



Chepstow Methodist Church Pastoral Letter

It is a delight to be a small part of your loving and caring fellowship here at Chepstow Methodist Church. Your pastoral team is excellent, prayer and house groups have continued despite lockdown, the podcasts are a real eclectic mix and there is a sense of a real desire to grow Christ's kingdom in this beautiful part of South Wales. Well done good and faithful servants.

In light of the pandemic and the changes in ministerial oversight over this past 2 and bit years, you really do need to give yourselves a pat on the back. One of many strange things in the Methodist Church is a Minister needing to give, in effect, 15 months' notice to leave. There is that time of gentle de-coupling and then wondering what's next. The anticipation of meeting someone new and then having to wait 9 months for them to arrive. All very strange in my eyes!

As you are all aware, it has been a dark and difficult path for Rachel upon her coming to Chepstow. Not through yourselves but through life's events. Your prayers and support to Rachel and Tom speak volumes for you all. Rachel is starting to emerge into a better place. The Lord is guiding her through the valley she has found herself in and she inches toward that green pasture of God's promise. We hope that she will be back amongst us all in early September and that she will become the blessing we all desire her to be. I will keep you informed and thank you for your support of me at this time.

We are also planning on re-opening our sacred space. There is a planned prayer and meditation Service on Thursday August 27th beginning at 11.00 AM. I will lead this through. There has been a thorough risk-assessment and it is unfortunate that the maximum number of people allowed to gather is 30. This will be the case, too, when we open on Sunday mornings. This is planned to begin on Sunday September 6th at 10.00 AM with Cliff Randall and his team working on ways to transmit parts of this worship into our homes so that we can all share together. More information will emerge, and the Stewards will let you know of the plans for the Thursday event and the arrangements for the Sunday mornings.

We also need to keep an eye on the future. The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the second-best time is today. We have revisited the past in establishing the Chepstow Missional Hub almost as a replica to the 'old' Chepstow and Caldicot Circuit. It is hoped that this much smaller and local unit will be effective in fulfilling our calling of growing God's kingdom here and now. We have also revisited 'A Way Forward', a visioning exercise undertaken by Chepstow Methodist Church under the Rev. Rod Ingrouille. This time we are to share this visioning with Caldicot Methodist Church in the hope that shared vision and ministry will bring fresh fruit into the lives of our Churches and Chapels as we seek to enable others to know of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Please do pray for this initiative and we are hoping to start planting this 'tree' before the end of September.

These have been unprecedented times. The Circuit has reduced to 4 Ministers (there were 7 when the initial amalgamation took place in 2008) and the Circuit has been able to release £44,000 of reserves to help Churches over this last six months and we emerge into an unknown future. As a Circuit Leadership Team, we believe that the Missional Hubs are the way forward for us as a Circuit, and I believe that 'A Way Forward' will help the Chepstow Missional Hub in discerning God's call into his future. For God is God and he offers these words of encouragement; *God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.* (2 Tim 1:7) Let us trust and obey, and, until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

Gordon

(August 2020)