

Dear friends

As we approach Advent and Christmas we come towards the end of a year where much has happened in our lives as individuals, as churches and as a Circuit. There have been good times and more difficult times but throughout it all we have known, and continue to know, the truth of 'Immanuel – God with us' and we can rejoice in that assurance into the future.

It is more than likely that a lot will change in the coming year politically, personally and within our church life and we need to be supporting, encouraging and praying for one another as we walk together with God and allow him to change us and use us for his glory.

- We have the prospect of a new lead Superintendent in the Circuit – please pray for those involved in the current stationing process, both ministers and circuits – that the right people might be stationed in the right circuits.
- Gareth Sherwood is offering as a candidate for the Methodist Ministry – please pray for both Gareth and Hannah and for those involved in this process – that the right decisions might be made at all levels.
- We have new worship materials available to help churches with Local Arrangements - you will notice that there are several LA(VINE) on this plan. When you see this we are encouraging churches to use the VINE material that we have subscribed to as a Circuit to help them with these services. The material is usually available through the senior church steward or Becki (our Circuit Administrator) and includes all you need to put a service together in line with the lectionary readings for the day.

This has come about because we are keen not to overload our already busy preachers and want to avoid them being called on for the LAs. The idea of the VINE services is to enable and encourage congregations to share the service between them using material which is already prepared for them – and perhaps discover new gifts and abilities in those who worship with us..

Please use it as much as you are able should you see a LA (VINE) service for your church on the plan.

These are only a few of the potential developments we will see around us as we approach the beginning of 2019.

We live in challenging, exciting and ever-changing times but it is good to know that we worship and serve a faithful God who is never changing and is always with us. He leads us and encourages us as we focus on him and commit ourselves to follow him into the New Year with confidence and trust – knowing that whatever we face he is the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace.

May each one of us know this reality for ourselves, this Christmas time and beyond, and rejoice in it.

Every blessing to you all.

Susan