

## A message from our new Superintendent

Dear Friends in Christ,

Fiona & I look forward to joining with you in the fulfilment of the work of God's kingdom in the Kettering area. We give thanks to those, especially within the Circuit Leadership, who have been so gracious in their welcome and making the transition so smooth and easy. This is the first time we have lived outside of Staffordshire.



A quick potted history. I am 55, and this is the 17<sup>th</sup> year of my ministry. My past career was banking – with 30 years happy employment with Lloyds both at domestic branches and within international trade finance. After three years part-time formation in ministry study at Queen's Foundation, I served my probation as an MLA (part-time unpaid) with pastoral oversight of Norton Canes. Upon ordination in 2002, I was stationed as Superintendent of Wednesbury Mission Circuit. I served there for 12 years, leading a single-station Circuit with under 100 members in an area of high urban deprivation to form and sustain substantial community outreach. At one point we had 13 lay employees and held strong bonds with Sure Start, health trusts, respite care, schools and local councillors.

I moved to Staffordshire Moorlands Circuit in 2015. This is a most rural and idyllic setting. I have held pastoral oversight of 12 chapels leading them through a period of great change and uncertainty. At Cheadle (the main market town) I have re-imagined the chapel area, just completed a major building scheme and opened-up the area for daily use as community outreach and mission for all ages. It has been a privilege to serve on the Connexional Grant Committee and am currently the District Grants officer at Chester & Stoke. I look forward to working with you in existing ministries and discerning with you the pathways that God is opening for us.

My hobby is acting and I have a passion for Shakespeare and Wagner. I also enjoy many comedies and satirical shows – TV and Radio. Coffee first thing is a must; and periods of silence and stillness through the day help to sustain me.

(Continued overleaf)

I live with my wife Fiona. We were married within days of my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and are blessed with three daughters. Hannah (30) and Lucy (29) share an apartment in Aldridge. Sophie (26, the youngest) lives with her partner, Luke, and our grandchildren Daisy (7) and Noah (3) in my home village of Pelsall. I miss them all greatly.

Fiona travels to them most weeks to help with the school run, etc. We are looking forward to Sophie and Luke being married next year – and my part in that day.

Fiona had a career in education before we moved to Cheadle. In the past years she has dedicated herself to leading a weekly 'play and stay' toddler group and a separate 'coffee' morning. She has been employed as a Lay Pastoral Worker in the Circuit and we have coped with being both husband and wife and sharing pastoral responsibilities. Maybe you should ask Fiona for her view. We both enjoy preparing 'Messy Church' activities.

Martin ended his last pastoral letter with the phrase *'keep on loving; keep on serving; keep on growing.'* These are wise words. We are all called to hold particular gifts and ministries which show something of the love of Christ and God's purposes for his creation. We do this in community and connexion with each other as fellow disciples and travellers with Christ. This Body of Christ, the church, works best when we find a unity of purpose, care for each other and those around, and strive to bring others to know our Lord through our words, actions, and prayer.

We should never be amazed that God is always ahead of us or that the Holy Spirit is at work within those who have no intentional association with our 'buildings'. I have found, and hold dear, that we work best when we do so in unity with others. Being a Circuit of chapels brings responsibility to see wider than our own local situation. The LEP at St Giles is something that excites me and is a most hopeful sign of unity in mission and worship. I look forward to being part of this long-established partnership. My personal guiding verse is *'If anyone would follow me, they must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me'* (Mark 8:34). It is in giving of ourselves that we find the pathway to salvation and the eternity of abundant life promised by Jesus. In our loving, serving, and growing we keep Christ in our heart and by being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit to fulfil God's purpose. *'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done'*.

May God Bless you,

Andrew.

Andrew may be contacted by phone on 01536 485690 or mobile 07985308637

Or by email at [andrew.farrington@methodist.org.uk](mailto:andrew.farrington@methodist.org.uk)