

4. *God For All: The Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth*

Contact names and details	Jude Levermore, Head of Mission, levermorej@methodistchurch.org.uk Trey Hall, Director of Evangelism and Growth, hallt@methodistchurch.org.uk
Resolutions	4/1. The Conference receives the Report. 4/2. <i>[withdrawn]</i> 4/3. The Conference agrees the programme plans as outlined in the Report, and directs the Council to monitor progress against the 'Expected Outcomes' annually, reporting back to the Conference on this in 2025.

Summary of content

Subject and aims	To present a contextual, coherent, and coordinated Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth.
Main points	Section A – Introduction Section B – Overview of the <i>God For All</i> Strategy Section C – <i>God For All</i> Core Strategic Areas Section D – Funding Summary, Conclusion, and Resolutions Appendix
Background context and relevant documents	Our Calling (2000) Reaffirming <i>Our Calling</i> : the future call of the Methodist Church (2018) MC/18/68 Connexional Team Report MC/18/72 Methodist Council Objectives MC/19/5 Connexional Team Update MC/19/69 Draft Foundations of a Connexional Evangelism and Growth Strategy

Section A – Introduction

1. The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. It does this through Worship, Learning and Caring, Service, and Evangelism. *Our Calling* says of evangelism: "The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ."
2. Following the 2018 Methodist Conference's reaffirmation of *Our Calling*, a new Evangelism and Growth team was appointed in 2018/2019 to work diligently with leaders across the Connexion and with our ecumenical partners to inspire, design, and embed a contextual, coherent, and coordinated Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth.
3. This paper presents the foundational orientations and key programmes of *God For All*¹, the Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth.
4. This strategy is presented in the belief that, by God's grace, it will help the Methodist Connexion to deepen its commitment to be a growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, inclusive Church of gospel people who speak of, listen for, and live out the goodness of God so that more people become disciples of Jesus Christ, and already committed Methodists experience a deepening of their faith.

Design process and timeline

5. From the outset, the Evangelism and Growth team committed itself to discerning and building this strategy collaboratively. It took this approach believing that God speaks through God's people, and that our mission is clearer, stronger, more flexible, and more achievable when it emerges from listening to the prayers, passions, wisdom, and questions of people faithful to the living God in different contexts and with different perspectives and beliefs.

¹ The term 'God for All' has been used in the ecumenical county of Cumbria as the title of their ecumenical programme for sharing God's love with all people. In conversation with the Cumbria District, the gospel language, God For All, rooted also in Methodism's Four Alls, has been chosen to describe a connexional vision for a renewed and expanded 21st-century commitment to evangelism in the Methodist Church, in concert with our ecumenical partners.

6. In the connexional year 2018/2019 the Evangelism and Growth team facilitated more than a hundred on-the-ground large group listening consultations and theological workshops across the Connexion. It engaged in thousands of individual conversations with leaders and practitioners across Methodism's broad theological and ecclesial spectrum and with key ecumenical partners and teams.
7. The emerging foundational commitments of the strategy and core direction of travel that flowed from the consultation process were shared, engaged, and tested at the Connexional Leaders' Forum, District Chairs' Meeting, Superintendents' Conferences, 3Generate, the Cliff Festival, Learning Network gatherings, and the 2019 Methodist Conference.
8. Draft programme elements of the strategy were conceived and developed from within an intentionally joined-up way of working with other emerging connexional strategies; other sections of the Connexional Team including the Ministries: Vocations and Worship team; Equality Diversity and Inclusion; the Learning Network; the Children Youth and Family Ministry team; the Joint Public Issues Team; the Global Relationships team; the Communications team; the Engagement team: and Property team; as well as with the Methodist Diaconal Order and our Learning Centres – Cliff College and the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education.
9. After the 2019 Conference, the first official draft of the strategy was written and shared broadly with Methodist and ecumenical leaders and was posted publicly on the Methodist Church website for reflection and feedback.
10. In the connexional year 2019/2020, the Methodist Church hosted an Evangelism and Growth Consultation and Celebration, where over 250 leaders – with a focus on the participation of laity, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people, young people, and the leaders of Methodist Fellowship groups – gathered to pray, worship, and respond to the first draft of the Evangelism and Growth Strategy. This dynamic gathering, featuring testimony from diverse Methodists and work groups, and with prophetic input from our ecumenical partners, affirmed the draft strategy with joy and hope.
11. The children and young people at the 2019 3Generate spoke out with a bold manifesto that challenges the Methodist Church to take action on several areas that are also key to the Evangelism and Growth strategy. These include conversation with God at the centre, a more welcoming and relevant Church, and working to combat poverty and injustice.
12. The draft strategy was presented to the Methodist Council, the Strategy and Resources Committee, and the Ministries Committee, in the winter of 2019/2020.

Biblical, theological, and historical foundations

13. *Our Calling* begins with God and our experience of the good news. Our searching, our faith, our mission, our prayer – none of this is generated by us alone. It all starts from God who is before the beginning of everything, the source and sustainer of all life. *Called to Love and Praise* states: “the Church ... belongs to God” and “...is entirely dependent on God's gift of [the] Spirit”². Anything good and gracious that the Church accomplishes flows from *Missio Dei*, God's mission which we are invited to join and be changed by. John Wesley's articulation of prevenient grace – “grace that comes before” – points to this foundational theme, which is a key aspect of the “general tenor” of Scripture: *We love because God first loved us* (1 John 4:19).
14. We want every aspect of our connexional commitment to evangelism and growth to flow from God's amazing grace. Of course, we must also have an intelligent understanding of changing demographics, cultural and social shifts, and the patterns of younger generations: and our mission strategy must engage these factors in relevant, practical, and compelling ways. But ultimately the future of the Church is not a strategy, however brilliant or effective: the future of the Church is the risen Lord Jesus Christ, known through the movement of the Holy Spirit. We are committed to evangelism and growth because we have encountered and are being transformed by the living God. This God – in the birth, life and teaching, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again in glory of Jesus Christ – creates, reconciles, and redeems the whole world so that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, all people and the whole creation will flourish and therefore glorify God.
15. This renewed commitment to evangelism and growth underpins our commitment to be a Church that aligns with the *missio Dei*, the mission of God for all. Our desire to be a growing Church that

² *Called to Love and Praise* (1999), paragraph 2.4.3

reaches new people and new groups of people flows from our encounter with God. We recognise humbly that even as we seek to join with God, the *missio Dei* will challenge us in profound ways. But we know this wrestling is on holy ground. We remember that when our foremothers and forefathers in the first century experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit poured out on all flesh that Peter preached (Acts 2), their understanding of themselves and others as Church continued to be challenged and expanded (Acts 10, 11, 15). Their communal struggle and ongoing sanctification were connected deeply to the meaningful participation of Gentiles, women, people of diverse nationalities, eunuchs, and many other groups in the Church (Acts 8, 11, 16). *Called to Love and Praise* states: "...Scripture testifies to a vital distinction between evangelism (ie representing and proclaiming Jesus) and that kind of proselytizing which, in effect, means making Christians in our own image"³.

16. For Methodists, this ever-widening, prayerful, Pentecostal incorporation is linked theologically both to the process of salvation and to a strengthened mission to the world. John Wesley's charge to "spread Scriptural holiness over the land" holds together evangelical fervour, justice for the marginalised, theological reflection, and the reform of nation and Church. A traditional summary of Methodist teaching holds that "All need to be saved. All may be saved. All may know themselves saved. All may be saved to the uttermost."⁴ The Holy Spirit continues to enliven the Methodist Church in the 21st century as we aspire to join with our ecumenical partners in proclaiming the Good News of a God for all and a Church for all.
17. As we proclaim this gospel, we seek to be transformed by it ourselves. We name these particular commitments towards becoming a Church, ever more transformed by God, that:
 - By God's grace, makes new disciples of Jesus Christ
 - Seeks robust ecumenical partnerships with a bias for action
 - Commits to gospel-shaped participation, with a particular focus on practising anti-racism and growing as an increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-racial Church
 - Expects, nurtures, learns from, and follows the leadership of children, youth, and young adults
 - Ministers in rural, estate, urban, suburban, and village contexts, with a particular focus on communities experiencing marginalisation.

We expect that these commitments will underpin every part of this strategy.

Traditional and contemporary at the same time

18. These theological and pastoral commitments are not new ideas for the people called Methodists: they are our foundations, which the Conference has repeatedly clarified and affirmed in major reports including *Called to Love and Praise* (1999), *Our Calling* (2000), *Evangelism and Evangelists in the Methodist Church* (2002), *Where are we heading?* (2003), *Priorities of the Methodist Church* (2004), *Of Equal Value: Poverty and Inequality in the United Kingdom* (2011), *Future Mission Together* (2012) and *Reaffirming Our Calling: the future call of the Methodist Church* (2018).
19. *God For All* seeks to help the Methodist Church organise our mission and ministry around our core doctrinal teaching in robust, strategic, and sustainable ways – so that we can practise more faithfully and wisely what we have always affirmed theologically. Methodists are called not just to know our faith or to find comfort and meaning in our faith, but to live out our faith in every part of our lives.
20. In addition to the above commitments and the strategic areas which follow in section B, we desire that our work be orientated towards:

A commitment to prayer
21. Theologically to embrace God's presence and ongoing promise is to depend on God in prayer. To paraphrase Evagrius of Pontus, a fourth-century Church father who deeply influenced John Wesley: "if we are theologically rooted, we will pray truly. If we pray truly, we will be theologically rooted."⁵ As Christians set about our work, we commit ourselves to intentional, unceasing prayer, so that our commitments to evangelism, church growth, mission with those who are poor and those who are young, and pioneering and church planting flow from a deep, contemplative orientation to God's

³ *Called to Love and Praise* (1999), paragraph 2.3.7

⁴ *A Catechism for the use of the people called Methodists* paragraph 68

⁵ Chapter 61 in *The Praktikos & Chapters on Prayer* by Evagrius of Pontus, translated by John Eudes Bamberger, Cistercian Publications: Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1989.

grace, movement, and will for us and the world. One of the particular gifts of Methodism to the Church of Jesus Christ is an insistence that prayer and evangelism, contemplation and justice, should never be separated: they are inherent dimensions of the Gospel.

22. 2020 is the 200th anniversary of 'The Liverpool Minutes' of the 1820 Wesleyan Methodist Conference. That Conference, alarmed at the decline in church membership only a generation after the death of John Wesley, articulated a strategy to grow again, which included as major drivers a call to prayer (XII. Cottage Prayer Meetings) and the challenge to reach new people in new places (XVI. Opening New Places).
23. Two hundred years later, as we seek to be a Church more fully alive with grace and truth, a people acting courageously and justly in the world, we come to God in prayer: we call upon the Lord and ask for renewal, revival, and resurrection; we confess and repent of our sin and seek forgiveness; we cry out to the Holy Spirit to break through and break apart our fear, rigidity, judgmentalism, and all idols or false gospels which we orient our lives around; we wait upon the Lord in silence and contemplative attentiveness; and we trust God to transform us.

A commitment to a mixed ecology

24. Thoroughly embedding this strategy across the Connexion will depend on diverse people working together. *God For All* is not theologically or strategically monolithic. It is most definitely not *one-size-fits-all*. It will be expressed in diverse ways across the broad spectrum of the Methodist Church. It values a mixed ecology: supporting the flourishing of a diversity of missional approaches rather than pitting approaches against each other. It values churches', Circuits', and Districts' prayerful reflection and decision-making about how to engage with the strategy most faithfully and fruitfully in their particular contexts.
25. However, this mixed ecology should actively resist an unfocused, disorganised, *laissez-faire* orientation to evangelism and instead develop an orientation that holds together and grows from commitments that have traditionally been understood as dichotomies. We believe that, in the light of the gospel, they are false dichotomies: that is, they are falsely positioned as opposing each other. They are more appropriately understood as partners, iron-sharpening iron (Proverbs 27:1). Increasingly mature evangelism and mission practice breaks these false dichotomies and holds together:
 - a. Church spiritual/missional growth *and* Church numerical growth
 - b. Inviting people to established churches *and* creating new expressions of church and new relationships outside the church building, in the community
 - c. Evangelism *and* social justice
 - d. Pointing to/expanding the Kingdom and ecumenical movement *and* starting/growing more particularly Methodist Christian communities
 - e. *Missio Dei and missio ecclesiae*: God's Mission *and* Our Mission/the Church's Mission
26. *God For All* is not a strategy that envisages "reversing numerical decline" by fine-tuning our current reality and "just working harder". In the short-term to medium-term, we expect that Methodist membership numbers will continue to decline. *God For All* envisages, in both existing churches and new churches, the stewarding of mixed ecology cultures so that over the long-term, growth does occur in the numbers of new disciples of Jesus Christ, the numbers of missional risks taken and new churches started, the numbers of people who offer themselves for ordained and lay leadership for such a time as this, and the numbers of lives and communities transformed.

A commitment to letting go now towards future structural change

27. Methodists across the theological spectrum have consistently expressed great hope in the *God For All* strategy. At the same time, there has been an almost constant refrain: "if we are to focus our energy on this important work, we will have to stop doing other things and align our mission." We know that this will require challenging decisions in Districts, Circuits, and churches, and in connexional policy. Focused attention is being given to potential structural and Standing Order changes – including trusteeship, governance, decision-making bodies, district and circuit reviews (see MC/20/9: Reaffirming *Our Calling*: Trustee Structure), resource sharing, administrative and operational streamlining, missional stationing, and releasing ministers for mission – that serve the Connexion's expanding commitment to evangelism and growth. The fruit of *God For All* as it begins

in earnest in 2020/2021 will support the Conference's work to address these crucial structural changes and to help the Methodist Church align more fully with *Our Calling*.

28. That said, we must not delay responding to the imperative of evangelism and growth until structural change is completed. Standing Orders in general, in their current formulation, are meant to enable and encourage flexibility for mission now. *Called to Love and Praise* states: "From its beginnings, Methodism has been pragmatic in its approach to questions of church structure and order. Its own order and discipline emerged largely as the result of a series of *ad hoc* experiments. They were created in the 'missionary' situation of the eighteenth century, and the legacy of this has been a tendency to subordinate church order to, and to deploy church resources in response to, the missionary needs of the Church. This is, or should be, a particular strength of a 'connexional' Church, in which there is a common recognition that all are parts of a larger whole"⁶. Each District, Circuit, and church is empowered already in our Methodist polity to take prayerful, missional decisions about the most important commitments to start and those to stop.

A commitment to offer ourselves

29. As we take the next concrete steps into action, we centre in the familiar story of the Feeding of the 5,000, which is repeated through the Gospels with variations on the 'abundance not scarcity' theme. When contemplating a major new strategy meant to drive significant ecclesial change, there is the tendency to imagine the Church as a superhero or wonderworker. "If we just work really hard", "if we perform amazingly", "if we take the stage with great courage and power", we say, then we will be able to make the needed change. But if we are rooted in the gospel, we know that the needed change is not ours to supply: it is God's. Our job is, over and over again, to offer what we have – the few "loaves and fishes" that are ours – and to trust Jesus to take them, bless them, break them, and offer them, so that all will have what they need. With Jesus, amazing abundance and wild generosity grow up from our offerings of what we actually have. Jesus transforms it all, and us in the process, and there is enough for everyone with plenty of leftovers for those who come to the party later. This is truly a God for all so that we can be a Church for all.

Section B – Overview of the *God For All* Strategy

30. *God For All* sets out the following eight core areas. It suggests prayerful and decisive action, coordinated strategy, and organised teams that build on the deep theological rooting and positive will for cultural change in the Methodist Church. It names concrete steps towards our commitment to be a growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, inclusive Church of gospel people who speak of, listen for, and live out the goodness of God – so that new people become disciples of Jesus Christ and committed Methodists experience a deepening of faith.
31. While all eight core areas have strategic elements, the first three areas describe our primary orientations to the work. Without these the strategy becomes disconnected from the living God and our missional imperative:
- Centred in God
 - Everyone an Evangelist
 - Transformational Leadership
32. The next five core areas describe the crucial movements that we believe will drive fundamental change.
- New Places for New People
 - Church at the Margins
 - Every Church a Growing Church
 - Young Evangelists, Pioneers, and Leaders
 - Digital Presence: Mission for the Digital Age
33. In the following section, under each core area there is a short introduction with basic aims and expected outcomes, brief descriptions of key programmes, and draft plans for how individuals, churches, Circuits, and/or Districts can engage and participate. Key working partners in the

⁶ *Called to Love and Praise* (1999) paragraph 4.7.9

Connexion and the wider Church are listed in each section, as well as the primary Evangelism and Growth staff contact.

34. This strategy is not envisaged as a tick-list that every church and Circuit must work through immediately to complete as soon as possible. Most churches and Circuits will find it helpful to choose one or two areas of focus, perhaps one internal and one outward-facing, to engage prayerfully and meaningfully over the next year as part of an intentional transformation process. This strategy is not about doing more: it is about making critical decisions to spend time, energy, and resources on the most important and life-giving things, and to stop doing things that do not reach new people and build up life.
35. Each area of this strategy is meant to address diverse regional and geographical contexts across the Connexion. No area, for example, is particularly focused on only one type of context. Faithful people in any context can engage in all areas; in rural, estate, urban, inner city, suburban, and village contexts; in established churches, new churches, and community projects; in historical Methodist Heritage sites and in contemporary missional communities that meet in someone's lounge or the local pub.

Continuing consultation, learning, and celebration

36. Three major conferences (with related regional events) over the course of the first several years of the *God For All* strategy will help learn from, resource, celebrate, and expand the mission and evangelism movement:
 - Launch Gathering (2022) – towards the beginning of the outworking of the strategy, hundreds of new, emerging, and veteran leaders gather for inspiration, ongoing mission training, and exploration.
 - Midpoint Gathering (2024) – as the strategy is now thoroughly underway, hundreds of leaders gather to celebrate, take stock of the journey so far, and plant seeds for the next five-ten years.
 - Transition Gathering (2026) – at the end of the first five years of the strategy and the launch of the next five to ten years, thousands of leaders gather to celebrate and commit to the next action steps.

Funding:

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£100,000	-	£100,000	-	£100,000

Total funding	£300,000
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Section C – *God For All* Core Strategic Areas

1. CENTRED IN GOD #CentredInGod

Introduction

God is the Three-in-One who creates us, loves us, frees us, saves us, and transforms us to be who God has always been calling us to be. We are because of God. The Church exists to glorify God and to be a sign and presence of the Kingdom of God. If we are faithful, our mission flows intentionally from this orientation.

The Centred in God strategic area of *God For All* focuses on deepening the discipleship of Methodist people and lays a foundation for *God For All* as a whole. It aims to inspire and equip Methodists to:

- Grow in the grace of God given in Jesus and experienced in the life of the Holy Spirit.
- Be rooted and grounded in prayer.
- Make *Our Calling* a lived reality, particularly through *A Methodist Way of Life*.
- Live out their discipleship in everyday life.

Expected outcomes

Methodist people will:

- Be confident in their knowledge of God's love for them, for others and for the world.
- Pray constantly and faithfully, expecting God to be present.
- Be better able to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit within the Church and beyond.
- Live intentionally as disciples of Jesus in the world.

Table 1: Five-year funding requirements

Programme	Funding
Rooted in Prayer	£50,000
Developing Pathways for Growth	£35,000
A Methodist Way of Life	£90,000
Making Beautiful Worship: Beautiful Worship within the Gathered Community of Faith	£23,000
Making Beautiful Worship: Beautiful Worship in Everyday Life	£23,000
Theological Depth: Theological Reflection	£4,000
Theological Depth: Theological Learning	£23,000
Total	£248,000

Programmes:

➤ Rooted in Prayer

Description: Rooted in Prayer will underpin with prayer the *God For All* strategy. It will seek to ensure that everything flows from God's initiative and is empowered by the Spirit of God, and will develop the understanding and experience that prayer is about more than making requests to God: it is the source of our life in God.

How to engage: Prayer in local churches and in other parts of the Church will be fostered in various ways including promotional videos and leaflets but especially through deepening collaboration with the 24-7 Prayer movement (a collaboration initiated by Methodist children and young people in the 2000s).

Funding: Funding will be focused on resource creation and promotion, including with partner organisations.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000

Total funding	£50,000
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➤ Developing Pathways for Growth

Description: Developing Pathways for Growth will map a clear, flexible pathway for Christian discipleship to enable Methodist Christians to grow in their life in Christ.

How to engage: Districts, Circuits and Local Churches will be encouraged to develop the basic pathway in accordance with their own contexts and needs. A variety of ways of resourcing these pathways will be signposted.

Funding: Funding will be required to produce video material and to publish and distribute leaflets to publicise the basic pathway, provide pointers, to implement it in ways that respond to local contexts, and signpost a range of means of resourcing it.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£10,000	£8,000	£7,000	£5,000	£5,000

Total funding	£35,000
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➤ **A Methodist Way of Life**

Description: A *Methodist Way of Life (MWOl)* will offer a means for Methodists and others to respond to God’s love in Jesus through a patterned way of life. It revives a traditional Methodist way of being and becoming disciples, and re-presents it for contemporary discipleship. The commitments of a *MWOl* are based on the four aspects of *Our Calling* and provide a means to make it a lived reality. Accompanying questions will encourage and challenge participants as they follow this “way” together. A *Methodist Way of Life* will be signposted as a major resource for developing pathways for growth in discipleship.

How to engage: A *MWOl* will be promoted through video and printed material. In September 2020 all members and those attending Methodist churches will be provided with *MWOl* cards (listing commitments on one side and accountability questions on the other) together with a concise promotional booklet. Further support will be provided through a booklet, *Finding the Way*, copies of which will be provided to all churches, with further copies available on request. Additional resources will be provided in subsequent years.

Funding: Funding will provide for filming and resource production.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£10,000	£50,000	£5,000	£20,000	£5,000

Total funding	£90,000
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➤ **Making Beautiful Worship: Beautiful Worship within the Gathered Community of Faith**

Description: Making Beautiful Worship focuses on helping worship within the gathered community connect people to God and transform them for mission within the world. Worshipers will be inspired through worship to serve God in daily life.

How to engage: Districts, Circuits, and churches will be encouraged to engage with practices and resources that help Methodists connect worship with life. These will be signposted and, where needed, developed for use across the Connexion. Preachers and Worship Leaders will also be resourced to develop ways of connecting gatherings with the service of God in the world. A future pilot project will explore ways to embed whole-life worship within a Circuit.

Funding: Funding will be required to produce and promote resources for use across the Connexion, as well as running events and the pilot project.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£5000	£5000	£7000	£3000	£3000

Total funding	£23,000
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➤ **Making Beautiful Worship: Beautiful Worship in Everyday Life**

Description: Making Beautiful Worship also seeks to equip Methodists to worship God in their everyday lives, and will include a focus on spiritual practices, including those for children and young people, that can help Methodists find the sacred in the midst of the secular.

How to engage: Individuals will be able to access resources to help them to worship God in the various contexts of daily life. Such resources will be available through the Methodist website and in other forms of media (including printed resources), and will form a natural link with the *Methodist Way of Life*. Churches, Circuits, and Districts will be encouraged to promote the use of such resources for Methodists seeking to grow their faith.

Funding: Funding will be devoted to resources and events.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£5,000	£5,000	£7,000	£3,000	£3,000

Total Funding	£23,000
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➤ **Theological Depth: Theological Reflection**

Description: Theological Depth will include the development and promotion of different models of theological reflection for use across the Connexion. Such models – drawing on our Wesleyan tradition, resources from ecumenical partners, and the global Church – will offer simple processes for bringing faith into conversation with experience, and so provide means of connecting faith with daily life and moving from reflection into action.

How to engage: Individuals will be able to access simple models of theological reflection through sets of accessible printed and online resources. Churches will be encouraged to promote such resources and model positive ways of theological reflection, and events will be held to promote good theological reflection at circuit and district level.

Funding: Funding will be focused on resource production.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£1,000	£3,000	-	-	-

Total funding	£4,000
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➤ **Theological Depth: Theological Learning**

Description: Theological Depth will also inspire and resource Methodists in deepening their understanding of the Christian faith and seeing its relevance to discipleship and mission. Drawing on the expertise and experience of theological educators in both the Church and the academy, Theological Depth will offer a vision for transformative learning, and resources to support it across the Connexion.

How to engage: At district and circuit level, Chairs and Superintendents will be drawn into conversations around theological learning and will be offered models of theological learning that they can share and develop within their areas of responsibility. Resources will also be developed for presbyters, deacons and local preachers, as well as for individual Methodists wishing to deepen their faith. Clear pathways for growing in theological depth will be provided to Methodists across the Connexion.

Funding: Following a theological learning consultation, funding will be used to develop events and resources that promote a vibrant vision for theological learning of the whole people of God and that resource Methodists to grow in theological engagement.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£3,000	£8,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000

Total funding	£23,000
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Good news story: *Brindley Ford Methodist Church (Kidsgrove Circuit, Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District) had dwindled to fourteen regulars. It now advertises itself as “The Village Church” and Sunday attendance has grown to about 25 following a renewed focus on discipleship. An introductory course is run twice a year and a discipleship-focused group meets fortnightly. Missional community initiatives also help energise the congregation’s discipleship.*

Quote: *“Remaining centred on God is absolutely core to evangelism. We’re not offering ourselves to others: we’re offering Jesus. I know I need to keep building my inner life of prayer, reflection, silence, Bible study, and pilgrimage in order to have anything at all to say to others. Each of us explores whatever it is that enables us to build our lives around God (not the other way round). Do spirituality and evangelism go together? Absolutely – spirituality as evangelism perhaps, for surely evangelism without spirituality is nothing more than recruitment.”* Jill Baker, Vice-President of the Conference, 2017/2018

Key connexional partners: Ministries: Vocation and Worship, Faith and Order Committee

Key ecumenical partners: 24-7 Prayer movement, Thy Kingdom Come

Evangelism and Growth team staff contact for *Centred in God*

Tony Moodie, Discipleship Development Coordinator: moodiet@methodistchurch.org.uk

2. EVERYONE AN EVANGELIST

#EveryoneAnEvangelist

All disciples of Jesus are called to listen for, speak of, and live out the good news from their own experience, theology, and perspective. While some have been given particular spiritual gifts for communicating the gospel, we are all called to witness to God's goodness in word and deed. Responding to this calling does not require a personality transplant or the adoption of a theological stance with which we do not resonate. Being an evangelist means starting authentically from where we actually are.

The Everyone An Evangelist strategic area of *God For All* is focused on expanding the evangelistic capacity and desire of Methodist people. It aims to:

- Help everyone talk naturally about what God is doing in their lives.
- Build everyone's confidence to invite people to explore following Jesus and to discover Christian community.
- Create a visible and compelling Methodist presence at major public events.

Expected outcomes

Methodist people will:

- Regularly practise and experience lay testimony as a key dimension of worship and discipleship.
- Be better able to encounter, form relationships with, and invite new people in their communities.

Table 2: Five-year funding requirements

Programme	Funding
Embedding a Culture of Testimony	£50,000
Equipping the Whole Church for Evangelism	£250,000
Training and Releasing Dedicated Evangelists	£400,000
Methodist National Evangelistic Witness	£375,000
Total	£1,075,000

Programmes:

➤ Embedding a Culture of Testimony

Description: Sharing testimony – our stories about being part of God's story – praises God, increases our experience of God, builds participation in the Body of Christ, and describes faith to new people. Drawing on 2019/2020 Year of Testimony (called for by 3Generate and Methodist young people) and the launch of The Story Project, Embedding a Culture of Testimony provides individuals and churches with continuing resources and encouragement to build public testimony into worship and the whole of church life.

How to engage: Individuals will be able to access practical guidance on how to develop testimony through online and print resources. Events will be held to help individuals and churches prepare. Churches will be encouraged to promote these resources and events as they commit to experimenting with testimony in a sustained way, eg throughout an entire season.

Funding: Funding will be devoted to resources and events.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000

Total funding	£50,000
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➤ **Equipping the Whole Church for Evangelism**

Description: Equipping the Whole Church for Evangelism focuses on helping all Methodists to develop theological rooting, spiritual confidence, and practical skills for sharing faith sensitively and effectively in their networks and communities.

How to engage: Districts, Circuits, and churches will be able to access a foundational training package for local use, planning help for hosting training and outreach events, and trainer presence for such events.

Funding: Funding will be devoted to developing training materials, hosting events, and trainer costs.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000

Total funding	£250,000
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➤ **Training and Releasing Dedicated Evangelists**

Description: While all are called to be evangelists, some lay people and ministers have particular spiritual giftings for evangelism. Training and Releasing Dedicated Evangelists will establish an ongoing programme of robust training and learning communities to raise up, challenge, and release theologically diverse leaders to engage evangelistically and apologetically with the diverse cultures of contemporary British society in creative and compelling ways.

How to engage: Any individual can apply at any time using the online application form to start the next season. District Chairs, Circuit Superintendents, District Mission Enablers, and Regional Learning Network Officers will identify individuals with calling, interest and/or promise, and encourage them to apply.

Funding: Funding will be devoted to training conferences, learning community gatherings, publicity, and creating training materials.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£30,000	£60,000	£90,000	£100,000	£120,000

Total funding	£400,000
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➤ **Methodist National Evangelistic Witness**

Description: The Methodist Church should be known nationally as a Church that proclaims the saving good news of God for all and a Church for all. With apologetic sensitivity, cultural relevance, and a Methodist distinctiveness, we will build a National Evangelistic Witness at major events and festivals and alongside major issues of faith and society, which will connect to specific related evangelistic outreach in local communities.

How to engage: Individuals can offer to serve on the design team for the envisaged national campaign. Districts, Circuits, and churches will be able to access strategy and planning packages for planning parallel campaigns in their own contexts.

Funding: Funding will be devoted to project planning, creative resource and branding development, team training, event partnership/entry costs, and attendance at events.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£25,000	£50,000	£75,000	£100,000	£125,000

Total funding	£375,000
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Good news story: *“I was with a group of young people and we were sharing stories about our lives. I was asking what people see when they look at us, what we will tell people if they ask, and what were our hopes and dreams for the future. One young person came out as LGBTQ and said they wanted to learn more about God every day.*

In a large plenary session I was leading, a woman shared a story from her life experience, which she’d shared in a small group of three. She’d been the first to speak in the “big group” and came up afterwards to say she didn’t know how she had found the confidence to speak, as she’s quite shy, but somehow she did. She was affirmed, uplifted, grew in confidence and glowed with satisfaction as a result of people’s laughter.” Barbara Glasson and Clive Marsh, President and Vice-President of the Conference 2019/2020

Quote: *“I am passionate about evangelism because I long to see personal lives changed by the love and grace of God in Christ Jesus, who in turn influence society to make it just, fair, and equal for every person. Evangelism is an orientation to the Kingdom of God.”* Richard Teal, President-designate of the Conference 2020/2021

Key connexional partners: Cliff College, Communications team, Engagement team

Key ecumenical partners: The Arthur Rank Centre, HOPE Together

Evangelism and Growth team staff contact for *Everyone An Evangelist*

Evangelism and Contemporary Culture Officer (to be appointed)

3. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP #TransformationalLeaders

A renewed focus on evangelism and growth in the Methodist Connexion will necessarily involve a great deal of change – and great change requires great leaders. Like evangelism, leadership can be expressed faithfully in a variety of ways. Transformational leaders long to see their churches and communities flourish and start to look more like the kingdom of God. This has its challenges, however: there is so much to do *right now* that it can feel impossible to think about the future. Transformational leaders are able to bring people together to pray, to seek God’s vision of a preferred future, and to work toward it as a team. They understand that change can cause conflict and non-reactively welcome it, hold it, and help the Church to address it graciously so that the conflict can be a meaningful part of transformation.

The Transformational Leadership strategic area of *God For All* is focused on deepening healthy, Christ-shaped use of prayer, power, servanthood, and influence in Christian communities to see God’s kingdom come. It aims to:

- Equip lay and ordained people to lead churches, Circuits, and Districts through change.
- Coach leaders and teams to move from vision into action.

Expected outcomes

- Church and circuit teams lead churches to embrace change skilfully and with confidence.
- Time, energy and money are used where they can reach the most people with God’s good news.
- Lay and ordained people have more energy and vocational fulfilment as they share the work and grow in discipleship.
- Leaders operate effectively within existing structures.

Table 3: Five-year funding requirements

Programme	Funding
Transformational Leadership Learning Community	£275,000
Coaching for Transformation	£300,000
Ministerial Training for Transformational Leadership and Evangelism	£300,000
Total	£875,000

Programmes:

➤ Transformational Leadership Learning Community

Description: A programme of learning communities will be established. Teams of lay and ordained leaders who work together at church and/or circuit level will receive training, opportunities to dream and plan together, and regular coaching over a one- to three-year period. Twice a year they will gather with other teams for input from transformational leaders, mutual learning and accountability, and time set aside to create realistic and specific plans for positive action. This offers a shared learning experience as well as time carved out to identify with colleagues how to put their learning into practice.

How to engage: Any church or circuit team can apply at any time using the online application form to start the following year. District Chairs, District Mission Enablers, and officers in the Learning Network to identify church/circuit teams who would benefit and encourage them to apply. Churches/Circuits to release key leaders to set aside time to attend gatherings (two weekends a year) and work with coaches (once a month for 90 minutes).

Funding: Funding will be focused on training conferences and the establishment of learning communities.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£35,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000

Total funding	£275,000
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➤ Coaching for Transformation

Description: Where it is not possible or appropriate to participate in the transformational leadership learning community with a church or circuit team, Coaching for Transformation offers ministers a year of monthly coaching as an important complement to the practice of supervision. The aim of this will be to accompany them through a transformation process in their Circuit or one of their churches, reflecting on their practice, setting concrete action goals, and troubleshooting any issues. Coaching will be provided in one of two ways. We will pay professional coaches to work with our people. We will also offer bursaries for Methodists who want to train as coaches in exchange for their offering free coaching to others.

How to engage: Ministers can approach the Evangelism and Growth team directly at any time to request a coach (and go on a waiting list if need be). The Evangelism and Growth team will actively encourage ministers whom it feels would benefit (eg Superintendent ministers) to consider coaching.

Funding: Funds will be focused on training ministers and employing professional coaches.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000

Total funding	£300,000
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➤ Ministerial Training for Transformational Leadership and Evangelism

Description: Partnering with The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education and the Ministries: Vocation and Worship team, an appointment will be made of a full-time tutor/officer in transformational leadership and evangelism for an initial five-year exploratory period. Working in concert with the Ministries: Vocation and Worship team, this tutor/officer will expand the work already being done at Queen's in these areas by shaping the Mission and Evangelism module in initial ministerial training, inputting into the formational modules and projects undertaken as part of probation studies, building on the current provision of Community Organising training, and developing the focus of church placements. This tutor/officer will lead also in our continuing work to identify, equip, and train future leaders across the Connexion, who will serve as Superintendents, Chairs, Connexional Team members and in other key positions.

Funding: Funding will be focused on stipend/salary, housing, and on-costs of the tutor/officer.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000

Total funding	£300,000
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Good news story: *Blaydon Methodist Church, a very small church in urban Gateshead (South West Tyneside Circuit, Newcastle District) experienced rapid growth due to the transformational leadership of a Methodist deacon. Tracey Hume led the church into many different forms of involvement in the local community, such as campaigning against benefit sanctions, giving out Christmas hampers, and providing space for community groups to meet. She built a team of mostly retired people as well as welcoming the involvement of those who were not yet members of the church. Tracey also led changes in Sunday worship, introducing a monthly café-style service with breakfast, crafts and discussion. Her leadership and the example she set of passionate engagement in the local community are key factors in the growth this church has experienced.*

Quote: *"I have come to believe that the single greatest detriment to our church going to the next level is not about facilities, new staff, or new ministry initiatives, though these are important issues, but rather how I lead."* Jorge Acevedo, United Methodist minister and Lead Pastor of Grace Church, Florida

Key connexional partners: The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education; the Children, Youth, and Family Ministry team; the Ministries: Vocation and Worship team

Evangelism and Growth team staff contact for *Transformational Leadership*

Emma Nash, Mission and Community Engagement Officer: nashe@methodistchurch.org.uk

Nigel Pimlott, Transformational Leadership Associate: transform@methodistchurch.org.uk

4. NEW PLACES FOR NEW PEOPLE

#NewPlacesForNewPeople

New Places For New People are projects whose primary goal is to start, build, and reproduce new Christian communities among unaffiliated people. These include church plants, pioneering communities of faith, fresh expressions, missional communities, and other new faith communities in rural, estate, urban, inner city, suburban, and village contexts. New Places for New People are the most effective means of connecting new people, new groups, and new residents to Christian exploration and community. In addition, they bring learning from experimental 'research and development', identify and strengthen emerging leaders, and help the whole Church reflect on and examine its calling.

The New Places For New People strategic area of *God For All* is focused on equipping the Methodist Church to plant and pioneer, grow, and reproduce new Christian communities among unaffiliated people. It aims to:

- Centre starting new Christian communities as a normal and prioritised practice of district and circuit mission/strategy.
- Support diverse pioneering models and planting approaches that share a common practice of building relationships with and discipling new people right where they are, taking missional risks, and growing ecclesial communities.
- Help existing churches experiment with fresh expressions of church.
- Develop a robust discernment and training pathway for pioneers and planters.

Expected outcomes

- Every District will launch at least one significant, sustainable, and replicating New Places For New People project that will inspire, influence, and shape future projects across the Circuits of the District.
- 80% of Circuits will fund, support, and resource a New Places For New People project with the goal of growing ecclesial communities that plant a second community within the first five years.

- The Methodist Pioneering Pathway becomes a thriving constellation of 300+ diverse planters, pioneers, and those exploring pioneering and planting that is trusted across the Connexion to staff and resource the flourishing movement of New Places For New People.

Table 4: Five-year funding requirements

Programme	Funding
Partnerships with Districts and Circuits to Plant New Churches	£5,000,000
Expanding the Methodist Pioneering Pathway	£900,000
Multiplying Fresh Expressions	£715,328
Total	£6,615,328

Programmes:

➤ **Partnerships with Districts and Circuits to Plant New Churches**

Description: Working in close partnership with Districts, the Evangelism and Growth team will provide accompaniment in prioritising New Places For New People in district mission policies, support in developing a particular and contextual strategy for new Christian communities in Circuits across the District, and a programme of significant match-funding enabling every District over the next three years (2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023) to plant at least one strategically significant New Places For New People project, which will subsequently model and effect future planting/pioneering practice. These match-funded strategic, significant district projects will be places of learning and training that encourage and equip future planting in Circuits. Flowing from district commitments, within five years, by 2025/2026, every Circuit will prayerfully consider the geographical area or human population from which a new church can be planned, funded, and staffed, and will take steps to launch.

How to engage: Districts will self-select into one of the first three years of this partnership (2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023) based on their official living mission strategy, missional readiness, identification of planting context and readiness to plant, and current human and financial assets. A robust application process in which Districts work closely in partnership with Circuits and the Evangelism and Growth team will ensure (1) funded projects meet essential criteria identified from fruitful practices in pioneering and planting and (2) future circuit applications are aligned.

Funding: Funding will be focused on significant, coordinated, strategic grants to Districts and their Circuits.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£679,000	£926,000	£926,000	£1,234,000	£1,235,000

Total funding	£5,000,000
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➤ **Expanding the Methodist Pioneering Pathway**

Description: Expanding the Methodist Pioneering Pathway is a multi-levelled commitment to clarify, strengthen, and expand this foundational community of pioneering discernment, training, and reflection so that it can support the flourishing New Places For New People movement in the Methodist Church.

The Methodist Pioneering Pathway will offer:

- **A clear, understandable, and accessible pathway** with defined entry points, an articulated direction of travel, training resources, and reflective communities of practice. It will include the following legs of the pathway:
 - **Calling:** discernment and exploration of individual pioneer calling, interest, and giftedness.
 - **Equipping:** practice and theology for pioneers, including an entry-level Pioneer/Planter short course, EDI training, core skills, and cross-context tools.
 - **Planting:** focused planning, praying, strategy, and guidance for the work of sustainably planting a particular New Places For New People/Church at the Margins community.

- **Coaching:** matching for every planter/pioneer in active planting/pioneering with a coach who has hands-on experience of planting/pioneering.
- **Connecting:** National, regional, and virtual communities of learning for practitioners.
- **Church Planting Intensive:** A regularly-offered, multi-day intensive training experience with a bias for action, contextual reflection, and planning for planters and planting teams in the first season of a significant project will ensure that New Places For New People projects have the best chance of reaching sustainability and maturity.
- **Planter/Pioneer Recruitment:** Focused campaigns in and outside of the Methodist Church will create a culture of invitation to planting/pioneering and connect emerging and experienced pioneers to New Places For New People projects.
- **Coaching:** Intentional relationships will be fostered between planter and coach towards conversations that empower the planter to fully live out God’s calling, reflect on context and draw out possibilities, prioritise engaging new people, and clarify concrete next steps with a bias for action.
- **Curating and Measuring the Movement:** Telling stories of faithful risk from diverse New Places For New People projects will inspire others to take missional risks. Developing metrics that measure effectiveness in honest, non-distorting ways will help the planting/pioneering teams doing the work. Both curating and measuring the right things will be crucial in order to understand how the New Places For New People movement is emerging and to develop a sound analysis and true narrative for future endeavours. We must learn from the wisdom of new ecclesial communities that reach maturity and of faithful experiments that do not.

How to engage: Any individual, church, or circuit can investigate the pathway online and start the discernment process by filling out a questionnaire and then being connected for an initial conversation with the designated Methodist Pioneering Pathway staff person in the Learning Network.

Funding: Funding will be focused on hosting frequent training gatherings, the support of learning communities, and coaching.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£90,000	£135,000	£180,000	£225,000	£270,000

Total funding	£900,000
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➤ **Multiplying Fresh Expressions**

Description: Small, volunteer-led fresh expressions have already had a significant impact on the Methodist Church. Micro-grants will be available to churches and Circuits with limited financial resources that want to start new fresh expressions. In partnership with Fx Resourcing, the multiplier program will increase both the numbers and effectiveness of these projects. Six to eight teams in the early stages of beginning a fresh expression will join together around a shared focus on the fresh expressions journey, just-in-time training using the new *Godsend* app, learning communities, peer support, and expert coaching for a two-year period. By working with teams, not just with leaders, the program will identify potential leaders for future projects and its impact will be much wider.

How to engage: Three to four Districts will begin the process in the connexional year 2020/2021. District Mission Enablers and Learning Network Officers will help to identify projects. Other Districts will be offered the opportunity to participate in subsequent years.

Funding: Funding will focus on micro-grants, facilitating community gatherings, and providing coaching, alongside supporting the ecumenical Fresh Expressions movement.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£144,494	£170,834	£115,000	£135,000	£150,000

Total funding	£715,328
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Good news story: Locking Castle Church was begun in the 1990s as a four-partner ecumenical community on a new housing estate and is now a healthy viable church with its own building. Weston-Super-Mare continues to grow and, building on the positive experience of Locking Castle, each of the partners (Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, and URC) has either begun or is planning a new congregation on new estates as they are built. This is not addition but multiplication planting and pioneering in action.

Quote: “I’m thrilled that a commitment to developing ‘New Places For New People’ is gaining momentum across our Connexion. The strapline is new, but the priority it represents is as old as our movement. Methodism was born as people reached out in new ways to those who had not yet received the Gospel. I’m praying that every part of our church will work together to ensure that this priority once again shapes our patterns of ministry and our use of resources.” Leslie Newton, Chair of Yorkshire North and East District

Key connexional partners: The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee; the Global Relationships Committee; the Engagement team.

Key ecumenical partners: Fresh Expressions Ltd; Church of England Gregory Centre for Church Multiplication; the Arthur Rank Centre.

Evangelism and Growth team staff contact for New Places for New People

Matt Finch, Pioneering and Church Planting Officer: finchm@methodistchurch.org.uk

5. CHURCH AT THE MARGINS

#ChurchAtTheMargins

A distinct, crucial, and inextricably connected part of the New Places For New People strategic area is a commitment to be Church at – and from – the margins. The potential for transformation, new life, and new leaders exists in all marginalised communities. The Church must learn from and be led by our indigenous leaders, who already have deep knowledge and wisdom about their communities. From that leadership, people across socio-economic classes can imagine new ways of being Church and community together.

The Church at the Margins strategic area of *God For All* is focused on equipping the Methodist Church to steward the majority of planting and pioneering resources with a faithful and preferential bias for people and communities experiencing marginalisation. It aims to:

- Start a movement of new Christian communities led by those at the margins.
- Work alongside people experiencing poverty to deepen community engagement.
- Build on the biblical connection between evangelism and social justice.

Expected outcomes

- A significant increase in the number of Circuits and churches directly involved in seeking justice and community organising in their localities.
- New Christian communities strategically seeded, led, and rooting amongst the marginalised areas of every District.

Table 5: Five-year funding requirements

Programme	Funding
Church at the Margins	£6,500,000
Support for Shared District Staffing	£2,150,000
Total	£8,650,000

Programmes:

- **Partnerships with Districts and Circuits to Start Church at the Margins New Christian Communities**

Description: Working in close partnership with Districts, the Evangelism and Growth team will provide accompaniment in prioritising Church at the Margins in district mission policies, support in developing a particular and contextual strategy for new Church at the Margins Christian communities in Circuits across the District, and a programme of significant match-funding enabling every District over the next three years (2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023) to plant at least one strategically significant Church at the Margins

new Christian community, which will subsequently model and effect future engagement and practice. These match-funded strategic, significant district projects will be places of learning and training that encourage and equip future planting in Circuits. Flowing from district commitments, within five years, by 2025/2026, every Circuit will prayerfully consider the geographical area or human population from which a new Church at the Margins Christian community can be planned, funded, and staffed, and will take steps to launch.

How to engage: Districts will self-select into one of the first three years of this partnership (2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023) based on their official living mission strategy, missional readiness, identification of planting context and readiness to plant, and current human and financial assets. A robust application process in which Districts work closely in partnership with the Evangelism and Growth team will ensure that (1) funded projects meet essential criteria identified from fruitful practices in pioneering and planting and (2) future circuit applications are aligned.

Funding: Funding will be focused on significant, coordinated, strategic grants to Districts and their Circuits.

- Five years of match funded Church at the Margins projects costing £6,250,000.
- Support Local Churches to engage with issues of justice in their communities, costing £50,000 per annum.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£899,000	£1,207,000	£1,207,000	£1,593,000	£1,594,000

Total funding	£6,500,000
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➤ Staffing

Description: Offering district funding for shared *New Places For New People/Church at the Margins* coordinating staff to support groups of Districts working together. Appointing two full-time Project Officers to oversee project management in this major expansion of pioneering and planting and to help design, implement, and manage development systems for metrics, narratives, and other data.

Funding:

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£430,000	£430,000	£430,000	£430,000	£430,000

Total funding	£2,150,000
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Good news story: *Freedom Community Project (Bolsover and Stavelly Circuit, Sheffield District) helps homeless people find housing, provides long-term support for people struggling with addiction, offers counselling on mental health, benefits, debt issues – and is discipling people and creating Christian community in the midst of it all.*

Quote: *“I want to be part of a Church that offers hope even in a credit crunch, welcomes asylum seekers, throws parties for prostitutes, longs and works for justice, listens to those no one else wants to listen to, believes in transformation not preservation, makes and nurtures disciples of Jesus; where every person takes responsibility for sharing the Good News.”* Deacon Eunice Attwood, Vice President of the Conference 2010/2011 and designated Church at the Margins Officer.

Key connexional partners: The Global Relationships team; Methodist Diaconal Order; Methodist City Centre Network; Pioneers/Planters in marginalised communities

Key ecumenical partners: The Joint Public Issues Team; Church Action on Poverty; the Arthur Rank Centre

Evangelism and Growth team staff contact for Church at the Margins:

Eunice Attwood, Church at the Margins Officer (from September 2020)

6. EVERY CHURCH A GROWING CHURCH #EveryChurchGrowing

Churches which build real relationships in their communities, prioritise making new disciples, and steward their time, energy, and money to reflect these priorities, will grow. They will experience spiritual growth, missional growth, and, the great majority of the time, numerical growth.

The Every Church A Growing Church strategic area of *God For All* is focused on equipping Districts, Circuits, and churches who want to grow and are willing to change in order to grow. It aims to:

- Enable every Circuit and church to write and implement a living mission plan.
- Empower every church to build local community relationships.
- Embed the core practices of growing churches throughout the Connexion.

Expected outcomes

- More Methodist churches growing than declining, ie 22% or 940 churches move from decline or stasis into growth.
- Every Methodist church aiming to see people encounter God and grow as disciples of Jesus, including those who are coming to faith for the first time (even if this growth happens within overall decline).
- Every Methodist church releasing resources for mission.

Table 6: Five-year funding requirements

Programme	Funding
Mission Hubs	£370,000
Mission Planning Training and Grants	£500,000
Partnership with Leading Your Church into Growth	£30,000
Core practices of growing churches	-
Total	£900,000

Programmes:

➤ Mission Hubs

Description: Churches, Circuits, Districts, or Methodist organisations involved in significant, purposeful, sustained mission and intentional discipleship will be recruited to become ‘mission hubs’. These hubs will share their learning with others in the Methodist Connexion in order to encourage intentional mission activity in every Methodist church. By becoming exposed to approaches to mission and evangelism which may be unfamiliar and being encouraged to reflect on their experience, participants will be prompted to experiment and take risks in mission.

How to engage: Any individual or church/circuit/district team can sign up to attend a mission hub event – either a one-day event or an ‘immersive experience’ of several days. Visitors will be encouraged to apply their learning to their own context – to do something different as a result of their mission hub experience

Funding: Mission hubs will only work if significant effort is put into publicising them and actively recruiting participants. Funding allows hubs to pay for admin support and/or to offset ministerial or lay worker time, and permits greater accountability between the hubs and the Evangelism and Growth team.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£30,000	£60,000	£80,000	£100,000	£100,000

Total funding	£370,000
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➤ Mission Planning Training and Grants

Description: Circuits will be inspired, equipped and incentivised to begin mission planning with a two-pronged strategy: district-based training days for Superintendents and circuit mission planning grants. District Chairs will be offered mission planning training sessions, to take place at Superintendents’

gatherings, in order to build skills and energy for mission planning. The aim will be to get to every District by 2025.

In addition, Circuits will be offered the opportunity to apply for small mission planning grants to kick-start a new mission initiative. This will incentivise circuit teams to set aside time for prayerful discernment, reflection and action planning. A consultant recruited and trained by the Connexional Team will also be allocated to provide help with mission planning. The grants will not be large enough to pay for any staffing needs but could be used for the purchase of equipment, the renovation of a meeting space, or for training courses for ministers, staff or volunteers, for example. Wealthy Circuits that would not be eligible for a mission planning grant can still apply for a consultant's help with mission planning.

How to engage: District Chairs to be approached by the Evangelism and Growth team to schedule mission planning training. Circuits can apply for a small mission planning grant of £500-£5,000 and/or consultant's time.

Funding: The availability of lots of small grants will provide a prompt and incentive for a large number of Circuits to get started with mission planning.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000

Total funding	£500,000
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➤ **Partnership with Leading Your Church into Growth**

Description: Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCiG) is run by an ecumenical group of practitioners who seek to equip ordinary local churches to grow. They run conferences and training days which are open to groups from all Christian denominations, provide resources and work with Districts, Synods, Dioceses, and other denominational judicatories to promote numerical and spiritual growth in the Church. We will partner with LYCiG by block-booking their annual residential conference; by recruiting teams from Methodist Circuits to attend; by supporting those teams to see growth in their Circuits; and by entering a conversation with the LYCiG team about the specific context of Methodist churches.

www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk

How to engage: Circuits can approach the Evangelism and Growth team directly at any time to request places (and go on a waiting list if need be). Evangelism and Growth team actively to recruit circuit teams for LYCiG whom we feel would benefit.

Funding: This funding will enable us to send four Circuits' teams of five people per year.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£6000	£6000	£6000	£6000	£6000

Total funding	£30,000
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➤ **Core practices of growing churches**

Description: We want to see fundamental culture change within the Methodist Church in Britain whereby decline is no longer the default expectation and doing things the way they have always been done is no longer an option. We want Methodist churches – of every theological location; large and small; urban, suburban, and rural; wealthy and cash-strapped – all engaging in meaningful community engagement and intentional evangelism in contextually appropriate ways.

How to engage: Core practices of growing churches will be communicated at every opportunity, such as on the Evangelism and Growth section of the Methodist Church website, at Synod presentations, via workshops offered at conferences and mission days.

Funding: Nothing extra – this will be woven into the work of existing Evangelism and Growth team members.

Good news story: *Brighouse Central Methodist Church (Calderdale Circuit, Yorkshire West District) is involved in a range of community engagement initiatives, including a Music Academy that is now financially self-sustaining. The church has seen growth over the past five years, with around 80 new people joining, half of whom are under 40, and 28 fresh faith commitments expressed in adult baptism or confirmation. Some have been drawn by engagement in quality Sunday worship. Others have been impressed by the church's engagement with poor and marginalised people in the community, such as through its food bank and its delivery of food packages during school holidays for children who receive free school meals.*

Quote: *"I do not for one second believe that God has done with the Methodist Church just yet, and I am not at all ready for the funeral."* Loraine Mellor, in her Presidential address to the Methodist Conference, 2017.

Key connexional partners: the Global Relationships and Property Development Committees.

Key ecumenical partners: Leading Your Church into Growth.

Evangelism and Growth team staff contact for Every Church a Growing Church

Emma Nash, Mission and Community Engagement Officer: nashe@methodistchurch.org.uk

7. YOUNG EVANGELISTS, PIONEERS AND LEADERS #YoungFaithLeaders

We know that faith commitment happens for many people when they are young. We want to become again a Church that is fuelled by the full participation of young people, so that their imaginations and faith formation are nurtured and supported – but also so that the Church can be challenged and converted by them.

The Young Evangelists, Pioneers and Leaders strategic area of *God For All* is focused on helping the Methodist Church to prioritise faith formation and evangelism with children and young people and to equip children and young people as evangelists, pioneers, and leaders. It aims to:

- Challenge churches to help children and young people encounter Jesus Christ and to invest in experiential faith formation that is meaningful and relevant to their lives.
- Equip young people to engage and share faith with their peers and networks in a relevant and authentic way.
- Invite and welcome the gifts and perspectives of young people to transform the Church and the world.

Expected outcomes

- Every region of the Methodist Church will have a growing cohort of young evangelists equipped for building relationships and exploring faith with unaffiliated people.
- 25% of Methodist pioneers will be aged 18-35.
- The majority of Circuits will have a consistent discipleship programme for children and young people.

Table 7: Five-year funding requirements

Programme	Funding
Young Evangelist Movement Training	£125,000
Internships in Evangelism, Pioneering, and Leadership	£425,000
Total	£550,000

Programmes:

- **Young Evangelist Movement Training**

Description: An ongoing programme of in-person and online training will be established for young people who are exploring their identity and calling as evangelists, including training materials, learning communities, twice-yearly large gatherings, and concrete experiences of sensitive evangelistic practice at Methodist children and young people events.

How to engage: Individuals will use online forms to apply during the relevant application season. Youth and Children’s Workers, Ministers, District Chairs, District Mission Enablers, and Learning Network Officers will identify young people who would benefit and encourage them to apply.

Funding: Funding will be focused on training gatherings, resources, and the establishment of learning communities.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000

Total funding	£125,000
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➤ **Internships in Evangelism, Pioneering, and Leadership**

Description: Supporting the creation, refining, and significant expansion of internship or training programmes for young people that centre on starting new Christian communities, evangelism and faith sharing, and leadership for church renewal and change (eg The Cliff Year, Methodist Interns, Methodist Pioneering Pathway, Young Leaders Training, etc.)

How to engage: Using online forms during the relevant application season, any individual can apply for internships that start the following year. Youth and Children’s Workers, Ministers, District Chairs, District Mission Enablers, Learning Network Officers, and leaders at large youth and evangelism events to identify young people who would benefit and encourage them to apply.

Funding: Funding will be focused on internship costs.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£85,000	£85,000	£85,000	£85,000	£85,000

Total funding	£425,000
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Good news story: *Natalie Manning, a Cliff Year evangelist intern, was full of doubt as she went to 3Generate to engage intentionally with young people on the fringe of the event – dressed as a unicorn! She was surprised by what she experienced. One teenage boy was able to relate his story to Natalie’s story of moving home a lot and she was able to offer encouragement to him that God is everywhere and ahead of where we go. There was also a very excited young girl who rushed to show Natalie her unicorn t-shirt which said, “I’m born to sparkle”; they then had a conversation about how she is unique and precious in God’s eyes, too. Looking back on this, Natalie says “it was a really good experience to share what my faith means to me as I heard the young people’s stories.”*

Quote: *“I believe Jesus’s love is for all – for every community, for every language, and for every person. That’s the single most valuable truth of my Christian faith. Even when we didn’t know God and didn’t really care about God, God loved us! God doesn’t love us because we do things right or we do things wrong, God just loves us – God loved us first. Before you even start loving God, God already loves you.”* Thelma Commey, Youth President of the Methodist Church 2019/2020

Key connexional partners: Children, Youth, and Family Ministry team; Cliff College

Evangelism and Growth team staff contacts for Young Evangelists, Pioneers and Leaders

Tom Donoghue, Cliff College Evangelist: t.donoghue@cliffcollege.ac.uk
Evangelism and Contemporary Culture Officer

8. DIGITAL PRESENCE: DIGITAL AGE MISSION #DigitalEvangelism

In the digital age of communication, the internet is our parish – particularly for younger generations who spend 15+ hours a day online but also for those who are isolated, housebound, or far from home. There is need for a digital and social media transformation in how the Church relates to iGen/Gen Z and all of those whose lives are inextricably connected in this way. Approaches are needed to online evangelism and Christian community that are not simply digital versions of those offline.

The Digital Presence strategic area of *God For All* is focused on igniting the Methodist Church to understand, explore, and innovate around what it means to be followers of Jesus in digital space. It aims to inspire and equip Methodists to:

- Embrace the internet as a crucial terrain for evangelism.
- Create online Christian communities to explore and expand faith.

Expected outcomes

- The majority of Methodist churches having simple, attractive, authentic websites and a regular social media presence.
- Digital gospel media campaigns awakening curiosity about God among unaffiliated people and connecting them to welcoming Methodist communities, both online and in person.
- Regular innovation events for creatives providing space and learning for experimenting with new e-forms of evangelism, communication, and community.
- Methodist leaders growing as public communicators, advocates, and catalysts for evangelistic and theological engagement, helping the Methodist Church to listen, learn, and articulate a relevant Gospel message for the public square.

Table 8: Five-year funding requirements

Programme	Funding
Basic Social Media and Website Training	£125,000
Digital Evangelism Campaigns	£375,000
Digital Pioneering and Innovation Initiative	£250,000
Total	£750,000

Programmes:

➤ **Basic Social Media and Website Training**

Description: The creation of a training platform, training team, and event roadshow that equips local churches in the basic and best practices for using digital space to reach their local communities; the development of an online channel with training videos, ideas, and basic online guidance hosted by a fresh face. The development of the “Find a Church Near Me” capacity on the Methodist Church website.

How to engage: Core resources will be found online on the Methodist Church website. Church/circuit/district teams can contact the connexional Communications team to plan and coordinate on-the-ground training for their contexts.

Funding: Funding will be focused on supporting training gatherings.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000

Total funding	£125,000
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➤ **Digital Evangelism Campaigns**

Description: Developing a yearly cycle of significant, far-reaching, and multiple-platform digital evangelism campaigns that speak creatively – in different seasons, to different people groups – to the wider world about God and engage unaffiliated people in conversations about spirituality and faith. Develop capacity for quick-response, focused campaigns that engage directly with emerging contemporary events, stories, and questions – including the arts, pop culture, and political life.

How to engage: Each season’s campaign materials, including core messages, images and videos, and basic guidance will be shareable on social media and accessible from the Methodist Church website.

Funding: Funding will be focused on creative development and the costs of targeted social media and online campaign placement.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000

Total funding	£375,000
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➤ **Digital Pioneering and Innovation Initiative**

Description: Forming a core working team of creatives and innovators with an accompanying extended network of practitioners that explores, shares learning, champions, designs experiments, runs events, and builds strategy for digital evangelism, including faith-sharing, online pioneering and Christian community formation, and digital discipleship trends.

How to engage: A description of the working team/network’s goals will be publicly available online and shared widely so that individuals can express interest and be recruited.

Funding: Funding will be focused on gatherings and seed costs for experiments.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000

Total funding	£250,000
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Good news stories: The Story Project, *a digital experiment in The Year of Testimony, has not only publicly showcased the rich diversity of stories of disciples across the Connexion, it has also begun to make a difference in local churches as well. One minister shared: “This project has already produced a change in the spiritual atmosphere of the church I look after, as church members have shared stories of God being with them in times of struggle and pain that haven’t necessarily been resolved yet.”*

Also, an expanding digital presence for the contemplative prayer and imaginative spiritual meditation programme called Take Time is bringing people into experiential contact and transformational relationship with Jesus in unexpected places as diverse as prisons and music festivals.

Quote: *“We live in an increasingly digital age and the opportunities are greater than ever for us to reach people with our message where they are: online. As a young adult, I believe our methods must change to reach my generation, and I’m passionate about equipping churches to use both websites and social media for this purpose. Now, more than ever, the church must strive to explore how we can use these digital tools for evangelism.”* Elliot Crippen, Digital Communications Enabler, Yorkshire North and East District

Key connexional partners: the Communications team, Cliff College

Key ecumenical partners: The Christian Enquiry Agency

Evangelism and Growth team staff contacts for Digital Presence

Ali Johnson, Cliff College Digital Evangelist: a.johnson@cliffcollege.ac.uk

Evangelism and Contemporary Culture Officer (to be named)

Section D – Funding summary, conclusion and resolutions

Funding summary

In addition to the funding needs outlined in sections B and C, there are also current staffing and programme costs, already included in the existing Connexional Team budget. These are outlined below.

2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
£528,784	£542,581	£551,686	£560,955	£570,285

Total funding	£2,754,291
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The next table summarises the full funding requirements for the first five years of the *God For All* strategy.

Table 9:

Strategic Area	Five-year total
Strategy Events	£300,000
Centred in God	£248,000
Everyone an Evangelist	£1,075,000
Transformational Leadership	£875,000
New Places for New People	£6,615,328
Church at the Margins	£8,650,000
Every Church a Growing Church	£900,000
Young Evangelists, Pioneers, and Leaders	£550,000
Digital Presence: Digital Age Mission	£750,000
Current staffing and programme costs	£2,754,291
Total	£22,717,619

God For All will be funded in the following ways:

- £2,754,291 represents the current staffing and programme costs, already in the existing Connexional Team budget.
- £1,500,000 per annum (£7,500,000 total) will be allocated from the Mission in Britain fund.
- £1,900,000 will be allocated from legacies left to MCB.
- £2,000,000 will be allocated from donations to MCB.
- A portion of the annual grant to Cliff College will be refocused, to deliver £350,000 towards the funding of the strategy.
- The Methodist Church Fund, Connexional Priority Fund, and Epworth Fund are all budgeted to be above their reserve levels at the end of 2021/2022. In line with the policy of reducing fund balances to reserve level, this £2,900,000 will be allocated to the strategy.
- The One Intern and One Programme Participants (OPPs) programmes (funded from the CPF and Epworth Fund respectively) will be refocused, delivering £2,000,000 towards the cost of the 'Young Evangelists' and 'New Places for New People' strategic areas.
- The remaining £3,313,328 of funding is yet to be identified.

Review, reporting, and oversight

As part of the connexional network of mutual accountability, the Evangelism and Growth team will coordinate regular (monthly, quarterly, and yearly) reporting and robust measurement streams, both qualitative and quantitative, for all key programmes in order to monitor progress, be attentive to emerging challenges and learning, and make strategic pivots in the first seasons of the strategy. It will also report annually to the Conference and within the connexional year to the Methodist Council, Strategy and Resources Committee, Ministries Committee, and any other official body required by the Conference.

Conclusion

Over the past two years, there has been a growing enthusiasm for a deeply embedded commitment to evangelism and growth in the present and future life of the Methodist Church. We are grateful for the freshness of this commitment, but we know that it is the fruit not only of the past two years but much more of the past several decades of witness, wisdom, and leadership from so many who have come before: Fresh Expressions Missioners; Evangelism, Spirituality, and Discipleship staff; Venture FX Pioneers; District Missioners; and innumerable leaders in Circuits and churches across the Connexion. The shoots of life and hope that we are starting to see as a Connexion are growing in large measure because of the prayers prayed, visions cast, and seeds planted by those faithful people.

That awareness helps us claim the truth that this is long-term, life-long work. This strategy is not built on any quick fixes, magic resources, or short initiatives: it signals a direction of travel for deep gospel transformation not only for the next three to five years, but also for the long-term future of our mission and whole life together. This expansive strategy will require much soul-searching, courageous decision-making, and significant structural change in the years ahead. Left to our own power, this work will be exhausting and impossible. Dependent on the power of God, it might just be life and joy for the Church and the world alike.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

4/1. The Conference received the Report.

4/3. The Conference agreed the programme plans as outlined in the Report, and directs the Council to monitor progress against the 'Expected Outcomes' annually, reporting back to the Conference on this in 2025.

Draft Resolution 4/2 was withdrawn

4/2. The Conference agrees to the allocation of funds as outlined in the Report, and directs the Council to identify a source for the remaining funding yet to be identified.

Appendix: Description of Terms

We commend the beautiful and extensive theological reflection present in the Methodist catechism and many Conference reports including *Called to Love and Praise*. The following descriptions are offered as a shorthand for commonly used terms in this paper; they are meant to complement the official theological work of the Methodist Church in Britain.

Evangelism

Evangelism is sometimes referred to as “the E-word”. For a variety of reasons, some have been suspicious of it and reluctant to meaningfully engage it. This resistance, much of it understandable, may begin to be relieved by a fuller description of what we mean by “evangelism”.

At a foundational level, we hold that evangelism is an orientation to the good news in all of our life together. It is not limited to techniques or practices of inviting or speaking (though it includes those) but is a cross-current in every aspect of mission and ministry.

Flowing from that general orientation, evangelism can then be understood as set of practices that introduces and inaugurates people into the kingdom of God for the first time (W Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism*). A particular and particularly important practice of evangelism is intentionally proclaiming the goodness of God as known in the person of Jesus Christ. This proclamation involves three dynamics: (1) speaking of the goodness of God; (2) listening for the goodness of God in the voices of others; and (3) living out the goodness of God. Fully-engaged evangelism necessarily involves all three.

As we expand our commitment to evangelism across the Connexion, we look for these markers:

- Evangelism is an intentional orientation to the good news in all of life – not only our beliefs and ideas, not only our practices, not only our relationships, but a holistic integration of all three. Evangelism serves as the foundation and matrix of all of our discipleship – our living out, listening for, and speaking of the goodness of God. As such, evangelism is not merely a list of invitation techniques or communication skills but a way of reflecting on all we are and do as Church. If we are committed to authentic evangelism, we review our mission and ministry and ask, “How is this activity orientated to the good news (or not)?” Our crucial commitments to social justice, beautiful worship, small groups, youth and children’s work, property development, hospitality, etc., find deeper life with that question in mind and heart. (See *Evangelism for Non-Evangelists*, Mark Teasdale. IVP Academic: Grand Rapids, 2016.)
- Evangelism is thoroughly relational. It invites depth, vulnerability, curiosity, and joy in relationships between church participants themselves and between the Church and neighbours in its community.
- Evangelism seeks both to reach new people in new places and to convert nominal Christians in existing churches.
- Evangelism brings spiritual joy and spiritual growth to those who practise it.
- Evangelism is not theologically or strategically monolithic. It can be expressed in diverse ways across the broad theological/ecclesial/human spectrum. We value creating a tapestry of approaches rather than pitting approaches against each other.
- Evangelism always seeks to do good and to do no harm; it requires a positive, non-shaming commitment to build up gospel life in individuals and communities. Some understandably resist evangelism because the word conjures images of coercion, fear, shame, and judgmental attitudes. The Methodist Church absolutely rejects those kinds of destructive tactics. The word “evangelism” comes from a Biblical Greek word, *euangelion*, which literally means “good news”. So if we are properly evangelistic, we are committed to good news – not bad news – in all of our motivations, relationships, words, and actions.
- Evangelism is hyper-contextual, expecting different approaches for different people groups, eg for people who speak Christianity as a ‘first language’ and for those who, if they embrace Christianity for the first time, will be learning it as a ‘second language’. As evangelists, we need to learn new

'languages' too, as we listen with people in diverse contexts to discover why Christianity is good news for them, and commit to journey with and learn from each other.

- Evangelism resists false dichotomies and lives in the realm of the 'both/and'. For example, the following commitments are faithfully held together:
 - Church spiritual/missional growth *and* Church numerical growth
 - Inviting people to church *and* creating new expressions of church and new relationships outside of the church building, in the community
 - Evangelism *and* social justice
 - Pointing to the Kingdom/expanding the ecumenical movement *and* starting/growing more particularly Methodist Christian communities
 - *Missio Dei and missio Ecclesiae: God's Mission and Our Mission/The Church's Mission*
- Evangelism is energised by a synergy of our theological statements about God and our encounter with and experience of God.
- Evangelism is enhanced by learning from deep relationships with people of other faiths and of no faith.

Prayer

- Prayer is essentially about being in relationship with God, so that like Jesus we can say "Abba" to God. As God's much-loved children we can respond by expressing our love and appreciation of God, by wanting to be honest about ourselves to God, by asking for things that we and others need, by uttering "sighs too deep for words" (Romans 8:26) or by simply being silent in the presence of the One who has called us into this relationship. Prayer is all these things and more.

Discipleship

- Discipleship is first of all our response to the God who calls us and draws us into the same kind of relationship which Jesus has with the One whom he calls "Abba". It is about us growing into maturity as God's children as we learn to open ourselves increasingly to the life and the Spirit of God. Discipleship requires us to work out that commitment as followers of Jesus in this world as we do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.
- A discipleship pathway involves all the ways in which a Christian community provides for its people to move from their first exploration or encounter with faith and with Church in the direction of ever-deepening Christian maturity. This requires those various ways of challenging and supporting people's growth to be intentionally planned, communicated, and organised so that they contribute to an ongoing process of development as disciples of Christ. A discipleship pathway will offer entryways both to newcomers and to those who have a longstanding involvement in Church.

Church growth

- Church growth patterned on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit is not a capitalistic enterprise of addition for the sake of addition. It is a process of grace, honesty, letting go even into death, and focused attention that effects deeper spiritual and missional growth. While faithful church growth is not obsessed with numerical growth, it is absolutely attentive to it because numbers represent people. We want to see more people exploring faith and encountering grace, more people coming to a living faith in Jesus Christ, more people growing in faith and discipleship, and more people becoming committed members of Methodist churches. For this reason, we welcome and celebrate the growth of every relationship and gathering which represents a step on that journey.

New Places For New People

- New Places For New People are projects whose primary goal is to start, build, and reproduce new Christian communities among unaffiliated people. These include church plants, pioneer projects, Fresh Expressions, missional communities, new worshipping communities, etc.

Pioneering and Planting

- These terms are often used interchangeably to refer to the process of starting a new Christian community, which involves the adventure of building relationships with unaffiliated people, listening for and discovering God's call in a particular community, learning to speak compellingly and sensitively about the gospel in that context, evangelism, casting vision and drawing people together in teams around vision and mission, discipling people into faith, and forming an ecclesial community or church. Described distinctives between these terms often have to do with approach (pioneering might start with one person beginning a completely new faith community with an innovative or unexpected form of church; planting might start with groups of people beginning a new community that replicates or adapts an existing form of church) and "cultural distance" (pioneers may be understood to venture further than church planters into communities, people groups, and subcultures with greater distance from "meaningful engagement of the Gospel"). We understand both terms to be foundationally about helping unaffiliated people encounter God, creating pathways for discipleship, and building new Christian communities that grow towards being ecclesial communities.

Fresh Expression

- Small organic forms of church, often lay-led, that seek to listen to people and enter their culture, serve those outside the reach of the existing church, make discipleship a priority, and intentionally form church.

Missional or neo-monastic community

- A small group of people who identify as an intentional, committed Christian community and who unite and share life together around a common calling to service and witness to a particular neighbourhood, human population, or network of relationships. They often have a rule or pattern of life or practice that is marked by prayer, communal life, hospitality, and practical engagement with people who are poor or marginalised.

New worshipping community

- A term which could encompass any of the above terms, but also may refer to a new kind of worship gathering or service within an existing church, or a parallel congregation that starts with a conscious connection to the ministry of an existing church, whether it meets in the same space or a different space as that church.