

## **Notes of Synod Proceedings Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

Synod was held at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster

Jongi Zihle constituted synod and invited Revd Lansford Penn-Timothy & Deacon Ali McMillan to welcome everyone on behalf of Methodist Central Hall.

Opening Worship was led by members of the Social Responsibility Commission.

Nigel Cowgill convened synod business.

### **Dispensations**

Dispensations were given to 16 Presbyters & Deacons.

Apologies were received from 3 supernumeraries and 6 lay representatives.

### **Introductory Business**

John Logan (Synod Secretary) introduced the business.

New lay members of synod were welcomed and the following Ministers who are new to the London District:

Revd Audrey Browne	Harrow & Hillingdon
Revd Graham Claydon-Knights	Purley
Revd Vida Foday	Teddington (Supernumerary)
Revd Nicholas Holt	New River (Supernumerary)
Revd Vindra Maraji-Ogden	Kingston upon Thames
Revd Francis M'Ltiiri	New River
Revd Joyce Popoola	Westminster
Revd Hendry Ponniah	Sutton
Deacon Sally Wheadon	Islington & Camden
Revd Paul Wood	Notting Hill
Deacon Ruth Yorke	West London Mission

### **Appointment of Scrutineers**

The synod appointed the following scrutineers

Aba Amponsah-Dadzie	Esther Ayanfejesu
Cynthia Bond	Norma Downer-Powell
Rachael Dzumbira	Virginia Hopson
Ruth Imbo	George Kulasingham
Kath Leckey	Beatrice Lewis
Adrian Pickett	Sheila Platt

## **District Representatives to Methodist Conference**

The District currently has the following Representatives to Conference

Mrs Janet Arthur	Miss Margaret Greer
Revd Richard Grocott	Mrs Helen Lunn
Ms Sarah Murrey	Revd Stephanie Njeru
Deacon Theresa Simons-Sam	Mr Moses Tandayi
Revd Mmasape Thathane-Tyolweni	Revd Roz Hollingsworth
Mr John Logan	

Following the Conference decision to reduce the number of reps to conference Synod is requested to appoint 2 additional lay representatives and 1 Ministerial Representative.

### **Lay Representatives**

2 Lay reps were needed and 2 nominations were received.

Ms Bola Nzekwe was appointed for three years and Mr Adetokunbo Jolaoso for one year.

### **Ministerial Representative**

3 nominations were received, and a ballot was held.

Ben Twumasi was elected.

Faith Nyota & Rachael Wilson are reserves

### **District Council Business**

Priya Rasanayagam (District Council Secretary) introduced the business

#### **District Appointments**

The Synod agreed the following resolution: The Synod acknowledges the appointments made since the last Synod (listed in the Synod papers), and those listed on the tabled paper today

These were:

District Council

Ms Priya Rasanayagam

Secretary

Social Responsibility Commission

Mr Bala Gnanapragasam

Member

Probationers Committee

Revd Nigel Wright

Member

Finance Resource Group

Mr Thomas Smith

Member

Chairs Nomination Committee  
Mrs Helen Lunn -

Member

The synod also agreed the following resolution  
The Synod delegates to the District Council any further appointments which need to be made before the next April Synod (2024).

### **Permission to Discontinue Public Service (SO943 (1))**

Synod agreed the following resolutions

- The Synod gives permission to discontinue public services in accordance with SO493 (1) at West Wickham Methodist Church.
- The Synod gives permission to discontinue public services in accordance with SO493 (1) at Pantilles Methodist Church.
- The Synod gives permission to discontinue public services in accordance with SO493 (1) at Farmlands Methodist Church.
- The Synod gives permission to discontinue public services in accordance with SO493 (1) at Pitshanger Methodist Church.

### **Ministerial Business**

Dawne Downes (Sabbaticals Secretary) introduced the business and thanked the members of the Sabbaticals Advisory Group for their work.

The Sabbaticals Advisory Group have considered and approved the following;

<b>2023/24</b>	
Revd Dr Stephen Day	Revd Dr Paul Hill
Revd Jenny Impey	Revd Elaine Joseph
Revd Richard Lowson	Revd Oseias da Silva
Revd Ung Soon Nguang	

<b>Deferred 2023/24</b>	<b>Deferred 2024/25</b>
Revd Faith Nyota	Revd Greg Obong-Oshotse

Deferred- date yet to be confirmed – Revd Catherine Hutton

Synod agreed the following resolution:

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

## Keynote Addresses

Jongi Zihle chaired the session:

Syond heard 2 keynote speakers reflect on Racial Justice and how the Church needs to continue to engage with the issue, learning from past mistakes and acting.

**Dr Lisa Adjei**, *British Church Relations Manager at Christian Aid and Leader of Sankofa Collective*

Lisa reminded the synod that it is 30 years since the murder of Stephen Lawrence and there was still much to be done.

Micah Ch 6 V8 :..... And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to **love mercy** and to walk humbly with your God.

Lisa expanded on what it is to love mercy and 3 things associated with mercy.

1. Truth  
need to know how we were shaped and the truth from history.
2. Repentance and Repair  
When we know and acknowledge the truth we need to repent and repair. Repentance is more than saying sorry. So often people say sorry but continue the same pattern of behaviour. Behaviour needs to change for there to be repair.
3. Take action  
in order to repair action needs to be taken. What do we need to do individually and as a church.  
Lisa challenged the synod to think about power. Who holds power, what power do we hold and how can we give power to others who have no voice

**Revd Dr Raj Patta**, *Minister serving in Stockport Circuit*

Raj reminded us it was 60 years since Martin Luther King Jr gave his famous "I have a dream..." speech and helped synod to think about dreams particularly focusing on Amos.

- My dreams are my story – if my dreams are taken away from me then I lose hope.
- to dream is to:
  - be liberated
  - Belong
  - be-loved
  - cry out loud my inner language of poetry
  - lament
  - pray
  - reimagine
  - be free
  - re-envision
  - act

- celebrate
- dance to the rhythms of love, life and liberation.
- Dreams are **holy interruptions** that unsettles the powers on one hand, and on the other hand they are **holy intrusions** that pave a way to keep striving for a new world as the fruition of such dreams
- Raj reminded us how in the book of Amos God used dreams focusing on The Dream of a Basket of Summer fruit – Amos 8:1-12
  - God speaks through symbols and images that are local, political and decolonial
  - Amos sees exactly what God has shown him – we see a perfect harmony which allows God's imaginations to shape Amos's
  - For us a basket of summer fruit might be about abundance & prosperity, but the divine offers them to be political images of justice, exposing the unjust practises and to ensure justice, equality and equity for people who have been exploited by systems and structures of society
- Raj concluded that it is when our individual dreams are in tune with the divine which can lead to real change. He challenged us to allow individual and communities to dream and not be afraid to dream sharing his own dream.

The synod was given an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

### **Act of Remembrance**

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

### **Ministers who have died since the Sept Synod**

Revd Chrispian Acher

Revd Leo Osborn

Synod adjourned for lunch

### **Letters of Greeting**

John Logan asked that the following letters of greeting were approved:

- 3 letters of condolence
- 1 letter of support
- 1 letter of thanks to the previous District Council Secretary

Synod approved.

### **Panel discussion with members of the London District reflecting on Windrush**

The discussion was chaired by Donald Palmer.

Participants were: Bevan Powell, Eleanor Jackson, Valerie McCallum, Nathan Stanley & Jongi Zihle.

It is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush in the UK.

The Panel reflected on what 'Windrush' meant to them & what the churches still need to do.

Valerie shared her experiences of arriving in the UK in the early sixties, including some of the attitudes she encountered in the church and local community.

For others it was learning from their parents and grandparents or the privilege sitting with members of their congregation who shared their experiences.

The panel reflected on how there are still echoes of those experiences today and what the church needs to do:

- The scandal and difficulty of people having to prove they had a right to be in the UK after having lived here for so long.
- How we treat current refugees & asylum seekers. More open to European refugees but not to other countries
- The current structures in our society which disempower groups of people.
- Attitudes within the Churches at the time continue to leave their mark and left structures which disempower groups/local congregations/circuits within the Methodist Church.
- Young people are asking that congregations address the issues which are important to them such as racial justice amongst others. If the church is not addressing these, young people see it as being irrelevant.

A further period of Q&A followed.

Synod closed with a short act of worship led by Nigel Cowgill.

### **Next Presbyteral Synod**

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024, Hinde Street.

### **Next Representative Synod**

Saturday 20 April 2024