



The Way Ahead

Falmouth and Gwennap Circuit Outreach Newsletter: Issue 8, Spring 2021

Learning to 'be Church' after lockdown

Spring is the anniversary of the first lockdown and, whilst we would not have wished the events of the last year on anyone, there are lessons the Church has learned in that time.

- ✦ **Pastoral care:** Many members have taken responsibility for calling, visiting (when possible) and delivering worship sheets and letters, drawing people together.
- ✦ **The accessibility of worship:** Online, DVD's, and worship sheets helped include those who can no longer attend, CD's have been provided for the visually impaired.
- ✦ **The value of community relationships:** Local Social Media groups have provided new links, the way many communities have helped people has been exemplary, it is to be celebrated and we should support this continuing.
- ✦ **Awareness of what is really important:** 'lockdown' has shown us what is really important to us, human contact, friends, family and neighbours, community worship...

Evolving as a Circuit

Reviewing our Vision Document

One of the foundational statements of our vision document is this:

- ✦ *The Falmouth and Gwennap circuit exists to identify where God is at work, and to join in.*

As we begin the annual review process, what may that mean in the light of the past year?

One thing is certain, we cannot continue as we were before 'lockdown'. When the Diaconal post comes to an end, in 18 months, the Circuit Meeting has agreed and planned to maintain a Ministry Team of 2 full-time Presbyters and a part-time Lay-Worker. Our planning for the future must therefore reflect this change.

We must utilise the time Deacon Jane is with us to discern what we are called to be, as both Circuit and congregations.

With the availability of preachers likely to continue to reduce in the future, we need to reflect on how we can continue to hold acts of worship in so many places.

The number of meetings held may also be a problem, we could explore ways of co-operating with others to share expertise. Identifying and empowering lay leaders as well as changing the day or time of some acts of worship may also help.

This discussion will inevitably include:

Reviewing what we used to do:

We must be careful not to simply restart what we have come to expect. Here is an opportunity identify what is essential and what is truly valued.

Building on new initiatives:

- ✦ Circuit online worship
- ✦ Community prayers Facebook page
- ✦ LP's/WL Facebook discussion group
- ✦ Circuit and local Bible studies, coffee mornings and Craft group using video conferencing (mainly 'Zoom').

Evolving as congregations

The way we do this is likely to be different for each congregation. No two communities are the same and each will have to work out what is most appropriate for them, but we do not have to 'reinvent the wheel'.

There are examples of good practice across the circuit, not all will be possible in some communities, but we can learn from what works in certain places. The following are intended as examples only, it is not an exhaustive list and other chapels already work in similar ways. We share what we do on Facebook and at circuit meeting to inspire others!

Ecumenical cooperation

Mylor/Stithians: Two denominations with different worship centres, yet much of the outreach is ecumenical, including 'Messy Church and Open the Book.

Perranwell: A recognised Methodist identity, managed as a 'class' of Frogpool, part of the CofE Congregation, with Methodist input.

Cooperation between Chapels

'Tempt' Guild: Chapels meeting together for midweek study/fellowship.

'The Plan': 2 or more chapels grouped for joint worship, Local Arrangements, Circuit services.

A Heart for the community

Mawnan Smith: exploring ways to draw the community together, host to many groups and the annual Lent lunches.

Ponsanooth: Released from managing a building to serve the community. Village Hall – worship, kids film night and Lunch Club, School – 'Livewires' and Shop – info hub and venue.

St Day: Lunch club, Drop-in, open church, prayer outreach, Messy church and seasonal village breakfast, film shows and events.

Exploring best practice as local communities

Deacon Jane can help your congregation by facilitating/being part of these discussions, as someone 'one step removed' from the situation.

Here are a few questions that may help you get started.

- ✦ What have you missed whilst activities were suspended?
- ✦ What 'new thing' have you valued?
- ✦ What are the needs of the community?
- ✦ Are there gaps in provision?
- ✦ What is distinctive that you can offer?

I look forward to sharing this journey with you, Yours in love and Prayer,

Jane

Deacon Jane Mills, on behalf of the Falmouth and Gwennap Methodist Circuit.

Prayer Focus

- For Government and community leaders as they respond to this evolving pandemic.
- For NHS staff and all key workers.
- For all whose life has been changed through illness or bereavement.
- For those facing financial hardship.
- May the Holy Spirit strengthen and guide each one of us as we seek to discern what God requires of the church in this present age.