



## **Strategy and Resources Group**

### **Update 3 - May 2017**

This is the third in a series of updates for church members in the Preston Ribble Circuit. It has been written to keep you up to date with the work of the Circuit Strategy and Resources Group. The Group was set up by the Circuit Meeting in 2016 to consider the challenges and opportunities facing the 14 Methodist Churches in the Circuit. These relate to the mission, ministry, worship and discipleship in our churches – and the resources to support them.

#### **What did we tell you in the last update?**

In our last update in February, we explained the actions being taken by the Circuit Strategy and Resources Group as part of our review. This included holding conversations with each church as well as a helpful Circuit Consultation evening. These discussions helped us to produce a “Case for Change” document which has already been considered by a number of Church Councils. We suggested that it was likely that the new Circuit Strategy will challenge us to rethink how we work together across the localities of the circuit to resource the mission, worship, pastoral care and leadership of the church.

#### **Where are we up to now?**

In the last few weeks, the Circuit Strategy and Resources Group has updated the Circuit Meeting on the progress being made. We have met the Chair of District who explained that it will be difficult to recruit the number of ministers needed in the Lancashire District through this year’s stationing process. We have visited the North Shields and Whitley Bay Circuit who have had positive experiences from developing a Circuit Leadership Team with a mix of lay and ordained individuals. Our ministers have completed a personal review of their ministry priorities – we have concluded from this that the Circuit needs to refresh our priorities for mission by focusing on God’s possibilities rather than the church’s decline. We have held a further Consultation evening with young adults across the Circuit, gaining valuable insights on their perspectives on the future of the Church.

#### **What does this all mean?**

All of the work which has taken place over the past year will come together in a report with recommendations for the next Circuit Meeting on the 20th June 2017.

The Strategy and Resources Group expects to make several ambitious recommendations about mission and ministry for the Circuit as a whole. We are keen to encourage groups of churches working in geographic areas to work increasingly together. We expect to emphasise priorities for high quality contemporary worship, pastoral care and opportunities for discipleship in individual churches. We may also need to take some difficult decisions and support each other through these.

We expect every church in the Circuit will face some changes as a result of this review.

### **What's happening next?**

A further Consultation Evening is being held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May to which church leadership teams are being invited. We are also arranging a Circuit Prayer Day around the time of Pentecost to place our hopes and concerns for the Circuit into God's hands.

### **When will I hear more?**

The group will be presenting its final report and recommendations to the Circuit Meeting in June. A further update like this will be produced to tell you about the actions agreed at this meeting.

We think some decisions (particularly relating to the number of ministers) will need to be taken quite quickly. Other recommendations can be discussed over a period of time within churches and in the localities of our Circuit.

### **Who is on the Strategy and Resources Group?**

Jan Astley

Rev Katharine Bland

Rev John Fisher

Rev Malcolm Hickox

Rev Mark Slaney

Andrew Bennett (chair)

John Ferris

Stephen Gregory

Rob Matthews

### **Questions or concerns**

If you have any questions, suggestions or feedback about the Circuit Strategy, please use our dedicated email address: [strategyprmc@gmail.com](mailto:strategyprmc@gmail.com) - or feel free to contact any of the Group members if you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this leaflet.