

Oxford Methodist Circuit

Purpose¹

The Oxford Circuit's purpose is to encourage and resource churches to be confident, creative, courageous and committed as they proclaim the love of God in worship, witness and service.

Priorities for 2021-2024

Resourcing

We will continue to support local churches to take forward the hopes and plans identified in the 'Planning for Fruitfulness' of 2019 process by:

- Appropriately deploying and supporting the ordained ministers stationed in the Circuit to provide for the needs of local churches.
- Recruiting and developing lay staff with complementary skills for specific roles or projects.
- Providing funding for projects and initiatives that further the mission of the churches.
- Facilitating the exchange of advice, skills and volunteer time between churches.
- Facilitating and supporting the introduction of more efficient governance structures for churches in the circuit reflecting the likely need for the creation of multi-congregation church councils in some parts of the circuit over the coming period

Belonging

We will build up a stronger sense of Circuit identity and of sharing in one mission together by:

- Sharing good news and successes, as well as struggles and needs, that we may rejoice together and support one another better.
- Organising events and initiatives that help to bring Methodists in the Circuit together for worship, mission or fellowship.
- Reviewing worship services across the Circuit to ensure a range of times and styles are offered.
- Linking up those engaged in children's and youth ministry for mutual support and learning.
- Add to the use of new technology and Internet presence that have become part of our experience during the Covid-19 pandemic to help those who cannot attend our buildings to belong.
- Creating, developing and supporting circuit mission projects including chaplaincy to students, community engagement work in the Cowley Road area, and ecumenical work at Blackbird Leys and other work that may come under the circuit.

Enabling

We will help people across the Circuit to respond to our calling 'to serve the present age'² by:

- Enabling conversations around important issues in our Church and society.
- Encouraging, supporting and training more people to become Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, Readers and providing training for those leading worship by local arrangement.
- Thinking together about how we can respond creatively to changes in our communities, especially new housing developments.
- Help Local Churches to make provision for 'New Places, for New People' resourcing opportunities for children, young people and family ministry in every Local Church.
- By word and deed become an 'Eco Circuit' and help every Local Church to become an 'Eco Church'.
- Offer appropriate Audio Visual and other resources that will allow Local Churches to make use of the internet to support them in their mission.

As agreed at Circuit Meeting, 21 March 2019 As agreed at the Circuit Meeting, 15 December 2021

¹ Methodist Standing Order 500 (1) defines the Nature and Purposes of a Circuit as follows:

The Circuit is the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help. It is in the Circuit that presbyters, deacons and probationers are stationed and local preachers are trained and admitted and exercise their calling. The purposes of the Circuit include the effective deployment of the resources of ministry, which include people, property and finance, as they relate to the Methodist churches in the Circuit, to churches of other denominations and to participation in the life of the communities served by the Circuit, including local schools and colleges, and in ecumenical work in the area including, where appropriate, the support of ecumenical Housing Associations.

² From the hymn 'A Charge to Keep I Have', by Charles Wesley.