



Revd. Gordon Gresswell

608 Chepstow Road

Newport

NP19 9BZ

g.gresswell@yahoo.co.uk

Home: 01633 272066 Mobile: 07570992890

April 27th 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

As life seems to reopen in Wales and we start to look ahead to a hoped for brighter, vaccinated future, I write an update of where we are as a Methodist Circuit and as a Methodist Church.

Firstly: Reopening of Churches.

The distancing, mask, and singing rules remain in place for places of worship, but some of our churches have reopened to worship in premises, and I am aware that others are planning to in May. The Circuit's plan is to have a 'Worship Plan' involving all of our Churches in place for June 6th through to August 29th. Some of this may be a mixed-economy of Zoom and physical presence, but the intention is for us to be able to gather as people in physical proximity to one another to offer our prayers and worship to the Living God revealed in the Risen Christ. If the rules stated above change in any way we will, of course, inform you all.

Secondly: Farewells, Welcomes and Congratulations.

We had proposed a Zoom Service for an opportunity to say a 'proper' farewell to Revs Preben and Ruth (alongside Margaret and Richard), a welcome to Rev Bethany and congratulations to Local Preachers who have achieved landmark years in their service to the Lord. This was intended for Ascension Day (May 13th) but will now NOT take place. This is because we are hoping to actually have an outdoor Service where we can safely meet. The UK Government's plan is aiming for a 'full-opening' up from June 21st, and we envisage that the Senedd will be giving a go-ahead in Wales for around the same time. We are searching for an appropriate venue and date. Preben, Ruth and Bethany are all excited about opportunities to actually meet some actual flesh and blood three-dimensional Christians. We envisage this to be late June/early July and please pray that we find the right venue and the right day when the sun is going to shine!

Thirdly: Synod and Connexional News.

There was a special Wales Synod last Saturday (24th). One item of this was a proposal for Synod Cymru to amalgamate into the Wales Synod and become one. There is work to be done still but this was agreed upon, in principle on Saturday.

The main body of discussion was around an indicative vote around the resolutions in the God in Love Unites us Conference Report. This Circuit's voters were the ordained clergy and five Lay Reps. There were five separate votes on these resolutions. These resolutions involved changes to CPD in regard to the understanding of the status of marriage in the Methodist Church. Some of this provision was around issues of cohabitation of

couples and around people of the same sex being able to be married in a Methodist Church. All of the resolutions were accepted by majority votes.

These resolutions are for discussion at this year's Conference. This Synod votes does not count towards this, this is why it is known as an indicative vote, it is a vote to reflect the generalised view of any particular Synod/District. If these resolutions are passed at Conference each Church Council will be asked, within the next 12 months, whether they are willing to accept a marriage ceremony to take place on their premises or not.

This has been a difficult discussion for many. Some have been strongly for these resolutions and some have been strongly against these resolutions. For some this will be a source of rejoicing and for others a source of angst and struggle. The Methodist Church is a broad church with many different views held. May Christ bless us with peace in our prayers and thoughts.

Fourthly: Daily Devotions

Thank you to all who have enabled us, day-by-day, to worship God collectively over this past year. The plans are for these to continue until the end of June. The Gospel of Mark is the set book for Bible Month which takes place in June. We plan for a daily devotion throughout June beginning on June 1st with Mark Chapter 1, and my hope is that 30 different people will take a day each giving us a wide variety of voices. After this we hope to continue with a written Sunday Service connecting us all as disciples of the Living God.

Thank you for the privilege of being your Superintendent Minister. If you have any questions please do ask, and if you have any news you wish to share please do let me know.

May grace and peace be with you all.

Gordon