

Dear friends

At a recent gathering of stewards from the churches and circuit with the circuit staff and our district chair, one of the most repeated concerns was the difficulty we have in communicating with each other about what is happening in the various parts of our circuit. An example of this has troubled me for a while; many people in our congregations do not seem to be aware of the information contained in this publication and over the years its distribution has become less. The 'Circuit Plan' is a fundamental part of our Methodist structure. I remember from my first teenage encounters with the church, the publication of the Plan being eagerly anticipated, and it being sold (I think for 10p a copy). All copies were eagerly snapped up and pored over to discover not only who was preaching where, but for the news of events it always contained.

As superintendent I look at the Plan on Sunday morning to see where my fellow preachers, lay and ordained are, and who is visiting the circuit on any given Sunday. This gives me a sense of connection with them as well as giving me opportunity to pray for preachers and congregations. Very occasionally someone will say something which makes me realise that they too take note Sunday by Sunday of where I am and their pastoral concern for what I am doing is very affirming and much appreciated. But, I am also aware that most of our congregation members do not even receive a copy of the Plan and have no awareness of where their minister or local preachers are. The Plan is not a secret document for the eyes of preachers and stewards only, it is for all who want to feel part of the life of the Croydon Circuit. In recent times the number of printed copies has been reduced but even so I often see several unclaimed copies lying on vestibule tables. I hope we can reverse this trend. This quarter we have printed more copies and I encourage door stewards and others to ensure they are distributed. If you are reading this then that encouragement may have worked, and I ask that you look at it frequently and take note of what is going on around our churches.



During Advent each of our churches will be using the candle lighting liturgy from our partner organisation 'All We Can' (previously known as The Methodist Relief and Development Fund). Each week there will be an opportunity to make a donation which will be used to buy some 'Extraordinary Gifts' – which bring help and hope to the neediest across the world. Please give generously and on Christmas Eve and Day we will reveal how many gifts we have been able to buy from local churches and the circuit as a whole



This initiative is not meant to take the place of usual 'Gift Services' and other charitable support – but is an additional way of showing our solidarity as a circuit for this significant Methodist charity and making a real difference across the world.

Full details and liturgies will be available nearer the time.