



District Newsletter – May & June 2021

District Chair's Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

And in the act of blessing he parted from them.

If you are reading this on the day the Newsletter is published, Happy Ascension Day to you! Yet as I consider the ending of this phase of Jesus' ministry as described in Luke 24 and Acts 1, I always wonder whether, for all the blessing and praising, there must have been some mixed feelings. The Disciples thought that they had lost Jesus on Good Friday, but Easter and its aftermath renewed their hope and joy; yet, now, Jesus was parting from them again. Even with the memory of his resurrection presence and reassurance that he would always be with them, and notwithstanding his act of blessing and promise of the Holy Spirit, surely there would have been some sadness and uncertainty for them?

So too for us in this interim time, as we wait for the final fulfilment of all that Christ promised; as we wait, again and again, for the dramatic or gentle re-eruption of the Spirit within our lives, church and society; as we wait, we hope, to transition from pandemic to greater normality; and as we gather again for the rebirth (thanks to Tim Cooke for this idea) of our churches at Pentecost and beyond.

At this interim time we continue to hold before God and in our care all those who sorrow, in our communities and across the world (please do consider the Christian Aid vaccination appeal). We think of those who struggle, including as the Methodist Church wrestles with 'God in Love Unites us'. We think of those ready for a new phase, of Zena Smith and Andrew Stirling, at long last approaching their ordinations. We think of the blessings and surprises that we have received – although not to belittle, rationalise or even compensate for the losses and disruption of a pandemic that no one, not even God, desired or planned and which wreaks havoc not least on the most vulnerable.

Rather, our spiritual blessings remind of the God who is faithful and loving through all times and in all places, who gently, strongly, rushes towards us even now through the Holy Spirit, inviting us to attend to all that is ours to be and do, just like the first disciples, the first followers and learners, who in being sent into the world, became also the first apostles, as we too are now called to be.

God Bless, sustain, and lead you,

The Revd Dr James Tebbutt

DISTRICT NEWS AND EVENTS

The Cumbria District Synod and God In Love Unites Us

The District Synod meets in its representative session in September and late Spring every year (and in its Presbyteral Session in the early Spring). Formal minutes of the meeting are prepared, but in addition the Synod Secretary submits a short report for the Methodist Recorder, which we also include here:

The Cumbria District Synod met by Zoom on Saturday April 24th, and was welcomed by the Chair, Revd Dr James Tebbutt. Worship was led by the retiring Deputy District Chair and Presbyteral Synod Secretary, the Revd Jennet McCleod, with the emphasis on loving one another, as exemplified in 1 Corinthians 13.

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing and voting on the provisional resolutions from the Conference Report: God In Love Unites Us. This began with a presentation of the District-wide facilitated conversations and consultation undertaken by the District and Ecumenical Being Inclusive Group, including an explanation of various summary graphs recording the responses of the Circuit forums and meetings to illustrate both the range of views (not votes!) expressed, but also the varying depths of feeling associated with them, in order to provide a composite picture of the District as a whole.

The Synod then proceeded formally to discuss and vote on the resolutions. These included three amending resolutions that were proposed but not passed, so that final votes were then taken on the original form of the provisional resolutions. The discussion was conducted with mutual respect and consideration for the feelings, experiences and understandings of others, with a decision for members not to use social media during the course of the debate helping to encourage Synod to be safe, it was hoped, for all opinions. The provisional resolutions were passed, variously with larger or smaller majorities, with the results published on the District website shortly after Synod ended.

In other business, correspondence was agreed and reports were received. The vote on the deferred special resolution regarding Model Trust 14(2A) was passed unanimously. Due to the way the electronic poll system works, visitors and observers were present for discussions but moved to a breakout room for all formal voting.

Synod approved two circuit mergers; Solway with Western Fells, and Wigton with North Cumbria. Four chapels, Sleagill, Cautley, Dent Foot and Corby Hill were given permission to cease to worship, with thanksgiving for their work and witness.

The Revd David Newlove was elected as Deputy District Chair, and the Revd David Stretton as the Presbyteral Synod Secretary, from September. Amongst other appointments, Hazel Edmundson was elected to take over the role of Local Preachers' District Tutor.

Stephanie Roux was introduced as the new joint property secretary for the Cumbria and Lancashire Districts, and Fiona Crouch as the new Youth and Young People's Work Co-ordinator. Synod was reminded that as its chapels begin to open, it is important not to let slip our attention to Safeguarding.

The Chair gave an update on the work of the Ecumenical County's (rather than Connexional) God for All Vision Refresh, "to release the whole people of God for the whole mission of God and the transformation of Cumbria in Jesus' name", expressed through following daily, caring deeply, speaking boldly, and treading gently.

The Chair thanked all those retiring from District office or moving on from the District.

In closing, the Synod stood to give thanks and remember those who had died since we last met, and to pray for all those affected by the pandemic, including our link church in Argentina, the Iglesia Evangélica Metodista Argentina.

Janice Rusling

The page on the District Website to which Janice refers, setting out the full text of the various God In Love Unites Us Resolutions and voting results, can be found here (or if you have difficulty accessing, please contact Carolyn Dickinson):

<https://www.cumbriamethodistdistrict.org.uk/news/news-stories/god-in-love-unites-us-synod-information.html> .

Once again, the Methodist Church is not asking anyone to consider changing their own views, but is asking whether it is better as a whole Church to live with our contradictory convictions around this matter and to allow for two views alongside each other, a traditional heterosexual understanding, and a same-sex understanding, with appropriate measures to allow for a mixed economy and understanding that seeks to safeguard a variety of understandings for local churches and ministers. The Methodist Conference at the end of June will consider the results from all the District Synods and other memorials and comments submitted, and make final decisions. We will report this in the next edition of the District Newsletter.

District Ordination Service – Saturday 19th June at 3 pm

The delayed 2020 Ordinations will be taking place on Saturday 19th June 2021 in various venues around the country. We are delighted that the President of the Conference, the Revd Richard Teal, will be presiding at the ordination of the Revds Zena Smith and Andrew Sterling, together with one other from their year group, at Penrith Methodist Church at 3pm that day. Mrs Jill Baker, former Vice-President of the Conference, who also led the Cumbria District Ministers' Retreat last Autumn, will preach. This is an all ticketed service, and given the continuing pandemic, tickets are sadly if necessarily not generally available, but we will let you know via the District weekly mailing if the service can be streamed. In any event, we will hold Andrew and Zena and others being ordained at this time in our prayers.

District Property Secretary

Stephanie Roux is now in post and has new contact details which should be used for all property matters. Email: cumbriamethodistproperty@outlook.com and Mobile: 07460 792055.

Give Thanks Christian Aid Campaign

Cumbria Methodist District has partnered with aid and development charity Christian Aid to give people an opportunity to give thanks for receiving their Covid-19 vaccination and to help others in crisis across the world. This forms part of our Christian Aid Week and wider Christian Aid response this year.

As more people, and often our family, friends and neighbours receive their vaccine, we feel a sense of relief and gratitude, but there is also an awareness that many communities around the world are suffering and do not have access to vaccines as we do. Indeed, many of them lack the basics that they need to protect themselves like clean water for handwashing.



When people in Cumbria receive the vaccine there is now the opportunity to give thanks and pass the blessing on by donating to Christian Aid's Coronavirus appeal. Christian Aid are helping vulnerable communities around the world by providing access to soap, water, food and vital health information and have so far supported over half a million people in 27 countries.

Photo - A woman very happy to collect her hygiene kit at an aid distribution funded by Christian Aids Covid appeal in Adagi community Benue State Nigeria

Going forward, Christian Aid will support vaccination programmes in communities by providing data on hard-to-reach populations to local health services and by working with trusted community figures to challenge misleading information about the virus and vaccination as well as any stigma faced by those who contract Covid-19.

In the Media Release, the Chair of the Cumbria Methodist District, James Tebbutt, commented,

“During Lent we suggested the possibility that those who had received a Covid-19 vaccination make a thanksgiving offering to help others elsewhere in the world to receive one also, and we know that a number have responded through various helpful organisations.

As our own society becomes a little safer, we are even more aware of the disparity with the many parts of the world where without our collective resources the pandemic rages. Accordingly, in the Easter season of life and hope and beyond, we want to encourage everyone again, whether in gratitude for vaccinations received or simply out of love for your neighbour, to donate just a few pounds or a much larger sum through Christian Aid, who with its partners are seeking to help some of those who are most in need of our help and resources.”

Christian Aid’s Head of Community Fundraising and Public Engagement Chine McDonald said:

“The coronavirus pandemic has shown us that none of us are safe, until all of us are safe. It has been amazing to see the speed at which the vaccines have been rolled out in the UK – every jab in someone’s arm brings us closer to the end of Covid-19.

“But the reality is that richer countries like ours are getting more access to vaccines, while the poorer countries in which Christian Aid works are left at the back of the queue. As a Christian organisation, we believe that every person is equal in the sight of God and worthy of living lives with dignity, equality and justice.



Photo - Ibrahim is being supported by a Christian Aid project to help reach the most vulnerable people impacted by Covid-19 in Benue Nigeria

“We’re delighted to work together with the Cumbria Methodist District to give people an opportunity to say thanks and help protect our global neighbours while the vaccine is out of reach.”

The appeal launch comes after nearly two thirds of people asked in a UK poll agreed that a global COVID-19 vaccine programme should be created which does not prioritise richer countries over poorer ones.

Sixty-three per cent of respondents to the survey commissioned by Christian Aid said they wanted to see countries working together to create a global COVID-19 vaccine programme that would not prioritise developed countries over developing countries. Only 11% disagreed.

To give thanks and donate to the Cumbria Methodist District’s Appeal visit:

<https://giving.tapsimple.org/online/christian-aid/cumbria-gives-thanks-for-our-vaccines>

For more details contact Christian Aid’s media team on mediacomms@christian-aid.org or call 07850 242950.

Savanta ComRes was commissioned by Christian Aid to explore views on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in developing nations. Savanta ComRes interviewed 2,119 UK adults aged 18+ online from 5-7 February 2021. Data were weighted to be representative of population by age, gender, region, and socio-economic characteristics such as social grade. Savanta ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Full tables can be found on the Savanta ComRes website: <https://comresglobal.com/our-work/poll-archive/>

Royal Maundy – Cumbria Recipient

We were delighted to hear that Irene McKay, a member of Levens Methodist Church, the District Equality, Diversity and Inclusion officer, and member of various District and Connexional Committees would be a recipient of the Maundy money. Royal Maundy takes place every year on Maundy Thursday when the Queen distributes money to pensioners in a service which commemorates Jesus washing the feet of the Apostles at the Last Supper. Recipients are nominated by their local diocese for contributions to their local church and community and in the current circumstances the service itself could not go ahead this year. Instead, the Maundy money was blessed at the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, before being posted to recipients along with a letter from the Queen.

Reflecting on this honour Irene has written:

“Dear Friends

Ever since the first communication arrived from Buckingham Palace, I have found it difficult to share the news. The words 'I am not worthy' overwhelmed me at the time and especially on Good Friday when I know each one of us will have those feelings at the heart of what the day means for us. I am writing to you with the sincere belief that each of you is equally worthy and that is why it has been so difficult to share this.



You may be aware that on Maundy Thursday the Methodist President Revd Richard Teal broke the news on his President's Facebook page:

'My good friend Irene McKay has today been honoured for her work to the church and community by receiving the Royal Maundy money from the Queen. Thank you, Irene, and richly deserved.'

I realised that it was then shared widely, and I needed to be in touch with my friends. When the first notification came, I had no idea how I had been chosen and I felt really self-conscious about how to find out. After speaking with the District Chair, I discovered that the Cumbria District Covenant relationship with Carlisle Diocese was the background, with the nomination resulting from liaison between Bishop James and present and previous District Chairs. Their citation to Bishop James was:

'Irene's lifetime of commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, not only in this country, but also in Zimbabwe where she served as a mission partner, has been second to none. She continues to be an advocate for this (for example, she is presently convener of the Cumbria Methodist District 'Being Inclusive' group, but also brings this awareness and principles into her many other church and community commitments). The outworking of Irene's spirituality also prompts her deep commitment to ecumenical participation, and her dedication to social cohesion, both within inner city and rural contexts, which has similarly been outstanding.'

On Maundy Thursday I received a letter from Bishop James which shared the sadness of not being able to be in the service at Westminster Abbey and inviting me, with all in the Diocese who have been recipients this year and last year, to a service on 26th August at St John's Church, Keswick, followed by a luncheon. He also included the link www.royal.uk, where you will find details for this year as well as further information about the history of Royal Maundy.



The significance of the link with Maundy Thursday means so much to me - the words 'maundatum', towel, last supper all connect with our Methodist covenant service, which has been at the heart of my calling and my first communication with the Methodist Missionary Society in January 1968.

I have been so greatly blessed in my life and each of you have been such an important part of that blessing. Thank you so much for the way you have always let me be who God called me to be, with all my unworthiness."

Irene McKay



Other Events and Information

Authorised Local Training Pathway (ALTP) Taster Evening– 24th June 7.30-9pm

Come along to an evening taster session to find out about ALTP.

What to expect:

- You will find out what it is, who it is for and how it works. We will share with you some stories from people who have engaged with ALTP and where their journeys have led them.
- Experience of some of the materials from ALTP.
- A Q&A section.

To book onto this Zoom session contact-

Emma Richardson- emma.richardson@carlisle-diocese.org.uk

Brec Seaton- seatonb@methodistchurch.org.uk

For more info- <https://www.godforall.org.uk/god-for-all-team/lay-training/>





Thinking about becoming a Circuit Steward?

- What does being a Circuit Steward entail?
- Do I have the skills and gifts to be a Circuit Steward?
- Is God asking me to take a role in the leadership of my Circuit?

An opportunity to explore the role of the Circuit Steward and ask questions.

Monday 19th July 7.30pm until 9pm

Facilitated by Brec Seaton (Learning Network) and experienced Circuit Stewards from the Kendal Circuit

Email Rob Glassonbury to book your place
 nwmannnetwork@gmail.com

For more information contact Brec Seaton
 seatonb@methodistchurch.org.uk

CUMBRIA METHODIST DISTRICT DIARY

JUNE 2021

- 7 10:00 Regional Learning Network Forum – Zoom or Preston
- 19 10:00 District Safeguarding Meeting - Zoom
- 19 15:00 Ordination Service
- 24-1 July Conference - Birmingham

JULY 2021

- 8 10:00 District Policy Group

AUGUST 2021

- 29 16:00 Welcome Service for Revd Dr Helen Hooley – SWCUA (venue TBC)

SEPTEMBER 2021

- 1 10:00 Superintendents Meeting – Venue TBC
- 1 18:00 North Cumbria New Circuit and Welcome Service for Revd Tokunbo Asogbon – Venue TBC
- 3 10.00 District Finance Group
- 5 (afternoon) Welcome Service for Revd Paul Harold – Western Fells Circuit (Solway)
- 8-12 Queens College Rural Placement in KSAT Circuit
- 11 10:00 Representative Synod
- 18 9:30 CTIC Dementia Anna Chaplaincy Conference – Border Kirk, Carlisle
- 28 Welcome to Cumbria Ecumenical Day - TBC
- 29 10:00 Regional Learning Network Forum - Preston

OCTOBER 2021

- 6 10:00 District Probationers Committee Briefing – Penrith Methodist Church
- 7 19:30 District Safeguarding Group
- 9 10:00 District Circuit Stewards Meeting – Cottage Wood Centre
- 13 10:00 District Policy Group – TBC
- 16 10:00 District Local Preachers’ Meeting – Carver Uniting Church, Windermere?

NOVEMBER 2021

17 10:00 District Sabbaticals Advisory Group
 17-19 12:00 Ministers Retreat

JANUARY 2022

22 10:00 District Circuit Treasurers Meeting
 25 10:00 District Policy Group

FEBRUARY 2022

5 Ecumenical Ministry Development Day – North Lakes Hotel, Penrith?
 9 19:30 District Safeguarding Group
 12 10 District MDR Group – Stainton Methodist Church

MARCH 2022

3 10:00 District Probationers Committee – Penrith Methodist Church
 16 10:00 Presbyteral Synod – KSAT Circuit
 22 10:00 District Policy Group

APRIL 2022

30 10:00 Representative Synod

This has been sent to Ecumenical Representatives, District Officers, Ministers, Supernumerary Ministers, Lay workers, Circuit Stewards, Circuit Administrators, and others who have subscribed to this Newsletter. Please feel free to circulate this among your churches and to others who may find any of these items of interest. If anyone would like to be added to the circulation list, please contact the District Administrator, Carolyn Dickinson.

The next issue of the Newsletter will cover July & August and any information for this to be sent to the District Administrator, Carolyn Dickinson, by 12th July.

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