

Dear friends

The sharp-eyed among you will see on the front of the plan that Reverend Susan Chambers is Acting Superintendent during this quarter while I take a sabbatical. This is the first time that I have had this wonderful gift from the Methodist Church, which is meant to give ministers a time to be rested, refreshed and renewed.

I am really looking forward to spending time with my husband Peter and our family, firstly enjoying a family Christmas here in Grimsby. It will seem strange to not have a series of Carol Services to attend, and Advent and Christmas services to prepare, but I hope that having time to stop and reflect, instead of my usual dashing from one event to another, will enable me to receive the message of Christmas in a deeper way this year.

In the New Year we will be visiting my step-daughter and her family in New Zealand. We will then be going on to Australia and visiting some of the must-sees there – Sydney Harbour, the Great Barrier Reef and Ayers Rock to name just a few! On my return I hope to use some of the new experiences in creative writing, ready for my return to the Circuit mid-way through Lent.

Please don't think me rude if I give you a wave, a smile and carry on walking when I see you in town or along the seafront at Cleethorpes - part of the idea of a sabbatical is to relinquish responsibility for just a few months, and that is harder to do if I know what is happening in all the churches! I will look forward to catching up with all your news when I return, and sharing some of my experiences.

In the meantime I know that I leave you in very good hands. Please pray for Susan and Katie and the Circuit Stewards as they take on extra responsibilities during this time. In turn, my prayer for you all is that you also find this season one of peace and joy.

Every blessing

Jade