

## **Letter to accompany the Plan for September, October and November 2024**

*“And its from the old I travel to the new, keep me travelling along with you”*- Sydney Carter wrote this famous hymn back in 1971, the year after I was born. It was chosen by Sharon Dome, who led our devotions at the Circuit Meeting after prayerfully reflecting on the agenda, and as we sang it that night, I thought again how many times during my ministry, how many times this familiar hymn has been sung at prominent moments, or in the ministry of Circuits and Districts where I have served.

We have, without a doubt, had a year of change. Whilst there has been a lots to be grateful for across the Circuit, there have been pockets of sadness as well. Verse three of Carter’s hymn reminds us that *“ as I travel through the bad and good, keep me travelling the way I should”*; no year in a Circuit’s life is ever, as in our own personal lives, all good or all bad, although when we are travelling, as Carter put it, through a particularly dark period, it can sometimes feel like it.

There is always joy to be found in everything we do and as we say good bye, close doors, find new places to worship, new people to worship with or look at the plan in front of us with a decreased number of Local Preachers, we remember the vision day, the week of prayer, the number of times we have met across the Circuit for worship, fellowship, training events, on line bible studies; the new stewards offering their time and expertise to help alongside their other responsibilities, and the providence that we were not only sent a Probationer Minister, but that Rachael is such a gifted musician and a blessing to us all.

Carter’s words are as true today as 53 years ago. Times are challenging us - yes they are - but we will not be defeated, *“give me courage though the world is rough, keep me loving though the world is tough, leap and sing in all I do, keep me travelling along with you”*.

I look forward with hope, as I start this third year of ministry with you all; Rachael by my side, a new team of circuit stewards, and you, as always, supporting the ministry of the Circuit. Let us all look forward with hope.

**Rev Kate Strange - Superintendent Minister - High Wycombe Methodist Circuit**

*Psalm 31:24 - Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.*