



District Newsletter – December 2022

District Chair's Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid (Isaiah 11.6)

Waking up from the disappointment of our best ever football team going out of the World Cup is, I recognise, no comparison to the experience of those who wake up daily hungering for food, justice, or righteousness.

In a world where girls and women in Afghanistan and Iran are heavily restrained by law, or when simply being Ukrainian means the loss of home or loved ones, or freezing conditions and a daily threat to life, how can the wolf and the lamb, and all that they might represent, possibly live together? How might they or their conditions change to enable them to live together? Yet this was Isaiah's extraordinary vision, that in God's world and according to God's ways, such extraordinary things might become possible.

It was probably a later Isaiah who went on to explain (in Isaiah 40.3) that, notwithstanding the wilderness, for such things to become possible we must "prepare the way of the Lord". Moreover, in doing so, we must ensure that our efforts are not shallow or hypocritical, if we are to avoid the charge that John the Baptist laid against the Pharisees: "You vipers' brood!" (see Matthew 3.7-10).

Who, and what, does this involve? This was something that even John the Baptist asked, sending his disciples to ask Jesus (Matthew 11.2-6). The answer involves Jesus, who enables the blind to see, lepers to be cleansed, and good news to be achieved for the poor; but, as Jesus makes plain in the rest of the Gospels, it also involves us all, in the discernment and commitment to all that is involved in preparing the way.

To work out what is involved and to commit to preparing the way is, as John and Jesus showed, costly. A new coal mine in West Cumbria would wonderfully bring employment and investment into one of the most marginalised parts of our county (and indeed nation); but environmentally, any more carbon extraction or release will further drive accelerating climate change, damaging God's creation and, above all, harming the poorest peoples of the world, who in their contexts have already suffered, including through devastating floods in Pakistan or famine in East Africa.

Such individual and corporate decisions must be navigated, however costly, if the way is to be prepared; which means, therefore, not for one group's benefit at the expense of another's. Only through such navigations and the taking on of the commitments involved, will God's way be prepared to enable 'wolves' and 'lambs' to live together, to enable all, safely and abundantly, to flourish.

In Cumbria, how can we tread gently, care deeply, and follow daily, so that, with legitimacy and not hypocrisy, we might speak and act boldly in these matters? If we can, and in order to do so, may we discover again for ourselves and for others the little child born so long ago, who can yet be born anew each day into our hearts and minds, for: "a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11.6).

As you ponder and respond, may God bless you, your loved ones and your communities; may God bless Cumbria and all the places of God's world, this Advent, Christmas and New Year.

The Revd Dr James Tebbutt

DISTRICT NEWS AND EVENTS

A great deal has been going on this Autumn, so we are sorry that this is the first District Newsletter for a while. Some of the busyness is connected with responding to change, with which of course all local churches and circuits are familiar. As changes emerge for our District and Circuits, and with the evolution of our County Ecumenical God for All vision and strategy, more will be said in future editions. For now, we bring you a 'bumper' edition from various events through the Autumn.

District Young People's Work Coordinator

We are pleased that the vacancy for the above part-time role has been filled and can now let you know that Su Davis began on 1st December. We will say more about the nature and focus of the role next time, but below is a brief introduction for now from Su.



I am Su Davis; passionate about all things to do with mission, youth and Cumbria. My journey to faith started by being invited to attend my local Methodist Church Youth Club in Penrith.

I encountered God for the 1st time due to people that volunteered and supported the youth work in the Church, and I want young people here in Cumbria to be given the same chance I had to encounter God.

Youth work can be so rewarding, yet also hard work. So, I want to empower and encourage those that work with young people. For more information on youth work and how I can help and support please email me: cumbriamethodistyouth@gmail.com

September Welcome Services

Both the Kendal and South Lakes Circuits held services to welcome new ministers to the District in September. On 3rd September at Arnside Methodist Church the Revd Tiras Dainty-Share and his fiancé Amy were welcomed to the Kendal Circuit. Tiras is stationed in the Kent Estuary section and works alongside the churches in Arnside, Levens and Storth. On 4th September at Ulverston Methodist Church the Revd Grace Cauldwell, her husband Ben and two children, were welcomed to the South Lakes Circuit where Grace is serving as the Superintendent minister.



Revd Dr James Tebbutt, Revd Anne Pettifor, Revd Tiras Dainty-Share, Revd Barbara Fairburn, Revd Andrew Norman



Revd Dr James Tebbutt, Revd Grace Cauldwell, Revd Jo Rand

September 2022 Synod

Synod gathered at Carlisle Methodist Church, Wigton Road, the newly formed city-wide church across multiple sites. There was an air of dislocation and sadness following the death of HM the late Queen Elizabeth, but a lighted candle in front of a commemorative photo of Her Majesty provided an honouring reminder. Appropriate reflective worship was led by members of the North Cumbria circuit, giving thanks for the Queen's life and praying for the new King Charles. Following a reading from Revelation, the Revd Tokunbo Asogbon offered a fitting song from his native Nigeria.

The Chair, Revd Dr James Tebbutt, welcomed new members to synod, including new presbyters, Revds Grace Cauldwell and Tiras Dainty-Share. District officers were elected for the year; greetings were expressed; and a number of reports received. Revd Andrew Sterling was elected to join Gillian de Bourcier, Philip Jackson and Janice Rusling as representatives to the Conference.

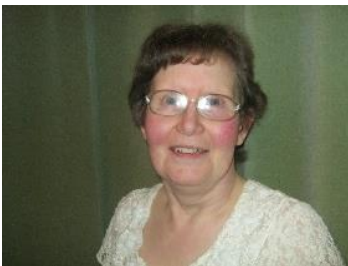
Gill de Bourcier gave an insight into this year's Conference, lighting the candle that she, like other members of Conference, had received from the President. She highlighted the major items debated, and expressed admiration for the confidence and enthusiasm displayed by the young people present. All three of the memorials submitted by Cumbria District were accepted; the request to bring manses up to a good environmental heating standard is already being implemented.

The proposed special resolution to create a connexional council, including to replace the Conference members as the formal trustees for the Methodist Church, provoked a lengthy discussion, concluding with a large majority in favour of the resolution.

Synod was principally concerned with 'Refocusing to serve the present age'. The District Chair gave updates on the Northwest Districts Review; the development of strategies for implementing the Cumbria Ecumenical God for All Vision Refresh; and the proposed District pilot project for New Places for New People, seeking to encourage all circuits and churches in the District to become more confident in accommodating and initiating pioneering and fresh expressions of church.

Chris Hulme and Helen Hooley gave a presentation on reforming Cumbria circuits, including the possibility of creating a county-wide Cumbria circuit to share governance burdens given declining numbers and to release energy for ministry and mission. The meeting then broke into six discussion groups for animated discussions. There was a unanimous agreement that a circuit exploration group should continue to consider the future configuration of circuits in Cumbria.

The Synod concluded by singing in faith and confidence 'Captain of Israel's host, and Guide'.



Janice Rusling, Synod Secretary (- this article previously appeared in the *Methodist Recorder*)

September Visit of the President of Conference

The Cumbria District was delighted to welcome the President of the Conference, the Revd Graham Thompson, to the county from 24th to the 26th September 2022.

Cumbria is a Covenanted Partnership in Extended Area, now in its 12th year as the first ecumenical county in the country. It is divided into approximately 35 ecumenical Mission Communities. Whilst some are at earlier stages of development, others have shared worship plans that seek to avoid competing services in the same local communities, for example between Anglicans and Methodists, while others share joint ministry in addition to undertaking mission and social outreach together.

On the Saturday evening, the President visited the Solway Plain Mission Community in the north west of the county. There the President met and mingled with members of several denominations at a development meeting, led by the Archdeacon of Cumberland and the co-superintendent of the North Cumbria Circuit, the Revd Philip Jackson. At the end of the evening, the President was invited to offer reflections and prayers, and his encouragement was warmly received.



The following Sunday morning, the President preached inspirationally on the lectionary at a circuit service to commission the newly merged Carlisle Methodist Church, held at Wigton Road, Carlisle. The merged church comprises four different congregations from small to large who will continue to worship in their own or in shared premises, but who have formed a single church to share governance and leadership to focus better the Methodist witness in Carlisle, and to help coordinate more effectively the ecumenical and outreach initiatives in the city. The service was led by the other co-superintendent for the North Cumbria Circuit, the Revd David Newlove, during which the President also led members and officers in an act of commitment. This was followed by a joyful, celebratory lunch.



Recent Presidential and Vice-Presidential visits to the District have allowed different issues or parts of the District to be focused upon. This time, in the light of the President's own long ministry, he was asked to spend time with both the supernumerary and active ministers, listening and supporting.

On the Sunday afternoon at the district manse in Penrith, the President met supernumeraries and their partners from the northern part of the District; and, similarly on the Monday morning, he met with those from the south at the recently refurbished Levens Methodist Church. Stories were exchanged; former connections with the President were renewed; and the ministry of those who have shown the way was gratefully acknowledged and affirmed. Whether in Graham's ready ability to engage with and value all whom



he met, or in the reflections and prayers that he offered, here was the President connecting us with the wider connexion, with one another, and with God.

Finally, on the Monday afternoon at Stricklandgate Methodist Church in Kendal, the President met with ministers in the active work. In an open and collaborative conversation, current experiences and concerns, initiatives and possibilities for the Church, were shared and reflected upon, with weariness and realism, energy and hope, all set alongside each other. Here too the President, in a

grounded way, was able to encourage the calling and commitment of those who were gathered, as he led us to a sustained and renewed confidence in Christ, which would be our privilege to continue to share with and alongside others.



James Tebbutt (- this article has also been submitted to the *Methodist Recorder*)

Autumn Cumbria District Data Protection Bulletin 5

Annual Checklist Responses

Data protection is one aspect of our caring for people, and it's part of our protection 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. Every church holds some personal data - see Bulletin 2 on this link:

<https://www.cumbriamethodistdistrict.org.uk/resources/gdpr.html>.

The annual checklist has prompted me to cover four related issues in this bulletin:

1. From the responses of all the churches/circuits that responded to the annual checklist, it is clear that many more churches than last year have carried out data mapping (See Bulletin 3 on the above link), so that's a big improvement – **congratulations** to all churches that have done this.
2. Inevitably, there are still some areas we need to work on, and it is clear that a number of churches have not yet completed a 'processor record'. The purpose of this record is to provide a central record of the different data protection documents and records used by your church to show that you are complying



with the requirements of data protection legislation. It's part of the so called "accountability" principle in GDPR. While it may sound difficult, most of the boxes (cells) in the template form have already been completed, leaving relatively few boxes for each church to complete. Guidance and the template are available here: <https://www.tmcpc.org.uk/about/data-protection/resources/standard-documents-and-forms/processor-record>. Feel free to contact me if you get stuck when completing the form.

3. One church, in response to the annual checklist, said that it was closing so they weren't going to fill it in. However, a church closure is a classic case in which office holders may fail to handle personal data properly, for example by not destroying or archiving records. If you don't do this properly at the time of closure, you may never do it, because you won't be prompted again from the District following church closure. Standing Order 015 requires that minute books, account books, and baptismal, burial and marriage registers are archived. There may be other records worthy of permanent preservation - please consult the District Archivist if you're unsure. Be aware that Local Authority Archivists will not accept financial records for the previous six years, as we are meant to hold them for that period. When handing over records to Local Authority Archivists, it's good to remove any unnecessary personal data, and they should not release records of a confidential nature for 75 years.
4. All this reminds me that any of us, even if we have not been involved with a church closure, may have retained old records, perhaps when we finished a church role. We may have done a handover that didn't involve destroying all the old records. We may think it's good to retain some records 'for a while', but at some point (and maybe after not that long), it will be appropriate for that data now to be destroyed or handed over, and not retained indefinitely. It could be that we will never think again about those old records, whether they are in paper or electronic format. Please try to recall anything in this category and remedy the situation. And when we finish a church role in future, let's remember to destroy (or archive) old records containing personal data!

If you have any views on this bulletin, or you 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.tmcpc.org.uk/about/data-protection>.

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



Argentina – Cumbria Partnership Link

The Argentina – Cumbria Partnership Link has existed for many years, and several from the District have visited the Argentinian Methodist Church or hosted those who have visited Cumbria. The District Chair was the latest to be profoundly moved by such a visit, when he attended the Argentinian Methodist Conference, or 'Asamblea', on behalf of the District and the wider British Connexion in early October. James Tebbutt has shared his experience in a number of services and devotions and he will continue to do so.



Attached to this newsletter is a full version of James's formal report, and below are the words written by the presiding Bishop, **Pastor Américo Jara Reyes**, to those gathering for the Asamblea, reflecting on the Asamblea's theme:

Jesus Christ: Grace that transforms, hope that liberates. In Jesus, the horizon of grace is without revenge and predicts the end of violence and the possibility of a new world, in a civilization that has returned to excessive revenge, revealing only hatred and injustice. It is vital to fight for a time of

grace and not of revenge, experiencing the time pleasing to God in which Justice arrives for everyone without revenge. We affirm that from Grace it is possible to implant peace and raise humanity to a higher level, and we feel called and called to share the integrality of the Gospel of the Kingdom with those who suffer, to work for the dignity of people, to offer our communities as safe and loving spaces and put into action our abilities, gifts and ministries at the service of God and our peoples.

We affirm together with the Apostle Paul that "it is in Hope that we are saved". Yes, Hope frees us from the fact that life is meaningless drives us and the future has no horizon and that darkness dominates. The Hope that liberates to be a pilgrim people, to project dreams and utopias and to be part of the Jesus movement that resists with a love that is outraged and with the courage that comes from his Ruach. In dark and uncertain times on the face of the earth, Hope appears as seeds that will germinate in dreams and actions. It connects us with resilience and the enormous human potential to resist and put an end to everything that stands as a barrier to living well, wanting, knowing and ultimately the loving project of the Kingdom, which was brought together in Jesus. We affirm that Hope is not deceitful because love is in our hearts.



OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

Learning in partnership with the North West & Mann Learning Network

The Learning Network often look for districts, circuits or churches to partner with them in offering new or existing opportunities to lean. In 2023 they are introducing two new courses and would like people to get in touch if they can offer to host them. These are:

The Last Taboo: a workshop developed by MHA to promote confidence in talking about death and dying in a positive and supportive way. Death is the only certainty in life and yet we are often quick to avoid the topic. This training is an opportunity to discuss best practice in end of life care, wishes and decision making with others in a non-judgemental setting. It is open to all people, whether you are involved in health and social care or not and would be particularly helpful for those in pastoral ministry, lay or ordained, paid or volunteer.

Discerning Together: this course is a resource to support groups in Christian leadership to learn together how to make good and prayerful decisions. The aim is to help people pay attention to God in their particular context, to identify and avoid distractions, to listen carefully to each other and to move forward together. Major decisions will require several weeks or months of prayer, information gathering, listening and reflecting. This course aims to begin that process, helping to establish a prayerful and reflective basis on which to base the decision-making process. Groups will not complete this course having made a decision – that is not the intention. Rather they will complete the course having considered together how the decision can best be made and having been equipped with a set of tools which will help them make a prayerful and thoughtful choices.

If either course offers value to your circuit, church or district in your context and you would like to discuss hosting please get in touch with Alison Ball: balla@methodist.org.uk

CUMBRIA METHODIST DISTRICT DIARY

JANUARY 2023

5	10.00	Cumbria Circuit Working Group meeting – Penrith Methodist Church
6	09:45	District Sabbaticals Advisory Group follow up meeting – on Zoom

13 10:00 District Finance Committee – on Zoom
 14 09:00 Cumbria Ecumenical Ministry Development Day
 16 10:00 Ministers Under 10s Group – Penrith Methodist Church
 18-19 Superintendents Residential meeting – Thornleigh, Grange over Sands
 21 10:00 District Treasurers Meeting – on Zoom
 23 10:00 District Policy Group – on Zoom

FEBRUARY 2023

16 13:30 GfA Strategy Group – Church House, Penrith
 28 10:30 District MDR Group – Stainton Methodist Church
 28 19:00 District Grants Committee – on Zoom

MARCH 2023

2 09:30 District Probationers Committee – Penrith Methodist Church
 4 10:00 Circuit Stewards Forum – Stainton Methodist Church
 15 09.30 Presbyteral Synod – Sedbergh Circuit
 15 12.00 Superintendents Meeting – Sedbergh Circuit
 16 10:00 GfA Operations Group – Church House, Penrith
 21 10:00 District Policy Group – Stainton Methodist Church
 22 10:00 Ministers Under 10s Group – Penrith Methodist Church

APRIL 2023

22 Representative Synod – Kendal Circuit
 26 09:30 Lay Employee Gathering – on Zoom

MAY 2023

13 10:00 District Stationing Briefing – Stainton Methodist Church
 15 10:00 GfA Operations Group – on Zoom or Church House, Penrith
 17 10:00 Ministers Under 10s Group – Penrith Methodist Church

JUNE 2023

13 09:30 GfA Strategy Group – Church House, Penrith
 14 10:00 Ministers (in the Active Work) Meeting – on Zoom
 22-29 Conference – Birmingham

JULY 2023

4 10:00 District Policy Group – Stainton Methodist Church
 5 10:00 Ministers Under 10s Group – Penrith Methodist Church

SEPTEMBER 2023

9 Representative Synod – Penrith Circuit
 12 14:00 GfA Operations Group – Church House, Penrith

OCTOBER 2023

6-8 3Generate – NEC, Birmingham
 9 19.30 District Local Preachers' Meeting – on Zoom
 17 10:00 District Policy Group – Stainton Methodist Church

NOVEMBER 2023

15-17 District Ministers Retreat – Rydal Hall

DECEMBER 2023

6 14:00 GfA Operations Group – Church House, Penrith

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.

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