



Yorkshire North & East Methodist District

6th January 2021

Dear friends

I write following the introduction of the new national lockdown.

We are being instructed to stay at home and only to go out for 'essential reasons.' The Government is allowing one of those reasons to be for 'communal religious worship.' However, the fact that this is permissible does not mean it is necessarily advisable.

I recognise the dilemmas and competing thoughts about how best to proceed. Having to discern the best way forward is demanding and costly.

However, I want to reaffirm here the caution expressed in my letter of 27th November, attached.

The lockdown is in response to a very worrying rise in cases, and the concern about how this will impact on the NHS. It is important that we play our part as fully as possible to limit the spread of Covid-19 at this time. So, although the decision of course remains with local Managing Trustees, I do encourage us to opt to not meet for onsite worship during this lockdown period.

I recognise how hard it is to continue to be deprived of meeting together physically for a further period. It is costly on many levels. But I believe that it is one of the ways in which we are 'watching over one another in love.' It can also be a witness to the communities we serve - that we want to demonstrate our love for our neighbours by not taking any risks in meeting together physically.

During this further period of restriction, may we all re-double our care for each other, keeping regularly in touch, especially with those who are on their own. Let's be careful too to think of people who cannot access fellowship and worship online to ensure that they are receiving information and worship resources.

And thank you to you all for all the ways in which you are continuing to be a faithful Church - serving your communities and sharing the Good News of our faith.

We continue to pray for each other, and for our land, and indeed our whole world caught up in this pandemic. We look forward with so much hope to the time when we can meet more freely together once again.

With all good wishes

Leslie Newton