

## **Ministers Message> 'Windows & Doors of Opportunity'**

A short report of my **Sabbatical** for my congregations:

Dear all,

Firstly, my Thanks go to my Borders Mission Circuit colleagues and Stewards in Churches for being on hand across the Churches. Thank you to you all for your prayers, understanding and encouragement shown to me as I have had this sabbatical time from The Methodist Church. There is so much I could share. I hope I can share more with you, and you will glimpse more of my experiences in conversations and in Worship etc. I trust you will discover more of what I mean by 'Windows & Doors.' So what follows is a brief overview of what I have done with my sabbatical:

### **Icons, Bulgaria Re-connect, Preaching, Football Mission, Local Ecumenical Partnerships-**

A large part of my sabbatical time was spent concentrating and reflecting on **Icons**. Most of this 'Icons research' came during a return visit to **Bulgaria**. I visited some monasteries and museums which have some incredible collections of icons and frescoes. Looking back to when we lived in Bulgaria, I think I regarded Icons as a 'tourist attraction' and didn't fully understand their meaning. I hope to be able to benefit from this experience and I believe it will help me in my devotional time and in leading worship, Retreats & Quiet days. For us as a family it was wonderful to re-connect with **Bulgaria**, in the Methodist churches and in the communities we lived in, and to visit some new places.

**Preaching**> I attended 'The Festival of Preaching' event in Oxford which was very good. There were some very interesting lectures & seminars such as> 'Preaching the Parables, 'A Preachers Alphabet' and 'Sermons seldom heard.'

**Football**> Only a little bit of 'football reflecting', honest! I met with club chaplains as well as other Christians who explore ways of mission and outreach with people through football.

**Local Ecumenical Partnerships/LEP**> I was able to have some conversations with colleagues across the Midlands about Ecumenical churches, which is important as New Cross has to review its own LEP.

I have been on two retreats in the UK. I have read a good range of books. On some Sundays I have been able to simply go to different churches and worship in varied styles and contexts. Having some time with my family has been good. I visited Epworth Rectory, the home of the Wesley's which reminded me of the Methodist DNA that speaks to us today.

Above all of this, I give all the Thanks to God (and The Methodist Church) for this sabbatical experience.

Rev. Peter Taylor 21/10/19





Some pictures from my time on Sabbatical. Pictures include: Veliko Turnovo & Rila Monastery in Bulgaria; Team Taylor with Methodist friends in Ruse, Bulgaria; Pete & Sam admiring the incredible frescoes at Rila; Ffald y Brenin retreat centre in West Wales; Christ Church Cathedral & University, Oxford.