



Our Strategy for Mission, 2025-2030

London is one of the 23 districts of the Methodist Church in Britain. The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the Gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

It does this through:

- Worship
- Learning & Caring
- Service
- Evangelism

In all this, we are striving towards a vision of being a Growing, Inclusive, Evangelistic and Justice-Seeking Church.

The mission of The London District of the Methodist Church is to share the good news of Jesus Christ throughout Greater London and the surrounding areas, and thus to strive for the flourishing and fulness of life of both people and their communities.

Building on the firm foundations of District-wide resourcing and our collective gifts, we will seek to live out this mission through three 'pillars' of work and witness:

- I. Seeking Growth
- II. Reaching Out
- III. Embracing God's World

About the District

The London District is comprised of 32 circuits and some 211 churches. It is roughly co-terminous with the 32 boroughs of the Greater London Authority created in 2000, but also reaches into parts of Surrey, Essex and Hertfordshire. The District is therefore home to a growing of population of more than 9 million people, who represent a vast array of cultures, who practice all of the world's major religions, and who speak a great diversity of languages. Patterns of migration continue to shape and enrich the communities we serve, with more than 40% of the District's people having been born outside of the UK: a figure much higher

than most other parts of the country. The District also encompasses the full range of economic conditions experienced by people in Britain: with around 25% of those in the London District living in relative poverty, and/or in conditions of marginalisation¹. Clearly, our witness and mission is also shaped and influenced by London's role as a capital city, and we strive, in partnership with Connexional bodies, to engage with political leaders and organisations both national and regional in offering the challenge and vision of the Christian Gospel to the work of law-making and policy development.

Above all, our mission is shaped by our calling to be God's people, and the followers of Jesus, in a world of rapid change, constant uncertainty, political fragility, climate crisis, sharp divisions, rampant injustice and enormous human need and pain. We seek to bear witness in word and action to the "hope that is in us" because of the Good News of God's extravagant love for the world, and for all that God has brought into life, revealed most beautifully in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Before we seek to implement any plan detailed below, therefore, we commit ourselves to pray constantly, to reflect deeply, to listen carefully, to God and to our neighbours, and to take seriously the calling we have as the people called Methodists, to participate in God's work of renewal, reconciliation, healing and transformation.

Co-creating the Strategy for Mission

Many individuals and groups have been involved in the genesis of the District Mission Strategy. The District Council has worked in close collaboration with the Chairs and the Executive to review and revise successive iterations, which have themselves been shaped in a variety of contexts. These have included conversations at the Superintendents' meetings, and those led by the Chairs of District in meetings with circuit leadership teams. The District Team also spent time together intentionally in exploring their perspectives, hopes and dreams for the District, and were assisted in this by expert facilitation from a member of the Connexional Team. A final draft was brought to the District Synod in May 2025 for reflection and refinement, including the addition of some specific actions which we will undertake in pursuit of our goals.

Our main priorities for 2025-2030

We will act to support and enable the interpretation of Connexional priorities² within the London District and in ways which recognise and respond to our particular opportunities, character and needs. This will be focused on three foundational 'pillars':

¹ <https://data.london.gov.uk/economic-fairness/living-standards/population-in-poverty/>

² Priorities for the work of The Methodist Church brought to and agreed by The Methodist Conference at its annual meeting; e.g. New Places for New People and the movement towards being a Justice-Seeking Church.

Seeking Growth
Reaching Out
Embracing God's World

There are eight key priorities, arising from our consultations, which form these pillars. The implementation of our priorities will be enabled and fostered through the focused work of synod and district bodies, the energies of a reshaped District Team, the use of our resources, and the development of missional strategies which acknowledge, honour and nurture the unique contexts of every circuit. This is not a 'one size fits all' proposition for every local church and circuit, and nor is it a top-down set of demands which will constrain our churches. Rather, it is an invitation and a reassurance to them: an invitation to a new season of continued discernment as to which of these shared priorities God is calling them to in their own context; and a reassurance that there will be encouragement, resourcing, wisdom and support from the District as they pursue them.

Building on Firm Foundations

Although the strategy identifies three key 'pillars' which will uphold and express our work in mission, nothing is possible without firm foundations on which to build – the necessary, everyday work which enables everything else to be done. During the course of consultations and conversations about the strategy, careful attention has been paid to these, and to the needs of our churches and circuits in offering proper skill, oversight and expertise in them, especially where local resources are scarce. To that end, and in response to those conversations, some of the recent changes in the District Team have been designed to offer better support to churches and circuits. In all the following areas, we will continue to seek to ensure that there is some help and practical support from the District, so that local churches are empowered for mission and enabled to build on solid ground:

- Administration (including guidance on GDPR and other compliance requirements, supporting the District's leadership, planning Synod and connecting churches and circuits)
- Support for creative approaches to configuring and reconfiguring for mission (e.g. restructuring, mergers, sharing resources, etc.)
- Digital Engagement
- Human Resources and lay employment (a new consents support group is coming)
- Finances, including exploring how best to support local finance officers
- Property, including manses and consent processes
- Establishing communities of practice for those in lay employment and ministry
- Learning and Training
- Safeguarding (via the new Connexional Team and our own Regional Officer)

- Ecumenical and Interfaith Partnerships
- Ministerial (lay and ordained) well-being

The Strategy: Three Pillars – Eight Priorities

PILLAR: Seeking Growth

A. Deepening Discipleship for All

We will encourage and enable Methodist churches and communities in London to deepen their faith, nurture their discipleship and grow in their following of Jesus.

B. Developing Lay Ministries

We will support circuits and churches in learning and development opportunities for local preachers, worship leaders and other authorised forms of lay ministries, to promote engaging worship, effective ministry and pioneering initiatives.

C. Enabling Evangelism to make Every Church a Growing Church

We will work to enable and encourage all our members to speak of their faith to others, and every congregation to engage with its neighbours in life-giving and dynamic ways.

PILLAR: Reaching Out

D. Creating New Places for New People (NPNP)/Church at the Margins (CaM)

We will launch (a) District NPNP project(s), and encourage, enable, and support circuits across the London District to join the growing NPNP/ CaM movement by developing contextually-relevant new forms of church, with an emphasis on Church at the Margins projects.

E. Being a Justice-Seeking Church

We will offer resources to our churches in the work of listening carefully to our communities, engaging passionately with questions of justice, and working tirelessly for the Kingdom of God.

F. Welcoming Children and Young People

We will enable, equip and support circuits and churches in developing, maintaining and growing creative, welcoming children's and young people ministries. We will foster and enable the leadership of young people in the District and its churches.

PILLAR: Embracing God's World

G. Pursuing Action for Hope

We will pursue climate justice at the District level, and will support our circuits and churches in working towards a sustainable future through the Action for Hope

strategy. This will involve both a review of the physical property stock and that of the churches' culture towards sustainability.

H. Cherishing our Place in the World Church

We will cherish our place within the world church, and seek to deepen our connections with it. As part of this, we will nurture the work, and the wider District's support, of our culture and language specific fellowship groups.

Our Working Methods

We have already reshaped and enlarged the District Team with generous help via the District Advance Fund (DAF) so as to:

- embed and engage with new Connexionally-funded posts offered through the *God for All* strategy – a Faith-Rooted Community Organiser and a District New Places for New People Lead – and thus resource churches for outreach and change-making;
- renew our work in district-wide communications and the administration which underpins our mission and the day-to-day work of the circuits;
- examine and strengthen the support offered to circuits in vital areas of compliance and care, including, HR, property and ministerial well-being.

This process will continue in response to the needs of the District's churches as the strategy is implemented, including in the area of the best configuration of circuits and District-wide leadership, so as best to release resources and energy in mission.

Our 'golden rules' for *how* we will approach the implementation of our priorities will be as follows:

- a. Prayerfully: undergirding everything with prayer, individually and together, and keeping ourselves open to the challenge of God's Spirit and the gift of Christ's risen life and power;
- b. Collaboratively: sharing best practice between circuits and churches across the District;
- c. Transparently: sharing the work of our groups widely and seeking input to their decision-making;
- d. Ecumenically: building on our historic partnerships, seeking to re-invigorate our collective witness and mission, and forming new friendships with other Christians;
- e. Attentively: listening carefully to God, to our neighbours in all their diversity, and to the needs and challenges of the world around us;
- f. Generously: cherishing and celebrating our diversity as a gift of God in creation and a sign of God's presence and purpose for us;

- g.** Faithfully: exercising prayerful stewardship of all that we have been given – finances, buildings, human potential, the natural world, our inheritance from previous generations, and our dreams for the future;
- h.** Intentionally: Holding all that we do in all our gatherings and meetings (Council, Exec, DAF, Staff Priorities etc.) accountable to the strategy and its aims;
- i.** Safely: Ensuring that we create safer space for all our activity and hold to the highest standards of Safeguarding practice.

The Strategy in Detail

SEEKING GROWTH

A. Deepening Discipleship for Everyone <i>We will encourage and enable Methodist churches and communities in London to deepen their faith, nurture their discipleship and grow in their following of Jesus.</i>
This means that we will... ³
Foster a deepening engagement with a Methodist Way of Life, e.g. with a Lent Course
Celebrate the breadth of the District's theological spectrum, and foster a generous acceptance of our sometimes contradictory convictions
Ask (and encourage) every church and circuit to embed these priorities in ways that are appropriate to their own context, needs and capacity, through deeply-rooted local discernment
Seek <i>growth</i> in all our life together, understood in its fullest and broadest sense and in ways appropriate for each person and context
Explore opportunities for pilgrimage, especially with young adults

B. Growing Lay Ministries (inc. local leadership) <i>We will support circuits and churches in learning and development opportunities for those offering authorised forms of lay ministry, or undertaking ministry as a lay officer, to promote engaging worship, effective ministry and pioneering initiatives.</i>
This means that we will...
Explore new ways of enabling and encouraging all people – and especially those experiencing marginalisation – to hear and respond to God's call to them
Embed new patterns of LPWL training and tutoring to ensure equal access and support for all in our circuits
Develop the Circuit LPWL Meeting and offer resources for its life and work
Signpost churches to support available for local arrangements for worship
Conduct a District-wide audit of patterns of lay volunteer ministries with a view to forming a new strategy for them
Nurture new lay leaders, and seek to reflect our diversity in their number
Offer encouragement and help to circuits in recruiting and training new Local Lay-Pastors

³ These are District-wide intentions and goals only; at the Representative Synod of May 2025, many circuits added in their own intentions and expressed their own dreams in these areas, and a record of these is kept in the District Office.

C. Enabling Evangelism to make Every Church a Growing Church <i>We will work to enable and encourage all our members to speak of their faith to others, and every congregation to engage with its neighbours in life-giving and dynamic ways.</i>
This means that we will...
Renew our commitment to story-telling and testimony as a characteristic of our common life and worship
Use Connexional resources (e.g. Learning Network, Cliff College, E&G Team) in building the confidence of London Methodists to speak of their faith
Seek new partnerships and build on existing ones in seeking opportunities and ways to share Good News with other Londoners
Move towards a culture of outreach and invitation in our churches

REACHING OUT

D. Creating New Places for New People/Pioneering Church at the Margins <i>We will launch (a) District NPNP project(s), and encourage, enable, and support circuits across the London District to join the growing NPNP/ CaM movement by developing contextually-relevant new forms of church, with an emphasis on Church at the Margins projects.</i>
This means that we will...
Launch one or more District NPNP project(s)
Renew our NPNP Team to foster circuit-based NPNP/CaM projects and release our <i>God for All</i> funding
Build on our well-established work in chaplaincy across the District (and the work of the District Chaplaincy Co-ordinator) and offer its fruit to the whole District
Be carefully attentive to District-wide needs among particular communities and groups (e.g. the elderly; the theatre community; LGBTQ+ people; asylum seekers and refugees; those in recovery; those experiencing food poverty; etc.) and seek to offer a collective response where possible
Embed mission-planning across the churches, and offer resources for that discernment (including at Synod)
Offer tools for those seeking to engage digitally with their communities
Commit to ensuring that those experiencing economic marginalisation are at the centre of our missional endeavours and vision, and full partners in them
Resource every church to conduct a community audit and support them in discerning how to act on them
Support ministers to spend more time in outward-facing engagement and less on administrative tasks
Seek to support and resource lay ministry (including employed workers)

E. Being a Justice-Seeking Church <i>We will offer resources to our churches in the work of listening carefully to our communities, engaging passionately with questions of justice, and working tirelessly for the Kingdom of God.</i>
This means that we will...
Embed Faith-Rooted Community Organising principles in our work to build new relationships and act missionally with others
Resource every church to conduct a community audit and support them in discerning how to act on them
Partner with others to support work to eradicate youth violence and knife crime
Build carefully on current projects and commitments, e.g. asylum seekers and refugees; Citizens UK; Warm Spaces; Let's End Poverty
Be an engaged and prophetic voice in addressing London's current needs, including housing justice
Deepen our relationships with London's civic authorities (i.e. GLA, Mayor's Office, Met Police, local borough councils) to forge new public relationships and bring about the changes we seek
Renew our commitment to the work of our historic missions (e.g. WLM, Whitechapel, SLM at Bermondsey), and seek their wisdom for District-wide work in social justice
Act according to our 'working methods' above to listen, collaborate, liaise and engage with all our partners effectively, sharing stories and seeking solutions
Engage with Connexional work on economic justice and have the difficult conversations about what it means in London

F. Welcoming Children and Young People <i>We will enable, equip and support circuits and churches in developing, maintaining and growing creative, welcoming children's and young people ministries. We will foster and enable the leadership of young people in the District and its churches.</i>
This means that we will...
Develop a District-wide strategy for children's and youth work, including an emphasis on family and intergenerational working, and encouraging ongoing participation in the life of the churches beyond Junior Church
Resource and encourage more District-wide participation in 3Generate
Share resources for worship to invite the presence of those less familiar or comfortable with inherited forms of worship
Utilise the presence of a Global Mission Fellow at Wesley's Chapel for engagement with young adults across the District

EMBRACING GOD'S WORLD

G. Pursuing Action for Hope <i>We will pursue climate justice at the District level, and will support our circuits and churches in working towards a sustainable future through the Action for Hope strategy. This will involve both a review of the physical property stock and that of the churches' culture towards sustainability.</i>
This means that we will...
Apply for Arocha status under the 'EcoChurch' scheme
Encourage and guide local churches and circuits to register with the Arocha 'EcoChurch' scheme with the intention later to apply for an award, and seek to offer networking in this
Secure Connexional funding via for Action for Hope funds, and appoint a Net Zero Champion to the District Team. We will release money to churches to develop Action for Hope in their own contexts
Create a specific District Environmental Policy that will work alongside a wider District Property Development Plan.
Guide churches in navigating the planning system when making environmentally-conscious changes (e.g. solar panels)

H. Cherishing our Place in the World Church <i>We will cherish our place within the world church, and seek to deepen our connections with it. As part of this, we will nurture the work, and the wider District's support, of our culture and language specific fellowship groups.</i>
This means that we will...
Celebrate our cultural diversity and seek to create intercultural spaces for reflection and mutual learning
Deepen our commitment to our cultural and language-specific fellowship groups, including their integration with the whole life, work and witness of the District
Work with global communities as they share in MCB's journey towards being evangelistic, inclusive and justice-seeking, discerning what it means in their context and from their perspective
Provide resources in languages other than English where it is possible to do so
Honour and foreground the particular experiences of diaspora communities in our justice-seeking work and our engagement with political authorities and in our ecumenical and interfaith work
Promote cross-district ways of working and the sharing of relationships and resources, e.g. with Iranian community