

20th March 2020

Dear Friends,

Yesterday I held a video consultation with the superintendent ministers of the District. It was heartening to hear of the ways circuits and churches are responding to the challenges which face us. As we cease meeting in our churches and chapels for Sunday worship, opportunities for prayer and worship at home are being offered, and a telephone ministry of pastoral care is being offered. Let us continue to support one another as best we can.

We were concerned about the impact on funerals, and recognised that we would need to find ways of helping people to mark the death of loved ones when normal practice is not possible. We also talked about ways the church can join in with others in providing support for people who are 'socially isolating'. There was also discussion about finance, because our churches will also feel the economic impact of the pandemic.

We officially took the decision to cancel our synods, postponing all business to another day. Quite how long this will take none of us knows. The Methodist Council will meet in video conference in about ten days' time, and give further guidance.

I have just heard that a member of a church in the District who was in hospital with pneumonia and confirmed as a case of Covid-19, has died. It brings the daily statistics of cases and deaths even closer to us, and reminds us of the fragility of our lives. Our prayers are with the family, and those who are seeking to support and help as best they can. In the face of all this we retain our hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Please pray for one another at this time: for good and careful consultations over ways to respond to the situation we are facing; and that we might all find ways to support those who are lonely or in material need.

Grace and peace.



Andrew J Lunn.
Manchester and Stockport District Chair