



SOUTHEND AND LEIGH METHODIST CIRCUIT

MISSION PLAN

2024/2025 – 2029/2030



The Methodist Church of Great Britain has adopted as the mission of the Church the statement which outlines its understanding of God's calling to the Church. This can be seen below and is known as 'Our Calling.'¹

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.

The Methodist Church looks at doing this through four key areas:

Worship: The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love

Learning and Caring: The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care

Service: The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice

Evangelism: The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ

As a Circuit this Mission Plan considers its response to the mission plans of the local churches and places this in the context of 'Our Calling.'

The Circuit Mission Plan is presented using the four areas of 'Our Calling' and outlines the intended actions of the Circuit. This will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Mission is the action of God. It is God's mission in which we are partnering and, through prayer and action we seek to make visible to the community the action of God in relation to God's people and the world. This mission plan will act as the primary reference point and guide to the work of the Circuit through the context of 'Our Calling.'

To ease formatting, each of the four sections begins on a new page.

¹ <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/our-calling/>

Worship – *The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love*



Priority	Action	Who?	Timeline	Expected outcome?
Encourage and enable inclusive and varied worship styles across the Circuit.	<p>The Circuit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to have one Circuit Service a quarter, centred on key festivities of the year (Easter and Christmas), celebrating the ministry of presbyters and deacons (welcome and farewell services), as well as encouraging unique and special milestones in the life and mission of our Circuit. Hold an annual Circuit Quiet Day which offers and develops a range of resources and approaches for different worship styles, activities and services. 	<p>CLT and Staff</p> <p>CLT and LP&WL Meeting</p>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>Annual</p>	To foster wider unity and encouragement in the Christian faith, spreading the Gospel and sharing our resources and experiences.
Provide support in installing and using technical resources where appropriate.	<p>The Circuit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share and facilitate good practice between churches in further developing accessibility at worship using technology. This includes CCLI, social media, internet presence, livestreaming, multi-media and installation and use of technological equipment and software. 	Circuit Meeting and informal conversations	Ongoing	Churches are supported to install and develop the use of technology to encourage encounters with God in different ways.
Support and encourage people exploring a call to worship leading or preaching.	<p>The Circuit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Vocations Sunday on an annual basis. Continue to offer Worship Academy Training on a routine basis with a varied and insightful programme, as well as quarterly Wholeness and Wellbeing Services. 	<p>LP&WL Meeting</p> <p>Circuit Tutor / Worship Academy Programme Organiser</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Monthly except Jan, Aug and Sep</p>	<p>To support all who are exploring and testing a call from God to lead worship and/or preach.</p> <p>To equip Local Preachers, Worship Leaders, Ministers and others with continual training and learning opportunities.</p>

Learning and Caring - *The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care*



Priority	Action	Who?	Timeline	Expected outcome?
Encourage range of opportunities for spiritual growth, faith exploration and discipleship.	<p>The Circuit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Prayer Zoom Meetings open to the whole Circuit, monthly Memory Worship at two churches, with a view to expansion. Signpost and promote Contemporary and Alternative Worship services around the Circuit, such as Gospel, Mindfulness, Anchored and Inspire, Small Groups on Zoom or in-person. Continue to fund and support the annual trip to 3Generate. Promote Big Church Day Out, Christian Resources Exhibition, New Wine and Spring Harvest. 	<p>Lay Led and volunteers</p> <p>Local Churches</p> <p>Circuit Youth, Circuit Newsletter</p>	<p>Monthly & Quarterly</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annual Events</p>	<p>Continued opportunities within existing activities and a broadening of opportunities for people to deepen their discipleship.</p> <p>Broaden horizons with the Circuit Youth, and wider links across the Connexion and ecumenically.</p>
Encourage churches to pray and to engage in God's mission of caring for people, including those on the margins.	<p>The Circuit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue its support of City Chaplaincy, and encourage wider attendance at the annual Love Essex Outreach Event in the City Centre. Enable the growth and development of the Trinity Family Centre, fostering links with the local community and youth work. Maintain weekly provision of worship at Westerley Christian Care Home. Encourage the work of Music Chaplaincy, allowing time and opportunity for this vocation and ministry. Explore and promote all types of chaplaincies in our Circuit, with a view to adapt current models when circumstances change. 	<p>CLT</p> <p>Local church teams and volunteers</p> <p>Ministers, Preachers and Worship Leaders</p> <p>CLT</p> <p>CLT</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Weekly</p> <p>Weekly</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>More people encouraged through missional activities to come into a relationship with God.</p> <p>Increased Youth Work and care for vulnerable people.</p> <p>Care for the elderly.</p> <p>Greater engagement with those outside of the Methodist Church.</p>

Service - *The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice*



Priority	Action	Who?	Timeline	Expected outcome?
Encourage churches to be welcoming and open to all people regardless of background.	<p>The Circuit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support for churches in mission planning to help each church consider how they witness to and serve others. • Ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training and Unconscious Bias training is provided in a range of formats for those new in roles. • Continue to provide and promote good safeguarding practices. 	<p>Ministers</p> <p>Circuit Office and EDI Trainers</p> <p>Circuit Safeguarding Officer & Trainers</p>	<p>Continuous</p> <p>Oct-Nov 2023 & Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Increased awareness in Circuit and church culture of EDI and Safeguarding issues.
Support churches in reaching people in their local community to share the care and compassion of Christ.	<p>The Circuit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share good news stories of work within the Circuit through the Circuit Newsletter, website and social media, Circuit Meeting Local Churches' Business and via email communication to inspire others. • Prayerfully listen to each other's concerns with compassion and openness. • Facilitate and support local churches with significant transformations in the direction they wish to travel to make disciples of Christ and greater serve their community. 	<p>Circuit Office via Local Churches</p> <p>Circuit Meeting and Church Council</p>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Improved communication and the sharing of expertise and resources across the Circuit.
To support and encourage churches in their care for creation and climate justice including aiming for net zero by 2030.	<p>The Circuit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of a culture where creation care and climate justice are embedded in the life of the Circuit through the Eco Team which offers a space of mutual support. • Continue to raise awareness of creation care and climate justice through Circuit Meetings Reports and wider communications such as the Circuit Newsletter. • Help local churches achieve eco awards, fund Energy Surveys / Audits, aim that all our manses meet a 'C' energy efficiency rating. • Be an Eco Circuit and work towards bronze level award initially. 	<p>Circuit Office / Eco Champions</p> <p>Circuit Office</p> <p>Ministers / CLT</p> <p>Circuit Office</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Quarterly</p> <p>Ongoing / manses by Dec 2028 By Dec 2025</p>	Improved care for the environment demonstrated as an expression of discipleship. Greater awareness of environmental matters amongst our congregations.

Evangelism - The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ



Priority	Action	Who?	Timeline	Expected outcome?
Support people in developing skills and confidence in sharing their faith and an openness to be moved by the Spirit.	<p>The Circuit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to form a Circuit Mission Evangelism Team that develops confidence and skills for people to more effectively share their faith in the wider community, by attending Community Events and promoting the Gospel in the public sphere. 	Evangelism Team	From April 2025 onwards	Increased confidence to share faith in Christ through the Holy Spirit to others leading to greater possibility for people who do not yet know God to experience His love.
Support churches, within available resources, in redevelopment for missional purposes.	<p>The Circuit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer missional grants match-funded from the Elm Road Fund for churches in consideration of redevelopment of premises for mission, to fund outreach events or employ personnel for ministry and evangelism. Support The Experience Project at the Whittingham Mission Centre, impacting the local estate and wider community by bringing fresh and creative approaches to sharing the Kingdom message and impacting the Social Justice sector. Support UMC Shoeburyness in its missional aim to cease to meet and sell the premises. Have regular and honest dialogue at local church and Circuit level about churches that are struggling financially or with attendance. Seek to streamline ministerial oversight. 	<p>CLT & Circuit Meeting</p> <p>Circuit Meeting / Superintendent</p> <p>Circuit Office & Circuit Stewards / Local Church</p> <p>Circuit Meeting and Church Councils</p>	<p>When approached by Minister and Church Councils</p> <p>Ongoing with review in 2027</p> <p>By Aug 2026</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Buildings redeveloped appropriately, and funding opportunities for lay workers, to further God's mission.</p> <p>Funding pledged for 3 Connexional years to maintain premises / core and ongoing costs.</p> <p>Sale of Church property, increase in funds.</p> <p>Greater transparency and mutual support for shared, common vision.</p>

Glossary

CLT – Circuit Leadership Team

LP&WL Meeting – Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Meeting