

“Missional, Sustainable, Transformational.”

Dear Friends,

Now that we are well into the start of a new Connexional year I wanted to let you know that it is my intention to write a monthly Circuit Pastoral Letter for distribution to all the Churches, rather than the weekly versions that have been done for the last 18 months. Given that all of our church buildings are now back open and in use and more activities are beginning to take place in person, this is a more realistic use of time.

There are several issues I would like to bring to your attention this month.

Circuit Growth Plan

The three words quoted above are taken from our Circuit Planning for Growth document. This is a working document that the Circuit Leadership Team and Circuit Meeting are using to help guide our thinking and planning about Mission and Ministry over the coming months and years. It is a document that I want to commend to all our churches and church councils for consideration, prayer, discussion and action. The three words “Missional, Sustainable, Transformational” are watch-words for us in assessing the decisions that we make about use of resources for the mission of God in our communities. But what do we mean by them?

By “missional” we mean always holding in our minds the need to think first about how we share the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with those outside our church communities. If we have love for God, then that will be expressed through love for our neighbour. What will that look like and what resources will it require? What do we need to learn to become more confident in sharing our faith with others?

By “sustainable” we mean developing ways to: sustain our churches as vibrant communities of Christian faith and love; make whatever buildings we require for our mission as environmentally and financially sustainable as possible; working to ensure that our lifestyles, our local communities and our wider world are as environmentally sustainable as possible; looking seriously at the structures we need at circuit and local church level to work as effectively and efficiently as possible. For example, in light of the Conference paper on Oversight and Trusteeship, what is the minimum number of trustees bodies we need in the Circuit to fulfil our calling and implement our Mission Statement? We also include working to ensure that our models for ministry and oversight and our staff team workloads are sustainable and enable our staff team to enjoy and thrive in their roles.

By “transformational” we mean the intention to be people and churches who allow Jesus to work in and through us in ways that enable God’s mission to “make all things new.” We recognise that God is constantly at work in our lives and in our world and we seek to embrace the dynamics of change and transformation in the pursuit of spiritual growth and formation.

We feel that through further consideration these three themes can form the basis of a renewed Circuit Mission Statement and we would encourage our churches to carefully consider them as part of their own mission to their communities.

Ministerial Re-invitations and Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Over recent months the Circuit Stewards and Circuit Invitation Committee have been working hard on the re-invitation processes for three of our Circuit Ministers. I am delighted to report that each of the re-invitations have been agreed as follows:

Rev Tim Perkins – a two-year extension until Aug 2024

Rev Dr Roberta Topham – a two-year extension until Aug 2024

Rev Roger Smith – a three-year extension until Aug 2025

Grateful thanks are expressed to all those who have been involved in the consultations and especially to the Circuit Stewards for the time, care, and attention they have given to this vital aspect of work on behalf of the whole circuit. I am delighted that we are able to keep our current team of Ministers together at a time when there is so much as that continues to be unpredictable.

For this current year we shall be working with a lower level of Ministerial staffing than during the previous two years. To help our churches and circuit thrive it is important both that we have clarity on Ministerial roles and expectations of our Ministers, and that each and every one of us considers what role we have to play in the life and mission of our church and circuit. I can address the first part of that now but only you can address the second part so I urge you as we continue to review the life of our churches as we emerge from Covid to consider what gifts and graces God has equipped you with and how you could use them to further the mission of God in this place.

As to Pastoral Charge, the following arrangements are in place for this year:

Rev Tim Perkins: Burley, Menston, Otley, Superintendent.

Rev Shannon Delaureal: Addingham, Ben Rhydding, Hawksworth, Norwood Management Team.

Rev Roger Smith: Bramhope, Guiseley, Pool, Yeadon.

Rev Dr Roberta Topham: Christchurch, Ilkley

As an Authorised Minister, Rev Helem Lambert will continue in her role in Pastoral Charge of Trinity, Rawdon.

Alongside pastoral charge roles there are other resources and ways of working that will be in place as follows:

Deacon Liz Day will continue to work alongside Rev Tim at Burley and Rev Shannon at Addingham and Ben Rhydding. In order to develop a clearer focus and level of understanding, Deacon Liz will be the lead Minister for Pastoral concerns at Burley and at Ben Rhydding and Rev Shannon will be the lead Minister for Pastoral concerns at Addingham.

Rev Roberta Topham will be offering preaching appointments to the wider circuit in a more focussed way so that at least some of them are used to lead worship and develop provision for worship alongside Rev Tim at Menston.

As with the previous year we are developing a small team of preachers to work alongside Rev Tim at Otley and this will include Rev Alistair Newton as he continues to offer support to that congregation.

We are delighted that Sam Price has agreed to extend her role as Activities Coordinator at Guiseley to Yeadon too, for the coming year, to work alongside Rev Roger Smith, as well as continuing in her role as our Circuit CAP Debt Centre Manager. We are also currently advertising for a similar activities coordinator role at Pool.

It is going to be an even more demanding year for the Ministerial Team than the last one has proved to be so please remember those words of St Paul and consider how you can help out.

New Ministerial Profile for Sept 2022

The Circuit Stewards have now submitted a profile for a new Minister for Sept next year. The role will be for Pastoral Charge of Otley and Pool and a new role as Circuit Mission Enabler (with an initial focus on establishing a digital church plant.) We have high hopes that it will be classified as a critical appointment making it more likely to be filled.

Worship at Home Resources

For those folk who are unable to attend in person worship at Church, there are three sources of worship resources that can be accessed via the Circuit website. Service sheets based on services held at Christchurch, Ilkley can be downloaded by using this link: [Wharfedale & Aireborough Sunday Reflections Archive \(wandamethodists.org.uk\)](http://Wharfedale & Aireborough Sunday Reflections Archive (wandamethodists.org.uk))

Service Sheets titled "The Vine" and produced by a Methodist organisation called "TwelveBaskets" can be accessed here: [Wharfedale & Aireborough - Publications \(wandamethodists.org.uk\)](http://Wharfedale & Aireborough - Publications (wandamethodists.org.uk))

Recordings of services from Burley in Wharfedale can be found on their Youtube Channel here: Burley Methodist Church Online - YouTube

If you are unable to access online material and would like printed versions of service sheets, then please contact your local Church Pastoral Secretary or your local Minister. We hope that these resources will enable everyone to participate in worship which they find engaging and which helps to connect them with God.

Circuit Property Officer

Our Circuit Property Officer Bev Downes has resigned from her post. We are grateful for all the work she has done for the Circuit over the last 4 years. The Circuit Leadership Team are reviewing plans for a new Lay Support Staffing Model in light of Bev's decision and will be working hard to identify the exact nature of lay roles that will best support the mission and ministry of the Circuit moving forward.

Circuit Manses

Over recent months the Circuit Meeting has approved recommendations to sell 3 of our Manses (those at Bramhope, Otley and Yeadon) and to replace them with one new one ready for the new Ministerial appointment in Sept 2022. We have agreed the sale of the Bramhope Manse and hope to complete in early November. The tenants at the Otley Manse have been given notice to vacate at the end of January and the Yeadon Manse will be marketed for sale in the next few weeks.

Every blessing,

Rev Tim