

YOUR OWN NEEDS

Any responsibility in the life of the church, especially one as vital as Circuit Steward with its 'servant leadership' style, makes great demands on your own spiritual resources. It is crucial to find times when you can put your concerns to one side and relax in an atmosphere and situation that enriches you spiritually. Some people go on retreat; others visit churches in other Circuits or denominations. As a Circuit Stewards team it is helpful to encourage each other to find ways of being spiritually refreshed.

PRAYER

In the face of the complex and demanding challenges of being an effective Circuit Steward, and the wisdom needed for such a task, prayer is vital. The way we pray is very personal. It is important to work to your own strength and preference. However, given the range of opportunities and responsibilities it is worthwhile making a prayer list to use briefly each day of the week to remember the people, situations and resources with which you are concerned. In conjunction with that list, here are some prayers that other Circuit Stewards have found useful:

What sort of person becomes a Circuit Steward? Answer look on:
www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=churchlife.content&cmid=2054

***Lord God, I pray for the life of each church
and every member and minister in my Circuit.
May we be filled with the power of your love
to work together
To welcome all who come to our churches
And to reach out in justice and peace to our
neighbour Amen***

*Are you being called?
Will you make a difference?*

***Lord
I am blessed with many skills, talents and
abilities for which I thank you.
I am called to share your love and grace with
those around me.
I am encouraged to support and nurture others
as they journey through Christian life.
Help me now to know if being a Circuit Steward
is the right way for me to serve you and the
community in which I live and worship.
Amen***

**Making
a difference
An Introduction to the
Role of Circuit Steward**

The role of a Circuit Steward is essential if the Circuit is to be effective and to fulfil its potential. This leaflet endeavours to give a brief introduction to this very important role.

See how a Circuit Steward describes their experience of the role.

As a Circuit Steward - a role to which I believe I was called, I was rewarded richly through:

- engaging, sharing and fellowship with others (both lay and ordained), collectively and individually, in the Circuit Leadership team and churches of the Circuit and also at District meetings and events;
- exercising my God given gifts and talents, many of which I had not previously recognised (specifically in relation to support of our Ministers);
- gaining a far wider perspective and appreciation of the relevance and importance of Methodism and its structures, beyond the local church; being challenged to think of creative and innovative ideas and ways to address the issues faced particularly by Methodism, but also the wider Church, in the 21st century, and encouraging and working with others to bring these about.

Circuit Stewards and 'servant leadership'

Like so many roles in church life, being a Circuit Steward means combining the roles of service and leadership, following Jesus' example.

Service

helping the people of God's church work together in unity as they seek to do God's will. That means that personal preferences and priorities must often take second place to the wider needs of the church – a very hard challenge to face.

Leadership

helping people to take responsibility for shaping the future and reaching a fresh understanding of the changes the church has to face if it is to do God's will and to use faithfully the gifts of people and resources that God has provided.

That may well sound like an entirely thankless task, but servant leadership does have profound rewards. Remember how the Circuit Steward described the experiences.

"The Circuit is the primary unit in which local churches express and experience their interconnection in the Body of Christ for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help... The purposes of the Circuit include the effective deployment of the resources of ministry, which include people, property and finance."
 Standing Order 500 from The Constitution Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church (CPD)

WHAT IS THE 'JOB' ?

From Standing Order 500 mentioned in the inset, the Stewards are responsible, with the Superintendent and ministers, deacons and probationers appointed to the Circuit, for the spiritual and material well-being of the Circuit which include:

- Upholding and acting upon the decisions of:
 - ❖ Circuit Meeting - As all Circuit Stewards are part of the Leadership of the Circuit, they all have a seat
 - ❖ Church Councils - Circuit Stewards would usually assign the Church Councils between them and report back
 - ❖ District Synod - one Circuit Steward attends and reports back
 - ❖ Other meetings as appropriate - for example Circuit property meeting

- Circuit Stewards are the treasurers of the Circuit Fund. Usually one Circuit Steward is deemed competent to do so and in consultation with the other Circuit Stewards, is entrusted to:

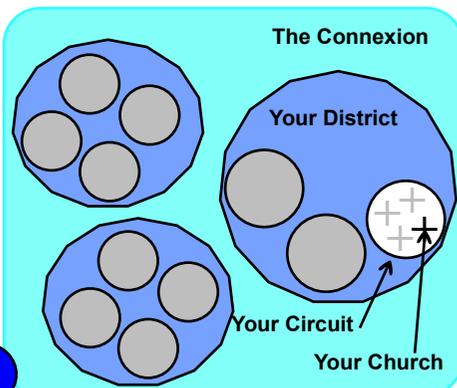
- ❖ Set the budget for the Circuit
- ❖ Manage the funds during the year
- ❖ Ensure all requirements of the Methodist Church and the Charity Commission are met

- Circuit Stewards are responsible for the maintenance and decoration of manses and furnishing them with office equipment

- Circuit Stewards are responsible for invitations to ministers, deacons and layworkers to serve in the Circuit, by following connexional procedures
- Circuit Stewards are essential in supporting the Ministerial staff such that their gifts and time are best used.
- Circuit Stewards have a vital role in bringing the concerns of the Circuit to the attention of the District and the Connexion, and in the same way of bringing the concerns of the District and Connexion to the people and churches of the Circuit.
- Circuit Stewards with the Leadership Team will be involved in Church and Circuit Reviews. This involves:
 - ❖ Giving space to discern God's will for the future and plan for it
 - ❖ Taking stock of resources,
 - ❖ Reflecting on the current state of life in the church
 - ❖ Clarifying what may need to change and how that might take place.
 - ❖ Following the review the Circuit Stewards will help to discover, promote and develop the resultant vision. This may not be easy, but rewards of doing God's work are immeasurable.

This may seem a daunting task but always remember that you will be sharing the work with others who will be happy to guide and encourage. These would include the superintendent and other members of the ministerial staff and your fellow Circuit Stewards. Many decisions would be taken at Circuit Leadership Meetings so you would automatically be involved. Managing the Circuit is a team effort.

Structure of the Methodist Church in the UK



Your Church is part of a group of Churches called a 'Circuit'

Your Circuit is one of a number of Circuits that combine to form a 'District'

All the District together are part of the 'Connexion'