

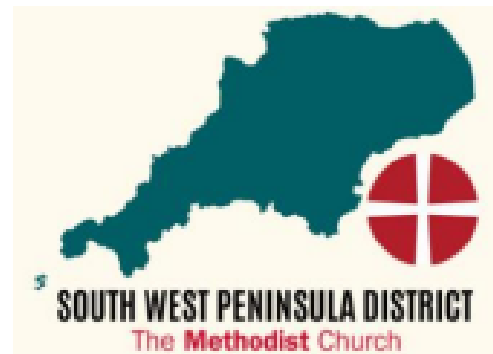
Letter from Rev Deborah Kirk, Superintendent Minister

Christ holds us together and makes all of *our* parts work perfectly, as we grow and become strong because of love. *from Ephesians 4:16*

Dear friends

Here we are at the beginning of another Connexional year. It really does seem to be true that 'the older we get, the faster time flies!'

This year brings a few changes in our relationship with 'the Connexion'. For a start, we are now part of the new 'South West Peninsula Methodist District' with a brand new District number of 37. (Our Circuit number will be 37/15.)



There have been many conversations to prepare for this closer relationship with our neighbours in Cornwall, a good number of which were around what the new District would be called, and a few that focussed on the right order to apply jam and cream on one's scone!

Once the name was agreed, there were further conversations about the spelling of 'peninsula'. (If you're interested, 'peninsula' is the noun, 'peninsular' the adjective.) The launch of the new District will be in Truro on 3rd September – the distance and timing might be difficult to manage from here perhaps, but please remember the event in your prayers.

The word peninsula comes from the Latin word *paeninsula*, which is a combination of *paene* (almost) and *insula* (island). Almost perhaps, but definitely **not** an island – especially in terms of our Methodist connectedness.

There will be challenges in being a larger District of course, around logistics and cover. The District Synod on 21st September, will be in Plymouth Methodist Central Hall (with the aim of being no more than 2 hours travel from anywhere in the new District). Representatives will be

expected to attend in person as ever, but to enable relationships to be built and to encourage good communication, there will also be the opportunity for others to connect with Synod electronically through 'hubs' in different locations. (Temple will be one of the hubs for the September Synod.)

In terms of cover, to support our District Chair, the Rev Dr Daniel Haylett, there are two newly appointed Area Mission Leads, and two volunteer Deputy Chairs, of which I am one. You may not be aware that I have held this post for a year now, and I want to reassure you that the Circuit should not expect to feel a detrimental effect of that responsibility.

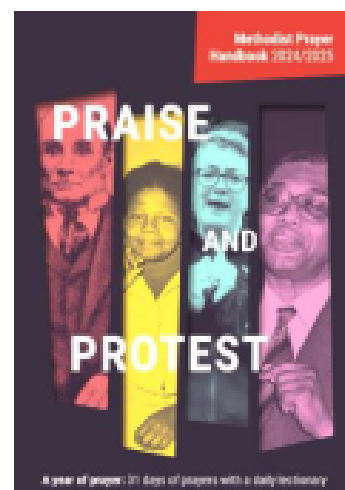
Of course, as well as the challenges of a larger District, there will be advantages too. We will be able to share the knowledge of some of our excellent specialist postholders for example, complementing one another's experience, and inspire each other with some of the really good things that are happening in ministry across our geographical boundaries.

We know that some of those good things are happening in our own Circuit – you can read more about them in the magazine, and we shall continue to work on our own connections across our Circuit churches, valuing one another and being interested in and supportive of each other's work and ministry. One way we can do this is to attend our own and each other's events when we can, and to remember to pray for one another.

The Methodist Way of Life is another way we are encouraging each of the churches to recognise both our individuality and our connectedness as Christ's Body. As each of the churches identify a 'station' to travel to and spend time focussing on through the next year, so the Circuit will play its part in supporting and enabling their vision.

There is a new Methodist Prayer Handbook available now or very soon in your church. It is called 'Praise and Protest', the title reminding us of the Methodist Church's commitment to be a church which seeks and works

for justice. The prayers over 31 days remind us of the contexts, joys and needs of other Districts both in Britain and across the world. Prayers for the SW Peninsula District are on Day 12. Using the Prayer Handbook informs our prayers, and reminds us that we belong to a worldwide church. If you haven't ordered or sourced your copy, please speak to a steward in your church, or I have some spares.



Finally, we turn with prayer and imagination and commitment to a new Connexional year; may we grow closer to God, through his Son Jesus Christ, and in the power of his Holy Spirit, as we travel together through these days.

Peace for the journey

Deborah

Let us be one, O Lord, in our praise of you, one in our prayers to you, one in our love for you, and one through Christ, in our coming to you.

Ignatius of Antioch (c35-107) from Day 29 of the MPH