



Dear friends in faith,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Acting District Chairs. My colleague, Bev Hollings, is probably well known to you all for her experience in this role over the years. She brings a wealth of knowledge and wisdom into serving the District. I thought the little picture above of Comedy and Tragedy often used by the performing arts might illustrate our two gifts. Because you have Bev, the mask is smiling...

The tragedy part is this American bumbling around with you and trying his best, probably calling Bev when the tough questions are brought. That said, in my 24 years serving British Methodism I have held many roles and know a load of people with the right experience in many areas so I am well equipped to find you the help you need if I don't have it at my fingertips.

September marks the start of a new Methodist year and we come to it with anticipation and hopefulness for our continued growth in the District, both in ways that can be numbered and in ways that can only be measured by depth and feeling. God's call is on us all.

I am reminded of Paul's message to the Romans, Chapter 15:13. <sup>13</sup> May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

John Wesley was with a group in an upper room when he had his conversion experience at Aldersgate. They were studying Paul's letter to the Romans, *"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while the leader was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away **my** sins, even **mine**, and saved **me** from the law of sin and death."*

How many Church Councils, Circuit Meetings, even District meetings have we approached unwillingly? John went into that upper room Very Unwillingly. The Spirit, our counsellor, our guide, the warming element in our hearts is very present in this District. The Spirit is moving. We are here to be moved with the Spirit while continuing to strive to help every church to grow, however that is defined by you.

God bless you all and thank you for the opportunity to serve you within the gifts we bring and the hope we will all share.

Peace in Christ,

Rev John on behalf of the Acting Chairs

