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Dear lovely folk of Chepstow.

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. May the peace of God be with us all.

It is such a privilege to be a small part of Chepstow Methodist Church. Your care for each other shines through, and your desire to reach out to others with the love of God in Jesus Christ is striking. As the Superintendent Minister, it is great to see such a beacon of light shining in the Circuit.

This has been a difficult time for the whole world, a difficult time for Chepstow Methodist Church, and a difficult time for your Minister, the Reverend Rachel Frank.

As you are aware, life has thrown many perplexing and arduous things Rachel's way this past year. The care and support to Rachel from you all has been, and is, much appreciated. Please do keep her in your prayers. The Coronavirus has taken us all by surprise and has drawn us into some dark and fearful places. For Rachel, coming to terms with grief, the virus has not helped in any way. She is in the category of being vulnerable due to a variety of health issues, and has been, rightfully, isolating to ensure safety. With so many varying stressful events I asked Rachel to see her G.P. and take some time away from the stresses of Circuit and Church life. Hopefully, this is for a short period of time and she will regain her energy and enthusiasm and provide the impetus for the next stage of Chepstow Methodist Church's life.

In the meantime I am your interim Minister. The Church is blessed by so many capable and caring people. The Sunday podcasts have provided a real lifeline to many and these will continue throughout August under the guidance of Cliff Randall and his team. The Stewards meet regularly, the Property Team are working hard on risk-assessments for the Church as a worshipping community, as a place of outreach and as a community centre. The Finance Committee are meeting regularly at this particularly challenging time for all churches. There is the prayer Chain that is being used, the weekly online Bible study, a weekly Zoom house group and Elena and Kathy are doing a wonderful job in enabling pastoral care to continue, particularly to those in our church who are not connected to the internet.

In my role as interim Minister, I will be praying for you all and making myself available to each of these groups. There will be other matters that arise, I'm sure, and I am grateful for all the prayerful support offered to Rachel and myself at this time.

As a Church we are looking at opening up for worship in the near future. There will be a 'Plan' of worship created to begin on Sunday, 6th September. Risk assessments will be carried out for this and more information will follow. There will be only one Service on a Sunday at 10.00 am. This is, at the moment a temporary, but necessary requirement, as we cannot ensure safety of all by having two services. The Coronavirus lingers for 72 hours and without a deep clean between Services the risk is deemed too high. There are plans being developed for this Service to be accessible to people in their homes as we recognise there is a need for this. We also have safety of all at the forefront of our minds and don't want people to feel an obligation or duty to come to Church, as we can find ways of bringing Church to you where ever you are.

I hope that this temporary arrangement will allow us all to praise God's holy name together and strengthen us at this time. As we draw closer to God together, the Spirit will bind us close and enable Rachel to return into this lovely, Spirit filled Church and enable us to go forward in growing God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

If you have any questions please do contact me on any of the above media and may the peace of the Lord go with us all.

Gordon