

Yorkshire West Autumn Synod 8th September 2018

Woodhouse Grove School

Bradford South Circuit



Agenda: business, beginning at 10am, will include:

- Dispensations, letters, announcements
- Themes of the day
- Introduction of new staff, welcome and response
- Constitution of Synod and appointments
- Election of Representatives to Conference 2019
- Items from Conference 2018
- Notices of Motion and announcements
- District Policy Committee Business
- Yorkshire West Youth Network
- Property matters
- Joint Public Issues Team (Yorkshire)
- Safeguarding
- Local Preachers' & Worship Leaders' Memorial Service

Synod began promptly, with a revised order of items: Dr Walton dealt carefully and engagingly with items one and two, then switched to the District Policy Committee, including Grant Applications, Permission to Cease Worship, and Property Matters: see pages 3 to 7 of the Business Booklet. (Gildersome's disposal of excess land and Churwell's sale of its building were approved.)

Conference Report comprised a lively video and further reportage.

Matters Arising:

1. In this new year it is recommended that churches discuss the topic of marriage, including marriage of same-sex couples, as Conference will receive a Report due in July 2020.

Resources for discussion are **a)** <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/marriage-and-relationships-2018/a-model-statement-on-living-with-contradictory-convictions/#>, including six decisions on how the church should relate to each other and visitors: and **b)** <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/marriage-and-relationships-2018/>, which includes a video link.

2. The relationship with the Church of England has deepened: a joint document has been released, <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/8523/mission-and-ministry-in-covenant-a-readers-guide.pdf>



Representatives to the Conferences for the next three years were elected, and the other representatives were endorsed by Synod.

The First major theme arises here:

Dr Walton presented Conference's discussion around the crisis in membership and effectiveness in witnessing to our neighbours who are not Christians, making the point that the root word for "crisis" indicates that a pivotal moment of decision to rise to opportunities has arrived.

Responsiveness and Imagination are necessary: this is the calling of the moment.

1. We have to manage our institution as stewards responsible to the future;
2. The time has come for the application of imagination in relating to those around us;

3. Congregations are asked to consider, and, if possible, undertake in order to discover a deeper walk with God;
4. Small groups of 3 and 4 individuals might undertake this walk together;
5. We need to acknowledge:
 1. Many buildings are stereotyped, and almost all are ageing;
 2. Many congregations are ageing;
 3. The Church is on the periphery of our culture;
6. Synod members discussed Revd Dr Walton's "A Methodist Way of Life", which was presented as an A6 card, the text is copied below. (Reproduction of these cards was not mentioned at the time. Ask District Office about this.)

Side 1:

As far as we are able in:

- ❖ Worship to
 - Pray Daily;
 - Worship regularly;
 - Look and listen for God each day;
- ❖ Learning and Caring to
 - Learn more of God and God's world;
 - Practise friendship and care for others and for ourselves;
 - Honour creation and tend the environment;
 - Practise hospitality and generosity
- ❖ Service to
 - Be good neighbours to those in need
 - Challenge injustice
 - Seek the common good.
- ❖ Evangelism we will:
 - Witness to the love of God in Jesus;
 - Speak of faith to others;
 - Help each other to be better disciples

We commit to this rule of life and to the well-being of this community, out of gratitude to God who forgives, heals, and makes all things new. May each life be a blessing within and beyond God's church, for the transformation of the world.

Side 2:

Questions for covenant groups to ask of each other concerning the Way of Life: "In

- ❖ Worship
 - What is the pattern of your prayer life?
 - How easy or hard do you find it?
 - What has recently spoken to you in worship or Bible study?
 - When has God been close to you?
- ❖ Learning and Caring
 - How and what are you learning at the moment?
 - How or what has God given you to care for?
 - How have you practised generosity and hospitality since we last met?
- ❖ Service
 - How are you serving your neighbours?
 - What issues of justice are you involved in? Are there any you need to take up?
 - How can we support you in your commitments?
- ❖ Evangelism
 - How have you witnessed to God's love?
 - What opportunities have there been to share your faith since we last met?
 - Are any particular people you should pray for or invite to consider Christian faith?

Questions to consider in discussion:

1. The call to a deeper walk with God is a call to all of us;
2. How much can a "rule" or "way of life" help us in our spiritual lives?

Discussion:

- Congregations that have revamped the building experienced new interest, new members;
- Recent "Blue sky thinking" has revitalised expectations and new initiatives are planned;
- New Bible study have been formed and are resulting in fresh interest in other activities;
- Own Arrangements have freed people to participate;
- Small groups within the congregation are reviving expectations;
- One set of church representatives present at the Synod said they were very pleased to get the "Way of Life" card, and will distribute it within their church;
- A series of team sermons led to the creation of small groups in the congregation;
- "Where have you seen God at work?" asked at weekly worship has resulted in awakenings;
- A centre-city worker has evolved a "Way of Life" which is spreading among staff at charities, the local communities within businesses and professional offices;
- An on-line church is running, using a Facebook page (but it needs volunteers to monitor it closely);
- A warning about language in liturgy and hymns was voiced – "your will" "my master" are loaded words for an abuse survivor, not just from the lyrics of a much-loved hymn.

The One Opportunities Scheme

Two interns were introduced – the project itself is rolling out this month.

<http://www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk/mission-ministry/youth-and-children-s-work/one-opportunity-programme>

Safeguarding: www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk/information-resources/safeguarding

Training: www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk/images/Yorkshire-West-Advanced-Module-Training-Dates_.pdf

The Advanced module is an important change: half the District will be covered in this year; the other half will follow next year.

Those officers who are intended for this essential course are urged to attend: Please note the above warning about language in liturgy and hymns – “your will” “my master” are loaded words for an abuse survivor, not just from the lyrics of a much-loved hymn – and there is a portion on the theology of release from memories.

MHA

The Chaplain’s report added warmth and deeper knowledge: e.g. the average stay is 3 years, yet those arriving are swiftly at home; many MHA Homes are rated ‘outstanding’; there are 140 Chaplains.

Property:

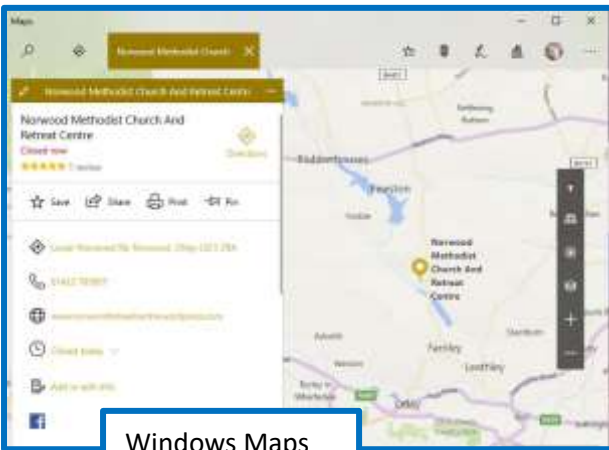
Touchstone has moved to the new premises: the formal opening is on Saturday 15th September, please come.

The District was thanked for its support and generous help in this landmark venture.

Oxford Place: the redevelopment as an hotel is progressing, and an outline of the intended finished building was shown. The District’s handing of the property to the Connexion for the physical work was tabled and passed.

The Norwood Centre is now available for retreats and other stays.

[www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk/people-](http://www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk/people-places/norwood-retreat-centre)



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Similarly the Beamsley Project Chapel and cottage are available : www.beamsleyproject.org/



Discipleship and The Learning Network:



Ministry:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning/network-regions/yorkshire-plus-region/>

Details of events, courses etc were listed: above & also <http://www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk/news-events/events>

3Generate:

:3Generate 2018 at Pontins 23rd – 25th November

District events:

Regional Retreat at Cliffe College 20th -22nd November

Retreat for those considering ordination 19th January at Leeds Church Institute

<http://www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk/images/Vocations-Day-2019-Flyer.pdf>

Youth Network Children's Day at Bradley Woods contact Laura Tunnacliff on 07531 819106

"1,000 letters project" please write a letter sharing your faith journey, or just a "Bless you" to one child – for more details from Laura Tunnacliff.

Challenges as opportunities to work with your community :

Meet your MP JPIT Yorkshire

Issues of injustice:

Human trafficking

Universal Credit rollouts in the District

Plastic waster especially litter

Homelessness

Fair Trade - please deal directly with Traidcraft – or our Resource Centre

The meeting closed at 4:00 pm