



## *The Derby Circuit of the Methodist Church*

Registered Charity no. 1142341

20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Friends

You don't need me to tell you that we are living in strange and uncertain times. Who would have ever thought that travel to other countries would almost come to a halt, that people would be encouraged not to work (or at least work from home), that schools would be closed down, or that every church in the land would be closed for Sunday worship. And yet this is where we find ourselves.

The word isolation has been used a lot in recent days, as people are being encouraged to self-isolate and distance themselves from each other. As Christians we believe in community, from the earliest days of the church the followers of Jesus have committed themselves to pray, to study, to fellowship together and to care for one another. The challenge for us at this time is to do these things while at the same time being separated in distance. I hope that in the weeks that lie ahead we will find innovative ways to still be community and ideas are being shared amongst the staff and leadership teams as to how this can be done. Obviously, one of the easiest ways for us all to feel connected is to speak to each other on the phone and perhaps we should commit ourselves to ring a couple of different people each day for a chat, making especially sure that those with no family support are not forgotten. Why not end your conversation with a prayer?

In terms of pastoral support, the Circuit Staff, lay and ordained, will be providing care as fully as possible, in line with government and connexional guidance. We are all only a phone call away at anytime of day or night. Please do not be afraid to ring us for a chat, a prayer, or even advice. Please also rest assured that you are and will continue to be in our thoughts and prayers.

For those with computers and smart phones, another way of remaining connected and up to date with what is going on is to check the Circuit and your Church websites. You will find on them a variety of resources and information, including prayers and liturgies for your own private devotion. There are also lists of organisations who require help as they support others, like for example those who use food banks or are homeless. The information will be changed regularly so keep in touch.

This morning I received an email containing this text from Philippians 4:6-7, ***Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** I pray that during these coming days, with all their uncertainties and challenges that you may know the peace of God, through Jesus, for he holds all our anxieties and fears and promises us that he will be with us always.

In his precious name  
Your friend and superintendent minister

*Colin Emerson*