

## CIRCUIT STEWARDS' REPORT

Normally we only send out a circuit steward report in January and September but we felt that it was a good idea to give you an update as there has been a lot going on.

The Circuit Meeting (CM) on 11th March had to deal with the admin for 2 years in the circuit, including the finances, assessment, etc. The CLT have approved supporting Woodlands with finances to help them at a difficult time and the CM agreed to this retrospectively. It was noted that some of our churches have maintained the income from offerings, whilst others have found this more difficult. If necessary we shall have to offer more economic assistance. Reports were received from some of the circuit churches about what they have been doing during the last year and it is wonderful to see the support given by churches to their members and the variety of worship which has been on offer.

We want to thank Chris Lusher and Kate Philips for remaining as circuit stewards during this year in order for us to have continuity until we could meet to vote for new circuit stewards, their commitment and dedication is much appreciated.

Although we had hoped to meet in person, the CM was on Zoom and therefore the voting was taken after the meeting, online or by post. This included voting for the new circuit stewards and we would like to say a huge thank you to all who offered to fill that role. As a result of the vote it was agreed that Joyce Wild (who has completed 4 years out of 6) would continue and Rodney Betts and I would be given an extension of one year in order to provide continuity as we emerge from lockdown, etc. Three new circuit stewards were elected, Peter Aston (Holtwood), Mark Priestley (Ringwood) and Chris Slade (Crowe Hill) and we look forward to working with them.

On 20th March there was a special Synod to discuss and vote on the report on God in Love Unites Us (GILUU). This should have taken place last year and was deferred in the hope that it could have been a 'live' meeting, but, again, it was virtual. Time was given to speak to the general issues raised in the report and then time to speak to the resolutions. As a circuit we have had 3 meetings about this, where people were invited to share comments. The results of the voting are available on the District website and we encourage you to look at those (The details of the resolutions are in the GILUU report). If you want more information please speak to one of us or another Synod rep. The results of the votes from all Synods will be presented to Conference in June, when members of Conference will vote.

As we, hopefully, emerge from isolation we have events to look forward to. On 6th June Rev. Phil Dixon will have his Testimony Service in preparation for his Ordination. As this is before the magic date of 21st June we strongly suspect that it will be under current conditions, masks, no singing and limited numbers to enable social distancing. Priority will be given to members of Bransgore and Highcliffe and we are aiming to have the service live streamed so that many more will be able to participate in the comfort of their own homes. Phil's Ordination is on 19th June in Taunton and we understand that will also be under current conditions, but live streamed.

I am not sure that we say we look forward to the next event because it means that we shall be saying goodbye to Nigel and Rhoda Deller as Nigel ends his time as a Circuit Minister and they move to Devon to be nearer to family. However, on 18th July, we shall be able to celebrate Nigel's ministry and dedication as he 'sits down'. As this is a July date we hope to be free from current constrictions (maybe even sing!!!!!!).

On 1st September we shall welcome Nick and Susannah Wood into the circuit as Nick takes responsibility for Verwood, Holtwood and Woodlands. We hope that they will soon feel 'at home' in our circuit.

Please remember the Pentecost Challenge, we have a number of submissions for this on the circuit website which demonstrate the creativity of members of our circuit.

With regard to the pandemic, we know that we are not out of the woods yet and may have challenges ahead of us. Many churches across the country have been considering their future and some of the discussions about this will be difficult. We will need to be gentle with each other, listen carefully, pray for and with each other and be guided by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the decisions we find the hardest and most painful are the very ones which give us freedom and renewal in ways we had not thought possible.

**Finally, but by no means least, the circuit stewards would like to thank all who have contributed to worship, property, finance, pastoral care during this last year. All of this has been under difficult circumstances, but the commitment and dedication of members and leaders of our churches has been outstanding.**



Thank you

Liz Ward

April 2021