



The **Methodist Church**



March 2021

Dear Friends

*“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.” John 17:11*

In February 2020, the Stewards of Ainsdale Methodist Church met with the Deacons of Ainsdale Village Church to consider how we could share more collaboratively together. We had hoped to share in fellowship together in order to appreciate each others traditions and get to know each other better, although given the various lockdowns and restrictions on the numbers of people allowed at services this was not possible.

The Stewards and Deacons met once more via Zoom on 24<sup>th</sup> February and 24<sup>th</sup> March this year. There was a strong sense that the Holy Spirit was prompting us to explore working more closely together, perhaps the possibility or the need for uniting some in the future.

This would address questions such as “Does it make sense to have two congregations worshipping at roughly the same time in broadly the same (traditional) fashion?” The resources freed by uniting the congregations could enable the existing members to be honoured by holding traditional worship whilst exploring new expressions to reach out to new groups. And then there is the thorny issue that at the moment we have to find two sets of leadership and office holders, a task which is becoming increasingly difficult. We recognise that we have two sets of premises that are both well maintained and situated within the village, and we hope will continue to be valuable assets for the promotion of the Kingdom of God. Ainsdale has a long tradition of working ecumenically and we consider that this is a further expression of the ethos that has underpinned our working over the years.

In the near future then, when possible, we will arrange services where we can join together on occasions as part of our discernment. We can assure you that major decisions will involve the whole of the churches and you will be regularly updated and consulted.

In the meantime, we feel that exploring in this manner is the most practical way of considering the future of our current congregations whilst at the same time offering an opportunity to free some energy to explore new ways of

reaching out to the wider community. It is, we feel, the best way of honouring those who have gone before us and preserving their legacy. In the words of the prophet Isaiah,

*See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.*

Please pray for those involved in the discussions that will continue to take place, and feel free to talk to ourselves and the Stewards and Deacons of our churches if you have any questions or comments to make at this stage.

Yours in Christ,



Rev Peter Lyth  
on behalf of the Deacons at  
Ainsdale Village Church



Rev Patrick Evans  
on behalf of the Stewards at  
Ainsdale Methodist Church