



District Newsletter – September 2020

District Chair's Pastoral Letter



Dear Friends,

The Kingdom of God is upon you.

Now that the flurry of the first September days are over, I can wish you all a 'Happy New Connexional Year!'. For many of us, it has been the usual round of September services, meetings, or sorting of particular processes (and we hold in prayer those candidating for ministry or involved in stationing). Only, in another way, it has not been very 'usual', with the continuing impact of Coronavirus upon our worship, pastoral care and ways of meeting. How much we previously took for granted the simple activity of being together, and how much we long for a return to it. And, it is not just that we cannot do things in a normal way; it is that Covid 19 demands so much extra work (once again apparent in our latest ministers' meeting when, for example, we acknowledged that preparing filmed material for assemblies required much more than simply going into school; etc.).

All this is as nothing to those who suffer from the dreadful disease; who have lost loved ones; who are caring on the front line; who are still shielding, deprived of contact and freedom; or who have been impacted upon economically, educationally, or creatively in all sorts of ways. Coupled with the evident impact of climate change, from out of control Californian fires to massive chunks of the Greenland and Antarctic ice shelves threatening to, or in recent days, breaking off, plus the economic warnings that trillions of Covid related debt may lead to a 1930s or 1980s style decade of hardship (in which a faltering relationship with Europe may not help?), makes for a gloomy, at worst an apocalyptic, scenario. It stands in such contrast to my youth, when, with the Berlin wall down, South African Apartheid at an end, an Israeli-Egypt peace deal signed and later the Good Friday Northern Irish Agreement, the world seemed full of promise and possibility.

In the cycle of history and given humanity's continuing inhumanity to all of creation and not just itself, the riposte could be made: 'it was ever thus' (although climate change does potentially put matters onto a geological timeframe, and not merely that of a century or two). Yet my objective here is not to be a harbinger of doom, but firstly to recognise that, difficult as some things are to contemplate, leaving our heads in the sand cannot serve well all the time, and then secondly to remind that, now as much as ever: "The time has arrived; the kingdom of God is upon you. Repent, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1.15, REB, being Jesus' opening words, as recorded in the oldest gospel).

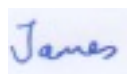
'Repent' calls us to ask for forgiveness, not – at least in my understanding of God – because climate change, Covid 19, or societal and economic woes are somehow a punishment from the God whose purpose is always redemption, although inevitably we, and tragically too often others, reap much of what we sow. Rather, forgiveness and change is needed for our own participation in ways of thinking, acting or relating that are short sighted, selfish and too often cruel, that wittingly and unwittingly disturbs balance or fails to effect justice, bringing hurt to others, directly or indirectly, and contributing to a still fallen world. More broadly, 'repent' means turning around our lives and perspectives (even sometimes as to what is truly faithful), and aligning ourselves fully with Christ and his way, the way of the Cross that leads to Resurrection, and to the redemption of our fallen world. How, therefore, in the midst of climate change, Covid, economic woe, and nations (sometimes even the Church) at war within and between

themselves, do we put ourselves better in tune with Jesus, aligning ourselves with him, not arrogantly, but with humility, grace and commitment?

At Synod I used for devotions Mark 8.22-26, the story of the blind man who, with Jesus' help, saw in two stages, initially with people looking like trees walking around, before then seeing clearly. As we struggle to discern what is required of us and the Church in response to Covid and in all our challenges from the personal to the planet, we are perhaps in that first stage: by God's grace we see a little, but only puzzling reflections in a mirror or in a glass darkly (to borrow from 1 Corinthians 13), recognising that we cannot yet see clearly, nor see all that may be required. Yet, if the Kingdom of God is now, by the discernment and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and in a commitment to working this out together, how might we better align ourselves with Christ for whatever is called of us at this time to be part of God's people and purposes to meet the present needs and challenges?

Many of you are taking note of the new 'Methodist Way of Life', building upon the four Methodist Our Calling themes. Others were at Synod where we affirmed the county God for All Vision Refresh with its emphases on discipleship, social justice, sharing God's love, and the environment, so as to 'follow daily', 'care deeply', 'speak boldly', and 'tread gently' (or, try also swapping the adverbs around as you reflect on God's calling to you this year). Strategies for implementing these will be developed and more will be shared. At root, they contain invitations to us all, individually and collectively, to live out Christ's way, whatever the challenges, decisions and actions required, not least at this time.

In all the uncertainties and tentativeness, in all the constraints and new opportunities, may God be with you in this coming year, in your homes and relationships, in your isolation and togetherness, in your joys and sorrows, in your occupations and endeavours, in your virtual and physical gatherings, in your being employed and laid aside for Christ, in your taking up and laying down, in the seen and unseen, and in all your decisions now and yet to come. May God bless you, now and always, alone and together, and in every layer and outworking of your being, until God's kingdom comes,



The Revd Dr James Tebbutt

The Revd David Johnson

For those who have not yet heard, we are sorry to announce the death in August of the Revd David Johnson, a supernumerary Methodist minister. Originally from Yorkshire, David served and taught for many years as a mission partner in Sarawak, before continuing a teaching ministry in Kent, again for many years. He came to Glenridding in retirement, serving as a supernumerary minister in the Penrith circuit. We hold his widow Pat and all his family in our thoughts and prayers at this time.

Chaplaincy to Workers in the Tourism Industry

The following article by Deacon Maggie Patchett, Chaplain to Tourism Workers in the South Lakes Circuit, was recently published in the Westmorland Gazette. It gives insight into her role and that of the chaplaincy.

As Chaplains to the tourism industry, our aim is to be ...

"among people, with people, for people, providing a caring listening ear" to the stories people want to share - about their work, their families, their life, their worries; to be present, available, where we are invited, not imposing our ideas on others in any way, just showing love, support and care; helping people cope with the stresses of life.

Normally I would call by cafes, hotels, B&Bs and other tourism outlets in the Ambleside / Windermere / Bowness area, on a fairly regular basis. Obviously this has not been possible over the past 3 months, but now as places open up again, I am re-starting this.

Now more than ever, we know people are likely to be under stress, whether that is the owners / managers, worried about their businesses, staff worried about jobs, and everyone worried about covid and its associated risks for people.

So I've made 'Welcome Back' cards for each venue I visit – with a local photo on the front, and a re-worked version of the well-known Psalm 23 'The Lord is my shepherd' inside, to help in times of stress. Written by Toki Miyashina, the 'psalm' reads:

The Lord is my pacesetter. I shall not rush.

He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals, He provides me with images of stillness, which restore my serenity.

He leads me in ways of efficiency, through calmness of mind, and His guidance is peace.

Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day I will not fret, for His presence is here;

His timeless-ness, His all-importance will keep me in balance.

He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity by anointing my mind with His oils of tranquillity; my cup of joyous energy overflows.

Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours, for I shall walk at the pace of my Lord, and dwell in His house forever.

Alongside this every member of staff receives a small individual card reminding them to take time for themselves, with my contact details on the back.



As I have gone into places in the last 2 days [this was when Maggie first returned after lockdown], I have been met with a whole range of responses:

- People glad to be back at work again
- Pleased that bookings are coming in – in some cases thick and fast
- Pleased that they are no longer stuck at home themselves, and are able to be out and about, carrying on with their jobs
- Happy that we have visitors back in the Lake District

But also the anxiety

- Of doing things in a different, unnatural way – keeping everyone at a distance when hospitality is all about welcoming people
- Of 'how do I know I have cleaned everything that was touched by the last guest'
- 'what if we have to close again – cancel all those bookings we are now taking'
- Anxiety about all the new procedures and protocols to be followed
- Of hoping there will be enough trade to get through to next season
- Admitting to the stress of the past 3 months as well as acknowledging that things are likely to continue to be stressful

I have been greeted by smiles and thanks – for thinking of them and for being there if / when they need a chaplain to talk to. Greeted with relief too – for the knowledge that someone will be there to talk to if they need them.

Some places are still to open, and many have reduced staffing, until numbers of tourists increase – but that is likely to happen quickly now. Already in the last 3 days I have noticed the increase in the number of visitors around the place.

It's good to be out and about again, greeting 'old friends', being there for others. I've also met new people, new managers and staff as some places having changed hands during the shut-down.

You can get in touch with Maggie through our Facebook page – *lakeschaplain*

or email tourismchaplain@slakesmethodist.org.uk

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Volunteers

Mrs Irene McKay, convener of the District Being Inclusive Group and a member of the Connexional EDI Committee has written as follows:

A very significant aspect of the 2020 Methodist Conference, held virtually at the end of June, was the focus on matters relating to EDI. As part of this, an important initiative to be taken forward is the implementation of the high level commitment to inclusion in the Methodist Church.

To that end workstreams are being established to take forward this work. This includes opportunity for anyone to apply to be involved. All the information relating to the application process is found on the Methodist Church in Britain website under 'Volunteer'. <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/connect/jobs-volunteering/volunteer-positions/> Or, please see the attached documents.

Deadline for applications 24th September with interviews the week of 5th October.

Youth President of the Methodist Church



In a recent communication to the District the current Youth President, Phoebe Parkin, (pictured left) has introduced herself and her role, as well as providing information about opportunities for young people. This includes details about the virtual 3Generate 365 initiative to engage children and young people over the coming year. Please see the relevant attachment for all the information.

North West & Mann Learning Network Region Newsletter

Each month an e-newsletter is produced and anyone who would like to receive this can subscribe on their website page below, in the Get in Touch section. There are a large number of events and opportunities offered in this month's edition in particular, and therefore we commend that you follow the link. Any new members of staff and circuit and church stewards in particular may wish to sign up for further editions.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning-and-development/learning-network-regions/the-north-west-and-mann-region/>

Transforming Churches & Communities ebuletin

"Churches today are required to have a level of 'professionalism' when engaging in work with communities and delivering their Mission. TCC helps churches, circuits and community groups meet the requirements to

set up and run activities effectively at a local level. TCC are experts on matters of project management, governance, funding, strategic partnerships and employment. They are also well connected with other experts to draw on, when required. As we start to become more active, it will be useful to contact TCC to see how we may help you in opening up your church building or facilitating conversations about the future Mission of the church."

The above is taken from the opening of the latest eBulletin from TCC. A number of circuits have used TCC for project advice. If you would like to access the whole bulletin, please use this link which will also enable you to subscribe to their regular ebulletins if you wish to receive them:

<https://mailchi.mp/835fe1275b95/tcc-sept-ebulletin-5954273?e=4f4761b29f>

Torch Trust information

We have received information from Becky Davies, Sight Loss Friendly Church Manager (Acting) who works for Torch Trust, the Christian sight loss charity. Sight Loss Friendly Church (SLFC) is an initiative to help churches to become accessible for people with sight loss and they are currently providing some free 30 minute SLFC Taster sessions on Zoom. These will enable churches to find out more about SLFC including all the benefits of this free resource, meet the SLFC team and ask questions. Session will take place on 29 & 30 September and 27 & 28 October. If anyone would like to find out more visit sightlossfriendlychurch.org.uk

or to book a place email SLFC@torchtrust.org.uk



Online Conferring and Decision Making in Virtual or Hybrid Meetings

Attached is a Connexional resource (that is also available from the Methodist website as a printable A5 booklet) produced by a small group of which James Tebbutt was a part regarding the important principles of Methodist conferring, and offering some practical and pastoral advice or considerations for meeting and making decisions virtually or in hybrid ways. (Various Cumbria examples helped to inform some of the suggestions made!) It is ideally something that we would have had several weeks ago, and of course it won't provide precise details for every context or scenario that might emerge. However, it does remind of the importance of participation in effective conferring at all times, and offers some principles and practices to guide your navigation of meetings in various ways at this particular time.

Spam Emails and Correct Email Address

Over recent months there have been occasions where individuals have received emails purportedly from James largely using his Methodist address. These appear to have been received by people in the east of the county mostly, but from the content is not from James, or the style or terminology is clearly not used by James. Somewhere a server or address list has been hacked to send out these spam emails, but they do not appear to be coming directly from James' computer. Please be alert to this.

Additionally, for matters for James relating generally to the Cumbria District, please use his Chair's email address: cumbriamethodistchair@outlook.com ; please try to get your email address books to send to this address rather than to his Methodist address: james.tebbutt@methodist.org.uk , which please only use if you have particular confidential matters. Thank you.

CUMBRIA METHODIST DISTRICT DIARY

SEPTEMBER 2020

18 10:00 Argentina Link Group – zoom
19 09:30 Cumbria Churches Dementia Conference - zoom
22 10:30 Regional Learning Network Get-together with new staff – zoom
24 19:00 Regional Stationing Meeting – Preston
26 18:30 Welcome Service for Revd Melanie Greenall – Kendal
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 – zoom
10 09:30 District Local Preachers' Meeting – Stainton
14 13:00 Regional Learning Network Forum – zoom
17 10:00 Ecumenical Ministry Development Day – zoom

NOVEMBER 2020

2 – 5 Stationing Matching Group 1
16 9:00 Strategy Steering Group - zoom
18 10:00 District Sabbatical Group – Rydal Hall
18–20 12:30 District Ministers' Retreat – Rydal Hall
30–1 Dec Stationing Matching Group 2

JANUARY 2021

20-21st Superintendents' Residential Meeting – Thornleigh, Grange
23 09:45 District Treasurers' meeting – Stainton
26 09:30 District Policy Group – Stainton
27 09:30 Candidates Committee – Stricklandgate, Kendal

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

13 10:00 Lay Employee Day – possibly Kendal
24 9:30 Representative Synod – Western Fells Circuit

MAY 2021

4-7 Diaconal Convocation
8 10.00 District Stationing Briefing – Stainton – NB this is in addition to the District Directory

JUNE 2021

7 10:00 Regional Learning Network Forum – Preston
24-1 July Conference - Birmingham

JULY 2021

8 9:30 District Policy Group

SEPTEMBER 2021

11 9:30 Representative Synod – South Lakes Circuit
29 10:00 Regional Learning Network Forum – Preston

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 October and any information for this to be sent to District Administrator, Carolyn Dickinson by **Monday 28th September.**

Chair of District: The Revd Dr James N Tebbutt Telephone: 01768 866342 Email: cumbriamethodistchair@outlook.com	District Administrator/Chair's PA: Carolyn Dickinson Telephone: 07727 415400 Email: cumbriamethodistdistrict@outlook.com
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