



THE GREEN SOCK

NEWS FROM THE SHROPSHIRE AND MARCHES METHODIST CIRCUIT

MAY 2019

Spring Synod Turns Attention to Growing Homeless Crisis

Following directly from last year's Conference, where Notice of Motion 2018/206, challenged the Church to take action against homelessness, harness political influence and effectively address the predicament of rough sleepers -seeking to see homelessness eliminated by 2027- Spring Synod reviewed the feedback that, gathered on a District by District bases outlined the ways in which Methodist churches are reaching out to the homeless. Examples of practical services such as access to showers, clean clothing, hot food and night shelter were viewed alongside wider initiatives such as partnering with local authorities to provide assistance with job searches and accessing benefits and accommodation. The feedback highlighted the extensive ways churches are helping but also reinforced the belief that tackling the underlying causes and consequences of homelessness requires an holistic approach. Calling for the Church to further engage, the report to Synod stated *"People must be able to flourish and reach their God-given potential. The current crisis of inadequate housing and homelessness often leads to poor mental and physical health, places immense pressure on family life, whilst unaffordable rents confront people with stark and unacceptable choices, such as between paying for food and paying for shelter. Addressing a person's housing needs does not simply require putting a roof over their head but ensuring that they are well-equipped to participate as fully as they are able in their community. The Church has an important and distinctive role to play in tackling the housing and homelessness crisis with an approach that places people and relationships at the very centre of everything we do."*

The report urged people to campaign for a change in policies, find out about local community housing plans and embrace opportunities to work ecumenically and contribute to existing efforts. Referencing the Connexional Property Strategy 2018-20, the report suggested addressing the housing crisis in church Mission Plans by, for example, considering redundant buildings and Community Land Trusts.

Synod additionally acknowledged Britain's part in the Palestinian-Israeli current state of affairs and affirmed that Methodists long for a peaceful and secure future for Palestinians and Israelis, based on human rights and respect for International Law, calling upon Conference to recognise "the extreme imbalance of power which exists in Israel/Palestine, and which enables the State of Israel to display almost complete disregard for the human rights of the Palestinian people living in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza". Connexional staff are asked to strongly oppose all human rights abuses, revise finance Policy Statements on Israel/Palestine and urge the Central Finance Board to divest immediately from any company which profits from the Occupation and is unwilling to change its practices. Also noted was the importance of the forthcoming report to the Conference on Marriage and Relationships.

GETTING PREPPED FOR THY KINGDOM COME

Thy Kingdom Come, which calls on all Christians to join a global movement of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost, is in its third year. What began with a prayer that 5,000 Christians would each pray for five people, has developed into a world-wide prayer initiative. The prayer is very simple – that more people will encounter a personal relationship with God, through the special love of Jesus Christ. Thy Kingdom Come 2018 saw 91% of participants pray to bring family members and friends to know Jesus, 75% felt motivated to pray more often and 42% felt more motivated to talk about Jesus.

For 2019, Thy Kingdom Come preparation consists of a whole plethora of resources that can be downloaded from the website or ordered directly from Christian Publications and Outreach. One you may find very helpful is called 'Bright Ideas for Churches.' There is also a Methodist booklet *Nine Days of Prayer* written by the President Elect of Methodist Conference 2019/2020. There will be a Bible study on Acts 1 from N.T. Wright (Tom Wright) and he and the Archbishop of Canterbury will be in conversation comparing a large city today with Jerusalem 2000 years ago. You may also look forward to a daily Podcast from Tom Wright.

Two events that allowed us to try out various ideas and novel ways of church families praying together, or as individuals, took place during April at Telford and Leominster, where we were delighted to learn about the variety of resources available and included discussing the thorny question of when prayers do not seem to be answered. Please do have a look at the Thy Kingdom Come website. It will be possible to advertise your church events on any social media platform through 'customisable' videos. There is a rich resource of personal testimonies from famous faces you will recognise to those who you will not know, but who have a genuinely beautiful story to tell about an awakening and thirst to know Jesus or know Him better.

If I can be of any assistance, please do contact me. Andrea Sheppick. amcs92@btinternet.com



Baptist Minister Chris Densham, Deacon Julie Morton from Telford and our own Revd James Eaton-Challinor at the Telford event.



Thy Kingdom Come training event at Leominster Methodist Church

STATIONING UPDATE

The Stationing Matching Group have confirmed that subject to Connexional adoption in June, Revd. Julia Skitt and Deacon Carys Woodley have been appointed to the North Area of our Circuit. Knighton, Builth Wells and Llanbister are to benefit from the appointment of Deacon Sara Windsor-Hides. Circuit Superintendent Revd. Hall is excited at the prospect of the three joining our staff unit. Presbyter Julia, will be assisting in Oswestry having served in the York Circuit. Speaking of the appointments, Revd. Hall said, "I am excited about all the folk we've got coming. It has to be said I think we're getting a really interesting mix of skills. Julia will be working full time across the Northern Area alongside Carys who is a new Deacon, who will be living in Wem and they will both be working with Jacob (Molyneux)".

Revd. Hall continued, "The plan is that the three of them will be working alongside me very much as a team, so it will be a new way of working in a sense. We're not replacing like for like and because it will be a new way of working the details of how it will work are not in place, there's still i's to dot and t's to cross but what we've got are a group of people who are coming, keen to work together, keen to find what it is that God's calling the church to do and to be in that part of the Circuit and that's exciting." Deacon Sara Windsor-Hides's appointment is a part-time post based in Knighton, with pastoral oversight there, in Builth Wells and in Llanbister. Unlike the traditional Deacon role, she will be primarily church focussed, rather than community focussed working essentially within the church communities helping to re-energise them as they develop a vision for the future. "It is really exciting" Revd. Hall enthused adding, "I think about August and the prospect of new possibilities."

MARGARET AT THE MOSQUE When Muslims at Craven Arms extended an invitation on Open Mosque Day, Local Preacher Margaret Savage accepted and went along. She told the *Green Sock* that removing her shoes on entering she immediately appreciated the underfloor heating. "It was lovely. We were shown a small room where the women gather for prayer then there was a demonstration of the prayer and explanation of the Five Pillars." Among the things she found particularly interesting was the Islamic attitude to children. "They don't believe in original sin, so children are not considered old enough to be held responsible." Opening their doors to the wider population enabled interaction with people of all faiths and non. Such was the response that the Imam had to offer a second Open Mosque session.



Hand-outs provided curious visitors with information on Islamic tenets and methods of prayer and worship

World Day of Prayer

Themed "Come- Everything is ready" and written by women of Slovenia, this year's WDP service was a call to reflect on the barriers that remained as a legacy of World War II. Several churches in the



Circuit held services and those in attendance were asked to give generously to counter some of the shortfall caused by last year's WDP service cancellations locally, due to inclement weather.



Circuit Stewards Training 18th May 2019

The District along with The Learning Network are providing a training day for Circuit Stewards entitled

A Toolkit for Navigating Change

The day will take place at The Wesley Centre, Spring Head, Wednesbury, WS10 9AD. To book your place please do so at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-toolkit-for-navigating-change-tickets-60189010952>



COURAGEOUS DAY OUT

Reviewing the District's Courageous Day Out, which took place in Telford in March, Jon Pedley who along with a team of young people, organised the event said the day had provided a fantastic opportunity for the District to "come together and celebrate our faith". Amid a variety of seminars and addresses from a diverse selection of guest speakers including Michaela Youngson, Bala

Gnanapragasm and Youth President Jasmine Yeboah, the workshops and (some) taxing activities challenged participants to overcome their anxieties and fears that perhaps prevent them sharing testimonies, following their calling or even taking a bungee jump. The courage of Esther, David and Daniel was explored in the context of going forth in faith which provided the backdrop to a discussion around the experience of migrating to the UK in which Shropshire and Marches' Revd. Shalome MacNeill-Cooper took part.

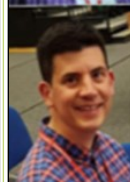


COURAGEOUS
The Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District of the Methodist Church invites you to
Courageous Conversations on Marriage & Relationships
with Deacon Eunice Attwood and Rev'd Jonathan Dean of the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education



Sunday 12th May

Ludlow Methodist Church, Broad St, Ludlow, SY8 1NH
from 3-7pm



A space welcome to people holding different perspectives where we can open the Bible together; look back over what the Church has said and done regarding Marriage & Relationships; consider what it means for us to be a people living with contradictory convictions and prepare for further conversations in 2019/20