

## South West Cumbria United Area Trustees' Annual Report (Sept 2023 – Aug 2024)

2023/24 got off to a great start when we welcomed Hayley back as a probationary minister in a lovely service at Ulverston Methodist Church, reflecting her role across the United Area and South Lakes Circuit. She is now well into the second phase of her probationary period, and we wish her well with her work and studies, as she looks forward to her ordination next summer. Hayley's stationing has facilitated closer working between the two circuits, and our Trustees and their Circuit Stewards shared an away day in November. This change in relationship also offered different options for Kirkby when they were considering with whom to merge.

It feels as though we have been through a few years of changes, with more of the same to come. Should we be anxious about this? If we think of changes as 'new beginnings', possibly not. The new beginnings above have certainly been positive; and another example of change being for the better is the new **re:new**. Although the extended period of waiting for it to happen was sometimes stressful, it was worth it in the end. Not only do we now have a large, bright and airy space which is wheelchair and buggy-friendly, with more room for our pre-loved items and an extended range of Christian books and products, we also have a community / café space where people can sit, have a drink and a chat – and find a friendly face to talk to if they are on their own. There is always a 'prayer of the week' on the tables and a prayer gathering takes place every Wednesday at 9.00am. All are welcome. The next step – another positive change! – will be to employ an experienced Pioneer to work alongside Tim in developing mission and outreach and ultimately building a new worshipping community there. **re:new** will continue to be a joint Methodist and URC project, so please continue to support us in prayer, by donating items, by popping in for a chat ... and possibly by volunteering in some capacity if you can spare an hour or two.

Some of us experienced another big change when we attended the first Methodist Synod of the new North West England District (NWED) a few weeks ago. A new beginning means that something else has come to an end; but that did not make the last Cumbria District Synod, which took place at Beacon Hill in April, any less joyful. Worshipping with a large congregation is always uplifting, but there was a real buzz about the whole day, too, possibly fuelled by the wonderful spread of cakes kindly baked by people from many of our churches. We were watched over by an impressive display of sourdough figures representing the Feeding of the 5,000, which subsequently made its way to Millom via Hawkshead; and we were inspired by the visit of the Vice-President of Conference, Deacon Kerry Scarlett, who spoke about the importance of discovering 'hidden treasures' in ourselves, our congregations and our communities. The final phase of voting for the single Cumbria Circuit also took place, meaning that, by this time next year, the United Area, South Lakes and the other Cumbrian circuits will be no more. For some people, this has caused a degree of anxiety, and it is true that there is a lot of preparation to be done during this year to be ready for September 2025. However, if we remember that the aim behind these two big mergers is to lift some of the current burdens from churches and allow them to focus on mission in their localities, this will hopefully be a change for the better, too.

Our churches have also experienced some changes, not all of them happy ones. We have lost some much-loved members; and some congregations have had to consider whether their church building has become more of a burden than a blessing. At the same time, new people have joined us, and we know that we will always find a welcome in all of the other churches in our Area. That close relationship at church and personal level will not disappear just because the circuit structure changes, and we *will* continue to work together, URC, Methodist and LEPs, along with our close ecumenical partners. The other thing that will not change, no matter what happens elsewhere, is our relationship with God. We know that we can always turn to him for guidance and reassurance, that we can put our trust in him to support and lead us when we are anxious or unsure.

Let's reflect on some of the good things that have taken place in 2023/24 in our own churches, when we have come together for worship and fellowship or when we have reached out to our communities - and look forward to doing more things like this together in the future.

The Anna Chaplaincy and the Dementia Tea Services have continued to provide valuable and much appreciated ministry to a vulnerable group of people. It is a loving ecumenical enterprise.

The Lent Pilgrimage Walks visited and prayed for *every* church in Barrow over six weeks.

We shared good news from our all churches at the Maundy Thursday service at Beacon Hill, displayed our coloured-in Stations of the Cross and afterwards shared a meal and a time of fellowship. We also had the opportunity to contribute to the Salvation Army's Stations of the Cross display and come together for the Walk of Witness and Good Friday service – then come together again for the sunrise service at the Cenotaph. (These joint services and celebrations are always a great joy. We should aim to have more!)

The visit of the National Methodist Youth Brass Band was a definite highlight. Their church crawl through Cumbria started at 7am, but they were still on great form when they reached the UA in the late afternoon ... and they even managed to arrive at Millom ahead of schedule! Their visit culminated in a wonderful concert and celebration at Hartington Street.

The good work on Eco Church has continued, with a number of our churches having achieved the Bronze or Silver awards this year through A Rocha UK. In the process, they have made their buildings and grounds as sustainable and 'green' as possible, using eco-friendly and Fairtrade products where they can and sharing good practices with their congregations and communities.

All our churches have worked through Renewed Beginnings and reflected on what they wish to continue in the future and how they might do some things differently. In June and July, some members from Dalton, Beacon Hill, Trinity, Hartington Street, Askam and Kirkby had weekly sessions with Emma Richardson from New Places for New People under the banner of 'Looking Beyond', where we explored different ways of being missional and reaching out to our communities. Millom plan to run their own Looking Beyond course with Emma soon.

We have supported each other spiritually through regular prayer groups and Bible studies and offer fellowship to our members and friends in the community through a multitude of activities and groups, including: the regular coffee mornings, soup lunches, the Community Lunch, Food and Fellowship, Coffee and Company, Sisterhood and Friends, MY group, Monday Magic, Cuppa, Chat and Company and the various knitting and craft groups. We also welcome a large number of outside groups who use our premises. Our ministry to children has included Sunday School, Messy Church, Toddlers groups, Flashbacks, holiday clubs, our ministers' visits to schools and schoolchildren visiting our churches to read, sing and enjoy Christmas activities. Our uniformed organisations have also been involved in some of our Eco Church work. We have continued to raise funds for charities like Christian Aid, All We Can, the Leprosy Mission, Fairtrade, the Foodbank, the Fund for World Mission, the Christian Blind Mission, Tearfund, Toilet Twinning and others. Our ministers, retired ministers and local preachers have led our worship on Sundays and during the week, in our churches and local care homes, as well as contributing to the weekly Worship at Home sheets and Pause and Pray, both of which we know reach people beyond our own congregations. We are very grateful for all their hard work. We are especially thankful for all that Helen, Kate and Hayley do to support us spiritually and pastorally - and for all the tedious but necessary admin work that most of us never see, but which they do quietly and conscientiously on our behalf.

*Please continue to pray for the life and work of our churches, those in them and those in leadership roles; and have faith in God's wisdom and his plan for our United Area, in this year and beyond.*

# South West Cumbria United Area

## Profit & Loss

	31/08/2024	31/08/2023
<b>Income</b>		
Broughton Income (includes balance transfer)	3,762	627
Interest	21,405	13,052
Misc Income	30	0
Assessment Payments	119,845	124,445
Charity Shop Income	31,806	29,511
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>176,848</b>	<b>167,635</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>176,848</b>	<b>167,635</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Clergy Salaries, NIC & Pension	62,099	45,552
Clergy Travel	4,476	2,082
Clergy Other Expenditure	2,022	922
<b>All Clergy Costs</b>	<b>68,597</b>	<b>48,556</b>
 Insurance	 844	 763
Manse Council Tax, Gas Service & Water	2,912	2,751
Manse General Repairs	379	2,740
Manse Quinquennials	0	360
<b>All Manse Costs</b>	<b>4,135</b>	<b>6,614</b>
 Administrator Wages	 5,083	 4,841
Area Photocopier Costs	705	382
Broughton Expenditure	3,766	1,371
Church Literature	699	1,680
Church Quinquennials	420	2,640
District Assessment	16,860	27,500
District Levies	23,551	19,633
Flashbacks	290	150
Misc Costs	225	54
Payroll & Bookkeeping Costs	470	418
Service Expenses	90	492
Staff Training	0	475
Trust Admin Fees	1,227	852
URC M & M	35,692	25,168
<b>All Other Costs</b>	<b>89,078</b>	<b>85,656</b>
 Bank Charges	 74	 65
Charity Shop Costs	58,531	43,309
Expenditure on Churches	13,594	1,975
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>234,009</b>	<b>186,175</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>-57,161</b>	<b>-18,540</b>
<b>Net Income/(Expenditure)</b>	<b>-57,161</b>	<b>-18,540</b>



# DECLARATIONS

## Treasurer

I confirm that I have prepared the accounts from the records of the Circuit and that they include all funds under the control of the Circuit

Signature of Treasurer



Date

30/09/2024

Name

Lynne Pearce MAAT

Address

60 Steel Street, Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA16 7BP

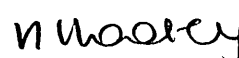
## Presentation to the \*Circuit Meeting for approval.

I confirm that the Accounts have been presented to the Circuit Meeting on

30/09/2024

and were approved.

Signature of the Chair of the meeting



Name of the Chair of the meeting

Rev Dr Helen Hooley

Date

30/09/2024

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

South West Cumbria United Area

Circuit

This Report is on the Circuit Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> August

2024

## Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider it is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.