

31 July 2025

Greetings!

As we come to the end of this connexional year, I have a sense of excitement and challenge in equal measure. We've said "happy retirement" to several people, all of whom have made a significant contribution to the life of this circuit over many years. As a circuit, we've wished them well as they continue their discipleship journey in a different phase of life.

For those of us who continue joining in with the work that God is doing in the Cannock Chase Circuit and new West Midlands District, we're aware of the changes that these farewells mean for us. Change is weighted with lots of emotion, depending on your experience of change. It can be a brilliant new beginning or perhaps a time of great anxiety. Both are equally valid and neither can be dismissed. Paul's letter to the Philippians (4:6 – 7) reminds us:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

As a staff team, we're so thankful for the work that God is doing among us and through prayer and by the grace of God, we hope that the transition to a different way of working will be as seamless as possible. We've worked hard to create a plan that reflects the changing nature of ministry in this circuit without being too radical. We've prayerfully worked with the dates local preachers have offered, special services requested by the churches and the need for communion services across the circuit. We trust that what we're presenting will meet the needs of our congregations in as practical a way as possible.

In conclusion, I'm encouraged by the words from the hymn by John Wesley:

Best of all is God is with us,
God will hold and never fail.
Keep that truth when storms are raging,
God remains though faith is frail.

Best of all is God is with us,
in our joy and through our pain,
till that final acclamation:
'life is Christ, and death is gain'.

Best of all is God is with us,
life goes on and needs are met,
God is strongest in our weakness.
Love renews, will not forget.

Best of all is God is with us
as we scale eternal heights,
love grows stronger, undiminished;
earth grows dim by heaven's lights.

Best of all is God is with us,
hearts are challenged, strangely warmed,
faith is deepened, courage strengthened,
grace received and hope reformed.

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With every blessing and grateful thanks for all you do, whoever you are and wherever you join in with God's work.

Rev Sam x