



CHRISTCHURCH AND WIMBORNE METHODIST CIRCUIT

Circuit Stewards' Report September 2020

I am sure I don't need to say that this report is like no other, circumstances have meant that church buildings have not been open for much of the time since the last Circuit Steward report, although the church has still continued, but in different places and in many different ways.

We should first of all like to say an immense and heartfelt thank you to all of you.

Each time the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) meet via Zoom we hear of how members of the churches have supported and encouraged each other by phone, distanced visits, letters and cards, and, of course, prayer.

Thank you to the Ministers who have had to learn new ways of being Ministers and who have led unusual funerals, sometimes by themselves, or with family only. They, with the support of church stewards and members, have ensured that worship has been available to as many as possible through written sheets or online. New skills have been learned and it has challenged us all to think of worship and church in a new way. Many trust that we will be able to continue with at least some of those initiatives, especially to those who are no longer able to attend on a Sunday as well as those who might not choose to do so but who appreciate feeling a part of the church in this way.

During a distanced Conference Phil Dixon was received into full connexion and it was a joy to be able to watch that, even if from the comfort of our own homes. Unfortunately it was not possible to have Phil's Ordination, which usually follows on the Sunday, but that will now take place on 18th April 2021 at Westminster Central Hall, hopefully we shall be able to be together for a full church on that occasion. Phil's Testimony service will be 28th March at Highcliffe.

Nigel Deller is taking part of his planned Sabbatical until the end of August, with the second part to be taken in June/July next year. As we know, Nigel will be 'sitting down' in July 2021 and we ask you to think of him and Rhoda as they move towards that time. The Circuit Invitation Committee has prepared a profile for the Minister for Nigel's 3 churches and we ask for your prayers for guidance and discernment as we work through the process of stationing.

Thank you to David Ellis, who has been looking after Mudeford Lane since March. David is now taking a well-earned rest and Nigel will have pastoral responsibility for Mudeford Lane for the present.

Thank you to Chris Lusher who has served this Circuit so diligently and wisely as Lead Circuit Steward for several years. As the CLT feels it would not be productive to have either a virtual or distanced Circuit Meeting at the moment which would be accessible to all members and where we could elect new Circuit Stewards, both Chris and Kate Phillips have

offered to remain in position as Circuit Stewards until we can elect new stewards in an acceptable and fair manner, whilst I take on the role of Lead Circuit Steward. I am sure you will understand that many organisations are making similar arrangements until they can 'meet again'.

Churches have been through the painful process of preparing a Covid 19 Risk Assessment and considering how/when/if they will be able to open again for worship. The CLT are very aware of how much work this has involved and the careful consideration each church has undertaken to ensure that members are/will be safe. We understand that this situation has caused many to question how they can operate as church and difficult decisions have already been made and we may find that more will need to be made in the coming months.

Please pray for each other and try to seek a true understanding of how your church may move forward. Be tolerant of each other, what may seem obvious and right to one may not be so to another. Be patient and generous of spirit as you discuss, debate, reach a consensus or compromise. Above all, love one another.

Liz Ward on behalf of the Circuit Stewards

14/8/20