



## District Newsletter – April 2022

### District Chair's Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

**Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

A very Happy Easter to you! I hope that some warm days, the green shoots, the spring flowers and lambs in the field have all contributed to a sense of renewal and goodness for you in recent days.

Yet, if your approach to Easter this year was similar to mine, maybe it was difficult fully to enter the Easter experience, given Ukraine and everywhere where pain and trauma is suffered because of the senseless, selfish evil that lurks the earth.

The cross displayed in many a Catholic church is not empty but a crucifix, from which hangs a still suffering Christ. In Protestant churches the cross is usually empty, emphasising the victory of the resurrection. At a time like now, we might better appreciate the symbolism and value of each. Put more simply (although perhaps a little simplistically), when we do a jigsaw, where are the previously broken pieces once the picture has been finished? They are still there, within the picture now made whole.

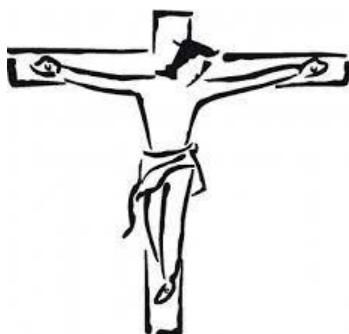
Resurrection does not ignore, or in one sense wipe out, the pain and suffering, or the sorrow and death, or the sin and evil, the effects and pain of which too often continue. But the Resurrection does say that the sorrows and wounds will be endured, and overcome, and that the first fruits of the final victory have already been won through Christ's death and resurrection.

The first Christians thought that the final victory would come very soon, even in their lifetimes. From our perspective in history, perhaps Christ's resurrection was more like Churchill's words after victory at El Alamein in 1942, which he described as "not the end, not even the beginning of the end but, possibly, the end of the beginning". God's final victory is assured, but for now we continue to be people of the crucifixion and the resurrection, called to play our part, not looking for superficial relief but for deep resurrection change for all of humanity, and therefore committed to discerning, caring, peace-seeking and justice-struggling for all that is good and brings life, with Christ as our strength and example.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

God Bless you, as we continue to pray and work for the peace of Ukraine and the world, and for the relief of all who suffer,

The Revd Dr James Tebbutt



# DISTRICT NEWS AND EVENTS

## Invitation to Synod – 30<sup>th</sup> April

Everyone, not just official members, are welcome to attend our Spring Synod at the Carver Uniting Church Windermere on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April at 9.30 for 10am until about 3.30pm (or part of it if you are not a representative, and if coming for the day, do bring a packed lunch!). At this time of change in the world and the Church, we will be considering how best to use the 'New Places for New People' resources within the District; we will hear an update regarding the County God for All process; we will wonder about the best Methodist structures for moving forwards in Cumbria and the North West, and we will receive various reports and discuss some proposed memorials to the Methodist Conference (suggesting some particular changes concerning climate change or concerning ecumenical matters). All of this will be rooted in worship and fellowship, and you will be most welcome.

If you think you might be attending, it will just help with the planning for numbers if you could notify Janice Rusling, the Synod Secretary, or Carolyn Dickinson, the District Administrator in advance (formal members of Synod don't need to advise this since we look forward to seeing you anyway or receiving your apologies).

## Vice President's Visit 27<sup>th</sup> February – 1<sup>st</sup> March

Following the visit of Barbara Easton James prepared a report for the Methodist Recorder and this is reproduced below. At the Service on 27<sup>th</sup> February an offering was taken for Action for Children and £130 has been sent to the Charity.

"Celebrating its first in-person Vice-Presidential visit for some years, the Cumbria District welcomed Mrs Barbara Easton to the county from 27 February to the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

The visit began with a Sunday evening District service at Penrith Methodist Church, streamed also on YouTube. Through an interview and in her sermon, the Vice President greatly encouraged us through her ideas, illustrations from around the Connexion, and sheer energy! It is not a cliché to say that the congregation was hugely inspired, as attested to by those present or online.



On the Monday, to gain understanding of the agricultural, economic and social challenges facing the rural areas of Cumbria, the Vice President visited two Methodist farms in the Eden Valley or edging up onto the steep-sided Pennines that were situated in the Kirkby Stephen, Appleby and Tebay Circuit. Surrounded by sheep ready for lambing, recent born calves or various diversifying initiatives, Barbara asked perceptive questions and listened attentively. The same applied when visiting helpers at the Sands Methodist Church foodbank in Appleby. Ecumenically run in an impressively sensitive and discreet manner, the foodbank reaches ever-growing numbers across a wide area. Anonymised stories of concern and hope were shared, including of the little girl who, on receiving a food parcel, exclaimed excitedly: 'Look, Mummy, apples!'



That evening, the Vice President conversed by Zoom with some 35 local preachers from around the District. Through stimulating reflections and questions, Barbara encouraged our vocations, but also the good exercise of them: how might

preachers more inclusively lead worship, in terms of language, concepts and reach, but also in terms of it not being about them, but about feeding and enabling the participation of the whole people of God?

Tuesday involved a visit to Langwathby in the Kirkoswald and Alston Moor Circuit, initially joining the East of Eden Mission Community staff meeting, comprised of Methodists, Anglicans and a Pentecostalist. After sharing morning prayer, the Vice President heard about the joint Preaching Plan which has evolved so that there is no longer any competitive worship between Anglicans and Methodists on Sunday mornings: congregations join together in each community for worship alternating between the parish church and the Methodist chapel, or in some cases choosing to go forward by concentrating on one of the buildings. (The ecumenical county of Cumbria is divided into approximately 35 ecumenical Mission Communities at various stages of development and involving various denominations.)

There followed a visit to the local primary school where a link has been established via Zoom with a Methodist School in Argentina as part of the District's link with the Methodist Church in Argentina. Stirred by the children's presentation and returning to the chapel for conversation with some District representatives, further conversation ensued about Cumbria's ecumenical and world church partnerships, and regarding the District's Methodist Women in Britain fellowship and initiatives.

Throughout the Vice President's visit and by her witness, insights and personality, Barbara encouraged us in faith and service, including by deeply affirming the ministry of the laity. Therein lay a challenge, for she reminded us that 'laos', the Greek word from which 'laity' is derived, generally means the whole people of God, which sometimes we forget, or which sometimes we unhelpfully reduce to meaning the 'non-professional' or the 'non-ordained', implying that something is lacking or second class. Barbara asked how we might better describe and grasp the rich possibilities of everyone's part in God's purposes? Thus alongside encouragement and inspiration, genuinely and gratefully received as the Vice-President connected us to the wider Methodist people, we were challenged to grow in grace and understanding, so that, in our engagement with one another and attentiveness to the world, we might truly be God's people for all."

## Change



Western Fells Methodist Circuit

The Western Fells Circuit have reintroduced their 'Link' magazine following a break over the last couple of years and in his introductory piece the Superintendent Minister, the Revd Paul Saunders, wrote about change. With his permission the article is largely reproduced below as this is something which we all need to consider at different times and is perhaps particularly relevant for our churches at the moment.

"We have seen an awful lot of change over the last couple of years, both in our churches and circuits, and in society around us, and change can be an unsettling thing. However, change is not something that we have a choice about, it happens whether we like it or not as the world moves on around us. The only choice we have is how we react to the changes that are happening in the world and society around us.

Some changes we can try to ignore, pretending that they don't really affect us directly if we choose not to engage with them. Smartphones, the internet, these are things for the younger generations, we have got along fine without them so far, we can manage without them now. The question then is how do we as a church communicate with those who not only use them, but for whom they are the primary means of accessing information and keeping in touch? Bill Clinton once said

*"The price of doing the same old thing is far higher than the price of change"*

The church today is declining in many places, the question is, are we paying the price of simply doing the same old thing?

The problem is that fear of change is in our nature as human beings, yet within us there is a desire to move forwards. Sydney J Harris sums it up nicely.

*"Our dilemma is that we hate change and love it at the same time; what we really want is for things to remain the same but get better."*

The fact is that if we want to move forwards, to grow, we need not only to embrace change but to actively seek it. To find ways to bring the gospel which we so cherish, which we believe can make our world a better place to new generations.

The good news is that change is not the only constant in our lives. God also is our constant companion, guide, and strength, always there to help us to deal with what the world throws at us. I will therefore let Jesus have the last words, as He reminds us that He is with us whatever happens.”

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-8*

## Cumbria District Data Protection Bulletin 4

### It's that time of year - the annual checklist

Data protection is one aspect of 'people protection', and it's part of our care for people inside the church community and for those outside too. But apart from that, it's a legal requirement as well.

If you have a circuit role, please read 'circuit' as well as 'church', every time I mention 'church' in this bulletin.

Someone in your church should soon be completing the annual data protection checklist, for which the deadline is 31 May 2022. If you hold an office in the church, or you hold any other personal data (e.g. contacts to be invited to an event), you may be asked about the personal data you hold on behalf of the church, such as email addresses.

The annual checklist prompts each church to consider how it is doing with regard to protection of personal data. Carolyn Dickinson, the District Administrator, and I are getting in touch with superintendent ministers, asking them to pass the annual checklist on to churches by 30 April. That gives one month to complete the checklist and send the completed form back to Carolyn. The first check is completion/update of the data mapping form - see Bulletin 3 on <https://www.cumbriamethodistdistrict.org.uk/resources/gdpr.html>

The checklist, like all our data protection work, relates to personal data we hold on behalf of the church. Every church will have some personal data - see Bulletin 2 on the above link. But the question arises about personal data, such as phone numbers or email addresses, that we hold just because we're friends with someone in the church. Of course, such data is not part of the church's data protection process. But if we hold personal data (such as a pastoral list) *on behalf of the church*, even if it's partly the same data that we hold because we know someone personally, then the existence of the pastoral list (or other personal data) needs to go on the data mapping form and be suitably controlled.



The annual checklist prompts us to think about the **security** of the personal data we hold, which may well be on an electronic device such as a computer or a smart phone. The most basic level of security on our electronic devices is to need a password or PIN in order to use the device. *Do you protect your electronic devices in this way?* In some households, personal data that you hold on behalf of the church could be easily accessed by another member of the household (who may not feel that the same level of security of personal data is required),

especially if passwords or email addresses are shared within the household. Security of personal data can be easily compromised, so please consider what you can do to achieve reasonable security of that information, so that only the person (or persons) within the household who can legitimately hold or use the church data has access to it.

If you have any views on this bulletin, or have any queries about data protection, please do get in touch with me, and I'll see what I can do. The answer may well be available on <https://www.t MCP.org.uk/about/data-protection>.

**Alec Bounds,**

**Cumbria District Data Champion,**

boundsalec@gmail.com



# OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

## Circuit Stewards Training

The Learning Network run a 4-session on-line course across the Connexion. This is suitable for those thinking about becoming a Circuit Steward, those new to the role, and those who would like the opportunity to be refreshed or develop in the role. The next course starts on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June and runs for 4 consecutive Tuesday evenings between 7 – 9 pm on Zoom looking at the following topics:

**Session 1:** Calling and Role of the Circuit Steward - 14<sup>th</sup> June

**Session 2:** Distinctively Methodist - 21<sup>st</sup> June

**Session 3:** Positive Working Together - 28<sup>th</sup> June

**Session 4:** Continuing to Learn - 5<sup>th</sup> July

Each session offers opportunities to explore ideas and share experiences as well as identify areas for further action, ongoing learning and development. For further information contact the organiser, Katie Deadman-Vernall: [deadmank@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:deadmank@methodistchurch.org.uk) / 07799902571 or you can book using this link: <https://circuit-stewards-june2022.eventbrite.co.uk>.

## MHA Sunday

This year the theme is 'Growing Together' inspired by Isaiah 43:19 "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the waste land" (NIV). The national Sunday is 12<sup>th</sup> June however a service can be held on an alternative date if more convenient. There is an online session on 4<sup>th</sup> May at 7 pm to find out more about this and how churches can get involved. To register and for more information as well as downloading additional free resources including videos to show in your service and an Order of Service, visit [mha.org.uk/sunday](http://mha.org.uk/sunday).



The Easter edition of the digital ecumenical newspaper for the Church in Cumbria has been published and can be found here: [https://godforall.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/The-Way\\_Spring-2022.pdf](https://godforall.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/The-Way_Spring-2022.pdf). This features articles on the opening of the Kendal and District Debt Centre, an introduction to Immerse: The Reading Bible, which is a new way to read the Bible in a Book Club, as well as the article from our last Newsletter sharing the work of Deacon Maggie Patchett, the Tourism Chaplain in South Lakes Circuit.

## CUMBRIA METHODIST DISTRICT DIARY

### APRIL 2022

- 24 16:00 Kendal Circuit Farewell Service – Arnside Methodist Church  
30 10:00 Representative Synod – Carver Uniting Church, Windermere (South Lakes Circuit)

### MAY 2022

- 3 10:00-16:00 Safeguarding Advanced Module – Penrith Methodist Church  
14 10:00 District Stationing Briefing – Stainton Methodist Church  
24 13:30 God for All Operations Group – on Zoom

### JUNE 2022

- 7 14:00 Churches Together in Cumbria AGM – Friends Meeting House, Keswick

- 8 19:00 District Grants Committee – on Zoom  
 9 10:00 Regional Learning Network – Preston TBC  
 16 10:00-16:00 Safeguarding Advanced Module – Sandylands Methodist Church, Kendal  
 18 10:00 District Safeguarding Group – Penrith Methodist Church TBC  
 21 13:00 God for All Strategy Group – Bishop’s House, Keswick  
 23-30 Conference - Telford

**JULY 2022**

- 7 10:00 District Policy Group – Stainton Methodist Church  
 17 18:00 South Lakes Circuit Farewell Service – Ulverston Methodist Church

**AUGUST 2022**

- 20 afternoon SWCUA Welcome Service - TBC

**SEPTEMBER 2022**

- 2 10:00 District Finance Committee meeting – Zoom  
 3 16:00 Kendal Circuit Welcome Service – Arnside Methodist Church  
 4 18:00 South Lakes Circuit Welcome Service – Ulverston Methodist Church  
 10 09:30 Representative Synod – North Cumbria Circuit  
 14 09:30 God for All Operations Group – Zoom  
 17 10:00 Anna Chaplaincy Conference – Penrith Methodist Church  
 24-26 Visit of Revd Graham Thompson, President of Conference  
 30-1 3Generate – NEC, Birmingham

**OCTOBER 2022**

- 5 13:30 God for All Strategy Group – Zoom  
 8 10:00 District Local Preachers’ Meeting – Levens MC TBC  
 15 10:00 District Circuit Stewards’ Forum – TBC  
 19 10:00 District Policy Group

**NOVEMBER 2022**

- 16 10:00 District Sabbaticals Advisory Group  
 16-18 Ministers Retreat

**DECEMBER 2022**

- 13 13:30 God for All Operations Group – on Zoom

**JANUARY 2023**

- 14 Cumbria Ecumenical Ministry Development Day

*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.*

If anyone has any information that could be included in the next issue of the Newsletter, please send this to the District Administrator, Carolyn Dickinson.

Chair of District: The Revd Dr James N Tebutt 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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