



Derbyshire North East Methodist Circuit

Superintendent Minister: Rev Mark Carrick

May 2026

Strategic Vision and Mission Plan:

One Body, Many Places: Rooted in Hope, Growing in Faith

Introduction

We stand at a significant moment in the life of our Circuit. Across our churches and communities, we recognise both the challenges and the opportunities before us. We are called to be faithful stewards of the Gospel in a changing world - listening carefully to the voice of God, discerning the needs of our communities, and courageously shaping a future that is alive with the Spirit, hopeful, and sustainable.

This is a time of reflection and discernment and, in many ways, new beginnings. We have heard several gardening stories and analogies over the past few months. From the story of the Fig Tree and the challenge to bear fruit, to the story of the vine and branches and the gardener's need to prune to enable strong growth. The reality of living with such images is that the early part of this process feels hard as we create space for growth and takes both time and energy to tend and care for the tree to be fruitful once more.

We recognise the Church across the world is no longer what it was a few decades ago. Society has shifted and we are called to remain a vibrant, relevant witness to the Gospel. Our approach needs to be grounded in Christ, rooted in hope, and ready for the challenge by partnering in God's mission. We already see the new shoots of growth through the commitment to New Places for New People project in Barrow Hill and the Rother Ward. We are encouraged by the bold steps of our Inkersall congregation to reimagine how they might use their land and offer witness to the community in a new project. Furthermore, we are excited by the church at Loundsley Green as they respond positively to the needs of their community by creating a Family Church. We remain committed to our Methodist traditions of meeting people where they are, welcoming them into our family, and revealing God as we walk alongside them as Christ's disciples. We are continuing to lay foundations for future generations to experience and know God in ways which sustain communities of faith across our Circuit.

Strategy

This strategy sets out a shared vision for the development of six centres of worship and three missional centres across the Circuit. These centres will work together in partnership, not in competition, forming one body with many expressions of ministry and mission. Each place will retain its unique character and calling, while contributing to the shared mission of the whole Circuit.

Our purpose is not simply survival. We seek renewal. We seek growth in discipleship, worship, mission, service, and community presence. We believe God continues to call the Methodist people to be a visible, compassionate, and courageous witness in our towns, villages, and neighbourhoods.

This is a vision rooted in hope.

Like the gardener who prunes a vine so that it may bear greater fruit, we acknowledge that change can involve loss, grief, and difficult decisions. Yet pruning is not the end of growth; it is preparation for new life. We trust that God is already at work among us, calling us toward a future where our resources, gifts, buildings, and ministries are aligned with God's mission.

Our Vision

To create thriving centres of worship and missional partnerships that work together as one Methodist Circuit, supporting one another in discipleship, leadership, worship, and community engagement, so that we may build a sustainable and growing Methodist presence for future generations.

We envision:

- Churches that are spiritually alive and deeply rooted in prayer and worship.
 - Congregations that actively make followers of Jesus Christ.
 - Networks that are underpinned by small group discipleship.
 - Communities where people of all ages feel welcomed, valued, and included.
 - Shared leadership and mutual encouragement across the Circuit.
 - Buildings and resources used wisely, creatively, and missionally.
 - Ministries that respond meaningfully to the needs of local communities.
 - A Circuit culture marked by hope, generosity, collaboration, and courage.
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Our Mission

As one body in Christ, we are called:

- To respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ.
 - To worship God faithfully and joyfully.
 - To nurture discipleship and spiritual growth.
 - To share the love and justice of Christ by serving our communities.
 - To create sustainable structures for ministry and mission.
 - To listen prayerfully to where God is leading us now and into the future.
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Our Core Commitments

1. One Circuit, One Body

Though we worship in different places and communities, we are one body in Christ. The strength of our Circuit will not come from isolated churches acting independently, but from congregations and leaders working together in partnership.

This means to:

- Create a Circuit-wide identity rooted in mutual care and mission.
 - Share resources and ministries.
 - Steward wisely the gifts, finances, properties, talents, and opportunities entrusted to us.
 - Encourage and support one another across the Circuit in times of challenge.
 - Celebrate one another's successes.
 - Develop common goals and shared priorities.
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2. Centres of Worship and Mission

The Circuit will focus its long-term ministry around six strategically located centres of worship and three areas of missional partnerships.

These centres will:

- Serve as hubs of worship, discipleship, pastoral care, and outreach.
- Support mission and ministry within surrounding communities.

- Develop sustainable patterns of leadership and volunteer involvement.
- Offer opportunities for diverse worship and intergenerational formation.
- Create spaces of welcome, hospitality, and community engagement.
- Encourage innovation and fresh expressions of church.

Each centre will reflect the needs and character of its local community while remaining connected to the wider Circuit vision.

Our worship centres will gather the small groups meeting in neighbouring communities for inspirational, weekly worship, before being sent out as disciples to minister to those in our neighbourhoods.

Our missional centres will partner with community groups and ecumenical congregations to serve the unique needs of those communities, whilst providing Methodist worship on a fortnightly basis.

The purpose of all these centres is to create healthy, sustainable, mission-focused communities capable of long-term growth.

3. Stewardship and Sustainability

Faithful stewardship is central to our calling.

God has entrusted to us:

- The gifts and talents of our people.
- Opportunities for mission.
- Relationships within our communities.
- Histories and traditions.
- Buildings and land.
- Financial resources.

We therefore commit to:

- Using our resources prayerfully and strategically.
- Aligning financial decisions with mission priorities.
- Ensuring our property supports active ministry and community impact.
- Encouraging generosity and shared responsibility.
- Investing in leadership development and discipleship.
- Developing sustainable models for ministry and governance.

We acknowledge that not every building can continue in its current form. Decisions about property must be shaped not only by sentiment or history, but by mission, sustainability, accessibility, and future opportunity.

Where difficult decisions are required, they will be approached prayerfully, compassionately, and transparently.

4. Discipleship for This Time and Place

The Gospel does not change, but the context in which we share it continually does.

We are called to create discipleship pathways that are relevant, accessible, and meaningful for contemporary life.

This includes:

- Deepening biblical understanding and prayer.
- Supporting people at every stage of faith.
- Developing opportunities for children, young people, and families.
- Exploring new forms of worship and community gathering.
- Equipping lay leaders and volunteers.
- Encouraging digital engagement and communication.
- Responding to local social needs with compassion and action.

Our mission must speak both faithfully and creatively into the realities of modern life.

5. Partnership with Our Communities

Our churches do not exist for themselves alone.

We are called to serve and walk alongside the communities in which we are placed. We therefore seek to be:

- Visible and engaged.
- Compassionate and welcoming.
- Active in addressing loneliness, poverty, and exclusion.
- Supportive of local partnerships and community organisations.
- Places of belonging, healing, and hope.

We will listen carefully to our communities and seek opportunities where the Church can make a meaningful difference.

A Theology of Hope and New Growth

Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly brings new life from places of uncertainty, transition, and apparent decline.

The image of pruning is deeply important for our Circuit at this time. Jesus teaches that branches are pruned so that they may bear more fruit. Pruning can feel painful, but it is not destruction; it is preparation for renewed growth.

As a Circuit, we may experience:

- Letting go of familiar patterns.
- Reshaping ministries.
- Difficult decisions about buildings and structures.
- Anxiety about the future.

Yet we hold firmly to the promise that God is not finished with us.

We believe:

- God continues to call people into discipleship.
- The Holy Spirit continues to renew the Church.
- As a Circuit, we respond to God by committing to this Vision and Mission Plan in faith.

We recognise:

- The Methodist witness remains necessary for our communities.
- Faithful change can create space for new life.
- Hope is stronger than fear.

Our vision is in confidence that God is already preparing the future. We must take note of where God is moving, what is established, and what is flourishing. We must discern where God is calling us to embrace the new thing He is doing and partner in that mission of God. We may see pruning as reducing our estate, but this creates the space and conditions to strengthen our roots and realise the potential for growth.

Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Strengthen Worship and Spiritual Life

We will:

- Create a Circuit of Methodists as One Body, united in strength and purpose.
- Develop vibrant and meaningful worship.
- Encourage fellowship, prayer, study, and spiritual formation.

Priority 2: Develop Sustainable Leadership

We will:

- Create Trustee bodies that will encourage and enable growth in mission and ministry.
- Invest in leadership and pastoral training, whilst encouraging collaborative models.
- Support volunteers, lay, and ordained ministry.

Priority 3: Align Property with Mission

We will:

- Review the use and sustainability of all properties, prioritising buildings that support active mission.
- Explore partnerships and community use.
- Ensure accessibility and environmental responsibility where possible.

Priority 4: Grow Community Engagement

We will:

- Strengthen local community and ecumenical partnerships.
- Develop ministries responding to community need.
- Encourage outreach and hospitality.
- Create opportunities for new people to encounter faith.

Priority 5: Build a Connected Circuit Culture

We will:

- Share resources and ideas across churches.

- Communicate openly and regularly.
 - Encourage mutual support and accountability.
 - Celebrate stories of transformation and hope.
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Practical Commitments

To support this vision, the Circuit will:

- Pray consistently for discernment and guidance.
- Establish clear governance and leadership structures.
- Develop a realistic financial strategy.
- Encourage transparent communication.
- Create opportunities for congregational participation.
- Monitor progress regularly.

The implementation of this strategy will require courage, patience, generosity, and trust.

Conclusion

We move forward together as one body. We honour the faith, sacrifice, and witness of those who have gone before us, whilst recognising that God now calls us to shape a future that is sustainable, mission-focused, and filled with hope.

This is not simply a strategy for buildings or structures. It is a commitment to becoming a people who listen to God, support one another, and courageously respond to the needs of our communities.

We believe that through prayer, partnership, faithful stewardship, and openness to the Holy Spirit, new growth is possible.

Even in seasons of pruning, God brings life.

And so, we step forward with hope - trusting that the God who has sustained the Methodist people in the past will continue to lead, renew, and strengthen us for the future.

Proposals for Circuit Meeting

1. The adoption of this strategic Circuit Vision and Mission Plan.
 2. To confirm the six worship centres and three missional partnerships by the Spring 2027 Circuit Meeting.
 3. To explore the creation of a single Church Council to provide Trusteeship for Storrs Road, Derby Road, Whittington Moor, and Hasland.
 - This Council will draw resources from across the four existing congregations and strengthen the body by utilising Circuit resources, both lay and employed.
 - This Council will operate at Circuit-level, and all resources will be managed at that level.
 4. To work towards creating a new Station for an ordained Deacon to lead our missional work in the Barrow Hill, Inkersall, & Staveley areas, whilst growing leaders from a combined church uniting these areas with Brimington.
 - Create a local Steering Group to explore mission and ministry across those areas, to discern their local vision, and establish a new Station ahead of the CIC meetings in 2027.
 5. To support the work of Loundsley Green and the potential creation of a Family Church.
 6. To encourage and support the development of a new, merged church which combines the former congregations at Barlborough and Clowne.
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