

GUIDANCE PACK

for church, circuit or district leaders

COMMUNITY
OF EVANGELISTS

You might be reading this guidance because you:

- Have somebody in your church, circuit or district who is exercising a ministry as an Evangelist and who wishes to join the Community of Evangelists.
- Have somebody in mind who you think is gifted and called to be an Evangelist and you'd like them to join the Community of Evangelists to help them explore this.

However, if you don't yet have somebody who is ready to join the Community of Evangelists, but are looking for guidance around encouraging potential applicants or recruiting to potential new roles or projects, the following webpages might help you:

- Identifying and raising up Evangelists in local churches: www.methodist.org.uk/raisingupevangelists/
- Establishing new ministry roles in evangelism in your church or circuit www.methodist.org.uk/rolesforevangelists

An introduction to the Community of Evangelists

All disciples of Jesus are called to listen for, speak of, and live out the good news from their own encounter, perspective and relationship with God. While all are called to evangelism, some people have particular spiritual giftings as Evangelists.

Evangelist is not a formal office of the Church, and therefore the ministry of an Evangelist might happen differently in different contexts. They could be lay or ordained, paid or unpaid, working as part of a team or as an individual. Evangelists always work in partnership with Christian communities, both in new and existing expressions of church. We recognise a calling to evangelism as distinct from a calling to pioneering, church planting or preaching – although there is common ground for each of them.

An Evangelist in your church, circuit or district could be:

- Somebody employed in a role with a specific evangelism remit.
- Somebody in a role with a wider remit but for whom evangelism is an important part of their ministry.
- Somebody involved in a particular project or initiative that is evangelistic or is seeking to be more so.
- Somebody who simply has a passion for sharing the gospel in their everyday life.

What is the Community of Evangelists?

The Community of Evangelists is a network of ongoing spiritual and practical support for Evangelists or those who are exploring a calling as an Evangelist. This community aims to raise up, challenge and support theologically diverse Evangelists for our world today.

Within the network is a specific community for Young Evangelists, aged between 11 and 26 years old.

If you wish to explore this option, please visit: www.methodist.org.uk/youngevangelists

What does being part of the Community involve?

Equipping

Since there is such diversity in the way evangelistic ministry is carried out, the Community is less about prescriptive training and more about offering relevant and robust opportunities for equipping members in their ministry through group coaching and relevant input requested by Community members. Members are expected to attend four group coaching sessions a year. Coaching will help Evangelists move from practising evangelism well to faithful intentionality and excellence as an Evangelist.

There are also two weekend residentials each year offering spiritual nourishment, reflection, training and development for our ministry in evangelism. The residentials are open only to Community members.

Connecting

Through gatherings, conversation and prayer, members will find mutual support with other Evangelists across the Methodist Church. There will also be opportunities to invite high quality speakers on themes relevant to evangelism to come along to our sessions to offer input, and the chance for group discussion and questions.

Guiding somebody through the application process

Applicants can sign up to join the Community of Evangelists at any time – there aren't 'cohorts' or an annual application process. The Community is an ever-growing network of individuals in ministry as Evangelists.

The application process can be found here: www.methodist.org.uk/evangelistcommunity. Applicants are also encouraged to use the discernment workbook, which can be [downloaded from the same web page](#).

You'll see that applicants are encouraged to speak to a local leader as part of their discernment. Please be prepared to speak to individuals and pray with them as they explore and make this application.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please speak to Holly Adams, the convenor of the Community, on **020 7467 5232** or email adamsh@methodistchurch.org.uk

Considerations for local support

The Community of Evangelists offers support and encouragement amongst a network of people engaged in a ministry of evangelism in local contexts. Joining the Community does not offer formal commissioning or accountability. Depending on the context of the evangelistic ministry, the Circuit or District may wish to consider the following:

- **Safeguarding.** If the Evangelist is carrying out ministry on behalf of a Church, did you follow safer recruitment procedures for the recruitment of this person?

- **Role and responsibilities.** If an Evangelist is formally representing the local church, their ministry should complement the vision or mission plan of that church – in what ways has circuit leadership been involved in discerning the direction of this role? In what contexts does this ministry take place and how can innovation, creativity and outreach be encouraged?
- **Supervision and accountability.** How is the Evangelist supervised? How is their ministry overseen and who are they accountable to? Should they have a formal ministry agreement that can be reviewed regularly to help establish shared expectations for the ministry?
- **Training, equipping and support.** Although the Community of Evangelists offers these things, there may be additional contextual training required. How has the Evangelist been offered development or training opportunities? Who do they go to for support? Do they have or need spiritual direction or prayer support?
- **Affirmation and commissioning.** How is the Evangelist affirmed in their ministry? Should they be commissioned as Evangelists within the life of the Church in any appropriate way? In what way is the wider Church or Circuit leadership involved in the recognition of an Evangelist? This should be considered regardless of whether the person is ordained or lay, paid or unpaid. You may wish to use the Commissioning of Evangelists liturgy passed by the Conference in 2003 here: www.methodist.org.uk/media/1074/the-commissioning-of-evangelists-0417.pdf
- **Equality, diversity, and inclusion.** In what ways are you committed to anti-racism, justice, inclusion and accessibility both in the ways you have recruited somebody for the role of Evangelist, but also in the way you envisage their ministry will be carried out?

Some additional notes for church, circuit and district leadership:

If a person who is a member of the Community of Evangelists moves to a new church or circuit, it is possible their ministry may come to an end. In a new setting their ministry within the life of the church may be different. This does not imply that a person will 'grow out of' an evangelistic ministry. It does, however, acknowledge that ministry is exercised according to context. If you have a person moving into your church or circuit who was an Evangelist elsewhere, or somebody who has been an Evangelist in your church or circuit moving away, and you would like to speak to us about this, please contact Holly Adams on **020 7467 5232** or adamsh@methodistchurch.org.uk