



Mid Derbyshire Methodist Circuit
Encouraging and growing God's people

Registered Charity No. 1139498

Rev Kate Strange
The Hollies,
Holly Lane,
Tansley,
Matlock,
DE4 5FF
07423144525

kate.strange@methodist.org.uk

1st May 2022

Dear Friends,

Happy Easter – He is risen – He is risen indeed – Halleluiah!

I can't quite believe that we are here at the start of May; I'm not quite sure where this year has gone. When I think back to the start of the connexional year when John, Helen and myself sat in Helen's garden, we were shell-shocked that Rev Loraine Mellor, the Chair of District, had taken over the superintendency of the circuit, that Stephen was signed off on long term sick leave, we were not sure if Robert would be returning to the circuit and three of the lay staff that had supported the circuit in the previous year were not to be replaced. We were also faced with the Conference's decision that in the forthcoming year we were to speak to every church about three very contentious issues: oversight and trusteeship (minimum number of members moving from 6 to 12), marriage and relationships report (the agreement of the Methodist Church to allow the marriage of same sex couples on our premises) and asking all churches, many of whom we knew to be really struggling, for a 15% contribution to the ministers' pension fund. I don't think I will ever forget that afternoon for the rest of my ministry, as we sat looking at each other wondering how on earth we were going to cope, having just decided a few weeks before, when things looked very different indeed for us, that we would boldly try 'team ministry'. We found ourselves with the daunting task of working out how to minister to 22 churches on our own. I knew 5 of the churches, so did Helen, and John knew 3. The questions we asked ourselves were: How could we fairly distribute our time, not favour those folks we knew and loved and end up ignoring the ones we didn't know? How were we going to cope with the amount of church councils and deal with the issues we knew were going to be contentious with folk we didn't have established relationships with? We recognised we are, after all, ministers appointed to a circuit. We talked of hope and grace. Our hope was that the churches would understand, that they would see what we were trying to do, would work with us, support us, encourage us, hold us through this time. I thank those of you who saw our pain and frustration and held us and did work with us and not against us.

It's been a year of change, transformational change. In November I was asked to share the superintendency with Loraine as her commitments in the wider District and Connexion meant she had little time for the circuit and I agreed. It hasn't been easy as I already have a dual role as Deputy Chair of the District and sit on several connexional panels, but we serve where we are asked. I thank God for our brilliant administrators whose work goes mainly unnoticed and without whom I could not function. Judith has such a vast knowledge of the circuit and people and seamlessly holds everything together without fuss. Sarah has brought us up to date in so many ways, working her way round the

Superintendent Minister:
Circuit Stewards:

Rev Kate Strange
Ruth Beresford, Kathleen Brydon, Vivienne Palfreyman, David Shirtcliffe, Geraldine Stamp, Gillian Stamp,
Paul Strange, Eddie Sweet

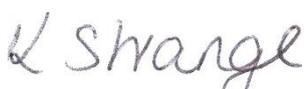
circuit getting our safeguarding DBS checks up to date, ensuring training happens, collecting information for the news sheet and keeping us legal for the charity commission; and, working as a team with Paul Strange, they have sold 3 of the chapels, done all the legal work on the properties and managed the very large property portfolio we own which supports the circuit to do mission; all of this is behind the scenes. And Gill, our circuit treasurer and finance administrator, amazingly keeps our finances on track.

The ministerial team was joined by Moses who brought his skills as a biblical scholar, albeit part-time, and that relieved pressure; and we were delighted to see Robert re-join the team in December. We are also delighted that Stephen has begun a phased return to work from the 1st April, so we are in a very different place to where we began the year. We have successfully navigated the councils through those difficult topics, dictated from Conference, supported by the team of circuit stewards who have stood by us all the way through very challenging meetings sometimes and we are very grateful for the hours of dedication that they give to their roles in the circuit. They have also been working all year on stationing and although we had a rocky start, we have now had invitations accepted for a Superintendent, a Presbyterian and a Deacon meaning Mid Derbyshire is fully staffed, with the intention of a Family Worker also to be employed from September.

I therefore ask you, in this continuing time of transition, to pray for me as I take over the entire superintendency, as Loraine left for Cornwall on the 30th April; as Paul and I prepare to move to High Wycombe in the summer; and as I also cover with my colleague the Chair of District role. Pray also for the staff as they take on extra responsibilities because of that; they have been a source of great support to me through this year. Please pray for John and Anna as they prepare to move to their new appointment in the Rochdale and Littleborough Circuit; for Moses and Diana as they prepare to move to Billericay; and for Robert and Liz as Robert seeks to take an appointment outside of the circuit. May I also ask that you hold in prayer the new team in their preparations; they are hoping to share with the circuit meeting this June how ministry will look from September; that is Rev Ann Anderson, Deacon Michaela Doherty, Rev Janet Rossall, Rev Helen Penfold, and Rev Stephen Pratt, our administrators Judith, Sarah, and Gill, and Roanna, our Mission and Outreach Worker. These will be supported, as we are in the final months of this connexional year, by our circuit stewards Ruth, Gill, Geraldine, Kath, Dave, Eddie and Viv and Paul till we leave, and know that every day we pray for you. I want to thank those of you who have been supportive, those who have been graceful, kind and patient, those who have seen the impossible situation which we have found ourselves in; that encouragement and support is what has kept us going.

We are holding a circuit farewell service to give us a chance to celebrate our ministry amongst you on Sunday the 17th July at 6pm at Marehay; there will be refreshments after the service and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

May God bless you all as we move forward together - holding the Christ light together



Rev Kate Strange
Superintendent Mid Derbyshire Circuit
Deputy Chair Nottingham and Derby District