

Minister: Rev Derek McLean

16th September 2020

Dear Friends

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.
Romans 1:13 (NIVUK)

Paul wrote these words to the church in Rome when he was expressing his frustration that he hadn't yet got there. Some would argue that his delayed departure was substantially to the benefit of those churches which he continued to serve instead.

My Sabbatical has been deferred. I got an email on Monday confirming the news which had seemed inevitable. It will not be possible to spend three months in Israel-Palestine in the period starting in December. Visitors cannot get into Israel at the moment and travelling around is likely to be hugely restricted.

It had seemed highly probable that this would be the case. In some ways it is good to get a firm decision, and for the Circuit Meeting on Tuesday to be able to confirm that I can defer the Sabbatical to a mutually convenient date so that the trip can still happen.

We will need to work out what that means in practical terms. (You'd got some great preachers lined up, we need to decide what to do about that.) However, even making firm plans for December in Oadby seems ambitious at this stage. As this pandemic continues, we are all constantly revising our arrangements.

I am, of course, hugely disappointed. This is something which I had wanted to do for many years, and is very much central to the nature of who I am as a Minister, and of the work which I believe Jesus has called me to do.

Nevertheless, I need to put this into perspective.

I am aware that Coronavirus has had a far more devastating effect on others than it has had on me. Many people have died, many more are bereaved – often unable to see loved ones in their final suffering, many have witnessed this at close quarters when they've worked in hospitals and care homes...

Many have had their lives seriously disrupted with loss of jobs, career opportunities, education etc. ...

Those losses will have been all the more intense along some of the Israeli-Palestinian political fault lines which I had expected to be monitoring.

In due course, you will have the chance to decide whether my delayed departure proves beneficial to the churches which I serve here. I don't expect to live up to St. Paul's standards, but nor do I expect that I will need to be as rude to you as Paul was to some of those early churches!

God bless you all – and stay safe.

Rev Derek

Joyful news:

Congratulations to the church family celebrating on safe arrival of their new baby Zenda.

Mixed-mode Worship

We continue to worship Sunday by Sunday. Some of us gather in the church whilst others join us online from homes far and wide.

Please let me know if you would like to join online, and I can send you a link, and also talk you through setting this up. Email for information: derek.mclean@methodist.org.uk

Don't forget that it is possible to phone in, even if you haven't got a computer.

Forthcoming Services:

- **Howard Smith** will be our preacher on 27th September
- **Holy Communion.** Our monthly 8:30am Communion service resumes from the 4th October. Please let Barry Wilford know if you plan to attend.
- **Harvest Service will be at 10:30am on Sunday 4th October.** The church will be open on Saturday morning (3rd October) to receive your gifts for the Foodbank.
- **Ann Reddecliffe** (Inclusive Church) will be our preacher on 11th October, where we hope to develop our mixed-mode pattern further. This service will be in church at both Oadby and Glen as well as on zoom.

Saturday Prayer. We will continue to be producing pray at home resources weekly, but we will also gather for prayer in church at 10:15am commencing on the 19th September.

Prayer Resource: If you would like a copy of the District Prayer Handbook, please let me know.

Church Council takes place on Wed 30th September. Reports and any items for the agenda are to be sent to Howard Smith by Wednesday 23rd September. After a series of COVID-related Extraordinary meetings, this is the regular full meeting. If you are not a member of the meeting but wish to join us, please contact me for joining instructions.

Prayer Pointers this week

- We pray for those known to us who have been very unwell.
- We pray for those recovering from operations.
- We pray for those making decisions about restrictions in Oadby as Coronavirus infection rates rise.
- We pray for new ventures in worship and for reopening activities... and for all those preparing for them. We especially remember **Houghton's** new midweek service and **Great Glen's** opening for prayer on Saturdays.

Affinity The deadline for the October/November issue of our Church magazine is this **Sunday, September 20th**. ALL contributions welcome; long or short, humorous or reflective, prayers etc. Please send them to Heather Corlett at telroc@talktalk.net

Lifting our Spirits Chris and I thoroughly recommend the TV series about a Special School from BBC Wales. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000mpv2> It is inspiring, uplifting, and chimes with our own positive experiences. If anyone ever said that you aren't able to do something, watch this.