

Explaining our Structures



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How do Methodist Churches Work?

The local church is overseen by a body called the Church Council. This body is responsible for all major decisions and policy in the life of the Church. It usually meets at least twice a year and is chaired by the Minister, though this responsibility can be delegated to another minister or a lay person.

The Church Council is made up of the Minister, the Church Stewards, other office holders and by members of the congregation elected by the Annual Church Meeting.

The Annual Church Meeting also appoints Church Stewards who are responsible for the running of the Church on Sundays and act as focal points for the congregation raising any issues of concern and dealing with any problems.

The Church Council appoints lay people to oversee the pastoral, financial and property dimensions of the Churches work and delegate authority as is appropriate. However the Church Council retains full responsibility for all decisions taken and must be consulted on any significant decisions. Committees may include: one for pastoral matters, governance matters including finance and property, worship planning and church and community outreach.

What is the local Methodist Church's Task?

It is the major task of the Church Council to seek God and discern a vision for the future of the Church. Having grasped such a vision it is the Council's task to plan the practical ways in which this mission will be brought to reality in the life of the Church.

The Methodist Church describes three important dimensions which shape most of Church life. These are set out in the document **Our Calling**.

- **Worship**
- **Learning and Caring**
- **Service and Evangelism**

If you have an idea or an issue which you think should be raised, please bring this first to the Church Stewards or the Church Minister. They will advise you on how to proceed. You may address issues direct to Church Council with reasonable notice and assuming that they lie within the remit of the meeting.

It should finally be noted that the Church expects its meetings to be conducted according to the highest standards of respect, courtesy and kindness.

Methodist Structures

Methodism became a separate Protestant denomination when it broke away from the Church of England in the 18th century. It has always described itself as a Connexion, emphasising the links between local Methodist Churches and those throughout the world. There are over 80 million Methodists in the world and we are growing!

Local Methodist Churches are bound together in groups called Circuits. The Leeds South and West Methodist Circuit covers the western half of the city of Leeds. Circuits are established for mutual help and support and are supervised by the Circuit Meeting. This meeting is chaired by a senior minister responsible for the oversight of the whole Circuit called the Superintendent. He is helped by a leadership team made up of other ministers and respected lay people called the Circuit Stewards.

Each Church Council sends its senior steward, treasurer and a set number of representatives decided by each Circuit.

Circuits are further grouped into Districts overseen by a senior minister, the District Chair and guided by a district meeting called a Synod. We are currently in the Yorkshire West District of the Methodist. Through the District the local church is connected to the British Methodist Conference which is the governing body of the whole Church.

In Methodism authority rests not on an individual but in the Conference. The Conference is the final authority in all matters of doctrine and practice and meets once a year in early July. The Conference is also responsible for the training and stationing of Ministers. Unlike other churches Methodist ministers must go wherever they are sent usually serving between 5-8 years in any given place.

The Covenant with the Church of England

Simply put the Methodist and Anglican Churches have agreed and committed themselves to working as closely together as they are able. The covenant recognises that each denomination contains within it a wide variety of practice and theological understanding and that different levels of cooperation and partnership will be possible in different places.

Contact Details

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