

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN WALES – THE WALES SYNOD

**Twelfth Meeting of the Synod held on Saturday 15 September 2018
at Theatr Hafren, Newtown, Powys**

Present: Rev Dr Stephen Wigley (Chair) Rev Rosemarie Clarke (Synod Secretary)
106 members and 4 visitors as recorded elsewhere
Apologies/Dispensations: as recorded by the Secretary

Opening devotions were led by Rev Cathy Gale assisted by Revs Stephen Boxall and Alana Lawrence.

1. WELCOME

The Chair, Rev Dr Stephen Wigley, welcomed the following ministers newly stationed in the Wales Synod: Revs Rosemary Davies, Alexis Mahoney, Hee Gon Moon, Phil Osborne, Margaret Adams, Kathleen Baldwin, Robert Gee, Christopher Gray John Howard, Eleanor Reddington, and Deacon Vivienne Gray. Rev Rosemary Davies briefly responded on their behalf. Gordon Gresswell who had undertaken new responsibilities within the Synod: new lay members of Synod and visitors, Rev Sally Thomas (URC and Cytûn) and Mrs Nina Rice (Action for Children) were also welcomed to the Synod.

The young people of the Synod, met elsewhere in the building in Youth Forum.

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 £402.50 including gift aid was later collected.
- (b) Members were requested to collect the Circuit bags before leaving
- (c) An explanation was given regarding the format of the attendance list which was then circulated for members to sign. The Secretary shared an e-mail received from Rev Bev Ramsden who had received a dispensation from attendance at Synod. St John's Church in Llandudno were hosting an art installation of the moon over their harvest weekend as part of LLAWN06 arts festival; people gazing at the moon were also viewing the window displays which told God's story of creation and taking a leaflet explaining the story of salvation. Hundred of people had already been welcomed into the church to view the installation.
- (d) Correspondence

The Secretary was directed to send greetings to: Rev Alan and Mrs Rosemary Cliff, Rev Dr Wesley Parfitt, Linda and Ken Bailey, Mrs Mary Williams, Miss Ann Cashmore and Mrs Judy Lister.

3. APPOINTMENTS TO SYNOD

The Synod agreed the appointments of representatives and officers as set out in the Handbook and amendment sheet with the additional circuit representative Keith Harvey (Newport and Lower Wye), and representatives to Conference 2018; Martin Rees, Emily Roe, Dr Jean Ware. Revs Roy Watson, Catherine Lewis, Gareth Edwards and Stephen Boxall were appointed as Scrutineers. At this point voting forms for Synod representatives to Conference 2019 were distributed.

4. ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONFERENCE 2019

Representative requirements were: 3 presbyters and 4 lay people.

Those elected were:	Rev Rosemarie Clarke	Rev Kofi Amissah	Rev Les Jones
	Ms Michele Jones	Mr Martin Rees	Ms Emily Roe
	Mr John Birch		

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 16 SEPTEMBER 2017

The minutes had been on the website and had been attested by the Secretary and the Chair before being submitted to the Secretary of Conference. There were no matters arising.

6. REPORT ON CONFERENCE 2018

The Synod watched a video which gave an overview of the work of the Conference and the presidential theme for the year of radical grace, transforming hope. Martin Rees gave an account of his impressions of the experience as a first-time representative to Conference. Reviewing the history of the Anglican Methodist Covenant, the Chair outlined the current proposals ministry and mission in Covenant.

7. MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Chair summarised the discussion at Conference 2018, and the Synod engaged in small group conversations on what they had heard and related questions drawn from material used at Conference.

8. GOOD NEWS FROM THE CIRCUITS

Newport and Lower Wye Circuit. Rev Ruth Lownsborough shared news of an ecumenical youth group keen to engage in evangelism amongst their peers who were learning together how to share their faith in a venture called 'Mission Academy Live'.

Swansea and Gower. Rev Howard Long brought news of the Methodist Church in Penlan, a most deprived area of Swansea, who are working in partnership with Grace and Truth Church, Interplay, Mum's with Passion (an after school club) and Action for Children. With the help of gardening groups from across the circuit the land surrounding the church has been successfully transformed into a Community Garden.

Ceredigion. Rev Roger Hides spoke of a recent sabbatical visit to South Korea. There are up to thirty students from South Korea currently worshipping in Aberystwyth and involved in the life of the church. The trip to South Korea had enabled reunions with past and present students and opportunities to meet their families, as well as attendance at fervent prayer meetings and worship. As a result of the experience a new early morning prayer meeting had begun at St Paul's in Aberystwyth.

Conwy and Prestatyn. Mr Gareth Williams shared news of an ecumenical event, Gobaith Conwy, which had been organised with the support of Scripture Union Cymru. The free event which was held in the grounds of a school used biblical themes each day, with all age presentations of Bible stories, literature and lots of free activities the event accommodated 300-400 visitors and has provided much for future work to build on.

9. SYNOD ENABLER

Synod enabler (Culturally diverse congregations), Rev Irfan John with Rev Les Jones had led a group of fourteen young people from the Urdu congregations on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The young people presented a video of their trip and shared how deeply meaningful the experience had been. Thanks were expressed to Synod for their support.

10. UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING

Sandra Oborski, Safeguarding Officer (south), reported on the advanced safeguarding module which replaces the Leadership module and the extension of those required to complete it. Synod was reminded that training should be refreshed every four years. Victoria Anderson was welcomed to the Synod, as Synod Safeguarding Officer based in the north of the Synod

11. UPDATE FROM LP SECRETARY

Peter Swindale drew the Synod's attention to the new requirement for peer review of Local Preachers, and invited circuits to notify him of any existing arrangements in that regard, Attention was also drawn to the change in requirements of the training of worship leaders.

12. UPDATE FROM THE LEARNING NETWORK

Amy Adams, Gareth Bennett and Delyth Wyn Davies spoke of a deliberate focus on evangelism and reported on a variety of resources available or offered via the circuit bags. The Synod was led in conversation about the Work of God Together as an introduction to the newly revitalised resource and invited to share their learning experience to contribute to a research project.

13. 'LETTERS FROM BETHLEHEM'

Rev John Howard, former mission partner, spoke of the time he had spent in the Middle East, mostly in the West Bank, living in an area of Bethlehem called Bet Jala, and shared something of the challenges, good news stories and surprises that he had encountered.

14. ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Mrs Nina Rice (Action for Children) reported that over £60,000 had been raised in Wales over the last year and thanked Synod for their efforts. Notice was given that next year (2019) would be the 150th Anniversary of the setting up of the charity, then known as National Children's Home, and a bumper year of celebrations was anticipated.

15. REPORT FROM POLICY COMMITTEE

A paper which summarised the work undertaken during the year had been circulated previously. The Synod confirmed the recommendations of the Synod Policy Committee for the closure of churches at Victoria, Blaenavon, Clydach, Aberbeeg (Gwent hills and Vales), Llanidloes (Welshpool Bro Hafren), Ffrwd (Wrexham) and Gwern y Saint (Newport and Lower Wye).

16. REPORT ON THE WORK OF Y CYNGOR

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

17. METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN

The Synod received reports of past and future events, as well as the work of the forum whose task group aims to support the provision of equipment and training to combat the effects of hearing impairment.

18. CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN WALES SYNOD AND SYNOD CYMRU

Mr Graham Illingworth provided a background information to the conversations, introduced the proposals under consideration and announced a period of consultation in the circuits, with the expectation that firm proposals would be brought to a Representative Synod in Spring 2019. After conversations in small groups, and an opportunity for views to be expressed to Synod as a whole, the Synod voted overwhelmingly that the conversations should continue.

19. EDI MATTERS

Rev Delyth Liddell presented an EDI statement which underlined the intention to be a welcoming and not just a non - discriminatory community, The Synod unanimously adopted the statement:

'The Wales Synod of the Methodist Church values every human being as created in God's image, equal in dignity and worth and part of the whole people of God. The Synod aims to encourage within the churches and circuits of Wales an environment which respects and values every person and reflects the grace and love of God so enabling each of us to achieve our full potential as a child of God through full participation in the life of the Church.

Wales Synod will comply with all relevant legislation from the law as well as The Methodist Conference, developing our understanding of the issues surrounding equality and diversity through training and discernment and seeking to be a place where the transformational love of God is embodied and life in all its fullness is a gift which is offered to all people. There are no distinctions based on race or ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation. Family circumstance, social or economic class, age or disability, or any discrimination that is a bar to this gift of God.

The Wales Synod encourages the churches and circuits to reflect the radical and eternal love of God who liberates from oppression and fear and welcomes all with radical hospitality into the fullness of life of the Kingdom of God; a place of justice and peace, mercy and compassion worked out here on earth and throughout eternity.'

18. GOOD NEWS FROM THE CIRCUITS

South West Wales. Rev Lorette Hinson shared news of the Angel Festival held at Carew Methodist Church. The angels were made from recycled materials and the festival elicited many conversations in the community.

Cardiff. Rev Nick Oborski outlined the work of the Trinity Centre in working towards a one-stop centre for refugees and asylum seekers. The scope of the work already achieved, the opportunities to partner with outside agencies and the challenges faced in a listed building in need of much upgrading.

19. MATTERS FROM MOMENTWM AND YOUTH FORUM

Members of the Youth Forum shared something of the discussions they had engaged in during the day.

20. CLOSING WORSHIP Mr Gareth Bennett invited the Synod to leave a message of encouragement to the Young People by chalking a message on the slabs outside the theatre (permission given), and led the Synod in a closing prayer.

21. THE NEXT MEETINGS of the representative session of the Synod were confirmed as 30th March 2019 and 14th September 2019, both at Theatr Hafren, Newtown, Powys.