

Barnet & Queensbury Circuit Mission Plan 2023

Context

The Barnet & Queensbury Circuit was formed in 2006, as part of the reconfiguration of Methodism consequent on the creation of a single London District. The Circuit comprises nine Local Churches on ten sites. Two of the churches, Trinity Mill Hill and Trinity Golders Green, are single-congregation LEPs with the United Reformed Church, and another, Barnet Brookside, is in an ecumenical partnership with the Anglican parish of St Mary's, East Barnet. Other churches have close ecumenical connections (e.g. Queensbury Methodist Church and All Saints', Queensbury). One church building, Queensbury, is located in the London Borough of Brent; the others are in the London Borough of Barnet.

The Circuit is set within, and seeks to serve, the largest and most diverse of the London boroughs. With a population in excess of 400,000, the London Borough of Barnet is larger than cities like Cardiff, Coventry, and Newcastle, and on a par with Leicester. More than 130 languages are spoken in the borough's schools, making national, ethnic, and religious diversity very apparent. Barnet includes areas of great affluence and areas of considerable deprivation and need. Communities continue to change, most recently with the arrival of Syrian, Iranian, Afghan, and Ukrainian refugees, and British National (Overseas) families from Hong Kong. Diversity is reflected in the Circuit's churches and through engagement with several Fellowship Groups, including the Filipino Fellowship worshipping at Golders Green and the Ghanaian Methodist Fellowship UK, and the Circuit is well-represented in the Barnet Multi-Faith Forum.

Although the Methodist membership is not large – 442 members at 1 November 2022 – the opportunities and needs are considerable, and this Mission Plan is written with this potential in mind.

Worship

Worship is fundamental to the life and calling of the Church. The Circuit therefore seeks to sustain the worshipping life of its Local Churches and to resource the churches to offer worship characterised by authenticity and excellence, in an appropriate variety of styles. Although a new Local Preacher was admitted in January 2023 and there are two others currently on trial, the plan is heavily dependent on a small number of very experienced preachers and Local Arrangement services are a regular feature in all churches. At best, Local Arrangements are experienced as creative opportunities for Local Churches, and we wish to build on this. Our aim, therefore, is:-

- To continue encouraging members to explore a call to lead worship and preach;
- To support Local Preachers on note and on trial, and trainee Worship Leaders, with appropriate mentoring and tuition;
- To encourage and support Local Churches in identifying and training local worship groups, so that Local Arrangement services can be an opportunity and not a problem;
- To resource Local Preachers and Worship Leaders through a Circuit-wide subscription to The Vine;
- To work with Local Churches in deploying technology, building on existing multimedia and streaming expertise, to make the best use of personnel.

Learning and Caring

Much of the learning and caring offered across the Circuit happens most appropriately and effectively through Local Churches, sometimes in partnership with ecumenical friends. The Circuit aims:-

- To act as a channel of communication, ensuring that District and Connexional resources reach appropriate contacts in local situations;
- To ensure that each Local Church is complying with Connexional Safeguarding and EDI protocols and training;
- To encourage and resource learning, exploration and training in the Local Churches.

Service

Communities across the Circuit vary considerably, with a diversity of opportunities and needs. In many places our buildings are significant community resources. The Circuit aims:-

- To ensure that church facilities are well-maintained, as bases for mission and service;
- To make funds available for personnel and property projects;
- To encourage efficient administration, including sharing of salaried personnel.

Evangelism

Our membership currently comprises 0.01% of the population of the London Borough of Barnet. Our aim is to increase that figure, through effective evangelism. To that end, the Circuit aims:-

- To encourage each Local Church to develop its own plan for outreach;
- To support Local Churches to enhance their online presence;
- To build confidence in expressing and sharing faith;
- To work with our ecumenical partners to develop new work on the North London Business Park;
- To maintain and explore chaplaincy opportunities: at Barnet Southgate College, Middlesex University and elsewhere.

Staffing

Since 2006 the number of presbyters in the Circuit has reduced. Given the Local Churches' needs for pastoral oversight, the opportunities for community engagement, and the scope for ecumenical and inter-faith partnerships, the Circuit seeks to maintain staffing at the current level and to explore ways in which salaried support with financial and property administration could relieve the burden borne by ministers and lay volunteers. The Circuit also aims to explore opportunities for diaconal ministry, to enrich and extend our outreach.

To be approved at the September 2023 Circuit Meeting