

12. Methodist Diaconal Order General Report

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1. Membership

The Methodist Diaconal Order currently has a complement of 266 members. Of these:
136 are in the active work
117 are supernumerary deacons
8 are student deacons
5 are deacons who hold 'without appointment' status.

In addition, there are 2 authorised deacons in the active work, 1 associate deacon in the active work and 1 supernumerary associate deacon.

Since the 2016 Convocation 8 members have died, 14 new full members were received by ordination to the diaconate, 4 accepted candidates and 4 members had permission to sit down.

At the time of writing the processes of Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee and Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee are incomplete, and so the number of recommended candidates and those to be ordained at this Conference are not yet fully known.

2. MDO Pastoral Centre

At the beginning of this connexional year a number of friends and supporters joined members as the new MDO Pastoral Centre now based within Methodist Church House was opened and blessed. This followed on from the induction and welcome service for the new Warden and the Deputy Warden. The Order is exploring how our ministry of prayer, witness and service might contribute to the House and its mission and ministry, alongside learning what it is 'to be' the Order, a religious order and order of ministry within a very different environment.

3. Stationing

During the stationing matching process 22 deacons were matched with appointments for September 2017 by the Methodist Conference. This includes five who will become new probationers, one of whom is a probationer deacon transferring from the United Methodist Church in the USA.

4. 30 years on

At the 1986 Methodist Conference the decision was made to re open what was then the Wesley Deaconess Order to candidates for ordained diaconal ministry and inviting both women and men to consider this lifetime vocation. 2017 sees the Order celebrating 30 years since its first candidates were received following the decision, and giving thanks for the renewal of the Order, which is an ongoing process! The Order as part of our celebrations has embarked on a podcast project to capture something of its journey and the ongoing invitations and challenges of the Spirit in our midst.

5. Faith and Order

The Order is continuing to work with the Faith and Order Committee following the receiving of the interim report on the theology and ecclesiology of the diaconate at last year's Conference. We are mindful this is part of a larger work on the nature and theology of ministry in the Methodist Church and we anticipate its fruitful outcomes at the 2018 Conference. This work is a focus of the Order's corporate prayer, as we with the whole Church seek to be faithful and willing servants ready to respond with confidence to holy opportunity.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

12/1. The Conference received the Report.

12/2. The Conference resolved that the Convocation of the Methodist Diaconal Order shall meet at the Hayes Conference Centre from Tuesday 8 May until Friday 11 May 2018.