

Methodists4Coventry

Dear Friends

(All members of the churches and particularly members of the Church Councils)

It was wonderful to meet with quite a large group of people from across the four Methodist Churches in Coventry on Sunday 6th September, as we continue to pursue the conversation about how we will work together this year and beyond.

Rather than offering formal minutes of the meeting, I thought I would take the opportunity to write this letter to you, highlighting some important parts of our meeting together that Sunday, and explaining the next steps as we go forward together.

As we had done before the summer, I invited the group to consider what might be good and bad about working together more closely, and formalising that relationship as it feels right.

People shared that drawing on a wide range of experience, sharing our human resources, hearing different voices and experiences, focussing priorities across our Coventry sites and increasing Connexionalism all felt like good things, and we are to be encouraged that we can start this work now, for example with each church being invited to be represented at Earlsdon's Christmas Tree festival (a small but lovely idea I think!) and of course that in all our workings, the 'best of all is God is with us'!

Acknowledging that working in new ways in a new group is not always easy, folk shared that letting go of some control, change, a feeling that something new is unfamiliar, and the potential struggle for power in our working together are all perceived as potential hurdles, negatives that might hamper our work.

I think it's really good to be honest together, and I welcome further conversations when we shared kindly but honestly if there are frustrations, as well as ensuring our

time and energy are well spent in seeking what God is calling us to be and do as the Methodists in Coventry.

In order to build fellowship across the four churches, but also to ensure that there is a forward movement in our working together, we agreed to propose to Church Councils this autumn a two-pronged approach to bringing the churches together in the year ahead, and suggest that both aspects come under the umbrella term 'Methodists4Coventry'...at least for now!

On one 'prong' we would like to see quarterly meetings for fellowship and conversation, open to all and with the encouragement to invite different people from each church along each time if possible. These meetings would certainly alternate between different venues, and maybe change day and time too to ensure accessibility across the year for a wide range of people. The first gathering of this nature will be **Sunday 22nd November 2026, from 2:30pm- 5pm** (though you don't have to stay for all!) **at Woodside Methodist Church. Please bring cake for a shared afternoon tea together!**

The other 'prong' relates to a more clearly defined working group, responsible for moving forward with formalising how we may work more closely together, upto and including the possibility of forming a Joint Church Council or Multi-Site Church. We are asking that each Church Council consider **and vote on** the following:

*That a working group be formed with members of Coventry Central Hall, Earlsdon Methodist Church, Radford and Holbrooks Methodist Church and Woodside Avenue Methodist Church in the Coventry and Nuneaton Circuit, Chaired and Convened by Rev'd Becki Stennett, with permission of (and appropriate attendance from) Rev'd Dr Jill Marsh (Superintendent) and comprised of one steward, one member of the Church Council, one member of the congregation and one person held in reserve **from each of the four churches aforementioned**, plus a representative from the Circuit Leadership Team.*

We will ask this group to meet *at least quarterly*, and present a timetable and terms of reference for their working, and to engage with consultants and experts from within and beyond the Circuit as required throughout their deliberating. I ask that Church Councils not only take a vote on this proposal in their autumn meetings, but

also either bring names for their representatives to the Church Council for agreement or authorise Stewards to invite appropriate people to the working group, who may be subject to the safer recruiting process of the Methodist Church if not already safely recruited to a formal role within the Church.

I hope that the membership of the working group will be diverse, and that it will contain a mix of people well-versed in Methodist governance OR passionate about our working together and ready to learn the more tricky bits!

Altogether, I ask for your prayers – that we might truly be seeking God's will and how we are called to be part of building the kingdom here in Coventry together.

I welcome any further conversation/queries/concerns being raised, and look forward to working with you all for God's glory.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Stennett'.

Rev'd Becki Stennett

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