

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN WALES – THE WALES SYNOD

Seventh Meeting of the Synod held on Saturday 19 September 2015

at Theatre Hafren, Newtown, Powys

Present: Rev Dr Stephen Wigley (Chair) Rev Rosemarie Clarke (Synod Secretary)
124 members and visitors as recorded elsewhere

Apologies/Dispensations: as recorded by the Secretary

Opening devotions were led by Rev Irfan John and the Urdu Fellowship.

1. WELCOME

Rev Sue Lawler, Superintendent Minister, Welshpool & Bro Hafren Circuit, welcomed the Synod to the Circuit. The Synod held a time of silence in memory of Revd Donald Knighton, former Chair of the South Wales District who had died since Synod had last met.

The Chair, Rev Dr Stephen Wigley, welcomed the following ministers newly stationed in the Wales Synod:

Rev Gordon Gresswell Deacon Philip Osborne Rev Judith Holliman Rev Robert Balfour

Rev Bob Thomas Rev David Ray Rev Ruth Lownsbrough Rev Nick Oborski

Rev Dee Yeadon Rev Phyl Fanning Deacon Stephen Richardson

And those who had moved station within the Wales Synod:

Rev Teddy Kalongo Rev Alf Williams

The Rev Bob Thomas briefly responded on their behalf.

New lay members of Synod and One Programme Participants, Roxanne Bainbridge and Fiona Smith, and ecumenical visitors, Rev Sally Thomas (URC) and Rev Steve Willson (CinW) were also welcomed to the Synod.

Synod was informed that the young people of the Synod, meeting elsewhere in the building in Youth Forum, would be joining the Synod for particular items of business during the day.

2. ADMINISTRATION

The Synod Secretary announced notices of a general and administrative nature.

(a) An offering for the Methodist Ministers' Children's Relief Association was to be taken as the Synod retired for lunch. A total of £313 (some of which was gift aided) was later collected.

(b) Members were requested to collect the Circuit bags before leaving

(c) Following discussion, and in order that Synod should not clash with Cymru Circuit Meeting, it was agreed that next year's Synod would meet 17th September and at the same venue.

(c) Correspondence

The Secretary was directed to send greetings to: Rev Roger Hides and Deacon Sara Windsor-Hides

Richard Hodgson Dorothy Cresswell Stan Mountford Margaret Evans

Rev Donald Wright Luke Curran

3. APPOINTMENTS TO SYNOD

The Synod agreed the appointments of representatives and officers as set out in the Handbook and amendment sheet. A reasoned statement for the appointment of Rev Cathy Gale as Assistant Chair (South East) which had been previously circulated was accepted and Ms Gale was formally commissioned by means of a short liturgy.

4. ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONFERENCE 2016

Representative requirements were: 3 presbyters; 1 deacon, 4 lay people.

Those elected were: Rev Rosemarie Clarke Rev Susan Lawler Rev Catherine Lewis

Deacon Philip Osborne Ms Michele Jones Mr Graeme Russell

Mr Manu Tuipulotu Mrs Mary Williams

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 13 SEPTEMBER 2014

The minutes had been distributed and were agreed to be a true record with one minor spelling correction.

6. REPORT ON CONFERENCE 2015

Manu Tuipulotu, first time representative to Conference, gave an account of his impressions of the experience. Rev Les Jones highlighted the One Mission Report and his role as Synod representative to the One Mission Forum. The Chair reported on the Past Cases Review, the associated report *Courage, Cost and Hope* and the work emanating from that report to bring change in policy, practice and most importantly, culture. The Synod Secretary spoke of the themes which the President and Vice President offered as a challenge to the Methodist people and the personal impact of the worship and evangelism opportunities during the week, including news of the forthcoming visit of the President and Vice President to the Synod in March 2016.

7. AMELIA METHODIST TRUST FARM

Karen Turnbull, Director of the trust, explained about the history and ethos of the farm and the facilities available for community groups and the public. Partnership with other organisations and the provision of alternative education programmes was having a lasting effect on young lives; a moving poem written by one grateful participant emphasised this eloquently. Ms Turnbull shared the vision for the continuing work of the farm and the need for fundraising and volunteer assistance to make this a reality.

8. NEWS FROM THE CIRCUITS

Swansea and Gower Circuit –Homeless Project, Ogof Adullam Mr Huw Davies updated Synod on the growing work here meeting the extensive needs of prison leavers, asylum seekers and addicts. He emphasised the need for the work to be bathed in prayer before and after, and the benefits of working alongside other organisations. New developments in the work include the use of *The Journey* (a programme similar to Christianity Explored) in response to requests from guests.

Gwent Hills and Vales Circuit – Outreach Week is ‘a challenge for every church each year’ in the Gwent Hills and Vales circuit, which was formed in response to the challenge to regroup for mission. Rev Cathy Gale presented a collection of slides which demonstrated churches going out ‘beyond the walls of worship’ into the community. Litter picking, barbecues, a settee outside a church to sit and chat, and line dancing were some of the new ventures explored.

9. MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIP CONSULTATION

Rev Chris Gray gave details of the planned consultations in the north, south and west of Wales with an invitation for anyone interested to be encouraged to attend, and for the invitation to be spread widely in the circuits

10. BENEFIT SANCTIONS

Rachel Lampard, Vice President Designate and a member of the Joint Public Issues Team addressed Synod about Benefit Sanctions. Outlining the process and the unfair impact, especially on the mentally ill. Members of Synod were encouraged to protest by writing to their MPs.

11. MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP LEARNING NETWORK

Amy Adams, Director introduced the new Leading Worship and Preaching Course as an integrated course using blended learning. Each circuit was encouraged to create explorer groups for theological reflection.

12. NEWS FROM THE CIRCUITS

Mid Glamorgan Mission Circuit. Paul Donnison brought news of the Aberfan Youth Centre, mothballed for some years, which looks likely to find new community use including providing a home for a new scout troop, as a result of the work done in engaging with the community by the project manager of a new link road for the town.

Newport and Lower Wye Circuit. Preben Anderson highlighting the ministry of St Julian’s in Newport endorsed the work of Prospects in enabling those with learning difficulties to participate fully in worship as they are able.

Updates on the impact of displaying the Methodist Art Collection in **Wrexham Circuit** was given by Richard Sharples, and of the development of Engedi Arts, a fresh expression of church in **Conwy & Prestatyn Circuit** by John Anderson.

13. ECUMENICAL MATTERS

Revds Sally Thomas and Steve Willson presented a summary of the origins and development of the Commission for the Covenanted Churches in Wales including the proposal for a Gathering of Covenant partners in 2016 which culminated in an opportunity for questions and comments from Synod members.

14. REPORT FROM POLICY COMMITTEE

Synod received a paper (previously distributed) which summarised the work undertaken during the year.

15. REPORT ON THE WORK OF Y CYNGOR (previously distributed)

Synod received a paper (previously distributed) which summarised the work undertaken during the year

16. METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN

Synod received a paper (previously distributed). Mrs Ronnie Dean, newly appointed representative from the Wales Synod to the Methodist Women in Britain Forum from 2016 (to succeed Mary Williams) was introduced and briefly addressed Synod.

17. YOUTH FORUM

The Youth Forum shared details of the programme they had followed during the day, and the discussions that they had shared which included a focus on prayer. Their presentation included a tree made up of hands – the outlines for which had been gathered from members of Synod and Youth Forum during refreshment breaks. Every person present had previously been invited to write on a card something which they wanted prayer for, and these were exchanged with the encouragement to continue to pray throughout the year.

Synod closed with worship led by Trish Earlam and Abby Watterson supported by members of the Youth Forum and the Chair and Synod Secretary