

**The Revd Graham Thompson**

President Designate of the Methodist Conference 2022/23

**Mr Anthony Boateng**

Vice-President Designate of the Methodist Conference 2022/2023

Methodist Church House

25 Marylebone Road

London NW1 5JR

+44 (0) 20 7486 5502 (enquiries)  
pandvp@methodistchurch.org.uk  
www.methodist.org.uk  
registered charity no 1132208

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Dear Janet

Greetings in the Saviour's Name!

We are pleased to write as the people designated by last year's Conference to serve as Vice-President and President for the Connexional year 2022-2023. We send you our greetings as we introduce ourselves and share some of the things that we may be able to offer as we travel around the Connexion. We are both looking forward to working with you and hope that you may wish to invite us, either together or separately, so that we can learn about some of the things that God is doing in and through the Methodist Church. We also wish to support you in your ministry, in any way we can.

We are happy to continue the custom of District visits and hope to meet with many of you during the year. Please invite us to events and occasions in your District and we will do our best to support as many of these as our diaries will permit. Our theme for the year seeks to encourage the Methodist Church to be the church that God desires. We believe that the church should be filled with those who love God, others and themselves. Also, that we need a fresh wind of the Holy Spirit to restore, revive and reignite us. Our overarching title is **The Greatest Commandment** (Matthew 22:37-39) and we hope that it is sufficiently broad to be attractive to many, if not all, in our church.


It is easy to list the problems and difficulties we are facing and we do this often enough. However, there are also opportunities and we need to discern which ones to pick up and which to let go. We also need to continue recovering from the effects of Covid19 and so themes of restoration and fanning the flames of faith are linked to the core relationships with which we can build communities of faith. Good relationships and openness to God's activity will be the central planks of our theme and we look forward to developing this with you as we spend time together.

As we visit the churches, circuits, districts and organisations of our Connexion, we hope to encourage individuals and churches who may feel low, small or fearful. We are hopeful that most visits can be 'in person' but are also happy to engage with online opportunities to meet with groups large and small, near and far. So what can we offer?

**Anthony**

*Over the years, particularly more recently and when I was training to be a local preacher, I would often pray in my heart yearning for revival; yearning to have power to comprehend the depth and breadth of God's power and to be filled with the fullness of God because I knew deep down our beloved church (and my ministry) depends on it.*

*What I mean by revival is for our church to be completely dependent on the sovereign work of God. So that many of our churches, Christians and non-Christians can be lifted out of spiritual indifference and worldliness into conviction of sin, earnest desires for more of Christ and His word. In addition, lots of conversions, joyful worship and renewed commitment to our Methodist calling.*



*Having previously served on various committees within the Methodist Church, I believe I can share my leadership experience with the wider church, which includes young people and those who seek clarity and understanding. I believe my spiritual journey and personal attributes put me in a privileged position to relate to those who feel voiceless and disillusioned within the church. Therefore, perhaps part of what I can offer is to promote the church to others, act as an agent for revival and change, as well as offer a means of relating, particularly to those who are on the margins of the church. I also offer my experience as an accredited local preacher to proclaim God's word and my passion for the revival message. Finally, any opportunity to meet and fellowship, serve and learn will be well received.*

*One thing the Bible teaches us from Mark 4:26-34 is that size does not matter and growth is mysterious and gradual: "first the blade, then the head, then the full grain..." Therefore, even though we may be smaller in number, ageing and increasingly under attack from the secular world, I believe God is not done with us yet. Rather, He is urging us to be attentive to the spiritual things He has placed on our hearts to bear fruit by uniting as a Church to make more followers through His greatest commandment - Matthew 22:34-40. So, like Graham, I am not concerned about size but more about the heart and desire to faithfully work alongside one another in love, put our head above the parapet and thirst to experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit.*

***Graham:** I am not concerned about size but about faithfulness. Some of our smallest churches have faithful disciples within them who, repeatedly, prove themselves to be fruitful for the Kingdom. Therefore, I wish to encourage them in their faithfulness and hear the testimony of God's activity. I strongly believe that we need good relationships if we are to be faithful and fruitful disciples - good relationships with God, with others and with ourselves. I would like opportunities to explore these ideas and seek to encourage others in their relationships. I am happy to be used in as many different contexts as can be imagined, from the pastoral visit to a single member to a larger gathering for a daylong conference. As well as bringing my experience as a presbyter, I want to learn as much as I can about our faith in God, the church to which we belong and the calls that are upon us today. I want my own thinking to be challenged and moulded by the experience of the presidency such that I become more the person that God calls me to be. At heart, I am a pastor and so opportunities to meet, greet and share with others are what I truly desire.*

We hope that these thoughts will help you with your planning. If you want to suggest other things that might be useful or helpful, please do so and we will gladly consider them. Invitations and a brief outline of your plans should, in the first instance, be sent to the Conference Office via Rachel Tufnell at this email: [pandvp@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:pandvp@methodistchurch.org.uk) and it would be really helpful if you can send these before Friday 9 December. If you have particular dates you would like to suggest, then please outline these in your invitation. Please note, Anthony will be continuing to work full time, so his time to engage during the working week will be limited.

With every good wish and continuing prayers,



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