

DISTRICT NEWS

February 2014

The district executive met in the early part of December without the presence of Barry Wilford who was sitting on a scrutiny panel for his local Crown Prosecution Service. Several executive members were delayed in arriving due to a motor accident on their journey, and the meeting then considered its normal full agenda.

Methodist Heritage and World War I : On behalf of the Methodist Heritage team and in particular the editorial team of the My Methodist History website, the executive is passing on a message about work being done by the team attempting to record all war memorials in Methodist churches and in particular those relating to World War I. If a church has such a memorial could someone please take a photograph of it. Then, visit the website, which is www.mymethodisthistory.org.uk where there are full instructions about how to add a page. Ideally the photograph should be accompanied by a listing of the names that are on the war memorial, supported if at all possible by family or church stories from the time. The website will also accept details of World War II memorials. Any queries should be addressed to Pamela Atkins or Ann Fox at mymethodisthistory@gmail.com.

Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network: The executive meeting heard that the final appointment of ministries officer has been made to the East Central regional team. Revd Tim Woolley has been appointed, with details for his start date yet to be decided. East central region covers the Lincolnshire, Nottingham & Derby and Northampton districts. The region has an establishment of 4.5 posts including a regional co-ordinator, and 3.5 learning and development officers. Each post holder will specialise in a specific area of development: either church and community, or discipleship and ministry.

Regional co-ordinator - David Syson is the regional co-ordinator. David has been a training officer based in the Chester & Stoke and Manchester & Stockport districts. He has worked with many church leaders in seeking God for the future life and mission of individual circuits and churches. Supporting the new ways of connecting something of the love of God through church to wider communities has involved David in supporting fresh expressions such as Night Church in Stoke on Trent, and connecting church with those enjoying the night life of Hanley.

Prior to working for the Methodist Church David was an education consultant for a government body, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, advising on quality and improvement in colleges. David has provided advice for the Department of Education on developing education for women in custodial care settings. He has been a senior manager within the specialist education sector. Whilst working in colleges in Aberdeen and Guildford, David and his wife enjoyed ecumenical Christian fellowship with those from many church backgrounds.

Learning and development officers - Jane Bingham is one of the new learning and development officers for the east central region. Jane has worked for the last four and a half years as a training officer for the two districts in the East Midlands. Prior to that she worked as a training professional, amongst other things, in the public and private sector including banking, customer service, power generation, the NHS and the civil service. Although a Midlands girl at heart, Jane has been an honorary Yorkshire woman for 25 years and worships at Sprotbrough Methodist Church in the Sheffield District. The great loves of her life are the cinema, chocolate, music (occasionally folky) and her teenage daughter although not necessarily in that order.

Lorna Valentine has been appointed part-time learning and development officer. After obtaining her degree in communications, Lorna worked for many years as part of the production team at the Methodist Publishing House. On leaving she escaped to the wider world, and worked in benefit administration. As the daughter of a Methodist minister and a lifelong Methodist the working time "away" was an invaluable experience but she was tempted back in 2011 when she took up a post as the district development enabler for Lincoln & Grimsby. As a creative person, musician and local preacher passionate about enabling the leading of worship, Lorna became involved in the district local preacher course and has worked with other districts to enable the model to be used more widely. Having successfully candidated over the last year, as Lorna takes up this post it is alongside her pre-ordination training. She has grown up with the label of "The Missing Generation" and spends much time pondering what that means for someone who is actually there.

Synod Secretary: During the executive meeting Revd Dr Martin Wellings advised members that he felt the time was right for him to stand down as synod secretary with effect from the end of the current connexional year. The executive is now seeking someone to replace him. The meeting thanked Martin for his long and diligent service; there will be an opportunity to thank him in a more public environment later in the year.