

Dear Friends

This autumn our circuit meeting was at Brixham. We were joined by the District Chair, Revd Graham Thompson, because we had to consider invitations to our ministers. I am pleased to say that Revd Doug Rix accepted an invitation to continue to serve in the circuit until 2024 and I accepted an invitation to continue to serve in the circuit until 2022. Central are still waiting for news of a suitable URC minister but in the meantime they are being ably supported by Revd Peter Williamson and Revd Jerry Cook. Also, in the summer, the circuit meeting agreed to our having additional pastoral help, if we were able to find the right people. Major Denise Brine, a retired Salvation Army officer, expressed an interest in coming to work with us in the circuit and will be seeking to develop and support some new initiatives at Goodrington, Victoria Park and Brixham.

On the first Sunday in October, members from across the circuit joined in a harvest festival service at Kingskerwell. This was the last service of public worship in Kingskerswell Methodist Church and so the otherwise joyful service was touched with sadness. Revd Val Price gave an excellent sermon, the choir from Central sang two anthems and tea and cakes were served at the conclusion of the service. Special thanks were extended to numerous friends and members but particularly to Mrs Josie Miller, who held so many offices in the church. We remembered the past with thanksgiving but we were also able to look forward not least as we sang, 'Thrice blessed is that harvest song which never has an ending.'

The beginning of this plan coincides with Advent Sunday. Advent is a time of preparation in which we also recall the Judah-ites (or Jews) returning from the exile in Babylon. There are some great Advent hymns. 'O come, come Immanuel' is a reminder of the plaintive call of the Jews, far from home in Babylon, looking for deliverance and return to the Promised Land. 'Lo, he comes with clouds descending' reminds us that Christians look for deliverance from our earthly sojourn to a far greater Promised Land, which is heaven – something that will happen either when faithful, believing Christians die or when the Lord Jesus returns in glory. The threefold affirmation in our services of Holy Communion, 'Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again,' is always a timely reminder that we celebrate a 'foretaste of the heavenly banquet' – 'for as often as we eat of the bread and drink of the cup we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes' (1 Corinthians 11:26).

The circuit meeting agreed that we should devote an evening meeting to the Methodist Conference Report on Marriage and Human Relationships. This meeting is open to the members of any of our circuit churches. This will be held on Wednesday 5 February at 7.30pm at Brixham. If you would like a copy of the report by email, please contact the circuit office. Kindly note, that if your contact details are incorrect in the circuit directory, it is important to inform our circuit meeting secretary, Miss Margaret King, and our circuit administrative secretary, Mrs Jenny Page.

God bless

*John M. Haley*

Superintendent Minister