

**Methodist Recorder article by Emily Roe, Rep to the British Youth Council**

Video calls, emails, conference calls, letter writing. Just a few of the things we've become accustomed to over the last six months or so. The things we used to take for granted became a lifeline back in March. How else would we have stayed in touch with each other? Whilst there have been many challenges there have also been positives to come out of this time. As a group of Youth Reps we met weekly during lockdown for a quiz (who didn't do at least one quiz during lockdown?!) and time to chat together, which has made our relationships stronger and helped us get to know one another better. Whilst doing this weekly has had to stop due to many of us being back at work, school and university we have decided to keep it as a monthly thing to have a catch up and continue building on those relationships.

We have also found new ways of connecting with children and young people. We upped our social media presence in particular on Instagram where, during lockdown, we started Worship Wednesday, half an hour where we would informally discuss a Bible passage that had been speaking to us or related to a theme or event going on that week and encourage young people to get involved in the discussion in the comments. We also started Takeover Tuesday, where each week a different Youth Rep would take over the Instagram account and show a day in our lives.

In August I was part of a team that organised an event for young green agents of change, where we gave space for young people ages 8-18 to meet together on Zoom. This was done in two age streams, 8-11 and 12-18. The young people were asked what their ideal world would look like and some of the barriers that prevent us reaching these dreams. They were also given the opportunity to discuss what they thought the Church could be doing to help combat climate change. Some of the suggestions that came up were using eco-friendly cleaning materials, reducing single use plastic and working towards being an eco-church. I often feel more inspired by young people than anyone else and never have I felt that more than during the event when the young people were given the opportunity to

share a bit about what they are doing to help protect the environment. Some of the things they are doing are small, such as reducing the amount of single use plastic they use, using public transport more and buying clothes from a charity shop, to much larger things such as going on the school strikes and talking to others about the impact of climate change. Some even spoke during their school assembly and to their MP!

As a British Youth Council (BYC) Rep I have also been to the annual meeting where we voted on the new chair and trustees of the board and discussed what motions were to be put into the manifesto this year. It was a really encouraging day of discussion over Zoom around the things that matter to young people across the country and being able to share the voice of young people from the Methodist Church with those from other organisations involving young people. The day included discussions around things that we see on the manifesto produced from 3Generate each year such as reducing the impact of climate change and more support for mental health.

Finally, as I reflect on the last two years as a Youth Rep I think about how much confidence I have gained in a variety of situations, whether that be leading a session with young people of a variety of ages or talking to leaders and parents. I have also grown in my own journey of faith through having the opportunity to connect with the other Reps to not only discuss what is happening with young people in the Methodist Church but to also learn, support and pray for each other as we go through different stages of life.