

Minister's Letter

You may have noticed that the Methodist Conference has been in town. I've not gone as a delegate but I've managed to go to the memorial service, the ordination service at Leyland road and helped out on the heritage walks that took place on Tuesday afternoon. It's been good to see so many people from our circuit taking part as stewards and of course every time I went to the conference centre I met so many people from around the connexion that I was able to catch up, some that I haven't seen for quite a while.

It's been interesting to talk to those who have gone to conference for the first time. On the whole they have been given a deeper understanding of how connected we are as a national church and concerned that some people don't have a deeper understanding of what it means to be a Connexional church.

The promise of mutual support is a strength of Methodism, this is expressed in one way as when we become members and we are allocated a pastoral visitor who is responsible for visiting and offering spiritual support, encouragement and challenge. However we also become members of the wider Methodist church which expresses itself in the connexion. "Holiness is not achieved except in community. Methodism has a strong sense of community, which is expressed in the way it is organised. It calls itself a Connexion" The Methodist Church believes that the whole people of God shares the same calling and that ordained ministers do not have a different calling from the rest of God's people; which is why lay leadership is one of the greatest strengths of Methodism. Conference is the governing body of the Methodist Church and meets once a year to discuss and decide on policy and the way forward for the church. The great beauty of the conference is that all people, lay or ordained are given the opportunity to have a say in the way the church is going.

At Marshside we are fortunate that a lot of our members are already involved in leadership within the local church but my question for you to ponder over the summer is how would you be better helped to understand the joys, privileges and challenges of belonging to a Connexional church?

I'll leave the last word to Charles Wesley:

"He bids us build each other up;
And, gathered into one,
To our high calling's
Glorious hope
We hand in hand go on"

608 Singing the faith

Blessings,

Rev Jan