



Mission Strategy

January 2020 onwards

- Working Document -

Confidential

2020

HARROW & HILLINGDON CIRCUIT
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Introduction

The Harrow and Hillingdon Circuit was formed in 2006 when two former circuits merged across two London Boroughs. Since then there has been a lack of circuit identity and unity despite four superintendents and 3 mission strategies. In 2018, after the previous superintendent unexpectedly left, The Revd Andrew Pottage and The Revd John Swarbrick become co-superintendents.

One of the early concerns highlighted to us was a lack of collaboration and cooperation and so a number of meetings were convened to increase communication and to share information. Two such examples are the superintendent and senior church stewards' meeting and the regular meetings between then senior circuit steward and the superintendent. In this time period the superintendent began meeting the circuit stewards. This opened up new channels of communication in which people shared their concerns and frustrations. Also, during this time, a pilot was tried to make the Worship Leaders' and Local Preachers' meeting more inclusive of the growing number of Worship Leaders' in the circuit and so the Worship Forum was conceived.

Following on from the Presidential Challenge of 2016, it was decided by the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) that a good way to keep the flow of information and communication going would be for each church to produce a Mission Action Plan (MAP); this in turn would help develop a Circuit Strategy which would arise from the people in the churches rather than seeming to be imposed from the top down. In September 2018, when The Revd Andrew Pottage became sole superintendent, this process led to each church developing its own MAP. The CLT asked for these to be submitted to the Circuit Office by Easter 2019. A small group of people worked with me and Claire Gill to review them, and it was decided to make a presentation to the June 2019 Circuit Meeting and then hold a summary service during the summer of 2019, but asking each congregation to give feedback on the points raised. This Mission Strategy arises out of that process.

I hope and pray that this working document will become for us our focus for mission for the future.

Every blessing in Jesus' name.

Andrew

Timeline

June 2017	The Revd Andrew Pottage and The Revd John Swarbrick become co-superintendents
July 2017	Our Calling Mission Groups discontinued, except for the Resources Group and the Communications Group. The Resources Group becomes the Circuit Resources Network (CRN).
October 2017	Deacon Claire Gill and Circuit Steward John Rout Jnr launch a Circuit Worship Review among ministers, preachers, worship leaders, and church stewards.
August 2018	New meetings launched to increase communication and the sharing of information The CLT adopts the policy of the Presidential Challenge 2016 but modifies it slightly. So instead of a growth plan or end of life plan, the Mission Action Plan (MAP) idea is formed.
September 2018	Every Church Council is encouraged to write a MAP
October 2018	The Circuit Staff Residential focused on Team Building and Personality Profiling
Easter 2019	MAP responses received at the Circuit Office
June 2019	Presentation made to Circuit Meeting
July 2019	Strategy Group meets and decides to create a MAP service so as many people as possible are involved in the process.
September 2019	Update presentation made to Circuit Meeting with next steps Statement of progress made by the Superintendent
October 2019	Staff Residential focused on Church Growth
December 2019	Draft Strategy Presented to Circuit Meeting
NB	During this period the circuit has been mindful of the Circuit's mission as it engages with the invitation and stationing processes.

What is Mission?

These extracts from scripture help to give us a clear picture of what mission is.

Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."^[a]

Luke 4:18-19

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Our Calling

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.

Let your whole way of life respond to God's call:

- letting **life** grow in you every day;
- nurturing **life** in the Church; and
- bringing **life** to the world.

This is the Methodist Way of Life.

Worship

The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love.

Learning and Caring

The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care.

Service

The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.

Evangelism

The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ.

According to David Bosch from his seminal text, *Transforming Mission* (2008)

Mission is, quite simply, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus, wagering on a future that verifiable experience seems to believe. It is the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world.

[*Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Orbis Books 1991]

Wesley's view of the importance of the mission of Christians:

You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore, spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most.

[The Revd John Wesley, *Rules of a Helper*, published in 1763]

Called to be God's People

The Church is a community called into being by God to participate in God's mission, witness to divine grace, and proclaim the kingdom of God as Jesus did. From God's "reign and mission, exemplified in and established by Jesus", the Church derives its existence and purpose and thus discerns its calling. God's mission does not belong to the Church, but the Church participates in it and witnesses to God's love through loving, suffering and service in our broken world. The Church is a sign, foretaste and instrument of God's kingdom. In this imperfect human community, the presence of the Holy Spirit makes such witness possible. (extract from *Called to Love and Praise*)

In the 1982 convergence document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Churches agreed that:

"Living in this communion with God, all members of the Church are called to confess their faith and to give account of their hope. They are to identify with the joys and sufferings of all people as they seek to witness in caring love. The members of Christ's body are to struggle with the oppressed towards that freedom and dignity promised with the coming of the Kingdom. This mission needs to be carried out in varying political, social and cultural contexts. In order to fulfil this mission faithfully, they will seek relevant forms of witness and service in each situation. In so doing they bring to the world a foretaste of the joy and glory of God's Kingdom."

The Circuit is the primary church unit in British Methodism, "in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help." For many Methodists, however, the Local Church is the primary place for the celebration, exploration and encouragement of the variety of ways in which Christians engage in witness and service in response to God's call. The Methodist Church, 1999, *Called to Love and Praise*, The Methodist Church, 2017, *The Constitutional Practice*

The purpose and theology of the Strategy

The concept of developmental social holiness in one's life.

For John Wesley this was realizable in this life, and from as early as 1725 he records that he was praying for and aiming at 'inward holiness' (John Wesley Journal, 24 May 1738). Throughout his writings he used the term as synonymous with 'entire sanctification' or 'perfect love.' In the 1763 *Minutes* he declared that Methodism originated in 1729 when he and Charles Wesley saw they could not be saved without holiness and that God's purpose in raising up the Methodist preachers was 'to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land'. He spoke frequently of 'holiness of heart and life', 'inward and outward holiness' and 'holiness or true religion', most often citing Hebrews 12: 14: 'Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.' [Source page 161, 'Holiness', A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland edited by John A. Vickers, Epworth Press, 2000]

- Disciples of Christ do not exist in isolation.
 - An outline of discipleship:
 - Called by God
 - Commitment to Christ
 - Membership Course
 - Baptism if not baptised as a child and Confirmation
 - Baptised/confirmed/received into membership
 - Nurturing and growing in spiritual maturity
 - Supporting and encouraging one another as Christians
 - Encouraging vocations in everyone for lay, ordained and missionary 'orders'.
 - Creating spiritual Christians
-

Developing a newer style of leading churches within the spirit of the Standing Orders:

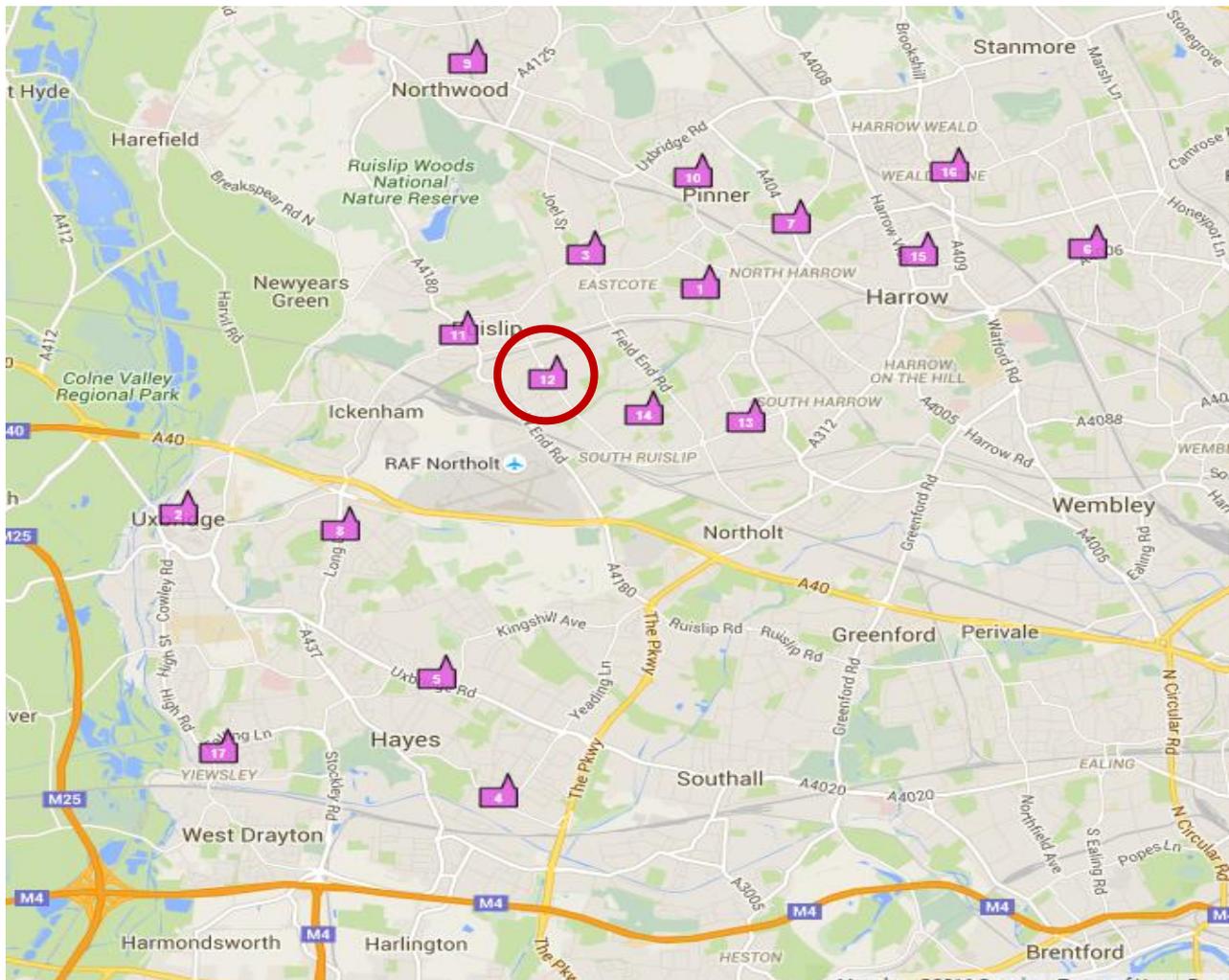
- Looking to Christ-centred models of leadership
- Every church developing a Leadership Team; TEAM as an acronym for Towards Everyone Aiding Mission
- Each leadership team being formed of 'leaders of leaders'
- God doesn't want us to reheat, rehash or rehabilitate, but refresh, reinvigorate and renew us through his re creative purposes.

❖ **Reforming God's Church**

❖ **Refreshing Mission**

❖ **Renewing ourselves**

Map of Circuit



- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Cannon Lane | 9. Northwood |
| 2. Christ Church, Uxbridge | 10. Pinner |
| 3. Eastcote | 11. Ruislip |
| 4. Hayes | 12. Ruislip Manor |
| 5. Hayes End | 13. South Harrow |
| 6. Kenton | 14. The Lighthouse |
| 7. North Harrow | 15. Trinity, Harrow |
| 8. North Hillingdon | 16. Wealdstone |
| | 17. Viewsley |

Membership Figures from each Current Church Society

The figures on the next page provide us with an overview in line with the national trend in all major denominations of decline in church attendance. We would like you to prayerfully consider the following questions:

- Are there activities/events we could be undertaking to increase the numbers attending worship?
- Why is there a disparity between membership figures and average Sunday attendance? Is there a way of re-connecting with these people?
- Are there ways in which we could be connecting with the users of our buildings, which may in turn increase our weekly attendance at worship?
- Is the time/content of our worship attractive to new people?
- What do the figures say about the future of our churches as worshipping communities?
- What do the figures say about the future of our churches as community letting agents?
- What do the footfall figures say about the location of our churches and how they connect with their local communities?

Church	Est	1980's	1990's	2000's	2010's	2019	Average Sunday numbers	Footfall Per hour	No. of building users per week	2028
Cannon Lane	1956	68	60	60	55	48	42	25	463	?
Christ Church	1972	222	130	111	52	50	40	65	1000	?
Eastcote	1824	105	92	58	52	51	35	15	120	?
Hayes	1907	125	109	72	31	29	25	1200	400	?
Hayes End	1891	70	72	106	87	85	50	60	920	?
Kenton	1927	210	171	127	99	99	62	190	1890	?
North Harrow	1927	228	149	101	74	75	60	51	670	?
North Hillingdon	1932	83	69	31	33	30	27	20	527	?
Northwood	1905	186	133	100	75	69	50	5	665	?
Pinner	1828	218	151	113	73	71	35	100	500	?
Ruislip	1921	214	166	176	84	81	51	38	570	?
Ruislip Manor	1934	127	109	110	60	60	48	18	470	?
South Harrow	1935	84	93	94	66	67	45	22	710	?
Trinity	1985	256	181	188	250	250	200			?
Wealdstone	1883	182	181	174	137	135	69	220	667	?
Yiewsley	1853	99	66	40	33	32	25	67	605	?
TOTAL		2477	1932	1661	1261	1232	864			?

Circuit Policy on Resource Deployment

1. Since the inauguration of the Lighthouse (Circuit Hub) it has been agreed to make the building a working resource for the circuit given the courageous decision of South Ruislip Methodist Church last year.
2. In agreement with the direction of travel proposed, the Circuit will reshape for mission in accordance with this goal.
3. As the Circuit Office prepares to relocate to the Lighthouse (Circuit Hub), a new circuit administrative team will be created and function under the care of the Circuit Administration Manager (CAM); all previous arrangements will now cease with immediate effect.
4. Since the development of the Circuit Resources Network (CRN) all matters of finance, property, Human Resources (now called People) will fall under the remit of this committee. Legal affairs will now be added, with the appropriate gifts and graces to meet this need.
5. The Circuit will employ a Circuit Property Manager (CPM) to oversee the previous functions of a circuit manse secretary and circuit property secretary. This appointment will be permanent and come under the line management of the CAM with the directional remit of the role coordinated by the CRN.
6. The Circuit will aim to draw up a procurement policy to enable better value services for both churches, community centres and manses in the future. This work will form part of the role for the new CPM in consultation with the CRN.
7. The CRN will undertake a strategic review of the Circuit Manses and report the results to the CLT (Circuit Leadership Team) and in due course to the Circuit Meeting (CM).
8. Any other properties such as the Lighthouse (The Hub) and The Welldon Centre at Trinity continue to fall under Methodist Property rules.
9. Any additional staff appointed on a Circuit basis will be invited to the quarterly Staff Meeting held at the Lighthouse (The Hub) and will be expected to attend unless directed otherwise.
10. While an innovation and an evolving concept, the Worship Forum continues to take the lead on the Worship Resources which the circuit has at its disposal. This concept continues to develop and encompasses the Local Preachers' Meeting for the purposes of Standing Orders 560 – 562.
11. The process for strategy is overseen by a small working party chaired by The Superintendent and reports on a regular basis to the CLT.

Strand One – Worship & Prayer



Context

John 4: 23–24 ‘Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.’

Worship and prayer continue to be the first priorities of the circuit to enable churches and Christians to engage fully with almighty God both individually and when assembled corporately. Worship should be of our best and prayer should be integral to who we are as believers; without both vital elements we cannot strive to be the best that God intended.

Following the consultation last year the following outcomes were identified: (1) more sectional services; (2) people wanted to see ‘their’ minister more; (3) people were unwilling to change their service time at ‘their’ church; (4) people wanted more variety; and (5) concern was expressed at the lack of pastoral care for Ministers and Local Preachers.

As a result, the Local Preachers’ and Worship Leaders’ meeting now incorporates a Worship Forum, which is intended to make meetings more interesting, topical and relevant. This year it will explore Family Friendly Worship and voice training.

The Pinner, Eastcote and Cannon Lane section has agreed to change service times, to ensure that the churches are led in worship by their minister more frequently and are able to be more adventurous in their worship styles.

Ruislip Methodist Church has created a ‘Worship Team’ to deliver Local Arrangements.

Future Working

- The Circuit is looking to roll out a new preaching series called 'Everyday Church'.
- The Circuit shall provide LA training, to enable Churches/sectional Teams to develop and deliver quality worship.
- The Circuit is looking to overhaul its prayer strategy to create a fresh approach and to inspire all to engage in prayer more fully, creatively and imaginatively. This will be based on the *Holy Habits* book written by The Revd Andrew Roberts; it will be combined with a version of the Underground map, to remind us to 'Mind the Gap between earth and heaven as we pray together'.

The Circuit is also providing each church with prayer cards to promote prayer more widely.



“Minding the gap between earth and heaven as we pray together”



Strand Two – Discipleship and Fellowship



Context

Acts 2: 42–47 The fellowship of the believers

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

In his book *Holy Habits* Andrew Roberts writes: 'We are not a church with small groups, we are a church of small groups'. Early Methodism was rooted in the class meeting—small groups of people who were mutually accountable.

Future Working

The circuit recognizes that early Methodism was rooted in small dynamic fellowship groups. If the church is to refresh, renew and reform, it needs to heed its past and learn lessons from its heritage. Therefore, the circuit will resolve to:

- encourage every member to read the Bible every day in a way that is both practical and relevant, and to suggest shared material;
- encourage every church to set up regular Bible Fellowship groups;
- support and promote the value of small groups that meet within each church, challenging them to grow and deepen their discipleship;
- prepare and offer Advent, Lent and Pentecost materials to be shared across the circuit;
- encourage every Church to work with the Circuit Resource Centre to produce a welcome pack; and
- facilitate the use of the 'First Impressions Count' material to look at how we promote our ongoing discipleship.

Strand Three – Children and Young People



Context

Mark 10: 15 Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it'.

The circuit recognizes the vital importance of this work. Therefore, it is in discussions with numerous organizations to effect change in this important area.

A number of churches identified this as an area they would like to explore and develop in their church Mission Action Plans.

Future Working

- Each church which has identified 'employing' a Children and Families' Worker or Youth Worker will be asked to complete the Proforma (see below). Help and advice can be sought from the circuit to help with its completion. Please Contact the Circuit Office for a Proforma.
- There is potential for several part-time posts to be created. Each church should clearly understand that any work with children and young people should not be undertaken purely to safeguard the existence of the church.
- The circuit aims to have employ a Circuit Youth Workers/Families Worker, although this does have implications for the circuit budget.
- There have been initial meetings with a new group of interested churches across Harrow and Hillingdon Boroughs to explore how we might work better together to provide and share resources

EXAMPLE Church Proforma

- Reason for the request: please outline briefly why you would like to employ a Children and Families Worker.

- Project Identified for Youth/Families Worker:

Example: Wednesday Evenings 5–10pm to greet BB parents and make connections with existing families during the drop-off and pick-up times; build up relationship with leaders of BB and explore connections between BB and attendance at monthly parade service.

- Hours requested: 12 hours (7 hours on Wednesday evenings/3 hours for exploration and relationship building /2 hours on a Sunday once a month for a Parade Service).
- Time scale & Sustainability: 2 years (within the first year identify volunteers who could continue the work or seek funding within the second year to continue with the existing post).
- Management Group: Line Manager, BB 2 representatives, 1 church member

Strand Four – Communication



Context

1 Peter 3: 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

Through recent reviews and communications, the circuit has been looking at ways to improve in this vital area.

- We give thanks for the generous donation of Wealdstone Methodist Church of £25,000 to help improve noticeboards across the circuit.
- The CLT has agreed to employ the services of a marketing consultant to advise us on a logo and the upgrading of websites and the circuit image across the board.
- The circuit is now well advanced in the delivery of prayer cards for every church.
- The circuit will endeavour to develop a resource system for cards and other suitable Christian items on a sale or return basis for church coffee shops, coffee mornings and other suitable occasions.

Future Working

The Methodist Church remains a largely unrecognized brand, and even asking members to describe in a sentence 'What is a Methodist' remains a challenge. In order to get the message out to the wider community, we must work extremely hard in this area.

Each church is encouraged to 'smart up' its exterior noticeboards in order to bring clarity, consistency and clear information as to what the Methodist Church is and does, and how this links to the wider person and mission of Jesus Christ.

Every church has been given guidance on signage.

Each church will receive a grant of £1,500 to enable them to improve their signage.

The CLT has engaged the services of a consultant to advise us on branding, websites, social media and other external output.

Strand Five – Older People: Care and Support



Context

Job 12: 12 Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?

- To build on and extend the existing work with older people across the circuit and share best practice with agencies such as MHA and the MHA Live at Home scheme.
- To encourage the idea of 'Everyday Church' to include mid-week activities such as lunch clubs, cafés and friendship groups as part of the churches' wider mission.

Future Working

- To develop and work towards a potential circuit-wide partnership with MHA and the Live at Home Scheme, akin to the existing one at Northwood.
- Work towards scoping the existing work, and developing ways to support volunteers in driving and expanding the work with the ethos of wider mission; look at the idea of 'chaplains' to the groups to develop the idea of everyday church.
- Encourage all cafés, lunch clubs, friendship and fellowship groups to use the prayer cards.
- Develop a greater understanding both theologically and practically of how to empower people in later life to feel less isolated and more loved and valued as the people God called and made them to be.

Strand Six – Encouraging & Equipping Ministry



Context

Ephesians 6: 7–8 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

The Circuit is the primary church unit in British Methodism,¹ 'in which local churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help.'² For many Methodists, however, the local church is the primary place for the celebration, exploration and encouragement of the variety of ways in which Christians engage in witness and service in response to God's call.

Future Working

- Encouraging people into the training avenues for Worship Leading, Local Preaching and the Ordained Ministries.
- Ensuring people complete statutory training on Safeguarding.
- Offering circuit wide Training for Local Arrangements and the development of the use of Social Media and Technology in Worship
- Developing a circuit-wide strategy for the deployment of staff both lay and ordained, which looks to current and future missional needs.

1 The Methodist Church, 1999, *Called to Love and Praise*.

2 The Methodist Church, 2017, *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, SO 500.

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint;
but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction.

Without the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Church will always be stunted and inward-looking. The Church and thereby the circuit must constantly be looking to God for fresh inspiration, ideas, challenge and to interpret what the Spirit is saying to us in today's contexts.

Harrow and Hillingdon Circuit

Mission Statement

Churches in the Harrow and Hillingdon Methodist Circuit are committed to:

- Reforming God's Church

By creating dynamic churches where worship is varied, vibrant and relevant.

- Refreshing Mission

By growing disciples of Jesus Christ and drawing people into the Kingdom of God.

- Renewing ourselves

By developing community, deepening our faith and engaging with the Bible and prayer.

Reforming God's Church

Refreshing Mission

Renewing ourselves