



**Staying Connected.
Week Beginning 12th July 2020
Pastoral Letter**

Dear friends,

I keep hearing it said, *'we don't want to go back to how things were before lockdown', or 'we're not going to be able to be The Church as it was before the pandemic.'*

Actually many **do** want to go back to how things were before lockdown....and we **are** going to be able to be The Church as it was before the pandemic.

Now that you've read this far, please don't stop here!

When I say 'before lockdown' / 'before the pandemic', I don't mean February this year, or even how things were in our lifetime. I mean that we can and ought to look to The Methodist Church as it was founded by John Wesley.....and to The Church as it was in Acts.

That doesn't mean everything about Wesley's model of Church was perfect – nor that the model of Church in Acts can be directly translated into our context today. There are some things which were right for those times, but which we wouldn't adopt for now.

But what this time of lockdown has done for us, is given us the chance to stop – to get off of the treadmill – and reflect on where we have been, where we are now, and what God is asking of us for the future.

The Circuit Leadership Team, on behalf of The Circuit Meeting, are continuing to meet regularly (virtually), in order to pray together, to discern God's heart and discuss our future direction.

Next week I will be sending out to churches some further information about the small steps we are hoping to take from September to enable worship to take place. This will not involve opening all our buildings and holding services in churches every week, but it will mean that those who would like to, will have the chance to meet with others in small groups in a way that we haven't been able to during lockdown. It might also involve 2 or 3 people visiting people safely, and sharing in worship together – especially with those who don't feel confident about going out. 'Staying Connected' and online worship will continue.

We are exploring the process which needs to happen in order to open some of our buildings, but it will need to happen at the right time and for the right reasons.

In the meantime, as Roger Jones said in his musical 'Wildfire' *'God doesn't just live in a building.....He's everywhere that you look!'*

In our worship this week we focus on prayer. I hope and pray that you will draw near to Him, and that in His presence, you will discover or re-discover His immense love for you.

God bless you,

Adrian

