

Stafford Methodist Circuit Mission Strategy Sept 2026

Our Mission Policy states:

Mission statement:

The Stafford Methodist Circuit is called to equip and encourage discipleship and mission, responding to the Gospel of God's love in Christ.

Our Objective:

To equip and encourage congregations, existing and new, in developing discipleship and mission across the Stafford and Stone area, and, as a Circuit, to enable people to respond to the love of God found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our commitment:

To regularly review and consider how the resources God has gifted to the life of the Circuit might best be utilised within existing and new communities of faith. To achieve this goal, a Circuit Mission strategy will be implemented and reviewed, encouraging the Circuit, the congregations within it and the individual disciples of those congregations to reflect on where God is calling us and how we might best channel, support and affirm discipleship and mission.

The Circuit will:

Equip and support church congregations in discerning God's calling in their context

- Support the development of mission plans in church communities with the help of *Our Church's Future Story*.
- Support missional activities which emerge following *Our Church's Future Story* and adopt the forthcoming *Our Circuit's Future Story*.
- The Local Preachers team will be supported to work alongside ministers to equip church members for mission and personal evangelism through their preaching, helping people to feel more confident in talking about their faith.

Encourage authentic, caring relationships with our community

- Encourage church congregations to find out more about their communities and form meaningful connections.
- Encourage prayer for our communities so that we grow in our concern and compassion for the people God has placed us amongst.

- Be open to where God is already at work in our communities and seek opportunities to join in, encouraging church congregations to deliver missional activities.
- Deliver Circuit wide missional activities such as *On the Way* (12 week course) and men's breakfasts.
- Be bold enough to think differently and be willing to challenge the status quo. Be alert for opportunities for a *New Places New People* or *Church at the Margins* community within the circuit.
- Offer *Alcoholics Anonymous* free use of space in our churches in response to high levels of alcohol related admissions in Stafford District, and for other agencies where appropriate.*

Direct resources towards missional priorities

- Provide a circuit mission fund to support church congregations in missional activities, and seek District funding where appropriate. Eg Gnosall Warm Welcome, Eccleshall Coffee Morning.
- Ensure the key priority of any building project is mission.
- Where possible, direct Circuit staff time towards areas of mission and growth, and seek out expertise and support from District staff as required.

Develop digital evangelism

- Establish a Circuit social media group to take responsibility for delivering a consistent, high standard social media presence across the Circuit and provide guidance for local church congregations in their social media delivery.
- Develop a social media brand and logo.
- Continue to maintain a high standard Stafford Methodist Circuit website.
- Continue to offer streamed access to some church services where there is a need.

Improve inclusivity

- As a justice seeking Circuit, form a small Circuit *Justice, Dignity and Solidarity* (JDS) group to lead on and update church congregations on JDS matters.
- Encourage use of inclusive language for those leading worship.
- Provide support and advice for church congregations to consider ways in which they can improve inclusivity, for example providing fidget gadgets for use in church worship.
- Offer some worship opportunities across the Circuit which are pro-actively inclusive of and appeal to specific groups eg St John's Stone actively involves young adults with learning difficulties.
- Encourage all in leadership roles to do the *Unconscious Bias* training.

Encourage deepening of faith and discipleship within our church communities

- Encourage and support young people within the Circuit in their faith journey by bringing them together in youth fellowship activities and enabling them to participate in events such as *Amplify*.
- Encourage the growth of bible study groups and house-groups in churches.
- Use Bible Month resources in our preaching each year.
- Recruit and train Worship Leaders and Local Preachers from our congregations.
- Continue to provide resources for Local Arrangements.
- Continue to use the *Methodist Way Of Life* as a focus to encourage growth in discipleship.
- Increase awareness of and responsiveness to Eco concerns in our congregations through the Eco Newsletter, and encourage consideration of the environment in church council decisions.
- Support church congregations who are facing significant changes such as closure or merging with another church, and help them to discern God's call for them and the missional opportunities within their communities in the future.
- Recognise that churches within the Circuit have very different contexts, some town, some rural, and each community's needs will vary. Three churches are LEPs, where we value the partnership with URC and Anglican colleagues and church members.
- Come together for occasional Circuit Days to celebrate together, to share best practice and encourage and support members in their mission and discipleship.

This strategy will be reviewed annually, and fully revised at least every 3-5 years.

**Admission episodes for alcohol related conditions 2022-23 were high across Staffordshire including Stafford District compared to the England average. Area Data Matrix 2025*
<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/staffordshire-observatory-data/local-area-data>

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28v19