

Cumbria District Autumn Synod 2021

The Chair, Revd Dr James Tebbutt welcomed everyone to the first 'in person' synod for two years, with members suitably masked and covid aware. He thanked members of the new Western Fells circuit (formed from the Western Fells and Solway circuits) for hosting the day at Lorton Street Methodist Church, Cockermouth.

Worship was led by members of the Circuit, and included a remembrance of those affected by the 9/11 attacks, on the twentieth anniversary of that tragedy.

In addition to formal business and elections, the bulk of the Synod was spent disseminating information from Conference, in three sessions of 'Conference Reflections'. The Conference video was shown, before the most significant items were discussed in greater detail, including local lay-pastors, online communion, oversight and trusteeship and pensions contributions. In addition, Synod heard about New Places for New People, and adopted a new District Mission and Development Plan that incorporated both the Our Calling and Cumbria ecumenical frameworks.

Cumbria is blessed with a number of members of connexional committees, and key presentations were provided by Mrs Irene McKay regarding the Conference report Justice, Dignity and Solidarity, and by the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt on the Theology of Safeguarding. Members then formed small discussion groups to consider what may prevent us from challenging harmful behaviour and what we can do to help our churches become communities that enable all people to flourish.

The afternoon concluded with the presentation of reports, and an offertory was taken for the victims of the Haiti earthquake.

Before the Chair led the closing prayer, members' attention was drawn to the Camino to COP26 pilgrimage. Organised by the Extinction Rebellion Group and Christian Climate Action the expedition set off from parliament square on 5th September and is passing through Cumbria on its way to the climate change conference in Glasgow. Pilgrims will be staying overnight at Kirkby Lonsdale and Sedbergh chapels, amongst others in the District, with members encouraged to join for part of the walk or to meet the walkers to find out more about their pilgrimage.

*Janice Rusling
Synod Secretary*