

10<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Recently the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference wrote to all ministers across the Connexion acknowledging how difficult a task it was to lead church congregations and communities through the uncertainty of Brexit. I am writing to you all now as members in the Northampton District to encourage you as we seek to be faithful people at such a difficult time.

We know that there are many diverse views held even within a single family, and this diversity is reflected across the people we worship with and meet as Christian community. As a result there are high levels of confusion, frustration and anger. Stories are already emerging that some people in our District are experiencing racial abuse as they carry out everyday tasks because they look and sound different to those abusing them.

The indications are that the coming months may be difficult to navigate. No option for the Brexit process is without pitfalls. Hurt, disappointment and anger will affect supporters of at least one side of the debate. The impact on our public life and that of the nations will take months and years to work through.



There are no easy answers as to a best way forward, but we know that among us in our churches there is great wisdom.

Alongside other Church leaders the President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference asked the government about the consequences of leaving the EU without a deal. The government has responded but has not directly addressed the greatest concern that families on low income, those needing personal care and people with long term health conditions will face particular difficulties.

In response to the current situation, we are encouraging you to be active in peace-building and reconciliation. To that end, some practical things you could consider might be:

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Charity Commission No: 1130373

- Writing a letter to your local MP, assuring them of your prayers even if you disagree with their politics.
- Supporting your local food bank
- Offering support to EU citizens whose sense of home and belonging may be shaken.
- Being attentive and supportive to those vulnerable to racial abuse
- Being attentive to the spiritual and physical needs of children and young people for whom these are confusing times.
- Providing and enabling safe space for difficult conversations on your church premises.
- Whether or not we leave the EU on 31 October, planning to join together, with ecumenical and interfaith partners, for a day or evening of prayer, and/or issue an invitation to fast at around that time.

The Joint Public Issues Team is bringing together some resources and information for you to use at this time. You can find them here [www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/brexit](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/brexit)

As Methodists we are called to love prophetically, live graciously, even with contradictory convictions, and to be agents for justice and reconciliation. It is not easy, but we all know that it is the way of Jesus,

I join with the President and the Vice President of the Methodist Conference in offering you our prayers and support,

Yours sincerely,

