

Dear Friends,

As a circuit and indeed as a local church we are being challenged as to what the Methodist church in Southport will look like in the coming years because we know that we cannot, for many reasons, carry on as we are. In amongst this discernment there has to be a degree of looking back, looking back to our roots and cherishing what brought us to this point in time and then maybe wondering what we would like to leave behind for the next generation. It is a massive undertaking for those in leadership within the circuit and the local churches and there are so many voices that need listening to that it's very difficult to know which way to turn first. I have found the following poem helpful, I hope you might too:

What lasts?

What lasts? We ask, when pondering the worth of what we've done.

What will the world remember when each one is dead and gone?

What impact will remain to show the difference we have made?

And will we be remembered as the ones who've made the grade?

Will generations yet to come recall what we've achieved?

Might they rejoice and marvel at the tapestry we've weaved?

Can signs remain for ever showing we've been past this way?

Will changes we have made outlive the passing of our day?

Will what we thought was special be remembered by the rest?

Might we be singled out for praise reserved for just the best?

Will what we have accomplished mean a plaque can mark our fame?

Will people talk of eminence when mentioning our name?

O child, you'll be remembered not by things that will not last,

Like merit, style or prominence, or kudos, rank or class, or accolades that make you
seem august and grandiose,

But by your help for others who have needed you the most.

Where love has changed a life, then you'll be worthy of our praise;

Where brokenness found healing, then a voice in thanks we'll raise;

When poverty was challenged, then you'll be recalled with pride;

If justice was your watchword, then your worth can't be denied.

The things of time will soon decay and crumble into dust;

For transience can never offer substance we can trust;

If you want immortality, kiss the things of time goodbye,

And grasp what is eternal – then your love will never die.

You see it doesn't matter that we leave an institution or a building, sound or otherwise, for the next generation to inherit. What matters is that we have passed on the love of God to them and shared the faith those who have gone before us with them. If that is our priority the rest of it should be a walk in the park.

Every blessing,

Rev Jan