

3 April 2020

STATEMENT: METHODIST CONFERENCE 2020

We welcome the decision that the Conference will not meet physically this year; it is clearly the right decision within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who suffer most at this time, and with all who join in the efforts to manage the national and global situation and care for those who are unwell and in need. We include in our prayers all those who were due to be received into Full Connexion and ordained at the coming Conference and those due to move to new stations in the summer, recognising that the present uncertainty places additional strain upon them and their families.

In the light of the decision that Conference will not meet physically this year, we are grateful that the resolutions from *God in Love Unites Us* will be deferred until the Conference of 2021. It is as yet unclear, with the current disruptions to normal life, how much additional time this will make available for consultation. However, we urge the Methodist Church at every level to use the delay to ensure that a consistent approach to the consultation is taken across every District and that every opportunity is taken to maximise the opportunity for local Methodist members to contribute in order to ensure that the results are truly representative.

Whilst we recognise the delay will be frustrating for others, many members of MET called on the Conference of 2018 not to suspend the usual two-year period of consultation before such a significant step in the life of the Church and we are grateful that the provisional resolutions will not be ratified this year. We continue to urge the Church to remain faithful to the biblical and traditional understanding of marriage and relationships as expressed in its current official teaching and rejoice for as long as it continues to do so. It is our hope that this extended period of reflection and discussion will allow our Connexion to give fuller examination of the report and to re-examine its interpretation of Scripture.

As the Christian Church across the world prepares to celebrate again our great Easter festival, we pray particularly in these uncertain times that many across the world will discover anew our one true ground for hope in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.