



# FROM THE DEVELOPMENT WORKER

*The Revd Derek Balsdon*

I begin by expressing thanks for your support through prayer, financial giving, encouraging emails, phone calls, etc. I continue to feel honoured to serve God as the MET Development Worker. The start of 2020 provided several opportunities to minister in different parts of the country. I was pleased to lead a covenant service in my own circuit, where I preached about trusting in God whatever we are faced with; a timely message considering what we have been enduring. It was a privilege to share in a marriage and relationships event with Sarah Sedgewick in Horsham, and to preach there on the Sunday.

It was good to attend the MET South West Conference, hear David Hull teach about Confidence in the Gospel and network with people from the South West. It was a privilege to preach there on the Sunday afternoon, and several people responded for anointing with oil and prayer to be filled afresh with God's Spirit.

Towards the end of February, I had a new opportunity, the leading of a two-day Circuit Staff Retreat. We focused on how forgiveness helps us serve well and stay refreshed in ministry, especially accepting God's forgiveness, forgiving those who hurt us, and letting God off the hook when we feel he has let us down. In early March I went to Launceston, the area I grew up in, and led a Local Preachers' study day about biblically preaching Good News in this 21st century, and on the Sunday I preached in the church where I received

my call to ministry. On both occasions several people received anointing with oil and prayer.

And then came COVID-19, with all MET bookings getting postponed or cancelled, so that has greatly affected the ministry that I am now offering. Updating our Remaining Faithful Network database is something I have been working on, with around 650 people indicating their disagreement with the 'God in Love Unites Us' report. I hope to be able to enable those in a local area to network together. Please get in touch if you would like to be added to the Remaining Faithful Network. I have also been working on improving the website, and setting up various online meetings using Zoom.

Near the start of the pandemic, on Sunday 22 March, Churches Together in England invited people to light a candle and pray at 7 pm. God gave us the idea of starting a weekly MET online prayer meeting via Zoom at 7 pm, and at times over 50 people have joined in from across the UK and also from overseas. It has been a wonderful time of fellowship and prayer for our church, nation and world. I have also been leading a Bible study via Zoom on Wednesdays at 7 pm, and would be willing to repeat it at a different time or day for others to join in. Please email me for further details.

In May we used Zoom for our Executive meeting; not quite like meeting face to face, yet a very effective tool. I have also

set up 'Methodist Evangelicals Together - MET', an open Facebook page which anyone can read, as a way of sharing our work more widely. It is a complement to our MET Facebook group. During the COVID-19 restrictions within MET we have sought to offer things to complement what churches and circuits have been doing, and we are aware that many people are benefitting from other online opportunities for worship, teaching and prayer.

MET is paying a subscription for Zoom, and this means that we have been able to choose our own ID. We first used Zoom for our Sunday prayer meeting, and I led the devotions on 2 Chronicles 7:14, and we were able to get the Zoom ID linked to that verse, 714 714 2714. In 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 the Lord says "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal that land." I do not believe that God sent Covid-19, but that it is part of the suffering that comes to a fallen world. I do believe that God wants us to seek him afresh, and that as a church we need to repent of drifting away from God's holy word towards the ways of the world. I also believe that our nation and our world need to repent and turn to God afresh. May our gracious and merciful God forgive our sin, heal our lands and bring revival.

MET has over 20 different books available through the Resources tab of our website, including one on Ruth for this year's Bible Month; I would be pleased to process any orders you make. You can also phone me to order any MET books. Even if COVID-19 continues causing some restrictions, I am willing to make provisional bookings for teaching days and preaching appointments, even if they have to be cancelled nearer the time (or the teaching possibly shared via Zoom or something similar). Please get in touch to explore possible dates. Offering pastoral support by phone and email is something which I have spent more time doing, and if you would value a conversation and prayer, please get in touch with me.

A list of my future appointments are on page 22. May you know God's peace, presence and power. **Derek**