

Revised and
updated
January 2024

The Superintendents' Handbook

A guide for
superintendent
ministers



Friends in Christ,

I am delighted to introduce this handbook for superintendents and grateful to you for answering the call to serve in this vital role in the life of the Methodist Church.

Much of this handbook focuses on the tasks and practical responsibilities of a superintendent. Thanks are owed to those who have collated them in this helpful manner. I cannot help but wish I had had this when I was a superintendent many years ago.

What the handbook also does is to highlight how the responsibilities of superintendency grow and change. In a post-pandemic context, questions are asked of us as a Church that were never previously imagined, and superintendents are key to how we as a Church notice, ask, and seek to answer them.

The handbook reminds us, however, that there are some constants in our ministry; not least that superintendency is one expression of the calling of the presbyter, which first and foremost is to be a person of prayer. Whether you are new to superintendency or have been in this critical, developing, role for some time, my prayer is that in the midst of all the tasks outlined here and all the challenges of the present age, you might be able to experience the communion of the Holy Spirit in all that you do.



The Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler
Secretary of the Methodist Conference

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methodist.org.uk/SignpostForMinistry

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A Guide for the Superintendent Minister

At your welcome service, the Chair of the District will declare:

**... to you is committed the responsibility
for the life and work of this Circuit.**

And then will ask:

**Will you, with your colleagues, lay and ordained,
care for its people,
inspire its witness
and watch over its life
in the name of Christ?**

And you will respond:

I will, and I ask God to help me.

The Methodist Worship Book

A commitment

Watching over and inspiring the people of God in the life of a circuit in the name of Christ is a significant responsibility – one which the Conference has declared, through stationing you, that you are called to.

Your calling requires from you a commitment to both being and doing (as do all ministry callings). This guide offers some tips on 'being' a superintendent and 'doing' the tasks involved in the role. Good and thorough preparation will enable you to lead and collaborate well with others. Do not forget the nurturing of your own spiritual health and well-being. There is no doubt you will need feeding in order to resource others.

If you are taking up the role of superintendent minister in a circuit where you are already stationed, you will need to take care not to bolt the superintendent's duties onto the duties you had previously. Superintendency has a different focus to other patterns of ministry and you will need to make time to do it well. This may mean a change to your pastoral charge, which will need to be discussed with others. Ask for your Letter of Understanding to be reviewed and redrafted.

The 2005 Conference report 'What is a Circuit Superintendent?' is a good place to start your reflection on what it means to be a superintendent. To download it, go to:

methodist.org.uk/2005Reports

Now is a good time to pray. Pray for the role you are about to take on. Perhaps you might go on a prayer walk or ask God to help you lead the mission of God in your locality. Maybe God is calling the circuit to pioneer some new venture? Superintendency is certainly not just about maintaining the status quo. Good superintendency is crucial for the life and soul of the Methodist Church. The gift of a vibrant superintendent is a gift to and for the whole people of God – a call to partnership, oversight and, of course, leading in mission.

Being Prepared

The superintendents' induction

Once you know you are going to be stationed as a superintendent minister, make sure that you are enrolled in the superintendents' induction programme.

The induction includes a residential and monthly online meetings to support you and prepare you for your early months in the role. Details about the induction can be found at: methodist.org.uk/TrainingForSuperintendents

The induction looks at what is required of you as a superintendent; how to make a good start and how you might best enable the ministry of others. All new superintendents are expected to attend the induction programme.

Preparatory reading

By the time you become a superintendent, you will have experienced how others inhabit the role. Some will have been inspirational, others less so. To give you a good foundation it will be helpful for you to read the following Conference reports, available at: methodist.org.uk/ConferenceReports

- 'Called to Love and Praise' (1999 Conference report)
- 'What is a Circuit Superintendent?' (2005 Conference report)
- 'The Missional Nature of the Circuit' (2008 Conference report from the Faith and Order Committee, Section A)
- 'Ministry in the Methodist Church' (2018 Conference report).

The importance of superintendents having a comprehensive understanding and familiarity with certain parts of *Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD)* cannot be stressed enough. Many people think they know what is included. You will need to know what the current Standing Orders are relating to circuit life. Spending some time re-reading specific parts of Volume 2, Book III will be beneficial at this stage, particularly:

- Part 5 – The Circuits
- Part 6 – The Local Churches
- Part 9 – Property
- Part 11 – Complaints and Discipline.

You may also want to download the Guidance for Local Complaints Officers and the Complaints Process Flowchart from the Methodist Church website, just in case you need to refer to it when you have no internet access. You may never need it – but if you do, you need to know where it is and what is in it. These can be found at:

methodist.org.uk/ComplaintsAndDiscipline

Remind yourself of the *Creating Safer Space Advanced Module* – in particular the section on safer recruiting for volunteers, local preachers and worship leaders, as well as for paid employees. Up-to-date information on safeguarding can be found at: methodist.org.uk/SafeguardingPolicy

Ministerial Covenant

The Conference of 2022 adopted 'The Covenant Relationship between the Church and its Ministers: Commitments and Expectations'. See Book IV part 6 of *CPD*.

Here the conference seeks to set out the expectations of all members of the Church. It is worth thinking of ways to introduce these materials to colleagues, circuit and local church meetings.

Supervision training

The 'Supervision Policy 2021-2026' requires all ministers in active work to be in reflective supervision. This includes those in appointments outside the Church and those without appointment. Training in reflective supervision continues to be rolled out across the Connexion. Those approved to supervise under the policy will be allocated supervisees according to their district's supervision implementation plan. If you believe you will be acting as a supervisor, please contact the district chair where you will be serving. If you are not already trained then they will advise you if it is appropriate for you to book onto supervision training and the timescale involved.

Those who are already trained in supervision will be invited to apply for reaccreditation in due course and to offer evidence of their development as they approach their fifth year post accreditation.

More information on supervision and updates to policy and practice can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Supervision

Chairing of meetings and rules of debate

As chair of all meetings in the circuit, you carry responsibility for everything outlined in Standing Order (SO) 520 – even if you choose to delegate a task.

Familiarise yourself with the rules of debate (see SO 517 and SO 413(5) to (7) and (10) to (25)). Circuit Meetings are necessarily more formal than Church Councils. As the chair, you do not want the other attendees of a meeting to be better acquainted with the rules of debate than you are. Likewise it is not helpful to make up your own rules!

Training on best practice when chairing meetings is available through the Learning Network and will be touched upon during your induction.

The Handover

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training consists of unconscious bias training, an EDI module and personal annual learning for all leaders. The training is available in a number of formats, including for people to access themselves directly on MCBX (the online training platform). Full details can be found at:

methodist.org.uk/Mandatory-EDI-Training. You and your colleagues will need to find a way of checking that those for whom it is mandatory undertake this training. This will require a list of who requires the training, who has completed the training so far, any reasons why people have not yet completed the training, and what plans have been made for individual personal learning for the upcoming year.

Safeguarding

- Up-to-date information on safeguarding is available at: methodist.org.uk/Safeguarding
- Get to know who the circuit safeguarding officer is, bearing in mind that the default person is you, as well as the district safeguarding officer. You will need to work closely with the circuit and district safeguarding officers in the management of safeguarding concerns and their support and advice can be of great assistance.
- Identify whether there are any Safeguarding Contracts in operation. All staff should be aware of the provisions of SO 692 should a person who is deemed to present a safeguarding risk decide to worship in a church other than where their contract is held.
- Make sure you know what arrangements are in place to enable those with a Safeguarding Contract to attend circuit services (you may need to refer to the *Creating Safer Space Advanced Module* or consult your district safeguarding officer for further guidance).
- Ask for an up-to-date list of those who have undergone the *Foundation* and *Advanced* training for safeguarding (*Creating Safer Space*).
- Check if the local preachers' safeguarding declarations and clearances from Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS; England and Wales), Disclosure Scotland or Access NI in Northern Ireland are up to date. Confirm the location of any relevant records. It is worth asking about local preachers who have transferred between circuits.

Complaints and discipline officer

Find out who the complaints officer is for your circuit. The default position is that if no one has been appointed, then it is the superintendent. Before you take over the superintendency, you will need to know if there are any ongoing cases.

Legal matters

Records

Ask where the circuit safe is, and whether any records are stored elsewhere.

Ask whether there is a district or circuit archivist. The district or circuit archivist will be able to help you with any records queries and should be encouraged to attend Synod.

If there is no district or circuit archivist, there is a Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives (archives@methodistchurch.org.uk) who will be able to assist you in recruiting or training someone for the post.

The responsibility for supervising and arranging the deposit of local church or circuit records is contained in SO 015(2) where in the first instance it will be the local church or circuit archivist, if appointed. If not, the circuit superintendent is responsible.

Property

Ask if any churches are in the process of closing and check where they are in the process. You may need to refer to the Guidance for Closed Church Buildings that can be found at methodist.org.uk/Property/A-Z for further information. Note the provisions of SO 654 about what happens to closing balances on accounts.

Check that all churches have had a Quinquennial Inspection within the last five years in accordance with SO 952 and ask if there is a plan for implementing the recommended actions.

Ask if any of the circuit churches are in the midst of, or planning, any building projects. You should insist on seeing the certificate of professional indemnity insurance of any professionals (including architects) and 'all risks' and public liability insurance certificates for contractors and anyone with whom a contract is being made.

Ask if any of the buildings in the circuit are listed, or in conservation areas. If so, you will need to read Section 98 of *CPD*. If the current superintendent can't give you this information, then arrange to have a meeting with your circuit (or district) property secretary/officer/or similar role as soon as possible once you are in your new station.

Check that all external organisations regularly using church premises have their own public liability insurance. If an organisation uses the premises three or fewer times per year, then it may be covered by the local church's own policy. If regular users do not have insurance and require it, Methodist Insurance can offer policies.

Buildings registered for marriages

Ask for a list of Authorised Persons for each of the registered buildings in your circuit, for both opposite-sex and same-sex marriages. This will help with arranging cover in an emergency.

It is helpful for all ministers to be capable of solemnising marriages in all the churches that are registered in the circuit; this is especially important if the requirements of SO 011B(5) and (6) – the ‘conscience clause’ – are to be upheld. If your circuit covers more than one registration district, it would be wise for ministers to become Additional Authorised Persons in a chapel not in their registration district. It is worth remembering that there may be lay people who are registered as Additional Authorised Persons. Reviewing these lists regularly is helpful, as people remain registered Authorised Persons until they are formally removed by the Church Council and the General Registrar Office is informed.

There may also be understandings in place with other churches who use Methodist premises, whereby the local minister acts as the Authorised Person for their marriages too. Knowing where these are, and setting clear expectations of what is and is not possible, helps in the long run.

Find guidance about how to register a Methodist church building for same-sex marriage at: methodist.org.uk/Same-Sex-Marriage-Resources

Finance

Ask for a list of the auditors or independent examiners used by each of the Church Councils in the circuit (this comes under the provisions of SO 012(4) and (5)). You must ask for a description of their independence.

Ask whether any trustee bodies (large churches, projects, etc) are registered with the Charity Commission. If your circuit is a registered charity, you will have to produce an annual report. You do not have to write the report yourself, but whoever writes it should try to make it interesting! Be creative in showing how your circuit’s activities are for the public benefit. The report will need to be uploaded to the Charity Commission website as part of the charity’s annual report and accounts, but it is also good to circulate it to the church treasurers and Circuit Meeting members.

If any of the churches in your circuit run cafés etc, check that they are fulfilling VAT requirements. If you are not sure if a church should be VAT registered, you can check at: gov.uk/Register-for-VAT

Check also that the primary purpose of the café, shop, or bookshop is to advance the church’s religious purposes. The rules around trading income for charities are

complicated and sometimes a separate trading company may be required for tax reasons. For guidance, contact lcp@methodistchurch.org.uk

Ask if any office holders within the circuit or local churches are subject to an insolvency process (which includes becoming compounded with creditors generally) that makes them incapable of exercising office. This is covered by SO 013(1)(11).

Ask if all lay employees are being paid the Real Living Wage (note that this is not the same as the National Minimum Wage). For updates on the Real Living Wage, visit the Living Wage Foundation: livingwage.org.uk

You can find the Living Wage policy of the Methodist Church at: methodist.org.uk/Lay-Employment/LivingWage

Ask what pension arrangements have been made for lay employees. Find the latest advice on pensions at: methodist.org.uk/LayEmployment
See also the Pensions Trust website: tpt.org.uk

Copyright law

Ask for a list of churches in the circuit that have licences from Christian Copyright Licensing International and/or One License for use in worship. It is good to know what licences have been obtained for playing videos and streaming worship. Christian Copyright Licensing can help with this. Visit: uk.ccli.com/playing-music-licence-manual

Playing live or recorded music in worship does not at present require a licence, but many churches now need a Performing Rights Licence (including PRS and PPL) to allow them to play recorded music in cafés, for example, or to put on live music performances. When combined with a Church Video Licence, the PRS allows churches to show some films outside worship.

If a church has a theatre company, they will need a performance licence from the holder of the copyright for the material they are performing. A church putting on a pantomime or other event may need to complete a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) for the local authority. Ask your local authority for details.

If churches are using word copies of hymn books such as *Singing the Faith*, a licence is not required unless you print or project the words. More details can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Copyright and at: methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus

Handover meeting checklist

Safeguarding	Notes	Follow-up
Where is the circuit safe?		
Are any records stored elsewhere?		
Who is the circuit safeguarding officer?		
Is anyone operating a Safeguarding Contract?		
Do you have a list of those who have undergone modular safeguarding training (<i>Creating Safer Space</i>)?		
Are there any specific needs in order to encourage people to attend training?		
Are all local preachers' safeguarding self-declarations in the circuit safe and are their DBS clearances up to date?		

Property	Notes	Follow-up
Which buildings are listed?		
Which buildings are in conservation areas?		
Do all external organisations using church premises have their own insurance?		
Are any of the circuit churches in the midst of, or planning, any building projects?		
Have you asked to see the professional liability insurance of builders, architects, etc?		
Are all actions from Quinquennials up to date? Who is overseeing this?		
Are all buildings registered accurately with the land registry? Does your circuit have a relationship or contract with a conveyancer and solicitor?		

Marriages	Notes	Follow-up
Have you been given a list of Authorised Persons for each of the registered buildings, including those authorised for same-sex marriage?		
Does your circuit cover more than one registration district?		
If yes: Are ministers registered as Additional Authorised Persons across the circuit?		

Relationships	Notes	Follow-up
Are there any Methodist schools in the circuit?		
Are there any MHA care homes in the circuit?		
Are there chaplaincy relationships (part of the circuit or adherent to it) in the circuit?		

Finance	Notes	Follow-up
<p>Have you been given a list of the auditors or independent examiners used by each of the Church Councils in the circuit (including a description of their independence)?</p>		
<p>Are any trust bodies registered with the Charity Commission?</p>		
<p>Is the circuit registered with the Charity Commission?</p>		
<p>Are any of the churches running cafes, bookshops, etc?</p> <p>Are they fulfilling VAT requirements?</p> <p>Have they received advice about setting up a trading company for tax reasons?</p>		
<p>Are any office holders within the circuit or local churches subject to an insolvency process?</p>		
<p>Are all lay employees being paid the National Living Wage?</p>		

<p>What arrangements for pension provision have been made for lay employees?</p>		
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EDI	Notes	Follow-up
<p>Do you have a list of who has completed each aspect of the EDI training?</p> <p>Are there any specific issues that have prevented people from completing the training?</p>		
<p>Is there anyone new to a role who now needs to complete the training?</p>		
<p>What provisions have individuals made for their own personal annual EDI learning?</p> <p>Are there ways this could be done collective that would be both supportive and relevant?</p>		
<p>Does the circuit have an EDI officer?</p>		

Copyright	Notes	Follow-up
<p>Which churches in the circuit have licences from Christian Copyright Licensing International and/or One License?</p>		

At the Beginning of Your Time as Superintendent

Your first few weeks

There are a number of things that are essential (and one or two that are advisable) in your first few weeks in post:

- Organise your diary. Establish a pattern of staff meetings within your circuit – these should include A Methodist Way of Life (see more detailed information on the following pages).
- Book a pastoral visit to meet colleagues (lay and ordained) and other significant officers in the circuit (treasurers, secretaries of various meetings, safeguarding officers, members of the circuit leadership team) within the first quarter.
- Appoint all the people whom you plan to authorise to deputise for you in the chair at Circuit Meetings or Church Councils, including the Church Councils (whether constituted under SO 610 or SO 611) of those local churches in single congregation local ecumenical partnerships (LEPs) (see SO 502(1)(b)).
- Both you and the circuit property/finance secretary should see the Standard Form of Accounts (formerly known as Schedule B) for each local church. Make a note of the pertinent figures for each local church in your circuit and get an idea for yourself about their finances.
- Ask your colleagues in LEPs to let you have a copy of the LEP constitution. Most single congregation LEPs use buildings on which there is a Sharing Agreement; a copy should be in the circuit safe and it is advisable to be familiar with its provisions. Ask your District Ecumenical Officer (DEO) or Synod Secretary to indicate whether a direction has been given by the Synod under SO 611 for any single congregation LEPs; this also affects the pastoral care of members under SO 644(11)(iii). This conversation with your DEO is a good opportunity to ask informally if there is anything you need to be aware of concerning LEPs in your circuit, or for advice they might give you.
- Check whether there are any building matters you need to be aware of (eg property schemes, insurance claims, property closures and property sales).
- Check that Property Returns and regular inspections are being processed and that Quinquennial Inspections are done, as well as annual gas and electricity, asbestos and PAT tests. More information about regular inspections can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Property/Inspections
- Check whether there are any potential candidates for ministry. If there are, you will need to support them as they navigate the Discernment of Vocation processes: DOV1 and DOV2. In particular, if they decide to candidate, you will need to meet with them to confirm that they assent to our doctrinal standards, affirm their willingness to uphold our discipline, and accept the obligation to be at the disposal of the Conference for stationing: methodist.org.uk/Candidating/Process

- Remind staff about the annual reporting of the Statistics for Mission. It is your responsibility under SO 305 to ensure (usually by checking online) that Statistics for Mission information has been input online by your staff before 31 January each year.
- Remind staff about (and read annually yourself) the duties of a superintendent in relation to the use of Methodist premises as set out in section 92 of *CPD*. Remind them of their need to keep you informed.
- Remind your staff annually of the need to inform you of any cases of 'sharing' worship leaders between their local churches. Sign and send off the forms to this effect.
- Share the meeting dates you have set for the circuit. Remind your colleagues that their autumn Church Council meetings should meet after the Circuit Meeting, and that their spring Church Council meetings should take place before the Circuit Meeting (see the pattern in the section on page 38 titled 'Circuit Meetings'), which should be before the spring Synod. They will thank you when they need property approval from the circuit and district!

To provide adequate pastoral care across the circuit, make sure you know when your colleagues are planning holidays during the coming year. Use an early meeting to decide what 'out of office' auto responses and voicemail messages colleagues should leave. Given the increase in thefts from manses, beware of publicising holidays in any way. 'Out of office' and voicemail messages might be better, with a message stating only that you are unavailable and who the caller should contact for assistance. This will give clear guidance to those in your pastoral care (and to funeral directors who might be trying to contact staff) without declaring that the manse is empty.

Check with the supervision implementation plan holder who will supervise those in your circuit, and how you will receive the agreed records.

Connect with any district-based groups for superintendents, and ensure meetings and residentials are in your diary. Many districts have social media groups to aid support and sharing. Getting on these early helps to prevent isolation and often gives a peer network of support to turn to.

Collate a list of the stationing dates for your colleagues, as this can be a significant stress point for them, and being aware of succession planning and strategy as well as pastoral care and support can be helpful.

Organise your diary

In the introduction to this guide, we highlighted the need for good preparation in successful superintendency. Already you will have begun to realise that one of the ways to achieve this is to exercise good diary management. Here are some tips to help you with this:

- Add to your diary any dates your predecessor may have left you.

- Find out what the dates of school holidays are for every local authority in the area your circuit covers, so that you can avoid scheduling meetings during those times. You can usually find these dates on the local authorities' websites.
- Do not forget to allot time for your own holidays, study days (SO 745(4)(a)) and rest days. Put them in early, even if you end up negotiating a change with a colleague at a later stage.
- Check the Synod diary and ensure you have all the district dates in your diary that are personally relevant for you or need advertising around your circuit (you should especially note Superintendents' Meetings, Candidates' Committee and Probationers' Committee).
- Plan well ahead. Planning 18 months ahead for major meetings is useful, but a minimum of 12 months will ensure everyone knows what is being planned. For effective management, you will need to keep this 18-month diary rolling.
- It is always good to speak to the person who has responsibility for supporting vocational exploration in your district to find out any arrangements and dates.
- The same is true for stationing dates.
- Add to your diary the dates and times when you will be in supervision. If you are a supervisor in your district, also add the dates when you are acting as supervisor.
- If you are in a single-minister station, you will need to book your district chair well in advance for their annual visit, in keeping with SO 425(1).

Preparation time

Once you have blocked out the main meeting dates in your diary, add some preparation time for each new meeting. Remember, preparing for 'firsts' always takes more time and energy. It can be useful to also block out some time after the meeting to put into place any agreed action points.

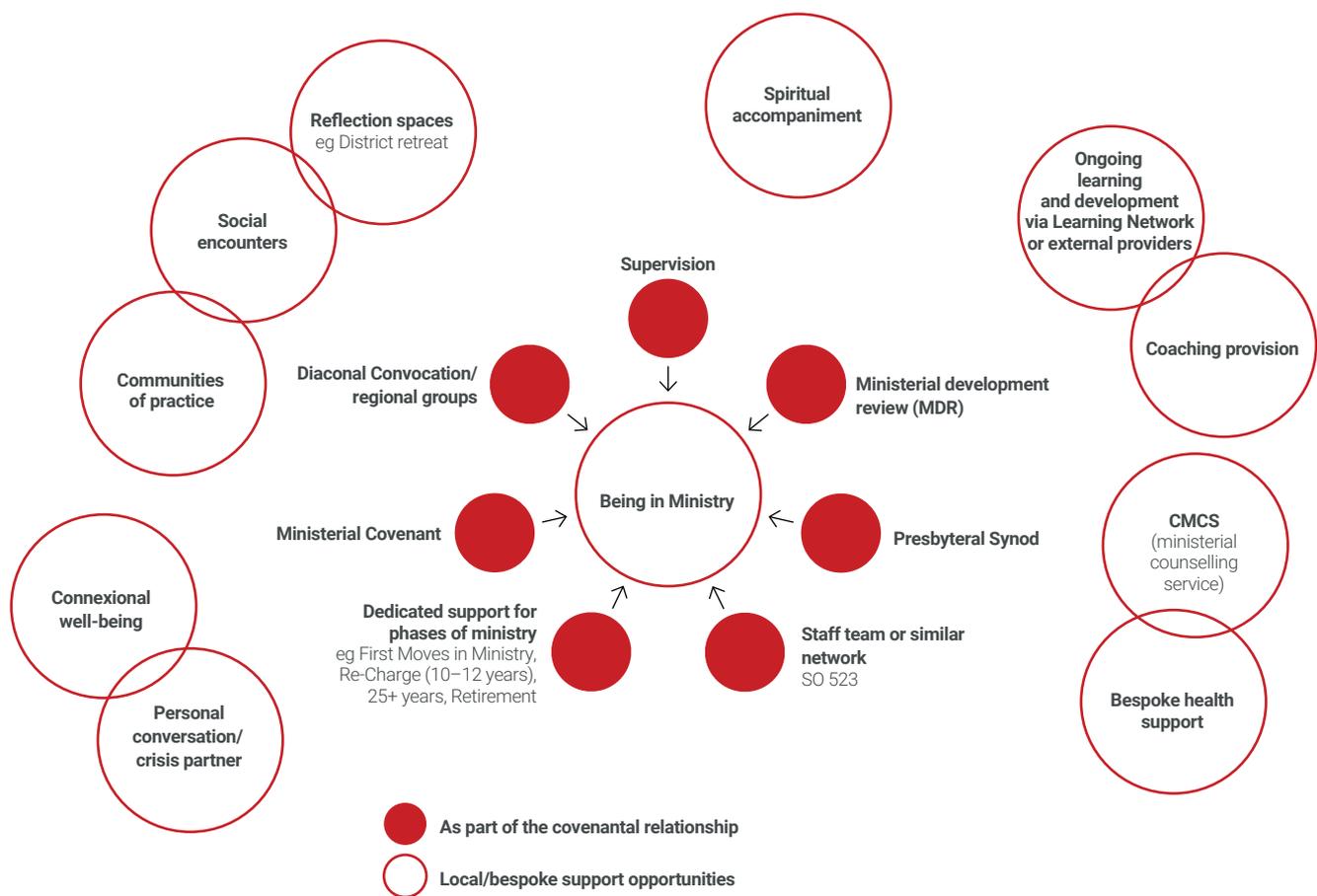
Block a catch-up day each month, free from other duties, so that you do not get behind with administration. You could also use it for planning and reflection. If you have a circuit administrator, you will need time to organise the delegation of work.

Colleagues' holidays

Ask your staff for their proposed holiday dates, quarter days, retreat/training dates and sabbatical dates so that you can arrange adequate ministerial cover. You are responsible for making sure that there is cover for pastoral emergencies in the circuit. Once you have all the dates, pay particular attention to school holidays (especially Christmas and summer) to ensure the circuit has adequate cover.

Pastoral care of ministerial colleagues

What you offer as a minister in oversight is part of a suite of oversight and support provided by the Conference for their ministers, as shown in the diagram on p. 21. If you are unsure about any particular aspect, please contact mvw@methodistchurch.org.uk



It is good practice to visit each colleague (and possibly their households) at least once a year. Some superintendents prefer to invite colleagues and their families for a meal at their manse.

There are a number of ministers in appointments other than circuit appointments named in SO 780. Arrange to visit the ones in your circuit – or to have a coffee with them at least once a year. Use this time to discuss with them how they wish to participate in the life of the circuit. Consider also your contribution to the pastoral care of those in their households.

Some supernumeraries offer pastoral leadership into the life of the circuit. It is helpful to formalise this through a Letter of Understanding, which outlines expectations of duties, location, and remuneration.

If a colleague dies

If a minister or probationer dies in your circuit, please notify the district chair and the Conference Office as soon as possible. Eventually you will need to ensure that an obituary is prepared (SO 487). Similarly, inform the district chair if a lay person who had a significant role in the district dies. If a local preacher dies, ensure that the Local Preachers Office is informed. Please inform Global Relationships (gr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk) of the death of any former Mission Partner, lay or ordained, as soon as possible.

Annual Tasks

There are certain tasks a superintendent needs to attend to on an annual basis. Some are just good housekeeping; others allow us to work properly as the Connexion.

Decisions of the Conference

You need to know of any decisions of the Conference that may impinge upon your circuit, especially any reports that are commended for local discussion and/or response. See to it that any deferred special resolutions of the Conference (SO 126(3) and (5)) are placed on the agendas of your Circuit Meeting and all Church Councils. The Conference Agenda is available at methodist.org.uk/Conference. The *Minutes of the Conference* will give you the information you need. Listen out for the Conference report from Synod. The Media Office produces a *Conference Business Digest*, which is helpful.

Be sure you are aware of any amendments in *CPD* (the passages in bold italic type) and highlight these amendments to your colleagues. New sections, which do not always appear in bold italic type, are highlighted in the introductory pages to Volume 2.

Statistics for Mission and property returns

Under SO 305, district chairs and superintendent ministers are jointly mentioned as being responsible for statistical and Property Returns from churches and circuit initiatives. In practical terms, this means knowing who is responsible for completing the online Annual Returns and how to keep track of progress for filling them in.

Superintendent ministers should also report, via the Statistics for Mission Church Closure Procedure, any society closure or merger within their circuit, once district approval has been obtained. The Methodist Heritage team, including Liaison Officers for Methodist Archives and Artefacts Collections, can assist you with re-distributing records and significant items from the closing church. Please refer to the Retention Schedule that can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Archivists

The circuit safe

Check and keep an inventory of the documents kept in the circuit safe. This should be done at least once a year (SO 903). These will probably include building deeds, certificates of Registration for Public Worship or Marriage, and other such legal documents. It is good practice to have a witness present when opening the safe. The district or circuit archivist will be able to assist you with any issues. Note that safeguarding documents should be kept in a separate safe.

Stationing needs

Make sure you are aware of the process for handling the re-invitation of ministers. Refer to the Code of Practice for All Involved in the Invitation and Stationing Process, which is issued annually and available at: methodist.org.uk/Stationing

Curtailment of an appointment

Occasionally a Circuit Invitation Committee or a ministerial colleague may indicate their wish for an appointment to be curtailed. Curtailments are always sensitive and require you to offer pastoral care to the minister (and their family). Details around the curtailment procedures are laid out in SO 544. You will need to inform the Conference Office of any curtailment.

Authorisation for the administration of the Lord's Supper

If the circuit requires an authorisation for the administration of the Lord's Supper by someone other than a presbyter, under the provisions of SO 011, make sure you obtain the required form from your Synod Secretary and return it in time for consideration at the relevant District Policy Committee (DPC), which you have the right to attend.

Authorisations are renewable annually, but this happens fairly automatically for the second and third years. You will have to remember to apply again in full after three years. Also note that no person may now hold an authorisation for a continuous period in excess of six years (SO 011(5) (a)). In all cases, have a conversation with your district chair about their policy for delegation of instruction under SO 011(6). It is likely to be you to whom this responsibility will be delegated. If you have a presbyteral probationer, you will need to apply for an authorisation if the circuit needs them to be able to preside at Holy Communion – see detail on page 55.

Grants

If you are applying to the District Policy Committee for grants for employing people, then information must be sought from your District Secretary (SO 439). You and another representative from the circuit may attend the grants committee. Make sure that you know the particular deadlines for applications. A list of grant providers for property projects and repairs can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Property/Grants and ministerial grants at: methodist.org.uk/Finance/Ministerial-Grants

Representatives to Synod

Ensure the Synod secretary is told the names and contact details of your circuit's representatives to Synod for the next connexional year as soon as they are elected.

Building used for non-Methodist public worship

If any of the churches under your governance hire their premises for worship to a non-Methodist congregation, check that the permissions are current and a written agreement is in place. A Schedule 14a must be submitted to the Conference Office for approval, together with a copy of the group's statement of doctrine. Licences may generally be granted for up to 12 months; leases are also possible in some cases. Details of the process and the Schedule 14a form are available at: methodist.org.uk/SharingOfBuildings

Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes' (TMCP) Standard Licence for Use of Premises for Christian Worship should be used where possible. Helpful guidance is available at: tmcp.org.uk/property/letting-property-and-third-party-use

Be aware of SO 920, which requires you to have an understanding of the teachings of any group worshipping on Methodist premises. Conversion therapy is not permitted under any circumstances. Please speak to the Ecumenical Officer in the Conference Office for guidance.

Mission and the Superintendent

SO 500 states: “The circuit is the primary unit in which local churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purpose of mission, mutual encouragement and help.”

The 2005 Conference report ‘What is a Circuit Superintendent?’ reminds us that the superintendent acts as the chief officer in the circuit leadership team. Therefore, you will be responsible (with others) for leading the circuit in mission.

God for All

God for All is the Methodist Church’s strategy to expand our commitment to be an inclusive, growing, evangelistic and justice-seeking Church. We believe that these are all facets of one gospel: the gospel of Jesus Christ, which we are called to receive and respond to.

Partnering with the Church’s commitments to *Justice, Dignity and Solidarity* and *A Justice-seeking Church*, *God for All* longs for:

- new people to become disciples of Jesus Christ,
- faith to deepen for everyone, and
- diverse communities and churches to experience transformation.

God for All invites circuits and churches into prayerful and decisive action, coordinated strategy, and organised teams that build on the deep theological rooting and positive will for cultural change in the Methodist Church. It names intentional, concrete steps and sets out key programmes and resources to help take these steps. The details of these are outlined on the following pages and updated information can be found at:

methodist.org.uk/Evangelism

God for All is not a tick list of activities to compulsively work through or robotically manage. The following programmes and resources are not pre-packaged initiatives, nor top-down information to merely download and insert, nor challenges to do more and work harder out of desperation. Rather, they are invitations for diverse circuits across the theological spectrum to journey together deeper into the gospel, to clarify and affirm a life-giving mission, and to make reflective decisions about how to spend their time, energy, and resources on the most important activities – and all of this by God’s grace.

Big questions for discernment

As superintendents called to equip and organise circuits for mission and ministry, consider the key questions on the following page as you explore and discern God’s invitation to you and those you serve alongside:

- What is the gospel? Simply put, the gospel is the ‘main thing’: it is crucial that everything we do arises from and reflects the good news. How do we talk about the gospel in our circuits – what is it, actually? If we asked our circuit meeting or worship service to answer that question, what kind of responses would we get? How might we describe the good news in ordinary language to someone who is ‘unaffiliated’ or new to spiritual exploration? Though there will certainly be diverse, faithful, individual responses to this question, it will be important for the circuit and churches to develop a shared understanding of how the gospel connects to their mission, and an expectation that God means to change them as they undergo the gospel together.
- Do you really know your local contexts? How are your churches befriending and falling in love with their communities? What are the hopes, anxieties, laments, desires and gifts of the people in those communities? What can you learn and seek together in relationship? It will be important for churches and circuits to discover these answers and to fall in love with their contexts not simply by commissioning research or sending out e-surveys, but by meeting new people and having real conversations.
- What is the core capacity or orientation you may need to develop as a circuit? If you could ask God for one animating energy for mission and ministry that would bring joy and confidence to your circuit, what would it be? Evangelism and faith sharing? Confidence in seeking justice? Boldness in testimony? Addressing conflict with charitable honesty? How might you seek to receive and develop this capacity?
- What new thing will you try to activate behavioural change? In order to be the Church, we need to leave the building and get out there. Transformative moments don’t just happen through prayer and Bible study, as important as they are. And talking about evangelism and mission is not the same thing as doing evangelism and mission. What will you actually do together to positively change the behaviour of the church or circuit?
- What do you need to let go of in order to centre the most important things?

As you survey *God for All*’s eight strategic areas below, keep the above questions before you.

***God for All:* Core strategic areas**

1. Centred in God

God is the Three-in-One who creates us, loves us, frees us, saves us, and transforms us to be who God has always been calling us to be. If we are faithful, our mission flows intentionally from this orientation. The Centred in God strategic area focuses on deepening the discipleship of Methodist people and lays a foundation for *God for All* as a whole. It aims to inspire and equip Methodists to be rooted and grounded in prayer, and to make Our Calling a lived reality, particularly through participating in the 12 commitments of A Methodist Way of Life shown on page 84. Find out more at:

methodist.org.uk/Discipleship

Superintendents have a key role in engineering a discipleship pathway for the people in the churches of their circuit: ensuring that opportunities are available to travel to all twelve 'stations', and fostering a culture of reflection and conversation about their experiences of worship and mission. Find some ideas to get started with A Methodist Way of Life as a superintendent at: methodist.org.uk/MWOLSupers

2. Everyone an Evangelist

The Methodist Church is committed to being an evangelistic Church: making more followers of Jesus Christ is one of the core parts of Our Calling. All disciples are called to listen for, speak of, and live out the good news and yet, as a Church, we can often lack confidence with evangelism. We want to be a Church which authentically shares our faith through our prayers, by our lives and with our words, so that new disciples are made, faith deepens, and communities are transformed. The following programmes seek to help equip the whole Church for evangelism:

- Everyone an Evangelist – a course for groups from local churches and circuits to explore their calling to evangelism and step into a practical evangelistic project.
- Evangelism for Leaders course – a five-session course on Zoom for Methodist leaders, lay and ordained, to equip leaders to confidently model evangelism; to intentionally prioritise evangelism and to encourage and equip others as evangelists.
- The Community of Evangelists – a group of Methodists called and spiritually gifted as evangelists, that supports and encourages diverse evangelists for our world today.

Find out more at: methodist.org.uk/EquippedForEvangelism

3. Transformational leadership

In our rapidly changing world, we need a new set of leadership tools. The world that many leaders – and many superintendents – were trained for, no longer exists. The team coaching programme (methodist.org.uk/TeamCoaching) exists to develop local church and circuit leaders so they can individually be transformed, help transform their churches and transform their contexts and communities in faithfulness to the mission God has put before them.

Other programmes and resources to support this transformation include:

- The God for All Influencer coaching programme – monthly one-to-one coaching to help you act, reflect, and keep on acting (methodist.org.uk/Coaching)
- Monthly Leading into Change webinars
eventbrite.co.uk/e/leading-into-change-tickets-537340127787
- Regional action learning away days

Find out more at: methodist.org.uk/Transformation or by emailing transform@methodistchurch.org.uk

4. New Places for New People

The Methodist Church sees starting New Places for New People (NPNP) in every circuit as a vital part of responding to the gospel of God's love, revealed to us in Christ. Our aim is to see new people becoming disciples of Jesus and forming new Christian communities in rural, estate, urban, suburban and village contexts. NPNPs are an extremely fruitful means of connecting new people, new people groups, and new residents to Christian exploration and community. In addition, NPNPs bring learning from experimental 'research and development', identify and strengthen emerging leaders, and help the whole Church reflect on and examine its calling.

NPNP projects are all about encouraging a change in missional culture so that every circuit makes beginning an NPNP a core priority in their mission plan. It is important to consider the project's wider influence and the potential shared learning for other circuits.

NPNPs can be started anywhere, in diverse contexts. The Methodist Church has suggested the following contexts and people groups as priorities for NPNPs in the next five years:

- new towns or new housing developments
- student/young adult/university
- families with children
- replanting in an existing place or second site of a growing church
- Church at the Margins.

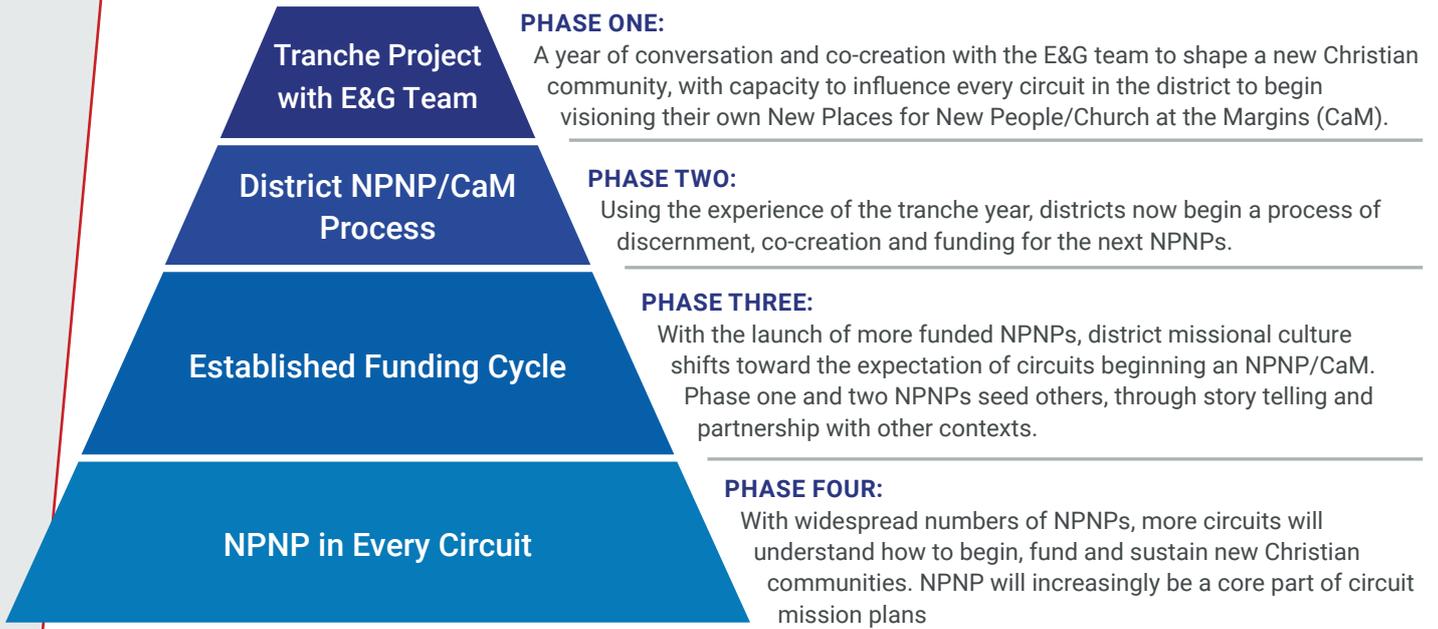
Each district has selected which tranche year they wish to begin the NPNP journey. Find out more at: methodist.org.uk/NPNPTranches

When the district has submitted their NPNP project, the district-led process to support circuits imagining their NPNPs projects can begin. Connexionally funded NPNPs will all follow the criteria in the practical guide (see link below).

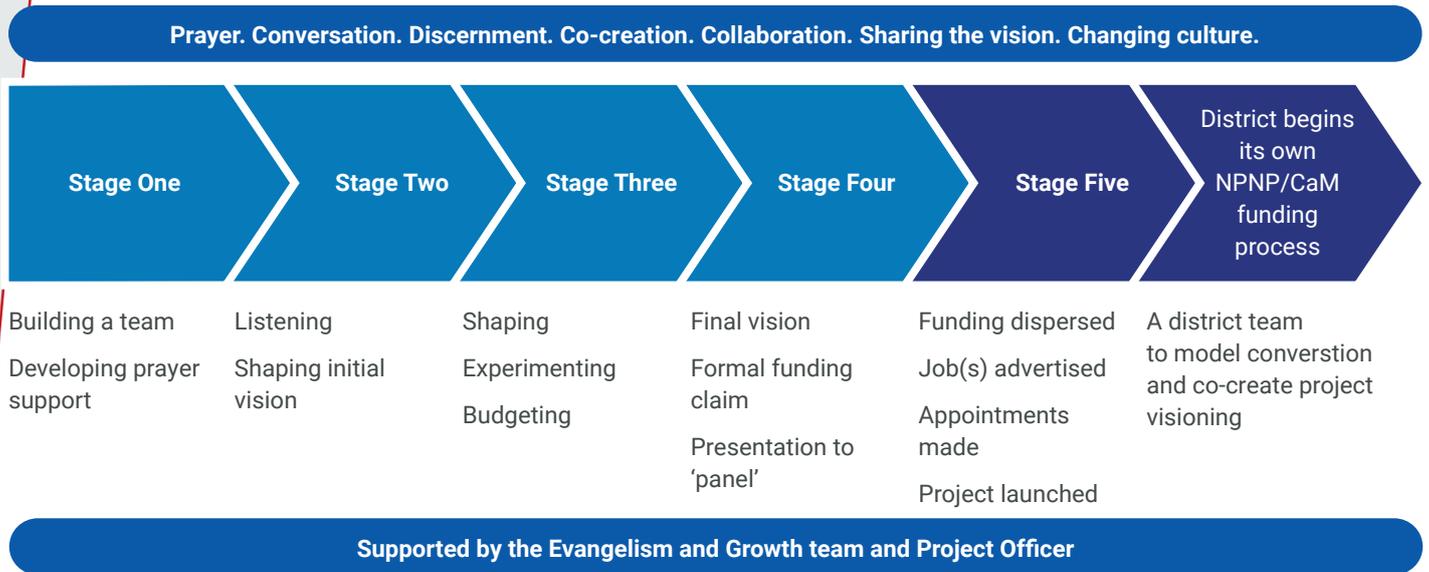
Find out more here:

- How to start a New Place for New People: methodist.org.uk/NPNPBegin
- The NPNP practical guide to starting new Christian communities: methodist.org.uk/NPNP-Guide

Connexion-District-Circuit



Tranche Process



5. Church at the Margins

Church at the Margins is a vital dimension of New Places for New People. Its vision is to nurture and build new Christian communities among and led by people who are economically marginalised. We know we are not taking God to the margins: we believe God is present with and in all people, in all circumstances. The goal is that every district and circuit will include Church at the Margins as part of their mission action plans by 2025.

These new Christian communities will embrace four key elements:

- **Creating connections:** Create spaces where people truly encounter one another, discover friendship, and in which the gifts of people experiencing poverty are recognised, valued and received.

- **Nurturing communities:** Communities where power is shared and transformed, and people with lived experience of poverty are recognised as the experts.
- **Sharing the Gospel:** Communicating the good news of God's transforming love and justice for all people.
- **Seeing transformation:** New Christians are nurtured in discipleship and new communities emerge which challenge and respond to injustice. Enabling those at the economic margins to transform the wider Church through their gifts.

Find out more here:

- An introduction to Church at the Margins: methodist.org.uk/ChurchAtTheMargins
- Church at the Margins training: methodist.org.uk/CAM-Training
- Faith Rooted Community Organising – Practices for people who want to develop a new Christian community: methodist.org.uk/Organising

6. Every church a growing church

As Methodists, we want to see more people exploring faith and encountering grace, more people coming to a living faith in Jesus Christ, more people growing in faith and discipleship and more people becoming committed members of Methodist churches. Mission planning is a key tool for helping every church look outward.

- How to develop a living mission plan: methodist.org.uk/MissionPlanning
- Mission planning for circuits discerning the future of small churches: methodist.org.uk/MergeForMission
- Explore the core practices of growing churches: methodist.org.uk/Church-Growth-Research
- How to develop a living mission plan: methodist.org.uk/MissionPlanningToolkit
- Our Church's Future Story (Autumn 2021 expanded edition) is a free interactive resource that strategically comprises stand-alone, user-friendly and tactile cards, effective for group work around mission planning and discerning God's call for a church or circuit. It supports established churches through their mission planning process; supports discerning, writing and putting into practice a really useful mission plan; includes new material specifically designed for producing a circuit mission plan; addresses the importance of digital missional engagement, intergenerational community, equality, diversity, and inclusion, and property considerations; and encourages churches and circuits to reflect on lessons learned from the pandemic. Order your free copy at: methodistpublishing.org.uk/product-display?isbn=OCFS121

7. Young evangelists and leaders

The Methodist Church is committed to empowering young people to explore their identities as evangelists. Our aim is to see young people confidently, authentically, and appropriately share their faith with friends, family and the wider community. The following resources are available:

- retreats and events for children, young people and youth workers
- a Young Evangelists Community for support, sharing of good practice, and building of friendships for children and young people
- encouragement for the local church in praying for young people
- social media content to encourage and equip young evangelists.

8. Digital evangelism

In the age of digital communication and community, the internet is a crucial platform for evangelism and mission. Together as the Church, we seek to understand, explore, and innovate around what it means to be followers of Jesus in digital space. We offer the following resources to help Methodists reach new people, share their faith and build new Christian communities online:

- social media and digital training
- resources, guidance and campaigns for digital evangelism
- support and resourcing for Methodists who are experimenting and innovating with mission, evangelism and pioneering online
- The Story Project – an online testimony library where you can access other people's testimonies and share your own
- Pioneering Digital Communities course – for people seeking to establish a new Christian community online.

Find out more at: methodist.org.uk/DigitalEvangelism

Rural mission and ministry

Rural mission and ministry is part of the landscape in nearly all our circuits. It is often where some of the hidden treasure lies. Each context and place is different, but the Church at its most local expression can be small, beautiful and offer depth to our relationships. A rural church with vision can connect with and impact the whole community, truly embodying God for all.

The following resources are available:

- Starting out; training for those new to rural life and mission – Rural Ministry Course: arthurrankcentre.org.uk/ruralministrycourse
- Rural hope network collection: eventbrite.com/cc/rural-hope-1123799
- Rural mission hubs: freshexpressions.org.uk/Rural-Hub

Want a personal conversation?

The Evangelism and Growth team would love to Zoom into your circuit leadership team meeting or Circuit Meeting. In whatever slot you have available on your agenda – from 30 minutes to 90 minutes – they will listen to what you are wrestling with in mission and ministry, offer a short introduction to God for All, and explore questions together. Superintendent ministers can email evangelism@methodistchurch.org.uk to book them in for a Circuit Meeting or circuit leadership meeting in the year ahead.

Using property for mission

After our people, our properties are one of the biggest assets to enabling mission. A Methodist building that is welcoming, eye-catching and that acts as a focal point for community engagement can speak powerfully of God's love. The Connexional Property team can help you if you are considering how you might use a property for mission including reordering, remodeling and extension or redevelopment projects.

Utilising a property, either by reordering it to explore new ways for ministry or redevelopment for social purposes to incorporate a range of social uses into an existing building, is as much a part of a mission plan as preaching, worship or community evangelism. Current guidance to encourage new ways to look at our property in the context of our mission and Our Calling – Strategic Guidance for the Use of Property in Mission – can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Property/Mission

There is also guidance on making buildings accessible that can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Property/AccessibleBuildings

If you find your circuit is already involved in a property project or is thinking of embarking on one, you are strongly encouraged to look at the Property Development Pathways at: methodist.org.uk/Property/Pathways. You may wish to look at what other churches have done at: methodist.org.uk/Property/Inspiration

TMCP are available to provide help and guidance on property-related matters. Please contact TMCP legal@tmcp.org.uk or find detailed guidance, checklists and template documents at: tmcp.org.uk

TMCP are here to help you and contact details are available at the back of the handbook and at: tmcp.org.uk/Contact

Do not forget – you are not alone. The Connexional Property team is there to help you. Details of contacts are available on page 86 and at: methodist.org.uk/Property/Support

For everything you have ever wanted to know (and more) about property and the Methodist Church, see: methodist.org.uk/Property. It includes information on items such as Quinquennial Inspections, annual inspection lists, maintenance matters, guidance for manses and a wealth of information on listed buildings.

You may have churches in your circuit which have a heritage story you want to celebrate and use for mission – the Methodist Heritage and Collections Officer can provide support and resources, for events such as heritage open days.

Keep referring back to methodist.org.uk/Property, as new and updated information is added over the year to help and support your work and the work of the churches in your circuit. One recent addition is the *Property Stewards' Handbook* that can be found at: methodist.org.uk/PropertyStewardsHandbook. It is useful to be aware of these pages, so that you can recommend them to the appropriate people in your circuit and churches – this might include your colleagues!

The Methodist Conference have set a target of becoming Net Zero Carbon by 2030. To find out more information about reducing carbon in church buildings, please refer to methodist.org.uk/Property/NetZero

You may wish to sign up to Property Matters, which is a monthly newsletter with updates on property-related guidance and legalisation, information and links to related subjects. Subscribe and view previous editions at: methodist.org.uk/Property/PropertyMatters

The *Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS)* was launched in 2021. It commits the church to structural, cultural and attitudinal change in order to prioritise justice and respect for all, especially those who have previously been excluded. The strategy calls for us to learn from one another so that we can recognise God's presence more fully in our life together and create a culture of care and connectedness.

As per SO 500 and the 2005 Conference Report 'What is a Superintendent?', as superintendent you are responsible, with others, for leading the circuit in its mission to be the interconnected Body of Christ, with justice and dignity for all. You therefore have a key role in leading this change within your circuit. A guide to this strategy can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Inclusive-Church/UserGuide. The strategy includes a range of actions, including mandatory training for all leaders and an Equality Impact Assessment that will be used in all spheres of Methodist life, including local churches and circuits, to ensure the impacts of policies and activities on different groups of people is understood. Details of the Equality Impact Assessment can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Inclusive-Church/EIA

The Methodist Conference in 2023 adopted the report, 'A Justice-seeking Church'. This marked the conclusion of the two-year Walking with Micah process of listening and conversation around what it means to be justice-seeking today. The report offers a framework of Principles, Priorities and Practices for justice for circuits and churches to explore as they develop their mission. Accessible versions of the report and further resources can be found at methodist.org.uk/Justice

Justice, Dignity and Solidarity

Justice-seeking church

Children, youth and families

The Well

This is the network for anyone, paid and voluntary, lay and ordained, working in ministry with children, young people, families and young adults. The Well seeks to equip and resource people wherever their ministry takes place across the local community. A wealth of useful information to support ministry can be found at:

methodist.org.uk/TheWell

Youthscape Essentials

To support anyone working with young people to grow in confidence and develop their practice, there is the opportunity to participate in Youthscape Essentials, a new training and equipping course. This ten-module course is a vital foundation for ministry, covers all the essential aspects and is recommended for anyone working with teenagers. More information can be found at: methodist.org.uk/EssentialsTraining

3Generate

The children and youth assembly of The Methodist Church takes place every autumn on an annual basis. It is an opportunity for children and young people to gather, speak out on the issues that matter to them, tune in to God and grow in their discipleship and friendship with each other. Taking place over a weekend, it can be a transformative experience for groups participating. Find out more at: 3Generate.org.uk or contact your district ambassador.

Flourish Schools

Flourish Schools is about churches recognising God's call to work with schools – so that children and young people, communities and churches can be transformed and flourish in all aspects of life, both physical and spiritual. Find out more and follow the step-by-step process for getting started at: methodist.org.uk/FlourishSchools

Contact the team

Whether you're interested in starting ministry from scratch or growing what churches are already doing with children, young people, families and young adults, then do get in touch. The team would love to have a conversation and support you. Email:

childrenandyouth@methodistchurch.org.uk

Stewardship: Reducing the Risk of Fraud

Local Methodist churches, circuits and districts are sadly not immune to fraud. Fraud is dishonesty involving:

- false representation, for example identity fraud
- failure to disclose information
- abuse of position to make a gain or cause loss to another.

Responsibility for local church finances

Each church treasurer is responsible for keeping the books, presenting the accounts, and providing their Church Council with sufficient information to enable them to make informed decisions. The church treasurer has a duty to ensure that the systems and procedures that support the financial administration of the church keep the possibility of fraud to a minimum. It is the responsibility of the whole Church Council to understand the finances, to question the treasurer and to have sufficient oversight of the finances to ensure the treasurer is not left alone 'to get on with it'.

The key point to remember is that, while a church treasurer looks after a local church's finances throughout the year, they do not have sole responsibility for the finances of the local church. That responsibility rests firmly with the Church Council as the local Managing Trustee of the church's property. This property is not just about the building; it includes all property, funds, investments and contents held on the Model Trust. The Church Council will also oversee general funds and benevolence funds, as well as money that may have been received from a legacy for a particular purpose. Fraud not only results in financial loss and police action, but reputational damage to the Methodist Church, a loss of morale in the local church and circuit, potential regulatory action by the Charity Commission and an impact on future funding such as lottery grants.

Steps to minimise fraud

Trustees have a legal duty to take adequate steps to protect against and detect bribery, fraud, financial abuse and other irregularities. It is important to implement and monitor sound financial controls and procedures.

Minimise the potential for fraud by taking the following steps.

Managing the bank accounts

- In accordance with SO 012(1), ensure that Methodist money is held in properly established and official bank accounts; not in personal accounts.
- All payments must be agreed by at least two trustees.
- A minimum panel of four signatories should normally be available to sign cheques or other payment instructions. Blank cheques must never be signed nor should the payees ever sign the same cheque for which they are receiving payment.
- Each cheque or payment instruction requires two signatures in accordance with SO 012(1).

- No cheque should be signed or countersigned without the signatories having adequate supporting evidence of the authenticity of the payment.
- Retain all spoilt cheques and make them available to the auditor/independent examiner (IE).
- Online banking payments should only be made using software which provides the facility for dual authorisation by personnel approved by the Church Council. In some circumstances a supplementary list of payments made should be subsequently countersigned by a trustee.
- Investments in deposits or other financial products must be approved by the Church Council.
- Similarly, any transfers of investments should also be authorised by the Church Council.

Keeping records

- The Church Council must ensure there is supporting documentation for all transactions. These should include among others: offerings journal, offerings record for the treasurer, cash receipts records, invoices and receipts, bank statements, expenses claim forms and cash analysis book.
- Planned-giving receipts should be recorded on a control sheet, which can then be reconciled with a register of donors committed to supporting the church financially on a regular basis.

Bank statements

- For churches you have pastoral charge over, arrange for the bank to send a copy of the bank statement to you and a senior steward each month.
- Bank statements should be checked by someone in addition to the church treasurer (the person checking should not have a personal or close relationship to the church treasurer).
- If you are able to view your account online, consider having read-only access to the bank account.

Bank mandate

- The Church Council or Circuit Meeting should annually confirm the names on the bank mandate and ensure that there is occasional change.

Cash

- All financial transactions must be recorded gross, which includes all money received and paid out.
- Loose cash from collections should always be counted by two people who are not related to each other.
- A Collection Record Sheet should be completed and signed by those counting cash.
- Cash should be banked promptly and intact without any deductions for expense payments.
- Expense-reimbursement claims should be paid by cheque or bank transfer.

- If small expenses are paid in cash, then a separate small expenses account should be kept and all payments recorded and supporting vouchers/receipts filed. These payments should then be signed off by a trustee each time the cash float is topped up.

Year-end procedure

- The superintendent minister (or other nominated minister) or senior steward should examine the year-end statements from the bank, Central Finance Board (CFB) and the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP).
- If there has been a long delay in the presentation of the year-end financial statements, the Church Council or Circuit Meeting should carry out an investigation quickly.
- A senior steward or minister should accompany the treasurer at the sign-off meeting with the auditor/independent examiner (IE).

Appointment of auditor or independent examiner

- Find information on compliance with SO 012 and the requirements of the Charity Commission in respect of audit or IE, depending on the level of income, at: [gov.uk/government/publications/independent-examination-of-charity-accounts-examiners-cc32](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-examination-of-charity-accounts-examiners-cc32)
- Independent examiners should not be related to, or a close friend of, the treasurer.
- The appointment should be by the Church Council or Circuit Meeting and confirmed by the secretary of the meeting sending a letter of appointment directly to the auditor/IE each year.

Division of responsibilities

- Wherever possible avoid a concentration of financial responsibility into one or two people. Ideally, have different people as treasurer, Gift Aid secretary, counters of the offertories and controllers of the envelope scheme.

Circuit stewards' treasury responsibilities

- Circuit stewards should be diligent in collecting church accounts by the due date.
- The circuit stewards may wish to review a local church's accounts and point out glaring errors or consider whether the IE is truly independent of the treasurer.
- Annually review the reserves policy and check on those of the churches in the circuit.
- It is recommended that the circuit stewards should not also be either the district treasurer or a treasurer of a church in the circuit.

What to do if you suspect fraud has taken place

If the church or circuit affected is a registered charity, a serious incident report should be made to the Charity Commission, stating the allegations or concerns that have been raised. The report can be filed online at:

[gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity)

Methodist Insurance should also be informed. Find their contact details at:

[methodistinsurance.co.uk/Contact-Us](https://www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/Contact-Us)

The Conference Office's Legal and Constitutional Practice team have produced a guidance note on who to inform and what actions to take in the event of a fraud. Email lcp@methodistchurch.org.uk to request a copy.

See also the Charity Commission's guidance: [gov.uk/government/publications/internal-financial-controls-for-charities-cc8](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/internal-financial-controls-for-charities-cc8) and at: preventcharityfraud.org.uk

Charity Commission resources

The Charity Commission has a wealth of resources and guidance at: [gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission)

See in particular the Charity Commission's guidance specifically for religious charities, which can be found at: [gov.uk/government/publications/faith-based-charities](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/faith-based-charities)

Other helpful resources include:

- The Essential Trustee (CC3) – in particular section 7, for information on managing your local churches' resources responsibly: [gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3)
- The Charity Commission's '5-minute guides': [gov.uk/guidance/charity-commission-guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-commission-guidance)
- Guidance for managing and assessing risk: [gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-risk-management-cc26](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-risk-management-cc26)

Methodist finance resources

Find more information on everything to do with finance at: methodist.org.uk/Finance

Meetings

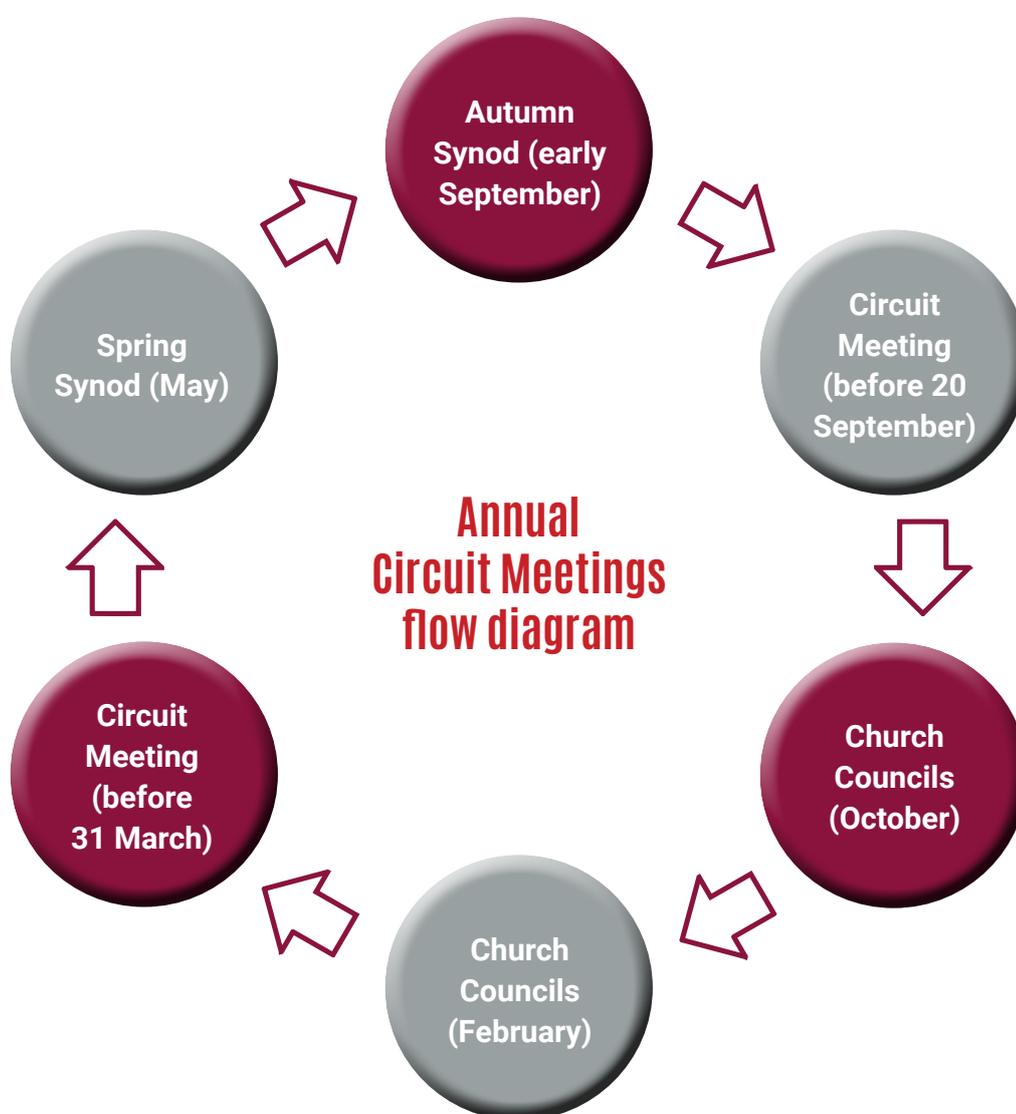
The district Synod

Getting someone to coordinate the travel to Synod will cut down on circuit expenses, and is a more environmentally friendly way of working.

At the Synod, you will need to empty the circuit mail box. Don't do it too early, or you may miss materials that have been added later in the day.

Circuit Meetings

In order that information flows between the various parts of our Church you should ensure that the pattern of Circuit Meetings follows that illustrated below.



Every Circuit Meeting agenda should include a space for EDI, to consider the work of the *Strategy on Justice, Dignity and Solidarity* as agreed at Conference 2021. Ideas for how to use this agenda item can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Inclusive-Church

As the *JDS* strategy begins to be embedded in the culture of church and Circuit Meetings you may want to consider some of the following examples of agenda items:

- Sharing the *User Guide* for the strategy with churches, which is found at: methodist.org.uk/Inclusive-Church/UserGuide
- Improving the accessibility of all resources and meetings across the circuit
- Discussing the Inclusive Language Guide and planning how to implement it within all services within the circuit: methodist.org.uk/Inclusive-Language
- Discussing the priorities for the circuit in terms of justice and inclusion
- Supporting leaders with deciding what personal EDI learning they need to do in order to fulfill their leadership role, including sharing details of:
 - The EDI Toolkit: methodist.org.uk/EDI-Toolkit
 - The EDI Learning Resources: methodist.org.uk/EDI-Learning-Resources
- Collectively completing training, learning or development together
- Reviewing the diversity of the Circuit Meeting and other groups and committees within the circuit, and taking decisions about how to describe and advertise vacancies in ways that improve the representativeness of leadership within the circuit
- Sharing stories of each other's experiences within the Methodist Church
- Having honest conversations about whether people feel safe and included within churches and meetings, and discerning what steps need to be taken to implement change so that this is the case
- Allocating the task of completing Equality Impact Assessments for activities within the life of the circuit or establishing a structure for doing this within the circuit, under the oversight of the Circuit Meeting.

The September Circuit Meeting

This should be held after the district Synod and before 20 September. This allows for re-invitations to be considered (SO 545 and 546) and/or stationing needs to be addressed.

If your own invitation is due to be considered, make sure you book your district chair well in advance so that they may chair the Circuit Meeting (SO 545(4)(a)). The district chair may nominate a deputy to fulfil this role. There is much to commend having the re-invitation as the last item of business, and chairing the meeting yourself up to that point before handing the chair over.

If your treasurer cannot get the accounts audited in time for the September meeting, then they should present them unaudited (or at the very least summarised). You will then need to make sure your March meeting receives the auditor's report and finalised accounts.

If you are intending to vary the number of representatives from local churches under SO 510(1) (viii), the September meeting is the best meeting to propose this, as it will allow local churches to use their February Church Councils to elect representatives.

The March Circuit Meeting

This should meet after all the February/March Church Councils and in time to send any memorials to Synod (SO 516) or the results of any voting on any deferred special resolutions of the Conference (SO 126(3),(5) to the Conference Office). The deadline for both is 31 March.

If the audited accounts have not been presented to the September meeting, they should be presented to this March meeting.

Church assessment meeting

It is good practice to hold a separate meeting with the circuit stewards and the individual church treasurers to discuss the assessment. It is important for you to attend as part of the mission of the circuit, even if you invite someone else to chair the meeting.

Other Circuit Meetings

CPD states there should be a minimum of two Circuit Meetings per year, shown in the diagram on page 38. This may not be adequate for your circuit and you may wish to consider additional meetings in December and May/June, which will allow for a more extended discussion of the life of the circuit and an additional opportunity for local churches to bring property approval requests.

When and where

It is worth considering rotating the Circuit Meetings through the week. However, it might be worth avoiding Fridays. Using this pattern, plan the dates at least a year (if not 18 months) in advance.

Likewise, it is worth considering rotating the meeting around the churches in the circuit. This enables churches to offer hospitality and gives non-preaching members of the Circuit Meeting a chance to visit other churches in the circuit.

Make-up of the Circuit Meeting

You should review on a regular basis the make-up of the meeting, asking if it is sufficiently representative with regard to age, sex and ethnic origin (SO 513).

Make sure the Circuit Meeting secretary lists all the members on every agenda, as this will remove all doubt as to who has a vote (SO 514(2)). A list of all members' other roles within the church and, if appropriate, in other organisations, should also be noted, to ensure that conflicts of interest and loyalty are managed appropriately (SO 019A(7) and SO 514(2A)).

It is worth encouraging others who are not members of the Circuit Meeting to attend and participate in the greater conversation about the work of God in the circuit. If you do this, remember that you may need to go into closed session (SO 514(3)) for confidential items.

Agenda

CPD Book VII Part 6 offers guidance on the agenda. See also sections on pages 68-70 on the September and March Circuit Meetings to consider what you might add at specific times of the year.

Ensure that an agenda is drafted and delivered to all members of the Circuit Meeting at least seven days (but preferably fourteen) before the meeting.

It is advisable to publish the dates of all meetings in the circuit diary. Also give notice of the next meeting at the end of each meeting's agenda. If you need to call any extra (non-emergency) meetings, you are required to give 14 days' notice (SO 910(5)(d)).

Some superintendents have found it useful to ask Circuit Meeting secretaries to organise the minutes: decisions made, action points and points for prayer.

Creative ideas for the Circuit Meeting agenda

Ask the host church to offer refreshments before or after the meeting.

You might allow a slot for local churches (on a rota basis) to give a presentation about themselves and their mission to the rest of the circuit.

Try forming the agenda around the four aspects of Our Calling. This helps the meeting ensure that everything we discuss brings us back to our core principles: reminding us that all we do is a response to the good news of the gospel. An example of setting out a meeting agenda based around the four aspects of Our Calling is shown on page 76. This will need to be adapted for a Circuit Meeting.

Specific items that need to be discussed at various times

Annual manse inspections

You will need to ensure that the Circuit Meeting receives a report of the annual manse inspections (SO 954(i)). See Guidelines for Manses: methodist.org.uk/Property/Manses

It is worth noting that SO 954(vi) requires the circuit to have a discussion at least every four years about the longer-term strategy and condition of the manses. Check past agendas; if this item is not on there, consider it overdue.

Archives

Include archives on the agenda at least annually, to remind people of the need to preserve minute books etc, and to comply with your responsibilities under SO 015(2). A summer meeting is good for this purpose, as officers who might be standing down prepare to hand over old files to new officers. The district or circuit archivist, or Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives, can help you with any queries.

Retention

The Retention Schedules for Methodist churches, circuits, districts and connexionally-owned properties (which can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Archivists) contain practical advice and guidance on which church records should be archived and preserved and take into account the requirements of data protection and other legislation. Key sections relevant to closed churches include: church meetings, employment, finance, membership, property, Health and Safety, safeguarding, publications and legal documents.

Within each section, certain categories of documents must be retained at circuit or district level, either permanently or for specified time periods. These include finance, trust deeds, title deeds, Burial Registers, data protection records, historic insurance policies, gas safety certificates and Quinquennial Inspection Reports.

Baptism Registers and unframed Cradle Rolls are particularly important for family history/heritage enquiries and should always be preserved and deposited in local authority archives.

The first point of contact should be either the Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives (archives@methodistchurch.org.uk) or the Heritage and Collections Officer (heritage@methodistchurch.org.uk).

Property projects

Make sure that the provisions of SO 951 are followed for property projects presented to the Circuit Meeting. Find more information at: methodist.org.uk/Property/Pathways

Quinquennial Inspections

Quinquennial Inspections are to be completed for church buildings and manses every five years in accordance with SO 952. These inspections are designed to identify any immediate defects and to help prepare for potential issues in the future. It is important to ensure that the recommendations from the surveyor are carried out in order to prevent any defects from escalating. It is the responsibility of the circuit to arrange and pay for the inspection. Find more information at: methodist.org.uk/Property/Qi

Charities Commission

Try to make the annual report required for registered charities as inspiring, stimulating and informative as possible!

Invitation Committee

SO 541 requires the Circuit Meeting to appoint an Invitation Committee annually. It is often helpful if the Circuit Meeting delegates all invitation responsibilities and duties to the Invitation Committee; if they do so, they will need to report to the following Circuit Meeting. For details, please consult SO 541.

It is worth noting that if you have an LEP in your circuit, it is best practice (and, indeed, may be required) to include ecumenical partners in drawing up the profile for appointing your own successor as superintendent.

Minimum size of a church

Ensure you are aware of any local churches which are at, or may be coming, to the point of having fewer than 12 locally resident members. If the membership falls below this level for four successive quarters, the church will cease to be a church in its own right and its members will need to be transferred to another church (SO 605A). Of course, churches can join together voluntarily even if they have more members than this. Be aware as well of SO 612, under which, if there are fewer than seven Church Council members willing and able to act, the Circuit Meeting needs to appoint extra Church Council members from other churches in the circuit.

Churches in breach of trust

Be aware of the provisions of SO 611A, under which, if a Church Council is so far failing to attend to its obligations that this amounts to a serious breach of trust, the District Policy Committee can step in to dismiss the Church Council and substitute a new one.

Worship leaders

If you have agreed to permit a worship leader to serve more than one local church, you need to inform the Circuit Meeting and the Local Preachers' Meeting (SO 683(4)).

Rules of debate

As highlighted earlier, it is essential that you understand the rules of debate (see SO 517 and SO 413(5) to (7) and (10) to (25)).

Superintendents in Scotland

If you are a superintendent in Scotland, ensure that the annual Sunday collection for the Relief and Extension Fund for Methodism in Scotland takes place (SO 476).

Single-Church Circuits

If you are in a single-church circuit, make sure that you are aware of and comply with SO 511, especially clauses (4) and (5).

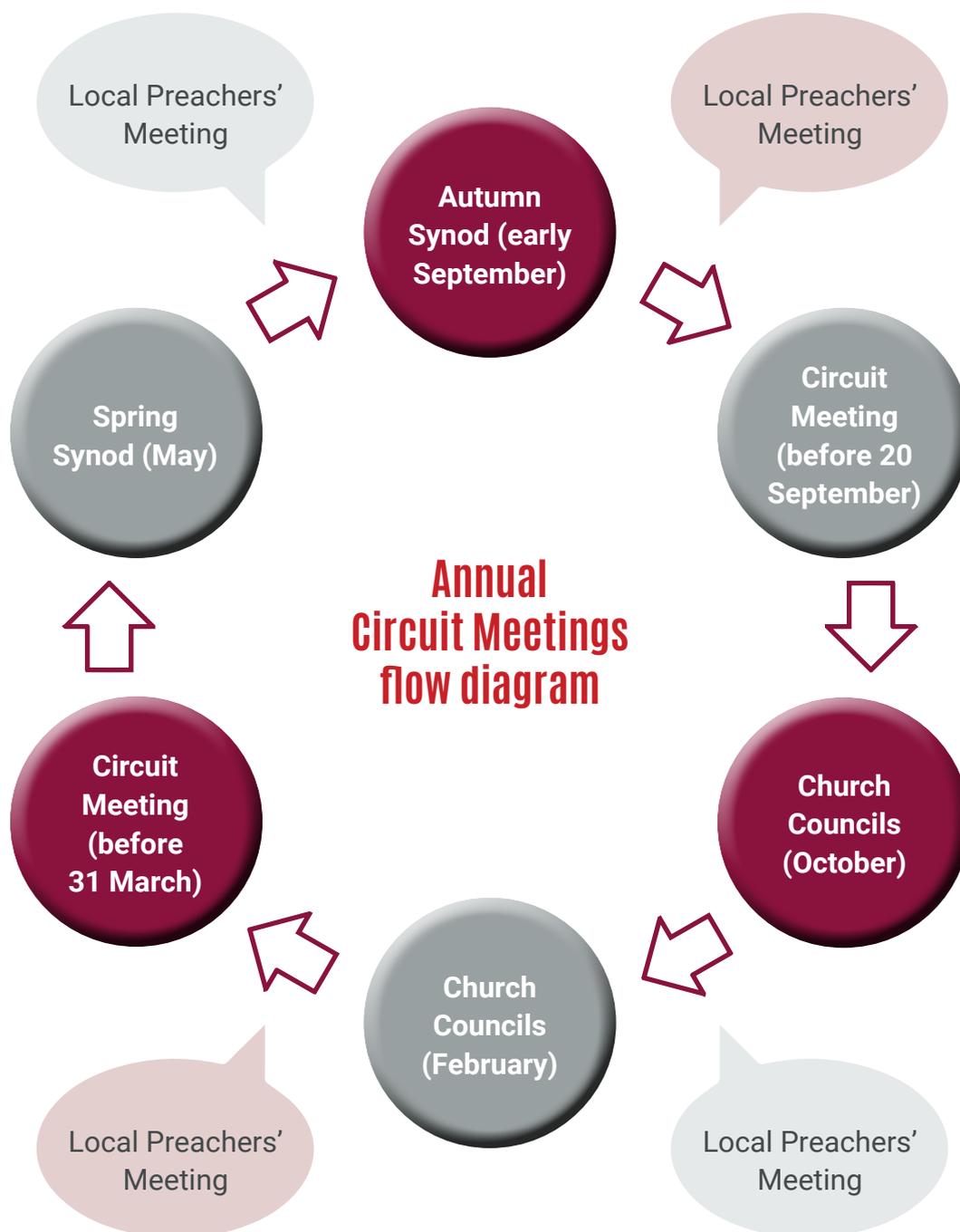
Responding to catastrophes

One of the Voices of Identity groups that met this year has been ministers who have found themselves serving in the midst of a disaster or catastrophe. They have compiled a document from their own experiences to assist others who find themselves in a similar situation.

This will be added to the well-being pages on Signpost for Ministry and will be part of the information that is sent out to you should you ever contact the Media team (mediaoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk) in the event of an unfortunate situation.

The Local Preachers' Meeting

According to SO 560(3), the Local Preachers' Meeting should meet quarterly – ideally before the Circuit Meeting, to allow for recommendations for admission as local preachers to be presented. Aim to have meetings in September, December, February/March and May/June.



Agenda

The key functions of the Local Preachers' Meeting are given in SO 560, and include worship and fellowship, attention to the work of God in the circuit, initial training and continuing development. For local preachers, this meeting is (or should be) a learning

community where they are encouraged and equipped for their mission and ministry. Guidelines called 'Meeting Well' can be found at: methodist.org.uk/CLPD or at: methodist.org.uk/LPSecretaries

Have a conversation with the Local Preachers' Secretary and local tutor(s) before you plan each meeting agenda. You can then determine if you need to allow time for any training items, such as interviews. It is for you to determine who conducts interviews (SO 566(2)). Note that chairing the Local Preachers' Meeting can be delegated by the superintendent to another person. There may be someone who can bring fresh energy and ideas to the role.

Ensure safeguarding and *JDS* are agenda items at each meeting.

All local preachers have a responsibility for their own continuing development, including regular review of their ministry. This should include regular participation in peer review. Every three years, each local preacher should be invited to share something from their own learning and development. This can form the required Continuing Local Preacher Development (CLPD) item in the meeting. Guidance notes on accountability and review for local preachers are found at: methodist.org.uk/CLPD, where you can also find a growing set of ideas and off-the-shelf session plans for CLPD.

You can invite other people to participate at the Local Preachers' Meeting (SO 560(6)), such as worship leaders, stewards and musicians. Even if they are not regularly present, consider inviting them to the annual celebration of the Lord's Supper.

There is information about training of local preachers and worship leaders at methodist.org.uk/WLP3. You will find information about the quarterly assessed service required for all people on trial, and requirements for trial services and interviews.

The circuit is responsible for finding a mentor and a tutor for each trainee. If you are struggling with the latter, consider working with another circuit. Your district's Local Preachers' Secretary or Learning and Development Officer may be able to help.

Each year, local preachers are required to attend a Service of Reaffirmation of Call (SO 563(3)(v)). A liturgy for this service is available at methodist.org.uk/LPSecretaries. You can use this in a Local Preachers' Meeting or as part of a circuit gathering to celebrate and support those involved in leading worship and preaching. Once a year, perhaps at this service, read out the Duties and Rights of Local Preachers (SO 563(1)(4)).

Attendance at Local Preachers' Meetings is a duty (and privilege) for all local preachers. Consider asking those who do not attend regularly what would encourage them to be there. Consider changing the time, day, location or format of meetings to enable those with work, family or caring responsibilities to take part, and encourage the Meeting to consider ways to include those who are unable to attend because of mobility, health, transport or other issues.

Your responsibilities beyond the Local Preachers' Meeting

You have pastoral and oversight responsibility for your local preachers. Here are some suggestions as to how you might approach this.

- Try to meet with every preacher once a year. If there are too many local preachers for you to do this, then share this task among the circuit staff. If this is not possible, ensure there is a planned visiting schedule over a longer time period. Local preachers are your partners in the mission and ministry and local theologians with much to contribute. Use these meetings to listen to their ideas and vision, and to talk about their continuing development. Remember, too, that the pastoral care of preachers is shared with the Local Preachers' Secretary (SO 562(1)(iii)).
- Try to meet at least annually with local preachers 'on note' and 'on trial'. They will really value your encouragement, as training can place many demands. Keep watch for those who are in danger of overrunning the limit of five years 'on trial' and offer them support. Remember that extensions can be granted by the district in exceptional cases, but all applications need to include a clear plan for completion of training and cannot be open-ended (SO 564B(3) applies).
- Ensure those who are 'on note' for the coming quarter receive a note from you (SO 564A). They should not receive the first note until they have satisfied the Methodist Church's safeguarding requirements (including a DBS check) and had an interview with you (SO 564). You should use this interview as an opportunity to assure yourself that they have understood the demands that local preaching will place on them, and that this may involve relinquishing other roles.
- If the preaching plan allows, try to be available to hear them preach. Perhaps leave yourself free at least once a quarter to listen to other preachers. Not only will it be a great encouragement to them, but you will be able to provide better support and oversight for them. Do communicate your intention to do this to avoid surprises.
- Encourage the local preachers to plan an occasional circuit-wide preaching series (see SO 524). This will enable smaller churches to share in opportunities sometimes only available to larger churches. There are great ideas and resources available. Bible Month and A Methodist Way of Life are examples; others are suggested periodically in the Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' quarterly eNews. It is a good idea to sign up for this at: methodist.org.uk/LPWLNews and to encourage all your local preachers to do so too.
- Suggest to the Local Preachers' Meeting that you mark Local Preachers' Sunday, possibly sharing with neighbouring circuits or the district.

New local preachers

It is the responsibility of the Local Preachers' Secretary to inform the Ministries team of any changes of status of local preachers by completing the online form found at: methodist.org.uk/LPSecretaries. They are also responsible for requesting the documentation for admission services and long-service certificates.

Circuit leadership teams

If you have the joy of organising an admission service for a new local preacher, it is appropriate to ask the local preacher whether there is someone they would like to invite to preach at this service. The service itself marks a real achievement for the preacher, and is an opportunity to commission them for the next stage of their journey of faith. Therefore, it should be a special service at a convenient time to which the whole circuit is invited.

Circuit leadership teams (CLTs) are formed by and report to the Circuit Meeting (SO 515(2)).

SO 531(3)(ii) requires circuit stewards to meet at least twice a year, however it is worth considering meeting more regularly with circuit stewards, ministers and appropriate lay employees.

If your circuit stewards are in the practice of meeting without you, you should ask that they:

- adhere to the same principle as the staff meeting (see below) of not formulating policy recommendations without the rest of the CLT
- send you (as chair of their meeting) notes of any meetings they have had.

Training materials are available for circuit stewards. Speak to your Learning and Development Officer, or find these at: methodist.org.uk/CircuitStewards

Handbooks for church and circuit stewards are can be found at:

methodist.org.uk/ChurchStewardsHandbook and methodist.org.uk/CircuitStewards.

It is good to ensure all stewards have read these.

Agenda

SO 531 lists the stewards' responsibilities. Use these meetings to discuss these issues but don't neglect the opportunity to see this meeting as a 'think tank' away from a formal agenda. Pray together and seek the work of the Holy Spirit. Avoid a rehearsal of everything that a Circuit Meeting should rightly discuss and decide. This only leads to a restless CLT at the Circuit Meeting, while the rest of the Circuit Meeting feel disenfranchised because all they are being asked to do is rubber-stamp decisions that appear to have already been made.

Staffing

Keep in the forefront of conversations matters relating to future staffing needs. Consider, for example, the advantages of inviting deacons, using the gifts of supernumeraries, or appointing lay employees. If your circuit is considering changing the number of ministers stationed to it, then remember that the District Policy Committee needs to be consulted and Synod will need to give permission before that decision can be implemented (SO 438).

The belief that it is the right and responsibility of the superintendent to decide which ministers serve which churches is not explicitly sanctioned in *CPD*, but has traditionally been part of Methodist practice. You may find it helpful to rely on this if in an emergency you need to pull a minister out of a difficult relationship with a church. In other situations, most superintendents would prefer these days to work with the CLT on any decisions to reorganise pastoral responsibilities.

If you are discussing the change of pastoral responsibility of ministers, and one of those ministers is serving in an LEP, then ensure that discussions take place with the Staffing Advisory Group and the relevant officers of other denominations (eg church wardens, archdeacons, United Reformed Church moderators, Baptist deacons). No change should happen without the Staffing Advisory Group's permission. Do not forget to talk to your DEO!

Deacons

The Warden or Deputy Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order (MDO) is always happy to help circuits consider their staffing needs. Among other things, they can advise on creating or sustaining a diaconal appointment, advise on vocational events or help a circuit develop its own rule of life.

The CLT should remember that deacons are members of a religious order living by a rule of life as well as an order of ministry under the discipline of the Conference. This brings certain obligations, including a requirement to attend Area Groups and Convocation and the travel expenses related to that are the responsibility of the circuit.

Deacons are to be listed on the plan as staff members. The 2020 Conference recognised that by their ordination deacons have a call to proclamation, and for many this includes a requirement to preach. Deacons should not be listed as local preachers (as this is a lay office). You will need to have a conversation with any deacon as to how many services they might offer on the plan.

Deacons can, of course, conduct weddings if they are authorised, as well as funerals and baptisms with the permission of the superintendent, and offer extended communion.

It is worth remembering that diaconal appointment profiles are usually specific and the focus of the deacon's appointment cannot be changed without the agreement of the Methodist Diaconal Order.

Returning to circuit ministry

If you have a colleague who is returning to circuit ministry, best practice is to assign them a buddy or mentor for a year who will walk alongside them and guide them in any changes to circuit life since they last served in such a role.

Working with the CLT to provide an appropriate welcome to incoming ministers

You should work alongside the CLT to ensure any manse that is changing over occupancy is ready in good time to be a place of welcome to the incoming minister. Guidelines are offered in Book VII of *CPD*. Remind circuit stewards of the need to have a current Energy Performance Certificate for incoming ministers (Book VII, Part 1 (2)). Remember, these are minimal standards. It might be useful to ask: 'What is the best welcome we could offer?' and then aim for that!

Covenant Relationship between the Church and its ministers

For a number of years, the Conference and the Connexion had been discussing a Ministerial Code of Conduct, which became the Ministerial Covenant and was presented to the Conference in 2022. Having been adopted by the Conference, it is now published in *CPD* Book IV Part 6, and is titled *Renewing Full Connexion: Commitments and Expectations*. It is thought that this document will become important in supervision, MDR, the invitation process and helping churches and circuits understand their part in the Covenant Relationship. Circuits are encouraged to think of creative ways to engage with this document.

Sabbaticals

It is a good thing to ensure appropriate discussions take place about sabbatical arrangements at the CLT, not just at the staff meeting. Changes were made to the frequency of sabbaticals by the 2018 Conference, so make sure you are up to date. There are more details about sabbatical preparation at: methodist.org.uk/Sabbaticals

Developing your circuit's mission: conversation partners

Your CLT will need to talk about strategies to implement Circuit Meeting decisions. You may wish to talk to your Learning and Development Manager or District Development Enabler about ways they can help you do this. It is a good idea to invite the district chair to come and take part in the conversation on a regular basis.

Voluntary district officers are also useful conversation partners, and could give advice on their areas of expertise. Such officers might include advisors on disability, property or children's and youth work. Use your Synod handbook/directory as a tool to build your CLT agendas.

The busier circuit staff are, the more important it is that they meet together to pray and take counsel. SO 523 recommends a weekly staff meeting. This is quite feasible for a smaller circuit and means that you can meet for 90 minutes, including coffee and prayer time. The best time to implement this is on arrival at a circuit! For larger circuits, it is arguably more important to meet regularly. The locality will probably determine how you might do this.

Staff meeting agenda and frequency

Monthly meetings should be the absolute minimum, but they have their downside: if a member of staff misses one meeting it will be two months before they meet their colleagues again. It is important that staff make the staff meeting a priority, so you may need to encourage them to tell funeral directors, etc, they are not available at that time. If you cannot meet physically, consider meeting online.

A good working pattern has proven to be:

- Week 1: Prayer and business
- Week 2: Bible study
- Week 3: Prayer and taking counsel. Ask: 'Where are you flourishing? Where are you struggling?'
- Week 4: Accountability. You may wish to use the A Methodist Way of Life reflection questions as part of accountability. See page 84.

This allows for the staff to watch over one another in love, and to:

- take counsel together respecting the affairs of the circuit (SO 523)
- discuss how the circuit may maintain doctrinal preaching (SO 524)
- confer, encourage and be accountable (SO 742).

The staff meeting is a good place to hold each other to account. Make sure that ministers have the appropriate number of Sundays off each year. You might find it helpful to set up an online calendar (such as the one provided by Google) for circuit staff to use.

It might be helpful for each member of staff to take it in turns to lead the staff meeting. Likewise, each member may choose to host the meeting or you could hold it in a central location.

It is best not to use the staff meeting to formulate recommendations to the Circuit Meeting about policy. Such a practice excludes others (eg the CLT) who should be part of those discussions.

Be imaginative

Staff meetings are an excellent place to remind staff of good practice. You could:

- reflect on what *Renewing Full Connexion: Commitments and Expectations* means for your circuit.
- look at part of the Guidance section of *CPD* (Book VII)
- discuss Conference reports
- share a discussion on a theological book – or a chapter of a book, or even a TV programme
- focus on a different local church or project in the circuit
- try using some of the old rules for a class meeting or the Methodist Way of Life

Inviting others to the staff meeting

- share learning from sabbaticals
- share MDR goals
- hear from probationers about their studies.

All ministers stationed in the circuit (including those without appointment) should be invited to the staff meeting (SO 523(1)).

If you have ministers who are recognised and regarded (SO 732), authorised ministers (AM), authorised to serve (AS) (SO 733) or associate presbyters or deacons (SO 733A), then they should be fully welcomed to your staff meeting, but make sure that they are not overburdened by it. There should be negotiation with those ministers (who will also have meetings of their own denomination to attend) to ensure that they are kept informed by, and are able to inform, the circuit about relevant matters.

There may also be ministers working within your circuit who are stationed in other appointments – such as chaplains to prisons, hospitals, etc, members of the Connexional Team or ministers who are working with particular language-based congregations. Make sure they also are welcomed to the staff meeting, even if their duties prevent them from attending regularly.

If you have a neighbouring circuit which is a single minister station, check with your district chair whether it would be helpful for you to welcome that minister to the fellowship of your staff meeting.

Staff socials

Some staff like to arrange social gatherings, such as Christmas parties or summer barbecues. You can hold a party at a restaurant, or ask if someone is willing to host it at their home. Do remember to invite the additional ministers who are members of your staff meeting under SO 523(1). And be conscious that for some people this type of gathering can be uncomfortable.

Lay employees

If any churches (including LEPs) are thinking of employing lay people, then they should consult the district chair and the lay employment officer. Before advertising the job vacancies, they should refer to the lay employment resource at:

methodist.org.uk/ChurchEmployees, in keeping with SO 438A and Section 57.

If you are employing a lay person, their line manager must have attended the Connexional Training for Line Managers. Details can be found at: **methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning-and-development/learning-and-development-events** or from your Learning Network Coordinator.

Supervision and Oversight

In order to reduce isolation and to attend to good normative, formative and restorative practice while being sensitive to risk and safeguarding issues, the Conference has decided that all ministers in active work should be in supervision. Find more details at: methodist.org.uk/Supervision

All probationary and ordained ministers in active work are required to be in reflective supervision and attend a meeting of 90 minutes at least six times a year or one hour nine times a year, with a supervisor who has been authorised to supervise under the Methodist Church's Supervision Policy. Together they will reflect on the supervisee's vocation and practice. This work also continues with those ordained but exercising that work beyond circuit ministry or even church life.

Probationers are included in this process and are offered reflective supervision with someone who is not their Minister in Oversight during their probationary period (SO 723(2A)).

The model adopted by the Conference is a shared-agenda model where the probationer/minister brings items to discuss and the supervisor may also note items from the MDR to supervision feedback or comment on trends and gaps from previous supervision conversations.

See also *CPD* Book VII Part 14, 4 (Guidelines for Good Practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Care: Supervision).

Under the policy (methodist.org.uk/SupervisionPolicy) superintendents are not required themselves to supervise, but must ensure that they and their ordained colleagues receive supervision according to the policy. Those who do supervise must receive the connexional training and be approved to do so.

The district chair holds and updates the district supervision implementation plan (often referred to as the SIP). Therefore, any local changes to supervision arrangements should be reported to the district chair and recorded on that plan. If you have any questions, you should approach your district chair in the first instance.

All lay pioneers and lay pastors working half-time to full-time need to be in supervision. From September 2024, those in other lay roles who have significant pastoral contact with individuals and families at points of vulnerability (pastoral workers, family workers, community workers) will need to be in supervision. Find out more at: methodist.org.uk/Supervision/FAQ

To help with setting up correct expectations for a supervision session, the supervisor should complete the Supervision Covenant Form. At the end of each session, an agreed

record is produced and distributed in accordance with the policy. If you are not a supervisor, or supervise across circuit boundaries, you are likely to receive copies of the agreed record(s) for your ministerial colleagues.

It is your task to check them and ensure that any issues of risk, safeguarding and well-being that have been raised are suitably addressed. Please also ensure that when a staff member moves on, arrangements are made for the transfer and deletion of agreed records. There are details of this at: methodist.org.uk/SupervisionForms

Ministerial development review (MDR)

While supervision allows for regular reflection on the normative, formative and restorative approaches to ministry, MDR is a requirement of the Standing Orders. Each minister is required to review their work over the past year, and identify new hopes and goals and potential learning and development needs for the coming year. It is the expectation of the MDR process that the superintendent acts as the ordained contributor for each of their colleagues unless there are legitimate conflict of interest reasons that suggest it is inappropriate.

Copies of the updated guidelines on MDR can be found at: methodist.org.uk/MDR

Ministerial well-being and flourishing

The Ministries Committee has asked us to remind all ministers that they are given a stipend in order that we might model a way of being. We are not 'paid' to do a job, or worse still to keep the show on the road. As ministers we are called by God to be a representative person, leading the people of God in mission and ministry. Therefore, you are invited to adopt A Methodist Way of Life as part of your discipleship, through an accountability group, or maybe as part of the staff meeting.

The committee spent a long time discussing the recommendations in *CPD* Book VII Part 3 relating to holidays and rest time. We do not speak of days off from ministry, because ministry is a way of life. However, *CPD* states ministers should have a minimum of 24 hours rest in each seven-day period. The research in ministerial well-being revealed that many ministers felt their well-being was impaired by not having 48 hours rest in a seven-day period. The committee reminds all ministers that the stationing committee works on the assumption that all full-time appointments involve 12 sessions a week (a session being a morning, afternoon or evening). This might equate to six days of two sessions a week or fewer days if the three sessions are deemed to have been used in the work of ministry. The committee encourages a dialogue between ministers and circuits to use the flexibility built into the system to enable the flourishing of the Church and those serving it.

Encouraging ministers to work 12 sessions a week may feel like increasing the pressure on the 'to do' list, particularly if we perceive the demands outweigh the time available to us. As a minister saying no is never easy, nor is it easy to hear as a member of the church. However, every minister and church member when agreeing to do something new is asked to consider what they might lay down to allow time for the new work to flourish.

Saying goodbye to colleagues

Early in the connexional year it is worth having a discussion with staff members who are leaving the following August, to ascertain when they intend to take holiday and when their final Sunday in the circuit will be.

Remind them well in advance of the requirements of the charter for incoming ministers (*CPD* Book VII Part 1), especially the need to sort files into:

- (a) those for handover
- (b) those for archiving
- (c) those for shredding (Book VII Part 14 (Guidelines for Good Practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Care) Section 17, 21).

Details of how to pass on a colleague's Supervision Records can be found at:

methodist.org.uk/media/23993/handling-supervisory-files-2021-2.docx

Plan a farewell service collaboratively with circuit stewards and the staff who are leaving (don't just do it yourself!).

When a member of staff is leaving, check with the circuit stewards that they have arrangements in hand to allow words of thanks (and, in some circuits, a gift) from the circuit to be given to the departing staff member. Do not allow this to be left to their own churches. Ministers are welcomed into the circuit and should be bid farewell by the circuit. An appropriate moment for this might be at the refreshments following a circuit service of farewell.

Probationers

For details of the particular needs of probationers, see the Handbook for Ministerial Probation at: methodist.org.uk/Probationers

Here are some pointers gained from past experience:

- If the practice in your district is for probationers to be welcomed at services in their own circuit, ensure that arrangements are made for Holy Communion to be part of that welcome service (SO 723(4)). If a probationer has been given an authorisation to preside at Holy Communion, this should be presented at their welcome service.
- Ideally, probationers should be given the opportunity to regularly attend worship that others are leading. Some circuits manage to offer this once a month or once a quarter.
- Set regular meetings for the probationers' Worship Development Group. This group needs at least three meetings before February.
- It might help if you (or a colleague in Full Connexion) is present at the Church Council of any probationer when they are considering managing trustee business.
- It is worth noting that MDR does not begin until after a minister has been received into Full Connexion. However, supervision begins immediately (see below).

Time off for probationers

All probationers are required to attend the district probationers' retreat.

Make sure that probationers take the Sunday after Christmas off (in addition to their five Sunday entitlement).

Probationers are expected to attend the pre-ordination retreat. They should also stop work on the Friday before their probationers' pre-ordination retreat, and so should not be scheduled to lead worship on the Sunday before the retreat.

Probationers are also strongly encouraged to attend the representative session of the Conference in the year they are ordained, costs of which are covered by the Conference Office.

Authorisation to preside at Holy Communion

It is your responsibility, where appropriate, to see that probationers have authorisation to preside at the Lord's Supper, and to arrange for them to have wedding authorisation.

The Authorisations Committee seeks to support circuits by making good, informed decisions. To do this, they need to gather the best information they can.

The committee will not know your circuit, and at the same time they will want our work to be about more than an arithmetic calculation. You need to tell them honestly about the need in your circuit. If your explanations make the boxes on the document expand, that is okay. They would rather have more information than less.

Please take care with your sums. The Church needs every person who presides at communion accounted for. The maths is based on a somewhat dated model of a full-time minister taking two services each Sunday, making 26 services in a quarter. So, you take the number of services the person normally takes in a quarter, and divide by 26, which gives their contribution as a fraction of what a full-time presbyter does.

Ecumenical considerations make for complications. Use your understanding of the local situation.

Example 1

There is a Methodist-Anglican LEP, with a small number of Methodists, and an Anglican incumbent presiding almost every week. Do not count either the incumbent or the Anglican communion services. Just count the Methodist communion services (defined as those where there is a Methodist presiding).

Example 2

There is a URC minister working within the circuit, mainly at a Methodist-URC LEP, but occasionally taking services elsewhere in the circuit. You would probably be best to count all communion services in the LEP and count the URC minister as full-time.

Whatever your situation please explain it to us. If you are unsure, contact conferenceoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk or Andrew Lunn at admin@mandsmethodists.org.uk and they will do their best to help guide you and answer your questions.

Make sure that you are scheduled to share worship with a presbyteral probationer at least once each quarter. In the case of a probationer without an authorisation to preside at the Lord's Supper, this should be a service of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (SO 724(2)).

If your circuit has, or desires to have, a presbyteral or diaconal probationer, then you (or a colleague to whom supervision is delegated) must have undergone the required supervision training. Supervisors should have attended a course in supervision under the policy and be recognised as an approved supervisor.

Please be aware we have a new standard in supervision under the policy, under which those trained in probationers' supervision prior to 2018 will need to retrain. Details of training can be found at: methodist.org.uk/SupervisionPolicy/TrainingEvents

Probationers must be given the required support and supervision, which comes via two routes.

Support and mentoring around circuit life is often weekly to begin with, then possibly less frequently later on. In particular, help the probationer plan for the first time they do a specific task and encourage them to reflect in supervision on what they have learned from the experience. For certain pieces of work, you might need to accompany them through it and debrief them afterwards.

Probationers' supervision, induction and support

Enabling the Ministry of Other People

Vocational exploration and lay training

Enabling the people of God to fully realise who they are called to be is the responsibility of every minister. How we speak of calling is vital. Worship materials for Vocations Sunday(s) are available at: methodist.org.uk/Vocations-Sunday

Speak to whoever has responsibility for supporting vocational exploration in your district/circuit to discover what the arrangements and dates are. This might mean contacting your Learning and Development Manager.

It is useful to find out what grants, if any, are available for lay training from the district and the circuit.

In 2023 candidating changed, so please refer to the website for up-to-date information. People can choose to engage in an Explorer's year before entering the pre-candidating phase. If you have the great joy of having a Candidate for presbyteral or diaconal ministry, do not underestimate the time it will take to support their candidature.

You should refer to the guidance for superintendents with regard to Candidates at: methodist.org.uk/Candidating/Process

The relevant Standing Orders can be found in Section 71 of *CPD*. Note especially your crucial role in fulfilling all that is required of you in SO 713(6)(a) and (b).

It is always worth bearing in mind the pastoral implications of support required by Candidates who are not recommended for acceptance.

Accompanists to Explorers and Candidates for ministry

Each Explorer and Candidate is allocated an Accompanist to journey alongside them as they do their discernment. If you know anyone with the gifts and graces to be an Accompanist, we are keen to hear from them! Details can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Candidating/Accompanist

Supernumerary ministers

As superintendent, you have a particular ministry to supernumeraries – which can bring joy and challenge! It is important that the superintendent recognises the gifts and graces that a supernumerary might bring to a circuit. You are encouraged to read the information on using the gifts of supernumeraries, see: methodist.org.uk/Supernumerary-ministers. It will be your responsibility to have a conversation about their continuing ministry and practical issues such as ongoing pastoral care.

The care of supernumerary ministers is important. Visit each supernumerary and minister's widow or widower residing in the circuit at least once a year.

Many superintendents find the delivery of the *Minutes of Conference* gives an ideal opportunity to do this.

Ministry to supernumeraries is a shared responsibility between the superintendent and the district chair. How this manifests itself differs across the Connexion. Be sure to check this out with your district chair.

If a supernumerary is ill or is in hospital, the superintendent should visit. There are also expectations of the local minister and the district chair. It may not be appropriate for all three to visit, but there should be some discussion as to who will visit.

Do not forget that SO 742(2)(b) and 742(3)(b) require that supernumeraries undertaking formal pastoral work should attend appropriate meetings – including the circuit staff meeting.

Information pertaining to the life and ministry of supernumeraries and your relationship to them is at: methodist.org.uk/Supernumerary-Ministers

Local Lay-Pastors

The Conference report 'Changing Patterns of Ministry' (2021) established the office of Local Lay-Pastor. Formal Competencies were adopted by the 2022 Conference and pathways for training offered from September 2022. Details can be found at: methodist.org.uk/LocalLayPastors

Conversation and reflection spaces

The Methodist Church offers conversation and reflection spaces for ministers at different phases of ministry, from thinking about their first decisions about moving or asking for a re-invitation, through to celebrating more than 35 years in ministry and preparing for retirement. As superintendent, your role is to encourage colleagues to be involved in these spaces, and those afforded during a sabbatical, to enable careful decision making and the possibility of theological or practical renewal. Information about these spaces can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Ministry/ReflectionSpaces

The Circuit Plan

The timetable for producing your circuit plan can be tricky. It is best to give one month's notice before a preacher is planned to preach. You also need a month to get the plan drafted and printed (allowing for chasing-up phone calls, etc). If your plan starts in December, your deadline for plan production and delivery should be the first Sunday in November, and you ought to ask for dates by 1 October.

Circuits often have a standard form for local preachers to submit. If yours doesn't, consider devising one – especially if you don't want to get postcards or scrappy bits of paper!

Consider listing worship leaders on the circuit plan. It not only facilitates collaboration between local preachers and worship leaders, it is also an aide-memoire to the Local Preachers' Meeting as to which worship leaders need a triennial review (SO 683(5)).

If your plan does not show lectionary readings or special Sundays, consider adding them. If space, you may find it useful to put a special note on the relevant Sundays, for example: 'Clocks go forward/back'.

You might like to consider inviting district officers to preach in your circuit.

Ensure that the distribution of the plan does not breach data protection regulations (GDPR) by putting personal details into the public domain. For instance, if plans are generally left at the back of churches for people to take, it will be necessary to leave the contact details of preachers off the plan. For more information about how GDPR relates to the Church and local church activities, see: tmcp.org.uk/About/Data-Protection

Your preaching commitment

Whatever the policy is for staff preaching around the circuit, as superintendent you should aim to preach in each church in your circuit at least once a year (see SO 522(1)).

Handy reminders when making the plan

Remember, it is good practice to allow time for ordained colleagues and probationers to attend worship on a regular basis. If this is difficult, why not plan to lead worship with a local preacher, so that they are not responsible for everything?

Make sure that probationers have the Sunday off after Christmas, and the Sunday before their probationers' retreat.

Local ecumenical partnerships (LEPs)

Be especially aware of issues of authority within LEPs. You only have authority in an LEP in terms of matters which are specifically Methodist.

Local Advisory Groups should have Methodist representation appointed by the circuit. Often such people are current or former circuit stewards. If you don't know who the current representatives are, then speak to your DEO.

It is good to ensure that:

- an appropriate LEP constitution exists, which is in line with the Charity Commission's requirements
- you have at least an annual conversation with Methodist members of the Local Advisory Group for each LEP.

If you have LEPs in your circuit which do not have Pastoral Committees, then you need to appoint a circuit Pastoral Committee (SO 553). Check the provisions and application of SO 644(11)(iii) in relation to Pastoral Committees for each LEP.

Extended communion

If you have people authorised to lead services of extended communion (SO 609(2)), make sure that your circuit staff know your policy of instructing those who are authorised.

Worshipping with the World Church

Worship resources from a global perspective are available at:

methodist.org.uk/Global-Relationships/Resources

News items from Global Relationships or Mission Partners' prayer updates can be found at: methodist.org.uk/Global-Relationships

Speakers and preachers for circuit or congregational events and worship, which may be drawn from members of the Global Relationships team or be Mission Partners, can be requested from Global Relationships.

Methodist Schools

The Methodist Church currently has 66 schools in the maintained sector. Almost all of these are primary schools and several go back to the early 1800s. They are spread all over the country, but about half of them are clustered in the North West. Historically, some may have been the work of a local church but now each school is a mission project of the whole circuit and part of the circuit's mission strategy. About two-thirds of our schools are shared with the Church of England (occasionally with other denominations) and represent opportunities for ecumenical working. Every district has a district schools officer (DSO), who can play an important role in promoting education locally.

The circuit holds the managing trusteeship of the school. As most of our schools are Voluntary Controlled, this means that the church owns the land to be used for Methodist Church purposes. As governors, the foundation governors keep a watch on the Methodist interest in the school. This is an important responsibility but does not often come to the fore. If schools become academies, some of this responsibility sits with the academy group and the superintendent may need to ratify things with the Department for Education; however, as schools go through the academy conversion process, issues to do with the ownership of the land can become prominent and, for a while, will require significant attention from the circuit.

Circuits working with Methodist schools

If the circuit has a school that is part of the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST), its main responsibilities are laid out in SO 500 and SO 342. These are formal requirements, but important opportunities come through everyday love for and involvement with the school. These may be delivered by key individuals, a particular congregation, people across the circuit or a combination of all.

The circuit does not have the same formal responsibilities for any Methodist independent schools in the area, but the invitation to love and work with the school is the same. All of our schools have a very significant reach and families are often heard to say: "For us, this is our church." Because of this, it is rewarding to think how you can use the link with the school creatively and intentionally. In addition, many circuits will also promote important opportunities to support and care for the community schools within their local area.

All Methodist schools in the state sector (maintained schools) are in MAST. Some schools have converted to academy status and belong to non-Methodist academy groups – but they are still in MAST. The Methodist academy trust is the Wesley Trust. Schools in the Wesley Trust still, also, belong to MAST. MAST staff are available to help with your work with schools, particularly for the key tasks listed on the following page.

Governance

The circuit superintendent is an ex-officio governor of a Methodist-maintained school. This duty is occasionally delegated to another committed Methodist of good standing, who has the ability to steer the leadership of this important circuit activity.

The Circuit Meeting needs formally to appoint the foundation governors of the school. For various reasons, the number of foundation governors for schools vary but are specified in the school's instrument of government. This works similarly where the school has become an academy. There are some limits on who can become a governor – you will find an eligibility form on the Methodist Schools website.

The circuit is responsible for getting the DBS clearances for its appointees and, if this is organised by the school, the superintendent should see them. The schools' visitor (think 'deputy DSO') is a possible candidate.

The circuit has to act in the difficult circumstances where a foundation governor has to be removed. This may depend on the school's instrument of government.

The Circuit Meeting should regularly receive feedback about the school from its appointed governors. This could be formal (eg a report) and/or less formal (eg people from the school do a 'show and tell' or lead the meeting's devotions).

Staffing

Traditionally, a school has been counted as a church in the allocation of circuit presbyteral staffing in order to provide chaplaincy for the school family. For example, it might count as 'half an appointment'.

It is unwise for the chaplain to be a governor in the school because it sometimes makes it difficult to fulfil either role.

In stationing, it is very important that the profile talks about the school. There is a space on the form which makes reference to this.

Organisation

The circuit safe should contain copies of key legal documents about the school, particularly the trust deed and land agreements.

If the school is voluntary aided, the circuit has some long-standing financial responsibilities and may need to offer more practical help. The District Advance Fund may be useful.

Where an area is expecting massive growth through new home building, a school can be a real opportunity for mission and pioneering. The Department for Education pays for building a new school, but the circuit would have associated costs in the development period. This is, again, a place to make common cause with the district.

Celebration

The superintendent is responsible for the effective advocacy for the school in the circuit and encouraging the circuit to celebrate the school's successes.

There is a role, which could be overseen at circuit level, for affirming the ministry of everyone who works in school, paid or unpaid, as an expression of their Christian vocation.

Find further information at: methodistschools.org.uk

The Year at a Glance: A Handy Checklist

During the year before you become superintendent:

- Book a place on the superintendents' induction
- Read background documents
- Undertake supervision training as appropriate
- Check what the Conference has decided and what has changed in *CPD* this year
- Arrange a handover meeting with your predecessor
- Get prearranged dates from your predecessor and circuit stewards
- Check the September Circuit Meeting is before 20 September.

On starting your new appointment (during September):

- Check the safeguarding files
- Book a visit to the homes of significant circuit officers, ideally within the first quarter
- Open the circuit safe (in the company of someone else) and check if there are any issues which need to be dealt with. Check that the list of contents corresponds with what is in the safe.

Important information to collect at or by your first staff meeting:

- Safeguarding Contracts: what exists, what needs reviewing?
- Safeguarding modules: who has undergone what training?
- Authorised persons to conduct marriages
- Auditors/independent examiners list
- LEP constitutions and delegation of powers
- On which premises is non-Methodist worship taking place? When does it take place? When is the annual date for renewal of permission?
- Book your 'tour' of the circuit with each staff member
- Consult the diary checklist on page 69.

Annual Calendar

September

- Sort out your diary for the year ahead.
- Write Letters of Authority to those who will deputise for you as chairs of meetings.
- Write notes for any persons who are 'on note', authorising them to accompany a local preacher this quarter.
- Confirm that someone has sorted out travel to Synod.
- Prepare the Circuit Meeting agenda (hold the first meeting before 20 September).
- At the CLT meeting, share any Conference decisions affecting circuits.
- Plan the Local Preachers' Meeting agenda, including the annual reading of the duties and rights of the local preacher.
- Meet with any candidates you may have to fulfill the requirements in SO 713(6)(a) and (b).

October

- Visit supernumeraries and widow(er)s with their *Minutes of Conference*.
- Staff meeting agenda should include:
 - a reminder about Statistics for Mission and Property Returns
 - reminders to staff entering stationing of the likely dates when they will need to ensure their manse is available for inspection by a possible successor.
- If the circuit is hoping to appoint a probationer minister in the following September, provisionally book with the circuit stewards the second (and, less likely, the third) weekends in January for the probationer's circuit visit. It is worth checking also they have the dates for the induction day for circuits receiving probationers in their diaries. This usually takes place in February.

November

- Staff meeting agenda should include:
 - a request for copies of annual reports from any local churches or other bodies in the circuit which are registered charities
 - a reminder about deadlines for Statistics for Mission (check towards the end of the month and chase up any outstanding entries).
- Review online Property Returns.
- Ask to see each church's financial Statement of Account.
- Prepare the December Local Preachers' Meeting agenda.
- Check circuit safe with circuit property/finance secretary or a circuit steward.

December

- Staff meeting agenda should include:
 - Anything of interest from Statistics for Mission that might inform discussion at a staff meeting (in particular, note any churches that have gone below the minimum size; see SO 605A and SO612)
 - Post-Christmas pastoral cover
 - Staff Christmas party
 - If you are expecting a probationer next September, remind the member of staff who is moving that their manse will need to be available for a visit in January.
- Write notes for any persons who are 'on note', authorising them to accompany a local preacher this quarter (SO 564A (4)).
- Submit district grant forms for personnel by 31 December.

January

- Send lay authorisation form to District Policy Committee.
- Ask the district chair for their availability for the September Circuit Meeting if you might be the subject of a re-invitation.
- Book the district chair for welcome services for new ministers/probationers.
- Prepare the spring Local Preachers' Meeting agenda.
- If you already have a probationer, seek feedback from appropriate people in order to write the probationer's report.

February

- Prepare and send out the March Circuit Meeting agenda (see page 70).
- If you have a probationer, write the probationer's report.

March-May

- If you are expecting a probationer, you will be invited to meet them at their learning institution. It is important that you, and possibly someone else from the circuit, attend.

March

- Write notes for any persons who are 'on note', authorising them to accompany a local preacher this quarter.
- Inform the Synod secretary of representatives to Synod elected by the Circuit Meeting.
- If your circuit is considering changing the number of ministers stationed in it in 18 months' time, then the District Policy Committee needs to be informed now, for Synod permission to be given (SO 438).
- Send the remuneration report to the district chair by 31 March.

April

- Arrange Synod travel.
- Remind ministers who are leaving about the requirements of the 'Charter for Incoming Ministers'.
- Prepare the May/June Local Preachers' Meeting agenda.
- This is a good time to have a chat with Methodist representatives on LEP Local Advisory Groups.

May

- Prepare and send the June Circuit Meeting agenda, if you are having one. Include a reminder about archives.
- Circuit leadership team agenda should include:
 - checking re-invitation procedure, and reminding about the inclusion of representatives from LEPs
 - checking leaving service/presentation arrangements
 - arranging welcome services
 - ensuring that the manse being vacated is being assessed for an Energy Performance Certificate, and that all arrangements are in hand for decorations/alterations
 - reminding circuit stewards to make sure that work they have agreed to be done will be done.
- If you require a probationer in 16 months' time, have a discussion with the district chair.

June

- Write notes for any persons who are 'on note', authorising them to accompany a local preacher this quarter.
- Write collaboratively the annual report for registered charities (Circuit Meeting, Church Councils).
- Ensure arrangements are in hand for the preparation of an appointment profile for any staff being sought in next year's stationing round.
- At the end of the month/early July, you will receive the transitional report for any probationer who is being stationed in your circuit this September.
- Check with District Probationers' Secretary if a mentor has been identified, and who it is.

July

- Prepare and send the September Circuit Meeting agenda before you go on holiday.
- If a minister is leaving the circuit, ensure you know that their supervision file has been appropriately transferred to the new Minister in Oversight.

August

- Visit new members of staff and their families when they move in (telephone beforehand to check they will be at home!).
- Ensure the Circuit Meeting agenda is sent out to arrive 14 days before the Circuit Meeting.
- Prepare the September Local Preachers' Meeting agenda. Include the reading of the Duties and Rights of the Local Preacher.

Appendices

i. Agenda reminders

September Circuit Meeting agenda should include:

- Present the annual report for the previous year.
- Decide on the number of representatives from each local church.
- Deal with any re-invitations. Report results to district chair/Warden of the Diaconal Order immediately after meeting.
- Communicate any stationing requirements to your district chair.
- Agree appointment profile for any ministerial or probationer appointments being sought for next year (submit the profile to the chair/Warden immediately after the meeting).
- Delegate authority to an Invitation Committee, should it be needed this autumn.
- Declare if you are considering becoming a Section 58 Circuit (ie a circuit with a modified constitution). Note that three months' notice is required (SO 581(2)).
- Annually appoint bank mandate signatories.
- Review circuit safeguarding policy.

September staff meetings

1. First and foremost, talk about the mission of God in the circuit and what is going well.

2. Other items

- Are there any candidates for ministry?
- Statistics for Mission and procedures for dealing with this.
- Items from Synod.
- Check listed buildings and conservation areas lists and note any additions.
- Ask about any property matters that need noting.
- Check whether any charity registration is required.
- Check whether any local church needs to deal with VAT requirements.
- Are ministers aware of insurance certificates for premises users and building schemes?
- Do any Schedule 14a permissions need renewing for non-Methodist worship on Methodist premises?
- Have the actions from church and manse Quinquennial Inspections been completed?
- Remind colleagues that every Church Council meeting agenda needs space to discuss whether the mission and ministry of the church reflects our Methodist commitment to being a fully inclusive Methodist Church (in line with *JDS*). See page 32 for help planning this agenda item for Church Council meetings.

3. Reminders to colleagues (these could be given in written form)

- The requirements for suspension from office due to insolvency or mental incapacity.
- Lay employment contracts and the Real Living Wage figure for this year.
- Copyright licences.
- Property returns should be completed during the light evenings.
- Pastoral referral to the local minister and the hospital chaplain if members go into hospitals not local to their church.
- The superintendent's duties regarding non-Methodist meetings (SO 920) and Masonic services and meetings (SO 928) on Methodist premises.
- Conference decisions affecting staff work and changes to *CPD*.

4. Diary checklist

- Decide on dates for your main meetings.
- Set Circuit Meeting dates. If you are in a single minister station, book your chair for a Circuit Meeting so that you can fix the date before asking the Circuit Meeting to approve it.
- Set Local Preachers' Meeting dates.
- Set staff meeting dates.
- Set CLT Meeting dates.
- Book your MDR with your district chair or their representative.
- Book supervision/ministerial development review time with staff members and supervisees.
- Book a time to visit staff and their families.
- Check colleagues' holiday dates, sabbatical dates and pastoral cover.
- Consider any arrangements for the staff Christmas party.
- Make arrangements for the summer (farewell) party.
- Note birthdays of any new staff members and their families (if it is something you wish to acknowledge).
- Book coffee with 'extra' ministers.
- Ensure plan-making deadlines for the year ahead are booked in your diary and communicated to preachers and local churches.
- In consultation with circuit staff, arrange to preach in each local church at least once during the year.
- If you have a probationer working alongside you, make sure they have been contacted by their supervisor and that dates are in the diary. Plan dates for quarterly shared worship.
- Set Worship Development Group dates for probationers.

March Circuit Meeting agenda should include:

- Memorials to the Conference, to be sent by 31 March.
- Election of Synod representatives.
- Auditor's report (if not available last September).
- Appointment of circuit Pastoral Committee (if required).
- Appointment of additional members to Church Councils (if required).
- Review of worship arrangements for former local churches which are now classes of other local churches.
- Noting appointment of worship leaders to more than one local church.
- Archives (or do this in the June meeting, if you are having one).

ii. Criteria and competencies for superintendents

The full list of ministerial competencies can be found at:

methodist.org.uk/Competencies

1. Vocation (call and commitment)

First and foremost, superintendents are presbyters, as stated in the 2005 Conference report 'What is a Circuit Superintendent?' It follows that superintendents must be those who, having been called to presbyteral ministry and having had that call affirmed by the Church, continue visibly to live out their calling and to be open about discerning a call to a position of seniority in the Church alongside a continuing pastoral ministry. Therefore, those identifying presbyters for stationing as superintendents look for:

1. Faithfulness in living out a call to presbyteral ministry.
2. An ability to articulate a call to leadership that is founded on a realistic appraisal of their own gifts, and is identified and supported by others.
3. A willingness to listen to the voice of others in their call to leadership.
4. The ability to witness joyfully to the experience of public representative ministry.

2. Vocation (ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain)

'What is a Circuit Superintendent?' describes superintendents as presbyters "who in exercising their ministry undertake particular responsibilities on behalf of the Conference". Those called to superintendency are called to a particular office that has its place in and affirms the forms of ministry practised in the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB), and which involves the exercise of oversight over the life of a circuit and the ministry of colleagues. Therefore, those identifying presbyters for stationing as superintendents look for:

1. A recognition of the needs of the Church and a willingness to respond appropriately to them in service.
2. A realistic understanding of the role of a circuit superintendent in the life of the Methodist Church.
3. An understanding of the nature of oversight as it is exercised and experienced in the MCB and the capacity to exercise such oversight.
4. An ability to articulate the missional contribution of a circuit.

3. Relationship with God

If superintendents are first and foremost presbyters, presbyters are first and foremost people of prayer, who will need a disciplined and robust spirituality to hold before God that for which the Church has made them responsible and to sustain them in the exercise of those responsibilities. Therefore, those identifying presbyters for stationing as superintendents look for:

1. An openness to the spirit through the means of grace.
2. A well-developed life of prayer that enables the individual to hold responsibility before God.
3. A devotional life that integrates the practices of prayer with the practices of ministry.
4. A commitment to seek in all things to bring glory to God.
5. A visible commitment to maintaining a life of prayer and to model that for others.

4. Personality and character

Those who have been superintendents know that the words of the Ordinal – “this ministry will make great demands on you and those close to you” – acquire greater meaning. The MCB asks its superintendents to bear significant responsibility for the life of several worshipping communities and for the MCB’s witness in a given area. Superintendents need to be able to deal with stressful situations, to work long hours sometimes, to be public representatives of the circuit, to address complex issues of discipline, to manage conflict, and to continue to exercise the role of a presbyter – in most cases continuing to hold pastoral responsibility for a church or churches. Therefore, those identifying presbyters for stationing as superintendents look for:

1. A realistic understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.
2. A willingness to seek help in times of need.
3. Appropriate patterns of self-care that model good practice for others.
4. A desire to improve their practice and discipleship.
5. Appropriate self-reliance and self-motivation, and the ability to effectively draw on resources from others and from the Church.
6. The ability to inspire the trust and confidence of others.

5. Being in relationship with others

The ability to work with others is central to superintendency. Superintendents need to enjoy good relationships with their ordained colleagues, the circuit stewards and other lay leaders in the circuit, the members of their churches, and their peers in the district, among others. Stories of the mission of a circuit being hampered or even disabled by inappropriate interpersonal dynamics have been frighteningly common in the MCB, but productive relationships can no more be expected to develop automatically in the Church than in other human communities, as the evidence of the Pauline letters attests. While superintendents cannot bear all the responsibility for forming and maintaining productive relationships in the Church, they play a leading role in enabling colleagues and others to work together and in ensuring that the circuit models estimable Christian fellowship. Therefore, those identifying presbyters for stationing as superintendents look for:

1. Highly developed self-awareness and the ability to be aware of one's impact on others.
2. A good understanding of differences and the ability to build inclusive communities.
3. The ability to work with conflict to enable transformation and, ideally, reconciliation.
4. Highly developed pastoral skills.
5. The ability to deploy a range of strategies in difficult interpersonal relationships.
6. Proven ability to receive and the potential to offer effective supervision.
7. An informed awareness of their own power and vulnerabilities.
8. The ability to use authority appropriately.
9. The ability to demonstrate and counsel others on the appropriate use of boundaries.

6. The Church's ministry in God's world

"The Circuit is the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for the purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help" (SO 500). Beyond the call to engage in mission, which is for all Christians, the particular vocation of a superintendent is to enable the effective participation of a Methodist circuit in the *missio Dei*. Therefore, those identifying presbyters for stationing as superintendents look for:

1. The capacity to offer prophetic leadership in mission.
2. The ability to hear and to articulate the call of God to mission.
3. An ability to interpret the culture of their locality and to identify the requirements of the work of God in response.
4. The ability to see how the Church's personnel and resources in an area might be effectively deployed.
5. A secure Methodist identity and the ability to inspire others in that.
6. A well-developed knowledge and understanding of the governance structures of the local Methodist circuit.
7. Clear understanding of Methodist policy and how it is effectively administered.
8. The awareness of the role as a representative leader in Methodism and in an ecumenical context.
9. Clear understanding of the duties of Methodist Trustees.
10. The ability to advocate safeguarding procedures.

7. Leadership and collaboration

Superintendency is a leadership role in the life of the Church. Just as all oversight in the MCB has a shared nature, however much it seems to be invested in an individual, leadership in the MCB always involves ways of working collaboratively and collegially. Therefore, those identifying presbyters for stationing as superintendents look for:

1. The understanding of the circuit as a unit for mission and the ability to make that effective.
2. Developed administrative skills.
3. Developed skill in chairing public meetings.
4. Clear understanding of the power inherent in superintendency in a circuit.

5. Developed skills of change management.
6. An understanding of a range of leadership styles and the ability to deploy them.
7. The ability to stimulate theological reflection.
8. The ability to recognise and encourage the gifts in others and to learn from their failures and successes.
9. A capacity for visionary leadership.
10. A developed understanding of risk and the ability to act independently and take responsibility for own actions.
11. The ability to encourage the voices of all involved in the life of the circuit.
12. The ability and willingness to challenge inappropriate behaviour.
13. The ability to use supervision effectively as a tool for oversight.
14. The ability to manage employees, where necessary.
15. The ability to delegate and to trust in the competence of others.
16. The ability to build, lead and work with teams.
17. The ability to delegate appropriately.

8. Learning and understanding

All presbyters continue to be students of theology throughout their ministry. The role of the superintendent in modelling this aspect of ministry and in fostering learning communities within the life of a circuit is crucial in enabling theologically informed worship, fellowship and mission. Therefore, those identifying presbyters for stationing as superintendents look for:

1. Demonstrable skills of and the ability to lead others in theological reflection.
2. The ability to model and encourage practices of study.
3. The ability to recognise the learning needs of a community of Christians and to draw effectively on the resources of the church and wider community.
4. The proven capacity to address their own learning needs by, for example, attending appropriate conferences and training.
5. The ability and willingness to create space for learning and theological reflection.

9. Communication

The communication of the good news of Christ is central to the ministry of all presbyters and circuits. Superintendents will find themselves exercising this ministry as spokespeople for a circuit. They have the responsibility of ensuring that good communication systems are in place to enable the taking forward of God's mission within and on behalf of the circuit. Therefore, those identifying presbyters for stationing as superintendents look for:

1. Advanced communication skills, including the ability to deal with broadcast media.
2. The ability to speak with informed authority on behalf of a circuit.
3. The ability to exercise effective oversight over a circuit's communications systems and publications.
4. The ability to enable good communication within a circuit and between its various bodies.

5. The ability to enable good communication on behalf of a circuit.
6. The ability to clearly articulate theological truths and the priorities of the Church.
7. The capacity to communicate effectively with, and to enable effective communication between, different offices and officers in the Church.

iii. Example of a Church Council agenda shaped around Our Calling

Here is an example of an agenda based on 'Responding to the gospel of God's love in Christ'. The church this was drawn up for is made up of 100 regular worshippers.

The individual items can be changed and reordered. Move items regularly to fit under the four headings – this will enable the meeting to view and deal with the business through the lens of Worship, Evangelism, Service and Learning and Caring. You may want to consider the four headings first and then take items such as finance and property under a separate resourcing section. Items such as Safeguarding and *Justice, Dignity and Solidarity* flow through each part of our work and so you may want to rotate where you take them in the agenda.

Like all agendas be aware of timing. Although this agenda looks full – it gives a guide to the council how much is needs to be covered in the time available. Some things will be for discussion and other things for information. This meeting lasted two hours.

Of course, it is possible to do a similar thing for Circuit Meetings.

1. Opening Devotions
2. Membership of meeting and apologies for absence
3. Minutes of last Church Council (distributed)
4. Matters arising not covered by agenda
5. Declaration of AOB for end of meeting
6. Correspondence

Our calling to EVANGELISM: The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ

7. Circuit vision strategy document
8. Our mission statement
9. Junior Church report
10. Our new coffee shop
11. Update to website
12. Using the Methodist Way of Life

Our Calling to SERVICE: The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice

13. Finance – including our giving to charities (policy)
14. Outside users
15. Property and resources group
16. Safeguarding: Acceptance of policy and module A
17. Newsletter
18. Pastoral list
19. Recent Joint Public Issues Team reports/blogs

Our Calling to WORSHIP: The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love

20. Review of worship, including:
 - Christmas and Boxing Day
 - Covenant service
 - Future special services
 - Appointing worship leaders
 - Use of new alternative liturgies
 - Music and musicians

Our Calling to LEARNING AND CARING: The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care

21. *Justice, Dignity and Solidarity*
22. Engaging in growth: the way forward: social events, Bible study?
23. Vocations Day
24. Pastoral list
25. Christmas meal for the homeless
26. Visioning day – set date
27. Any other business
28. Data protection and confidentiality
29. Date of the Church Council
30. Devotions to be led by...
31. Closing prayers.

iv. Listening for God - Local Preachers' Meeting outline

The community of preachers

In today's Church, local preachers and worship leaders need each other's fellowship and encouragement so we can rediscover our calling in a changing world.

The start of a new year brings an opportunity to press 'reset' on the fellowship of local preachers (and worship leaders) and to start afresh. There is surprisingly little that must be done in the Local Preachers' Meeting (known as Worship Leaders' and Preachers' Meeting in some circuits) other than worship, fellowship, theological reflection and the oversight of training. There is a lot that can be done to rebuild faith and confidence.

'Meeting Well', a guidance note which can be found at: methodist.org.uk/CLPD, provides further ideas for how to transform the meeting from just another business meeting into a learning community that people want to be part of. In order to find out how you can encourage non-attenders to come back you may wish to conduct a survey of your local preachers (in person or by phone if possible).

Suggested survey questions are also available at: methodist.org.uk/CLPD together with other ideas and resources for you to use. A warning though, if you ask what people want you need to be prepared to do what they ask for!

Pre-meeting planning

Send a specific invitation to all who are entitled/obliged to be there, remembering that all local preachers are obliged to attend (SO563). Include worship leaders if that is your practice. Do invite those who don't normally attend, and don't assume everyone knows about the meeting from reading the previous minutes. Perhaps use or adapt the following wording:

Our next Local Preachers' Meeting will be on <date> at <time> at <venue>. All local preachers are obliged to be present at our quarterly meetings, which provide an opportunity to worship, share and encourage each other in our shared mission in the circuit. For our first meeting of 2024, we are using some ideas from the Ministries team – our theme is 'Listening for God'. Please join in as we start the new year listening together for what God is doing in our lives and our circuit, and how we can play our part.

Preparation checklist

- Have invitations been sent out in good time to all, including those not normally present?
- Have you asked someone to take part in the 'Reviewing our Ministry' item? It's important to ask in advance - asking for volunteers on the spot doesn't often work.
- Is the venue accessible to all? Are practical arrangements made: access, heating, sound reinforcement, provision for playing music?
- Does the room have flexible seating to allow work in groups?
- Are refreshments organised? Hospitality is important: fresh coffee and tea is appreciated, and a box of cakes, doughnuts or pastries generally goes down well.
- Do you have the resources you need for the meeting: Any handouts? A flipchart for collecting ideas? Minutes from last meeting? Publicity flyers or resources?
- If there are those who need help with transport, has this been offered?

Meeting outline

0:00	<p>GATHERING 5 mins</p>
	<p>Greet and welcome people as they arrive, preferably in an informal space.</p> <p>Offer refreshments, encourage conversation. Don't assume everyone knows each other, especially in a larger circuit.</p> <p>Encourage people to ask each other questions like these (stick them on the wall so that people can see them easily):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did you last preach and how did it feel? • What's the thing you most appreciate about worship together? • What's your favourite worship song at the moment?
0:05	<p>LISTENING AND WORSHIPPING 45 mins</p>
	<p>Introductions</p> <p><i>Once seated, welcome everyone.</i></p> <p><i>Explain that the meeting will follow an outline suggested by the Ministries Team, to encourage people to think afresh about our meetings at the start of a new year.</i></p> <p>Prayer</p> <p>A suitable prayer for new year, or today's prayer from the <i>Methodist Prayer Handbook</i>. You could use appropriate extracts from the Covenant Service (MWB p.281).</p>
	<p>Perceiving God</p> <p>One of our functions as a meeting is to consider the work of God in our circuit. In these challenging times, it's even more important to consider this.</p> <p>We're going to start by considering this question:</p> <p><i>Where have you been aware of God or seen evidence of God at work in this last year?</i></p> <p>Let's hear the voice of God in each other...</p> <p><i>Allow two minutes of personal reflection.</i></p>
	<p>Now turn to someone next to you and share your response to the question.</p> <p>Feel free to share as much or as little as you like, but don't feel under pressure to share anything you don't want to. Everything said is confidential and stays in this room.</p> <p><i>Do ensure everyone has opportunity to share something.</i></p> <p><i>Allow five minutes for conversation, then, if appropriate, provide opportunity for a few people to express their specific observations to the group, recording key thoughts on a flipchart or otherwise.</i></p>

	<p>Song (recorded)</p> <p>Play the following song or alternative music to suit, while inviting people to reflect on what they have heard.</p> <p>Leslie Odom Jr – Speak Now youtube.com/watch?v=ZvnPEMW1jj8</p>
	<p>Prayer</p> <p>In same pairs as previously, consider this question:</p> <p><i>What are you hoping for in this next year in the life of our circuit?</i></p> <p><i>Allow five minutes for each pair to agree on a shared hope for the future.</i></p> <p><i>Then pray together, allowing each pair to voice their prayer, with this response between each item:</i></p> <p>God of past, present and future, be at the centre of our hopes and dreams.</p> <p>Conclude with Psalm 62: 5-6 (NRSV shown):</p> <p>For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.</p>
0:50	<p>LEARNING AND REFLECTING (30 mins)</p>
	<p>Reviewing our Ministry</p> <p>Every local preacher is required to review their ministry, including sharing with the Local Preachers' Meeting at least once every three years from their continuing learning and reflection.</p> <p><i>Ask the person who previously agreed to participate for their contribution, prompted by these three questions (taken from the guidance note 'Reviewing our Ministry') :</i></p> <p>1. What has inspired you in your continuing development, worship and preaching over the previous period?</p> <p><i>This is an opportunity for the person to reflect on a particular piece of learning on theology, worship and preaching.</i></p> <p><i>If time permits, develop this into a conversation in the meeting, either in groups or all together.</i></p> <p>2. What insights have you gained from your experience of peer review?</p> <p><i>There is no requirement for the person to share details of their peer review conversations, but an opportunity for them to share general reflections on the joys and challenges of preaching.</i></p> <p>3. What is your particular focus for continuing development over the next period?</p> <p><i>This provides an opportunity to share some specific goals for continuing development, skills the person wants to develop or topics they wish to explore.</i></p>

1:20	OTHER ESSENTIAL ITEMS (15 mins)
	<p>Some time to cover other essential items, unless you have training interviews to conduct, in which case reschedule other items accordingly. Items for this section can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral news • Quarterly service reports for those on note/on trial (we recommend holding the detailed conversation outside the meeting) • Local preacher training, including any interviews, and reports from tutors (we recommend that detailed arrangements for assessed services, trial services etc. are made outside the meeting) • Worship leader training and progress reports • Date and topic of next meeting • Enlist a volunteer for Reviewing my Ministry next time • <i>Justice, Dignity and Solidarity</i> (How can we ensure our services foster a culture of care and connectedness, with justice and respect for all across all areas of difference – create space to share stories, good practice and further training needs?)
1:35	CLOSING WORSHIP (15 mins)
	<p>Listen</p> <p>Play or sing together the song Hear the call of the kingdom by Keith and Krystin Getty (<i>Singing the Faith</i> 407), or appropriate alternative.</p> <p>A version with lyrics can be found at: youtu.be/gDfuGb89x_8</p> <p>Read</p> <p>Then read this passage thoughtfully (display on screen also if possible):</p> <p>“Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”</p> <p>(Matthew 28:18-20, NRSV)</p> <p>Spend two minutes reflecting quietly on each of the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would Jesus’ words have sounded to his hearers? • How did the early Church respond to these words? • What is my response to these words now? <p>Pray</p> <p>Invite people to contribute short sentences beginning with: Help us God to...</p> <p>Response: Thank you God that you are with us to the end of the age.</p> <p>Conclude by sharing the Lord’s Prayer (making it clear which version will be used, or that people can use their preferred one).</p>
1:50	MEETING CLOSES

v. A Methodist Way of Life, for leaders

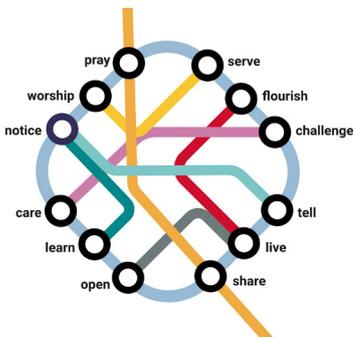


1. Get on the train

God longs to take you on the journey of a lifetime.

Being a disciple starts with saying yes to Jesus. This can be scary, as you don't know where the journey will take you. But it is so worthwhile.

And if you have said yes, you need to continue to say yes every day, committing to staying on the train even when things get hard.

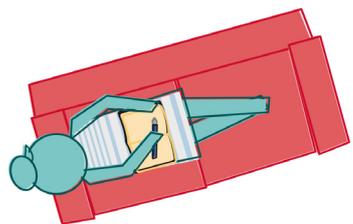


2. Visit every station

As Methodists, we highlight 12 particular stations on the discipleship journey.

God calls each of us to get involved in all 12, as each helps us to respond to God's love in a different way.

Some might feel familiar and safe, or like a passion – let's call it your home station. This could be linked to a vocation but could also be something completely different. We might avoid some stations because they're scary or difficult – experiencing God here feels hard. Others are unfamiliar, but it feels like the season to visit them. Let's call these exciting, or terrifying, stations growth stations.



3. Reflect on the Journey

When we live A Methodist Way of Life, we can expect to have amazing experiences as we encounter God in any and all of the 12 practices.

A crucial second step is to reflect on these experiences; to make memories, to see how they fit with the rest of Christian tradition, and to think about what might happen next.

Reflection is a space where sanctification can happen.



4. Be a travelling companion

We are all on the journey together. What does this look like for you?

Think about how you intentionally support people as they grow in faith.

You might play a role in guiding people to stations that will open up new possibilities for them.

Just as you meet God in other people, maybe someone will meet God in you.



5. Build new infrastructure

What construction work is needed so that all 12 stations can be open for travellers?

We might also need to pause construction on a station. Maybe we've been rebuilding one over and over again, limiting our capacity to consider the other stations.

And maybe some things need demolishing so that there's enough energy for what is really needed, moving forwards.



6. Make easy entry points

The travellers we already have are not our sole focus. We want our churches and activities to be open to all.

People who aren't part of a church community will probably still be passionate about some of the stations of a Methodist Way of Life. You never know what might be someone's way into the network.

vi. Twelve practices of A Methodist Way of Life with reflection questions



pray

We pray daily.

God loves spending time with you.

Don't overcomplicate it. God's there, and is a perfect listener.



How do you pray?

Has prayer been easy or hard?



worship

We worship with others regularly.

God wants to refresh you.

Worshipping with others helps to knit us into a faith community.



When have you felt close to God in worship recently?

What sort of worship refreshes you?



notice

We notice God in Scripture, and the world.

God is near, and findable. But not completely.



Where have you noticed God recently?

Which part of the Bible is important to you at the moment?



care

We care for ourselves and those around us.

It's all about love. Love for other people and yourself is what matters most.



How are you caring for yourself?

Who are you caring for at the moment?



learn

We learn more about our faith.

You can become like Jesus.

You are not stuck where you are.



What has helped you learn and grow recently?

What would you like to learn about faith?



open

We practise hospitality and generosity.

God gives a warm welcome.

We meet God in relationship with people.



How have you shown hospitality and generosity recently?

How have you received them?



We will help people in our communities and beyond.

It's a win-win situation.
Helping is good for the soul.

- ? Who have you helped recently?
 - ? Who has helped you recently?
-



We care for creation and all God's gifts.

The earth is a gift from God.
We are part of the earth too, lovingly woven from the same fabric.

- ? How are you caring for creation?
 - ? What is your biggest challenge in responding to the climate emergency?
-



We challenge injustice.

God is a liberator.
God always takes the side of people experiencing poverty and injustice.

- ? What issues of injustice are you concerned about?
 - ? What are you doing in response?
-



We tell of the love of God.

Your story matters.
It's natural to want to pass on good news.

- ? When was the last time you told a story about God?
 - ? Who do you discuss faith with?
-



We live in a way that draws people to Jesus.

You be you.
You are made in God's image, so let that shine out.

- ? How have you become more authentically you recently?
 - ? Which is you: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control?
-



We share our faith.

You get to partner with God.
God involves us in the task of bringing love and restoration.

- ? How have you shared your faith recently?
- ? What opportunities to share faith are coming up?

vii. Contacting the Connexional Team

**Remember,
the
Connexional
Team is
available
to help you**

A full list of contacts can be found at: methodist.org.uk/ConnexionalTeam

Methodist Connexional Team

Tel: 020 7486 5502

enquiries@methodistchurch.org.uk

Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ

Tel: 0161 235 6770

tmcp@tmcp.org.uk

tmcp.org.uk

**Some
individuals
you may need
to contact**

The Secretary of the Conference: **the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler**

soc@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5140

Connexional Secretary: **Doug Godfrey-Swanney**

godfrey-swanneyd@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5185

Assistant Secretary of the Conference: **the Revd Michaela Youngson**

asc@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 3520

Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice: **Joanne Anderton**

lcp@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5111

Head of Ministries and Learning: **Richard Armiger**

armigerr@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5295

Head of Mission: **Jude Levermore**

levermorej@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5174

Useful contacts

Safeguarding

safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5189

Human Resources

hr@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5198

Local preachers and worship leaders

localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 3774

Evangelism and Growth team

evangelism@methodistchurch.org.uk

Media Office

mediaoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk

Out of hours support: 07799 902580

Property

property@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5271

Conservation

conservations@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 0161 235 6739

Web Support Officer

(Statistics for Mission, Annual returns, Consents, Ministers' Personnel File)

ministersonline@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5199

Methodist Heritage Officer

heritage@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 5181

Joint Public Issues Team

enquiries@jpit.uk

Global Relationships

gr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk

Tel: 020 7467 3795 or 020 7467 5113

Feedback, corrections, amendments or suggestions for this handbook are welcome to

mvw@methodistchurch.org.uk

viii. Things I wish someone had told me

**You will feel
guilty that you
can't do everything
- don't!**

**Don't forget to
celebrate the call to
superintendency**

**Eat with your team,
pray with your team**

**Discover
the freedoms
you have**

**It's good to
be the Super!**

**The Supers'
Conference is a
must-go-to**

ix. Top tips for well-being

We asked a group of ministers who had recently become superintendents to share their top tips for well-being.

Here are their suggestions.

- Make time for the things that feed or energise you as a minister.
- Programme in your holidays at the start of the year (or earlier), before your diary becomes filled.
- Know you are where God called you to be.
- Hold regular staff meetings (in nice cafés?).
- Laugh with family and friends.
- Spend more time in prayer.
- Lead by example.
- Factor in recovery time in your diary.
- Once every month, do something spontaneous and unplanned. Don't feel guilty!
- Remember to keep praying.
- Engage in an activity that is not church- or circuit-oriented (eg singing, or playing a sport).
- Be self-aware, and recognise when it is time to stop.
- Take regular, pre-planned holidays.
- Have a creative hobby.
- Take your dogs for a walk.
- Eat and drink with friends and family – and have a lie-in afterwards!
- Be able to say 'no' and mean it!
- Stay in touch:
 - build relationships
 - show interest
 - support in difficulties
 - celebrate.
- Work out who you can trust – then trust yourself to trust them wisely.
- Stick a note on the office whiteboard saying what you are going to do on your next day off.
- Have regular 'catch-up' days with no meetings scheduled.
- 'Breathe' between one task and the next.

For more information, see Mental Health and Well-being for ministers at:

methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministry/mental-health-and-wellbeing-for-ministers-2020

For other ideas, see the Wheel of Well-being website at: wheelofwellbeing.org

Share ideas and hear how others are in ministry at:

sheldonhub.org

Download your own copies of the Our Calling poster at:
methodist.org.uk/OurCalling

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

Our Calling

Feedback, corrections, amendments or suggestions for this guide are welcome to
mvw@methodistchurch.org.uk

If you would like to request this resource in an alternative format,
please contact us to discuss your needs at publishing@methodistchurch.org.uk

The **Methodist** Church 

methodist.org.uk