



The Methodist Church

West Midlands District

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The new West Midlands Methodist District is being formed from the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury and Birmingham Districts on 1st September 2025.

The West Midlands District will be :

- 320 churches grouped in 20 circuits across Birmingham, Wolverhampton and the Black Country, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire,
- diverse in race and ethnicity, social and economic status, sexual orientation and gender identity, age and background, theological and political belief and yet called to explore and live the way of Jesus together
- serving communities in rural, inner city, market town, suburb, city centre settings from the Welsh Marches to Tamworth, Stafford to Evesham including the cathedral cities of Hereford, Worcester, Lichfield and Coventry and the whole of the West Midlands conurbation



while the two current districts share a common vision to

- **Enable** local churches to flourish
- **Connect** people
- **Evolve** with the changing picture of Methodism
- **Initiate** new work
- **Challenge** the status quo

There is much work to be done to bring this vision to reality and there are differences in style and approach that need to be faced and new joint ways of working discovered.

The Joint District Task Group has identified values and priorities for the new district and these have been endorsed by the Synods

Our Kingdom Values:

- **Team-Working** – we are created in the image of God who is community itself, three in one
- **Justice, Dignity and Solidarity** – all are created equal before God
- **Shared Lay and Ordained Leadership** – we believe in the priesthood of all believers
- **“Can-do” Attitude** – we can do all things in the power of the Holy Spirit
- **Thanksgiving** – we are sacramental people who live eucharistically in everything we do

Priorities:

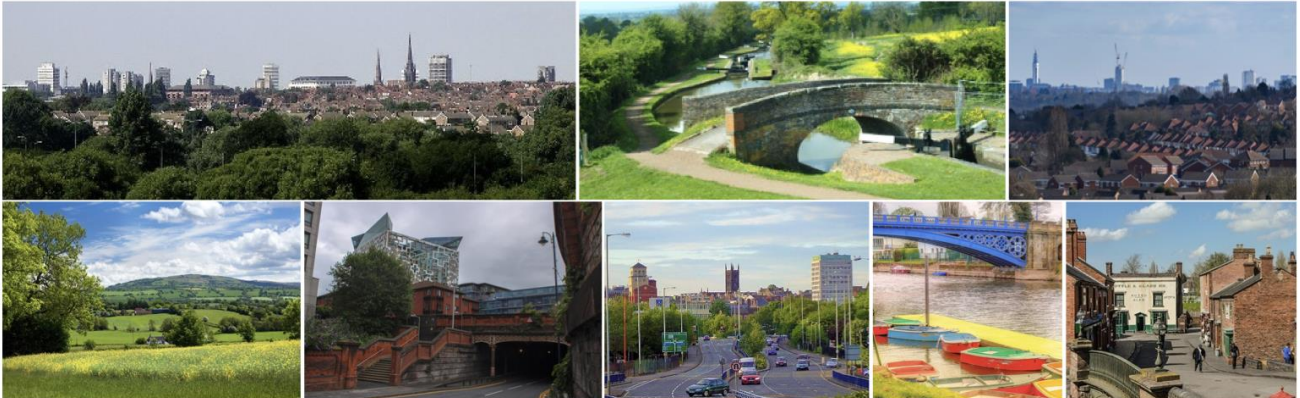
- Supporting the management of transitions in churches and circuits (due to growth or decline)
- Intergenerational and Youth
- New Places for New People
- Rural
- Circuit Governance Support
- Crisis Mission and Ministry Support (conflict, HR, reconciliation)

This will be alongside the core work of the District:

- Pastoral support and supervision for ministers
- Vocations including support for candidates and probationers
- Stationing
- Worship training and support
- Complaints and discipline
- Facilitating synods

and other more generic areas of work which would support the priorities and the district as a whole:

- Lay worker support and pastoral supervision
- Safeguarding
- Administration
- Communications
- Finance
- Office holder support
- Training / Gathered Events



The new West Midlands District will continue to be

- Committed to planting and nurturing Pioneer congregations (eg Street Banquet and work with Inclusive Gatherings)
- Linked with partners in worldwide Methodism especially in Rwanda, the Kadoma District of the Methodist Church of Zimbabwe and Germany
- Responsible for the oversight of Birmingham International Student Homes (BISH)
- A partner in the Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy:
- Offering a grants programme that will support mission and social justice projects such as Ablewell Advice Centre and Stratton St Methodist Church Community Centre
- Home to the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education
- Nurturing of World Church congregations / fellowships (Ghanaian, Zimbabwean and Chinese)
- Home to four Methodist primary schools
- Working to become a Fairtrade and an Eco District (Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury already is)
- Supportive to individuals eg conference reps or circuit stewards
- Supportive of circuit mission planning
- Supportive of chaplaincies in hospitals, health care, prisons and universities

Birmingham District received funding from the first tranche of the 'God for All' funding with a particular focus on the 'Church at the Margins' strand, while Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury were in the third phase with a particular focus on inclusion. Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury piloted the connexional project for District Property Advisors and retain that support to the circuits. Together the two districts piloted the Community Faith Organising work that God for All 'Two' plans to roll out across the connexion.

A Chair for the new District

For the first year of the new district, 2025-26, the new Chair will work in partnership with Revd Novette Headley who is currently serving as chair of the Birmingham District. Conference appointed Novette as joint chair of the new district for one year before she is eligible to ask for an invitation to 'sit down' at the end of the 2025-6 connexional year. Revd Rachel Parkinson current chair of Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District is moving on from 1st September 2025.

Senior Leaders Team

The two district leadership teams have worked in quite different ways and there will be a time of transition as shared approaches are developed.

The Senior Leaders group will include alongside the Chair(s) a Deputy Chair (s), a District Secretary and a lay Synod Secretary

District Staff will include

District Secretary, a senior, lay management role equivalent to the 'connexional' secretary, whose key responsibilities will include managing and leading the district support staff team as well as participating in the strategic and mission planning for the District.

2 District Administrators who also act PAs to the Chair and District Secretary

Mission Advisor/NPNP lead

Ministry and Mission Co-ordinator

Youth Engagement Officer

Property Advisor

Rural Officer

Pastor Inclusive Gathering Birmingham

Pioneer Minister Street Banquet

Borderlands Chaplaincy

Finance Officer

The Safeguarding Officer and Assistant Safeguarding Officer already work as a team with a single Safeguarding Committee across the West Midlands area.

The existing Mission and Ministry staff from both districts have a good partnership and shared patterns of working in a team with the Learning Network Aligned Officers.

Conversations are continuing with the circuits about what other support might be offered from the district to help them handle governance concerns around property, finance and HR and ministerial staff vacancies. Opportunities for community faith organising initiatives also continue to be explored as the districts were part of the pilot for community faith-organising although the initial post-holder has moved to a new role with Citizens UK.

This may lead to one or two additional district staff posts being established ahead of the new district.

Manse and office

A manse will be identified in the autumn of 2024. We will be looking around Bromsgrove and the incoming chair will be consulted before a house is purchased.

The Joint District Task Group is looking for a district office that will be easily accessible from the district manse by public transport with space for meetings and car parking.

Both will be close to train or tram and other public transport links and with good access to the motorway network.