

## Friends

I don't know if you remember the project that London Underground ran and as far as I know, still runs, "Poems on the Underground." Many of us when travelling were delighted by a reminder of some poem first met long ago in English lessons, when education required us to learn poetry by heart. I was recently reminded in this way, of the John Donne piece "No man is an island."

*"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.*

*If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were.*

*Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.*

*John Donne (1572 - 1631)*

There are times when people die, and they are so much a part of our lives, and the lives of our churches, that we really understand what John Donne was saying. Such a person was Alison Mount, the senior steward at Windsor Methodist Church, who died and was promoted to glory last Saturday. I know that people across the circuit will be saddened by that news and will want to send their love and prayers to everyone at Windsor and especially to her family and close friends.

The Methodist understanding of this idea that "any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind" is expressed in the idea of connexionalism. We are a connexional Church and therefore we care about the welfare of all our congregations and each member of our communities. God is a connexional God, who not only cares for and loves each one of us, but who also connects us one to another through the work of Jesus in our lives, and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who resides in each one of us. As the old chorus says, "Bind us together, with cords that cannot be broken. Bind us together with love."

I said last week that it had been a hard autumn, and it is not yet easier. However, we are bound together by our love for and faith in Jesus, who built his church on us. May we continue to work together to serve him.

God bless, Vicci