

The **Methodist** Church in Scotland



# In Touch

Issue 10 Winter 2017

Strathclyde

Forth Valley

**Ayrshire &  
Renfrewshire**

North of  
Scotland

**Angus  
Dundee &  
Perthshire**

Inverness

**Dear Friends,**

As I write this letter we are in the midst of Stationing – the process whereby circuits and ministers are matched for appointment at the beginning of the next Connexional year in September 2018. This year this continues to be extremely difficult. There are, approximately, 140 circuits looking for Presbyters with less than 90 available. Sixteen circuits have been accepted to receive that number of Deacons and there are around 25 circuits to which a Probationer will be appointed. You don't, therefore, have to be a mathematical genius to work out that around 50 circuits will be trying to cover these shortages next year. Although the stationing process is not yet complete, Scotland is one of only three Districts where it has been possible to match ministers with all the appointments hoping to be filled. Please pray for our fellow Methodists who will be seeking the best way to fulfil the mission of the Church in circuits that already stretched through previous reduction in numbers of ministers.

But, in the midst of all of the challenges, I want to share with you the inspiration and encouragement that I felt as looked at the profiles of circuits and ministers. I was inspired by the instances of circuits where growth in numbers and new ideas was clearly taking place, whether it was a growing congregation composed of young people, or another which had 'transplanted' a hundred of its members to renew a moribund church in the same circuit, a multi-ethnic congregation in London of over 700, or a small church in the Yorkshire Dales where a chapel that had concluded that it ought to close had reached out to its community which felt it shouldn't and so set up a chapel support group and where now the congregation has grown and new members have been welcomed; and there are many other examples of places where Methodists were looking for new ways of being Church. I was also encouraged to learn of ministers who are willing to go to anywhere in the Connexion and to serve where the need is greatest. And, as someone who is a couple of years away from retirement, I was heartened by those ministers who are younger and/or newer in the work who see a future for the Church and who are obviously deeply committed to Christ and his Church.

There is no doubt whatsoever that we live in challenging times for the Church but we also live in times of opportunity. I praise God for those circuits, churches and ministers who can see and grasp these opportunities and have the courage to step out in faith by the power and inspiration of the Spirit.

*A footnote:*

In response to a request from the District Policy Committee, a small working group brought proposals to its November meeting regarding our development as a District. It proposed, in many ways, that we look to our core identity as Methodists with a stress on social action arising from an understanding of our faith - social holiness driven by inner holiness. More news and information about this initiative will be given to Methodists across Scotland in the coming weeks and months, including through future editions of this newsletter.

Every blessing, David

Advent 2017

# **An Invitation from the President, Vice President and Secretary of Conference**

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

## **Thy Kingdom Come, 10th – 20th May 2018**

We are delighted to invite you and your churches and communities to take part in *Thy Kingdom Come*, a global, ecumenical call to prayer between Ascension and Pentecost 2018.

As many of you will know, *Thy Kingdom Come* began in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. Today, *Thy Kingdom Come* aims to equip individuals, families and churches to pray, so that through prayer, people will be empowered by the Holy Spirit, finding new confidence to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

Methodists are already involved in *Thy Kingdom Come* in a number of ways, but we are delighted to say that the Methodist Church is now a formal partner in the initiative, as an expression of the Church's commitment to personal and social holiness and to paying attention to God through prayer.

There are many ways to get involved. A number of churches across the Connexion will host *Thy Kingdom Come* Beacon events in 2018, and we will be seeking to identify *Thy Kingdom Come* 'champions' who will promote the initiative across the Connexion. A wide range of resources are already available through [www.thykingdomcome.global](http://www.thykingdomcome.global) for use by churches, including materials for prayer walks, prayer stations and service templates. Further resources are currently being developed with particular reference to Methodist contexts and charisms.

Further information, along with suggestions and resources for prayer, will be available on the Methodist Church's website and at [www.thykingdomcome.global](http://www.thykingdomcome.global). We do hope that you and your churches and communities will join us in engaging with *Thy Kingdom Come* and in uniting in prayer between Ascension and Pentecost 2018.

Yours in Christ,

**Lorraine N Mellor**

**Jill Baker**

**Gareth J. Powell**

## **Reflection on 'Pause & Pray' event**

### **Saturday 30th September 2017 in Nicolson Square Gardens, Edinburgh**

Some months ago, I experienced what I'll call a 'Godly nudge' to actively encourage prayer. Specifically, the call was to take prayer onto the streets in the form of a 'prayer station'. The idea was well-received across the Forth Valley Circuit and, equipped with a (fairly) weather resistant gazebo, a specially made banner, a prayer tree and variety of Christian resources - we were good to go!

None of us knew quite what to expect but just how much God was ahead of us would become apparent. We had no agenda other than to be a Christian presence, representing the Methodist Church in Scotland, willing to engage with people in conversation and prayer.

Whilst people passing through the Gardens did stop by, it was the group of people who often make the Gardens their base, who engaged the most and made us very glad that 'Pause & Pray' had become a reality and had not simply remained an idea for the future.



Many of the people we met had suffered loss of some kind and until now, had not had the means to express or mark these losses. Names were lovingly painted on stones or written on cards and placed on the prayer tree.

God was certainly ahead of us. One man we met always carried a Bible and especially loved Psalm 4. Another proudly showed me the cross he wore and said how blessed he used to feel when he was in church. Those who were estranged from families still cared deeply about them and wanted to talk about them and pray for them.

What next? We pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to move in the lives of those we met and that we will remain open to creative ways of sharing God's blessings with others.

**Deacon Elizabeth Harfleet  
Forth Valley Circuit**



Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue of "In Touch"  
 As of January 2018, we will be sending out the "In Touch" on a monthly basis, depending on the amount of articles we have received, so please submit any articles, by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, to Fiona Inglis at [fiona@methodistchurch.plus.com](mailto:fiona@methodistchurch.plus.com)  
 Please use Word format when emailing  
 Please continue to check our website for updates [www.methodistchurchinScotland.net/](http://www.methodistchurchinScotland.net/)  
 The Methodist Church in Scotland  
 Old Churches House, 1 Kirk St, Dunblane, FK15 0AJ  
 Tel: 01786 820295