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PRESS

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The **Methodist** Church 

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Providing a Media Service for the Methodist Church in Britain

- Overseeing the Methodist Church website www.methodist.org.uk
- Running the Methodist Church's social media channels.
- Helping members of the media with information about any aspect of the life and work of the Methodist Church in Britain.
- News releases on stories related to the Methodist Church.
- Regular podcasts featuring thought-provoking interviews with people from across Methodism and beyond.
- First point of contact for the views of the Church on current issues.
- Media support for local churches.

Useful Links

For news from the Methodist Church in Britain: www.methodist.org.uk/news

For news and information about the Methodist Conference: www.methodist.org.uk/conference

Find the Methodist Church on Facebook www.facebook.com/MethodistChurchinBritain
and Twitter: twitter.com/methodistgb

Keep up to date with stories from across Methodism by signing up to one of our mailings:
www.methodist.org.uk/signup

Find out about the views of the Church on key issues: www.methodist.org.uk/views

Follow our daily online Bible study: www.methodist.org.uk/bible

About the Methodist Church

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The Methodist movement was founded by the Anglican clergyman John Wesley (1703-91). Although Wesley declared, "I live and die a member of the Church of England," the strength and impact of the movement made a separate Methodist body virtually inevitable.

Today, the Methodist Church is one of the largest Christian churches serving Great Britain, with 170,000 members and regular contact with over 500,000 people. It has 4,110 churches in Great Britain, and also maintains links with other Methodist churches totalling a worldwide membership of 80 million. Its activities, both alone and with ecumenical and secular partners, are based on four aims known as *Our Calling*:

- To increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love.
- To help people to grow and learn as Christians through mutual support and care.
- To be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.
- To make more followers of Jesus Christ.

Methodist faith and worship

Methodists have always believed that no one is beyond the reach of God's love. Salvation is there for everyone who turns to God, and not just for a chosen few. It is a strong feature of Methodism that laypeople (those who aren't ordained) should play a major part in the running of the Church.

Methodists believe in what John Wesley called 'social holiness'. The longing for holiness is not about wanting to be 'holier than thou'. It is about wanting the love of God to permeate all of our lives, and for that love to be shown through our lives to other people.

Worship each week is not always led by an ordained minister, but often by a local preacher - a layperson who has been trained and authorised to lead worship. At all levels of the Methodist Church, laypeople are involved in decision making, and the Vice-President of the Conference is always a layperson or a deacon.

Music plays an essential role in Methodist worship, and singing is regarded as an important means of learning about, sharing and celebrating faith. Charles Wesley wrote about 6,000 hymns, many of which are still sung by Christians across the world today.

Church Structure

The Connexion

Methodists belong to local churches, but are also part of a larger connected community - the Connexion. In the Methodist Church decisions are made as openly as possible, giving opportunities for all to contribute. Included in the British Methodist Connexion are all the districts of Scotland, Wales and England, along with the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands and Shetland.

The local church

The local church is the congregational place of worship where Methodist members and other attendees are nurtured. Local Methodist churches are congregations based on the original Methodist 'societies' which met within the Church of England. When they began to gather in larger buildings, Methodists continued the practice of meeting in small groups or 'classes' for Bible study, prayer and Christian conversation.

The circuit

A circuit is a group of local churches, served by a team of local preachers and ministers, led by the superintendent minister.

The district

The district serves a geographical group of circuits and is led by the district chair. There are 30 Methodist districts across Great Britain.

The Methodist Conference

The Conference meets annually in June or July in a different location each year. It is the governing body for the Methodist Church.

It first met in 1744 under John Wesley, who gathered together his assistants (both ordained ministers and itinerant lay preachers) to confer together about "what to teach, how to teach, and what to do, ie how to regulate our doctrine, discipline and practice".

The contemporary Conference is a gathering of representatives from each Methodist district, along with some who have been elected by the Conference and some ex officio members and representatives of the Youth Assembly. There is a mixture of laypeople, ordained presbyters and deacons.

The President and Vice-President

At the start of the Representative Session at each Methodist Conference, a new President and Vice-President are appointed to preside over that year's Conference. They then spend the year travelling around the Connexion and abroad, representing the Methodist Church. The President is always an ordained presbyter and the Vice-President is always a layperson or deacon.

Global relationships

The Methodist Church in Britain works with 60 Partner Churches worldwide in four geographical areas: Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, as well as the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Middle East. The Church sends and receives mission partners, arranges scholarships for students and advises on the mutual sharing of resources and experiences with our Partner Churches.

Key People



The Revd Richard J Teal,
President of the Methodist
Conference, 2020/2021

Richard is a Methodist presbyter and was brought up in a small Yorkshire Dales village, where his father was a farmer. After leaving school, Richard worked in textile management and during that time he candidated for the Methodist ministry. He attended Wesley College, Bristol, and left a year early due to the shortage of presbyters at that time. His first circuit was Blaydon in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne District and he was then sent as Superintendent to what in those days was a priority appointment in Berwick-upon-Tweed on the English-Scottish border. Nine years later, Richard returned to East Yorkshire and served as Superintendent of the Beverley Circuit. In each of these appointments there was significant church growth.

After circuit ministry, Richard served for 11 years as Chair of the Cumbria Methodist District and his experience of rural ministry came to the fore. His understanding and appreciation of rural issues helped considerably when Cumbria was devastated by two county-wide floods. In 2010 a gunman killed 12 people on the west coast of Cumbria and Richard had a significant role in leadership and pastoral responsibility.

In his time in Cumbria, Richard had at least two other very significant roles: first in enabling the region to become the first ecumenical county in Great Britain. Second, he formed a strong agricultural chaplaincy team to bring pastoral support to the agricultural community and beyond.

Richard greatly values rural communities and encourages rural churches to take risks and do new and exciting faith activities. For Richard, a small rural chapel is not a failed large church. Small communities are important and significant in building the kingdom of God. Richard was also contributor to *A Discipling Presence*, a workbook that promotes an effective Christian presence in rural communities (Methodist Publishing, 2017).

Richard is married to Susan, and they have two children and two grandchildren.



Carolyn Lawrence,
Vice-President
of the Methodist
Conference,
2020/2021

Carolyn has a background in primary education and was an educational mission partner in Guyana with the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and Americas. Since returning to the UK, she has worked in a voluntary capacity within the Methodist Church as a preacher and leader. More recently she has worked with the Global Relationships team of the Methodist Church helping to engage people with our worldwide network of Partner Churches. She is also part of the 'World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women', serving as the Area Officer for Great Britain.

Carolyn grew up in a non-Christian home but became part of the Methodist Church through the Girl Guides and gave her life to Jesus at the age of 15. She then spent three years in an Assemblies of God Pentecostal Church where she was baptised, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and got married. Carolyn and her husband Mark felt called back to serve in the Methodist Church where they have worshipped now for the past 36 years.

Carolyn has a heart for sharing the love of Jesus through preaching, teaching, pastoral care and social action. Wherever people are on their spiritual journey, she enjoys helping them to grow in their faith and she encourages them to become 'disciple-making disciples'.

She and her husband have two grown-up married daughters, three grandchildren and two cats.

Key People



The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler,
Secretary of the
Methodist Conference

Before becoming Secretary of the Methodist Conference, Jonathan had been Assistant Secretary since September 2017. Prior to this he was the Ministerial Coordinator for Oversight of Ordained Ministries in the Connexional Team.

Jonathan trained at Wesley House, Cambridge, and studied as Finch Scholar in Rome for a year. He was ordained in 1992. He served in circuit appointments in Leighton Buzzard and Stewkley, Cleveland, and Mid-Lincolnshire, before returning to Wesley House as Vice-Principal and Director of Pastoral Studies.

Jonathan has served on a number of committees in the Church and as a District Ecumenical Officer. His involvement in the training of local preachers and ministers has been extensive and he continues to write on pastoral theology, preaching and church history.



Phoebe Parkin,
Methodist Youth President,
2020/2021

Phoebe grew up in Telford, in the West Midlands. Having taken A levels in history, psychology, performing arts and Spanish, she hopes to study for a degree in Spanish and philosophy at university.

Phoebe loves the performing arts, baking and running. She worships at Wellington Methodist Church, where she has served as a junior steward, led worship and helped organise youth events. In particular, Phoebe enjoys working with young people and children, especially engaging with them in practical projects, such as Messy Church. She also likes to be involved with the wider community. For example, she is a National Citizens Service (NCS) Youth Board member, a volunteer in charity shops and is becoming an NHS volunteer.

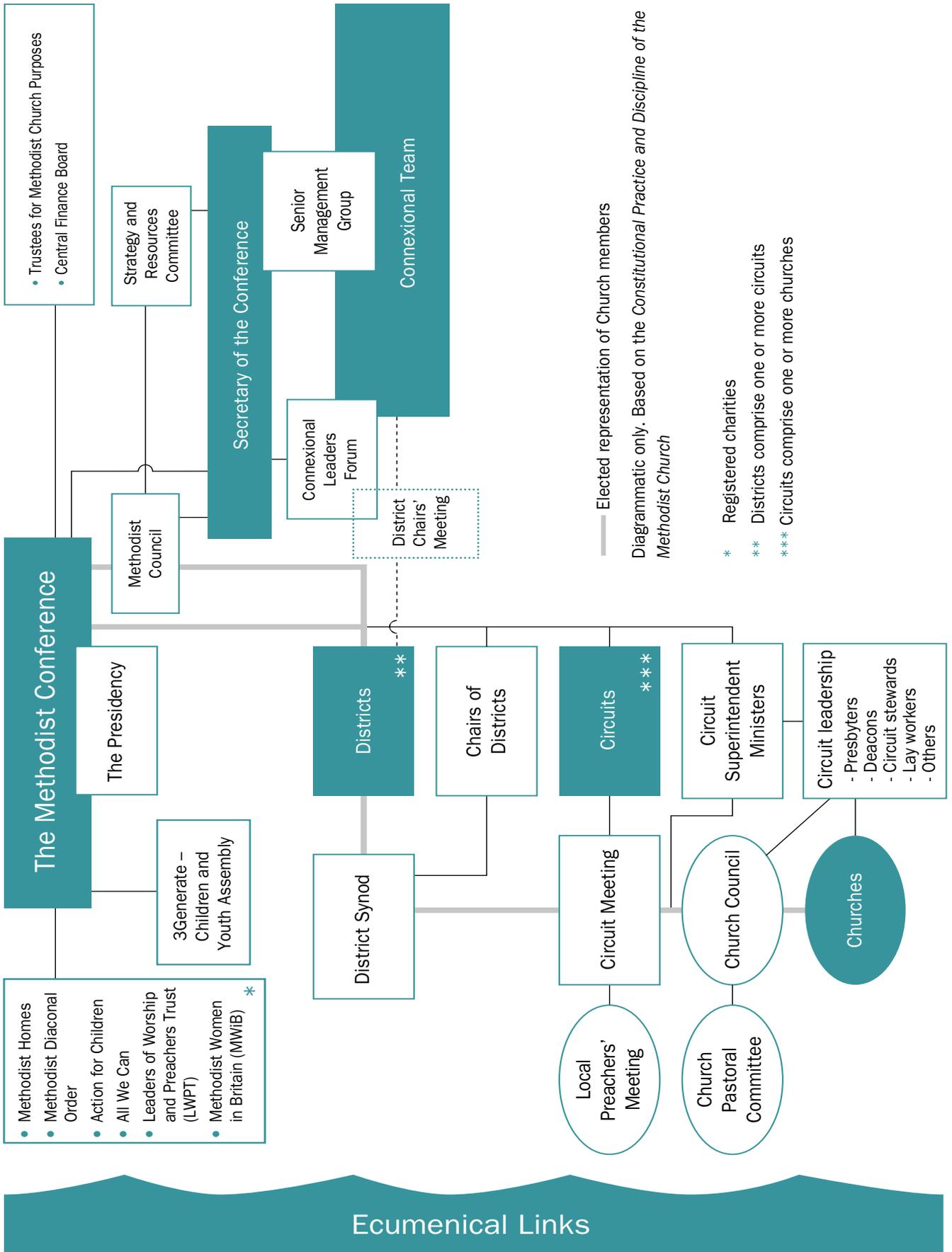
Having been encouraged by church leaders, Phoebe decided to stand for the role of Youth President because she is passionate about encouraging young people in the Church to engage with wider issues. She believes that with their God-given talents, young people in the Church have so much to offer, and through their faith can bring something valuable and unique to the community. This was the basis for her theme 'God's World, Our Home', which focuses on young people and children addressing the environmental crisis theologically, spiritually and practically.

Phoebe says, "I pray that during my year, I can help young people to be the change in their churches and communities, giving the Church a voice in the current environmental crisis. I hope that our faith in God will enable us now, and as the future generation, to tackle these issues with the grace and love of Jesus."

Phoebe will take up her post in August 2020

 @YouthPresident

Structure and organisation diagram



Methodist District Map



Methodist Districts

- 1 Synod Cymru
 - 2 Wales Synod
 - 5 Birmingham
 - 6 Bolton & Rochdale
 - 7 Bristol
 - 9 Cumbria
 - 10 Channel Islands
 - 11 Chester & Stoke-on-Trent
 - 12 Cornwall & Isles of Scilly
 - 13 Darlington
 - 14 East Anglia
 - 15 Isle of Man
 - 17 Lincolnshire
 - 18 Liverpool
 - 19 Manchester & Stockport
 - 20 Newcastle upon Tyne
 - 21 Lancashire
 - 22 Nottingham & Derby
 - 23 Northampton
 - 24 Plymouth & Exeter
 - 25 Sheffield
 - 26 Southampton
 - 27 Yorkshire West
 - 28 Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury
 - 29 Yorkshire North & East
 - 31 Scotland
 - 32 Shetland
 - 34 Bedfordshire, Essex & Hertfordshire
 - 35 London
 - 36 South East
- * Districts 1 & 2 together form the Methodist Church in Wales

Key

- Counties & Unitary Authorities
- District Boundary Lines

Channel Islands

- 10 Channel Islands