



The **Methodist** Church 

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## **PASTORAL LETTER – March 2021**

Dear Friends

I have only run a marathon once – in 1990 (the year Crystal Palace got to the FA Cup Final!). But I remember everyone talking about how normally after about 20 miles, runners often hit the wall – the time when energy is low and running becomes tough. I also remember hitting the wall!!

We have been living with covid-19 for nearly a year, the end is in sight, but I have heard many describe their fatigue, they have hit the wall. The same could also be said for our building project, the end is in sight, but people are tired as decisions are made in the closing stages.

Since my last time of writing to you, we have also been rocked by the loss of both Pat Wass and Barbara Cooper, Jack Weatherall and Jean Cooper. So, I want to write a letter of encouragement to you and as I was praying about this, the message that I received was that despite any stormy seas that we are in right now, or might still be ahead, we are to stand firm and be strong. My attention was also directed to a passage in Acts 27. Paul is in a boat to Rome - it hits a major storm.....the crew panic, and this is what happens and what we are to avoid:

**DRIFT** – the boat drifts in the storm (v15) – it is easy to be at the mercy of the storm, and to veer off course. We need to keep focused on Christ and on our mission- to see people come to faith and grow so that we as a church might grow.

**DISCARD**- the crew start to throw everything overboard (v18-19) – let us not discard our calling to: *Be a church family of all ages who want to make a difference by living out God's love in worship, mission & in service to each other and our community.*

**DESPAIR** – the crew gave up hope (v20) of being saved. Rather than giving up, we are urged as Paul urges the crew, to keep up our courage and have faith. And in this we are to put out the number of anchors (V29):

**1st ANCHOR - PRESENCE** - We have the assurance of his presence with us always.

**2nd ANCHOR - PURPOSE**- God works in us and through us - we can do nothing without him - God did and is blessing the work at SIMC. We have a growing children's and families ministry –We have others who we have reached through social media and our prescription deliveries, and new people who want to be part of our fellowship.... praise God!!

### **3rd ANCHOR - PROMISE** - God will never leave us – that is the hope that we have!

As we come to the end of the pandemic and face tough decisions on our re-building project and re-opening – I urge you to stand firm and remember God’s presence, purpose, and promise. There are many positive things that are happening, but we face challenges as we look forward.

Firstly, we face the challenge of filling vacancies that will be instrumental in insuring the future of our mission. We desperately need people to be part of our property team, someone who is able to look at risk assessments, health and safety as well as someone who is able to meet contractors at the church when needed. We also need people to help us out with our growing children & families work.

The second and most crucial challenge is one of finance. Throughout the last year our finances have been severely affected and we need to secure our future with your support. I am confident that as we reach out under God’s direction, that we will see growth.

As Project 200 comes to an end with a new refurbished church – we go forward into renewal and mission. Thus, I would like a new name for our next phase – e.g. Project Fresh or Project Fire – I am open to suggestions!! This would give a focus to looking forward, thanking God for work already done in P200, but launching a new phase in our church life and mission.

But let us keep in mind the need to stand firm, encourage one another, plus also be inspired by what God is doing and plans to do through us here in St Ives.

#### **What is God doing in our church?**

- Elaine now reaches out to 42 children and their parents.
- Our digital outreach is making new disciples.
- We are developing new and exciting elements into a new mission plan.
- A greater commitment to prayer – we have a new 8-week prayer course starting in April and we have seen a greater engagement in the Wednesday’s prayer meeting.
- We welcome new members into our worship band that will be at the core of a new vibrant worship.

If you can help out with our challenges ahead as we enter our new phase of mission and ministry in the church, then please speak to me or Lesley our Treasurer. I look forward to being with you all over the coming years as we unite around our mission and commit to seeing the renewal of God making a difference in our church and community.

To conclude: *1 Corinthians 16 v13-14: Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.*

*God Bless*

*Nick*