

September 2023

Dear Friends,

The best laid plans... Sometimes, however well something is thought through, something changes at the last minute and things don't happen. The train is delayed, roadworks hold us up, the flight for going on holiday gets cancelled or any number of things can get in the way. The anticipation that was felt gets somewhat reduced when things need to be altered.

As we enter a new Methodist year, many plans have been made. Some activities which took a summer break now start up again and new ideas which were brought forward begin to come together. For some of the churches in the Circuit and for Hannah, it is a time of new beginnings and the plans that have been put into place to support her and the churches begin to come to fruition.

When plans come together there can be a good feeling, but when things have to be changed, especially at the last minute, a real sense of disappointment. Our emotions can then affect the way we respond to things. We know that we are assured of Jesus' presence with us in all that we face, whether it is good or difficult. At the same time, we know that we worship God who has assured us of the 'new heaven and new earth' where all things will be made new and perfect as we find in the book of Revelation.

This is the hope into which we are invited by Jesus. It is an assurance that the world will be as it should be. The world of frustration, disappointment, grief, fear, and mourning will be past. We will live in eternity with God where all things are right, and we can live lives that are totally fulfilled. This is an assurance and a certainty. So often, we make plans in the 'hopes' that they will be lived out in the way we think or want. Hope in this sense is not the certainty we have from God. It is something much more transient. To live in the hope of God, as promised by Jesus is so much more than that. It is total certainty.

We know that there is much in the world that is not right and we long for it to be better. We should continue to bring the needs of the world and others before God in prayer. We also need to be alive to the work of the Holy Spirit and look for the opportunities to share in God's work in building God's kingdom right here and now. And we must look ahead to the hope of all that we are promised with faith.

Whether plans have worked or been changed, we should continue to walk on together in, and with, faith. God's plans are bigger than ours, but each small plan in the meantime becomes part of the whole. As we enter a new season, we do so with faith and in the hope of Christ for today and for eternity.

God bless,  
Chris