Mission Plan 2026–2031

Rooted in prayer, shaped by grace, serving with courage

Our calling

The Aire & Calder Methodist Circuit exists to share the love of God in Christ across Wakefield, South Leeds and the communities we serve. We believe God is gracious and active in the world today, and that every person should know they are loved, valued and safe. We will continue to seek to be a Circuit that prays deeply, acts justly, speaks honestly, welcomes generously and serves faithfully.

Our vision

To become a Circuit of confident, caring and outward-looking Methodist communities, where churches, projects, schools and mission initiatives work together to offer worship, pastoral care, justice, hope and practical service.

Our priorities

1. Deepening prayer and worship

We will encourage every church and project to place prayer at the heart of its life. Worship will be accessible, inclusive and rooted in the realities of people's lives. We will support local churches in offering worship that is both faithful and sustainable, including online, small-group and alternative forms where appropriate.

2. Strengthening local mission

Each church will be encouraged to identify its particular calling in its own community. This may include work with families, older people, isolated people, those facing poverty, new housing areas, schools, warm spaces, dementia support, arts, chaplaincy, or online engagement. We will celebrate what is already life-giving and focus energy where there is clear purpose, capacity and need.

3. Developing new Christian communities

We will continue to invest in new and emerging forms of church and mission, including Lakeside Creative Arts Centre, Twenty-7, Methley Online Church, City Fields, children and families work, Trinity Mission and other pioneer opportunities. These will not be side projects, but part of our shared Circuit life, helping us reach people who may never walk into a traditional church building.

4. Caring honestly for existing churches

We will support every church with compassion and realism. Some churches will grow, some will change shape, some may share resources, and some may faithfully come to an end. Where difficult decisions are needed, we will act with honesty, dignity and hope, honouring the past while asking what God is calling us to do now.

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5. Building a sustainable Circuit structure

We will continue to reshape ministry, staffing and oversight so that responsibilities are clear, fair and sustainable. We will strengthen teamwork between ministers, lay employees, Circuit Stewards, church leaders and volunteers. We will prepare carefully for future leadership, including the transition to a new Superintendent, so that the Circuit remains stable and confident.

6. Growing discipleship and leadership

We will nurture lay and ordained leadership across the Circuit, helping people discover and use their gifts. We will offer training, encouragement and practical support for worship leaders, local preachers, pastoral visitors, stewards, treasurers, safeguarding teams, children and youth workers, and those serving in mission projects.

7. Committing to justice, inclusion and safety

We will seek to be a Circuit where all people are welcomed and respected. Equality, diversity, inclusion and safeguarding will be central to our life, not added extras. We will speak and act for justice, especially where people are vulnerable, overlooked or excluded.

How we will work

We will work collaboratively, with trust and openness. Decisions will be made prayerfully, with proper consultation and clear governance. We will avoid simply preserving structures for their own sake, but we will also avoid change that is rushed, careless or imposed without pastoral understanding. We will keep asking three questions:

- What is God asking of us?
- Who are we called to serve?
- What can we do faithfully and sustainably?

Signs of faithfulness

By 2031 we hope to see:

- Churches clearer about their purpose and mission.
- New Christian communities established and growing in confidence.
- Stronger lay and ordained teamwork across the Circuit.
- A healthier and more sustainable pattern of oversight and staffing.
- Churches supported well through change, including closure where necessary.
- A stronger online and community-facing presence.
- People across our communities encountering the love of God in practical, visible and hopeful ways.

Closing commitment

We do not know exactly what the next three to five years will bring, but we trust the God who goes before us. With the Holy Spirit in our midst, we will move forward with courage, compassion and hope, seeking to be faithful to Christ and good news to the communities we serve.