

Friends,

As I sit down to write to you today, I realise that in exactly one month's time I will be spending my first morning in the manse at Oakham. I cannot quite imagine what that will be like, but I can say with confidence that it already feels like home. In fact, as I think about the Circuit and the people and churches I have already met, the feeling I get is one of belonging. This is definitely to do with the loving welcome I have already received from so many of you. However, it is also grounded in the fact that through the prayerful process of Methodist Stationing, God has called us all to journey together for the next few years.

Ironically, as I am simply not a gardener, my devotions approaching the move have been focussed on images of being planted. In particular I would like to share with you the words of Jeremiah 17:7-8 "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit."

I am intrigued that God keeps giving me the image of being planted, because my personal story is not one of someone who stays still. I was born in Leicester, and spent the first few years of my life living in the tiny village of Old Dalby. Google maps tells me that this village is only 30 minutes away from Oakham. My family then moved to Storrington, a small town in West Sussex. Since then I have lived in Stoke, Manchester, Nottingham, Haywards Heath, Salisbury and Birmingham. On top of that my family come from Norwich and I feel strongly connected to that city. As well as moving homes I have also moved between careers. Starting as a personal injury and criminal law solicitor, I later became a nursery worker, before leading a team to set up our own nursery business. Finally, as I began to respond to God calling me to ministry, I worked as a Lay Pastoral Assistant in the Salisbury Methodist Circuit, beginning by supporting churches as they waited for their next minister and then working across the circuit.

But in all of this move and change, God has been the constant in my life. Although I may not have been geographically planted, my roots are firmly embedded in the life-giving stream of God's love. It is that stream which already unites each one of us and which gives me the blessed assurance that you are my new home.

I am looking forward to meeting you all, to celebrating our God of love together, and to discovering the fruit which we will bear.

God bless,
Rev Bekkie Wright

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