines as we look ahead to the beginning of a new connexional year beginning in September.

This also means that we will not be able to gather together to say thank you and farewell to Preben and Margaret Andersen nor to Ruth and Richard Lownsborough. What we will be doing, however, is an on-line tribute as a Circuit and I will be co-ordinating this. I will be speaking to some people but if you would like to say something and be involved in stories, prayers, thoughts for any of these fine folk please do get in touch with

me using any of the media in this letterhead. We plan to invite Preben and Margaret, Ruth, and Richard back to the Circuit next Spring where we can say a heartfelt thank you and show our appreciation to them with appropriate gifts.

We are to be blessed with the arrival of Revd. Bethany Willers, with her husband Joel. They will be coming to Monmouth for September. Bethany is a MOCC (Minister from other Churches or Conferences) and is from the USA. Bethany and Joel are currently in Notting Hill and hope to be in Monmouth by the end of August. The magnificent Monmouth people are already swinging into action to welcome them both as best they can, *but* we will *not* be having a formal Circuit Welcome Service in September, but will await a future date when all is safe. Bethany and Joel will create their own 'get-to-know-us' once they arrive in Monmouth.

#### Finance and Administration

We recognise that this has probably impacted Churches/Chapels. Not meeting without an offertory and not having rental income are just two factors that we recognise is probably making treasurers lives more difficult than usual. Roger Langford, as Circuit Treasurer, is doing a sterling job keeping in touch with Church Treasurers. We have some proposals, as a Circuit Leadership Team, and these will be discussed at a 'Zoom' Treasurers Meeting on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

Alongside this we need to agree next year's budget. This would normally be done at a Circuit Meeting. We are not going to be able to meet, in person, for a Circuit Meeting for a while. The Circuit Meeting Trustees will be contacted with any proposals and we are hopeful that we can find consensus going into our uncertain future. We will be in touch with the Church Representatives very soon.

In a similar vein, the Wales Representative Synod that is due to take place in September will also be postponed and will, hopefully, take place in the Spring of 2021. This will probably involve the discussions we have been having around Marriage and Relationships, as Conference, this year, is to take place electronically and this is not one of the items for discussion.

Please also note that the Revd. Alexis Mahoney, who candidated out of Caldicot Methodist Church and is stationed in Cardiff, will come into 'Full Connexion' at this Conference. His Ordination, however, will take place at a date further down the line.

#### Superintendent bit

Christian faith, it has been said, owes a lot to the Stoics, a Greek philosophical idea from about 250 BC which became prominent in Roman thinking around the time of Jesus. From my reading of you all, you are being wonderfully stoic. The support networks in Church have been a pleasure to be part of and to hear of. We have had folk in hospital, and some who have passed on to be with the Lord, yet I have heard no grumbling and much love and wisdom expressed. Thank you for the encouragement all of this has given me.

We will 'wake-up' to a similar, but different world. Alongside colleagues and the CLT we are seeking to discern how we go forward as *relevant* Church in these circumstances. The word LOCAL keeps cropping up. Please pray into this word and may God bless us as we seek to grow His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Stay safe, until we meet again. With love and prayers in Christ

*Gordon*