

Liverpool District Synod Report – Autumn 2013

Members of the Liverpool District Synod gathered in Linacre Mission for a cheerful welcome from the stewards to our morning meeting on Saturday 7th September. We celebrated the 70 year anniversary of MHA, opening devotions led by three District MHA chaplains.

Having started with a chaplaincy theme, Synod was delighted to welcome one of our own members, the Revd Martin Earl, formerly chaplain at HM Prison Altcourse, Martin is now Co-ordinator for Restorative Justice there. Outlining SORI – Supporting Offenders through Restoration Inside – the programme is designed to enable offenders to understand the real impact of what they have done, to do something to repair the harm and allows victims of crime to share with offenders the real impact of crime and receive an apology. Based on ‘Kingdom’ values of respect, trust, honesty and compassion the programme provides a safe, non-judgemental space, giving victims a voice and encouraging offenders to recognise and face up to the harm they have caused. Not an easy option the programme often leads to recovery and restoration for both victim and offender. Martin introduced Tony, who spoke to Synod in a moving and honest way of his first hand experience undergoing the programme and of his work now with homeless people and in supporting people with drug addiction to recover.

Our churches are challenged to consider how we can support ex-offenders in their rehabilitation, if our church communities can help in offering a safe environment for ex-offenders to grow and develop and become a positive part of the local community.

We had a report from Conference 2013 and elected the following people as representatives to Conference 2014: Revds Jackie Bellfield, Anthony Clowes, and Paul Wilson, Mr Steve Cooper, Mrs Jane Otterson and Mr Craig Price.

Following a presentation from Mr Michael Owens from the Lay Witness Movement describing opportunities to host a Lay Witness Weekend in our churches and the benefits of doing so and a gift and thank you to Alison Hulse, formerly a Regional Training Officer, now part of the new Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network, we concluded by sharing Communion together.

Sarah Blackie
Liverpool District.