SPRING SYNOD HANDBOOK

Representative Session

Saturday 6th May 2017
at 10.00 am
at
Hurst Green Methodist Church,
Narrow Lane, Halesowen, B62 9PE

Chair of the District
Rev Ian Howarth
36 Amesbury Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8LE, 0121 449 0131
office@birminghammethodist.org.uk

Deputy Chair of the District
The Revd Carol Hamilton-Foyn
62 Bedworth Road, Bulkington, Bedworth, CV12 9LL,
Tel 0247 6311057, carol_foyn@me.com

Secretary of the Synod
Mr Richard Hamilton-Foyn
62 Bedworth Road, Bulkington, Bedworth, CV12 9LL,
Tel 07740 828334, synod@birminghammethodist.org.uk
Dear friends

I look forward to seeing you at the Representative session of Synod on 6th May at Hurst Green, and I thank the people of Hurst Green and the Blackheath and Halesowen Circuit for all their work towards the Synod.

I have pleasure in writing the introduction to the Synod handbook, which outlines much of the work done on your behalf by District officers during the past year, and I would like to offer a heartfelt word of thanks to all who work so hard in different ways on behalf of the District to forward the church’s mission.

In our Synod we will be exploring the diversity of that mission. We will be hearing from ministers in the District of Zimbabwean background and exploring how we can build on our relationships with the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. Trey Hall our mission advisor will be launching our ‘Church without walls’ mission initiative and helping us reflect on the value of testimony. We also have three memorials to Conference to discuss which remind us of our need to engage with the world in which we live and share in God’s mission in the social and political sphere.

At our Presbyteral Synod we gave permission for Revs John Rowe, Stuart Jennings, Helen Jobling, and Paul Edwards to become Supernumerary ministers and we wish them well as they move into retirement. We also remember Deacon Janet Smith who retires at the end of this Connexional year. Revs Jane Wilson, Edson Dube, Deborah Cornish, and Deacons Liz Rowe and Linda Kinchenton are moving to different districts to continue their ministry. We give thanks for their ministry among us.

This is the last Synod for which Richard Hamilton-Foyn will be Synod secretary. He has made an enormous contribution to the District in a variety of ways, and I have greatly valued his support and colleagueship. We welcome Jean Hamilton, who is currently shadowing Richard and will take on the role in September for the next Synod.

I trust our day together will be a time of inspiration, fellowship and challenge.

Yours in Christ,

Ian Howarth

(District Chair)
The Birmingham District of the Methodist Church

Spring Synod 2017

Saturday 6th May

Hurst Green Methodist Church

10:00 Opening
10:05 Welcome (from the Circuit)
10:05 Worship
10:40 The Church in Zimbabwe
11:10 Without Walls – Testimony
12:45 Lunch
1:45 District Business
  Situations Vacant
  Methodist Council Report
  District Council Report
2:15 Synod Secretaries Business
2:25 Memorial 1
2:45 Memorial 2
3:05 Memorial 3
3:25 Soap Box

NOTICES

District Stationing meeting (for all those involved with Stationing 2018) has been arranged for Thursday 11th May, 7.30pm at Droitwich Methodist Church, WR9 8AN.

District Ordinand’s Testimony Service, Thursday 25th May, Bromsgrove Methodist Church Centre, B60 1AS

Follow us on
Twitter:@Bhammeth
Facebook:@Birminghammethodistdistrict
Arrangements

Travelling expenses to Synod for Supernumerary Ministers will be paid on application to the Secretary of Synod

Methodist Ministers Children’s Relief Association.
A collection will be taken during Synod.

Mail Trays
Any mail for distribution should be put in the trays by 12 noon and circuits should check their tray is empty before leaving Synod.

Autumn Synod Saturday 9th September 2017
Birmingham Circuit – Solihull Methodist Church
The audited accounts for the year to 31 August 2016 were adopted at the District Council held on 30 March 2017. A copy has been filed at Methodist Church House.

The audited accounts can be viewed on the Birmingham Methodist District website. A summary of funds is attached to this report.

Districts are obliged to file the accounts of their District Advance Fund with the Connexional Grants Office by 31 October each year. Birmingham’s DAF accounts to 31 August 2016 are attached to this report.

As treasurer, I attend the District Treasurers’ Forum at Church House every August. At the meeting in August 2016 we discussed the districts’ contribution to the Methodist Church Fund for 2017-18. In November every year I meet with the circuit treasurers and we discuss the allocation of Birmingham’s assessment between the 11 circuits. I attend District Council quarterly and present a finance report. I believe all matters are up-to-date and running smoothly.

Churches are supposed to submit their examined accounts and reserves policy, by 31 March of every year, to the circuit treasurer. Circuits are supposed to submit their examined accounts to the District Treasurer by 31 March, together with the circuit reserves policy and a schedule detailing the cash balances held at the individual churches. Whilst I have not yet received all the information from all the circuits, I understand that the paperwork is in hand. All Methodist entities with gross income of more than £100,000 must register with the Charity Commission and file their accounts and annual return by 30 June following the August year end.

The District Grants Committee meets twice a year, in April and November, when we consider district grant applications. We are fortunate that we always have exciting projects requesting funding, and we often have to make difficult decisions. As well as making grants to churches and circuits for mission and property projects, DAF supports the role of the Mission Adviser and the Safeguarding Officer. DAF also contributes towards chaplaincy at the NEC and the universities, with the help of Connexional funding. The amount held in DAF at any one time is in the region of £600K, and this is always fully committed to future projects.

Helen Lynskey
### INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>unrestricted</th>
<th>restricted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circuits' contributions</td>
<td>530,000</td>
<td>530,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>4,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>214,004</td>
<td>20,54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>14,100</td>
<td>4,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>530,886</strong></td>
<td><strong>25,17</strong></td>
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### EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methodist Church Fund</td>
<td>480,775</td>
<td>480,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>225,877</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees' salaries</td>
<td>20,392</td>
<td>3,972</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employees' expenses</td>
<td>2,430</td>
<td>812</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>7,233</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District office costs</td>
<td>5,376</td>
<td>5,376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manse costs</td>
<td>6,607</td>
<td>13,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustees' expenses</td>
<td>3,191</td>
<td>3,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative costs</td>
<td>3,214</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions</td>
<td>2,651</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional fees</td>
<td>3,951</td>
<td>3,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7,109</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>535,820</strong></td>
<td><strong>20,16</strong></td>
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### Transfers between funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(65,000)</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>(51,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>26,74</strong></td>
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### Closing position 31.8.16

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>restricted</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>64,211</strong></td>
<td><strong>65,310</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>unrestricted</th>
<th>restricted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>807,177</strong></td>
<td><strong>807,177</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Birmingham District Advance Fund

Report to Connexional Grants Committee as required under S.O.963(3)

Period 1 Sept 2015 to 31 August 2016

## 1. Ministry Grants paid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circuit</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham District</td>
<td>Higher Education Chaplaincy</td>
<td>47,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham District</td>
<td>Tax Justice Networker</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham District</td>
<td>BCC- Restore Project</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham District</td>
<td>Friends of the Holy Land</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Circuit</td>
<td>Community Worker St Francis</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Circuit</td>
<td>Community Worker Lyndon/Dorridge</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Circuit</td>
<td>Holly Hill and Hawkesley schools</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Circuit</td>
<td>Shirley Family Worker</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Circuit</td>
<td>Lozells personnel costs</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham (West) &amp; Oldbury</td>
<td>Quinton Youth Worker</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratford &amp; Evesham</td>
<td>Evesham Family Worker</td>
<td>3,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coventry &amp; Nuneaton</td>
<td>Coventry Central Hall Worker</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coventry &amp; Nuneaton</td>
<td>Nuneaton Development Worker</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Prayers on the Move</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>148,902</strong></td>
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</table>

**Transfers from DAF to other District Funds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chaplaincy Fund</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeguarding Fund</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Adviser Fund</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee Project</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>51,500</strong></td>
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</table>

**Total (A): 200,402**

## 2. Property Grants paid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circuit</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Circuit</td>
<td>Earlswood Methodist Church</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Circuit</td>
<td>Perry Hall Methodist Church</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Circuit</td>
<td>Lyndon Methodist Church</td>
<td>1,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bromsgrove &amp; Redditch</td>
<td>Studley Methodist Church</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Circuit</td>
<td>Northfield</td>
<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham Circuit</td>
<td>Cambridge Road</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>76,975</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

## 3. Future Commitments at 31.8.16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount committed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>£208,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>£120,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>£106,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>£98,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020/21</td>
<td>£70,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total future commitments</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 4. Summary of Accounts

### Income £ Expenditure £

Levies rec'd from (Total)
5. District Officer’s comments and report on the use of the District Advance Fund during the past year:

The grants committee meets twice a year – in November and in April.

Currently, DAF’s sources of income are levies on Circuit Model Trust Funds and a distribution from the Central Priority Fund. There is also some interest, but now that rates are low, this is not a significant amount. The amount that DAF receives from CMTFs (formerly Circuit Advance Funds) depends on the balance those circuits are holding at the start of the Methodist year: up to £100,000 – 2.5%, £100,000 - £250,000 – 5%, above £250,000 – 7.5%. The combined total of income from CMTF and CPF is usually around £170K per year. The CPF distribution is dependent upon our filing the DAF accounts with the Connexional Grants office by 31st October.

We currently receive connexional grant funding towards the cost of the NEC chaplaincy role and the University chaplaincies.

Grant applications for mission projects and for property projects are received from circuits, churches and occasionally from other bodies. The applications are assessed by the members of the grants committee in accordance with our District Grants policy. This year DAF has paid £200,402 towards Mission projects, including £32,500 for refugee work. Grants of £76,975 have been paid for property projects.

Included within Mission Projects are transfers to ring-fenced funds held within the District accounts for the support of various ongoing district roles: the Mission Adviser, the NEC chaplain/district chaplaincy co-ordinator and his assistant, and the Safeguarding Officer.

When awarding grants, we ensure that our future 5-year commitments do not exceed the value held with the District Advance Fund. At 31.8.16, our DAF stood at £606,282. Our commitments at that date were £604,246.

6. Monitoring and evaluation of grant-funded work undertaken during the year:

We are obliged to file monitoring reports with the connexional grants office in July of each year for the University Chaplaincies and for the NEC Chaplaincy/District Chaplaincy co-ordinator. The District Grants Officer collates the information for these reports, files them with the connexional grants office and circulates them to the district grant committee members. It is confirmed that these reports were filed by the due dates.

Reports are also received for other projects which receive district funding spanning more than one year. Instalments paid each autumn are conditional upon certain requirements having been satisfactorily fulfilled.

Presented by District Treasurer: Helen Lynskey

Approved by District Council
Date: 13 October 2016

This report should be sent to the Connexional Grants Office in accordance with SO963(3) by 31st October, together with a copy of the District Reserves Policy. A copy should be presented to Synod.
ANNUAL REPORT OF DISTRICT PROPERTY COMMITTEE FOR PRESENTATION AT SPRING SYNOD, HURST GREEN METHODIST CHURCH, HALESOWEN, ON SATURDAY, MAY 6TH, 2017

The Committee has continued its work of scrutinising and monitoring projects for the extension, improvement and renovation of Methodist Properties in the District as well as the sale, lease and purchase of properties.

Projects have ranged from those for simple improvements costing under £10,000.00 to major schemes costing over £100,000.00. Churches have continued to improve facilities for the disabled and to install energy-saving measures.

The on-line property consents system has been revised and up-dated to provide more information and is now more user-friendly with coloured symbols indicating where action is needed. The system has greatly speeded-up the process of giving district consent and has enabled access to funding to be simplified. Please will Managing Trustees note that the date of the most recent Quinquennial Inspection now has to be entered under the property details and the annual property return has to be completed before district consent can be given, also that it is best to consult TMCP before proceeding with schemes involving sales, purchases or leases of property to avoid delay.

This is the fourth year running when all the Church and Circuit schedules have had to be completed on-line and, at the time of writing this report, only 98 out of 139 churches and 4 out of 11 circuits have completed their returns which is a matter of some concern. I am grateful to all the church and circuit Property Secretaries for completing these returns and would urge the outstanding returns to be completed as soon as possible to avoid any delay in processing project consents.

However, many of the returns have flagged up issues including safeguarding policies not up-dated, safeguarding policies not displayed, property inspection forms not completed and insurance premiums not up to date. These are all matters for concern and should be addressed as soon as possible.

The register of Quinquennial Inspections is being accurately maintained and currently shows that fifteen churches have inspections overdue from 2016 or earlier which is a matter for concern. Managing Trustees are reminded that consent for new property schemes is usually withheld if inspections are not up to date.

The District Website will be regularly up-dated with information on property issues.

Please contact me for guidance or information on any of these matters.

Chris Osborn – District Property Secretary
0121-351-4628
07740-963106
chrisosborn@btinternet.com
Property (Finance)

Contributions to the Fund for Property are shown below, which showed a decrease on the previous year. This may be due to some monies being paid in late. Some of the District’s larger projects have been successful in obtaining a grant from the fund and if you have an exciting scheme for developing your church’s buildings for mission then consider applying.

*Philip Osborn*

### General Property Fund Year 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/ 1</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ 4</td>
<td>B’ham Sutton Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ 6</td>
<td>B’ham West &amp; Oldbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ 9</td>
<td>Tamworth &amp; Lichfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ 10</td>
<td>Coventry &amp; Nuneaton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ 13</td>
<td>Mid-Warwickshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ 15</td>
<td>Stratford &amp; Evesham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ 16</td>
<td>South West Worcestershire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ 18</td>
<td>Bromsgrove &amp; Redditch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ 21</td>
<td>Blackheath &amp; Halesowen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ 24</td>
<td>Herefordshire (South &amp; East)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

2014-2015  

22,610

*Philip Osborn*
District Archivist Report May 2017

Telling our Story is an important part of our heritage, to remember where we have come from, affirm and proclaim our presence today and look forward with confidence. If you haven’t visited the Methodist Heritage website, www.methodistheritage.org.uk it is well worth a look, it also provides links to several other interesting sites, including My Methodist History, www.mymethodisthistory.org.uk which is divided into a growing number of different branches of Methodism, providing a forum for people to talk about and research their Methodist ancestors.

I know from the number of genealogy enquires I get through the website that our history and heritage offers us a wonderful opportunity to connect with people in our communities who we don’t otherwise have contact with, this is another opportunity to be church outside the walls. So it is important that we have the resources to tell our story and are able to continue to tell our story effectively, to present and future generations, that is why our archives are important and why we need to continue to archive our story today so future generations can continue to tell the story of Methodism.

Methodist Heritage once again had a stand this year at Who Do You Think You Are? Live! at the NEC Birmingham on the 6th -8th April 2017, this is an opportunity to makes connections and reach out to people outside of the church, using our history and heritage to engage with them.

Our history and heritage can help us tell the story of Methodism to the wider world, this can provide a witness to help current researchers and future generations to understand what Methodism is about, what Methodists did, and why faith was an important part of their ancestors story. So part of my role is to help people interested in Methodism and its history and people, so we can tell our story today and to future generations.

Diane Webb, Birmingham District Archivist

Report from District Probationers Committee

District Probationers Committee met on Saturday, March 4th, with Ruth Wilson, Jane Braund, Ping Ting Chen and Farai Mapamula.

We were delighted to recommend to the Presbytery Synod that Ruth be Received into Full Connexion and Ordained by the Laying on of Hands at the Methodist Conference to be held in Birmingham on June 25th, 2017. This recommendation was agreed by the Synod. The Ordinand’s Testimony Service will take place on Thursday, May 25th, 2017, at Bromsgrove Methodist Church and Centre, commencing at 7.30 p.m. The preacher will be Rev Ken Howcroft.

Jane, Ping Ting and Farai were recommended to continue their probation into the second year The Synod agreed.

The District Probationers Committee had to come to a decision with regard to Penny Thorne, who should have been coming as an ordinand to the committee. However, Penny has been off sick since June 2016, and was therefore unable to fulfil any of the criteria by which the committee could make judgement on her suitability. The
Committee therefore recommend to the Connexion that Penny not be ordained at this Conference. We hope and pray that her health will improve so that ordination may be possible in 2018.

Peter Bates

**Report upon Ministerial Candidate 2016/2017**

Mr Chair and Members of Synod.

There were several enquiries during last summer with regard to candidating both for the presbyteral and diaconal ministry. However by September 1st we had three candidates all for the presbyteral ministry. However just after Christmas one candidate withdrew due to a change in personal circumstances.

The District Candidates’ Committee meet on 21st of January to discern the candidates’ call to ordained presbyteral ministry in the Methodist Church. The Committee have to vote on the proposal that “the candidate named above be recommended to enter pre-ordination training for presbyteral ministry”, in other words it is a simple yes or no vote. Sadly, after the interviews, by 2 panels and then the full committee, followed by much discussion and deliberation the Committee could not vote “yes” to one of the candidates and so that candidate was not recommended while the other was recommended.

The Candidate not recommended could have chosen to go forward to the Connexional Committee but chose not to.

The Candidate recommended, Rachel Leather from the South West Worcestershire Circuit, went to the Connexional Committee and was recommended for pre-ordination training for the presbyteral ministry.

I would also like to pay tribute to the District Candidates’ Committee. Our District Committee is professional, conscientious and diligent, bringing a wealth of Church experience as well as expertise from their professional lives. However some wish to retire from this ministry and so we do need some new people to serve especially to keep a balance of gender, age and ethnic origin. I would be grateful if any minister or lay person could think about who in their churches may be able and willing to serve.

If there are people in your Circuit thinking about candidating could you please let me know so that we can begin the process of discernment.

Rev. Anne Smith
District Candidates’ Secretary
Report for Trey Hall, District Mission Advisor

In my first six months in ministry as the District Mission Advisor, I have worked to begin vital relationships with leaders across the District and in every Circuit. Since October 2016, I have accepted generous invitations to share, listen, and learn in different ways: I have visited and/or preached in 30 different congregations; presented at Circuit-level leadership meetings in 8 of 11 Circuits; and presented at meetings of local preachers, lay staff, and ministerial staff in 9 of 11 Circuits. I have also done more than 100 one-to-one meetings with diverse people in and 'outside' of our ecclesial structures.

I have begun to work with the already-established Mission Strategy Group to build a deeper analysis of our conditions as a District in order to wisely strategize for the future. The Mission Strategy Group will shift to become a Mission Strategy Team in the next year in order to diversify and expand our leadership potential.

Some of the early fruit of the District Mission:

- Formulating and adopting new concrete missional goals that flow from the District Mission policy and will guide our energy and focus from 2017-2020:
  1. Start eight new congregations through lay and clergy pioneering.
  2. Teach every member how to share their faith and invite new people.
  3. Expand every congregation's commitment to radical inclusion and hospitality.
  4. Whilst affirming ministry across generations, prioritise ministry with children, youth, and young adults.
  5. Live out mission and justice beyond the walls of our buildings.
  6. Build clear discipleship pathways that develop the ministry of all Christians.

- Gathering 175+ people for a day of inspiration, challenge, and equipping at the first annual Reimagine Church Forum in March 2017 (mark your diaries for 10 March 2018 for the second Reimagine Church Day).

- Launching Church Without Walls, an initiative to help revitalise existing churches, start new churches, and raise up new leaders.

It's a joy to serve as your Mission Advisor. I am here to encourage and equip Circuits and Congregations as you take the next steps into the future. I offer workshops on a variety of missional practices, values and vision discernment processes, an upcoming enewsletter with new ideas, and coaching to help you think and lead differently.

Contact:

Phone  07575 796069
Email  mission@birminghammethodist.org.uk
Adavu is a project of the Birmingham Methodist District which aims to facilitate an effective local response to modern slavery. Men, women, and children can be exploited for forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, or other forms of slavery.

This report offers a summary of key areas of work over the past year, since March 2016.

**Adavu Aftercare Project**

Adavu offers long term support and advocacy to adult survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking in the West Midlands policing area. Since March 2016, caseworker Mohinder Kaur has supported 29 adults (27 women, 2 men) who needed assistance in making the transition from initial government funded safe houses into life in a new community. Common needs include help with registering with a GP, accessing college, ESOL or employment programmes, getting and managing a tenancy, and support with ongoing legal processes such as the asylum process. The Lloyds Bank Foundation continues to fund the majority of our caseworker’s salary.

We have secured £29,000 funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Victims Fund, which will enable us to increase the Caseworkers hours to 4 days a week, and to employ a part time project manager. The project manager, once appointed, will take over the day to day management of the project from Kerry, as well as being responsible for developing and implementing a future fundraising strategy to allow the work to develop much needed capacity.

We remain deeply grateful for further small amounts of money raised or gifted by local churches and groups which helps to pay for interpreters for beneficiaries who do not speak English, for travel costs, and to help us purchase essential food or household items for clients in crisis.

**Awareness Raising**

There has been little capacity for awareness raising or information sessions this year. However we were significantly involved in the conference ‘Modern Slavery – A Victim’s Journey’, which was organised by the West Midlands Anti Slavery Network (CIC) and the West Midlands Police on Anti Slavery Day (October 19th). Our address on ‘Day 46 – after the safe house’ was well received. Many people were shocked to discover how quickly Government funded support for survivors ends, and the level of vulnerability which many still experience.

The revised Methodist Safeguarding Foundation module now includes a number of case studies on modern slavery and human trafficking, which were provided by us. Kerry has also had articles published in the CCPAS Magazine ‘Caring’.
Kerry has been invited to represent Adavu, and the District, at a meeting of the Clewer Initiative against Modern Slavery (CI) at Lambeth Palace in May. The CI is a partnership between the Bishop of Derby and the Mission and Public Affairs Department of the Church of England in response to Modern Slavery.

**Campaigning / Social Justice Issues**

Our experience of working with victims and survivors long term has offered particular insights into the continued needs and vulnerabilities of men and women who have been exploited through modern slavery. Although we work with a vast number of partner agencies who provide specialist support in areas like employment training, ESOL, Counselling, etc, we are one of only 4 similar projects in the UK. The quantitative and qualitative data that we collate is therefore of immense value in campaigning for change.

At a local level, we continue to be part of the West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network. Because of the high number of Albanian people we have supported, we have been asked to be part of a small multi-agency group doing specific regional research on the trafficking of Albanian nationals.

At a national level, we are one of a number of co-authors of a report produced under the umbrella of the Human Trafficking Foundation. This report calls for improvements to the ways in which survivors are engaged with by key agencies such as Local Authorities, DWP, etc, and has been sent to the Home Office. We understand that the independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, is supportive of our recommendations and hope that the Home Office will engage in further dialogue leading to change.

In February, Mohinder accompanied ‘A’, one of the survivors we support to a Parliamentary Select Committee hearing, which wanted to hear survivor testimonies about the way they had been treated by the DWP post rescue. A’s story of exploitation is a particularly harrowing one, and her recovery from it was further impacted by a series of mistakes and misunderstandings at Government level, which meant that she did not receive the benefits she was entitled to for almost 7 months after leaving the safe house. Had it not been for our support and the support of food banks etc she would have been destitute. Her story moved several panel members to tears, and was later referred to by one on the floor of the House of Commons. We anticipate being increasingly called upon to use the specialist knowledge we have in these areas.

**Future Developments**

The next steps for Adavu will involve a significant transition in leadership, as a new Project Manager is appointed, and Kerry moves to a different and less directly involved role as a member of the Adavu Management team. We hope that the new project manager will be someone who is able to continue to enable to work of Adavu to grow, and the survivors we work with to flourish.

Deacon Kerry Scarlett, director@adavu.org.uk (07918 148266)
BISH will be familiar to some but not all members of Synod. It is a significant part of the mission of the Methodist Church in the Birmingham District, managing two overseas student hostels in Selly Oak and Selly Park on behalf of the Connexion and District, respectively. The former Methodist International House now forms one half of BISH, renamed as Wesley International House.

BISH has concentrated in the last decade on offering rooms for overseas postgraduate students – a “Home away from Home” in the U.K., while they pursue their studies here. In fact, almost all non EU overseas students these days are postgraduates. U.K. universities have invested heavily in student accommodation over the last 5 years, but almost always require that students commit themselves for a complete academic year. This does not accord with the needs of many postgraduates, whose courses vary significantly in length, so there is still a real need in this sector. BISH has branched out recently into offering accommodation for new foreign employees of the NHS, as they undergo initial training here, where the requirement is typically for 3 – 6 months.

In conjunction with the District, BISH will be helping to accommodate a Syrian refugee family piloting a new private sponsorship scheme, which, it is hoped, will open new ways that refugees can be helped in this country and Europe. This is a new step for all of us and separate from council and government schemes.

At any one time there are normally around 150 people in our houses and in any calendar year we host more than 350 people from overseas. We have managed for the last 15 years to continue upgrading the standard of our accommodation without being a financial drain at all on District or Connexion. This is a continual challenge - we have in the last 12 months removed significant asbestos from the roof of one of our buildings, upgraded kitchens and converted a number of rooms to en suite facilities.

We are indebted to the Trustees, drawn from the Birmingham District, who willingly give so much time and effort, offering professional skills and knowledge to make the charity a success. We are always grateful to churches and individuals in the District, who support this work and are pleased to show you in person the work that is being carried out or provide a speaker to your meetings. Our residents are always happy to confirm what a difference it makes to someone from overseas to be living in a caring community – a Home away from Home.

Mike Fisher
Hawkesley Church Primary Academy

Rev Ian Howarth, in his role as School Visitor, visited in July 2016. In his report he says that he found the school to be in ‘good heart’ and ‘appreciative of the support and care it receives from church sponsors and through its relationships with both Methodist and Anglican churches. This support ‘comes not just from assemblies but from clergy, including Rev Caz Hague, the Methodist Chaplain, getting to know children and being part of the life of the school.’ Church governors also offer the school support through their professional expertise and their interest in the children and staff.

I represent the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST) on the board of directors for the Academy. I was privileged to be involved in planning meetings for the celebration of the school’s 40th Birthday. It was good to see the strong involvement of the churches and the community with the school. The celebrations culminated in a trip to Blackpool for all pupils and their parents. Many of the children had never been to the seaside before and seeing the illuminations was a highlight of the trip.

I visited the school in February 2017 and was impressed by the calm purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. The current Ofsted grade is ‘Requires Improvement’ and the school is working hard to make progress to achieve ‘good’ at their next inspection which is expected before the end of the academic year.

The end of key stage 2 standards are expected to rise this year. There are interventions in place to ensure that all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and those eligible for Pupil Premium funding, make progress. Numbers of SEN and PP children in this school are much higher than the national average.

In 2016 the DfE introduced new progress measures. Schools are judged on increases in attainment achieved by each pupil. The school was particularly pleased last year with standards in writing which were in line with national standards.

The latest SIAMS inspection grade (March 2016) is ‘Good’. The report states that ‘The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hawkesley as a Church of England/Methodist school are good. The Christian character is deeply embedded; Christian values are the mortar in the joint denominational foundation of this school.’ It also states that ‘The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners’

Pupil numbers throughout the school are good except in Nursery where a fall in numbers has necessitated a reduction in opening hours from 5 days to 3.

Holly Hill Methodist Church of England Aided Infant and Nursery School.

As the former headteacher of the school I have been unable to visit the school formally. I was, however, invited to the nativity performance at Christmas. I found the morale at the school to be good following a recent very successful SIAMS church
school inspection. The staff were delighted to have maintained their ‘Outstanding Church School’ status.

The report states that ‘the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holly Hill as a Methodist and Church of England school are outstanding. The combined work of the Church of England and Methodist churches has an exceptional and powerful impact on transforming the lives of families in this community.’

The Methodist visitor has not visited the school in the last year but the school is well supported by Methodist governors, including the Chair of Governors, Rev Neil Johnson, and the Director of Education for the Methodist Church in Britain, Barbara Easton.

Rev Caz Hague is the Methodist Chaplain and a frequent visitor. Rev Ian Howarth takes assemblies regularly.

The school’s current Ofsted grade is ‘Requires improvement’. A monitoring inspection HMI visit in April 2016 concluded that ‘senior leaders and governors are taking effective action in order to become a good school.’ The next full Ofsted inspection is due before the end of the academic year.

Christine Parker

Safeguarding Report for Spring Synod 2017

National Safeguarding
There have been many developments within safeguarding in the last 12 months nationally. There are a significant number of papers relating to safeguarding that are going to Conference 2017 and these can be viewed on the Methodist Website under the Conference tab, council papers:–

MC17-34 Pornography Working Group
MC17-37 Safeguarding General Report
MC17-38 Increasing DSO Time Across Districts
MC17-39 Arrangements for Supervision of DSOs
MC17-40 Risk Assessment Policy
MC17-41 Covenants of Care
MC17-46 Supervision Policy
MC17-54 Past Cases Review Implementation Group

The most important ones are the changes to Covenants of Care. The appendices 4 and 5 give a template for recording the Annual Review of a Covenant of Care and the Role Description for a member of a Monitoring and Support Group. There is an update regarding the Past Case Review. There is a strong focus on survivors and this was the theme of the Annual Safeguarding Conference. The paper Past Cases Review
Implementation Group gives guidance about keeping a pastoral records by ministers and pastoral workers.

There is a new Safeguarding Policy which will only be available online. This is a huge piece of work and the policy is much improved and more detailed. Connexional Publishing are hoping for this available in the next two weeks. Shortly after this the Risk Assessment Policy will also be available online.

**Local Safeguarding Update**

**Training**

There are now new courses for Foundation Edition 2016 and Foundation Refresher Safeguarding Training. All circuits are rolling out these training courses. Foundation Edition 2016 is for new people in roles in the Church and those people who completed MOD ‘A’ Training pre Sept 2011. The Refresher course is for those who attended the Foundation course that was launched Sept 2011. It is now 5 years since then and the training needs to be repeated as per the Safeguarding policy.

**Please note:** As of Sept 2017 all safeguarding training needs to be redone every 4 years instead of every 5 years.

The Leadership Module of Creating Safer Space is being reworked by Connexion and a new course should be available from September 2017. There will be a District Leadership Course on Saturday 7th October 2107, venue to be decided.

There is a District Leadership Course being held on Tuesday 9th May 2017 at Coventry Central Hall. If any leaders wish a place please contact me ASAP to book on.

The District has also set up a District Training Group to provide support to Circuit Safeguarding Trainers. There has been one meeting so far and it was well attended and received.

**Learning from Cases**

The number of safeguarding cases continues to increase. This is great news as it shows that awareness is being raised.

However, recently there have been a few instances where the correct procedures have not been followed and potentially have exposed the Church and its members to risk. In several cases I have not been notified when a member of the church has been arrested and charged with offences against children or vulnerable adults. This has meant that the alleged perpetrator has not had any form of monitoring whilst attending church. This leaves the Church and its members exposed to risk from the alleged perpetrator. In some cases references have been given by church members to the court. Please do not do this.

Alleged perpetrators and convicted perpetrators can attend church to worship. However, it is crucial that we know what risk the person poses to others so that risk
can be effectively managed in a way that protects the Church community and the perpetrator.

Therefore, can I ask that if you know of anyone within your churches who are currently on bail for an alleged offence or have been recently convicted that you contact me with the details ASAP please.

Church Audits

I am pleased that many of our Churches have embraced this and have undertaken an audit with regard to safeguarding. The audit focuses on good practice and tests out at a very local level the understanding of what is required with regard to safeguarding.

Past case Review Learning.

Below are the Ten Themes of Learning from the Past Case Review for your information and knowledge:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 1: Abuse and risk are still not always recognised.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Behaviour which might be of concern is still not recognised</td>
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<tr>
<td>- In particular, behaviour which is potentially <em>grooming</em> behaviour is not recognised</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Patterns</em> of worrying behaviour are not recognised</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>THEME 2: The huge and ongoing impact of abuse on those who have been harmed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The PCR report says “The ongoing pain and distress of victims/survivors is deep and lasting. It is amplified when they feel they have not been listened to. It is still not always recognised/responded to well.” P30</td>
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| THEME 3: Abuse which has occurred in the church setting is even more distressing and a devastating breach of trust |

| THEME 4: There is a need for a further development of listening skills |

<table>
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<th>THEME 5: People in the Church are still not responding well to serious situations</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Well-meaning people can be naïve</td>
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<tr>
<td>- There are still ‘lone safeguarding rangers’ who think they can manage situations on their own</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ministers can be very anxious about safeguarding and this may lead to concerns not being shared and sometimes safeguarding is not seen as a team activity</td>
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<th>THEME 6: People find it difficult to put respectful uncertainty into practice</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is a lack of skill in dealing with potentially contradictory views of people, so people find it difficult to recognise that those who are their colleagues and friends – and have done good things- can also do harm.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
THEME 7: Responding well to the congregation in difficult safeguarding situations continues to be a challenge. Ministers often struggle to deal with conflicts and tensions within congregations. The Past Cases Review Report says “The impact of abuse within a Church community is often deep and lasting and sometimes cannot be resolved by those enmeshed in it”. P35

THEME 8: Recording: Practice has improved but record keeping is still not consistent enough.

THEME 9: Effective working with other agencies still requires development.

THEME 10: There has been and remains, insufficient understanding of the significance of safeguarding concerns about those who hold leadership roles in the Methodist Church. There are many instances of people, other than Ministers, who are in roles of Church leadership (for example, local preachers, worship leaders, stewards) and who have behaved in a way that is not consistent with safeguarding. Yet among some in the Church there is limited appreciation that firstly, this may present a risk to others and secondly, that this presents an inappropriate role model.

I-Hop

This is a great resource available for leaders of groups, prison chaplains and ministers who know of children or families where a parent is in prison. The impact on the child can be significant and invisible to statutory agencies. You can download the resource at www.i.hop.org.uk

Church Agency for Safeguarding (CAS)

CAS are the designated body that carries out the criminal record checks (DBS) on behalf of the Methodist Church. Their contract has been terminated and they will cease to carry out our DBS in December 2017. The Methodist Church has now started a tendering process to replace CAS in this provision.

Sue Holder

District Safeguarding Officer
Report on Methodist Council to Birmingham District Synod

Due to Revd Mary Shanahan’s ill health, Revd Richard Wilde attended the January meeting of Council and Helen Woodall the April meeting as her substitutes.

From discussions at the January Council the following are highlighted

1. **Lay Employee Pension Contribution Levels**
   It was agreed to allow some flexibility from 1 September 2017 where the employer contributions under auto enrolment will remain at six per cent but employees will be allowed to contribute between two and six per cent according to their choice.

2. **Ministerial Code of Conduct**
   Rev Dr Jonathan Hustler along with Rev Ken Howcroft presented what was probably the report of the entire Council. A well-researched presentation on the background to “watching over each other in love” formed the backdrop to a recommended code of conduct for all ministers. The code was divided into three columns titled The Office, Being and Functioning ranging through vocation, personality and character, relationship, leadership, ministry in the world and communication. Under each it sets out some standards that we should aspire to and during supervision question each other on.

3. **Supervision**
   There is to be a roll out of compulsory supervision for all ministers by 2020 (Past Case Review recommendation 7 of 23) This is being shaped by the experience from the two pilot districts South East and Liverpool and something more flexible and workable than the first plan is emerging.

Richard Wilde

From the discussions at the April Council the following are highlighted

1. **Pornography**
   In response to a notice of motion at 2015 Conference, a working group has produced a paper exploring issues around pornography. Faith and Order Committee are going to produce a brief document based on the report that could be used to facilitate discussion within church groups. The report and a list of web based resources is available on the Methodist Church website.
   

2. **Safeguarding**
   New safe guarding risk assessment procedures were approved. It was recommended to the Conference that the language of ‘covenants of care’ is replaced by ‘safeguarding contracts’.

3. **Statistics for Mission**
   Membership below 200,000. There is a review underway of what statistics are useful to collect and how they are used querying whether if all the data necessary. Promises of full discussion about how these stats impact on priorities and use of resources at Conference.
4. **Equaliy, Diversity and Inclusion Committee**


5. **Past Cases Review Implementation Group.**

There is provision in the connexional budget for provision of Counselling for survivors of abuse.

There is new guidance on required practice re recording pastoral work (ie forms to keep in and records to keep) is for ministers and those with formal pastoral charge not pastoral visitors.

It will be required for all local preachers and worship leaders and those in training as LP & WL to receive the leadership training for safeguarding.

6. **Reflections of President and Vice-President**

It is usual at the April Council for the President and Vice-President to give some reflections on their experience in the role so far. Roger Walton and Rachel Lampard did this in the form of a conversation which was typical of the openness of their approach and illustrative of the good and collaborative relationship between them and how they seek to over a shared oversight.

They chatted about:

- how they in many places have shared with those who are not sure what the future is for the people called Methodist but with people who have a real sense of calling to grow the work of the church, also a real sense that we are in a transition place (see new edition of Connexion magazine) not knowing what the future holds a painful place balance inheritance past with seeking to serve a new world
- how important it is that they personify the interconnectedness of the people called Methodist – pride of an 80 year of Local preacher not met a Methodist President before and wanting to have a photo
- dangers of a ‘fast food’ prayer life grabbing what you can because you are so busy
- need for spiritual feeding especially for those in leadership churches and circuits, talked of ministers stretched and lay people exhausted
- joy at finding how much holiness and justice interwoven into nearly all Methodist activity

and many other things in a way which was nurturing of each other and of the gathered Council

Helen Woodall
Proposed Memorial from the Birmingham District Synod to Conference 2017

(already passed by the Stratford and Evesham Circuit)

This Circuit Meeting welcomes the Transition Pathway Initiative on global warming supported, among others, by the Methodist Finance Board and the Church of England, but fears that its targets in relation to timing and holding temperature increase to 1.5 degrees are seriously insufficient. It further fears that fossil fuel companies are an increasingly risky investment. It therefore requests that the Methodist Council oversees a process, in company with the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment (JACEI), with a view to issuing robust advice that the Methodist Church entirely divest from fossil fuel industries (coal, gas and oil) by Conference 2020, and seeks to invest a significant and growing proportion of its portfolio in renewable energy and infrastructure investments that will urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Revd Audrey Simpson, Ms Margaret Fuller

Reasoned Statement

The Paris agreement, of December 2015, on climate warming was to keep the global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius with an aim of keeping it to as little above 1.5 degrees Celsius as is possible. To achieve this there needs to be a substantial and rapid cut in greenhouse gases. The scientific consensus is that at least 85% of known fossil fuel reserves must not be burned but remain in the ground. New sources of these fuels should not begin to be exploited. The Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, has observed the prospect of swift decline in the use of fossil fuels creates a strong risk of stranded assets. This would give rise to a large fall in the value of fossil fuel company shares. Investments in them are therefore in jeopardy. “Active shareholding” is not giving rise to the fundamental shift in fossil fuel company behaviour which would obviate that risk.

made in the next two or three years binds us into the shape of the economy and its effects on the environment for the next 20 plus years. The Commission calls for a radical reduction in fossil fuels subsidies. Fossil fuel subsidies, estimated at £430 billion worldwide in 2014, are skewing investment policy against the renewable alternatives.

Global warming and climate change is also a major concern of the insurance companies, who estimate that at the present rate of global warming by the year 2100 insurance payouts could soar to a staggering 20% of global GDP. Mark Cullen of the Association of British Insurers has said that global warming “could lead to insurance becoming impossible to get.”

The impact of human-induced climate change is already being experienced around the world, often affecting the poorest communities most severely. The impacts, which will increase, include reduced food security, drought, famine, severe flooding and extreme weather causing devastation, fires, heat-waves, disease and migration of populations.

One response of the Church should be to divest itself, over a reasonable time frame of three years, from its climate damaging investments in fossil fuels. The funds released should partly be reinvested in the clean, renewable, energy-producing technologies of the future. A portion of the funds released could also be invested in schemes that improve the housing stock of this country and in particular schemes to improve house insulation reducing fuel use, greenhouse gases and fuel poverty. Such investments can provide attractive, secure long-term returns, especially if Government is lobbied to provide appropriate encouragement.

This modest step of divestment from fossil fuels by the church will witness to its God- given tasks of caring for the planet, and standing alongside the most vulnerable locally, nationally and globally, and “with those who are not… with us today.”, (Deuteronomy 29 v. 15), the future generations.

[The Transition Pathway Initiative is an online tool that will be used to assess fossil fuel companies as well as those in various other sectors. Assessments will be made on criteria including Management Quality (made available today for the 20 largest global oil and gas and electricity utilities companies) and Carbon Performance (available from May/June 2017).]
The Transition Pathway Initiative involves the Church Investors Group, including the Church of England and the Methodist Church. However Operation Noah, which strongly urges divestment, says the Initiative will measure companies not just against the 2 degree target but also the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), which would lead to **between 2.7 and 3.5 degrees of average global warming** and devastating climate impacts.]

**Proposed Memorial to Conference**

The Birmingham District Synod expresses its thanks to the Marriage and Relationships Task Group which reported to the Conference in 2016 and assures the Conference of its prayers and encouragement for the newly appointed task group in their work. The Synod recalls that it has sent memorials to the Conference in 2012 (on the blessing of civil partnerships) and in 2014 (on same sex marriage) and reaffirms its commitment to work for an inclusive church. The Synod believes that fully including LGBT+ people is essential to the mission of the church in the 21st century. Within the District there are ministers and churches who would gladly celebrate same sex marriages as well as those who would not feel able in conscience to do so. The Synod believes we must allow those ministers and churches who feel so called by God to celebrate same sex marriages while not placing others under any obligation or expectation to participate. It therefore requests the Conference to encourage the Task Group to bring in its report in 2018 recommendations which will enable this to happen.

Proposed: The Revd Mark Rowland  
Seconded: The Revd Rachel Frank

**Memorial to Conference from the Birmingham District Synod, May 6th 2017**

The Birmingham District Synod notes that 2017 is a significant year for anniversaries within the context of the situation of Israel/Palestine. It is 50 years since the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, 70 years since the UN partition plan for the then British mandate Palestine and its aftermath,(described by Palestinians as the ‘Nakba’ or Catastrophe) and 100 years since the Balfour Declaration – signed by the then British Foreign Secretary, Sir Arthur Balfour on 2 November 1917.
In the Declaration, the Foreign Secretary stated: “His Majesty’s government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

The Synod wishes to be unambiguous in its recognition of the right of the state of Israel to exist; the right of its citizens to live securely within the state’s internationally recognised boundaries, and declares its abhorrence of all expressions of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial that still cause fear and hurt to our Jewish neighbours. However, Synod is also aware that key aspects of the Balfour Declaration, and other declarations at the founding of the state of Israel, were never fulfilled. These deficiencies and Balfour’s failure to even mention the political and nationalist aspirations of the Palestinian people remain as unfinished business. When in 1948, in the wake of the first Arab-Israeli war and the declaration of the State of Israel over 400 villages were ethnically cleansed and some 750,000 Palestinians driven from their homes, many became refugees in numerous camps within historic Palestine and neighbouring Arab countries. Their descendants still languish in those camps notwithstanding UN resolution GAR 194 (renewed annually), declaring their ‘right of return’ . Not only has this historic injustice never been redressed, but has intensified - by Israel’s internationally declared illegal military Occupation; by the growth and expansion of Jewish settlements on Palestinian land promised to them by the UN for the establishment of their own state alongside Israel; in the differing legal systems for Israelis and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories; in the escalating demolition of Palestinian homes and in numerous other ways - making it abundantly clear that the ‘civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine’ have not been protected The outworking of the Balfour Declaration also adversely affected Jewish communities in parts of the Middle East and can be seen as contributing to the intolerable growth of anti-Semitism.

The Synod notes moreover, that the British Government had no legal right to promise a piece of land that it did not own to another group of people, especially as the inhabitants of that land had not
first been consulted. It also notes how the Declaration contradicted promises made to the Arab people in the 1916 Hussein-McMahon correspondence, promises which were fundamental to the alliance between the Arab people and the British in the First World War.

A recent letter to Prime Minister May from the Rev Dr Alex Awad, Palestinian and retired mission partner of the United Methodist Church exemplifies the response from this community to Balfour: ‘Your Honor . . . All the power of Great Britain can’t compensate me and my fellow compatriots for the death, injury, loss of land and enormous suffering that came upon us and continues to bring pain to us due to the Balfour Declaration and other oppressive policies of your predecessors . . . I seek no apologies and no compensations. And as a Palestinian Christian, I offer you and the British people total pardon . . . A first step would be for Britain to recognise an Independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Once your government takes this courageous act, many reluctant European countries would be encouraged to follow suit. Already 138 countries including the Holy See recognise Palestinian Statehood.’

Given the continuing dispossession experienced by Palestinians within the Occupied Territories, it is difficult to believe that any commemoration of the forthcoming centenary can occasion pride. Synod particularly notes the decimation of the Christian presence in Palestine and the reality of the enduring suffering conveyed by leaders of the thirteen indigenous Palestinian churches in the significant Kairos Palestine document that calls for Christian solidarity.

In the light of these factors Synod asks that the Conference:

1. Call on the British Government to issue a statement of regret for all that the Palestinians have suffered since the issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917.
2. Issue a similar statement of regret, to be sent to the Palestinian Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches.
3. Urge British Christians to learn more about the situation and expectations of Palestinian Christians and act on what they learn so that justice and peace for both Palestinians and Israelis may be promoted.

Proposer: Rev.Warren Bardsley
Seconder: Rev Brian Brown
MHA has almost 75 years experience of accompanying and supporting people as they age, and we are committed to doing all we can to ensure that our later years can be as fulfilled as possible, working to combat loneliness and providing opportunities for people to create caring and supportive communities.

**Best Sunday or Ages – 11th June 2017**

This year we are continuing with our ‘Best Week for Ages’ campaign where we ask our staff, their local communities and churches to organise various fundraising events during the week commencing June 11th. For well over 25 years, churches up and down the lands have supported our MHA Sunday appeal and we are grateful for all that that has enabled us to do - particularly in supporting our Chaplaincy work, our Music Therapists' work with those living with dementia, and our more than 60 Live at Home schemes. This will now be known as the Best Sunday for Ages and we hope that old friends and new will join us by holding special services, taking a collection for MHA’s work or simply remembering MHA in your prayers.

We invite you to take our theme of ‘Befriending Age’ to look at ways in which we can help one another support older members of our church and society as well as learn from them how best to plan our own ageing journey. While the landscape of ageing still has many of the features of diminishment and difficulty, those are to be seen alongside features of flourishing, discovery and adventure. Your support helps our aim to help more older people to benefit from the loving, Christian based care MHA provides.

An Order of Service and other worship resources can be downloaded from our website at [www.BestForAges.com/BestSunday](http://www.BestForAges.com/BestSunday) or contact Lesley France on 01332 296200 or email lesley.france@mha.org.uk for printed copies.

**Impact Report** - For more information on how we use our fundraised income and our aims to make later life better, please download our latest Impact Report ‘Connecting Older People in Communities that Care’ at [www.mha.org.uk/about-mha/our-publications/](http://www.mha.org.uk/about-mha/our-publications/) or contact us for a copy.

**Development Strategy** - Staff changes within our developments team have afforded the opportunity to review our development strategy. The review will be concluded in the next few months and will give us a clear view of how to deliver great communities for older people. While this clearly has a short term impact we are confident that the delay will be beneficial.

**Return to Circuit Ministry** - Rev. Dr Keith Albans, Director of Chaplaincy & Spirituality

Since joining MHA in September 2001, Keith has been responsible for the spiritual and pastoral welfare of staff, residents and scheme members across the organisation, leading our chaplaincy service and maintaining links with the Methodist Church and the wider church. Keith became a Methodist Minister in 1984 and will take up the role of Superintendent Minister of the York circuit in September. MHA is indebted to Keith for his service and will be making sure he is given a fitting send off before he starts on the next stage of his professional journey.

**Thank You** – we are very grateful for the support MHA receives from our friends within the Methodist Church and for sharing our mission to improve the quality of life for older people, inspired by Christian concern.
Exploring Ministry in the Methodist Church

Could God be calling you to something amazing?

Vocations Day for people considering ordained ministry in the Methodist Church

at The Queen’s Foundation B15 2QH
Saturday 13 May, 10:00—3:00

To book your place, please contact Caroline Wickens (Ministries Development Officer) on caroline.wickens@gmail.com
Portfolio Development Days

Saturday 27 May, 10:30-3:30
Zion United Church
Woodend Rd,
Frampton Cotterell BS36 2HY

Saturday 17 June, 10:30-3:30
Stookland Green Methodist Church
Slade Road,
Erdington B23 7ET

Sessions include:
- Pulling a portfolio together
- Developing skills in reflection
- How will the portfolio be assessed?
- Keynote address from a leading Methodist theologian

For more details and to register a place, please contact:
caroline.wickens@gmail.com
8 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

for the Connexional Grants Committee and Streams

from September 2017

We are seeking volunteers (lay or ordained), who are committed Methodists to contribute to this important piece of mission resource work for 3-6 years.

Do you have the time, interest and skill to help assess grant applications and ensure that funding is used for missional purposes?

Much of the work is done on line and by telephone conferencing with 2-3 meetings in London per year.

New Members are needed as follows:

- Connexional Grants Committee – 2
- Mission and Ministry Stream - 1
- Chaplaincy Stream – 1
- Property Stream - 1
- World Church Approvals - 2
- The monitoring and evaluation group ‘MELD’ - 1

We particularly welcome Black and Ethnic minority applicants who are under-represented on the main Connexional Grants Committee and women who are under represented on the Monitoring and Evaluation Group.

Closing date: 12 noon on Tuesday, 16 June 2017

Further details and application form from:
Personnel Office, Methodist Church House,
25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR
24 hour Recruitment Line: 020 7224 1538
E-mail: recruitment@methodistchurch.org.uk

CHRISTIAN FAITH IN WORD AND ACTION