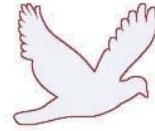




# Borders Mission Circuit



The **Methodist** Church 

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Dear Friends

As I write this minister's message, I have just been conducting my father-in-law's funeral at the Crematorium and because this message needs to be written on a Monday so it can be given to those who deliver on a Tuesday, this is what I offer to you all.

It appears a while since I last wrote, but I am still writing my weekly worship sheets for my church members and my grammar is still shocking! As I think back to last years' Lenten journey, it started with physical meetings, but soon restrictions and lockdowns were in place. By now many of you will have received your 'ticket to freedom'. Good ! I'm not too sure what your 'freedom' may look like, but it will happen!

Perhaps our churches once again may open, whilst others may not be able to and as members we have tough questions to ask ourselves about all of our churches moving towards opening. Some of our churches have remained open and I know for those churches the physical meeting together for worship has been very special and valuable to those who could attend.

As I conducted John's funeral today part of his tribute was how much loss he felt when those places he went to were closed due to lockdown and I guess the loneliness he felt at times. How many, like John felt or still feels that way today?

We still live in difficult and challenging times with many frustrations and some feel like a coiled spring waiting to get back into action, doing mission to the lost and unsaved yet others are more subdued, perhaps still anxious about what is next.

I know like many, we can't just go back to where we were a year ago because much has changed, whether we like it or not and would that be right anyway, just open up and be the same.

I'm not the same, and like many people I meet, we have all changed because of the effects of this terrible virus, which still bites.

Our Lenten journey begins differently again, but still we journey to the cross, possibly you have given up something, like you do, or taken up something, slightly restricted, like putting one tin or packet per day in a box to give to a food bank at the end of Lent, that's exempt from all the restrictions (if you wait 3 days at the end). I know that's what I will be doing, as I have first-hand experience on a twice weekly basis of how food helps. However, I'm not too keen picking up 40 trays of food from Tesco and keep telling myself, I'm getting too old for all of this, but who else can do that!

Our Lenten journey is one that takes us through different types of landscape; different backdrops and scenes in which are set critical, decisive moments in the life of the Son of God, and by extension the world of faith.

Barren wildernesses gives way to the dirt roads, the towns and villages along the way, mountains and valleys, and ultimately a city, a hill, and a garden.

Our readings for the first Sunday in Lent demand that we look both up and down: at the sky above and at the earth beneath.

Rainbows of promise above, and rivers, floods or drought below, remind us of the power of water in daily life and religious symbolism, while the solid earth might be scrubland, hill or road where the story of salvation is played out.

However, your Lenten journey happens it will, like last year, again be different but as faithful followers we journey, apart in so many ways, but we still share our common humanity, love, hospitality and faith with those we journey alongside, in a social distances sort of way.

Take care, till we meet again Rev Ann on behalf of everyone else.