

**Methodist Recorder article by Gemma Curtis, Youth Rep to Methodist Conference**

In my life, I've often heard people say to expect the unexpected. This phrase has certainly been true for me this year. Working on the frontline during a global pandemic was something that I wasn't expecting to do, but it has certainly taught me a lot of things, especially resilience. As I write this, I'm sat in the staff cafe on my lunch break during my first day working at my local hospital. I've just finished my job as senior carer in a residential care home for those living with dementia.

Throughout working in this time, I have often been reminded of the scripture "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*" Philippians 4:13. When I was tired and felt like I had nothing else to give, I had a fresh reminder that I wasn't doing things in my own strength but with the strength of God who is right by my side. When I felt strong and was powering through 14-hour shifts, I looked around and would question how I was doing what I was doing, and was again reminded that I'm working through God's strength! I also wasn't expecting to be moving jobs. I knew I was ready to begin a new step in my career but didn't think I'd be doing it during a pandemic, that's for sure! I am blessed that God has protected me and those I had cared for during this time, and pray that this will continue into my new role.

Having to attend Methodist Conference virtually was something else that I wasn't expecting to happen this year either. I was very much looking forward to attending Methodist Conference and was a little gutted knowing I wasn't able to experience the full thing and be amongst other representatives. However, I still thoroughly enjoyed conference this year, especially knowing that, as the children and young people's representative, I was able to bring their voice to the platform of Methodist Conference. I found the reception into full connexion extremely moving, especially when we joined each of those being received into the connexion in their homes. It was a privilege to lead the conference in a Bible study along with the Youth President and two fellow Reps. Again, this is something I would not have expected to find myself doing.

As a Youth Rep team we started 'Worship Wednesday' when lockdown first began, as an online way to reach children and young people who, like all of us, were now unable to go to church. We have found a time of fellowship and been able to look at topics such as refugees, mental health and trusting in God. I, like most young adults, use a variety of social media, but never had considered doing things like videos and live posts. I certainly wasn't expecting to be hosting online worship some weeks and producing video reflections

too on the 3Generate Reps Instagram account. Within my own church I have helped to produce content for online church and have been producing a monthly newsletter to keep our congregations up to date and in touch with one another.

Throughout this year a lot of things have popped up that I certainly wasn't expecting. I moved out into my own place, we went into lockdown, I attended online Conference and got a new job!

I've learnt that there are two ways to react to these situations. One is to panic and worry about them, the other is to face them head on, embrace each situation and trust that God has it all in control. I must admit I have reacted both ways. But I remind myself through scripture and through people around me that God is using me in all of these situations. I may not be able to see this at the time, but he is working in me and through me, he never stops working. Stepping out in these unexpected situations has allowed me to strengthen my trust in God and although at times I have felt far from my comfort zone, I hope that I am living out the life God has called me too.