



## District Newsletter – June 2020



Dear Friends,

Like the first disciples who were encouraged, when faced with the physical loss of Jesus at the Ascension, to wait and trust that through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit they could yet be witnesses to God's unfolding redemption, we find ourselves leaving behind former lives for an emerging 'new normal', the exact nature of which we do not yet know. Even as some Coronavirus measures ease (but still with all the continuing uncertainties), we are sensitive to a new precariousness to life. We wonder about future social interaction, or distance; about the economy (or maybe also the environment); or more immediately about when we might next see family or friends, or engage in the singing of hymns or a simple meal together.

I have no doubt that God has not caused this pandemic and weeps with those who weep, and feels the fear of illness, or loss of livelihood, or dislocation from what was previously known. God's understanding, God's working to relieve, is true for us and for those across the globe. Friends from the Methodist Church in Argentina have relayed how acutely difficult the Covid 19 crisis is for many there too, especially for the poorest. We pray for them, as we do for all who know the agony of lost loved ones, to whom our hearts go out, and as we remember all who are giving of themselves for others, as Christ gave of himself.

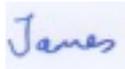
In society, church and our personal lives, we are at a hinge, just as, for the disciples, the experience of Ascension and Pentecost was a hinge, a hinge between the new life begun and the new life yet to unfold. Our hinge is between previous patterns and new ways, when (for all the continuities there may yet be) the landscape has changed, invoking sadness for loss and apprehension at a future unknown. Yet like the first disciples, we are invited to trust that new possibilities and appreciations will emerge, and, in time, maybe even renewed joy.

For surely God is ready to engage with us in a new chapter, if, like those first 'disciples' (followers and learners), we can keep the faith (as God keeps faith with us), to become (Luke changes the term - ) 'apostles', those who were sent out to be witnesses to the redemptive and renewing love of God. For this new chapter, some were dramatically empowered on the day of Pentecost; others were equally but more gently inspired (see the complementary accounts in Acts 2 and the gentle breathing in John 20). So it has been, or will be, in our experience, that God will call and equip, empowering us to be faithful, discerning, responsive.

Last week I heard a minister (from outside the District but from within our Region) suggest that it was not our chapels and meetings that we were missing most, special places as our buildings might be, and important as our conferring must always be! Rather, what the crisis had revealed to be most important was our worship and prayer, and our pastoral care (amongst ourselves, and more widely in our communities). Would you agree? Is this our present experience of Jesus opening our minds to understand, as he did for the disciples before departing from them?

As many of us wonder what form our churches will take or need to take in future (just as the first disciples worked out what it meant to become the first 'churches'), there will be some changes beyond our control, but other changes might, or perhaps should, be chosen or prioritised. Together therefore, let's keep wondering, asking, discerning, conferring. Let's hope that amongst us we will hear God's drawing attention to that which we most must be and do. In this, as for those first disciples and apostles, may we sense God's continuing love and blessing, for ourselves and for all, to help us come through, caring for all. Then may all know the peace and presence of God's powerful yet gentle Holy Spirit, now and always.

God bless you, and all,



The Revd Dr James Tebbutt



### **A new newsletter – and District Administrator!**

Thank you everyone in recent months for coping without a District newsletter, or the regular publishing of forthcoming dates. The District Policy Group appointed a small group to think about future communication within the District, and re-launching the newsletter is one means to that end. This will be a work in progress as we work out what format or frequency (generally monthly?) will be of most help. Apart from publishing dates and on many occasions a pastoral letter, we also want this to be an opportunity for your circuit to share with neighbouring circuits good news or concerns, or to publicise special events if they may be of interest to others (whether through links to other documents or websites, or on occasion via attachments). Accordingly, future editions will contain more information and links.

We will obviously seek to distribute this to circuit and church officers, administrators and ministers, and ask that perhaps one person in each church would take responsibility for printing off a copy to place on a noticeboard or table at the back of church, for this is your District! Additionally, we would be glad to send by email a copy direct to anyone who requests it: just email the District Administrator.

So, let me introduce Mrs Carolyn Dickinson, a member of Cottage Wood Centre and Local Preacher in the Penrith Circuit, who for many years has been employed as an administrator. She began with the District on May 1<sup>st</sup> as the District Chair's PA and District Administrator, working half time, with her main hours being Monday-Thursday mornings. She will work from home or sometimes (once passed lockdown!) from the District manse. She can be contacted direct on a work mobile number: 07727 415400, or at [cumbriamethodistdistrict@outlook.com](mailto:cumbriamethodistdistrict@outlook.com). I am, needless to say, delighted that Carolyn has joined us!



It has also been the opportunity to review my own email arrangements. In future, could you email me about all general matters (which will be virtually everything) on [cumbriamethodistchair@outlook.com](mailto:cumbriamethodistchair@outlook.com). Carolyn will also have access to this account, as I will have to the administrator's account, to help our joint and hopefully efficient working together. Our eventual successors (many years hence we hope!) will also be able to inherit these accounts, so using them from now on in your email address books should not require many changes ahead. I will still retain my present [james.tebbutt@methodist.org.uk](mailto:james.tebbutt@methodist.org.uk) account, so you can use that if there is a particular confidential matter you need to communicate with me about (Carolyn's trustworthiness will rapidly become

apparent, but Carolyn won't have access to my Methodist account, to allow for necessary circles of confidentiality to be maintained when appropriate or required). However, in general, please do make the change to my new chair's account in your address books, and use that rather than my Methodist account from now on, thank you.

Carolyn will publish the next edition of the District Newsletter in early July, the deadline for any information for which will be **Monday June 22<sup>nd</sup>**.

James Tebbutt



## DISTRICT DIARY

### JUNE 2020

- 1 10:00 Superintendents' Meeting – zoom (at present mostly weekly)
- 2 10:00 Agricultural Chaplaincy Management Group - zoom
- 3 10:00 District Ecumenical Group – zoom
- (13 District Probationer's Testimony Service - to be re-arranged)
- 17 10:00 Regional Learning Network Forum – Preston/zoom
- 17 10:00 District Mission Enabler Management Group – Carlisle/zoom
- 25 – 2 July Conference - zoom

### JULY 2020

- 6 13:00 God for All ('GfA') Strategy Steering Group – Church House, Penrith
- 9 10:00 District Policy Group – Stainton
- 10 10:00 Local Lay-Pastors' 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
- 12 09:30 Representative Synod – South Lakes (Cockermouth)
- 10 09:30 Ecumenical Induction Day – Church House, Penrith
- 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
- (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

20-21<sup>st</sup> 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 14:00 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.*

Information for the July Newsletter to be sent to District Administrator, Carolyn Dickinson by **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June.**

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