



The **Methodist Church**
Plymouth & Exeter District

Minutes of the Spring Synod 2018

Held at Seaton Methodist Church, Seaton on Saturday, 21st April 2018

Synod opened at 10.00am with a service of Holy Communion led by the Chair of District, Revd. Graham Thompson. Focussing upon Christ's charge to Peter on the shore of Lake Galilee [John 21: 1-17], Graham called Synod to renew and hold dear the pastoral heart of the Church at a time when the growth of individualism within society at large puts our sense of community in Christ under threat.

The Chair of District welcomed members to Synod, especially those attending for the first time. He also welcomed Revd. Ruth Gee, a Past President of Conference and current Chair of the Methodist Council.

Revd. Stephen Santry, Superintendent of the Exeter Coast & Country Circuit welcomed Synod on behalf of the Circuit and Seaton church, with the expectation of a fruitful day.

Dispensations, Apologies and Letters of Greeting

Revd. Chris Brown
Revd. Ruth Goodland
Revd. Phil Griffin
Revd. Stephen Hill
Revd. Deborah Kirk
Revd. Robert Manning
Revd. Michael Parsons
Revd. Verity Phillips
Revd. Colin Roberts
Revd. Jane Sperring
Revd. Andrew Vidamour
Revd. Paul Wier

Elizabeth Lynn [Exeter Coast & Country]
Marilyn Lewis [Torbay]
Paul Violet [Exeter Coast & Country]
Caorlyn Lawrence [Representative to Methodist Council]

Synod agreed to send **Letters of Greeting** to:

Revd. John and Valerie Carne; Revd. Lynne Burgon; Revd. and Mrs. Stephen Hill; Revd. Amos Cresswell;
Revd. Laurie Smith

and **Letters of Condolence** to Mrs Iris Chapple; Mrs Joan Bolt; Mrs Irene Capstack; Mrs Elaine Peak and Mrs Wendy Forman.

Initial Business: The Synod Secretary highlighted a number of points to enable business to run smoothly.

Christian Communities in Conversation [CCiC]

Following the introduction to CCiC at last Synod, Jo Simpson, District Evangelism Enabler, reported the enthusiasm with which the residential Training Course involving 18 people had been received. She reported progress in equipping a network of people across the District to enable and encourage confidence in our capacity to initiate and carry forward conversations about faith with whoever wishes to engage with us. Revd. Andy Day [Plymouth & Devonport] spoke of his own excitement about the project, which is shared with those from his Circuit who attended the Course.

Another Course will take place in November and those interested should contact Jo Simpson.

Report from District Policy Committee

The full report is available in the 'Annual Reports to Synod' on the District website. The Secretary to the DPC, Dr. John Prebble, introduced the report to Conference and made the following recommendations:

1. The appointment of Ron Jordan (currently Assistant Synod Secretary) as Ecumenical Officer for Somerset following the resignation of Glenys Allinson.

Approved

2. The revised constitution of the Cornerstone LEP (Plymouth & Devonport).

Approved

3. The revised constitution for Churches Together in Somerset.

Approved

Dr. Prebble also presented the Approved Applications for authority to Preside at Holy Communion which are being made to the 2018 Conference:

For a First Year

24/11	Bude and Holsworthy	Muriel Hodges	L
24/11	Bude and Holsworthy	Clive Smale	L
24/20	Ilfracombe and Barnstaple	Martin Reardon	L

For a Second Year

24/10	South Devon	Rachel Mitchell	L
24/11	Bude & Holsworthy	Michael Reeves	L
24/11	Bude & Holsworthy	Courtney Drew	L
24/16	Tiverton & Wellington	Anne Browse	L
24/16	Tiverton & Wellington	Hilary Young	L
24/20	Ilfracombe & Barnstaple	Sylvia Edwards	L
24/22	South Molton & Ringsash	Gloria Manning	L
24/22	South Molton & Ringsash	Arthur Mildon	L
24/23	Torrige	Elsie Potter	L
24/24	West Devon	Daisy Bray	L
24/24	West Devon	Barry Searle	L
24/25	West Somerset	Margaret Lintern	L
24/27	Ringsash	Colin Rice	L

For a Third Year

24/20	Ilfracombe & Barnstaple	Geoffrey Harding	L
24/20	Ilfracombe & Barnstaple	Brenda Prentice	L
24/20	Torrige	David Ley	L

The District Treasurer, Rachell Mitchell, presented the Accounts for 2016-17 and sought approval for the Budget and Assessments for 2018-19. The Accounts 2016-17; the Budget and Assessments for 2018-19 were approved.

The District Treasurer reported a **reduction of £17k in the District Assessment** for the Connexion. This was reflected in the reductions in Circuit Assessments, although the agreed arrangements to ameliorate any big changes across Circuits meant some Circuits saw a rise and others a reduction.

She also asked Synod to note that the allocation to **the Cuttack Fund** was not for direct assistance to work in the Diocese but to enable those who would not otherwise be able to travel between our District and the Cuttack Diocese. The fund would be used in both the District and the Diocese.

Rev. Paul Booth noted that while there were some reductions in some Circuit Assessments and that there was an overall reduction for the District as a result of Connexional changes, some Assessments continued to rise at a time when membership rolls were falling. He asked that the District Policy Committee examine ways of reducing assessments in the District.

Proposed: That the District Policy Committee look at ways of reducing Circuit Assessments and report to Synod.

Proposed: Rev. Paul Booth Seconded: Rev. Mark Lawrence

The proposal was agreed by Synod by a show of hands.

Mission and Ministry in Covenant

The Chair introduced Rev. Ruth Gee and invited her to speak about the report *Mission and Ministry in Covenant*. A full copy of the report is available on the District website.

Rev. Gee explained that the main proposal of the report is to enable the interchangeability of presbyteral ministry between the Methodist Church and the Church of England. She said this was important as a step towards the unity of Christ's body the Church. It is also important in the context of interdenominational relationships within the United Kingdom. She emphasised that disunity impedes God's mission and that unity and mission go hand in hand.

Rev. Gee went on to detail the reasoning and proposals in the report explaining that the report had been to the General Synod of the Church of England where it had been warmly welcomed alongside a request for further urgent work on two aspects of the report. She stressed that the proposals asked for hard work and significant steps by both churches.

In respect of 'interchangability of presbyteral ministry' she underlined that there was no suggestion that presbyters ordained in the Methodist Church should undergo re-ordination.

The report would now be presented to the 2018 Conference with a request that it be sent to Districts and Circuits for consultation in order that the 2019 Conference might determine to send the proposals to the two churches for decision.

Questions:

Rev. Dave Martin asked for clarification that the conversation was between the British Methodist Conference and the Church of England. Rev. Gee agreed that it was and that other conversations are being held with the Church of Scotland and the Church in Wales.

Rev. Stuart Innals asked by whose invitation it was envisaged interchangeability might take place. Rev. Gee said the proposals honoured the polity of the two churches so the invitation in an Anglican context would be from the Diocese and Parish and in Methodism by the Circuit.

Synod divided into groups for discussion. Groups were asked what questions they have and how they were going to progress this conversation in their own context. Synod will return to these issues at a future date.

In the afternoon session of Synod **Dave Watson, Covenant Champion**, [a regional post jointly appointed by the Methodist and Anglican Church] urged members to read and share the report. He said that he is speaking to Superintendants individually to determine what further action to take.

LUNCH

Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund

Revd. Graham Shaw spoke about the work of the Fund which had grown out of the need of people in poverty and need following major changes in land ownership and use. It began as the distribution of 'relief feeding'. This need continues. The Fund is actioned at ground level by local pastors and so makes a direct and efficient contribution with very low overhead costs.

Graham offered to address any World Church or other meetings who wished to know more. Information was distributed to members of Synod.

Thy Kingdom Come

Revd. Dave Martin introduced a call to prayer led by the Archbishop of Canterbury and shared by other denominations, including the Methodist Church. The call is for a programme of prayer for 10 days between Ascension and Pentecost. Dave spoke about the strong network of prayer across the country.

Synod was told of plans in Wellington and Tiverton, Tavistock, Torridge [including Wooton Campsite] and Newton Abbot to respond to this call.

General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR]

Using information available on the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes [TMCP] website, the Chair of District highlighted the work being undertaken between the Connexional Office and TMCP to meet the requirements of the incoming GDPR. GDPR is effective from 25 May 2018. He recommended that churches and Circuits look at the TMCP webinar on the TMCP website which lists 9 steps which should now be addressed.

Graham stressed that the requirement for **Data Controllers** was already in place and had been since the 1986 legislation when it was agreed that TMCP and the Connexional Office fulfil this role for the whole Connexion. This does not prevent churches and Circuits asking someone to be the focus for work to secure information but they should not be titled Data Protection officers, as this is a particular role with statutory requirements.

- Guidance is being rolled out by TMCP. The expectation of the Information Commissioner [IC] is that a plan for compliance will be in place by 25 May 2018. The TMCP guidance amounts to such a plan and has been shared with the IC.
- Legislation bringing GDPR into British Law has yet to be passed in Parliament.
- TMCP guidance is bespoke for the Methodist Church. There are targeted templates for use by churches and Circuits and TMCP will host a regional training event.
- It is wise to progress a Data Mapping exercise [information on the TMCP website]
- Templates for Privacy Policies, retention and responding to data requests will be put on the TMCP website.
- Information and advice about the legal basis on which specific information should be held is given on the TMCP website.

- Consent to hold information is only one basis for legally holding information and is not always the first resort. Since the Methodist Church is a membership organisation it already holds some information by right.
- We await information about Directories, although the TMCP website holds information under the current legislation which it is wise to check is being followed.
- Any computers used in conducting church business need to be password protected. Some information needs to be encrypted and work is going on to establish how this will be done.

A number of detailed questions were raised by Synod members and responded to by Graham.

Ecumenical Matters

The Chair of District asked the Synod to approve the dissolution of the Ecumenical Partnership at Flavel Church in Dartmouth. An initiative, taken originally by Revd. Philip Nevard of the URC and supported subsequently by Revd. Jerry Cook and Revd. Dr. John Haley, has successfully grown a Pioneer ministry at Flavel which will now be best nurtured within the URC. The building is owned by the URC. Both Jerry Cook and John Haley spoke in support of the work at Flavel. **Synod unanimously supported the proposal.**

District Reports

The Chair of District proposed the adoption of the reports before Synod in the booklet 'Spring Synod 2018 Annual Reports. **The reports were approved nem com.**

Appointments

The Chair of District proposed the following appointments with effect from 1st September 2018:

- Revd. Andrew Sails as Ecumenical Officer [Devon] **Approved**
- Ms. Jane Allin as Assistant Synod Secretary **Approved**
- Revd. Dr. Stephen Mosedale as Candidates Secretary **Approved**
- Mr. Ron Jordan had earlier been approved as Ecumenical Officer [Somerset] on the recommendation of the DPC.

Good News Stories

The Chair of District invited any Good News Stories.

- ✓ Revd. Alison Richardson promoted the work of the Equalities and Diversities Group.
- ✓ Mrs. Daisy Bray spoke about the flourishing work at Winkleigh in West Devon, especially among young people.
- ✓ Revd. Dave Martin, Central Hall, Plymouth, encouraged people to apply for grants by describing a project for developing youth work at Central Hall that was both supported and encouraged by the Connexional Grants Team.
- ✓ Val Marriott spoke about the growing work with a 5-8 year old Kids Club at Ivybridge in which parents with little or no experience of church were involved.
- ✓ Revd. Pam Stranks celebrated the appointment of a Community Worker at Horrabridge
- ✓ Deacon Becky Lovett described the growing work with Messy Church and young people in Axminster.

Farewells and Moves

The Chair of District gave news of all the moves and changes in the District (subject to Conference), thanking all those who contributed in many different ways to the life of the District.

- ✓ Revd. Dave Martin is 'sitting down'. He will continue to live in the District.
- ✓ Revd. Jonathan Froggatt is moving within the District to Braunton in the Ilfracombe & Barnstaple Circuit.
- ✓ Revd. Beth McDowell is moving to be 'without appointment' but remaining in the District.
- ✓ Revd. Bruce Sawyer is moving to Durham.
- ✓ Revd. Pam Stranks is moving to be 'without appointment' to Chippenham.
- ✓ Revd. Martin Keenan is moving to the Christchurch & Wimborne Circuit.
- ✓ Revd. Robert Manning is sitting down. He will continue to live in the District.
- ✓ Revd. Stephen Hill is taking a recuperative year after major illness.
- ✓ Revd. Andrew Vidamour is moving to Northam in the Torridge Circuit.
- ✓ Revd. Stephen Mares is sitting down. He is moving to South London.

Celebrations

Revd. Yangsung Yi; Revd. Philip Griffin and Deacon Linda Brown will be ordained at the 2018 Conference in Nottingham.

Retiring Officers

- Dr. Jon Curtis of the Discipleship & Ministries Learning Network is moving to a new post with the Diocese of Exeter,
- Mrs. Ruth Sorenson, Finance Officer, is moving to another post
- Mr. Ron Jordan is retiring as Assistant Synod Secretary
- Revd. Mike Parsons is stepping down as Candidates Secretary
- Mr. Howard Franklin is stepping down as a World Church representative
- Revd. Robert Manning is stepping down as Sabbaticals Secretary
- Mrs. Glenys Allison is stepping down as Ecumenical Officer [Somerset]
- Mrs. Marjorie Ashley is stepping down as Church Membership Officer
- Dr. John Prebble is stepping down as Secretary of the District Policy Committee
- Revd. Simon Leigh is stepping down as Deputy Chair of District

Revd. Canon Graham Thompson
Chair of District
Plymouth and Exeter District

David Clitheroe
Synod Secretary
Plymouth and Exeter District