



# GLOUCESTERSHIRE METHODIST CIRCUIT

## CIRCUIT VISION AND STRATEGY FOR MISSION

### 2017-2022

*'The Methodist Circuit of Gloucestershire exists to join in God's mission: we seek to offer God's love to the people of Gloucestershire as an inclusive 24/7 church'*

#### **1. OUR VISION**

As a Methodist group of churches and people we want to work with others, and our vision is shaped especially by our Methodist identity, emphases and calling.

##### **A Worship**

In worshipping God we root ourselves in the God who loves us. Accordingly, we will:-

1. seek to offer quality worship in traditional and contemporary styles,
2. gather in traditional, and explore new, ways of being Church,
3. engage more in prayer every day, as individuals or together.

##### **B Learning and Caring**

God meets us where we are and invites us to grow by caring for others and ourselves. Accordingly, we will:-

1. commit to changing ('repentance'), and to growing in faith, love and discipleship,
2. develop loving and inclusive congregations and communities,
3. develop confidence in living and sharing our faith in God's love for all.

##### **C Service**

Since God loves all, God invites us to join God in serving others. Accordingly, we will:-

1. as individuals, congregations and communities, as far as we are able, identify and engage in ways of serving and advocating alongside our neighbours (whether near or far),
2. challenge and seek to transform unjust structures of society, and promote the integrity of creation,
3. as a Circuit, prioritise deploying our resources in standing with and going to 'those who need us most', including people and communities in social and economic need or experiencing injustice.

##### **D Evangelism**

Since God loves all, we want to share God's love with others and invite them to respond. Accordingly, we will develop new styles of mission, including developing:-

1. new ways of presenting the Gospel to encourage followers of Jesus Christ,
2. ways of being alongside people in the workplace and wider community,
3. the involvement of the 'whole people of God'.

## **2. OUR STRATEGY**

Our strategy to deliver our vision and fulfil our calling will be to:-

### **A Worship (and 'being church')**

- 1.1 consult and identify the worshipping needs of existing and possible new congregations,
  - 1.2 develop, train, and more intentionally deploy worship-leading, preaching and ministerial resources (including recruiting and ensuring continuing development),
  - 1.3 explore greater local consistency to enhance worship quality and faith development (including through use of teams and local leadership),
  - 1.4 establish a 'worship task force' (initially for 18 months) to drive forward and co-ordinate delivery of this strategy (including by liaising with existing structures and bodies),
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- 2.1 ask each existing congregation to consider their physical and geographical locations, and to relocate into community contexts, or to share worship or join with others, if better to do so,
  - 2.2 determine where and how to establish new congregations or ways of being church, and the ministerial, lay, and financial resources required to set up and lead them,
  - 2.3 ensure that all continuing existing and new churches are effective, in terms of premises, operation, and leadership, including where appropriate by:
    - 2.3.1 establishing multi-site 'sectional' churches, twinned churches, congregations as 'classes' connected to other churches, and/or shared use of church officers,
    - 2.3.2 offering some central administrative support to those needing it (subject to agreement about how and whether to prioritise Circuit payment for this resource),
    - 2.3.3 identifying, training, appointing, supporting, and holding accountable, as appropriate, suitable local 'lay leaders or pastors' for each church where potentially present,
    - 2.3.4 identifying and releasing a percentage of ministerial time (or some ministers' time) where appropriate to release gifts to work across the Circuit, including (alongside laity) through the various identified task forces,
    - 2.3.5 reviewing ministerial sections & oversight (including superintendency, and manse locations),
  - 2.4 establish a 'church task force' (initially for 18 months) to ensure consideration and, where possible, implementation of this strategy (from mission, property, and, governance and oversight, perspectives),
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- 3.1 encourage '24/7' church, including in terms of individual and joint prayer,
  - 3.2 explore developing acts of worship and use of premises (for worship and other activities) not just on Sundays,
  - 3.3 establish a "'24/7' task force' (initially for 18 months) to encourage implementation of this strategy, liaising as appropriate with others and across various strategies;

### **B Learning and Caring**

1. offer and encourage attendance at discipleship and pastoral training ('Explore' courses, pastoral awareness training courses, etc., including through the co-ordination of the Circuit Learning & Development Enabler),

- 2.1 strongly encourage congregations and communities to ‘watch over one another in love’ by meeting in small groups, offering training and guidance for the facilitation of such groups,
- 2.2 encourage mutual understanding and support between ministers and churches (and their pastoral visitors, and any local ‘lay leader or pastor’) regarding their inter-related pastoral roles,
3. support each other as above, and through fellowship and networking across churches, including with regards to:
  - 3.1 children and young people’s work (including through the Circuit Children & Young People’s Convener),
  - 3.2 contextual links such as rural or urban, etc.,
  - 3.3 sharing area services, mission and fellowship events (in addition to Circuit services or events),
  - 3.4 training and development arrangements;

## **C Service**

1. encourage awareness and commitment through Worship, Learning and Caring, and the Circuit Public Issues and Social Responsibility team and network,
2. ask each congregation annually to review (alongside the other elements of ‘Our Calling’) their capacity, commitment and priority/priorities for service and social and environmental justice in the ensuing year,
3. apply the prioritising ‘most in need’ test to the deployment of resources and new ventures;

## **D Evangelism**

1. establish a ‘new ways of expressing the Gospel task force’ (initially for 18 months), to identify and promote opportunities, methods, resources, and training for evangelism, and to:
2. encourage a letting go of some old models and assumptions about ‘bringing people in’, whilst finding new ways of reaching out and ‘gathering together’, including through chaplaincy, and social media,
  - 3.1 ensure that it is generally possible for all church members to undertake the new ways in 1. and 2. above,
  - 3.2 additionally, the ‘church task force’ will:
    - 3.2.1 review the present missional and outreach appointments (ministerial and lay, liaising with ecumenical or other partners where applicable),
    - 3.2.2 agree ways of evaluating effectiveness for all such posts,
    - 3.2.3 within 18 months agree any other Circuit financial resources that can be used,
    - 3.2.4 identify any other part or full time missional and outreach posts that could be established (using existing or new lay workers or ministers), according to the priorities of ‘going to those who need us most’, and focusing resources where there is clear vision and direction.

**Vision and Strategy, and the four ‘Our Calling’ areas, are all interconnected.**

*Adopted by the Circuit Assembly on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2017*