

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016- 2020

THIS IS WHO WE ARE

The South-East District of the Methodist Church has over 10,000 members in over 200 churches that are grouped together in 19 circuits. We are a group of Christian disciples within the Methodist tradition who live in the counties of Kent, East and West Sussex, parts of Surrey, Berkshire and Hampshire. The Methodist Church in Gibraltar and the Methodist/Church of Scotland ecumenical partnership in Malta are also part of the district. In many places we work with ecumenical partners.

THIS IS OUR PURPOSE

The Methodist Church believes that the Church is called to serve the purpose of the reign of God through its worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism. Within this purpose the South-East Methodist District will concentrate on what it can uniquely and best do to promote excellence and creativity in worship, mission, ministry, oversight and governance in local churches, circuits and their communities.

THIS IS WHAT WE DO

ENCOURAGE

The role of the district is to offer support and encouragement to circuits, churches and individuals in the development of discipleship, mission and ministry and to do this wherever possible in partnership with others. This includes helping circuits see their work within the context of the diversity of a world-wide church and global community; listening to and learning from the experience of others, particularly those who are marginalised; supporting the participation of people of all ages and backgrounds and implementing the policies and decisions of the Methodist Conference.

RESOURCE

The district has resources of expertise, experience and money to make available. These resources will be used to help circuits and local churches achieve the best they can in the deployment of ordained and lay people for ministry; to prepare the people of God for discipleship and ministry in the life of the world and the church; to make the church a safe place for children and vulnerable adults; to ensure the appropriate development of property and help meet other requirements laid down by legislation.

CONNECT

The district has a role in “connecting the Connexion” and in facilitating ecumenical relationships. This involves representing the circuits to the wider Connexion and the wider Connexion to the circuits and promoting the value of being a connexional church; playing an active role in the development of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network; representing the Methodist Church in discussions with ecumenical partners and communicating decisions, policies and procedures effectively.

OUR VISION IS FOR:

- “wonder, love and praise” to be at the heart of our life together within a Christian community and for everything we do to be underpinned with God-centred worship and prayer;
- a church where worship in a variety of styles is vibrant and well led;
- a church that commits its resources to help people discover what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ;
- a church where people can give and receive personal, prayerful pastoral care;
- the church to be focussed on the ministry of the whole people of God in the life of the world;
- a church where the priority is to share and deploy resources of people, property and money in evangelism;
- a church committed to supporting community development and action for justice especially among the most deprived and poor;
- the church to be confident about its vocation as an agent of God’s mission;
- a church where all people, regardless of gender, cultural or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, are treated with dignity and respect;
- a church committed to working with ecumenical partners and with all those with whom we share a common vision and purpose.

THIS IS OUR PLAN

Alongside its ongoing work, these are the priorities to which the district will give particular attention between 2016 and 2020.

In partnership with the regional Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network team the district will:

introduce and continue to support *Worship: Leading and Preaching*;

support the ongoing development of ordained ministers

support developments in rural mission and ministry;

support *Fresh Expressions of Church*;

support *Pioneer Pathways*;

introduce the *Local Ministry Development Programme*;

implement *Positive Working Together*;

implement *Larger than Circuit*;

review support offered in recruitment, selection and management of lay employees;

ensure that opportunities for learning and professional development are offered to all lay employees;

support 3Generate and develop associated district activities.

With the support of the wider Connexion the district will:

implement the report of education commission and continue to support work with schools and education;

develop a chaplaincy policy;

implement the policy of *Releasing Property for God's Mission*;

encourage worship, mission and ministry in areas of new housing;

implement the recommendations of Past Cases Review into historical abuse;

develop a culture of accountability and support through supervision for all, including ministers and other church officers;

promote and support conversations about marriage and relationships.

The district will:

develop opportunities to enable the participation of supernumerary ministers in the life of the district;

review the staffing of the district;

review the membership and purpose of the District Leadership Team;

streamline and review the district appointments and membership of committees;

renew the district website and communication policy;

encourage initiatives for unity in worship and mission with ecumenical partners including new churches;

encourage a culture of transparency;

implement any other decisions of the Conference made during the life time of this plan;

monitor and review this plan annually and report to synod with more detailed proposals for implementing this plan.

March 2016