

- Churches to hold meetings to further the formation of cluster churches or amalgamations
- Evening services taken around the Circuit, to include Songs of Praise and Witness Box services
- Circuit Choir/Music group formed for Easter 2022

December Circuit Meeting 2021

- CLT makes interim reports to December Circuit Meeting
- CLT reports on stationing process

March 2022 Circuit Meeting:

- Societies to bring any proposals for amalgamations to establish a new society to be approved
- Preparation of a Circuit budget for 2022-3 with new assessment formula
- If stationing process is unsuccessful, discuss how the Circuit will be managed.

June 2022 Circuit Meeting

- Sharing our understanding of the work of God in this Circuit, with communion

September 2022 Circuit Meeting

- Strategy implementation review

The Strategy – our budget

Staffing and District assessment accounts for 85% of the Circuit budget. Core income/expenditure for 2022-3 will need to be approx. £200,000 with £180,000 raised from assessments. A new formula for raising assessment from each society could be based on:

- income from giving, or total income,
- membership/attendance
- net income over expenditure, or net assets
- a combination of the above

The established working group to continue working on this, consulting with others as appropriate.

Conclusion

We are indebted to so many across the Circuit for their tireless service. We wish to both honour our tradition and to look ahead. Although challenging, this revised strategy offers new possibilities which can remove crushing weight from the past, ease our present circumstances and be the basis for the future to which God calls us. We commend the strategy to you for prayerful consideration, discussion and acceptance.
St Austell Circuit Leadership Team, September 2021

The importance of change and transformation for the Christian

Christians are called to be people constantly on the move. It is God who calls: the Bible attests to God's willingness to call people to do something different, often at moments of tension, danger and unpredictability. The Old Testament narrative tells of people called to make journeys, adapt to new circumstance and survive change in their lives. Throughout, God is faithful to people in those circumstances: to support, guide and inspire. God's call to His Church may also be a challenge to live with difference, change and the unpredictable - and his faithfulness and our faith in Him makes this possible. The Church does not define our Christian experience. Our Christian experience is defined by a life that is full of God's love and a driving desire to be obedient to His call. What follows in this document is offered in the light of that belief but requires all of us to be attentive to God and to share what He is saying to us, particularly at this time of post-Covid change and recovery.

Why a revised strategy now? To turn a threat into an opportunity

The Methodist Church has changed dramatically within our lifetimes. We have increasingly faced difficult decisions, and it is apparent that it is increasingly unworkable for Circuit and churches to sustain existing commitments. The pandemic has added to historic problems, but also offers an opportunity to see a radical vision of a streamlined Circuit using resources in a more effective way with new mission possibilities. This strategy proposes a way of streamlining our work, structure and finances, reducing the burden on an ageing and reducing membership, sustaining a balanced infrastructure and supporting churches to function more effectively post-pandemic.

Some stark realities

- Finances are finite and reducing – from September 2021 we shall have 2 Presbyters, to be supported by lay staff.
- The number of people available to run Chapels and Circuit is limited and the age profile of our members continues to increase.
- On average we can only provide preachers for fewer than 12 services a week. -in a Circuit that has previously planned 18-20 acts of worship weekly.

The Strategy - our calling

Our mission statement begins: “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 Strategy – our vision

We envisage a sustainable and streamlined Circuit with new priorities. The Circuit will continue to encourage churches to move towards a smaller number of societies that:

- normally meet in one building for worship and activities, with scope for a society being Managing Trustees for more than one building
- prioritise co-operation, mission and ecumenical working where possible
- provide opportunities for face to face Christian worship, fellowship such as bible studies and house groups, and
- activities across different communities, especially where there would no longer be a Methodist building
- provide opportunities for on-line provision of the same
- Support family, youth and children’s work - for example Bugle Youth Club, St Dennis Soft Play Area, Messy Church, Open the Book
- Support work with the elderly and vulnerable – for example Age UK at St Johns’ and work in residential homes

The Strategy – our structure

A sustainable, streamlined structure for the Circuit, consisting of

- 2 Presbyters
- An appropriate number of local lay pastors and/or Lay Pastoral Assistants
- 1 Part time Admin Officer/PA to Superintendent and Presbyter
- Around 10 Societies operating across multiple buildings
- 10-12 Principal Acts of worship each week
- Fellowship and missional opportunities for all across and within different communities

In order to achieve this we will seek to:

- Move from maintenance to mission.
- Focus our resources into churches that are looking outwards to serve their communities

- Encourage worship that is inclusive to all by providing it in person and online
- Ensure training is given to enable people to fulfil their roles and safeguarding responsibilities
- Encourage churches to do more together including with other denominations in their area.

Suggestions for churches working together:

- St John's and Trinity
- Bethel and Carclaze
- Mount Charles and Polgooth
- Bugle, Stenalees and Gunwen
- Leekseed and Tregrehan
- Par and Tywardreath
- Indian Queens and St Dennis
- Whitemoor and Nanpean (and Roche with CofE connection too)
- Lostwithiel remains alone
- St Andrews remains an LEP

The Strategy – our implementation

September 2021 – Circuit Meeting

- This updated Circuit Strategy for 2021-22 taken to Circuit Meeting for approval.
- Agree a Circuit Profile for a Presbyter from September 2022:
 - Churches/Clusters - Clay Area and two St Austell churches (Bethel, Carclaze, Indian Queens, St Dennis, Whitemoor, Nanpean, Roche, Bugle, Stenalees, Gunwen)
 - Superintendent’s Churches/Clusters from September 2022 (Trinity, St Johns, Mount Charles, Polgooth, Par, Tywardreath, Lostwithiel, Tregrehan, Leek Seed, St Andrews Mevagissey)
- Report on Churches that have begun the process of working together

Autumn 2021 to Spring 2022

- CLT continues to organise planning groups to form clusters, working out implications for staffing, finance, property, worship, fellowship and mission. Each group reports on steps needed to establish a single society for each cluster with multiple buildings and/or disposals.
- Working Party works on new assessment formula