

Behold I am doing something new!

September traditionally is the start of the new school year in England and Wales. This year the new school year will start, but things will be different.

Sometimes, we can find handling change difficult, especially if the change is forced upon us rather than something we have chosen for ourselves. COVID 19 has forced all kinds of change upon us. Nothing is as it was before and until we have either developed a vaccine or discovered whether people gain lasting immunity after an infection, it is unlikely that things will ever go back to the way things were 'before'.

Instead of seeing this as a disaster, however, perhaps we should be looking for the opportunities. We may not be able to gather altogether for services – but perhaps we can find ways, like the early church, of meeting in two household groups to watch online materials, pray together and perhaps share meals?

We may not be able to sing communally in worship, but are we using this time to worship through listening or by using creative skills or talents? Have we explored how our creativity echoes the creativity of God and allowed the Spirit to inspire our imagination?

We may not be able to do big group community work through Mend It right now, but have we worked to build community where we live? Have we encouraged our neighbours, checked they are okay, brightened their day with a message in our window?

We may be shielding and feeling isolated, but have we picked up the phone, written letters or even grappled with technology to stay in touch with others? Have we used a time of isolation and quiet as a time of retreat with God, reading materials to feed our spirit, spending time in prayer or contemplation?

God is always going new things, as he says in Isaiah 43:19, "Watch for the new thing I am going to do.

It is happening already—you can see it now!"
Are you ready to join in?!

Grace and peace, Sarah

Regional Minister on Racial Justice March

Following the protests about death of George Floyd in the US, HEBA Regional Minister Dave Ellis and other black church leaders including the BU President Yinka Okeyan organised the Gathering for Racial Justice march in London.

Dave says, "Among our main concerns was to be seen to support the young people who took to the streets. We don't want them to say to us where was the church?"

Wolverhampton-born Rev Ellis, was among the Christian leaders calling for the implementation of more than 200 recommendations from previous inquiries in the UK. While many Baptist pastors were involved, the campaign is not a BU initiative although the leadership including General Secretary Lynn Green is supportive.

Dave is the regional minister for Baptist churches in Staffordshire and north Birmingham. There are now plans for a petition to demand that racial inequalities are debated in Parliament. Dave adds, "We don't condone violence of any kind.

"We were there because we want to speak truth to power and to challenge the powerful to fulfil and legislate the recommendations that have been made in every single inquiry that has been held about racial injustice. And to challenge the judicial system which is stacked against people of colour."

See Facebook and Gathering for Racial Justice

<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/wolverhampton/2020/07/09/we-want-to-support-the-young-people-who-took-to-the-streets-we-dont-want-them-to-say-to-us-where-was-the-church-says-wolverhampton-born-leader/>