



'Staying Connected' 20
Week Beginning 2nd August 2020
Pastoral Letter

Dear friends,

How are you all? Have you done something this week that you haven't done for awhile? How did it feel? Were you pleased with your efforts or were you still a bit unsure? It seems to be perfectly natural to be unsure and still feel that a milestone has been passed. We have much to be thankful for, living in the Peak Circuit where we can breathe fresh air and wander a few hundred metres for a view that takes your breath away. I have been revisiting some of my husbands' photos this week when the weather kept us indoors. Seeing the valley from Stanage in all weathers, misty bottoms or covered in snow or purple heather is just magical. I wish I was a poet! We have much to thank God for and much to share!

In Hathersage, we have been meeting in small groups outside either in the garden by the church or the allotment by the Manse or in folks' gardens. The limit seems to be six according to the government and on the whole we have tried to keep to that. Some couples have thought of themselves as one. This initiative came from a Zoom group that has been meeting since early on in the lockdown just to keep in touch and talk about general difficulties. There was much hilarity over hair cutting mistakes! Organic is the word to use to describe how this grew and is still growing and changing to meet the members expectations. There is no real plan but there has been opportunity to chat about what is important and each meeting is different. When was the last time you shared the Lord's prayer in an actual company of believers? That was special. Of course, it is always weather dependent but the coffee and cake are always a draw!

I have produced the worship this week based on the lectionary readings and I am continually amazed that the Bible has something to say about the present situation whether now or last year or ten years ago. I feel there is a theme going on here for us to think about. I am hoping that you know the tune of Ode to Joy for the first hymn. It seems to fit really well and I am aware of the crescendos and steady beat as I am singing it. Enjoy! I took the photo of the creamy flower hiding amongst glorious shiny leaves on the famous High Line walk in New York in Memorial Day when all of the city was on holiday. Just last year! The other photo is the Hope Valley one misty morning. It is possible to be shrouded in mist in the valley bottom and the sun brilliantly bright up above. "Great is thy faithfulness O Lord"!

This is Staying Together number 20! Who would have thought it!

May God bless you all,

Sheila Simpson