

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN WALES – THE WALES SYNOD

Thirteenth Meeting of the Synod held on Saturday 14 September 2019

at Theatr Hafren, Newtown, Powys

Present: Rev Dr Stephen Wigley (Chair) Rev Rosemarie Clarke (Synod Secretary)
109 members and 8 visitors as recorded elsewhere

Apologies/Dispensations: as recorded by the Secretary

Opening devotions were led by Ministers and members of the Swansea and Gower Circuit.

1. WELCOME

The Chair, Rev Dr Stephen Wigley, welcomed the following ministers newly stationed in the Wales Synod: Revs John Hughes, Janet Park, Rachel Frank, Michael Hall (RAF Chaplain) and Deacon Jon Miller. Rev Janet Park briefly responded on their behalf. Welcome was also extended to Rev Judith Holliman who had moved station within the Synod: new lay members of Synod and visitors including Mrs Nikki Booth (Action for Children) and Mr Tom Donoghue (Evangelism and Growth). supernumerary presbyters Revs John Payne, Ken Morgan, Peter Barber, Graeme and Elaine Halls were welcomed to Synod in their absence.

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 £394 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.
- (d) Correspondence

The Secretary was directed to send greetings to: Rev Roy and Mrs Tanya Watson, Mrs Bridget Gibbs, Rev Rob Balfour, Rev Bill Jones, Rev Hee Gon Moon, Rev Jeffrey and Mrs June Morgan, Rev Laurie Smith and Mrs Margaret Evans.

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 representatives to Conference 2019; Mr Martin Rees and Ms Emily Roe. Revs Gareth Edwards, Anthony Gregory and Stephen Boxall were appointed as Scrutineers. Sufficient lay representatives and two presbyteral representatives to Conference 2020 had been nominated by the due date. These were agreed en bloc. At this point voting forms for the remaining place for a presbyteral representative to Conference 2020 were distributed.

4. ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONFERENCE 2020

Representative requirements were: 3 presbyters and 4 lay people.

Those elected were: Rev Dr Kofi Amisssah Rev Rosemarie Clarke Rev Anne (Alana) Lawrence
Ms Emily Barry Mrs Wendy Barwise Miss Linda Davies
Mr Rob Talamai

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 15 SEPTEMBER 2018

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. The Synod's attention was drawn to the reply declining the memorial, relating to Israel Palestine, which was sent to Conference 2019.

6. REPORT ON CONFERENCE 2019

The Synod watched a video which gave an overview of the work of the Conference and the presidential theme for the year: 'So what's the story?'. Mr John Birch gave an account of his impressions of the experience as a first-time representative to Conference. The Chair spoke about some of the material which had been discussed at Conference 2019 including reports relating to the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment (JACEI), the diaconate, and Marriage and Relationships which was to be discussed later in the agenda. He also introduced the cuddly toy lion which every District had been given, by 3 Generate at Conference, to encourage them to 'Be Courageous'. The lion later joined the prayer album to travel around the synod as the prayer initiative moved from circuit to circuit.

7. EVANGELISM AND GROWTH

Mr Tom Donoghue (Cliff College Evangelist working with young people) representing the Connexional Evangelism and Growth shared the basis for the *Connexional Evangelism and Growth Strategy* and the consultations across the connexion which have helped form it. Synod broke into small group for conversations on the theme – What good news do you have to share?

8. SYNOD PRAYER INITIATIVE ‘If my people...’

Rev Paul Donnison reported on this initiative to pray for renewal, mission and evangelism by inviting testimony about the experience of prayer across the Synod.

9. 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 Bistre (Lane End, Buckley), Bryn (Alltami) both in Buckley and Deeside Circuit, Tregaron (Ceredigion Circuit) and Aberfan (Mid Glamorgan Mission Circuit).

10. REPORT ON THE WORK OF Y CYNGOR

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

11. METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN

The Synod received reports of past and future events.

12. UPDATE ON CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN WALES SYNOD AND SYNOD CYMRU

The Chair reported that Synod Cymru had committed to undertake a review of every church, ardal and ministerial appointment to consider a mission plan and the resourcing thereof. A significant piece of work which it was envisaged would enable reflection on a viable plan for the future of Methodist work in the medium of Welsh.

13. UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING

Ms Vicky Anderson, Safeguarding Officer (north), thanked members for their diligence in promptly providing the training details required for the Independent Enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse to meet a tight deadline, and for their good record across the connexion in ensuring all ministers had up to date DBS disclosures.

Attention was drawn to the updated safeguarding policies and procedures, as churches and circuits come to their annual review of policy, which can be accessed via the Methodist Church website.

14. ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Mrs Nikki Booth (Action for Children) invited members to be part of the Choose Childhood campaign to celebrate 150th Anniversary of the setting up of the charity, then known as National Children’s Home.

15. PRE- LUNCH NOTICES

Rev Hugh-John Wilson brought news of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2021.

Mr Tom Oborski is to run in the Cardiff Marathon for the benefit of the Trinity Centre, Cardiff.

16. EDI MATTERS

A survey enquiring into EDI awareness and the use of the EDI toolkit had been distributed at the start of Synod and analysed over lunchtime. Rev Alana Lawrence, considering the results of the survey, challenged circuits and churches to go beyond adjustments relating to age and disability to ensure all are welcome, and commended the adoption of the EDI statement presented to Synod in September 2018.

17. MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIPS CONFERENCE REPORT 2019 ‘God in Love unites us’

Synod watched a video featuring the task group who had prepared the report and their journey alongside each other through that process. The Chair summarised the recommendations from Conference 2019, relating to human relationships, sexuality and marriage which amongst other things would permit the registration of churches for same sex marriages and allow Methodist ministers to officiate at such marriages. These recommendations come to the churches, circuits and synods as provisional legislation allowing opportunity for reflection, consideration and discussion before votes at Spring Synods and Conference 2020. Discussion took place regarding the availability and suitability of materials to aid consultation in the circuits and churches. Members committed to share their experience in engaging with the subject to spread good practice.

18. VOCATION STRATEGY

Revs Cathy Gale and Chris Gray introduced the strategy as a matter for serious discussion and prayer and shared the hope of appointing a vocations officer and a group to take the strategy forward. Members were encouraged to talk about and encourage all to explore their calling to lay and ordained offices within the church. Vocations days are to be held to explore ordained ministry on Saturday 1st February 2020 (in South Wales) and 7th-9th February in North Wales to coincide and be included in the visit of the President and Vice President of Conference. A Vocations Sunday is planned for 19th April 2020.

19. GOOD NEWS FROM THE CIRCUITS

Swansea and Gower: Rev Andy Walker brought news of ecumenical ministry with families and young people on the Gower Peninsular, offering to share sessional material for various gatherings.

Vale of Glamorgan: Revs Carole and Phil Challis had run the Bible Society's 'Bible Course' over breakfast and spoke of the value of engaging with the big picture of the Bible which had been appreciated by longstanding Local Preachers and newcomers alike.

19. MATTERS FROM MOMENTWM

Synod enjoyed a video of Momentwm youth events on the theme of courageous (Youth President's theme for the year). News of Youth events was shared: Big Day Out February 2020 half term event; 17-19 July 2020 Youth Camp. Applications were invited from 17-23 year olds for an exchange visit to Jefferson City, Missouri sometime during July – August 2020.

20. CLOSING WORSHIP Closing worship was led by ministers and members of South West Wales Circuit.

21. THE NEXT MEETINGS of the representative session of the Synod were confirmed as 25th April 2020 at Newtown Methodist Church and 12th September 2020 at Theatr Hafren, Newtown, Powys.