



## District Newsletter – July & August 2021

### District Chair's Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

**The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5.22)**

This year's Methodist Conference met near Birmingham, with about 70 representatives attending in person and another 250 or so via Zoom (including all the Cumbria representatives). We dealt with routine business such as ministerial stationing and finance (although some budget cuts were hardly routine); passed resolutions concerning Climate Change and various world issues; and considered several significant reports regarding Changing Patterns of Ministry; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; Marriage and Relationships; Oversight and Trusteeship at all levels of the Church; and the Theology of Safeguarding.

In theological, relational, and organisational terms there is much for us to reflect upon, and this shall be the focus of our Synod on 11<sup>th</sup> September. In the meantime, attached to this Newsletter is a Digest of Conference Business, and a letter encouraging consideration of the Cumbrian Authorised Lay Training Pathway in connection with Local Lay-Pastors (the Conference formally approved this new role) and more broadly concerning discipleship and vocation. There is also information about the Reconciliation Pilot Project which was launched at Conference. Additionally, we attach a copy of the President and Vice-President's letter read out in churches on July 4<sup>th</sup>, and include a summary of a sermon below, concerning God in Love Unites Us, i.e. the Marriage and Relationships report.

This was indeed one of the significant matters decided upon by Conference representatives, and the decisions made will have caused a mixture of joy and pain. I preached the full sermon at Sandylands Methodist Church on July 11<sup>th</sup>. The summary shared here was part of a circulated worship sheet, and also contains ideas and illustrations that I have used elsewhere in the District. It is offered in case it is of help, as with the Report and Conference decisions, not to change minds, but to encourage a living respectfully alongside each other with our sometimes equally sincere but contradictory understandings and convictions.

In these summer weeks of reflection and I hope relaxation, we will also be emerging from the long months of pandemic regulations. Yet I think that we also know quietly in our hearts and minds that all is not yet well, and that we have a responsibility for ourselves and others to continue to take care. In every chapel, managing trustees will need to continue to risk assess and consider what is safe, in terms of masks, distancing and hygiene. Even our longing for singing needs caution, perhaps when permitted to be undertaken quietly behind masks (but recognising that for some this can cause breathing difficulties). In this there will be some hard-headed assessments and decisions, but also I hope some gentle-hearted and sensitive considerations for one another, so that we don't impose burdens or expectations on others but continue to seek to be as considerate and inclusive as we can. God Bless you in these reflections and deliberations; continue to check the Methodist Church website's wider Coronavirus guidance; and please still take care of one another. Thank you for doing so for so long.

May God continue to bless, sustain, and lead you,

The Revd Dr James Tebbutt

## Summary of a sermon by James Tebbutt on John 17.20-26

A football tournament can be a wonderful uniting event, even in disappointment. 25 years ago I was fortunate enough to be at Wembley when England actually won a penalty shootout at Euro 96! After the game, the singing and unity in the crowd was amazing; and, somehow, the moment transcended even our tribal loyalties when we noticed that beside us some defeated Spanish fans were graciously smiling and applauding our English victory.

Jesus prayed for the unity of the disciples, but that he did this (according to the record in John's Gospel) as one of the last things that he did before his betrayal, arrest and crucifixion, stresses how important the unity of the disciples must have been for him; and therefore how important also his prayer is for us, whom Jesus (in verse 20) included in his prayer, as his disciples today.

Living in unity, notwithstanding our differences and contradictory convictions, is at times incredibly hard. Early in the Methodist story, Charles Wesley referred in his journal to the 'stillness controversy'. This was between those who suggested that the supremacy of God's grace meant that one should do nothing but passively wait for grace to be given, and the Methodists on the other side who argued that it was still vital to respond to that grace by, for example, caring for others, such as by visiting the sick or those in prison. As the controversy raged, Charles Wesley wrote in April 1740: "I see no middle point wherein we can meet". Sometimes, it is so hard when different perspectives seem irreconcilable.

Yet all the same, Christ's prayer would seem to invite us to try to live with our contradictory convictions, even if it takes enormous perseverance and grace. At the Methodist Conference in 2019 I was moved to hear two South African Methodist ministers speak of their experience of the racist oppression of Apartheid. One of them was black, the Revd Jongikaya Zihle (one of the Chairs of the London District); the other was white, the Revd Rory Dalgliesh (a minister in York); yet their shared wisdom and grace meant that either could have spoken these insights that I rapidly wrote down:

- "Reconciliation is not about tolerance but about a deep commitment to walking the road to mutual identity."
- "We are all recovering from prejudice, or we are prejudiced."
- "It is about learning to live with difference and to celebrate diversity, building a culture of peace."

After a long and careful process of reflection, consultation and decision, the representatives of the Methodist people at the recent Methodist Conference considered and voted on the proposals regarding marriage and relationships, and the suggestion that God might be found in all self-giving (not selfish) relating, but with a recognition of different convictions as to what this might mean. As a result, the Methodist Church has decided to adopt a 'mixed economy' of understanding and practice regarding marriage. The Church will honour two understandings of marriage: as being between a man and a woman, or as being between any two persons. This would allow for same-sex marriages, but only where a congregation agrees to this (it is an 'opt in' arrangement), whilst for ministers there is a 'conscience clause' regarding their willingness to marry same sex couples or not, without fear of discipline either way.

For some this was a decision of great joy, for others one of huge disappointment and even dismay. Yet I want to stress that nobody is being asked to change their mind or to alter their own position; rather, the question is: are you able to live alongside others with different opinions and perspectives? Living with such differences can be, again, very hard, not least when Christians of equally sincere faith can find good biblical and theological reasons for drawing opposite conclusions. Yet we are called to respect and to live alongside each other, within God's "reconciling love", as the President and Vice-President of the Conference put it in their letter to the Methodist people, so that, as Jesus put it, "we may all be one".

It is Jesus' prayer and grace that will enable this to happen, that will enable us, if we desire and commit to it, to grow in patience, compassion, understanding and respect for one another. In the passage Jesus longs for us to share in God's glory (and thus to share in God's powerful presence); indeed, he longs for us to be in God, as the Father and the Son are in one another; in order to receive God's love made known through Christ, that we may be one; not least, so that the world may believe. I am more and more convinced, that for all our challenges and disagreements including regarding marriage and relationships, that if as a Church we can hold together and live well with our contradictory convictions, that will be such a powerful message and witness to our divided world, with its fractured politics, prejudices, tribalism and injustices; as the President

and Vice-President put it, this would be: “for the sake of Christ and for the sake of the world which urgently needs to know the power of Christ’s reconciling love”. That is a prize of witness and transformation that is surely worth struggling for, and would be a living out of Jesus’s most earnest prayer.

I was struck when I came across a quotation (in Cameron Butland’s excellent book ‘Growing Spirituality’) by the Bishop of Carlisle in his letter to clergy dated 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016, issued immediately before the signing of the Cumbrian ecumenical partnership. Bishop James acknowledged some potential sources of disagreement, for example with the Salvation Army regarding the sacraments; with the United Reformed Church regarding same-sex marriage; and with the Methodist Church regarding bishops. Nevertheless, “in the interest of that unity for which Christ prayed, that mission which he commended, and the furtherance of that kingdom which lay behind all his teaching, I am committed to ‘good disagreement’ and a focus on proclaiming the Gospel ‘in season and out of season’”.

May God be with you at this time, whether the decisions of the Conference bring you joy or pain, and in whatever else may be happening for you in your relationships and circumstances. In all things, may you know and trust the love that God has for you, and for all, and that God will be with you, and with all. Amen.

## DISTRICT NEWS AND EVENTS

### Conference 2021 Digest



For anyone who would like to catch up on what happened at Conference then you can access the Conference Business Digest, which provides a helpful summary. A copy is attached to the electronic newsletter or can be accessed using the following link: [Conference Business Digest \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/conference-business-digest) .

### Local Lay-Pastors & Authorised Lay Training Pathway (ALTP)

Revd David Newlove, the District Mission Officer has issued a letter inviting consideration of the Local Lay-Pastor role and the opportunity for training with the ALTP course. The letter is attached to the electronic newsletter along with a flyer about ALTP with a taster session on 12<sup>th</sup> August. This information is also available on the District website: <https://www.cumbriamethodistdistrict.org.uk/initiatives/local-lay-pastors.html>

### Reconciliation and Mediation Pilot Project

Place for Hope and the Methodist Church are committed to a three year project to enable and equip people to engage and interact with each other positively and respectfully within the life of the church so all can live well together with difference. The project runs from 2020-23 and will train and support a team of reconcilers and mediators to work within the Church in the pilot regions, one of which is North West and Mann.

For more details please see the introductory letter which is attached along with a leaflet (with the electronic version) or visit the website:

<https://www.placeforhope.org.uk/support/methodist-connexion-reconciliation-and-mediation-team> .



### President and Vice-President’s Letter

On 1<sup>st</sup> July Revd Sonia Hicks, President, and Mrs Barbara Easton, Vice-President, issued a pastoral letter which was to be read at services on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July. A copy of this letter is attached to the electronic newsletter or can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-president-and-vice-president-of-the-conference/a-pastoral-letter-from-the-president-and-vice-president-following-the-conference-vote-on-marriage-and-relationships/>

## 3Generate 2021



Fiona Crouch, District Youth Work Coordinator, has issued the following invitation:

“It is really encouraging to see that a decision on whether 3Generate will go ahead has been reached. The verdict is Yes! When and where - NEC, Birmingham, 29-31 October 2021.

Do you have a Youth Group anything that covers from 8 years – 23 years? They are welcome! (19-23's can come as individuals, others require a leader). Tickets are available for days, the whole weekend and, as normal, as a whole weekend residential option. AND, for the first time at 3Generate there will be a special event on the Saturday (10am - 3pm) for 4-7 years and their significant adults! What are you waiting for? Get booking, now. It's on a first come basis and tickets are expected to sell fast!

If you have any queries, please feel free to ask, email me at [CDMYouth@outlook.com](mailto:CDMYouth@outlook.com) or call 07768 726681.

May the Lord continue to bless you.”

Fiona Crouch

Details of the 3Generate event are attached (on the electronic version) or can be found [here](#).

## Cumbria District Data Protection Bulletin 1

### New Champion and the Privacy Notice

I first met James our District Chair over 30 years ago in the Wesley Manse in Cambridge. We both enjoyed being part of the student Methodist Society (MethSoc), and we have kept in touch ever since. So when James asked me a few months ago to be District Data Champion, I said Yes, without really knowing what is involved, and even now I'm still not sure!

There was an immediate task to address, namely that the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) had asked Districts to send out an Annual Checklist to all circuits, and via circuits to all churches. The checklist is all to do with how well we are complying with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

James, Carolyn Dickinson and I worked together to amend the TMCP Annual Checklist so that we could determine how well the District is doing with implementation of GDPR, knowing that demonstration of compliance is patchy throughout the District. We would very much like to **thank** all those people who have already completed the Annual Checklist.

We have reviewed the completed checklists received so far, and we have found that the most popular check to complete is **Check 3**, which is about the Privacy Notice. That may be because it's the easiest one. If you've already done this, you can stop reading now! While the Privacy Notice itself is 15 pages long, you don't need to print it all off. You can use the following template for a Fair Processing Statement for your noticeboard or website, like this:

[NAME OF CHURCH/ CIRCUIT] cares about your privacy and your trust is important to us. Our Privacy Notice explains how Local Churches, Circuits and Districts within the Methodist Church in Great Britain collect, use and protect your personal information. It also provides information about your rights (paragraph 9 of the Privacy Notice) and who to contact (paragraph 1 of the Privacy Notice) if you have any questions about how we use your information. You can find our Privacy Notice online ([www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection/managing-trustees-privacy-notice](http://www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection/managing-trustees-privacy-notice)).

[NAME] will try to deal with any questions as a local point of contact.

The last sentence can be deleted if no-one is confident to be named. For websites etc., there is an electronic form of the Fair Processing Statement available [here](#).

I think that **every** church and circuit in the Cumbria District can amend a template and publicise it. In the Birmingham District, Revd Stephen Froggatt has recorded a video about this Check 3, available [here](#). When he says, 'Ask me if you get stuck', you should instead ask me (Alec).

I know that data protection isn't always easy and can take time, but our data protection work is done because we **care** for the privacy of members and of those outside the church.



**Alec Bounds,**  
**Cumbria District Data Champion,**  
boundsalec@gmail.com

## **District Ordination Service – Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June at 3 pm**

Sheila Mallinson, Circuit Steward at Penrith and part of the organising team for the Ordination service shares the following report which was prepared for the Methodist Recorder:

“An ordination service took place at Penrith Methodist Church in Cumbria on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

This service along with others had to be rearranged because of the Covid 19 virus in 2020. With all guidelines in place the Ordinands and supporting Ministers along with their families were welcomed to the service by the Revd Tim Cooke, Superintendent Minister of Penrith Circuit.

The officials leading the service were the Revd Richard Teal, President, Mrs Jill Baker, former Vice President, and the Revd Dr Nicola Price–Tebbutt, Secretary. The Ordinands were the Revd Tim Broughton, the Revd Zena Smith and the Revd Andrew Sterling.

The Revd Richard Teal led the worship with a short devotion before the hymn **Ye servants of God** was played. After a short prayer the Old Testament reading Isaiah 6: 1–8 was read by the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt.

The second reading was the Epistle to the Romans 12:1-18, and this was read by the World Church Representative the Revd Brian Hutton. This was followed by the hymn **The Saviour when to heaven he rose**. A reading from the Gospel according to John 20: 19–29 was read by Mrs Jill Baker who also preached on the passage.

The Secretary presented the Ordinands to the President and the ordination began as the Ordinands affirmed the following words:

- To preach the word of God
- To declare God's forgiveness of all who are penitent
- To Baptize, to Confirm
- To preside at the celebration of sacrament
- To lead God's people in worship, prayer and service
- To minister Christ's love and compassion
- To serve others in whom, you serve the Lord himself.

The ordination hymn **Come Holy Ghost our souls inspire** was played.

The President laid hands on each of the Ordinands, and they were presented with a Bible as a sign of the authority invested in them. This was followed by the declaration and the congregation were invited to applaud the new Ministers.

The Lord's Supper was prepared, and the hymn **Lord enthroned In Heavenly splendour** was played.

The President took the bread and wine, and this was served at the front by the presiding clergy to the Ordinands followed by their invited guests. The sacrament was served to the remainder of the congregation in their seats.

A small group of singers sang for the hymns and during the Communion Service.”



*The ordinands and officials ahead of the service.*

## Other Events and Information

### Churches Together in Cumbria – July/August Newsletter

The latest newsletter giving information on a number of county wide initiatives and events is attached electronically or can be viewed using this link: [CTiC Newsletter - July 2021 \(mailerlite.com\)](mailto:admin@churchestoghethecumbria.org.uk) . Contact the administrator at [admin@churchestoghethecumbria.org.uk](mailto:admin@churchestoghethecumbria.org.uk) if you would like to subscribe to the newsletter and receive it directly.

## CUMBRIA METHODIST DISTRICT DIARY

### AUGUST 2021

29 16:00 Welcome Service for Revd Dr Helen Hooley – Beacon Hill MC, Barrow in Furness

### SEPTEMBER 2021

1 10:00 Superintendents Meeting – Cottage Wood Centre, Calthwaite  
 1 18:00 North Cumbria New Circuit (with Wigton) and Welcome Service for Revd Tokunbo Asogbon – Venue TBC  
 3 10.00 District Finance Group  
 5 15:00 Western Fells New Circuit (with Solway) and Welcome Service for Revd Paul Harold – United Church, Workington  
 6 13:30 District Induction Day – Venue TBC  
 10-12 Queens College Rural Placement in KSAT Circuit  
 11 10:00 Representative Synod – Western Fells Circuit: Lorton Street MC, Cockermouth  
 18 9:30 CTiC Dementia Anna Chaplaincy Conference – Zoom  
 22 10:00 Regional Learning Network Forum – Preston TBC  
 23 10:30 MWiB Gathering – Penrith Methodist Church \*  
 28 Welcome to Cumbria Ecumenical Day – Venue TBC

### OCTOBER 2021

6 10:00 District Probationers Committee Briefing – Penrith Methodist Church  
 7 19:30 District Safeguarding Group – Venue or Zoom TBC  
 9 10:00 District Circuit Stewards Meeting – Cottage Wood Centre, Calthwaite  
 13 10:00 District Policy Group – Venue TBC

16 10:00 District Local Preachers' Meeting – Carver Uniting Church, Windermere TBC  
29-31 3Generate – NEC, Birmingham

#### **NOVEMBER 2021**

17 10:00 District Sabbaticals Advisory Group – Rydal Hall  
17-19 12:00 Ministers Retreat – Rydal Hall  
22-24 MWiB Together at Thornleigh Hotel, Grange over Sands \*  
28 pm County Ecumenical Covenant Renewal Service – details TBC

#### **JANUARY 2022**

19-20 Superintendent's Residential – Thornleigh Hotel, Grange over Sands  
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  
27-1 Visit of Mrs Barbara Easton, Vice-President

#### **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 – South Lakes Circuit

#### **JUNE 2022**

23-30 Conference - Telford

#### **JULY 2022**

7 10:00 District Policy Group

#### **SEPTEMBER 2022**

10 9:30 Representative Synod

\* To find out more about the MWiB events please contact the MWiB Team Co-ordinator, Revd Jackie Betts (details in the Directory or contact Carolyn initially).

*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 be in September and any information for this to be sent to the District Administrator, Carolyn Dickinson, by 31<sup>st</sup> August.

Chair of District: The Revd Dr James N Tebbutt Telephone: 01768 866342 Email: <a href="mailto:cumbriamethodistchair@outlook.com">cumbriamethodistchair@outlook.com</a>	District Administrator/Chair's PA: Carolyn Dickinson Telephone: 07727 415400 Email: <a href="mailto:cumbriamethodistdistrict@outlook.com">cumbriamethodistdistrict@outlook.com</a>
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