

## Link May 2019

'Half way up the stairs is the place where I sit  
There isn't really any place quite like this  
It's not at the bottom and it's not at the top  
It isn't really any place but half way up.'

Over Easter we were once again cat sitting for our son and his girlfriend. To be fair the cat isn't a problem unless you are trying to get up or down the stairs, as her favourite place to sit is right in the middle of the staircase. As I negotiated this feline obstacle one day, I found myself sitting down to stroke her and singing Kermit the Frog's song - much to the dismay and ridicule of my family!



Reflecting on that moment I realise that I feel 'half way up the stairs'; not upstairs not downstairs but in between. I am the minister at AMC and superintendent of this circuit and yet increasingly I am being asked to respond to events in my new job as chair of Chester and Stoke – a job I haven't got a clue how to do! I live with a mixture of sadness at having to leave but excitement and fear for what is to come.

I am in a liminal place.

Similarly, the church and circuit know that change is imminent as one minister leaves and another arrives – such a change offers exciting new beginnings but also frightening unknowns.

Liminal places are often not easy. We don't particularly like change as the unknown seems filled with fear and yet we follow one who stated that we were never to settle: 'Foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head,' said Jesus.

We are called to be a people who are always moving, always changing, always re-creating and never complacent.

We are called to be a liminal people, living our lives in between the needs of the world and holiness of God. It is not an easy place to be: God's people in the world.

And yet it is this 'half way' place; this liminal existence that enables us to be a vehicle for God's grace; loved and precious children of God who strive to live that love in our community. It is only by occupying that 'in between' place that we fulfil our call to follow Jesus.

Here at AMC we have recently opened our 'Welcome Space'. My hope is that this becomes an 'in between' space; a place where the needs of the community are met by the love of God. A space that offers belonging to people of faith or no faith; hospitality to the stranger and welcome to the ones who feel like the outcast.

Inhabiting the 'in between' will never feel comfortable and yet we must remember that God will always be there; before us and behind us, for every place is his.

So, when we find ourselves feeling out of our depth or even 'halfway up the stairs', dealing with changes we cannot control, may we remember that we are in good company for we are always in God's company.

*Helen.*