

**Synod Secretary**

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**To All Members of the Southampton District Synod**

**22nd April 2020**

Dear Colleagues

**Update and Information**

As we approach the date when we were due to meet for Synod I thought it would be helpful to give you an update and some information about some of the important issues.

**The Methodist Council met (online) at the end of March: Conference 2020** will not meet in person. Details are still to be confirmed on how the essential business of Conference will be conducted. Reception into Full Connexion will go ahead in some form but Ordination Services will be held at a later date.

**'God in Love Unites Us'** Report – deferred until Conference 2021. This is good news as it means that we are able to deal with the Report at Synod as previously planned in September, or if necessary (I pray not!) in April 2021.

**Deferred Special Resolution about the use of Church Premises by other Churches:** Please find attached some guidance notes regarding the process for handling this Deferred Special Resolution which was passed by the 2019 Conference, along with a briefing document (from the Law and Polity Committee) which sets out the detail of the proposals. You will see that it is recommended that we start this process at Spring Synod which is obviously not possible. We will deal with the matter at September Synod but the **important** thing to note is the timings for votes; it is important that Church Councils are not held in the autumn before Synod on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**District Business:** urgent business will be conducted by email consultation with members of DPC. DPC are due to meet on June 10<sup>th</sup> but this is obviously subject to the lockdown rules at the time.

**Superintendents** continue to meet with the Chair on Zoom twice a week; sharing concerns, finding solutions and offering support to one another.

**Conference 2021 Representatives:** Although Conference will not take place this year in its normal format, we will still vote for our Representatives for 2021 as we would ordinarily at September Synod. I am attaching a Nomination Form for your prayerful consideration. Please note that I have not added details of the venue as this may change in the light of all that has been thrown into disarray this year.

**Change of Venue for September Synod:** We hope and pray that our Synod in September will be able to go ahead as normal and it will be a very special time to come back together. We have **changed the venue** to enable us to meet in a church – Poole Bay Circuit have very kindly agreed to host at **The Spire**. Thank you to Yeovil and Blackmore Vale for being so gracious about the change!

**Annual Reports:** The District Annual Report Booklet will be available online from 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and it will be produced in hardcopy format for distribution with the next Synod Mailing in September.

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Albeit that this is a very difficult time for everyone, one of the silver linings is that we are all finding new ways of working, creative ways of sharing worship, deepening our pastoral care, and reaching out to those in our communities to share the love of God. It is exciting, humbling and deeply moving to hear about some of these initiatives! The District is hugely appreciative for all the work and the love that is being shared. Our Chair would like to add a postscript to this update too:

**The Reverend Andrew de Ville**

*I would like to add my own personal thanks to you all, and through you to all in your Circuits, for the graciousness that you have shown in these difficult and challenging times. We are very much in uncharted waters and so it is very hard to know how to be God's holy people at this time but, from the Superintendents and others, I have heard many examples of the way that the Methodist people have supported and encouraged each other, truly being Christ's Church at this time. Thank you for offering pastoral care, for sharing in worship, and for reaching out to friends and strangers in your communities. My prayer is that, as we travel on, each one of us experiences the presence of God who strengthens us, offers us peace and by whose Spirit we may know ourselves loved.*

*The work of the District continues through our District Officers and I want to thank them also for their ministry which is being shaped in a different way to support you all. Please do continue to get in touch with me, or any of the Officers, if you need particular support either for yourself or those in your community.*

*As we have travelled through the events of Lent, Holy Week and Easter I have been reminded of the vulnerability of Christ as he responded to those around him, especially as the events of his death and resurrection drew near. So, at times when we might be feeling vulnerable ourselves, let us remember that Christ identifies with us in our vulnerability, and, enabled by the Spirit, helps us to continue to offer ourselves as channels of the Father's love to the world.*

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you require any further information or guidance. I look forward to seeing you in September - positive thinking!

Very best wishes

*Sandy*

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**Southampton District**