



## District Newsletter – July 2022

### District Chair's Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

#### Who is my neighbour?

Many of us will have been reminded of and will have reflected again on last Sunday's gospel reading about Jesus's encounter with the lawyer (Luke 10.25-37). First there is the sharing of the great commandment: "Love the Lord your God with – all of your being, and your neighbour as yourself", chosen as their Presidential theme by the new President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Graham Thompson and Mr Anthony Boateng; followed by the parable of the Good Samaritan.

When we come to the parable, often our first instinct is to position ourselves as the Good Samaritan and to recognise the invitation, indeed command, to go and do likewise. First, however, maybe we also need to think through some possible similarities with the other characters in the story?

We are critical of the lack of concern and apparent hypocrisy of the priest and Levite who pass by on the other side. Yet being 'good' according to the principles of the day meant avoiding contact with a dead body (they would have had to go over to check whether the person lying in the gutter was alive or dead), for it would have made them unclean. It would have prevented, for example, the priest from going to take a service and perhaps having to let down a congregation, etc.. Yet, as both Jesus' audience and we can see, by observing the inherited understandings and practice, the priest and Levite missed the bigger point that the Samaritan fulfilled, the need to show compassion and care for the one in need.

Quite apart from our own failure often to care for those in need, how might our present understanding of faith, and present practices and ways of organising ourselves in church, get in the way of us seeing or delivering on the bigger picture, including joining in effectively with God's concerns and mission at the present time? We are living through a period of ecumenical and Methodist reconsideration and reorganisation at local church, mission community and circuit, county and regional layers, and thank you for increasingly engaging with this. How might we better lay down (or share) some of the less important things in order to release ourselves and others for getting on with what is more important, and for which we are called upon to use more effectively our time, energy resources, including to care deeply for our neighbours?

Then, in recent years, we have increasingly been invited to imagine ourselves as lying in the gutter, in need of help, and to consider the possibility that this might not come from someone like us but from a 'Samaritan' (of all people, Jesus' hearers might have said)! What then if the one whom we naturally dislike, of whom we might be instinctively wary, disapproving or fearful (as Jews and Samaritans were of each other), turns out to be the one whose help and mercy we really need? In such an imagined or real encounter, can we reappraise and reappraise the 'other'? How might we then with humility learn from the 'other', from the one whose background, behaviour or even understanding of God is different from our own? Is it from them that we might need to receive grace and understanding (and, through them, such things from God)? Remember how we sing: "pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too" (STF 611).

Having imagined ourselves into the shoes of the priest or Levite, and then as the one set upon and lying in the gutter, might our understanding of what it means to be a 'Good Samaritan', be deepened and increased?

For in all of this, Jesus is 'turning the flank': of the questioning lawyer, of those who were listening to him, and of course to question our own understanding and presumptions. The question: "Who is my/our neighbour?", becomes: "To whom might I/we be called to be a good neighbour, to whom we can show care

and compassion, and – most importantly – from and with whom I/we can learn and work to establish justice and restoration?”

In our individual and collective ecumenical and Methodist life, at all layers and in all places, may this question lie at the heart of who we are and of what we are about, as we work at letting go and sharing to focus on what is most needed, as we engage in God’s love for all in this part of the world.

As you ponder this, may you also know some rest, refreshment and renewal this summer, and thank you, and God Bless you, for all that you are and do,

James

The Revd Dr James Tebbutt

## DISTRICT NEWS AND EVENTS

### Shaping the Future in North West & Mann

As part of the consultation regarding the future of the districts in the region three opportunities to get involved and have a conversation have been offered. The third and final opportunity is on **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July** between 7.30 pm and 9 pm. This will be on Zoom and if you would like to attend to hear what is happening or share your views then please book by contacting Rob Glassonbury: [NWMannNetwork@gmail.com](mailto:NWMannNetwork@gmail.com).

### MWiB Spring Day

We are now well into Summer and this event took place some months ago, but we are pleased to share a report about the day which has been prepared by Kathleen Williamson.

“Our Spring Day at Levens on 22<sup>nd</sup> March was a really good day. Levens Methodist church has been refurbished and is a lovely building with all modern conveniences.

We learnt a lot about climate change and also had good worship and fellowship. It was good to meet up with friends old and new from other circuits. It is always interesting to know what other circuits are doing and if not much is happening in your circuit at the moment, then come along to district events and meet other Methodist Women.



The day started with a bit of admin, telling us what was happening over the next year, presenting accounts etc and then worship.

Then Dori Henderson, who is an Anglican member of the East of Eden Mission Community, spoke about climate change with a lot of good slides. She explained what is happening and about temperatures rising and some of the reasons for this and about globally what governments are doing about it. But for me the most interesting part was what can we do about it and about living sustainably. ‘Think globally, act locally’ was a phrase used a lot ie think about the world but do things locally to help eg Reduce food waste, avoid palm oil, eat less meat, buy less stuff, use charity shops, responsible travel, plant a tree, reducing plastic etc etc. One thing I learnt a lot about was recycling, I didn’t know we could recycle as much as we can eg Did you know that someone is making crisp packets into blankets for the homeless?

We then had a break for lunch, we all had a packed lunch but drinks and biscuits (chocolate of course) were available or there was a shop close by if you hadn't brought enough to eat! There was time to visit the bookstall or have some fresh air – it was a beautiful day. I spent most of the time chatting to people from other circuits, catching up with old friends and making new ones.

After lunch we broke into small groups and had a discussion answering 4 questions

- How can we encourage a shift from 'what we want' to 'what we need'?
- Discussion on how we can make a difference with some suggestions.
- What does 'think globally, act locally' mean for us in practice.
- Have we taken Genesis 1:26-28 too literally? 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over ..... every living creature'

Our group never got past question 1! Then there was some feedback following by worship.

Then more drinks and this time not biscuits BUT .... wait for it ..... big chunks of CAKE!!! And more chatting to people of course. A good day, a day out to relax and forget the work and things to do back home.

Our next meeting – Wed June 15<sup>th</sup> - Afternoon meal and talks at Sedbergh Methodist Church. Also a residential at Thornleigh 14-16 November 2022. More information on both later.”

## OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

**Mental Health First Aid** Adult 2 Days

**Fulwood Methodist Church** Watling Street Road, PR2 8EA

Wednesday 14th September and  
Thursday 15th September  
9am to 5pm

Brec Seaton and Ruth Jeffries  
seatonb@methodistchurch.org.uk  
0779 9900469

**What is Mental Health First Aid?**

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an internationally recognised training course which teaches people how to spot the signs and symptoms of mental ill health and provide help on a first aid basis. For more information visit [www.mhfaengland.org](http://www.mhfaengland.org).

**What does it cost?**

Usually the course costs £300, however if you are connected to the Methodist Church its been subsidised to £50 (none refundable) Please don't let the cost deter you. If you need help paying for the course please contact us for more information.

**How to book your place**

Follow the link to Eventbrite:  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/adult-mental-health-first-aid-tickets-338946898297>

MHFA England  
INSTRUCTOR  
MEMBER

# CUMBRIA METHODIST DISTRICT DIARY

## JULY 2022

- 17 18:00 South Lakes Circuit Farewell Service – Ulverston Methodist Church  
19 19:30 Shaping the future in North West & Mann Conversation – on Zoom  
20 09:30 New Places for New People Steering Group – on Zoom

## AUGUST 2022

- 20 14:30 SWCUA Welcome Service for Revd Kate Hunt – Beacon Hill Methodist Church, Barrow

## SEPTEMBER 2022

- 2 10:00 District Finance Committee meeting – on Zoom  
3 16:00 Kendal Circuit Welcome Service for Revd Tiras Dainty-Share – Arnside Methodist Church  
4 18:00 South Lakes Circuit Welcome Service for Revd Grace Cauldwell – Ulverston Methodist Church  
5 10:00 Superintendent's meeting – Stainton Methodist Church  
7 09:30 Welcome to Cumbria Ecumenical Induction – Church House, Penrith  
7 14:00 Methodist Induction – Church House, Penrith  
10 10:00 Representative Synod – Wigton Road, Methodist Church, Carlisle  
14 09:30 God for All Operations Group – on Zoom or Church House, Penrith  
17 10:00 Anna Chaplaincy Conference – Penrith Methodist Church  
24-26 Visit of Revd Graham Thompson, President of Conference  
28 10:00 Ministers Under 10s Group - VTBC  
30-1 3Generate – NEC, Birmingham

## OCTOBER 2022

- 4 10:00 District Probationers Committee Briefing – Penrith Methodist Church  
5 13:30 God for All Strategy Group – on Zoom or Church House, Penrith  
15 10:00 District Circuit Stewards' Forum – Tebay Methodist Church  
18 19:00 District Grants Committee – on Zoom  
19 10:00 District Policy Group – Stainton Methodist Church

## NOVEMBER 2022

- 12 10:30 District Property Stewards Meeting – VTBC  
16 10:00 District Sabbaticals Advisory Group – Rydal Hall  
16-18 Ministers Retreat – Rydal Hall  
23 10:00 Ministers Under 10s Group - VTBC

## DECEMBER 2022

- 13 13:30 God for All Operations Group – on Zoom or Church House, Penrith

## JANUARY 2023

- 14 Cumbria Ecumenical Ministry Development Day  
16 10:00 Ministers Under 10s Group – Penrith Methodist Church  
18-19 Superintendents Residential meeting – Thornleigh, Grange over Sands  
23 10:00 District Policy Group – on Zoom  
21 10:00 District Treasurers Meeting – on Zoom

## FEBRUARY 2023

- 16 13:30 GfA Strategy Group – on Zoom or Church House, Penrith  
28 10:30 District MDR Group – Stainton Methodist Church

## MARCH 2023

- 2 9:30 District Probationers Committee – Penrith Methodist Church  
15 Presbyteral Synod – Sedbergh Circuit

16 10:00 GfA Operations Group – on Zoom or Church House, Penrith  
21 10:00 District Policy Group – Stainton Methodist Church  
22 10:00 Ministers Under 10s Group - VTBC

**APRIL 2023**

22 Representative Synod – Kendal Circuit

**MAY 2023**

15 10:00 GfA Operations Group – on Zoom or Church House, Penrith  
17 10:00 Ministers Under 10s Group - VTBC

**JUNE 2023**

13 09:30 GfA Strategy Group – Church House, Penrith  
22-29 Conference – Birmingham

**JULY 2023**

4 10:00 District Policy Group – Stainton Methodist Church  
5 10:00 Ministers Under 10s Group - VTBC

*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.*

If anyone has any information that could be included in the next issue of the Newsletter, please send this to the District Administrator, Carolyn Dickinson.

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