



# Berkshire & Hampshire Borders Methodist Circuit

## Mission Policy

### Vision

Proclaiming and reflecting the love of God as a justice-seeking Church.

In doing this we shall place

- people before buildings,
- mission before maintenance, and
- God over church.

### Who We Are and Want to Be

- We belong to God. God created us, God sustains us. We, and all the resources at our disposal, belong to God. In our Covenant service we say, 'I am no longer my own but yours'.
- We are part of a Connexional church. This means that we have access to a wide variety of resources (people, experience, grant funding, etc) beyond our local church and Circuit:

*The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. It does this through Worship, Learning and Caring, Service and Evangelism*

*The Methodist Church is committed to being a growing, evangelistic, inclusive, justice-seeking Church – so that new people become disciples of Jesus Christ, faith deepens for everyone, and diverse communities and churches experience transformation.*

- We are part of the Global Church and community groups. Wherever possible we should work in partnership with other churches and local community groups.
- We are part of local neighbourhoods. Knowing the people in our neighbourhood, working with them, and building relationships are critical to being part of what God is doing.
- We will be radical and take Godly risks.
- We give each other permission to start and stop things as seasons change.

We are disciples of Jesus – called to make more disciples – and discipleship is costly. If we are to fulfil God's mission and commission, then this will mean each making sacrifices, but we will walk together and watch over each other in love.

# Our Circuit Mission Policy

*How do we best use our Circuit money, property, and people (ordained and lay) to enable Our Calling (worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism) and Vision?*

**1) Helping churches produce and action a Mission Action Plan and providing resources and ideas to support them.**

We encourage churches to 'dream God's dreams' and to not be limited in this dreaming by resources – including perceived lack of people, funding, or current buildings. Each church must decide *"How will we make more disciples of Jesus Christ and grow in our own discipleship?"*

**2) Helping churches end well**

Sometimes local churches come to a point where there is little scope or calling to new mission work. In these cases, local churches should ask the Circuit Leadership Team to assist them in developing an 'Ending Well' plan. In this way they can use their ending to leave a lasting impact.

**3) A Mission, Team and Gifting model of staffing.**

Staff will be enabled through the Mission Groups (see below) to use their gifts and grace, along with those of lay leaders, to enable mission in churches. This will not mean that churches 'lose' their named Minister with pastoral responsibility but rather that some of their time will be given to enriching other churches' mission. It is expected that this work will take up to an average of 2 sessions a week for staff, enabling them to exercise their gifts and flourish in ministry, and the churches in the Circuit to be enriched by the diverse gifting of the whole staff.

**4) Expand and plant.**

We will explore within the Circuit where there is currently no Christian presence and release members to 'plant' as a team for mission and/or as a worshipping community.

**5) Sharing our 'Good News Stories'.**

We will share our stories of God's Work to encourage one another in our own sharing of God's love and so we learn from each other's Godly risks.

# Mission Groups

*Enabling mission: What do we bring, what is ours to do, what may our starting point be?*

Group	Responsibilities
<b>Worship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Together with the quarterly Worship Leaders and Preachers Meeting offers support and development opportunities for new and existing Worship Leaders and Preachers</li> <li>• Will produce themed quarterly worship services with a video sermon to resource Local Arrangements</li> <li>• Hope to enable regular Circuit Worship Gatherings</li> </ul>
<b>Nurturing Faith</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable the creation and development of local discipleship groups in various forms for the nurturing of everyone's faith</li> <li>• Will signpost individuals and groups to 'off the shelf' and bespoke resources for encouraging deepening discipleship</li> <li>• Will through the Prayer Resource group produce "<i>Dwelling in the Word</i>"<sup>1</sup> passages and prayer guides to enable a grounding in prayer</li> <li>• Hope to create and run regular online Circuit courses and produce liturgies (Advent, Lent, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Children and Young People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support, equip, and encourage work with children, young people, and families</li> <li>• Will plan and support the annual trip to 3Generate for children and young people across the Circuit, especially those who may not otherwise ever get the opportunity</li> <li>• Will equip churches to develop their own work</li> <li>• Hope to create regular opportunities for all Circuit children and young people to worship and fellowship together</li> </ul>
<b>Later Years and Care Homes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipping and encouraging missional and development opportunities with those in their later years focussing on outreach and care</li> <li>• Maintain and develop worship and other resources for those unable to attend church on site, including "<i>Worship at Home</i>" and "<i>Church of the Living Stream</i>"</li> <li>• Working in partnership with the care homes and those already engaged in delivering Care Home ministry (e.g., local churches), to develop a sustainable Care Home ministry</li> <li>• To continue the recognition by the local churches (working ecumenically where possible) of the corporate nature of pastoral care and to develop additional provision as appropriate, e.g., support and lunch groups, bereavement groups, Holiday at Home. Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Eco-Church</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer mutual support and sharing to assist local churches in becoming more eco-friendly and thereby enabling the Circuit to do the same</li> </ul>

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<sup>1</sup> *Dwelling in the Word* is a tool used by the partnership of Missional Church as part of the culture-change process and significantly contributes to church growth. It is focussed on allowing people to listen to scripture, to each other, and to God.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will educate all that ecological care is not just about climate change or achieving 'Eco-Church awards' but modelling God's care for creation</li> <li>• Will support churches in the official Eco-Church and Fairtrade church processes</li> <li>• Hope that every church will have a representative and reduce their impact on the environment</li> </ul>
<b>Mission Resourcing Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act as conversation partners in the on-going development of Mission Action Plans (this work is never completed), in mission project planning, and resourcing, and development of Ending Well Plans</li> <li>• Tasked with bringing to the CLT any requests for financial or ongoing staff support of a project</li> </ul>

## How do local churches access Circuit Resources?

*In CPD, Standing Order 500 states that 'The Circuit exists to resource the local church.'*

Churches requiring support should initially make an approach to the named contact for the appropriate Mission Group. These contacts will be agreed by each Mission Group team and widely publicised in the Circuit.

Requests for more regular medium or long term support (e.g. staff to run an activity on a regular basis or project work requiring capital funding) should be referred to the Mission Resourcing Group who will accompany churches in understanding their project, completing the required paperwork and EDI impact assessment, and give a recommendation to CLT on allocation of staff time and funding up to £3000. Where necessary, external funding or a larger grant request to the Circuit Meeting, District, or other partner will be facilitated.