

The **Methodist** Church in Scotland



In Touch

Issue 2 Spring 2015

Edinburgh &
Forth

Strathclyde

Ayrshire &
Renfrewshire

Central

North of
Scotland

Angus
Dundee &

Inverness

Dear Friends,

The first edition of *In Touch* was generally well-received. I hope that the distribution went without too many hitches. This time and in the autumn it will be sent out via Synod and, in future at Christmas/New Year through the Superintendents' meeting – although this didn't happen last time for various reasons to do with deadlines. If, in future, you would like to make a contribution it will need to be with Fiona at the Office by mid March, mid July or the beginning of November.

You will see in this edition that there is news from across the District. As I travel around I am encouraged by the variety of things happening and the new opportunities being taken and long-standing things being done well amidst all the challenges and discouragements that are inevitable. If anything is happening in your neck of the woods – it may be a new project or a discussion your Church/ or Circuit is having about something significant – we would be glad to receive short article about it.

You will be reading this following Synod. When we met in Edinburgh on April 25th one of the main items for discussion was the issues raised by the introduction same-sex marriage, etc led by two members of the United Reformed Church in Scotland. At last year's Methodist Conference a report on Marriage and Civil Partnerships was adopted which, among other things, committed our Church to consider this further. A working group was established to prepare materials for discussion across the Church and to bring proposals to the Conference of 2016 as to whether or not Methodism should revisit its understanding of Christian marriage.

As well as the discussion at Synod, over the coming months Circuits and Churches will be asked to take part in this process of discussion and consultation. Two things in particular were revealed during the consultation for the 2015 report: people feel very strongly on both sides in of this matter and so we will be asked to explore how we can live with contradictory convictions; secondly many of the responses to the working party revealed a very high level of homophobia among some Methodists and Conference decided that this needed to be addressed too. We will also be asked if we feel that the Methodist Church should revisit its understanding of Christian Marriage. As a result of this consultation across the Connexion, a recommendation will be brought to the 2016 Conference. If the Church decides it is time to revisit our understanding of marriage then that process will begin following the 2016 Conference. It will not mean that Churches can marry people of the same sex from that date. Due to the need to carry out this consultation at circuit and District level, please note that the District Policy Committee has proposed that the dates of the autumn DPC and Synod be switched. Synod will now be on November 21st and the DPC on September 12th.

I hope you will take part in this important and, for some, challenging discussion in our Circuits and Churches. I hope, too, that you will respect and listen to the views of others, even if you strongly disagree with them.

Kindest regards,
David Easton

Unpacking Fresh Expressions

Thirty five Methodists and a small number of guests from the Church of Scotland gathered in St George's Tron on 21st February to learn more about 'making church with the un-churched'.

John and Olive Drane facilitated the day and the content included time spent exploring the process of bringing a fresh expression into being as well as descriptions of a number of different fresh expressions.

One particular example of a Fresh Expression was from a Methodist context where four elderly ladies (the majority of the church council) supported a vision from a local woman to turn their church into a soft play adventure centre as a means of engaging with the local community at a point of need and creating opportunities for conversations with parents about faith. There is now a strong worshipping community in that place.

Evaluations of the day were extremely favourable and it is hoped that this event will mark something of a launch-pad for convening circuit-based or church-based conversations about growing some new fresh expressions of church within Methodism in Scotland which complements existing work in the District.

Please contact Gary Williams, williamsg@methodistchurch.org.uk if you would like to take part in these conversations.

In addition, Fresh Expression Vision Days are taking place in various locations throughout Scotland in the coming months (led by the major denominations in Scotland including Methodism) and details are available on the district website or from Gary.

The church in rural Scotland

The land mass of Scotland is 94% rural and nearly one fifth of the population live in rural areas. Over recent years, the population in rural areas has grown at a faster rate than the rest of Scotland, especially in those parts defined as 'accessible rural' (areas with less than 30 minutes driving time to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more).

The ecumenical Scottish Churches Rural Group (SCRG) exists to raise awareness about issues that affect people living or working in rural areas. It also aims to identify ways in which the church – at national and at local level – can work in partnership with other agencies to bring benefit to our rural population.

Two major concerns, both of which are priority topics for the SCRG throughout 2015, are "energy" and "well-being". Each of these, clearly, is also important to town and city dwellers: everyone uses energy to heat their homes and for travel, for example, and we all want to live healthy and fulfilled lives. For people living in rural Scotland, however, there are some specific issues that need to be addressed.

There are both benefits and disadvantages to the building of wind-farms, for example; the electricity produced may help to reduce our national 'carbon footprint' but it is used to provide heat and light to distant cities not to heat or light local homes; and if their presence on the hill-side keeps tourists away, will rural jobs go too? There are excess fuel costs for people in remote rural areas; petrol and diesel cost more, while many people need to use more than urban dwellers to go shopping, get to school or go to work.

In order to live *well*, we all need companionship; isolation is a significant problem in rural areas. Many people work alone – more so today, because of mechanisation and technology, than in the past. The benefits of internet access in enabling home-based work may also

become a problem; denying the company found in office or factory. Limited public transport makes going to the doctor, or attending a hospital appointment not only difficult but also costly. Young mothers can find it impossible to get outside their home with a young baby and may be at risk of depression or anxiety. Support for vulnerable elderly people is being cut because the time needed for home-carers to travel between clients has made providing this service too expensive.

Churches can help in a variety of ways. Rural church buildings can be used, as many already are, to provide a place to meet and talk and share together. Cullen's Wednesday "Open Door" is a good example of this way of reducing the problems that living alone can bring.

The command of Jesus to "love our neighbour" acts as a reminder of the need to look out for each other, especially when our neighbour may be living alone or be geographically isolated. Our righteous God calls us to seek justice for the poor and oppressed; we can help by buying local produce, refusing to buy milk from supermarkets not giving to farmers enough to cover the cost of production, or campaigning to keep less-profitable bus-routes running.

SCRG is currently in discussion with several organisations also concerned about rural well-being and it is hoped that we can work together to develop some kind of rural support network or plan. Anyone who has any ideas or suggestions about how this could be achieved is welcome to contact me by email at revrat1999@yahoo.com or by phone on 01467 625102. Please also get in touch if you are aware of any issues that the SCRG should be working on.

And if anyone is planning to go to the Royal Highland Show at Ingliston on 18 to 21 June, do take time to visit the Churches Tent there. This year's theme is 'Here to Listen' and there will be different activities each day, a warm welcome and a chance to sit and chat over a free tea or coffee.

Rev Lorna Murray



Christian Against Poverty started by helping people in debt in Bradford, and now has over 500 centres across Great Britain.

In March 2014 it started CAP Job Clubs as it recognized a lot of debt was due to unemployment.

In September 2014 Pollokshaws Methodist Church in Partnership with Christians Against Poverty set up a CAP Job Club to help the unemployed within the local community.

Phil Haggis the CAP Job Club Manager works with volunteers from the church to provide three really important areas of support.

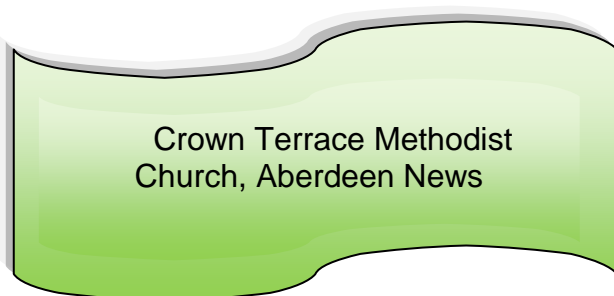
1. A Community space where job seekers can come and use computers to access the internet to search for work one day a week on a Tuesday 10.30 – 2.00.
2. To provide a series of 8 workshops to help members through such things as setting Goals, Completing CV's, and interview techniques.
3. Providing individual one to one coaching focused on their own needs.

Since September we have helped 120 job seekers in their quest to get back into work, with 10 people already finding paid employment. The CAP Job Club is supposed to run 2 workshops a year, however such is the demand we have already run five workshops, and hopefully we will be able to run 10 series of 8 workshops in the first year.

Rather than the one day a week, we are finding that we are running coaching sessions on two other days, as well as the Tuesday. We have now also employed a CAP Coach to work ten hours a week.

Between the two workshops currently being run on a Tuesday we enjoy soup and fellowship.

If you are interested in the work of CAP, which also now is involved in organising centres to help people with addiction, and also centres which run money courses, then visit : capuk.org or phone 0800 328 0006.



Since summer 2014 we have seen steady growth in membership and those who gather for worship on Sunday mornings week by week.

We were actively involved in the Fresher's Weeks at both Universities in the autumn which brought us into contact with a number of undergraduate and postgraduate students largely from African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon but also from England. Through my chaplaincy work with the University of Aberdeen Chaplaincy I have also conducted various weddings, funerals and baptisms which have given us further links with others beside.

We have also been actively engaging with many churches in the city centre which has led to various large gatherings in our church including various prayer and worship services one of which raised more than £1K for charity.

Several of our members formed a team to put on a very successful pageant float to mark the switching on of the Christmas lights

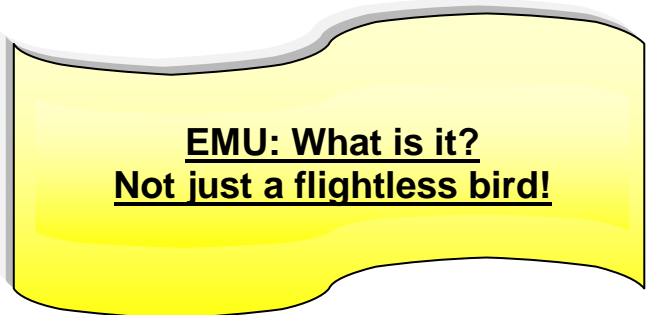
along Union Street which led to much favourable comment from both the general community and across the churches.

One exciting development in the church is the growth in the number of young children which attend Sunday Club and Crèche. To support this we have started a Parenting Children Group which convenes after morning worship once a month and now has 16 members. We have also set this up as a Closed Group on Facebook so members can continue to converse between the sessions for mutual benefit. We are looking at the possibility of having an affiliated youth group in Kintore with a former protégé of mine Jill Douglas from the early nineties taking an active role in this.

Our Roof Project to replace the church roof is now with the Quantity Surveyor with the hope that the work will be done during the coming summer.

Your prayers on all these matters are very much valued and appreciated.

Rev Dr John McNeill



EMU stands for the **Episcopal, Methodist, United Reformed Partnership** whose formal Statement was signed on 23rd January 2010 by the leaders of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Scotland district of the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church in Scotland.

EMU is a development of the relationship between these 3 Churches following termination of the Scottish Churches Initiative for Union (SCIFU) conversations which also included the Church of Scotland.

EMU is not a formal conversation looking towards structured union, but a means of developing the relationships between the churches, across all areas of life and work, and of “*sharing resources across Scotland to fulfil our shared Christian mission to spread the Gospel*”.

EMU's Steering Group of 4 persons from each Church meets regularly 2 or 3 times a year, and the Church leaders, Ecumenical Officers and others are in more frequent contact. Those engaged with formation and training have close personal links, after working together and presenting joint programmes and events, over a number of years. EMU has more recently agreed the appointment of the representative of one church acting as the “EMU link person” for meetings with other ecumenical partners or bodies.

EMU churches, separately and together, maintain relationships with other ecumenical partners. EMU has recently hosted meetings for a wide range of churches to consider ways of working together on ministerial vocations, training and formation, for both ordained and lay persons.

EMU partners know the jokes about “a flightless bird”, but there have been areas where it is felt things have got off the ground. Although the rate of take-off is slow and uneven, there are examples of a local sense of “we can work together because we are EMU”. Forward movement can appear uncertain or even unlikely – not least because of the scattered nature of EMU congregations across Scotland – but there are signs of and a commitment to progress.

EMU is recognised to be an unknown creature in places – is there always a copy of the formal Statement on public display? Or it is felt not to be of interest, relevance, or

practical use. Information about or from any or all of the 3 churches does not always reach local levels – e.g the monthly *Faith in Action* prayer guide

(http://www.scotland.anglican.org/index.php/church_in_society_committee/faith_in_action_prayer_guide/).

EMU's Review has been invited not only to assess the past 5 years but to suggest pointers for future closer growth. EMU's Methodist representatives invite comments and suggestions at any time, via the District Office.

Jenny Easson



The Methodist Church in Scotland is partnering with a number of denominations in the delivery of Fresh Expressions Vision Days in various locations in Scotland. Fresh Expressions are forms of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. Thousands of new congregations have been formed in the UK alongside more traditional churches.

If you would like to attend one of these events, please use the contact details provided on the fliers.

[V05 – vision day flier -Dornoch](#)

[V05 – vision day flier – Fort Augustus](#)

[V05 – vision day flier – Kilmarnock](#)

[V05 – vision day flier – Perth \(2\)](#)

If you have any questions, ideas or thoughts about how the Methodist Church in Scotland is seeking to support the growth of Fresh Expressions, please do get in touch with me (details below)

Gary Williams

Regional Learning and Development Officer-Scotland

Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network

Email: williamsg@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 01413323196 Mob: 07799900464

Methodist District Youth Weekend

In September over 40 young people, youth workers & ministers headed up to Perthshire for the Methodist District Youth Weekend at PGL centre in Dalguise. The majority of the young people in attendance were from youth projects/groups associated with local churches from across the Edinburgh and Forth and Glasgow circuits. Despite the varying weather the weekend was a lot of fun for the young people and a great opportunity to realise that they are not alone no matter how distant they may seem from other projects. The PGL centre led two full days of programme with outdoor activities including; archery, canoeing, abseiling, cycling and orienteering. Our team also led a varied evening programme themed on 'The Good Samaritan' exploring through sessions and workshops of music, drama and art, how we can be a good neighbour in our current situations. Young people shared their creative ideas in song, spoken work, drama and creative collages during our interactive Sunday morning session.



Thanks to continued funding from the District Advance Fund, plans are already in place for a repeat of the weekend in 2015 (September 4th – 6th) and we are hopeful to make it a district wide event and include young people from all around Scotland, details will be shared shortly about how to register young people you work with – circuits are being asked to nominate 2 representatives before general registration opens.

For more information please contact

Hayley Gillies – hayley@ymcaedinburgh.com 07799747427 or

Gary Williams williamsg@methodistchurch.org.uk 07799900464

Thank You.

For the last 60 years, Action for Children has been working tirelessly in Scotland to make children's lives better. As our founder, Methodist minister Thomas Bowman Stephenson said, we're here "in the service of the children".

The Methodist Church in Scotland has been with us every step of the way, so please join us in celebrating our 60th anniversary.

How to get involved:

- Collect loose change in one of our home collection boxes
- Hold a collection at your church
- Encourage friends or family to join you at one of our fundraising events such as the zip slide across the River Clyde.
- Organise a coffee morning... perhaps you could bake a birthday cake to celebrate!
- Once you have provided for your own family, please consider leaving a gift in your will to help us continue our vital work over the next 60 years and beyond

You might have some fantastic ideas of your own to mark the occasion, so let us know how you'd like to celebrate.

**Contact Stuart Laurie,
our Community Fundraiser:**

**stuart.laurie@actionforchildren.org.uk
0141 550 9022 or 07715 043 736**

actionforchildren.org.uk



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Visit of President and Vice-President of Conference

The Rev Steven Wild and Dr Jill Barber will be taking up their positions as President and Vice-President of our Church at this year's Conference in Southport. They will both be visiting Scotland during their year in office – Steven in August of this year (16th – 19th) and Jill during March of next year (2nd – 4th). Steven is the Chair of the Cornwall District, where he has spent most of his ministry, although he is originally from Lancashire. He was also on the staff of Cliff College before returning to Cornwall and has had experience of presenting television programmes. Jill is a professional archivist and is the Warden of Englesea Brook Museum of Primitive Methodism. Details of their itineraries in Scotland will be available in due course.

As a bit of background to their visits, it might be helpful to be reminded of why the Methodist Church has these positions. During his lifetime, John Wesley presided over the Methodist Conference. Following his death, the 'travelling preachers', as ministers were then called, and who constituted the membership of Conference, decided that they would 'have no other king in Israel' – in other words no permanent President. So it was agreed that a new President would be elected annually – although it would be possible for a person to hold the office more than once, as a few have.

None of the branches of Methodism that emerged during the 19th Century had a Vice-President until 1872 when the Primitive Methodist conference established the office. When, the Wesleyan Methodists, United Methodists (who were a merger of three smaller branches in 1907) and Primitives merged in 1932 it was agreed that the Primitive Methodist practice of a lay Vice-Presidency would continue. Both the President and Vice-President are elected by Conference a year before they are due to take up their offices.

District Dates 2015

May	5	EMU Meeting	(Edinburgh)
	5 - 7	Diaconal Convocation	
	9	Circuit Stewards Meeting	(Dunblane)
	13	Superintendents Meeting	(Stirling)
	14	Religious Leaders' Inter-Faith Meeting	(Glasgow)
	16	Methodist/URC Roadshow 'People, places, possibilities' looking at church buildings as places for mission. 10.15 - 16.15	(Duke St. URC, Edinburgh)
	24	Armadale Church's 150 th Anniversary	
June	2	ACTS Members Meeting	(Alloa)
	10	Regional Learning & Development Forum	(Glasgow)
	19 – 21	Solas Festival	(Perth)
	25 - 26	Conference - Presbyteral Session	(Southport)
	28	Conference - Ordination Services	(Southport)
	27 – 2 July	Conference - Representative Session	(Southport)
August	16 - 19	Visit by President of Conference	
	26	District Executive Meeting	
September	4 - 6	District Youth Weekend	
	7	Relief and extension Fund Meeting	(Dunblane)
	12	District Policy Committee	(Dunblane)

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue of "In Touch"
 If you would like to submit an article to the Summer issue, please send to Fiona Inglis at
fiona@methodistchurch.plus.com
 Please continue to check our website for updates www.methodistchurchinscotland.net/