

District newsletter April 2009

Hallo Everyone,

Spring is here and the lovely sunny days are giving encouraging signs of new life in the gardens, fields and hedgerows.

We have had our Spring Synod, earlier this year than usual to allow for the Sabbatical of Rev. Lily Twist. The following abridged account will give a flavour of the work of the Synod which was held in Rosyth Methodist Church.

Rev Lily Twist, Chair of District welcomed everybody to Synod and lit a candle brought from the Scarborough Methodist Conference. This was to show our connection with other Methodist people and Christ's people everywhere.

A Special welcome was given to new representatives and also to the Ecumenical guests.

Worship was led by the North of Scotland Mission Circuit. A DVD was shown to stimulate our thinking about 'Why' we come to Synod.

This was followed by a dance group illustrating the Hymn – 'Were you there when we crucified My Lord.'

The point was made that God takes that which is damaged and uses it.

Rev Andrew Letby spoke of his attendance at the recent Conference 'Holiness and Risk'. It had been required attendance for Chairs of District and supported by other Circuit staff. It proved to be a microcosm of Methodist Britain today.

The question, 'What are the distinctive parts of Methodism', was considered. The Ecumenical contributors had positive points to make and in conclusion it was decided that - 'God hasn't done with us yet.' 'Methodism is alive and well.'

There were other questions considered –

- 'What is God doing in the situations of today'
- 'Where do we need to move on?'
- 'What jewels must be held on to?'

'Holiness' was experienced. 'Risk' gave rise to the debate, - What does that mean in our Scottish context?

Synod was directed to the Methodist Web-site where more can be found about the 'Holiness and Risk' conference.

Rev Lily Twist highlighted the following challenges –

- How we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us?
- How we use 'structure' usefully?
- What it is to be Gods people in the twentieth century?
- How do we make Methodism more inviting and inspiring?
- How do we develop confidence in God and follow the lead given by the 'Our Calling' programme.

In the aim to encourage and equip leaders, small groups are to be formed. These will address issues that include property and finance and will seek to ensure that there is good stewardship of resources. Circuit Mission and Policy Statements are to be drawn up in order to facilitate the future planning of initiatives to further the realisation of these aims.

The focus is to be 'Proclaiming and Affirming Gods Love'.

Some initiatives working towards this include :-

- A Youth participation strategy
- Creating safer space
- An annual review of Ministers
- Fresh expressions of being Church.

The work is to be resourced by 4 Officers covering Learning and Development, and Ecumenical outreach.

The Officers are

Mr Gary Williams
Mrs Sally Robertson
Mrs Helen Wareing
Dr Bill Reid.

Sally Robertson launched a project to highlight the concept of 'encouragement'. Encouragement to :-

- a) Inspire people with hope, and with confidence
- b) Give support to people
- c) Stimulate new ideas.

Everyone was asked to collect a piece of dough, and to shape it into a symbol of 'encouragement'. This was to be baked, painted and brought back to next Synod.

Dr Bill Reid gave an overview of the remit of his post, and told of how 2010 is to be very significant Ecumenically.

He introduced the Ecumenical guests.

A DVD was shown about the Youth Participation Strategy, and there is need to find an identifiable post in the District for this type of Youth involvement.

Rev Lily Twist gave details about arrangements for the District during her imminent Sabbatical.

Rev John Butterfield told of an exhibition 'The Methodist Collection of art', that is to be held in Stirling from December to January 2010.

Mr David Cowling spoke about his work with the Scottish Branch of 'the Wesley Historical Society'.

The feedback from group work about the 'Distinctiveness of Methodism' was displayed along the side of the Church and will be analysed for future circulation.

A presentation was made to the retiring Synod Secretary, Mrs Janet Murray.

Closing Worship was led by Rev Lily Twist who then brought Synod to a close.

Other News.

Trade Justice Movement www.TJM.org.uk People are asked to lobby MEPs about unfair trade deals.

The Arthur Rank Centre, (the Rank Foundation serving the rural community and its churches.)
www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk

MRDF Conferences 2009 - London May 23rd. Birmingham May 30th.
York. June 13th. Stockport. June 13th. Exeter. June 20th. Details from
mrdf@methodistchurch.org.uk or www.mrdf.org.uk or Booking forms from - Methodist Office,
Churches House, Dunblane.

Methodist Homes Sunday June 14th 2009 (housing and care for older people) www.mha.org.uk

OLD AGE : Wasteland or Harvestfield? An ecumenical exploration of the needs of older people and the gifts they bring to the churches. A conference in collaboration with the Church in Society Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church and ACTS. Friday May 8th. 2009 EDEN COURT. INVERNESS. Bookings by May 1st to – FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE. 21 Grosvenor Crescent Edinburgh EH102 5EL with a cheque for £20. email : info@flop.org.uk

World Mission Conference – Christians and Muslims: Side by side, and Face to face.
June 5-7th 2009 venue, The Hayes, Swanwick. www.mwm.org.uk urgent booking needed for required booking date.

Habitat for Humanity - Building on Faith Week 2009. Saturday 12th – Sunday 20th September 2009
Volunteers wanted to spend one week in an urban township in Cape Town, South Africa, helping to build safe, decent homes with local families. www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk/dtbuild.htm

District Day - 'Turning the Church on its head'. Come prepared to be challenged about Mission and what that means within your local congregation.
Saturday 13th June, 10am to 4 pm venue – National Christian Outreach Centre, Riggs Road. Perth PH1 1PR
With Revd Barbara Glasson of the Fresh Expression Bread Church. 'Somewhere Else' is the bread-making church in Liverpool's city centre. More details from Fiona Inglis Telephone no. 01786 820295

With good wishes to everyone, and particularly to David Easson who will now be the new Synod Secretary,

From Janet Murray.

April 2009