

Synod report Discipleship & Ministries Learning Network Isle of Man

Our work has a number of aims, including developing sustainable networks of people who gather around a shared ministry, providing learning opportunities for lay leaders, providing learning opportunities for ordained leaders, supporting the learning infrastructure of the Methodist Connexion, providing support for churches, circuits, districts and individuals for development.

We work under 4 areas of focus, Church and Community, challenging and equipping mission-shaped communities, Ministry Development forming and equipping those who share in lay and ordained ministry, Discipleship Development nurturing and equipping Christ-like disciples, and Scholarship, Research & Innovation enabling and encouraging creative thinkers in an environment of scholarship, research and innovation.

We have specialists in the first three categories all eager to help with your needs and each DMLN member is beavering away to provide resources that are well researched and innovative.

Here in the North West & Mann region we have allocated one person in our team to be the link for you to access all of this provision – in your District this is Alison Ransome. This does not mean that Alison will deliver everything herself but we hope it makes things simpler for you in terms of having just one person to access rather than the 8 of us in our regional team or the additional 50+ of our specialist colleagues based in either Methodist Church House or Cliff College.

I have written a fuller report for your Synod which you can find on the news section of our website www.discipleshaped.org this report is a snapshot for your Synod papers.

What we've been doing uniquely in your District

- Leadership away day
- CORE skills for children's ministry training the trainers day & children's ministry vision day.
- Island Spirituality retreat
- Preachers and Worship Leaders away day

What we have offered to every District

Working alongside churches in visioning and setting a direction of travel. And – responding to individual ministers, churches and circuits as requests arise. This work is varied and may involve one meeting, or involvement over a period of time. Then there are also opportunities for learning and development which are on offer to you and all Methodists in this region.

Since May Synod 2015 these are the headlines for some of that which we have offered;

Connecting Disciples – annual conference, plus Connecting Disciples Local. This is learning & development for lay employees. In this region we offered retreats and this year we would welcome invitations to bring together lay employees in your District.

Resourcing lay employees

Resourcing lay employees steering groups to share good ideas and move forward. This has been piloted in Cumbria and been found to be very helpful. This series of 2 facilitated meetings over a 6 month period is available on request to all Districts.

Growing Through Conflict – this training day is on offer through until October 2016 and all the dates can be found on our online calendar. Alongside this Brec would like to meet with those experienced in conflict intervention to build a network of people with a shared skill and interest. We are hopeful that in Lent 2017 we will be hosting Bridge Builders 5 day Mediating Interpersonal conflicts training at a subsidised cost.

Worship: Leading & Preaching – this is the new course to train Local Preachers and Worship Leaders. It is the largest training programme the Methodist Connexion delivers, and it is the responsibility of Circuit to offer the course to those it has discerned may have a call to preach or lead worship. To support Circuits in that we have delivered at least one Familiarisation session to every District, and two Districts have also had this for every Circuit. We have delivered 5 Tutor & mentor training days and 5 are in the calendar for the next few months. We have provided a comprehensive mentor training material which has gone to every Circuit so that mentors can be trained over a period of months via Local Preacher Meetings, or in Circuit at times which suit. We have enabled a number of Circuits to work together to offer the training and this is beginning to work well. We can be contacted if you are interested in this. We gather the District Candidates Secretaries together on a

regular basis to share information, ideas and support including relating to the new course but also wider issues. For FAQs about the course please visit www.methodist.org.uk

Circuits and churches considering their ministry; we have led many consultations using processes to give people the time and space to do their best thinking as they consider ways forward. We act as external consultants as this sometimes gives everyone involved in leadership the opportunity to be heard. We tend to work with circuits and churches over a 12 month period or offer a one off consultation visit if that is requested.

Children and young people's participation

We are providing a number of resources to encourage adults to enable children and young people's participation. These include

"The Mirror – This Is What We See"; a film of children speaking to adults in the church about what they think about God, and the Church. There are questions for adults to ask each other following on from what they hear and then ideas for use in your own church to hear your own children's voices. **3Generate** is organised and led by the DMLN and this year had record numbers. In the Methodist Church we also have an amazing resource which the Methodist Church provides every year so that children & young people who haven't been able to attend 3Generate can still participate, this is called

The Big Sleepover. However few church leaders are accessing it so we hosted 2 events "Unpacking The Big Sleepover".

Rejuvenating local children's and youth work; In this region our Learning & Development Forum has committed £25,000 and has applied for a Connexional grant of £60,000.00 To fund part time workers in every District to work with those working often in isolation with children and young people week in week out. This group of adults are in essence church leaders and we are committed to giving them as much resourcing and support as we do for example to Worship Leaders or Local Preachers. So watch out for someone soon to be appointed in your District who will have a 3 year role to support volunteers on the ground involved in children's and youth work.

The ONE programme has had an OPP in this region this year that we have supported, and we are currently recruiting another OPP somewhere in this region. The ONE programme is expanding and there will more opportunities for young people to take on supported leadership roles over the next couple of years. Again, more info about this will be in our newsletter and website as it becomes available.

Pioneer Pathways – the Methodist Church is committed to resources people who are leading new forms of church, these people each work in unique contexts and an off the shelf training programme won't work for them. Therefore there is a more nuanced programme of support offered to them. It is in its first year and we are working to develop a Community of Practice with experienced pioneers and missionaries who themselves will offer mentoring to those new to the ministry. There are subsidises for those on a Pioneer Pathway to access formal training. This work is in its early stages and it is an exciting development. If there is someone with a pioneering role in your church or circuit then this is a network of support, training and mentoring just for them.

Safeguarding

We continue to offer **Domestic Abuse** awareness training sessions on request. Each year we also offer the mandatory **Creating Safer Space Leadership Module**, and **training the Circuit based Foundation Module trainers**. As you know the **Past Cases Review** means some revisions to the Foundation Module, therefore we are hosting a series of dates and all Foundation Module trainers must attend one of these sessions to be able to continue leading the revised course, and also the refresher course to deliver to those who have completed Foundation Module 5 years ago. For more information about please visit our website and check out the News section www.discipleshaped.org

Lifelong learning for Presbyters and Deacons

We are working the Chairs of Districts and CDiM Officers to develop sustainable, needs led lifelong learning for Presbyters and Deacons. That group have met twice and the third meeting which will agree action is planned for this year.

We have offered one off training days for Ordained Ministers, and Lay leaders. This includes Whole Life Discipleship; Imagine Church, Line Managing Lay Employees, Personal Safety, Time Management,

For the first time we are partnering with the Nazarene College and Luther King House and the three are sharing a summer school for Ordained Ministers. The key note speaker this year is Gerard Kelly and the theme is Renewal. 16-19th May 2016, it is possible to attend individual sessions or the whole week in Didsbury.

Resourcing lay employees

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Cliff College is part of the Learning Network and as such we work with them in offering a summer school. The theme this year is and booking is via Cliff College. This summer school is open to lay and ordained people. 20-24th June with focus on Bible, Mission, and Discipleship and also 1-5th August with focus on Theology, Worship, and Ministry.

Circuit Stewards are key leaders in our church, and with the support of Chairs of Districts we are offering 2 part Leadership sessions “lay leadership: hearing God, leading God’s people”. These are happening this Connexional year and next and the hope is that the sessions we lead with Circuit Stewards they can then lead something similar with Church stewards.

We have brought in **Family Ministry** training days over the last 12 months, and this is something available on request.

We have led **Messy Church** training and again is available on request.

We are starting to offer a series of **deeper theological teaching** days, exploring the Bible to enable us all to grapple with issues of difference. Sign up for our newsletter for up to date information and check out the website and social media.

Discipleship development

We are working with one District to develop ways of **being intentional about deepening discipleship and exploring vocational discernment**. This is available on request to all Districts and Circuits.

We host a series of Saturdays for anyone discerning what God might be nudging them towards. These days stand alone or you can attend them all. Postcards went out at September synods and the dates to be found on our calendar of events and the flier on our website and watch the social media. Topics for the remainder of this year are ‘Understanding Vocation’, ‘Becoming myself’, ‘Biblical models of Vocation’, Methodist perspectives on Vocation’, and ‘Discernment and Decision making’

As ever we work with ordained colleagues who volunteer their time to lead **Candidating Support** sessions throughout the year.

We have gathered together District Candidate secretaries and hope to do so again as last time it was a useful time of sharing experiences and ways forward.

We offer **small group facilitation** training on request.

Professional coaching – Edel is working towards her professional accreditation and is currently coaching 4 leaders in every District for this year.

Methodist Identity – There is 6 session course to be delivered locally in church or circuit for those interested in what is distinctive about Methodism. Also, in this region we are at the early stages of developing a selection of resources to gather the voices of local Methodists saying what Methodism is for them.