



For all Methodist & LEP Church Members and friends
15th August 2025

The Methodist Church Goole and Selby Circuit

Christian Greetings!

It was good to see many of you at our recent Circuit Service to celebrate Revd Christine's ministry and to wish her God's blessing as she now 'sits down' from active service.

This is now a family focused time for Christine, and although (unusually for us Ministers!) she remains in the locality at present, she will not be taking any active role in churches or Circuit. Let's respect this please and hold her and her father in our prayers.

I write to thank you for joining in with the journeying we are doing across the Circuit, as we look to God's new future for us in this area.

We have begun to respond to key comments made by you at our recent gatherings and vision days, and to take steps that we pray will help us to move forward together. The talking and listening is not over of course, but CLT have now created a 3-fold 'framework' in which we will work to help the Circuit take some steps toward our new future.....

1. **Building a team of people** within the Circuit whose role will be to support, encourage, and take a lead within one (or more) of our local church communities.

'Local Missional Leaders' (LML) will become part of a **Circuit Ministry Team** that includes Local Pastor Eileen and Revds Joseph, Arthur and myself. Our intention is for each church to have a recognised LML, as a key point of contact for your church community.

2. **Developing 'The Plan'** in such a way (over time) that it provides an enriching variety of times and styles of worship across the area, so that you have opportunity to engage with different styles of 'services', to help you grow in your faith. This is in response to comments made during our recent gatherings, asking for new ways to deepen your faith.

Our core group of Local Preachers, Lay Pastor and the ordained team facilitate as much worship as they are able – BUT there are increasing challenges to making this work in the Sunday based model that has been our tradition. SO, we intend to develop a rhythm of worship that is varied, led in familiar ways and new ways – and also is less focused on Sunday as the only day for worship services! Eggborough and Camblesforth have already led the way in midweek services, so (over time, and in discussion with you of course) we will be following in their pioneering steps ☺

There are many gifted worship leaders and musicians/singers around the circuit, who facilitate services including Local Arrangements. As a result, we are already offered services such as 'NI' in Goole, 'Extravagant worship' in Howden, 'Messy Church' in Sherburn and 'Contemplative Worship' in Selby. Thank You to all involved in these, and in other examples of varied gathered worship.

Do share your thoughts and ideas for how we 'experiment' further with a more flexible, varied Plan. ('experimenting more' is a suggestion made at the gatherings)

3. **Beginning to explore how best to organise trusteeship** of our 20 church communities, and the Circuit itself, to simplify how we are well governed, so that we have energy for our mission!

At our gatherings, you raised a desire for simplification of administration and lessening of energy taken up in 'running church', so you have energy to pour into mission and ministry.

CLT is also asking the same governance question in regard to re-focusing the Circuit resources too.

The word **explore** is key to this step, and this is something that will **take time**. **Be assured**, the September Circuit Meeting will NOT include definitive proposals to vote on about how we are structured! Any formal proposals about renewed approaches to church or circuit governance will

emerge as we hear one another, understand key issues at hand, and discern together our sense of how God is leading us forward. There must be a time and plan for action of course, but not yet!

It strikes me that all this movement is not really a new story. After all, when Moses was appointed to free God's people from the burdens and shackles they were experiencing in Egypt, so that they could move in to a new space of freedom to live out their faith, they needed a new framework (of tribes and leaders) in which to organise themselves as they journeyed forward! I am hopeful that we are not on a 40-year exploration though ☺. I also pray we will not cry out too much to go back to *our* 'Egypt', ie the very things that burden our churches and circuit, holding us back from all that our loving God has in store for us and through us in the days ahead!

We are planning to offer open gatherings for conversation as we move forward. Each will have a particular main theme, with space for broader conversation too. The **18th August, Portholme, 7pm and REPEAT gathering on 21st August, Barlby and Osgodby, 2pm** will set us off, focusing on **building team ministry, and the Local Missional Leader role**. We will add more gathering dates soon.

So friends, be encouraged. We are journeying into God's new future!

And, as we step forward, I do just want to add one thing. There is NO CLT, Me, or Revd Leslie secret MASTERPLAN for the future of the circuit or churches!

What the CLT are doing is responding to the need/opportunity we have all recognised in our Vision Days to move forward in new ways, by discussing possibilities, pitfalls and hopes for the Circuit. I strongly encourage you to *choose* not to interpret this as CLT wielding power or having a masterplan. Our heart and actions are set on 'getting the ball rolling'!

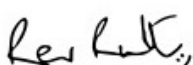
Some of you, I am sure, would prefer a clear plan of action decided for you asap – 'who is our minister' 'when will we get Holy Communion at 'our' church' etc. Others of you will want space to ponder, and (quite rightly) to have your 'say' in the process – perhaps even before CLT does or says anything! We are all so different, *and* times of flux unsettle us in different ways. I know the way forward is not fully clear and how uncertainty can so easily draw us in to worry, negativity – and even into the land of 'Fake News'! *I find that openly asking questions when I'm unsettled about something helps me keep perspective, and to trust, so please do ask away - we are in this together, and God is with us!*

My prayer is for us to soak in the endless Grace of God as we journey together and to pour this out as a blessing on one another, as :

- Trust of the CLT, appointed by you to 'take a lead' in the Circuit.
- Openness to Leslie and I as we share learning from other parts of the Church who are adapting and experimenting in pursuit of their calling to grow in faith and mission.
- Courage to engage with the framework of ideas and actions offered at this point.
- Loving thoughts, attitudes, words and conversation, privately and as groups.
- Togetherness and appreciation of one another's perspective as we discern God's leading.
- Encouragement of one another to 'Hear the call of the Kingdom' and with gusto to reply...

'King of heaven we will answer the call, we will follow, bringing hope to the world, filled with passion filled with power to proclaim, salvation in Jesus name' (407 Singing the Faith)

May Grace abound!



Rev Ruth Gilson-Webb

(Acting) Superintendent Minister, Goole & Selby Methodist Circuit