

March 2020

Dear Friends

***God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into
the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.
The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."
(Psalm 46:1-3, 6, 10)***

I am pleased to be safely home from Brazil despite being disappointed not to be able to stay longer and to have had to cancel the other plans for my sabbatical, which included visiting Portugal with Torquay United Walking Football Club, and sharing with Methodist congregations in Poland. I have to find other uses of my sabbatical and am in the process of changing my programme. Both Janet and I have underlying medical conditions and so are among those for whom social distancing is a requirement.

These are very difficult and stressful times for us all. I am concerned about the well-being of the members and also the well-being of the church and offer the following suggestions:

Worship and prayer:

In addition to the regular broadcast services on radio and television, Revd Steven Wild, past President of the Conference, from the Cornwall District has worship and prayer resources on *Facebook* and *Youtube* and details of these are available through our circuit website and Facebook pages. Revd Darren Middleton from Plymouth is also providing resources. Knowing Steve and Darren these will probably be as good as any available. If you need help accessing these please contact the circuit office.

Pastoral care:

Pastoral secretaries and pastoral visitors should be in touch with members regularly by telephone. If you need further support, please do not hesitate to contact Doug, Denise or me. Once again we are using a temporary office mobile phone 07380 638244. Email messages to the office address will normally be checked every working day (Tuesday to Friday) and probably more often.

Circuit plan and Connected magazine:

It might seem odd but we are going to continue to make the circuit plan and publish the circuit Connected newsletter. There could be a time when restrictions on public worship are lifted and we need to be prepared for that to come about as suddenly as the restrictions have come.

Kind regards to everyone – we have to be sensible and to keep well. The word ‘unprecedented’ seems to be an everyday part of our vocabulary. We need to continue to support and pray for one another, for our National Health Service and for the Prime Minister and government at this time. The Methodist Prayer Handbook is useful to remember particular parts of Britain and Ireland and the wider world. Finally, if you received this letter through the post, please could you let us have your email address if you have one.

God bless



**John M. Haley
Superintendent Minister**