

Dear Friends

I can't believe that this letter marks the beginning of my second year here. Time really does fly and I am now feeling at home back here in the south-eastern corner of England.

One big difference that I have noticed here is the difference in community. I am no longer in a small market town with a square in the middle where people can gather and meet each other. Here, there are many different centres of community and many small shopping areas but all seem to run into one. Everything is linked by rows and rows of houses. There is so much more traffic, parking is always difficult and the pace of life is much faster than in rural Cheshire.

Those are all surface differences and do not matter because the people in this circuit, and in these towns, where we minister, are just as special and as important as those I left behind last year. Each and every one of you has some reflection of God the Creator within you. We are all creatures of the same Maker and are loved by Him. This makes my job that much easier because all I have to do is to give the same message to you as I gave to those where I was before.

The message is that God loves you so much that He wants to spend the rest of eternity with you, and with me. God wants us to live with Him forever and He has made it possible for it to happen. He has taken the burden of our sin upon his own shoulders by letting Jesus Christ die on the cross. Jesus was not just a man but was God himself. Imagine that – God dying so that we might live forever. The proof the Jesus was God is that He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven. His body did not remain on earth but is now in Heaven with God. He will eventually come again to judge each of us and to welcome the righteous into His kingdom. There is nothing that we can do to make ourselves righteous. All we can do is accept Jesus into our hearts and allow him to guide and direct our lives.

That is the most important thing that I have to say Everything else revolves around that central premise that Jesus is Lord. We should love Him and others as we love ourselves. Our circuit and our churches exist to proclaim that message to all and to build up the people of faith in this area. Let us try to put that central to all that we do.

Finally, on your behalf, I want to welcome Elizabeth Kirova to the Southend and Leigh Circuit. She will be ministering to the churches in Benfleet and Canvey Island. This is her first job as a Methodist minister and I trust that she will be affirmed in all that she is and does by the love that she will find here.

God Bless you all

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Bry', is located at the bottom left of the page.