

DURHAM CONFERENCE

24th to 28th AUGUST 2018

DAY ONE

Friday 24th August and here we are in Durham. It's cold and damp (which is a complete contrast to the very hot weather we've had recently here in the UK) and it's hilly! 'It goes up and down rather a lot!' commented one member from the plains of Germany. 'It has a kind of verticality!' remarked someone from USA. But through all the ups and downs, which included lost baggage at the airport, cancelled trains and general bewilderment at Durham's road system, everyone has arrived safely.



The conference began, as it should, in chapel. We enjoyed a quiet act of opening worship which focused on our theme and included a Bible Study led by Christine Allsopp entitled '**Christ is alive! Really? Where did THEY find him?**' and contrasted the accounts of the resurrection appearances of Jesus given by Matthew and Luke.

You can read the Bible Study by clicking the link on the home page.

accommodation with '*Cantores Vagrantes*', the choir singing the services in Durham Cathedral during this holiday period. So the dining room was very full and quite noisy, and everyone seemed to enjoy their first meal in college.

After a formal welcome by Bishop Michael Ipgrave, our Anglican Moderator, Dr Jaakko Rusama, our Lutheran Moderator, introduced Professor David Wilkinson, Principal of St John's College which is next door to St Chad's. His presentation was entitled, '**Christ is Alive! Really? Where do we find Him? In the Cosmos**'.

It was a very lively session indeed, full of good humour and laughter. It included video clips of Dara O'Briain on creation and evolution, young Sheldon arguing with the Minister

about God, and Richard Dawkins and Lawrence Krauss expounding on religion. But Prof Wilkinson's underlying message was very challenging. Using as his starting point not Genesis but Colossians 1.15-20 he argues that the meaning of the Universe is not to be found in an impersonal cosmic force, or in a mathematical theory of everything, or in an abstract philosophical idea, but in a personal God who wants to be in relationship with human beings. To be human is to be given the gift of relationship, to love and to be loved by the God who created you.

Here is David enjoying a joke as he signs one of his books



A fuller summary of the presentation will appear in the October *Window*, but you can read his theological underpinning through the link on the home page.

We look forward to Saturday's programme.

