

Report of the Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Meeting 02.06.14 @Pitton

1. There were 21 Ministers and Preachers present, and 3 guests, Huw and Cerys Davies and Kojo Essiaw.
2. Various pastoral concerns were highlighted
3. The meeting congratulated the three preachers "on trial" for completing successfully a section of the Faith and Worship course, and for the quality of their worship leading. Selina Taylor was formally interviewed, and she talked about her journey of faith and call to preach and it was unanimously agreed that she continue with training. She is therefore now working on Section C; Caroline Buckler and Cynthia Mumford proceed to Section B. Assessed services were arranged for all three. The meeting also heard good reports on preacher "on note" Sue Raad, and the meeting encouraged her to continue.
4. Various events from around the Circuit, past and future, were highlighted, with Rev Howard reporting that 150 people attended the "Aldersgate" Circuit Service. He also commented on the good progress of the Circuit project "Water Aid", with numerous fund-raising activities having taken place, and more to come.
5. Rev Howard was pleased to announce the appointment of new Circuit Stewards: Bob Alderdice, and Martin Gregson (from September).
6. The meeting heard that there was overwhelming support by Sketty Methodist and Bethel URC members for a Local Ecumencial Project.
7. Congratulations were given to Rev Leslie on being appointed a Chaplain to the Para-Olympic Games to be held in Swansea in 2015
8. Win Hawkins gave a report from the feed-back meeting of the Night Shelter.
9. The meeting closed with a presentation on the progress of the proposed "drop-in" for homeless people, Ogof Adullam, by Huw and Cerys Davies.

Alan Cram

Summary of a Report on Modern Slavery

- Slavery is unfortunately the fastest growing crime in the World.
- Every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, in their own countries and abroad.
- It is estimated that there are approximately 27 million slaves around the world.
- Almost every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims.

During the last 3 years, there has been a new emphasis on tackling Human Trafficking in Wales and the UK. Wales was the first country in the UK to appoint an Anti-Slavery Coordinator, Mr. Stephen Chapman, appointed in November 2012.

Since 2009, Wales, and the UK, has seen a significant rise in the number of potential victims of human trafficking referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

Whilst rising, numbers of NRM referrals remain low, figures for 2012 showed a total of 1,156 cases across the UK.

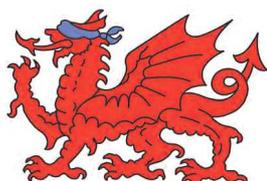
Welsh specific data for 2013 includes:

- 50 reported cases were recorded
- 8 of these cases being minors

A recent conference was organised for South East Wales, and was attended by a number of people from Swansea Council and the University. The aim was to raise awareness and understanding of the issue, and an Anti Slavery training programme was launched. Workshops at the event outlined key issues for the human trafficking agenda:

- Informing the Modern Slavery Bill – Your Voice.
- Identify and protect trafficked victims – safeguarding issue
- National Referral Mechanism – identification of initial needs and aftercare of trafficked survivors
- Internal Trafficking – Protecting our vulnerable

The official logo for the All-Wales Anti-Slavery training programme (appropriately named 'Dewi') was launched at the conference. It was designed by the Wales Anti-Human Trafficking Group, with ministerial approval from Minister for Local Government and Government Business - Lesley Griffiths AM.



Postscript: I noted in the list of attendees of the conference that the only church representative was Jim Steward for the Evangelical Alliance. I then found on the Methodist website this comment from Keith Waddell, a mission partner in Zambia:

We are often tempted to look on the abolition of slavery as one of the crowning achievements

of Western Christian civilization, forgetting that the slave trade still exists but as human trafficking. The sale of people as commodities is happening in both Zambia and Scotland. In spite of laws, people are still keeping their fellow human beings in economic and physical bondage. This will

only change when the welfare of people takes precedence over the economy and profit. It is good to see the Church supporting the campaign to eradicate this modern-day slavery. Human beings have been created in the image of God. Therefore, for a Christian, it is sinful to do nothing while fellow human beings are being sold.

CIRCUIT MEETING JUNE 2014

MWIB

Our Easter Offering service was held at Sketty on Sunday June 15th. The speaker was Dr Alan Cram. Thanks to Alan for a very interesting and thought-provoking talk. Thanks also to all those who took part and to Sketty for providing refreshments. The amount raised this year was £1639.98. This is slightly down on last year, but does NOT include Gift Aid which will be reclaimed by MCH. Gift Aid should total about £200. Last year's total, including Gift Aid was £1780.27. However, to be added to this year's total is another £616.71, which includes the Aldersgate Sunday collection and various donations. This brings the total to £2256.69. This is the first time we have topped £2,000. Since the year 2000 EO in our circuit has raised £22,896.80!

MISSION

The Circuit Mission Committee recommends that from 1st September 2014 we support the AMELIA TRUST FARM as our project. Deacon Lorraine Brown, who is the director of the Trust will be speaking at our Missions Service on October 12th. The farm was given to the Methodist Church in south Wales. What on earth does a church do with a farm? Rev John Stacey-Marks had the vision to use it as a centre for children and adults with learning and physical difficulties and for children who had been excluded from school or did not "fit in" to the normal educational environment.

Every day youngsters and adults are brought to the farm, to carry out various tasks from gardening to collecting eggs, from helping in the cafe to helping with the animals.

Entry to the farm and car parking is free, though you can make a donation. You can also take out a standing order e.g. per month to support the farm. The farm relies on donations and national and local government grants. Recently these have been cut, so the farm is always looking for financial support. They also need volunteers to help in the coffee shop.

Several years ago Network/MWiB had a prayer labyrinth constructed. Volunteers to help with gardening ARE ALWAYS NEEDED. If you can help with this please contact Janet Neilson (01792202085 E mail

iverbrustad@btinternet.com)

Janet Neilson June 2014

Missions Report for the Circuit Meeting(19/06/2014).

Funds received for Circuit Project (WATER AID).

Circuit Service - £602

Personal gifts - £210

Sketty Church - £139

Pitton Church - £1,058

Mumbles Church - £820

Horton Church - £198

Brunswick Church - £144 One card Scheme for Christmas cards.

TOTAL £3171

Funds received for World Mission.

Pitton Church - £100

Horton Church - £100

Murton Church - £260

TOTAL £460

Funds received for Mission in Britain.

Murton Church - £55

Clydach Church - £25

Mumbles Church - £23.47

Brunswick Church - £245

Horton Church - £50

Pitton Church - £50

TOTAL £448.47

We need the approval of the Circuit Meeting for our new Circuit Project from October 2014, which is the Amelia Trust Farm.

Lastly, there is a new name for the Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF) which is 'All We Can', the Methodist relief and Development partner. Sorry about that! I'm sure the last thing people need is a new name for something, but it wasn't my idea!

Sybil Smith (Secretary, Circuit Missions Committee.)

Methodist Homes.

We have recently had Methodist Homes Sunday when, I trust, the work of Methodist Homes was brought to the attention of the Circuit Churches. I would be grateful if all monies collected by the churches or donations made by churches for Methodist Homes is sent to ME and NOT directly to Methodist Homes - this is to ensure that all money will be recorded as coming from the Swansea and Gower Circuit.

Sandra Pengelly (Circuit Treasurer, Methodist Homes.)

The Lord is here

His Spirit is with us.

At least that's what it has felt like during the process of the last nine months as Bethel United Reformed Church and Sketty Methodist have been worshipping together. For many years, the two churches have been working closely together, including shared evening services. But in October 2013 Bethel URC took the decision to cease worship in their own building; to join with the Methodists; and to vote in favour of becoming a single congregation with the Methodists.

It's taken the Methodists a bit longer to come to this stage. But after an amazing Joint Annual General Meeting in April – when the atmosphere was tangibly full of grace and love for one another; after the whole congregation stood to affirm it's assent to becoming an LEP during worship on 1st June; and after the Methodist Church Council followed this up with a formal vote in favour of the LEP, it's FULL STEAM AHEAD!!

We now seek the approval (according to Methodist rules) of the Synod Policy Meeting, the Circuit Meeting and finally the Synod which makes the final designation. But in the hope that this will be received, we can at last fully commit ourselves to working out HOW to become a single congregation LEP, for there is no



blueprint.

SOME OF THE ISSUES STILL TO BE RESOLVED

10. How will the church work? The United Reformed and the Methodist Church work in very different ways. Whereas many LEPs decide to adopt one system or the other, we are looking to use the best of each system. One *possible* way is shown in this diagram.
11. What name will we be called by? Clearly we will need a new name. We have to plan a process to do this.
12. What about Bethel's building? For the time being no decision is being made about this. We wait to see a vision emerging as to what God is calling us to do and be, and whether both buildings seem to fit into that vision.

AND WHERE IS THE WORK OF GOD IN ALL THIS?

Alongside the detailed background work that has been going on to get us to this point, we have also undertaken a congregation audit and a community audit. This has been to assess who we are, what kind of vision we have for our church, and what is the make-up and the needs of our local community. We have found out some interesting information – although processing this into action is going to take further thought and prayer. A few (not all) of the statistics are below:

The congregation

13. 73% of the congregation are retired.
14. 75% live within two miles of the church.
15. 33% of the congregation walk to church.

16. Relatively low proportion of children and people
17. Above average proportion aged 65+
18. 25% of population in Sketty are over 65
19. 20% of households are 1 person living alone over 65

The community

What might we take from these statistics?

Looking at the profile of the congregation and the community, should we be engaging with older, lonely people?

But what about work with children and families? Could we do more in this area as well? Eg messy church

AND HOW DO WE DEEPEN OUR OWN DISCIPLESHIP?

- We're looking at starting a number of new house groups (so important in a larger congregation)
- We're looking at starting a quarterly morning service with a difference – a sort of 'breakout' church where we start together but then go off and explore the Word in different ways – discussion, craft, prayer etc etc. Perhaps we could invite friends to this kind of service more easily than our normal service.

BRUNSWICK METHODIST CHURCH REPORT TO CIRCUIT 2014 JUNE

It is good to report that at Brunswick with the help of our circuit members many things are happening at your city Church.

We had Worship Here Group just before Palm Sunday on the 11th of April and those who attended were blessed. The Service was Spirit filling.

We would have been more pleased if many people attended but we had over 100 people. We give thanks to Ken Shingleton for his efforts in arranging this.

At Easter we were assisted by the Circuit members to distribute invitation cards to our surrounding community. We invited them to come to our Easter Services. Over 1600 cards were distributed within a short time because there were many of us doing this. The church was open the whole of the Holy week. People came for prayers round the Stations of the Cross. People found peace in this.

Easter we had really good services and the attendances were not bad. People experienced foot washing and some other people came for our Dramatised Narrative of the Passion Story from the Gospel of John and the women fellowship and choir Meditations and singing was exuberant. On Good Friday Brunswick joined the Churches Together UNITAS IN THE Walk of witness. This witness came out in the Swansea Evening Post and we were on the front page. There was a lot of support from our members.

The Hill Church Continues to worship at Brunswick.

Huw Davies's Project is progressing

For our Christian Aid Fund Raising we had the Umbrella Choir on the 16th May at 7.30pm. They sang very unique songs and a lot of people who came enjoyed their Rhythm and Harmony. Many people attended about 150 people came for this concert. That night we raised £536 from donations. From the envelopes we received £812 and gift aid £58. A total of £1300 was raised from Brunswick. We give thanks to Alice Rutter and Sheila Singleton for their efforts.

We are extending our Outreach services to St Helens by doing School Assemblies, Attending the Sand fields Community meetings attending the UNITAS Meetings and joining with the other Clergy in the Fraternal Breakfasts.

We plan to send some more invitation cards for our Harvest Service.

Circuit Local Outreach Working Party Report to Circuit June 2014

The group met last on April 28th with ten present.

1. 3,800 leaflets had been successfully delivered - Wesley (1,500), Mumbles (1,000), Brunswick (1,300). We discussed the importance of letting the folk round our churches know “We are here for you” and also what we stand for.
2. Worship Here at Brunswick. Those who attended had generally found it an encouraging and challenging time. There was some disappointment that there were not greater numbers attending both from the local area and from the circuit.
3. Easter. It was reported that churches seemed fuller than usual. Some of our circuit churches had taken part in Good Friday marches or open airs (City Centre, Morriston, Treboeth, and Mumbles)
4. Future big events. The next challenge for our churches will be the Big Invitation/Back to Church Sunday and then Harvest. Churches need to be starting planning now. Looking forward to Christmas it was suggested we might knock on doors, wish people a Happy Christmas, and invite them to our services..
5. Sunday services. Many families today use Sunday as a day out, or for sport. But our service times are mostly fixed by tradition and for the convenience of our own members. Churches might consider what is the best time for their services and possible mid-week and evening services and activities..
6. It was suggested that we organise circuit wide meetings to share ideas, experiences and expertise. e.g. Alpha Courses, Messy Church, FAN groups, Web sites, e-news, Posters, Leaflets etc. etc.
7. Dr Martyn Atkins points out (Methodist Recorder June 6th) that in the last ten years our church membership has dropped by a third and children’s attendance has dropped by 58%. I believe that we need as a matter of urgency to address this challenge or Methodism will be sleep walking into oblivion.

Next meeting

Monday July 28th 7pm at Brunswick.