**CASTLE METHODIST CHURCH**

A letter from the Rev Chris Preece:

September 2022

Dear friends,

Firstly, please can I thank you for the wonderful welcome I’ve received over the past couple of weeks. From the wonderfully uplifting Welcome Service with all the work that went behind it, to my first Sunday with you and many other things as well, it has been such a real joy to begin to get to know you. Many people have been very gracious in giving me their time and patiently helping me with my many and varied questions. I am really grateful for all the time and energy that everyone has put into this time.

As part of my ‘getting to know Castle a little better’ conversations, it was good to meet with a few people last week at church. I was able to hear something of the things that are exciting about being church at this time whilst also acknowledging some of the challenges that there may be as well. We shared many different things and began to think about some of the things we could do in the near future. This included the recognition of the challenges that will be faced by many this winter with the cost-of-living crisis as well as the desire to begin to think about how we can build up the church community and reach out to others too.

Initially, it may seem that these are two quite different things but we may be able to bring them together as part of our Christian witness. Fellowship is an important principle of how we live well together with one another as Christians, and also how we can share God’s love with others. I know that there are different ideas being suggested around games afternoons, craft mornings, and many other thoughts too. We also know that these sorts of activities can help others to come together, get to know others better, whilst sharing in a warm welcome, and having a cuppa together. Given the issues brought about by the energy crisis, it could also be a warm place where people can gather with one another, enjoy a warm drink and be alongside one another.

There are many thoughts and ideas that could happen but it’s important that everyone has a voice. It is our Harvest Festival and Church Anniversary on 9th October and it was thought that following that, we could bring our own picnic and share some time together with one another. After this, we thought it might be nice to have a short gathering where we share together in some of the ways in which we may be able to build fellowship with one another and hopefully beyond the church congregation as well. I do hope that you’ll be able to come on 9th October as we share in worship with one another again.

Whenever we share ‘The Grace’ we do so remembering that all things come from God and that we are built up as disciples of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. ‘May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.’

God bless you all,

Chris