



District Newsletter – July 2020



Saturday 28th June at 3 pm District Service (join from 2.45 pm)

via zoom – for joining information contact your Circuit Office or the District Administrator
via YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbkayyVevv3wOBMbK3iYHHg>

District Chair's Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

"...those who are with him are called and chosen and faithful" (Rev 17.14b)

Our faith understands that God loves all, and calls us into relationship with God and one another. We understand that, to reflect this love that God has for all creation, God also calls us to live out that love and to be a part of God's purposes, in shared and sometimes particular ways. The Latin word for call, 'voco', gives us the English word 'vocation'; and part of being a Christian is to share in the vocation to be God's people, within which sometimes we are also chosen to particular roles and purposes, through which God invites us faithfully to respond.

At this time, we celebrate that our former District Chair, **the Revd Richard Teal** has been called to be the President of the Methodist Conference for the 2020-21 year, beginning with his induction at the (virtual) Methodist Conference on June 27th. On the same day, we celebrate God's calling of **the Revds Zena Smith and Andrew Sterling** in our District to be presbyters in the Methodist Church. With their formal training and assessments now behind them, they will be Received into Full Connexion, formally recognised as ministers in connexion with the Methodist Church. We will offer thanks for that as part of our District Service by Zoom and YouTube on June 28th at 3pm. In normal times, Andrew and Zena's ordinations would have taken place that day, but, because of Covid 19, sadly their ordinations are now delayed until a later physical gathering will become possible. We hold Andrew and Zena in our prayers in this period of waiting, even as we look forward with joy to when that step will be complete; and please also hold Richard (and Sue) in your prayers during his year undertaking the Methodist Church's highest office.

Covid 19 has affected many things, including the planned series of ecumenical '**Vocations Roadshows**' within the County, postponed for now until a later date. Their purpose is to encourage all to think about vocation. In response, some may wish to explore callings to particular roles, and the Anglican led 'Authorised Lay Training Pathway' may offer ideas and options for some from this September; even as our own Circuits and Regional Learning Network continue also to afford opportunities to explore. We had hoped that, subject to approval at the Methodist Conference, one possibility would have been that some may feel called to become Local Lay-Pastors, a scheme which we had hoped to launch this Autumn; again, Covid 19 has delayed this wider initiative in the Connexion until Conference 2021, and we will need to be patient until then.

Thus, at this time, there are developing ecumenical and connexional initiatives and impetus to encourage us all to think again about how and to what **God may be calling** us. Some may sense a calling to distinct roles and particular service, perhaps requiring particular gifts and training; others may feel called to serve in some of the more 'standard' or (perhaps post-Covid 19) new roles in the Church or in the wider community that your heart or attention might be drawn towards, or that you may feel able to step into (or to continue within!), especially where others seem reluctant or few. With all these callings, to use the words of the Covenant Prayer (Methodist Worship Book, p.288):

Christ has many services to be done:
some are easy, others are difficult;
some bring honour, others bring reproach;
some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests,
others are contrary to both;
in some we may please Christ and please ourselves;
in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.
Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ, who strengthens us.

Please do think about how God may be choosing and calling you at this time and in the months ahead, and be willing to talk to trusted friends and colleagues in the church and perhaps to your minister about this. In particular, as we begin, we hope, to move towards a return to 'normality', we are all recognising that the old normal has changed, and in this there may be opportunities, roles or tasks to which you find yourself called? Indeed, as colleagues have emphasised, we may have a relatively brief window of a few weeks or months in which we might let go, or keep hold of, some of our former patterns and practices as churches, whilst also discerning and develop new ones, to which God may be calling us in order more effectively and faithfully to serve the present age, as God's redemption works its way even in the midst of loss and disruption. As part of this, is God calling you to respond, in large or small, visible or invisible, ways, in prayer, and in new or renewed action?

May God bless you, and all,

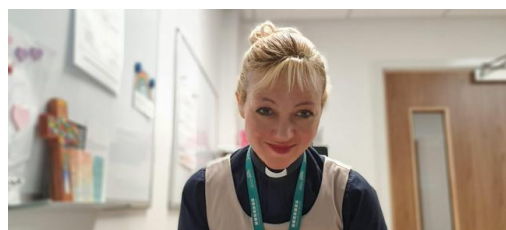
James

The Revd Dr James Tebbutt



The following article about Methodist Deacon Debbie Wilde was published in the *Premier Christianity* magazine on 28th May at https://www.premierchristianity.com/Blog/Christians-on-the-frontline-We-are-creatively-finding-new-ways-to-show-compassion?utm_source=Premier+Christian+Media

**Christians on the frontline:
'We are creatively finding new
ways to show compassion'**



Deacon Deborah Louise Wilde is chaplaincy team leader at Furness General Hospital, Cumbria. She shares the challenges facing pastoral care teams and those ministering to the sick in the time of Covid-19

With three colleagues across the Bay unwell and our volunteer team 'stepped down' for the interim, it has been a challenge to maintain a chaplaincy presence since the pandemic started.

Today, on our paediatric ward, a consultant friend told me that every registrar on the ward was sick, awaiting testing for coronavirus. Staff are working long hours and many are anxious about taking the virus home to those they love.

I struggle when gowned, masked and goggled, sitting beside a patient on a respirator. Their words, offered on breath they can scarcely spare, I can barely hear.

It is heartbreaking when I listen to families unable to visit their loved one, desperate to comfort them, to sit beside their bed. The care that my hospital is so proud of, the extra touches of love and thought, are still there but we are creatively finding new ways to show compassion. We utilise letter writing, phones and Facetime so patients can hear from loved ones, but the things we took for granted are no longer safe measures of comfort (such as a hug for an exhausted team member or a pat on the shoulder).

Each day we hope to be a presence of peace, of comfort and hope. Some days are easier; some are downright exhausting and sad. Presently, a member of my volunteer team is very sick in our hospital; a gentle-hearted man who has encouraged so many of us.

The impact of Covid-19 will certainly be obvious in years to come and speciality groups within healthcare are talking together about bereavement, end-of-life care, paediatric healthcare, spiritual and psychological resilience and changes to be made in its wake.

What is transformative is God's grace and presence, despite our human vulnerability. Honestly, even though we are reminded of our fragility each new day, I thank God for renewed breath, for grace and love to work in his service, but mostly for those who minister to me.

And so each day I thank God for gifts of hope, hand sanitisers sent by local firms, our local mission community sending gifts of toiletries, donations of food and their prayers to support us.

Pray with us: for the hospitals of Morecambe Bay, for the people we care for, for those who wait at home. Pray our staff have renewed strength and hope, which transforms us and all we do.



We have received the following information which we are pleased to share from members at Grange over Sands regarding a new initiative in the Methodist Church

What a year it is being for the small team from Grange who volunteered to take part in the Connexional pilot of the "Transformational Leadership Programme". We began with an intensive initial weekend in Swanwick in January, funded and very well run by Connexion. The aim was to discern a vision for our church and plan for how we lead and encourage the church community to achieve it. We came to realise that Grange Methodist Church already had a challenging vision, carefully crafted in recent times and which appeared each week on the notice sheet: "We believe we are called to be a church where people of all ages and backgrounds are supported in:

- loving and serving God
- loving and serving our neighbours, both local and global
- growing and sharing faith"

What was missing, perhaps, was the opportunity for each person in the church to realise their own place within that vision and to identify the God-given gifts and skills they bring to the whole; to spot where God is in their story. Before lockdown, we had already introduced some changes, such as to the family time slot in morning worship to enable different members to share their "This Time Tomorrow" and their prayer requests. To help

inspire and unite our prayer life, we produced and distributed a prayer diary which will, we hope, be used by young and old, active and housebound, and created a dedicated prayer board in the hall, including the offer to honour any prayer requests made by hall users, especially those who came to the Wednesday coffee mornings. And we had benefited so much from the opportunity given to us at the initial weekend to learn more about each other and ourselves through careful, reflective listening that we had planned opportunities for all our folk to “share our stories”. We’d even created our own “brand” for the various initiatives inspired by our group to convey the dynamism that we pray will inspire our vision as we follow God’s call through this year and beyond.



Then came lockdown and the imperative for real transformational thinking.

The “share our stories” events have had to be postponed, but Zoom gatherings, pastoral phone calls and a proposed newsletter enable us to keep in touch. The prayer diary was already in people’s homes, so its use could be commended. The changing series of prayer guidance posters were moved from the hall out onto the external notice board. Growing in faith is happening in the study group currently meeting by Zoom. The vision statement itself is now the cover photo on the church’s Facebook page, which many more folk are now using including accessing the live streamed services. And we offer ourselves as a resource in all the local discussions about how we go on from here. It will all be very interesting when we have to report back in October – online now, of course!

Hazel Edmondson, for the 2020plus team

DISTRICT DIARY

JUNE 2020

- 25 – 2 July Conference – zoom
- 27 14:15 Induction of Revd Richard Teal as President
- 15:15 Presidential Address
- 18:00 Reception into Full Connexion – all Conference live stream -
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/conference-2020/conference-live-stream/>
- 28 11:00 Methodist Central Hall streamed Service with Revd Richard Teal –
<https://www.youtube.com/user/MCHWevents>
- 28 15:00 District Service – zoom or YouTube

JULY 2020

- 2 09:30 Learning Network “Scripture, Spirituality & Conflict” - zoom
- 6 10:00 Superintendents & Ministers meeting – zoom (often weekly)
- 9 10:00 District Policy Group – zoom
- 9 16:00 District Ecumenical Group - zoom
- 10 10:00 Local Lay-Pastors’ Group – zoom
- 11 10:00 Circuit Stewards’ Meeting – zoom
- 14 09:30 God for All (‘GfA’) Strategy Steering Group – zoom

SEPTEMBER 2020

- 2 10:00-15:00 Superintendents’ Meeting – Yan Yak, Windermere
- 4 10:00 District Finance Meeting – District Manse
- 4 16:00 District Ecumenical Group – District Manse
- 10 09:30 Ecumenical Induction Day – Church House, Penrith
- 12 09:30 Representative Synod – Western Fells (Cockermouth)
- 18 10:00 Argentina Link Group – District Manse
- 19 09:30 Cumbria Churches Dementia Conference - Carlisle
- 24 19:00 Regional Stationing Meeting – Preston
- 29 09:30 District Supervisors’ Training

OCTOBER 2020

- 3 09:30 District Circuit Stewards’ Meeting – Keswick
- 6 10:00 District Policy Group – Stainton
- 6 19:00 District Grants Committee - zoom

7 10:00 Agricultural Chaplaincy Management Group – DM or zoom
 (10 September Synod Reserve Date)
 10 09:30 District Local Preachers' Meeting – Stainton
 14 10:00 Regional Learning Network Forum – Preston
 17 09:30-17:00 Ecumenical Ministry Development Day – North Lakes Hotel, Penrith
 28 13:00 Strategy Steering Group – Church House, Penrith

NOVEMBER 2020

2 – 5 Stationing Matching Group 1
 (14 September Synod Reserve Date)
 18 10:00 District Sabbatical Group – Rydal Hall
 18–20 12:30 District Ministers' Retreat – Rydal Hall
 30–1 Dec Stationing Matching Group 2

DECEMBER 2020

JANUARY 2021

20-21st Superintendents' Residential Meeting – Thornleigh, Grange
 23 09:45 District Treasurers' meeting – Stainton
 26 09:30 District Policy Group – Stainton

FEBRUARY 2021

1 10:00 Regional Learning Network Forum – Preston
 6 10:30 District Ministerial Development Review meeting – Stainton
 26-28 Rev R Teal – Presidential Visit

- Friday evening – Ecumenical Leaders gathering
- Saturday morning and afternoon – Rural Church workshop – Wigton Road, Carlisle
- Sunday morning – preaching Solway Circuit
- Sunday afternoon and evening – Tea and service – Stricklandgate, Kendal

MARCH 2021

17 09:30 Presbyteral Synod – Wigton Circuit
 17 02:00 Superintendents' meeting – Wigton Circuit
 23 09:30 District Policy Group – Stainton

APRIL 2021

24 9:30 Representative Synod – South Lakes Circuit

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 September and any information for this to be sent to District Administrator, Carolyn Dickinson by **Monday 24th August.**

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