



District Newsletter – February 2021

District Chair's Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

Know that I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go

As the lockdown continues with this strange life that we are living, I wonder how you are?

If you are particularly affected, if you are fearful for another or have lost a loved one (whether through Covid, or through other illness at this time), or if you have had coronavirus yourself, or are struggling with the financial impact, then all of us will be feeling for you, and hoping that something of the strength and presence of God will be reaching and upholding you, not least I pray through the love and kindness of family and friends, neighbours and strangers.

If the impact for you is more about confinement and seeking to stay safe for yourself and others, then I have been wondering about how sometimes we only seem to make sense of things by shifting our view or travelling to a new place. This might sometimes require an actual journey so as to discover new cultures and vantage points, to gain a new understanding or appreciation. Sometimes, however, we need not travel literally but might be invited simply in mind or spirit to leave behind some familiar territory so as to change our way of thinking, seeing, behaving or relating, in order to grow a little, learn a little, and ultimately to love and care a little more deeply and widely.

Venturing out can involve risk and courage either way; although, at this time of lockdown, I guess it is more the figurative rather than the literal venturing out that is required! Yet, reflecting upon this, maybe in all the current dislocation and disorientation there is an opportunity and invitation to venture out in our thinking and faith? Jacob did not have a lot of choice, but he ventured out to discover (for him) a new country, new relationships, and new longings and frustrations. As we know from the middle chapters of Genesis, this was not just a physical journey, but it led him to a new understanding of himself, of God (see Genesis 28.15a, quoted above), and of his past behaviour and relationships. Something a little more faithful, considerate and understanding was born, as Jacob became Israel.

Like the first stage for the blind man in Mark 8.24, we continue to see only partly what this pandemic means for our living, our society and our church; yet, in its midst, can we, in our conversations, prayers, and reflections, consent to venture out just a little; can we let God's Spirit work within and amongst us to bring us to whatever new perspective or thing it is that God might be calling us to (Isaiah 42.6-9)? This time is unsettling (to say the least), as it was for Jacob, and his homecoming was different and delayed from what he might initially have imagined it would be. Yet God never ceased to work or to use even the challenges and disasters to continue to redeem and bring his people to places of new understanding and hope.

May you venture well, as we seek to grow in faith and understanding and in love and care, knowing that God will be with us and will keep us, wherever we may go, whatever befalls, and in all to which we are called.

God Bless you,

The Revd Dr James Tebbutt

DISTRICT NEWS AND EVENTS

The Visit of the President of the Methodist Conference – 26-28 February 2021

The visit of Revd Richard Teal, President of the Methodist Conference 2020-21, to the Cumbria District will now take place on-line, given the continuing pandemic.

- On Friday evening 26th at 7.30pm, several of the **County Ecumenical Leaders** will gather for conversation with Richard, to catch up with their former colleague, and to reflect on the continuing ecumenical journey, including in these pandemic times.
- On Saturday morning 27th at 10am, Richard will meet from wider than the Church various invited **representatives from the agricultural industry or with wider rural concerns** in the County. One of the themes of Richard's presidency has been a concern for rural matters, and during this year he has met with similar groups in various Districts around the Connexion.
- On Saturday afternoon 27th from 2 - 3.30pm, **members of the District who are interested or involved in the Rural Church** are invited to meet with Richard to consider Mission and the Rural Church. In this (as likewise with the sessions above), the idea is that numbers will be limited to no more than those who can fit onto a single screen in the Zoom meeting, to enable Richard to have a real and meaningful conversation with those present (his experience so far this year has revealed that this is a more effective way of meeting people than for him to talk or to try to converse with larger gatherings). We appreciate that this may limit numbers compared to how many could attend if we had been gathering physically. Nonetheless, if you would like to be part of the conversation, please do contact Carolyn Dickinson, the District Administrator (contact details at the end of the Newsletter) to indicate this, and we shall try to include you.
- On Sunday morning 28th at 11am Richard had been due to preach at Maryport, so will now **preach at the Solway Circuit Zoom service**. (Some have enquired as to whether this can be joined by other Circuits, but we have responded that this is intended to be a service now for the Solway Circuit, whilst instead all will be welcome and indeed encouraged to attend Kendal Circuit service in the afternoon.)
- On Sunday afternoon 28th NB now at 4 pm, Richard will preach at a **service hosted by the Kendal Circuit to which all in the District are invited**, to be followed at the end of the service by Zoom 'breakout rooms' to allow at least some in small groups to have the opportunity briefly to say hello to Richard and one another. As many will realise, the numbers of those who can be hosted at and admitted to a Zoom service are limited, so the service will also be live streamed on YouTube or Face Book, joining details for which will shortly be provided in the Kendal Circuit and through the weekly District mailing. (Those wishing to join by Zoom, including to have the possibility of joining a breakout room, are likely to need to obtain the relevant details from the Kendal Circuit and/or the District administrator, but again we will confirm this in the weekly District mailing.)



Many have expressed sadness that Richard's presidential year has been so impacted upon by the pandemic. In the Cumbria District especially, we feel great regret that it will not now be possible to meet Richard and Sue in person on this occasion. Nonetheless, we do hope that some of you can join on the Saturday afternoon, and that many of you will do so on the Sunday afternoon to

hear what Richard has to share and draw out from being amongst us. Please hold him and all involved in the events of the weekend in your prayers, as you will continue to hold him, and all the people called Methodists, in your prayers during this connexional year.

Ordinands Testimony Service – 13 March 2021 at 3pm – to be held on-line

This service, postponed from last year because of the pandemic, will be a celebration of the ministry and forthcoming ordination of two Methodist ministers in the District, the Revds Zena Smith and Andrew Sterling, and an opportunity for them to share their testimony with the District. Given the ongoing impact of the pandemic, we have decided to hold the service online, on the previously agreed date of 13th March at 3 pm. We will provide details for joining via Zoom or on a streaming platform once these have been worked out, but please do note the date and time in your diaries so as join this special service if you are able.



Other Events and Information

Spirituality, Scripture & Conflict – 3rd March 2021

This event running from 9:30 – 15:45 on Zoom is advertised by the Learning Network “To deepen our understanding of the impact and wisdom of scripture in transforming conflict, and in transitioning through change.” Closing date for booking is 17th February and for more information and to book see the flyer attached to the electronic copy of the Newsletter.

North West & Mann Regional Learning Network Newsletter

The February edition has just been published and has a number of events advertised which are taking place during February, March and beyond. A copy of this is attached to the electronic copy of our Newsletter. Details of some of these events have been circulated previously and details of how to sign up are included. If you would like to receive their newsletter directly you can sign up using this link to their webpage: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning-and-development/learning-network-regions/the-north-west-and-mann-region/> .

Churches Together in Cumbria Newsletter



The February edition of the Newsletter has recently been published and includes updates and information on a number of events and activities. This is attached to the electronic copy of our Newsletter. If you would like to receive this yourself directly please contact the CTiC Administrator using this link: https://www.churchestogethercumbria.org.uk/groups/318437/contact_us.aspx .

Anna Chaplaincy Newsletter

The winter edition of the Newsletter has just been published and provides information about the work of the Anna Chaplaincy in Cumbria. There is an introduction to the three chaplains currently ministering and updates of work by the Dementia Enablers in Barrow and South Lakeland as well as some upcoming events in February – Introduction to Anna Chaplaincy and in March – Dementia Awareness Training. Please see the attached copy on the electronic copy of our Newsletter.



CUMBRIA METHODIST DISTRICT DIARY

FEBRUARY 2021

- 11 19:30 District Safeguarding Meeting - Zoom
23 19:30 Argentina Partnership Link Group Meeting – Zoom
25 9:30 Local Lay-Pastors Steering Group - Zoom
26-28 Rev R Teal – Presidential Visit (see details in main section above, all events will be by Zoom)

MARCH 2021

- 13 10:00 District Circuit Stewards' Meeting – Zoom
13 15:00 District Ordinands' Testimony Service – Zoom
17 09:30 Presbyteral Synod – Wigton Circuit by Zoom
18 15:00 District Being Inclusive Group
23 10:00 District Policy Group

APRIL 2021

- 13 10:00-13:00 Lay Employee Day – Zoom
24 9:30 Representative Synod – Western Fells Circuit / Zoom TBC
28 19:30 District LP meeting with Bob Bartindale - Zoom

MAY 2021

- 4-7 Diaconal Convocation
8 10:00 District Stationing Briefing – Stainton

JUNE 2021

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

JULY 2021

- 8 10:00 District Policy Group

SEPTEMBER 2021

- 3 10.00 District Finance Group
5 (afternoon) Welcome Service for the Revd Paul Harold – Western Fells Circuit (Solway)
11 9:30 Representative Synod – South Lakes Circuit
18 9:30 CTIC Anna Chaplaincy Conference – Border Kirk, Carlisle
29 10:00 Regional Learning Network Forum - Preston

OCTOBER 2021

- 9 10:00 District Local Preachers' Meeting – Carver Uniting Church, Windermere?
13 10:00 District Policy Group

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 March and any information for this to be sent to the District Administrator, Carolyn Dickinson, by **Thursday 4th March**.

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