

Milton Keynes Methodist Circuit
Mission Development Plan 2022 – 2027

Methodists understand that mission is recognising and taking part in God's work within our churches and communities; this includes praying and worshipping together, sharing our faith, caring for those in need, and acting in loving and just ways.

The Circuit seeks to become a community that:

- Grows and flourishes
- Tells others of the love and grace of God
- Notices and challenges unfair and unjust situations
- Offers hospitality and generosity in ways that are open to all

1. A community that grows and flourishes

What does this mean?

As Methodists we believe that both personal and congregational growth is a necessary part of our Christian faith. This means that we practise prayer, worship, reading of the Scriptures and talking about our faith with one another. We also recognise that God desires our flourishing and so calls us to become the best version of ourselves.

What might this look like in a local church?

A community that offers a safe place with opportunities to learn and grow. A group of people that can live with uncertainty, respect diversity and encourage a range of opinions and views.

What resources are available at circuit, district and connexional level?

The Circuit Local Preachers Meeting and Circuit learning resources

The results of the Learning Church Project between the Circuit and the University of Roehampton can be found on Milton Keynes Circuit website <http://mkmethodist.org.uk/>

The Eastern Region Learning Network <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning-and-development/learning-network-regions/the-eastern-region/>

The Methodist Way of Life <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/a-methodist-way-of-life-resources/>

Bible Month and other Connexional seasonal resources

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/a-methodist-way-of-life-resources/>

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/the-bible/bible-month/>

2. A community that tells others of the love and grace of God

What does this mean?

Sharing our faith and what God means to us has always been part of Methodism. As Methodists we believe that we are called 'not just to speak about the love of God but to show it, and to become it' (Helen Cameron, Chair of Northampton District).

What might this look like in a local church?

Faith is talked about in every day ways. This is often done through sharing of stories, in quiet, one to one conversations. We can do this even though we might not have all the answers yet!

What resources are available at circuit, district and connexional level?

Circuit resources and sharing of good practices through Circuit mission group.

District evangelism initiatives e.g. 'Love is...'

<https://www.northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/evangelism/love-is/>

Connexional evangelism and growth team <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/>

3. A community that notices and challenges unfair and unjust situations

What does this mean?

As Methodists we acknowledge God's preference for the poor and marginalised. We accept our calling to serve and care for others, and to speak out against injustice.

What might this look like in a local church?

Supporting local projects e.g. Winter Night Shelter, MK Foodbank

<https://www.winternightsheltermk.org/>

<https://mkfoodbank.org.uk/>

Working with other local organisations, care organisations and charities

Engaging with local councils and leaders in policy making decisions.

Individual advocacy that may include working with disadvantaged individuals and groups.

Making decisions and using resources in ways that are responsive to the local and global environment.

What resources are available at circuit, district and connexional level?

Circuit funded Family and Children Worker

Circuit newsletter

Walking with Micah: Methodist Principles for Social Justice project

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/social-justice/walking-with-micah/>

Joint Public Issues Team (JPiT) resources <https://jpit.uk/>

Eco church initiative <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/environment-and-climate-change/take-action-become-an-eco-church/>

Church at the Margins, God for all Strategy <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/discover-church-at-the-margins/>

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/explore-the-god-for-all-strategy/>

4. A community that openly offers hospitality and generosity to all

What does this mean?

As Methodists we believe that everyone is welcome whilst being mindful of the church's safeguarding framework. We recognise that in offering hospitality our assumptions and practices will be challenged and we will be changed. It is God's church and not ours!

What might this look like in a local church?

People are welcomed before they are known and when they are known they are encouraged to find a place within the church.

We hold our resources lightly recognising that we are stewards both for the Methodist Church and for God's kingdom.

A community that is curious and joyful and prepared to take the next step.

A community that knows that failure isn't necessarily a bad thing!

Local examples might include:

- A welcome coffee morning for the local community

- Welcome packs for new residents with an invite to a community event

- Hosting an emergency winter night shelter for homeless people

What resources are available at circuit, district and connexional level?

Church and Circuit Safeguarding Leads meeting

Circuit application for District Advanced Fund and London Mission grants

The Methodist Church Principles and Policies of Safeguarding

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/>

The Methodist Church Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-church/>

Connexional and District New places for new people resources

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/new-places-for-new-people/>

The work of planning for mission

The Circuit Mission Development Plan informs the Church Mission Plan for each church in the Milton Keynes Circuit that describes the vision for God's mission in a local area and is instrumental in identifying priorities and decision making. Local churches work with ecumenical partners and other partners of faith and no faith within their communities in acts of mission. The church mission plan is the work of the minister and members of the Church Council to agree and then review in discussion with the congregation.

Resources available to help churches with local mission planning

Circuit Mission group for stewards and others involved in mission planning

Connexional resources for mission planning including webinars and tools

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/lead-churches-into-growth/write-a-great-mission-plan/>

Our Circuit Mission Development Plan has been written in line with the Methodist Way of Life and the Northampton District Mission Development Plan

<https://www.northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/evangelism/district-mission-policy/> . It seeks to make the goals personal to our local situations. It has been agreed by members of the Circuit Meeting that met on 14th March 2023. Our intention is that this plan should influence local church planning and decision making and that over time the church mission development plans will influence future circuit and District plans.

Review date June 2027