

A Story of the Year 2022

Sheffield, The Peak, Rotherham & Dearne Valley,
Derbyshire North East, Barnsley, Doncaster &
Trinity Circuits



For such a time as this

GROWING DISCIPLES fostering a restored culture of high-quality small group and personal discipleship, nurturing leaders and bringing access to any training you need

PASSIONATE CONTEXTUAL WORSHIP sharing best practice so our acts of worship are occasions when we expect to encounter the presence of God, supporting growth of complementary dispersed and gathered worship

SHARING STORIES making testimony normal, sharing stories, making communication easy and creating a culture of invitation to relationship with Christ

TRANSFORMING MISSION encouraging and equipping innovators breaking new ground, asking searching questions and embracing change

SIMPLIFYING PROCEDURES to release your time and energy for sharing stories, passionate contextual worship and transforming mission

PROPERTIES FIT FOR MISSION making your premises fit for your missional needs and reducing our carbon footprint

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to The Story of the Year. We hope you have found it an enjoyable read.

If you'd like some printed copies for your church please email Katrin Hackett, District Administrator admin@sheffieldmethodist.org



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

At our Spring Synod, in April 2022, held at Cliff College, we focussed on the importance of "sharing stories" and the way in which our own stories help us to tell God's story. This "Story Of The Year" is our first attempt, in magazine format, to tell some of the wonderful stories of what God has been doing across the District during the last year. There are many more stories that could have been told, but we hope that this publication will provide you with a flavour of the amazing way that God continues to be at work.

The last year has continued to present us with many Covid related challenges. So, the fact that so many of you have managed to focus on reaching out to the communities around you and sharing the love of God in Christ in all the ways that you have, is truly remarkable and reason for celebration. Our mission strategy reminds us that we are called "For Such A Time As This" and the stories told here represent many of the ways in which you are responding to the needs of those around you in these times.

The District is always keen to support you in your local missional endeavours and during the last year we have been delighted to welcome two new members to our District staff team to enable us to do that more fully. Tom Rattigan is our Missional Property Enabler and Victoria Loveday is our Children's and Youth Co-ordinator. You can discover more about them and their interests and skills on the district website.

I am grateful to all of you for the wonderful way in which you continue to be active followers of Jesus and respond to his call on your life where you are. But I hope this publication has enabled you to catch just a glimpse of what others are being called to do right across the district. If you are the kind of person who likes to live on a larger map and help to make things happen beyond your local setting, you might like to consider applying to join the District Leading Team. We are currently looking for new people to join us and more information about that can also be found on the district website.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this publication. Please use it as a resource for your prayers as you continue to discern what God is asking you to do and what stories you are being called to share.

Loving God, thank you for all the ways in which you are at work, by your Spirit, in people and places right across this District.

Help us all to continue to be alert to where you are quietly at work, so that we can join in.

Give us courage to share our stories in such a way that they make an impact on others.

Shape and mould us, so that we are followers of Jesus "for such a time as this."

Amen

REVD GILL NEWTON

District Chair



GROWING DISCIPLES

The Terminus - Sheffield Circuit

Outreach Chaplain Elaine and her army of volunteers are creating safe spaces and changing the perception of church for those who traditionally wouldn't think they'd be welcome.

The Terminus Project has been working on the Lowedges estate for more than a decade and has offered a community café and even a charity shop, however when the pandemic hit, things needed to change and that's when Elaine stepped in.

The Terminus is open for coffee mornings, toddler groups, a homework group after school as well as helping with food distribution. Various other social groups have also emerged in the last few months with the creation of a Singing For Wellness group, a Friday Fellowship group and a Health and Well-being Group. At each of the groups Elaine and her team pray openly and during the Friday Fellowship sessions there is worship, guided meditation, a Bible story and discussion around what the passage means. This group regularly sees more than 20 people each week.

Elaine said: "These are exciting times, we are breaking down the barriers people perceive are around churches. We are regularly seeing people who wouldn't set foot in a church, however there's a glimmer of light and this local community have joy and hope they haven't previously had. The perception of church is definitely changing. Jesus came to heal a broken world, he didn't come to preach to the wealthy.

"I am proud of what we've achieved so far, we are here to do God's work and it's clear he wants to be in Lowedges and that the local community want him here too."



Holy Habits - Barnsley Circuit

Holy Habits is a programme based on the actions of the early church in Acts 2:42-47. From this passage, there are ten habits that helped form the early church: Biblical teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, gladness and generosity, serving, worship, sharing resources, prayer, eating together and making more disciples.

Revd Claire Rawlinson explains: "We started with the habit of Fellowship and chapels were encouraged how to explore fellowship. For the circuit event we held a 'Jeudi Gras' (which was a Mardi Gras but held on a Thursday). We shared food, crafts, games and a chance to chat with each other and a great time was had by all.

"We then moved to Breaking Bread, exploring the themes of Holy Communion and as a circuit, enjoyed a bread evening led by John Foster from Fosters Bakery. During this people made and ate bread, alongside John, a local preacher, who talked about baking and faith.

"For our third habit we focused on serving others. Chapels explored acts of service amongst themselves and were encouraged to serve those in their communities. As a circuit we held a service safari, where people could go to one of the chapels for coffee, lunch or afternoon tea, bringing gifts for those who serve in our local care homes. We gathered so much stuff that after creating 18 large gift hampers for care homes, we still had plenty left over for the foodbank and refugee collections.

"Next, we moved on to worship, exploring different types and styles of worship. Our circuit event looking at worship was incorporated into the farewell service for Rev Cameron Stirk and his family. We are just embarking on sharing resources, which will involve our circuit harvest collections and celebrations, alongside our work with Blytheswood Care on the shoebox appeal.

"Alongside preaching, chapel and circuit events, there have been opportunities to look at the habits further in Bible studies as well as exploring them through social media video and picture reflections.

We also follow Holy Habits in our Messy Churches, care home work and contemporary worship."

GROWING DISCIPLES

Young people and Families



In June over 30 young people and leaders from around the District gathered at Hesley Woods activity centre in Sheffield for an action-packed day of worship, fun activities and to learn about how a Methodist District is run.

During the day they attended workshops about communications, safeguarding and wellbeing, mission - creating new churches, storytelling, seeking God, what it's like to be a Minister and also about being Chair of the District. In the afternoon groups took part in team building activities such as raft building, axe throwing, peddle karting and orienteering.

As lockdown restrictions finally eased, some of our churches and circuits also invested in memorable trips, such as Emmanuel Waterthorpe in Sheffield who took 11 young people to Parson House Outdoor Pursuit Centre where they took part in rock climbing, abseiling, bouldering and an obstacle course before enjoying pizza at church in the evening.

In September more than 21 young people and ten leaders from Barnsley, Doncaster & Sheffield Circuits travelled to Birmingham for the weekend to take part in 3Generate, the children and youth assembly of the Methodist Church.

They all camped inside the NEC in Birmingham and spent their time worshipping, playing, talking, acting, preaching and praying.

District Children and Youth Co-ordinator, Vic Loveday said, "It's so important to get alongside children and young people across our churches either directly or those on the fringe. The world for children and young people is constantly changing and we have the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus with them through any means we can – seeking intentional opportunities to share. This generation are hearing about Jesus for the first time – how exciting.

Over this next year we plan to get more groups booked into 3Generate, and to encourage more young people to join in our future events. We are also planning more opportunities to equip and encourage those who work with children and young people"



Positively Rural - Yorkshire Plus Region

Positively Rural is an online community hosted by the Yorkshire Plus Learning Network Region for all denominations to share stories and experiences of rural ministry. Deacon Lorraine Brown, our Peak Park Rural Development Enabler created the group with Andrew Webb a rural minister from Yorkshire to promote rural ministry in a positive light. Lorraine explains: "We wanted to create a learning space where people could share their experiences of rural ministry and to create new connections in what can feel quite isolated areas.

"The webinars take place quarterly and speakers join us to talk about how various topics including how green spaces can improve wellbeing and the use of festivals in our ministry. "There's usually around 80 people who join each time and there's a mix of lay workers, ordained people and volunteers with a Christian faith.

"I cant believe how successful it's been. Positively Rural goes some way in sharing the value of the small and committed faithful communities who can sometimes feel lost and undervalued."



WORSHIP

Camping Church - Peak Circuit

A fresh expressions family group in the Peak Circuit celebrated Camping Sunday inspired by the United Church of Canada. In April families pitched tents, played games, worshipped and shared a meal outside St John's Parish Church in Tideswell.

Karen Perry, Children and Families Worker for the Peak Circuit explained: "I came across the tradition of Camping Sunday in the United Church of Canada. It's one of the biggest youth ministries in the United Church and each summer thousands of children and youth across Canada come together to be in relationship in community, with creation and with God. On Camping Sunday churches celebrate and give thanks for camping ministry.

"Taking inspiration from this I decided to have our own 'Camping Sunday' on the fourth Sunday in April to similarly celebrate the benefits of camping and how it can help build relationships with each other, creation and God.

"Everyone gathered to 'set up camp' which ranged from 4 berth camping tents to play tents in a large circle around a 'campfire' (the children collected twigs and placed them around a candle which we lit as part of our worship later on). We set up and lit a couple of BBQ's for our brunch and people also brought outdoor games for everyone to play.

"We gathered around the 'camp fire' for a time of worship where I invited everyone to share their experiences of camping, talking about how it can be a great way to take time out in God's creation and to draw closer to God, but also to grow in fellowship together. We lit the worship candle and the children read several lines from Psalm 104 'Praise to God who made the world'. I followed this with an interactive message about respecting and valuing life in all its diversity, that God has made everything for a purpose (even slugs and wasps!), and as his children we are all valued and loved equally by God then we stood up and sang 'Our God is a great big God'.

"It was also a great opportunity for witness, based on where we were located, in the centre of Tideswell, for people to see families worshipping together."



we take this time
to recharge with
our families and
friends

View Insights

Boost



31 views · Liked by gillnewton7

sheffieldmethodist #prayer #halfterm #3generations #youngpeople #youthwork #christian #methodist #autumnleaves #thanksbetoGod #letuspray

20 October 2021

District Prayers

Throughout the last year we've been creating and sharing District prayers via social media and our weekly mailing and many churches and circuits have also shared this resource with their followers too. The prayers have related to the seasons, events being held, celebrations and topical issues.

Sometimes the prayers are recorded, sometimes they are shared as a graphic and sometimes as a voiceover video. Thank you to everyone who has offered prayers for us to share around the District, we've had a number of volunteers and are always looking for more people who are willing to write or record a prayer for us.

District Communications Officer, Sam Roberts, said: "The prayers are a great resource we can share on social media, via our weekly newsletter and on our website and they are there to be shared by everyone. We have plans to continue District prayers throughout this next year so please use and share them with your church and circuit followers."

WORSHIP

Focus Church - Sheffield Circuit

Totley Rise Methodist Church in the Sheffield Circuit offer an alternative to their traditional service once a month for people who have learning disabilities and cognitive difficulties.

The service is a time for worship, creativity, fun and fellowship and an opportunity for carers to chill.

Linda George a member of the leadership team explains: "The time begins with 30 minutes of activities such as craft and mindfulness colouring, also games such as table football, Connect 4 and bowling. It's flexible time which allows people to chat and make friends. We then move onto the worship and we always start with the same song 'Everyone is Welcome' as it is what Focus Church is all about. There's a different theme each month with a bible reading and a story which people act out. We then finish with a prayer and coffee and cake.

"We have a good core of people who come along each month, they bring their families and sometimes their carers, it's a space for people to be heard and for us to listen.

"It's moving to be part of Focus Church as you see people worshipping uninhibited, it's inspirational and our volunteers find it very rewarding."



Metal Methodist

Metal Methodist was started by Rev James Morley, Sheffield Circuit, during the first COVID-19 lockdown and continues to evolve and grow to this day. It is a way of connecting people within heavy metal and associated subcultures who are also seeking to navigate the ups and downs of life in an open, caring and inclusive way; people who can feel judged by and excluded from church and much of society.

Regular online gatherings "Metal Compline" provide an inclusive, supportive space to share experiences, engage with liturgy drawing from scripture and metal lyrics, with a soundtrack of happy headbanging or loud lament, and occasional interviews with metal musicians. The Metal Methodist Way of Life provides a framework, and other resources such as the Metal Bible are drawn on.

James reflects in Theology Everywhere: "This isn't about Christian alternatives to heavy music and subcultures or constructing Christianised versions of these things. Rather, for me, it's been about a deeper discovery of the Divine who is within us and ahead of us; out there; in others. It's been about discovering the God of the margins in people who are asking serious spiritual questions and offering critiques of mainstream faith"



SHARING STORIES

Growth in Communications

Every year new and exciting ways of communicating appear. The use of social media grows, where people seek their news from changes and new technology is developed. In the District it's important we keep up with some of these trends, whilst being inclusive and accessible, and also not forgetting the more traditional methods of sharing stories and news.

Over the last year we are delighted to report our social media followers are higher than ever before and thanks to feedback from a communications review, our engagement is growing too.

Thanks to that feedback, we've also made a printable version of the District weekly news so it doesn't have to be read on a screen and you will also see it is now presented in easy to digest sections. Our social media channels now also contain more images and graphics to make our posts more eye-catching to people scrolling through. We will conduct another review next year to make sure we are communicating in the best ways we can.

You can sign up to receive the weekly mailing on the District website and to follow us on social media just search Sheffield Methodist.

For those who would like a more "printer friendly" PDF of this newsletter here:
[Printable Newsletter](#)

This Week's News

Happy New Year

The Methodist Year starts on 1 September and welcomes ministers: Revds Romeo Pedro, Naomi Coates, and to the Sheffield Circuit and Deacon Alison McCat

WarmWelcome.UK



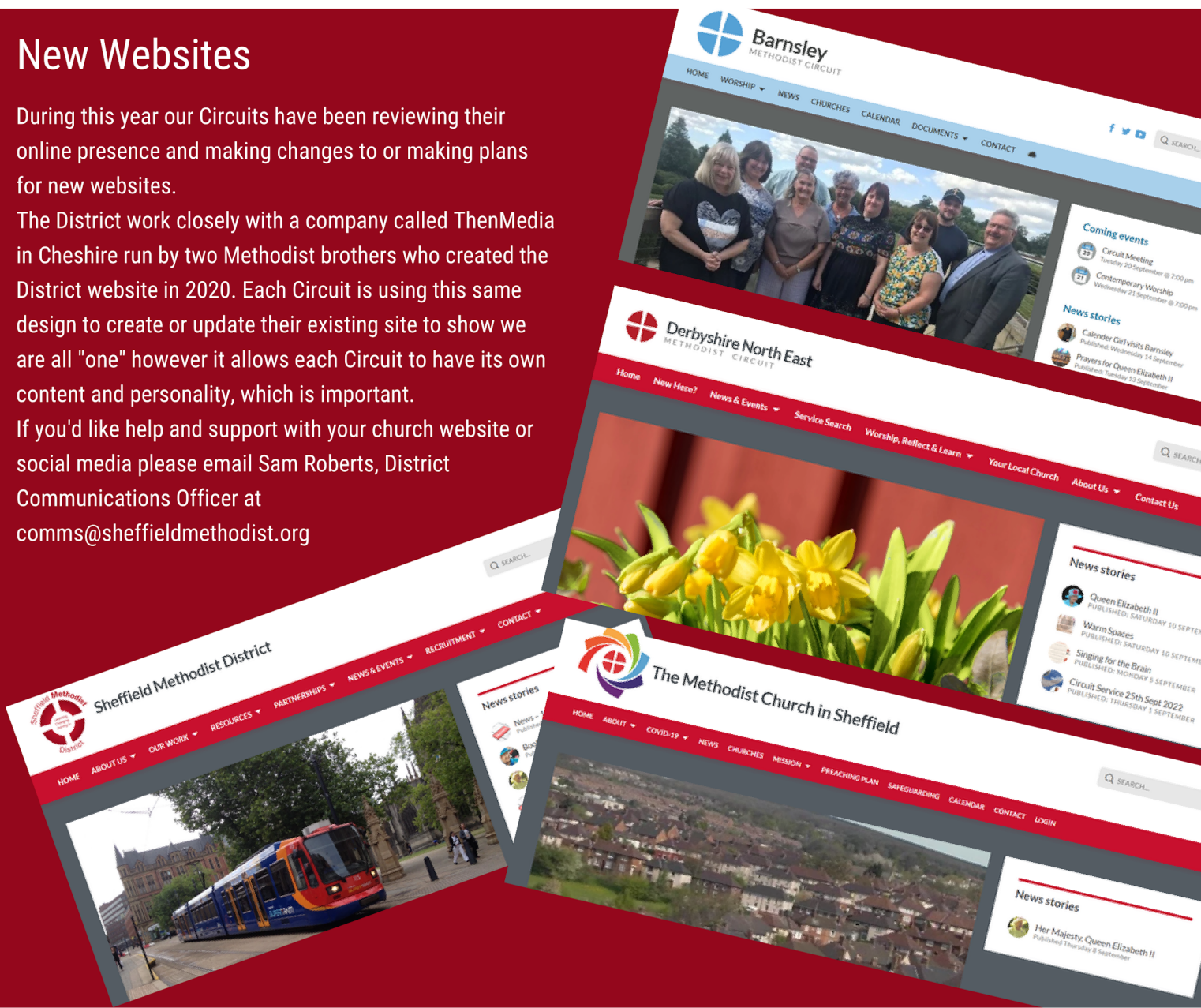
Book Now
Nurturing Leaders
Representative Synod
Saturday 10th September 2022
High Street Centre,
Lawmarsh, Rotherham
All are welcome

New Websites

During this year our Circuits have been reviewing their online presence and making changes to or making plans for new websites.

The District work closely with a company called ThenMedia in Cheshire run by two Methodist brothers who created the District website in 2020. Each Circuit is using this same design to create or update their existing site to show we are all "one" however it allows each Circuit to have its own content and personality, which is important.

If you'd like help and support with your church website or social media please email Sam Roberts, District Communications Officer at comms@sheffieldmethodist.org



SHARING STORIES

Everyone an Evangelist

The Doncaster Circuit explored how sharing stories can make everyone an Evangelist. The course designed by the Evangelism and Growth Team invites people to gather in three sessions to look at different ways to share stories and testimonies confidently and remove some of the apprehension which can appear when using the word Evangelist. McCauley Key, Community Development Worker, said: "This course helped to reimagine a concept of evangelism that causes fear into something that can occur naturally, in our everyday lives. Members of our circuit wrestled with these misconceptions and were keen to take away resources and to share them in their own contexts."

"Following on from this course, people were able to have conversations about what projects they would like to do and even shared stories of times where they were able to share the good news with someone in the everyday."

"I would strongly recommend this course to other circuits, but it may need adapting. For example, in our circuit the time scale of the course had to be shortened and we inserted our own section where we discussed specific case studies of evangelism from within our own circuit. This enabled people to critically engage with their own projects whilst encouraging members of the circuit to get behind them."



Testimony Service - Derbyshire North East Circuit

At the District Celebration Service in June Revd. Mark Carrick shared his testimony as part of his preparation for ordination at the Methodist Conference. The celebration service was held at Central Methodist Church in Chesterfield and live streamed to allow people to watch online.

Here's Mark's testimony, "Everyone's calling, on one hand, is the same - to love God with everything they are and to love their neighbours. We are also reminded that the way we live out that calling will differ from person to person, according to the gifts Christ gives to the church.

"My own journey remains, first and foremost, to love God and love my neighbour. Making a commitment to this way of life, to this faith in, and in service to, Christ, became a personal decision when I was 15 years old. Four years later, at a Youth Weekend at Cliff College, I felt the call of God to enter full-time ministry. It was a very clear, very real, call. Realising that call, however, proved anything but simple!

"I had a clear plan. Despite still being at university, I decided to start the training to become a Local Preacher. I also thought leaving university and seeking a youth worker role would be the right path. Neither of those worked out. Doors closed as quickly as they were pushed open. Invariably doubts crept in - had I heard right?

"My minister at the time wisely suggested life had to be experienced and God would be the light to my path. In His timing, things would become clear. God, I have realised, doesn't work to the same timescales as me! But call again He did.

"It has always been a journey of exploration. A journey where God calls you to His side, guides you through the various paths, never leaves you alone, and never lets you forget the call He has placed upon your life. It is a journey where He teaches, counsels, forms, and makes good on His promises. It is a journey that doesn't end with ordination, but one that stretches out as He simply says "Come, follow me. Let's have an adventure!"



TRANSFORMING MISSION

Family Fun Church - Rotherham & Dearne Valley Circuit

Family Fun Church in the Rotherham and Dearne Valley Circuit has just celebrated its first birthday and is growing from strength to strength.

Running twice a month across two churches in the circuit, between 50-70 people come along to enjoy worship, prayer, food, games and other activities.

For many years churches had run Messy Church sessions, but after listening to what local families saying where saying, Family Fun Church was created. It's a space for families from across the circuit to get together, a place where people can invite their friends to church and where children can be children.

As the year progressed a space for the grownups too to ask questions and develop their faith has been introduced. There are plans to introduce a teenage space over this next year too.

Family Fun Church is run on the first Sunday of each month and the other on the third Friday of the month which allows families the flexibility of working shifts or other activities that young people are involved in.

Kerri "We love Family Fun Church because it's a really fun way for children to be introduced to the Bible and it's teachings without the formalities of traditional Sunday services, and we love meeting with other families and we enjoy sharing food together too."



The Hub at Hope - Peak Circuit

The Hub at Hope reaches out to residents and visitors to the Peak Park through many family accessible outside activities including cycling and hiking. The Hub started out with five people who met on a Sunday morning, enjoyed a breakfast together then rode together. During lockdown this has grown to around 35 regular members and funding has been secured for a Pioneer Minister to work at The Hub. Revd. Jonathan Brook has been working hard to attract more families and has introduced children's activities such as den building, Messy Church and Forest Church. The members of the group stay connected via WhatsApp and have created a real community which not only enjoys outdoor activities but also allows for scripture to be discussed and explores God in creation.



SIMPLIFYING PROCEDURES

Keeping our District Safe

Safeguarding training has been given a massive overhaul this year with much of it now being completed in the comfort of your own home with detailed online resources and a choice of either in person or on Zoom training with District Safeguarding Officer Alison Hill.

The changes have been made to simplify the training which will allow more people to complete it therefore making our District a safer place to work and volunteer in.

Due to Covid there has been a backlog in training needs, however it's excellent that almost 130 people have received the safeguarding training required to fulfil their roles.

The Sheffield District also joined our neighbours in the Yorkshire Plus Region and Darlington and Newcastle Districts to produce online safeguarding conferences. Two have been held in the last year exploring what safeguarding means, how our gifts can be used safely within our roles and how we can keep ourselves safe through monitoring our own wellbeing. The conferences lasted around a week and were organised for different times each day to allow for flexibility around people's commitments who wish to attend. Speakers included the President and Youth President of Conference, District Chairs and the Director of Safeguarding for the Connexion. All sessions are still available to watch online.

District Safeguarding Officer, Alison Hill said: "Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. What this means changes over time, often only learning lessons after children and adults have suffered at the hands of others. I stand with The Methodist Church, acknowledging that this is a shared responsibility.

"Safeguarding is fundamental to the mission of the Methodist Church and a part of its response and witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ. Safeguarding policies and procedures, whilst not glamorous or exciting, provide a solid foundation, upon which Methodist people can create safer spaces needed for people to flourish.

"I have felt, and continue to feel, a strong calling to help, support and equip Church & Circuit Safeguarding Officers; Circuit Leadership and Church Council members as they work through all that is required of them. The Methodist Church has a strong safeguarding support system in place and I feel honoured to play a small part in this, serving all people as and when required & invited too, in the Sheffield Methodist District."

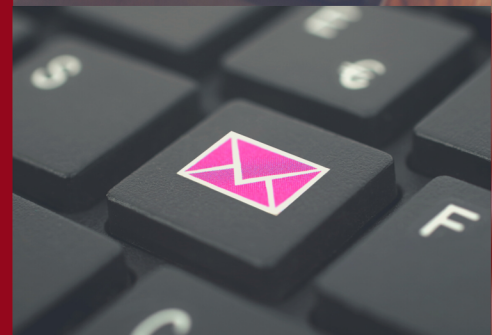


Keeping our District Connected

The District Team are always looking for new ways in which we can improve how information flows around our District and gets to the right people as quickly as possible, so District Administrator, Katrin Hackett has been creating a database of contacts.

We do rely on emails for communication but are aware that not every church office holder has access to the internet. The aim is to have at least one email point of contact for each church who will, where necessary, pass on information to relevant people. This will allow District Officers to contact the most relevant person and allows a smoother flow of information.

This will always be a work in progress as people move or change roles. We are currently checking the information currently held to ensure all those held on the database are aware of why we are holding this information and how it will be used.



PROPERTIES FIT FOR MISSION

Eco Church

Eco Church awards are being achieved around the District with churches in most circuits participating in the scheme.

Churches are receiving their awards after they have reduced their environmental impact including creating woodland gardens, changing to energy saving light bulbs, encouraging recycling and even upcycling broken or worn out items.

Eco-Church is a scheme designed to motivate and equip churches to express care for God's world in worship and teaching, management of church buildings and land, community and global engagement and in the lifestyles of the congregation.

Tom Rattigan, Missional Property Enabler, said: "I'm encouraging all churches to explore the Eco-Church scheme and by taking some small sustainable steps we can all play our part in a much bigger picture. We are in a climate crisis, which makes care for creation an essential part of being fit for mission. Eco-Church offer lots of resources to help you explore further and your District team are ready to support you."

If you'd like to apply or make changes to your buildings to support this scheme please contact Mission Property Enabler Tom Rattigan at mpe@sheffieldmethodist.org



Reaching Communities through Soft play

Soft play can often be seen as a lifeline by many parents and grandparents looking to entertain children so two churches in Sheffield and Barnsley Circuits have installed play equipment to fit the needs of their local communities.

Little Fishes Play Centre and community café can be found at Hemsworth Methodist Church, Barnsley.

Elizabeth Haigh explains: "The soft play is designed for children up to the age of 11 and along with the café creates a relaxing place for children to play while the grown-ups enjoy a cuppa, and families can enjoy a meal.

"Not everyone wants to come to a church service, however through projects like this, they are happy to come into our buildings and enjoy the fellowship and create new connections."

Sam's Space at Firth Park Methodist Church in Sheffield re-opened fully, after the pandemic, in September 2021 and is now busy serving the hugely diverse and needy local community.

Lynne Brand said: "Our team of volunteers, led by our manager, provide a rich and varied programme of extra activities, such as pottery painting, crafts and animal encounters in Haydon's Haven, in addition to the soft play facility and sensory room.

"We also now provide SEND sessions, once per month, which cater for families who require a specialist environment and understanding for their children as well as much more."

PROPERTIES FIT FOR MISSION

Major Renovations

Despite the Covid pandemic, £2million has been invested in making our properties fit for mission this year, funded by generous local giving backed up by grants from charities, councils, Methodist organisations and businesses. Churches in Sheffield, Rotherham and Derbyshire North East Circuits have been transformed into modern community spaces, expanding their missional opportunities.

Greenhill Methodist Church in Sheffield has a new atrium and church entrance, a fully refurbished hall with a central catering kitchen, a new play area outside and the Scout hut has been given disabled access making sure the whole premises is now accessible to all.

Bolsover Methodist Church in Derbyshire has been extended, modernised and refurbished creating a warm, welcoming multi use space with new kitchen facilities and under floor heating. A service of rededication was held earlier this year where the President of the Methodist Conference, Revd. Sonia Hicks preached.

The High Street Centre in Rawmarsh, home to Rawmarsh Methodist Church has been undergoing renovations for a number of years, but in the latest round of building work a new easily accessible entrance and flexible meeting room have been created. This allows the building to have multiple uses and creates more space for the local community to congregate.

Neil Harland, District Mission Enabler said: "The works in these church buildings are excellent examples of how we can make properties fit for mission. These churches have clear visions of how they can support and be in the centre of their local communities.

"Each project has been careful to retain the traditional elements of the buildings and preserve the heritage, whilst allowing modernisation.

"Whether it's major renovation work or small changes needed to your churches, the District are here to help and support."



SUPERINTENDENTS SPEAK



"This has been a hugely challenging year, but one in which we have seen many prayers answered and a growing desire to work together. We pray that our hopes for the future will be realised and look forward to all that God might yet do amongst us"

Sheffield Circuit - Revd Romeo Pedro

"In my few weeks since arriving in Sheffield as their new Superintendent I have been excited to learn of the foundations that have been laid over the past year. The last year has not been an easy one for the Sheffield Circuit, but it has been wonderful to see people beginning to pull together more and to see levels of hope rising about the possibility of a different future. In particular, it has been good to see some people committed to a weekly Circuit prayer gathering. These gatherings have been special, and it has been wonderful to be able to encourage each other with stories of answered prayer.

The Circuit has been reminded of how important good relationships are in enabling the Circuit to function well. It has been good to witness examples of staff collaborating to deliver such things as bereavement groups. The weekly prayer gatherings have enabled individuals from across the Circuit to get to know each other better as well as hearing the stories of what is going on in various parts of the Circuit. In addition, it has been helpful to gather the local church treasurers together on a couple of occasions to enable better understanding of the circuit's financial position but also, again, to hear each other's stories and grow in understanding of both the joys and challenges that are being experienced and faced across the Circuit.

At the start of the Connexional year, the Circuit also welcomed Revds Naomi Cooke, Mike Jones and Philip Peacock and the circuit is also preparing to employ a mental health worker too. We very much look forward to getting to know them and sharing in ministry and mission with them across the Circuit. This will undoubtedly bring a new dynamic to the Circuit team and to our ways of working together and we look forward to all that God will show us and teach us as we journey on together.

A small group within the Circuit continues to explore a number of projects that may be pursued within the New Places For New People initiative and we look forward to the continuing discernment processes about where to invest our resources and what God might continue to do in each place amongst his people.

It was great to welcome the President of the Conference to the new congregation emerging at Oasis in Victoria Hall and to host her at The Terminus Initiative where an increasing appetite amongst those who visit the site for studying God's word has seen the formation of a regular bible study group.

A few churches have come to the difficult decision to cease worship, whilst others are taking seriously the need to reduce the number of trustee bodies within the Circuit and are beginning to explore what it might look like to be part of a multi-site church. The sale of some buildings enables the Circuit to invest in other exciting projects. For example, the Circuit is considering employing a Mental Health worker to support staff and train people across the Circuit in this important area of our wellbeing.

This has been a hugely challenging year, but one in which we have seen many prayers answered and a growing desire to work together. We pray that our hopes for the future will be realised and look forward to all that God might yet do amongst us."

SUPERINTENDENTS SPEAK



"If you were ever called to bring two Circuits together to create a new one, you wouldn't normally choose to do this during a pandemic. The past two years have offered a challenging start for the new Derbyshire North East Circuit but we are starting to see some fruit in the last year."

Derbyshire North East Circuit - Revd Sean Adair

"The past two years have offered a challenging start for the new Derbyshire North East Circuit but we are starting to see some fruit in the last year. Here are some of the highlights.

The hosting of the District Ordinand's Testimony Service at Central Methodist Church when our very own Mark Carrick was our only ordinand this year.

Inkersall Methodist Church's vision for a new church building is finally coming to the point of seeking planning permission.

Our New Places for New People project led to the appointment of Jonathan Hood as Circuit Community Pioneer just after Easter.

New schools work in the areas where Jonathan and our Circuit Youth Pastor, Tim Rossell work together. Tim has also been able to revive with our friends at Hasland Methodist Church 'the Hangout', a post school drop in for young people which regularly attracts in excess of 20 people.

Central Methodist Church have been starting to discern the potential for a dementia friendly cafe at their Cornerstone cafe and a dementia friendly act of worship also.

Central also became a place for gathering and supporting refugees from the war in Ukraine.

Barlow and Cutthorpe Methodist Church made the decision to cease to meet last summer and now largely connect with the Whittington Moor congregation which has brought much benefit to the life and work there.

Staveley Methodist Church became the home of the newly created Edge Ministries which has a mission to reach forgotten people in forgotten places, a work that resonates very much with our own New Places for New People vision.

Bolsover Methodist Church reopened officially after a significant refurbishment project on Saturday 14th May 2022 with this year's President, Revd Sonia Hicks our preacher on that occasion.

Finally, it was a year of continuing developments in worship with the ongoing delivery of Daily Devotions which this year involves reading the whole of the Bible in just over a year, three chapters per day.

We continue to hold Sunday evening Zoom Services. Three churches now have the potential for live streaming their services.

Finally, we have had a new venture simply entitled Contemporary Exploration services with everything from storytelling to Godly Play, to a service based around recent worship songs."

SUPERINTENDENTS SPEAK



"This year has been a very challenging period but this has allowed us time for reflection and to consider how we reset and change going forward. Change is never easy but there is a recognition we need to do some things differently across our Circuit and Churches – much prayer and thought is underway."

Trinity Circuit Circuit - Revd Julie Coates

During this year we've seen a collective strength of our churches to get back open, open our doors to local communities, restart church activity and share our faith. Great resilience has been shown by many in our churches to restart past activities that have been much valued by the community and also be open minded to new areas of activity.

It has been great to welcome our Probationer, Deacon Emily Hoe-Crook, into the Circuit. The members of the Worship Development Group, who have been supporting Emily, have been inspired by the fresh perspective and innovative suggestions that she brings to the role, for instance in how she prepares for and delivers baptism services.

This year we've learnt to step out of our buildings and found that we like worshipping in our Church Gardens and opening up our Car Parks for Street Parties! We met with God beside the canal and in a cemetery on a Good Friday Walk and even celebrated an ecumenical Carol Service in the rain in Retford Market Place.

The timing of our weekly worship has changed and our plan has a different pattern to it with occasional early morning communions and afternoon Café Services. The Grove now has a monthly 'Open Door, Calm Space' time of reflection.

Church partnerships are becoming more important with local church leadership teams meeting together to support one another and plan joint projects.

We've continued to film some of our services, like the Act of Worship to mark the closure of Woodsetts Methodist Church and celebrate its witness within the local community, so that we have a lasting record of these occasions which can be shared with those who were unable to attend.

Our commitment to environmental issues and facilitating justice conversations has been underlined through Circuit Services.

The Crossing Church is providing a motivating example of how to run dementia friendly activities within an accessible building. Although the café business at The Crossing is missed by many there have been new opportunities to use that space in partnership with groups like the YMCA, the Foodbank and Methodist Homes.

Things will only happen if God is in it. We have had numerous ups and downs across the Circuit but understanding and recognising that matters will only progress when it is God's plan and the time is right has been key. As a Circuit we believe more change is required and needed and we are currently in a discernment/consideration phase to fully understand God's plan. We know that we have some difficult questions to address and that the answers are far from obvious. Time to focus on our mission and now we are testing out the reality of what works in the new normal.

Looking ahead to next year, we'll continue to support our churches to develop their forward plans, we think this may lead to more change with perhaps more churches joining together and some having to consider their future, whatever course it may take.

We'll continue to develop the Eco Church initiatives and the Justice Conversations. In particular we have been challenged to build relationships with local politicians.

We will use the resources and facilities that we have to respond to those struggling with isolation, loss of confidence and problems caused by the cost of living crisis.

SUPERINTENDENTS SPEAK



"After two very difficult years of restriction as we moved into the new Methodist Year in September 2021 we started to see some of our traditions return including Harvest and our Family Worship"

Rotherham & Dearne Valley Circuit

As Covid restrictions lifted it has been great to get back to many of our activities and traditional service.

At St John's our weekly T-Junction returned with the usual coffee and conversation but now with hymns and a monthly Holy Communion as we strive as a circuit to get Jesus to the centre of all that we do. Across the circuit our weekly and monthly Coffee Mornings returned enabling the people living in our circuit to come into our buildings and get the much needed people contact they need.

At Wath & West Melton we have continued to have our building open to with Broad Horizons providing a valuable service to the most needy in our community not just throughout the pandemic but as we come out the other side. The final phase of our building project was completed with roof repairs. Many years of hard work finally completed.

At Rawmarsh the Hight Street Centre is in full swing. We are enjoying the fruits of our recent building works and improvements. The centre is at the heart of the community with the building used every day.

In Swinton we have continued to work with Swinton Community Focus Group. The Methodist Church was host to their Helping Hands Event where agencies from across the spectrum came together to try and help those most needy in our community. We had over 100 visitors all who left helped and better for having attended.

At Piccadilly we have continued to support the community by keeping the Pre-school going throughout the pandemic. This year they have gone from strength to strength and are nearly reaching capacity.

We have had our Uniform Drive and Prom Dress Initiative. Offering support to those who can not afford uniforms and need a bit of help. Providing Prom Dresses for a donation to enable attendance where the cost of a dress prohibits attendance.

At Clifton our community Café is back open and Table Tennis is playing a part in getting our community active and socialising in our setting. Our youth club is also back open and providing a Godly safe place for the youngers of that community.

In Wickersley we have our over 50's Youth club which is well received and much needed.

Memory Cafes are back open at St John's in Swinton and at Wickersley Methodist Church. Providing refuge from those suffering with memory loss and their carers.

Our Little Boat Clubs for under 5's are up and running this year at Broom, St John's and Central. A parent toddler group with a Christian message every week.

Our Girls Brigade has been up and running all year and continues to be a great success. We have added to this a Boys Brigade which started part way through our Methodist Year. We have been working hard to acquire belllyres as we work towards our aim of a belllyre band.

In Whiston we have been open and active and delighted to be back being a presence in the community festivals as they have returned post pandemic.

Across the circuit there has been support for Family Fun Churches which are twice a month in different locations. A different worship offering specially for families.

Finally we remain in partnership with our Anglican Colleagues in LEP partnership at Thorpe Hesley.

SUPERINTENDENTS SPEAK



"The Circuit although facing the reality of chapel closures has not given up but continues to look forward publishing a mission plan encouraging people to engage with the Methodist way of life."

Barnsley Circuit - Revd. Mick Neal

In the last year Covid has made people stop and think and re-evaluate their situations. We've seen some brave decisions made, Chapels closed but we have found alternative ways to meet for example in a pub.

On the whole we've learnt to adapt, being online isn't for all, but for some meetings, groups and studies worked well.

Our Mission Plan is being continually looked at and worked on bringing new ideas and initiatives including Holy Habits which is building momentum. We are also delighted that we've secured funding for a fourth minister in the Circuit.

This year we've learnt to listen to one another's needs. What one chapel needs might be very different from what another needs and we've realised we can't go on as we are, things do need to change. Covid and its impact on Chapels has forced us to think harder than ever about doing new things and members realised we want the circuit to survive and come out stronger but we will have to change for this to happen.

Next year we are looking forward to building a purpose-built manse in a new housing development, a new deacon, which we hope will bring new opportunities as she works with our other enthusiastic (for new work) ministers, lay staff and members. Trying out new ideas as we explore being church for today and the future.

Doncaster Circuit - Revd. Mick Neal

In Doncaster this has been a year of many challenges, but we have faced them in the certainty that God is with us. We have addressed changing staffing situations which meant we had to regroup the churches halfway through the year. Church members have responded positively to the opportunity to open again for worship following the pandemic which now means that once again worship is happening in all our churches most weeks. We are grateful for the local church leaders as well as the preachers and leaders of worship who have made this possible.

In May we held an outdoor Circuit Service on Aldersgate Sunday as a positive witness the church is alive. We used this opportunity to celebrate the life of the church, to recognise the legacy of our Methodist tradition and witness to what God is doing today. In August we were able to take part in Doncaster Pride with a stall in the town centre. Our group was able to engage in conversation about God and how we are seeking to be a more inclusive church.

We are also delighted a new Pastor has joined our staff team.

We are grateful in this year for the leadership of our Circuit Staff and our Circuit Stewards who have all taken on additional responsibilities to guide us through.

In the year we have learnt that we can trust in God to guide us through difficult times and in the new year we will continue to review our Circuit Mission Strategy and engage positively in the stationing process as we seek a new Superintendent Minister for September 2023.



SUPERINTENDENTS SPEAK



"The phrase 'life is a rollercoaster' is a bit over-used, but it does describe our experience in the Peak Circuit since September 2021!

It has been challenging, sometimes frustrating, exciting, tiring, encouraging, scary, but inspiring as we continue discerning where God is leading us for such a time as this"

Peak Circuit - Revd. Adrian Perry

As for all of us, we feel that 're-grouping' following lockdown has been challenging, but that it has also given us some insight into re-imagining what Church might look like.

Some of the highlights over this past year include the strong connection between a local Church and school through 'Godly Play' and 'Story-keepers', as well as strong connections with local families in another village through 'Seedlings and Groundbreakers'.

The Hub at Hope Church aimed at cyclists and walkers continues to develop new ways of being Church too.

Another highlight is seeing the positivity and 'can-do' attitude of the CLT and local Churches and a willingness to commit to fulfilling the vision, not least in relation to our developing pilgrimage venture the 'Wesley Way'.

We have been reminded that there is hope for the future and that we are indeed 'yet alive'. We can engage with all kinds of people today and we've learnt that we can be brave, take risks, and achieve more than we think. We are learning how to live out our faith, rather than simply talk about it. We've learnt about the value of teamwork, both within the CLT and with the District, and we've learnt the need for, and value of planning well.

We are looking forward to seeing ministry amongst communities continue to grow, such as those mentioned above and the development and of our newest project the 'Wesley Way'. We are currently working on phase 1 of the project, and will be moving onto phase 2 as the year unfolds. We look forward to raising the profile of the project and engaging a wider media awareness of what we are doing, both locally and nationally.

We look forward too, to having a clearer sense of what a 're-imagined' Circuit looks like over the coming year.

It has been challenging, sometimes frustrating, exciting, tiring, encouraging, scary, but inspiring as we continue discerning where God is leading us for such a time as this.

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