

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN WALES – THE WALES SYNOD

Seventh Meeting of the Synod held on Saturday 19 September 2016

at Theatre Hafren, Newtown, Powys

Present: Rev Dr Stephen Wigley (Chair) Rev Rosemarie Clarke (Synod Secretary)
121 members and 5 visitors as recorded elsewhere

Apologies/Dispensations: as recorded by the Secretary

Opening devotions were led by Rev Cathy Gale, Deacon Jon Miller and a team of young people from across Wales recently returned from the first leg of an exchange trip organised with the Methodist Church in Jamaica.

1. WELCOME

The Chair, Rev Dr Stephen Wigley, welcomed the following ministers new stationed in the Wales Synod: Marty Presdee, Stephen Boxall, Kate McClelland, Stephen Kingsnorth, Linda Woollacott and Rosemary Nunn, and DLMN staff member Gareth Bennett.

New lay members of Synod and visitors, Rev Sally Thomas (URC) and Jo Hibbard (Connexional Team) were also welcomed to the Synod. Rev Kate McClelland briefly responded on their behalf.

The young people of the Synod, who had been present for the opening devotions moved from the auditorium to meet elsewhere in the building as the Youth Forum, returning to join 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 £403.20 (£215 of which was gift aided) was later collected.
- (b) Members were requested to collect the Circuit bags before leaving
- (c) Synod agreed that the text of a proposed memorial to Conference which had been distributed on their arrival be scheduled for discussion at 2-15pm
- (d) Correspondence

The Secretary was directed to send greetings to: Mrs Val Peaden and family, Rev Tom Davies, Rev Gordon Greswell, Rev Sue O'Hare and Rev Alan Stubbs

Mrs Pat Preston was congratulated on her appointment as Chair of the Wesley Guild's National Executive Committee.

3. APPOINTMENTS TO SYNOD

At this point Rev Rosemarie Clarke assumed the chair of the synod. A reasoned statement supporting the re-invitation of Rev Dr Stephen Wigley to serve as Chair of the Wales Synod had been previously circulated. No opposition to that recommendation had been received by the appointed time. Synod thereby adopted the recommendation of the nomination committee that Revd Dr Stephen D Wigley be invited to serve as Chair of the Wales Synod for a further two years from September 2018. The Synod broke into spontaneous applause.

Dr Wigley resumed the chair and Synod agreed the appointments of representatives and officers as set out in the Handbook and amendment sheet. Revs Roy Watson, Catherine Lewis and Mrs Anne Davies were appointed as Scrutineers. At this point voting forms for Synod representatives to Conference 2017 were distributed.

4. ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONFERENCE 2017

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

Those elected were:	Rev Rosemarie Clarke	Rev Gareth Edwards	Rev Chris Gray
	Deacon Lisa Rathbone	Mrs Michele Jones	Dr Jean Ware
	Mr Manu Tuipulotu	Mrs Janice Ross	

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 19 SEPTEMBER 2015

The minutes had been distributed and were agreed to be a true record.

6. REPORT ON CONFERENCE 2016

The Synod watched a video which gave an overview of the work of the Conference. Rev Cath Lewis, first time representative to Conference, gave an account of her impressions of the experience. The Chair reported on the presidential themes of 'Holiness and Justice' recalling the call to scriptural holiness and what that might mean as well as the challenge to live out God's justice. He also drew Synod's attention to the Conference's decision to direct a new working party to reconsider the church's definition of marriage and report to the Conference of 2018. The Secretary shared a summary of the larger than Circuit report and the steps being taken to improve the breadth and depth of leadership within the church, and the review of MAPP programme and the thinking behind its change of name to Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice (MAPP).

7. UPDATE ON DLMN

The staff team of Amy Adams, Delyth Wyn Davies and Gareth Bennett introduced themselves and described their particular portfolio. Delyth – Discipleship. Mission and Evangelism – talked of being called, equipped, formed/transformed, sent and sustained and the support she sought to offer in that journey. Gareth - Community Development – spoke of a number of youth initiatives in which he was involved. Amy – Ministry Development (Lay and Ordained)- brought news of the take up across Wales on the new Worship and Local Preaching Course. The area of emphasis for the year being vocation Amy announced that she will be contacting every circuit. Synod's attention was drawn to the pack of information leaflets that each member had received.

8. UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING

Jean Lang had been prevented from attending because her car had broken down en route. Consequently the safeguarding information posters for each circuit were not available. It was agreed that they would be distributed at Synod Policy Committee in October. Mrs Jane Ellis was welcomed to the Synod as Synod Safeguarding Officer based in the north of the Synod.

9. NEWS FROM THE CIRCUITS

Newport and Lower Wye Circuit. Rev Andrew Webster spoke of an ecumenical project based in an ex-pub which was helping ex-offenders not to reoffend by offering structure to the week and a rule of life akin to monasticism – commitment to work, to service, to prayer, to holy leisure. Older members of the church had been able to offer their life skills in support of the individuals concerned.

Conwy & Prestatyn Circuit.. Rev Bev Ramsden spoke of the visit of the Methodist Modern Art collection which took place over a period of 10 weeks and formed part of the 150th anniversary celebrations at St John's in Llandudno. Staffed by volunteers and working with the Mostyn Art Gallery she described how the Pink Crucifixion drew people in and enabled them to have encounters with God – through art, through the building, through engagement with stewards. The church received over 18,000 visitors during the exhibition and through the experience the members had developed a taste for offering hospitality and sanctuary.

Llanelli & Carmarthen. Rev Flis Randall spoke of strengthening links in the community with churches who haven't got people power. She offered tried and tested community worship events for children: a Pet Blessing Service on the church car park, an after school Easter Egg Hunt Service and a Scratch Nativity. Her experience had been growth in members and occasional offices, and a spring board for further work with the community, as well as being a good way to share the Good News.

10. YOUTH EXCHANGE TO JAMAICA

Members of the group shared something of their trip, including a video diary, and the impact that the experience had made on their lives. [Synod also heard of some provisional plans for a return visit from young people in Jamaica.](#)

11. NEWS FROM THE CIRCUITS

Wrexham Circuit. Deacon Lisa Rathbone described the experience of putting on a production of the Roger Jones' musical 'Wildfire' in three different churches on three consecutive nights. This involved the participation of a community choir and had been a blessing to both audiences and those taking part.

Vale of Glamorgan Circuit. Rev Phil Challis shared the experience of the small mainly elderly congregation of Barry Uniting Church who had not felt able to lead a childrens' holiday club. With the support of friends from Birmingham and of another circuit in the form of equipment, a holiday club had taken place over the summer. The result was that the local congregation had grown in confidence to take the task on next year. The church had also been presented with a Child Friendly Church Award from the URC: the first URC church in Wales to receive the award, and had recently signed up with Citizens Cymru-Wales a broad based community organising group.

Conwy & Prestatyn. Rev Keith Tewkesbury reported on the offering of space at Nant y Glyn Methodist Church to the community which had grown up around the former fresh expression of church, En gedi. He perceived that, as that community continues to seek spiritually to make sense of life, the future holds possibilities and potential.

Pembrokeshire. Rev Hugh-John Wilson shared the vision for a building project at Albany Church and the new impetus that the congregation has to reach out to the community who are using the new Haverfordwest Leisure Centre which is very close to the church.

Bangor and Holyhead Rev Kate McClelland spoke of the work of Community Lay Worker, Mrs Rebecca Miller, with the church at Penmaenmawr. This church, which had no children of its own, ran a free intergenerational art festival, from Thursday to Sunday with just eight key workers. It was a tremendous success covering a range of events to suit all age groups and is likely to be repeated.

12. MEMORIALS TO CONFERENCE

The Synod agreed that a memorial be sent to Conference voting: For 75 Against 15 Present 119

The text of the memorial was as follows:

The Wales Synod, Representative Session draws the attention of the Conference to the visible lack of racial diversity reflected within the leadership of the Methodist Church of Great Britain, specifically in relation to our senior leadership roles of President, Vice-President, and Chair of District, noting with regret that in the history of British Methodism we have had only one BAME President, and to date only one Chair of District of African/Caribbean descent and one of Asian descent.

In view of this, we would particularly like to encourage the Conference to:

- Ensure that each District appoints an Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) officer.
- Be intentional in the development and mentoring of current and future Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Ministers and lay people for senior leadership roles within the Connexion.
- Particularly when it meets in a culturally diverse context within the Connexion, reflect the height, breadth, width, and depth of that diversity as best it can through its worship and fringe events.
- Support BAME Local Preachers, Presbyteral and Diaconal Candidates, Students, and Probationers to flourish into the fullness of their vocations as prophets, pastors and teachers.
- Create a safer environment through race awareness training as a standard for Circuit Stewards and District Officers.'

[In addition, the Chair reported that a Memorial sent from the Presbyteral Session of Synod concerning 'Criteria for candidating for the ministry' had been accepted by the Conference.](#)

13. HERITAGE, MISSION AND ADVOCACY

Jo Hibbard gave an overview of the work which her new post oversees which included the importance of heritage for mission as individuals and churches of whatever age, and the power in the telling of story. She encouraged people to understand the distinctiveness of Methodists, to know who we are in order to engage appropriately with others. The Synod listened to a short video about the difference that leaving a legacy to the Methodist Church can make in continuing the work of the church.

14. ECUMENICAL MATTERS

Rev Chris Gray spoke of the way in which the churches in Port Talbot, despite having no formal Cytûn groupings, were working together with the Rev Rick Hayes (Industrial Chaplain at Tata Steel in Port Talbot) to provide a listening ear to anyone who needed one. This was generating a feeling of solidarity and support as individuals grappled with the issues facing the steel industry and them personally.

Rev Cathy Gale spoke about the difficulty in discerning the direction of travel for the Commission for Covenanted Churches in Wales following the rejection of the proposals for structural unity, which were brought to the member churches in 2012. The commission had been encouraged by the commitment of member churches to continue the covenant journey, and by the deepening of relationships between church leaders. The inability to recruit a Covenant Worker allows the possibility for the funding of the post to be redirected to commission research.

15. REPORT FROM POLICY COMMITTEE

A paper which summarised the work undertaken during the year had been circulated previously, two further items of business had been circulated earlier in the day. The Synod received the paper summarising the work of the Committee and then gave its attention to the business on the additional paper: Synod gave its approval in principle to a scheme of merger between the Pembrokeshire Circuit and the Llanelli and Carmarthen Circuit with effect from 1st September 2017, delegating to the Synod Policy Committee its responsibility to scrutinise and approve more detailed proposals of the merger once these have been approved by the two circuits. The Synod also confirmed the recommendations of the Synod Policy Committee for the closure of churches at Rhosnesni, Llangurig and St John's, Prestatyn. At this point the Chair led Synod in prayer.

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

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

17. METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN

Mrs Norma Boocock and Mrs Ronnie Dean reported on the MWiB which had taken place in the year, and directed Synod to the resources which are available on the MWiB website.

18. YOUTH FORUM

The Youth Forum shared details of the programme they had followed during the day, which was around the theme of giving value and being valued through being encouraged, being equipped and being empowered. All those present were invited to take a shoe lace and thread beads with the letters 'V"A"L"U"E"D' on to it, and then replace one of their own shoe laces with it and photo tag it to Methodist Youth Wales facebook page. This exercise was to make a connection to the children's home in Jamaica [to which the exchange team are sending shoes.](#)

Synod closed with worship led by Rev Phil Poole