



Bramhall and Wythenshawe Methodist Circuit

Vision and priorities 2021-2022

Growing God's kingdom in South Manchester and North Cheshire

Bramhall & Wythenshawe Methodist Circuit is a group of 12 churches, with a common purpose of serving God in our local communities and nurturing disciples of Jesus Christ. We want each of our church communities to have the resources needed to be effective and passionate in their local ministry. We are stronger and more effective in serving God when we do it together.

We will seek the Holy Spirit at work in our communities, guiding our ministries, challenging our priorities, and equipping us for God's work. We will support one another by seeking to serve God as effectively as we can. We will do this by:

- **Focussing on worship:** Enabling people to worship God in rich and diverse ways.
- **Focussing on learning:** Equipping followers of Jesus to serve God in their daily lives.
- **Focussing on caring:** Having compassion for all God's people.
- **Focussing on serving:** Taking action for those in need and challenging injustice.
- **Focussing on growing:** Sharing God's love and making new disciples across our communities.

As a result of this, we will become a disciple-making, disciple-equipping, disciple-nurturing movement, shaped for mission.

Focused on worship

'Sing a new song to the Lord' Psalm 96:1

Challenges, expectations and passions

Across the circuit, we are passionate about enabling all people, regardless of background, age or tradition, to worship God in ways that are accessible, engaging and interactive. We want to seek a continuing freshness and renewal in worship, where the congregations are encouraged to become more than just consumers, and to participate fully and actively in worship.

Participation
Consistency
Renewal
Variety
Inclusion
God
Meeting
Engagement
Expectation

Our circuit priorities are:

- Helping each church community to feel empowered to experiment with worship and prayer in different ways.
- Encouraging variety in worship (through the plan, through preachers, supporting churches with initiatives such as 'café church').
- Seeking opportunity for people to access different worship styles (e.g. large scale, small scale, reflective).
- Encouraging, nurturing and resourcing innovations in music, ideas, and approach.

Getting specific (2021-22)

Make worship more accessible through the continuation and development of on-line worship, e.g. zoom services, pre-recorded worship, live-streamed services from within and without church buildings using different platforms, worship material delivered to those at home without an internet connection.

Learn from the experiences of shorter services and alternative provision of worship during lockdowns and ensure the continued delivery of high quality considered acts of worship.

Encourage and support new forms of worship e.g. mid-week worship, Café Church and more contemporary worship, as well as worship that is led by circuit members in schools, care homes, nursing homes, housing complexes etc (when safe to do so) Ideas and resources could be discussed and shared at the Local Preachers' Meetings and at staff meetings.

Support, encourage and learn from new expressions of church e.g. St Nics (Northenden Inclusive Church), The Mindful Church services at Wilmslow, The Climate Year at Bramhall, The Fresh Expressions work at Cheadle Hulme.

Focussed on learning

"Listen then, if you have ears" Matthew 13:9

Challenges, expectations and passions

As a disciple-making and nurturing movement, we are passionate about equipping each other

to serve God effectively in the places where we spend our time. We recognise that whatever our age, background or experience of faith, we all have much to learn, and will support each other on our continuing and varying journeys of faith.

Across our church communities, we want to encourage and enable a growth in discipleship, empowering people to see, develop and use the gifts that God has given to them. We want to kindle a desire amongst our congregations for people to learn more about God, and to apply that learning in their daily lives.

Our circuit priorities are:

- Recognising the power of small groups, helping to contextualise learning to our own lives.
- Seeking opportunities to empower individuals to see, develop and use their God-given gifts.
- Seeking opportunities to share our stories, both as individuals to each other, and as whole churches to our communities.
- Finding ways to identify and share resources with one another.
- Learning to be Online Church – as a response to the pandemic this needs to be first as a foundation for the other priorities.

Getting specific (2021-22)

Support churches in generating regular resources for online Bible study/ prayer/ reflection/ worship, sharing these via the circuit by building a support team to help churches produce a regular programme of material for their congregations and communities (via sharing training and technical resources) and creating a team, process and schedule for sharing these resources and techniques around the circuit.

Learn to use social media effectively by documenting current use, identifying learning resources to support identified needs, providing training and mentoring to encourage churches develop their use of social media and increase engagement and providing training and guidance on online safety and effectiveness as a disciple for our congregations.

Training Time management
Story telling
focus

Focussed on caring

"Love one another warmly, as Christian brothers and sisters" Romans 12:10

Challenges, expectations and passions

Caring for one another and for the communities in which we are based is a key part of our Methodist DNA and heritage. We want to make sure that the members of all our churches feel loved and supported in whatever stage of life and faith they find themselves.

We are committed to making sure that our congregations feel supported and not isolated. Particularly with geographically distant or smaller congregations, we want to ensure that individual churches feel loved and cared for.

Our circuit priorities are:

- Finding ways to support all our congregations so that they feel part of a larger caring community of united Christians.
- Helping our churches to be safe environments where people can find help, nurture, care and support.
- Promoting small groups, ensuring that every individual in the Circuit has the opportunity to be part of a small group.
- Seeking ways in which the Circuit can support individual churches in offering care and compassionate outreach into their communities.

Getting specific (2021-2022)

Continue to place prayer at the heart of circuit life, by sharing methods currently used e.g. WhatsApp prayer groups, zoom prayer meetings, e-mailed prayer requests (including pastoral letters), agreed times to pray.

Encourage churches to embrace technologies and other means in order to exercise pastoral care in the current circumstances, enabling congregations to remain connected to each other and Christians in other churches e.g. WhatsApp prayer groups, phone calls, zoom meetings, letters and cards, emails, circuit newsletters.

Encourage our churches to provide community support e.g. for people with dementia and their carers, via CAP debt centre, supporting food banks, wellbeing groups, shopping etc for vulnerable people.

Attention
Nurture
Support
Small groups
Isolation
Training

Focussed on serving

"Kindness shown to the poor is an act of worship"
Proverbs 14:31

Challenges, expectations and passions

Across our churches, we find a rich tapestry of individuals, groups and whole communities serving God in practical ways locally, nationally and internationally. Such compassionate action is a key part of our calling as Christians, and at the heart of our Methodist DNA.

We want to empower one another as churches and individuals to continue to seek ways in which we can put the Christian faith into action:

- serving God in practical ways
- speaking out against the causes of injustice
- responding to racial and homophobic prejudice

Our circuit priorities are:

- Finding ways to discover how members of our churches are involved in 'serving', celebrate that and share common needs and concerns across our congregations.
- Seeking ways for our combined voice to be heard locally and nationally, speaking out against injustice and being seen to put our faith into action.
- Engaging inter- denominationally to bring a Christian voice into our communities.
- Seeking new partnerships as a Circuit and seek ways in which the churches can access those partnerships and expert resources.
- Pray without ceasing, praying compassionately for the people whom we serve, and for opportunities to serve.

Compassion
Responding
Challenging injustice
Prayer
Partnership

Focussed on growing

"Go and do the work of an evangelist"
2 Timothy 4:5

Challenges, expectations and passions

We want to help each other to feel confident in sharing our faith and telling our stories. Many members of the churches already do so much to serve God because of their faith, such as helping with food banks. We need to help them to see that work as evangelism and use it as a way of telling their stories.

We want to see the members of all the churches being supported in living out their faith through the whole of their life, celebrating the God-given opportunities to serve.

Our circuit priorities are:

- Encourage churches to make the link between 'evangelism' and existing activities – such as helping in the church charity shop or working in the foodbank.
- Seeking opportunities to break down barriers and make it easier for people to come to church activities and events.
- Promoting story telling – to one another, to other people, helping individuals to grow in confidence in sharing their stories.
- Encouraging all our members to get alongside people outside of the church, sharing hospitality wherever we can.

Being alongside
Love
Hospitality
Telling stories
Invitation
Sent out
Sharing
Credibility
Testimony

Getting specific (2021-22)

Continue to support the recently established Christians Against Poverty (CAP) project in Wythenshawe, financially, prayerfully and practically. Establish a network of advocates in local churches.

Encourage individuals from different churches to support activities such as Saturday Club at St Andrew's, where additional support is needed alongside the local church congregation by e.g. word of mouth, circuit newsletter.

Support church groups in difficulties after Covid restrictions are eased.

Develop further community relationships e.g. with Emmaus and Studio One at St Andrew's.

Getting specific (2021-22)

Encourage churches to focus on growth, across all age-ranges, particularly starting with the age groups they have.

Encourage Children and Family Workers and Schools Workers who are actively reaching out to families and young people.

Affirm the work done with different types of toddler and Messy Church groups and engage in creative thinking around how to offer discipleship pathways for parents.

Facilitate a group from across the Circuit to attend the 3Generate youth event, opening up the possibility for future Circuit youth "get togethers".

Make the Circuit website accessible for use by the smaller churches with up to date information and resources. Develop the Circuit Facebook page as a further external communication tool.