

Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District

Report on the September 2015 synod

The synod was held in Wednesbury on the 12th September 2015 and was pleased to be in the new Black Country Circuit so soon after its formation. The new circuit gave us a very warm welcome, brought on behalf of the circuit by the superintendent, Revd Phil Thomas. Worship led by members of the circuit set the scene for an interesting day. Warm greetings were brought by the Mayor of Sandwell, Mrs Barbara Price and her husband and by Revd Timothy Vasby-Burnie from St Bartholomew's Church of England. Synod expressed thanks to Revd Andrew Champley for his work as Assistant Chair over the last two years and Revd T John Davies accepted John Howard's invitation to replace Andrew as Assistant Chair of the next two years. Good wishes were sent to Revd Paul Nzacahayo, who has left the district to be a tutor at Queen's Foundation, in Birmingham

Synod business included an interesting report from Chris reed, the **District Treasurer**. He spoke of the importance of turning money into mission, of being good stewards of all our resources and transparent in all financial matters. At Connexional level, an extra One million pounds is being made available in each of the next three years for Churches, Circuits and Districts to apply for mission grants.

Safeguarding: Margaret Reynolds updated synod on the Past Cases review and on the Policy for Safer Recruitment, for which training is now available.

The District Children's Holiday: Thanks were given to churches and circuits who had supported this financially. This holiday has a high impact on the children who participate and on their parents.

There were also short reports on **Action for Children, The Dementia Friendly Churches' resources, the district link with Rwanda, the Positive Working Together report and Climate Change and Fossil Fuels (A letter was agreed to be sent to MPs about this urgent issue.)**. **The 2015 Conference representatives** gave a report that reflected on some of the main issues raised and decisions made, concerning Marriage and relationships, Safeguarding, Faith and Order matters and Reaffirmation of Baptismal Faith, for which there is now an authorised Order of Service. Synod appointed as representatives to Conference 2016 Revds David Lavender, Caroline Wickens and Denise Williams, Mrs Beatrice Cloke, Miss Helen Cook, Miss Jacqueline Hill, Miss Andrea Sheppick and Mr Keith Walton.

Leigh Maydew told synod about a family fun Day to be held at The Black Country Living Museum on 9th April 2016 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of Bishop Francis Asbury, born a Black Country boy.

Revd Jon Chesworth proposed and Frances Biseker seconded a Notice of Motion concerning the current refugee crisis. After discussion, the following resolution was agreed by synod:

The Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Methodist Synod recognises that Europe is facing the biggest refugee crisis since the end of WW2, a part of the huge world refugee crisis. Synod further recognises that the vast majority of refugees are not coming to Europe, but are displaced within their home region.

The Synod calls upon the UK Government and UK Local Authorities to play a full and fair part along with other European countries in accepting and resettling refugees. Synod further calls upon governments across the world to properly fund the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and ensure adequate care for refugees wherever they have been displaced.

The Synod reminds its churches of the call by the 2015 Methodist Conference that every church should do what it can to help. Thus we urge all our churches

- **to support and befriend refugees in their local communities,**
- **to raise public awareness of their needs**
- **to raise funds for other groups working with refugees**
- **to keep refugees and all who try to help them in our prayers.**

Synod agreed that this resolution should be sent in a letter to all MPs in the district.

The theme for synod was discipleship. In his keynote address, 'Dare to Dream' Andrew Roberts, of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network, reflected on what it means to be a disciple, illustrated by individual and personal journeys of discipleship and consideration on what God might be calling us to do. He referred to a new programme, Holy Habits, which is based on Luke's description of the first Christian community in Acts 2. (The full script of Andrew's address is to be found on the District website.) This was followed by a range of workshops addressing discipleship in differing contexts – Nurturing discipleship through the local church, Nurturing discipleship through the sacraments, Messy discipleship, discipleship and young people, discipleship in rural areas.

Synod stood for a moment of remembrance of Revd David Gamble, ex-president of Conference who died on 11th September 2015. Revd John Howard led concluding worship.

Please Note

The Spring Synod is on 16th April 2016 in the Stafford Circuit. This will be John Howard's final synod in the district. A farewell service is being planned for 16th July 2016.