



# The Methodist Church

The Lincoln and Grimsby Methodist District

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## **Toward a 2020 Vision**

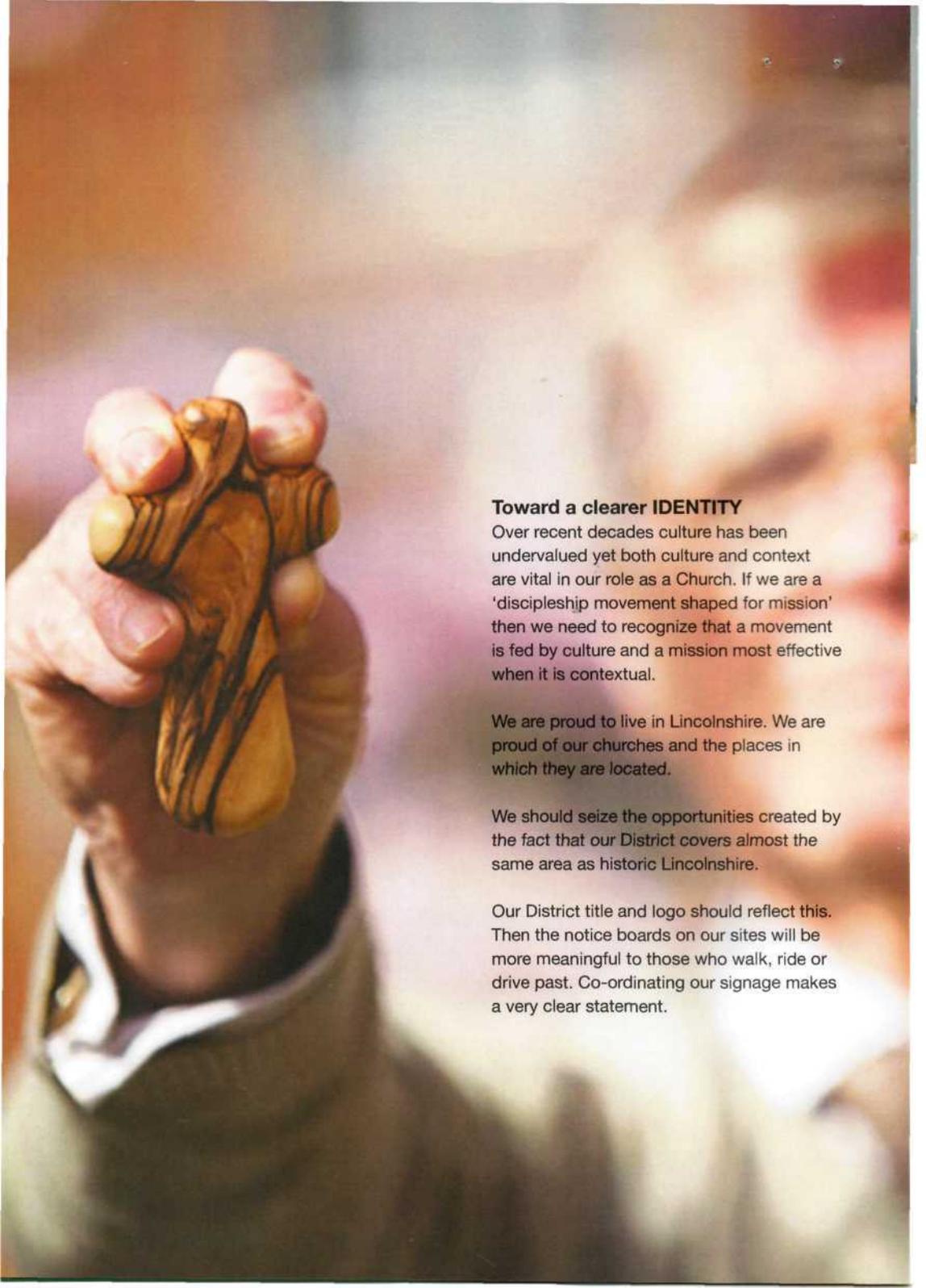
All are welcome

All can know themselves to be loved by God

All can find fulfilment in this life

All should have the chance to be free from that which holds them back

Image: Woven basket - Shine/Mackrell-Hey for Kathryn Barker Floristry

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a wooden cross. The cross is made of light-colored wood with dark, wavy grain patterns. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the thumb and index finger gripping the top of the cross. The background is a soft, out-of-focus scene of people, suggesting a church service or a public gathering. The lighting is warm and natural, highlighting the texture of the wood and the skin of the hand.

### **Toward a clearer IDENTITY**

Over recent decades culture has been undervalued yet both culture and context are vital in our role as a Church. If we are a 'discipleship movement shaped for mission' then we need to recognize that a movement is fed by culture and a mission most effective when it is contextual.

We are proud to live in Lincolnshire. We are proud of our churches and the places in which they are located.

We should seize the opportunities created by the fact that our District covers almost the same area as historic Lincolnshire.

Our District title and logo should reflect this. Then the notice boards on our sites will be more meaningful to those who walk, ride or drive past. Co-ordinating our signage makes a very clear statement.



### **Toward more meaningful CO-OPERATION**

Just as our District covers almost the same area as historic Lincolnshire so it is with the Diocese of Lincoln. Few Methodist Districts can claim to have equivalent shared area of focus.

Across the county we need to care for the relationship we have built up with our brothers and sisters in Christ. In every village and town that relationship with other denominations will become even more critical if we are to maintain and develop a Christian presence.

It is just as important to acknowledge that some of our communities will become more multi-cultural over the next decade with an increasing presence of faiths different to our own. Some, for their own political ends, will seize upon this to create fear and suspicion, deepen division and hostility, especially in a time of economic uncertainty. As people of faith we must not fall for this; we have nothing to fear from other faith communities. But we do have much to fear from those who are opposed to faith altogether. Which is why we should cooperate with those who express their beliefs in a very different way to our own. It's only a short step from ridiculing one faith to ridiculing another.

### **Toward more effective ENGAGEMENT**

The Christian Church may have reached a low point in this country. We now have many wonderful opportunities to build from where we are and again engage others in such a way that we can help change their lives and together the world in which we live.

However for churches and for individual disciples confidence is often something that is lacking. It may not be that we don't know what to do; it may simply be that we need the encouragement that will lead to the confidence to do it.

Small groups within churches have always been a means by which Christians have explored what it is to be a disciple. What we must not do however is become so entrenched in the theory that we forget the practice. The small group is a means to an end not an end in itself.

We can learn much about engagement from two organisations that are very different to each other, the Transition Network and Citizens UK. Whilst we are proud of our own heritage we must not be so proud that we overlook other movements that have much to teach us.

- Change the name of the District to the Lincolnshire Methodist District with a new logo that reflects in some way the Lincolnshire flag.
- Co-ordinated signage across the District.
- Deepen our relations with those of denominations and faiths other than our own.
- Foster small groups to build awareness, confidence and commitment.
- Look beyond Fresh Expressions, Messy Church etc that we might be prepared for the opportunities created by them.
- Partner other agencies such as the local authorities and voluntary organisations to ensure that we are as effective as is possible in changing lives and the world in which we live.
- Reshaping for Mission calls us to consider how our areas of activity reflect other agencies not least denominational and local authority boundaries.
- Produce a newly formatted website that is attractive, accessible and informative.

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**Lincoln and Grimsby Methodist District**

**Administrator**

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