



*From the District Chair: The Revd. Dr. David Hinchliffe*  
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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

As we are all aware, we are living in unprecedented circumstances as the whole world, and not least our own nations, seek to come to terms with the impact of the coronavirus/Covid-19.

Following yesterday's announcements by the Prime Minister and his advisors and in response to a question to the Secretary of State for Health in the House of Commons, this afternoon at 3pm, our colleagues at Methodist Church House in London updated their advice to us as local circuits and churches. The full text can be found at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/coronavirus> - and I would urge you to read it in full.

The statement begins:

**"It is with sadness that we recommend that worship services in Methodist Churches are suspended for the time being in line with Government guidance."**

It goes on to offer advice concerning how resources for worship and prayer might continue to be offered, and in particular, the impact for conducting services of baptism, marriages, and funerals.

The statement further adds that **"In terms of Church business, we recommend that all meetings including church councils and circuit meetings should be cancelled."**

I therefore propose that until Easter all face to face District meetings are similarly cancelled, or should take place via Skype, or other remote means. They are as follows:

Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> March:	Safeguarding Advance Module Training – <b>Cancelled</b>
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> March:	Preaching Development Day – <b>Cancelled</b>
Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> March:	District Safeguarding Group – <b>Cancelled</b>
Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> April:	District Council – <b>Cancelled</b>
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> April:	Chair and Assistant Chairs' Meeting – <b>via Skype</b>
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April:	Synod Planning Group – <b>via Skype</b>

Regarding the Representative Session of Synod planned for 25<sup>th</sup> April, we will keep you posted as the situation develops.

Supervision should be undertaken via Skype or other electronic methods.

In addition to the above matters, the Methodist Church website offers guidance on the following topics:

- Community activities such as foodbanks, lunch clubs and after school clubs
- Pastoral visiting
- Pastoral concerns
- Helping others
- Worshipping at home
- Safeguarding considerations
- Planning ahead

- Prayers
- A message of thanks and support
- Links to official information

**Please note that the Methodist Church website is regularly updated and I strongly advise you to keep reading it for those updates. Again, the website address is:**

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/coronavirus>

The District Officers are still available for advice, but I would suggest that in the first instance this is via email – unless an emergency – and we will get back to you as soon as we can either via phone or email.

Please pray for those who are suffering from the virus, and their loved ones. Please continue to hold our government in your prayers, their advisors and the extraordinary men and women who staff our health services. Please pray for those who are far from their loved ones and are concerned for their well-being, as they are for them. And please pray for the many businesses under threat as a consequence of these times.

Finally, I conclude with a prayer from the Methodist website:

*God of all hope we call on you today.*

*We pray for those who are living in fear:*

*Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other's reactions to them.*

*May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.*

*We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.*

*For those people who are worried about attending worship.*

*For those needing to make decisions in order to care for other*

*For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend.*

*Grant us your wisdom.*

*Holy God, we remember that you have promised that*

*Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.*

*Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.*

*Amen*

In love and prayer.

Yours in Christ,



Rev Dr David Hinchliffe

cc. Presbyters and Deacons  
Senior Circuit Stewards  
Members of the District Council and District Leadership Team  
Southern and Islands Learning Network Officers  
District Safeguarding Officer