



# FROM THE CHAIR

*The Revd Dr David A. Hull*

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Dear Friends,

Happy New Year to you - and I do pray that it will indeed be happy. Whatever the circumstances, may we all know what it is to 'rejoice in the Lord always'.

The year ahead is, in many ways, set to be a defining one. It will be a defining year for the world. We are still to emerge from a global pandemic which has already had a profound effect on the lives of everyone around the world. Vaccines are being rolled out and we are told we will need to discover a 'new normal'. It has been suggested that the world will never be the same again; just as the terrorist attacks of September 2001 have cast a long shadow that still falls across the world today, so the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be long lasting.

Thus, this must surely also be a defining year for the Christian Church. It will be necessary to work out our mission in a new context. Towards the beginning of the first lockdown, there was talk of a new openness towards matters of faith amongst many people as large numbers joined church services which were being streamed online. Questions of suffering and evil are at the forefront of the minds of many. There will undoubtedly be new needs surrounding us: mental health struggles, loneliness, financial concerns and grief. The uncertainty of life, which has been more strongly underlined than ever in a generation or two, presents us with the opportunity to make known, in word and deed, the rock of our salvation.

It is also a defining year for the Methodist Church. The Methodist Conference, when it meets in the summer, is due to vote on the ratification of the resolutions arising from the report, 'God in Love Unites Us'. For the first time, the Methodist Church is considering writing into its doctrine and discipline a position that is directly contrary to the teaching of the Bible. MET is committed to continuing to call the Methodist Church to remain faithful within these debates and to supporting all our members, however they feel they must respond following the decisions.

As it happens, exactly twenty years ago, it was a defining moment in another ministry. Earlier in this edition, I have referred to the ministry of the Revd Dr Rob Frost, founder

of Share Jesus International, a partner organisation of MET. This year marks the 20th anniversary of SJI and I am greatly honoured to have been invited to join the present day Director, Andy Frost, in a celebration streamed live online via [sharejesusinternational.com/20years](https://sharejesusinternational.com/20years) on Thursday 4 March at 7:30 pm. Please do join us to celebrate the work of a ministry that has had such an impact on the Methodist Church over the years.

As another year ends for the work of MET, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have come to the end of their terms of service on the Executive Committee. The Revd Dr Tim Woolley has served for a number of years in different roles, not least as editor of MET Connexion and, more recently, as one of our Vice-Chairs. The Revd Len Pereira has led our Equipping for Ministry work and Dr Ed Mackenzie has been our Theology and Research Officer. I am very grateful to them all for the immense amount they have contributed to our work over the years.

As we look ahead, perhaps this will be a defining year for you too. Whatever the future holds, no matter the uncertainties of it all, we could do no better than to put our trust in our unchanging Lord, who holds all authority in heaven and earth. As generations of Methodists before us, we may again commit ourselves to the Lord, 'I am no longer my own, but yours', and pray with Charles Wesley:

The covenant we this moment make  
Be ever kept in mind!  
We will no more our God forsake,  
Or cast his words behind.

We never will throw off his fear  
Who hears our solemn vow;  
And if thou art well-pleased to hear,  
Come down, and meet us now!

Rejoicing in our partnership in the gospel,