

Notes of Synod Proceedings Saturday 10th May 2025

Synod was held at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster

Jongi Zihle welcomed everyone to Synod.

Tony Miles welcomed everyone on behalf of Methodist Central Hall.

Opening Worship was led by members of Harrow and Hillingdon Circuit.

Dispensations

Dispensations were given to 17 Presbyters & Deacons.

Apologies were received from 9 supernumeraries and 7 lay representatives.

Introductory Business

John Logan (Synod Secretary) introduced the business.

Appointment of Scrutineers

The synod appointed the following scrutineers

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|---------------------|-----------------|
| Esther Ayanfejesu | Cynthia Bond |
| Racheal Dzumbira | Joana Idun |
| Ruth Imbo | Kath Leckey |
| Beatrice Lewis | Sabrina Malcolm |
| Irene Miller | Adrian Pickett |
| Priyanka Suryawansh | |

Report from Chairs Nomination Committee

John Logan updated synod explaining the conversations since Jongi's decision to curtail and presented the following reasoned statement:

In pursuance of SO 423(6), the London District Council has discerned that it needs a time to agree its way ahead following an unexpected change of leadership and so asks the Synod to designate a Chair to work alongside Jonathan Dean for two years.

Faith Nyota has been Deputy Chair in the District since 2018 and a Superintendent for 15 years. She offers to the District a clear vision of the needs and opportunities of a complex and diverse district, pastoral sensitivity, a confident handling of the processes of the Church, an ability to work caringly with others, and a model of leadership that is spirit-led and collaborative. Her ministry is underpinned by a vital spirituality which will enable her to hold the complexities and challenges of an interim role at this point in the District's life.

The following resolution was put to a ballot and approved by 97%

RESOLUTION: Synod to recommend to Conference that the Revd Faith Nyota is nominated as Chair of the London District from 01 September 2025 for a period of two years

Ministerial Business

Probationers Committee

Jonathan Dean gave the report from the probationers committee.

Revd Dr Joyce Popoola and Revd Rachel Read have completed their 2nd and 1st year of probation respectively and have been recommended to continue in their probationary to third and second year.

Sabbaticals

Dawn Downes gave the report from the Sabbaticals Advisory Group.

The SAG have approved the following Sabbaticals since the last Synod.

| 2024/2025 | 2025/26 |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Revd Duncan MacBean | Revd David Innes |
| Deacon Laura MacBean | |

The SAG have agreed that the following to be deferred.

| Deferred 2025/26 | Deferred 2026/27 |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Deacon Andy Packer | Revd Paul Wood |
| Revd Greg Obong-Oshotse | |

The Synod agreed **Resolution 1**

The Synod to approve the recent decisions made by the District Sabbatical Group.

Ministers Seeking permission to become Supernumeraries

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| Revd Dr Andrew Lyons |
| Revd Rosamund Hollingsworth |

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| Revd David Newton |
| Revd Rupert Weekes |

Ministers moving away from the District (subject to Conference)

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|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Deacon Jacqueline Esama-John | Staines & Feltham |
| Revd Lansford Penn-Timity | Staines & Feltham |
| Revd Oseias da Silva | Launceston |
| Revd Nigel Wright | Leeds North & East |
| Revd Dr Jongi Zihle | TBC |

Ministers moving within the District (subject to Conference)

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Revd Paulo Bessa da Silva | Lambeth |
| Revd Kong Ching Hii | Forest |
| Revd Richard Grocott | Croydon |
| Revd Claire Potter | City Road |

District Council Business

Priya Rasanayagam (District Council Secretary) introduced the business

District Appointments

Synod agreed the following **resolution 1**

The District Council recommends to Synod that Revd Matt Lunn is appointed as Presbyteral Synod Secretary from 01 September 2025

The Synod agreed the following **resolution 2**

The Synod acknowledges the appointments made since the September 2023 (listed in the Synod papers).

These were:

District Manse Advisory Committee

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|--------------------|--------|
| Ms Nancy Acquah | Member |
| Mrs Margaret Logan | Member |
| Mr Monty Grigg | Member |

Methodist Conference

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| Ms Evelyn Annan | 2025-2027 |
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| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Ms Sue Millman | 2025-2027 |
| Ms Margaret Greer | 2025 |
| Revd Mmasape Thathane-Tyolweni | (reserve) |
| Revd Eleanor Jackson | (reserve) |
| Deacon Ruth Yorke | (reserve) |

The synod agreed **resolution 3**

The Synod delegates to the District Council any further appointments which need to be made before September 2025.

Permission to Discontinue Public Services

The synod agreed **resolution 4**

The Synod gives permission to discontinue public services in accordance with SO943 (1) at St John Methodist Church, in Enfield Circuit..

District Report

Kojo Amoah-Arko introduced the Finance Report including the Accounts, 25/26 budget and Circuit Assessments.

Synod asked for clarification on the Capital receipts in the report. As the District Treasurer was not present it was agreed to check after synod.

As stated at note 3.2 on the full accounts - During the year, Tower Hamlets Circuit sold former manse, 2A Stepney Green. Proceeds of sale amounted to £978,332, out of which a levy of £367,333 has been paid for the Connexional Advance and Priority Fund to support mission around the Connexion. The money to purchase the manse had originally come from the East End Mission Fund and so the sales proceeds have been lodged in Trust 20520.

Synod agreed **resolution 5**

The Synod notes the District Accounts 2023-2024, which have been approved by the District Council as charitable trustees of the District.

Synod agreed **resolution 6**

The Synod adopts the District Budget for 2025-2026.

Synod agreed **resolution 7**

The Synod adopts the allocation of the assessments to the Circuits for 2025-2026.

Memorials to Conference

1. Housing

The following Memorial was agreed by vote:

For – 150

Against -1

The London District Synod draws the attention of the Conference to the current housing crisis in the UK. A shortage of truly affordable homes is pushing more people into homelessness than ever before.

Record numbers of people are stuck for years in temporary accommodation that harms their health. This includes over 164,000 children in England who are growing up in unsafe conditions, restricting their life chances and trapping them in poverty.

People are being forced to sleep on friends' sofas, fearing they have overstayed their welcome, and thousands are left to face the danger of sleeping on the streets.

This is all having a huge impact on wellbeing, health, employment, education, community cohesion and it is happening in every part of the UK, affecting all the communities we serve, whether they are urban, rural or coastal, or in areas of affluence or deprivation.

The chronic and longstanding shortage of affordable housing is the key factor driving London's homelessness emergency that requires London boroughs to spend £4m a day on providing temporary housing for the 183,000 Londoners who are currently homeless.

It should be recognised that this housing crisis harms us all and that The Methodist Church can play its part in responding to the housing need, particularly in so far as it affects the poorest and most marginalised in our communities.

Such a response by The Methodist Church would strengthen communities, combat poverty, reduce destitution, and increase wellbeing and flourishing. Everyone needs a safe, secure, affordable and warm home in order to live well.

However, there are currently legal limitations for churches, circuits, and districts who wish to respond by selling or leasing land or buildings to provide accommodation. An increased provision of accommodation for those affected by the shortage of genuinely affordable housing and of good quality emergency provision including modular requires more flexibility to facilitate this work.

Conference

- (i) affirms that the provision of genuinely affordable homes and of emergency accommodation is an integral part of the mission of The Methodist Church as a sign of the gospel of Jesus Christ and as an outworking of our commitment to be a justice seeking church and is furthering the purposes of The Methodist Church;
- (ii) recognises the rich heritage of the Methodist Church and celebrates the work that Methodist churches, circuits, districts and others are engaged in to meet local housing need,

including emergency accommodation. The Conference strongly encourages the Methodist people to consider what more they can do to tackle the housing and homelessness crisis in their area;

(iii) directs the Connexional Council to consider the steps to be taken to achieve greater flexibility in order to facilitate (i) and (ii) above;

(iv) directs Districts and Circuits to identify suitable manses, church premises, buildings, and land that could be used to meet housing need.

2. Safeguarding Symposium

Following requests for clarification on the original tabled motion. The following was approved by vote:

For -140

Against -3

The London Methodist District, being deeply aware that some of the operational issues relating to safeguarding (both inside our own Church and others, and also, significantly, wider society and public opinion) would benefit from thoughtful and prayerful exploration and sharing. *We request the Conference to encourage and affirm a symposium to explore these issues.* The London District ~~plans to host~~ **is invited to share in the hosting** such an open meeting at Methodist Central Hall Westminster before the end of 2025.

The symposium would seek to provide an inclusive and informed conversation about safeguarding and the Gospel, and also address some of the personal, pastoral and theological issues being raised by ministers and members throughout the connexion. The underlying purpose of this discussion is to build up the Body of Christ **in accordance with the strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity and the Theology of Safeguarding Report**. Given the broad nature of some of the issues under conversation, the open meeting would seek to ensure ecumenical participation.

Keynote Address

Revd Matt Finch addressed the synod on **New People for New Places**.

Matt explored the journey of Pioneering work in the Methodist church over the last 20 years, explaining what a New Place for New People is and how it links with Church at the Margins.

Matt challenged synod to think about those who “can be persuaded”. There is a deep yearning to learn about faith and how do we go out to meet people where they are.

Matt encouraged synod by giving examples of some of the New Places for New People across the connexion, ranging from neighbourhood project which meet in local cafes and libraries to Recovery Church. Challenging Testimony was heard from two projects.

The synod was invited to reflect on the following questions:

- Who are the people that an NPNP might begin with and for?
- Where are the places/spaces/groups an NPNP might emerge?

- What questions do you need answered to help you begin an NPNP in your context?

District Mission Plan

Jonathan introduced the business.

Synod was asked to reflect on the three visions:

1. *Seeking Growth*
2. *Reaching Out*
3. *Embracing God's World*

Particularly to think about what they are currently doing and what they might do in the future?

The feedback will be collated and will inform the final plan which will be launched at the September Synod. Any further feedback is to be submitted to the District Office by 6th June.

Letters of greeting

Synod was asked to send four letters of greeting

Act of Remembrance

Synod held a period of silence for those who have died since the previous synod, both lay and ordained:

Local Preachers who have died in the last year

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|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Nnorom Okezie Osondu Azuonye | Lesnes Abbey |
| Timothy Buckley | Battersea & Wandle Valley |
| Mary Daniels | Newham |
| David Groves | Ealing Trinity |
| Beryl Heather | Enfield |
| Jenny Haden | Teddington |
| Sally Judges | Teddington |
| James Otoo | Battersea & Wandle Valley |
| David Porter | Harrow & Hillingdon |
| Gordon Wallace | Romford |

Ministers who have died since the Sept Synod

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| Rev'd David Cruise |
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Synod closed with prayer led by Jongi Zihle.

Next Representative Synod

Saturday 20 Sept 2025

Saturday 18 April 2026