



Cross Gates **Methodist** Church

Mission Action Planning

2024

*We are a group of people who are seeking to celebrate and share God's love for all.
Through Worship, Witness and Service in the Community we aim to follow Christ's example
of open arms, hearts, minds and doors.*

*Cross Gates Methodist Church, Austhorpe Road, Cross
Gates, Leeds, LS15 8QR*

*Approved by Church Council on 20th February 2024
For review and update in Autumn 2024*

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Introduction

Feb 2024

This Mission Action Planning document is the result of the work of many people and hours, considering the future that God is calling the people called Methodists in Cross Gates to.

The work has been prompted by a particular set of circumstances which are worth noting.

Firstly, in Autumn 2023, the Leeds North and East Circuit Leadership Team issued a paper entitled 'The Way Ahead', which not only explored some of the realities faced by the Circuit and the wider Methodist Church in terms of reduced financial and human resources, but also challenged every church in the circuit to consider their current ability to fill roles, share the gospel and manage their finance and resources, and their future plans to not only sustain buildings and congregations, but increase witness and mission in their own localities.

Secondly, the youthwork organisation Missional Generation were in need of a new place to have office space, and they were invited to come to see not only the currently functioning spaces at Cross Gates Methodist Church, but also to visit the vast basement space beneath the church, which hasn't been actively used by groups for a long time. Together with Church Leadership, Missional Generation agreed there could be great potential in this space to develop both office facilities and a youth drop in area to be used throughout the week. This requires some significant work, and would need to be funded mostly through grant funding. Taking this possibility to the congregation alongside the conversations about 'The Way Ahead', there was great appetite to move forward with this plan, not only as a new source of revenue, but particularly as a great collaborative effort to serve the young people of Cross Gates.



Introduction

Thirdly, a change in Presbyteral cover in September 2023 meant not only a fresh pair of eyes, but also a limited time for Rev Becki Stennett to work alongside Cross Gates, with her appointment in the circuit due to end in Summer 2025. This meant a concentrated effort to identify the particular work that could be done in that time was necessary. Since supporting the two buildings of Cross Gates Methodist Church had been very burdensome for a long time, necessitating a great deal of energy, time and money to be given to the upkeep of the buildings, it was quickly identified that a way forward with the property would be a good focus for Rev Becki to work with Cross Gates towards, in a concentrated and time-limited fashion.

These three factors, in addition to a long history of conversations about the building, enabled conversations about the future of the church which were prompted to begin before Christmas 2023, shared by a significant number of the church congregation, focussed, and timely in order to feedback to the CLT by the end of January. Conversations were held in a range of ways, and the final work to prepare a Mission Action Plan to take to the Church Council in February 2024 was completed in a long afternoon together with role holders and invited other members of the church.

In these conversations, Rev Becki shared with the church that, while she has assumed that it would be highly likely that at least one building would have to be sold when she took pastoral charge in September 2023, having got to know the congregation and the community a bit, and after lots of prayer, it was clear that to lose a Methodist presence in such a prominent location within the Cross Gates community would be a devastating loss. In the same breath, continuing in that place with the current buildings would be increasingly difficult with declining numbers of people in the congregation and buildings which continue to age and need maintenance.

Together, in the conversations that unfurled, we accepted and began to explore the fact that big new things are needed, in collaboration with other groups, to significantly repurpose the space we have, in order to best serve the community, use our resources well, and, above all, to give glory to God and show God's love in Cross Gates.



Our prayer for the community of Cross Gates

See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
They will be his peoples,
And God himself will be with them;
He will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Loneliness, isolation, fear will be no more;
poverty, begging, homelessness, hunger
and apathy, lack of self-worth, anti-social behaviour, drunkenness
and lack of role models and aspiration will be no more,
For the first things have passed away.

Amen.

(Activity taken from Our Church's Future Story. Words adapted from Revelation 21: 1-4, NRSV, and further adapted by Cross Gates Methodist Church, 10th February 2024)



What does our community need?

- Space for Spiritual support
- Space for the community (NB closure of the library building)
- places to come to for social activities
- accessible amenities
- Fewer nail bars, gambling shops, pubs and barbers
- to be forward looking
- while elderly are cared for to a degree, we need to see more care for all age groups and people with disabilities and dementias

What resources do we have?

- huge volume of space
- vision to do something new
- location within the Cross Gates community which provides visibility and presence
- accessibility by train and bus
- human resources – we may not be a large number in terms of those who are active, but a truly dedicated, caring, committed, experienced and expert group.
- the example of the Repair Café, which models collaboration for us
- good relationships with the wider community

What help do we need?

- finance to make vision possible
- some fully developed ideas which become concrete plans
- volunteers
- partners
- the community itself (noting 500 new homes on the Barnbow site means the community is expanding)
- more useable spaces within our property, which are accessible



Our Church's Story

As part of the conversation that led to the forming of the Mission Action Plan, we used the activity suggested in *Our Church's Future Story* in order to write down our story so far.

There were no parameters set for this, any event which felt significant in any way was entered, and though we could have added more detail, time was limited. We started as far back as we could, and travelled through the decades into the last 10 years.

It was an activity that not only really inspired the whole group and enabled us to see some interesting shapes in the growth and decline of the church over time, but also felt like a great opportunity to enjoy and honour the memories of things that have gone before.

The results are displayed on the next page



Our Church's Story

1761 - John Wesley preached in Seacroft. Very few houses in Cross Gates

1860 – the first Methodist Preaching house in Cross Gates - a thatched cottage opposite site of current chapel

1882 – Land on Austhorpe Road (current site) purchased

1883 – Railway and Mines came to Cross Gates – area expanded

1892 – church hall building opened

1893 – Church building opened - 62 members built premises for 3501

1962 – 426 members 350 in Sunday School 100 in Youth Club 'Biggest in Leeds'

1932 – Methodist Deed of Union 245 in congregation, 450 in Sunday School

1926 – Caretakers House built and Guides started

1907 – Church enlarged, Institute opened. 62 Members created space for 652, costing £3060

1900 – Schoolroom extended

1965 Playgroup opened

1975 - 'Joseph' performed by young people!

1982 – Galilee built, chancel conversion, pews removed from transepts

1988 – 60 Pastoral Visitors, 500 Pastoral letters sent out

1990s - start to see decline in numbers

2014/2015 – conversations about repurposing/ redeveloping the building(s) begin



Our Church's Story

Having constructed this timeline, we noticed that there were significant moments in the life of the church where relatively small groups of people took enormous leaps of faith, building spaces to serve the community well before they came close to having the numbers to fill the new spaces!

We were encouraged, then, that doing something radically new with the church building would not be disregarding the dedication and discernment of those who had gone before us in this church, but rather would be honouring the great faithfulness and readiness to embrace change for the sake of God's purposes in the place we've been called to.

We noticed, too, that the considerable decline that has struck the church in recent history came in the 1990s, and we discussed the various important societal changes that meant this was a pattern across a majority of churches. It was agreed that sometimes the Church has failed to notice and respond to changes in our communities- not just Cross Gates Methodist Church, but many churches of many denominations in many places. Perhaps it's possible to learn from these mistakes, and to open our building and our worshipping community in new ways, to enable others to access the Church and get to know Jesus. This might include not only a large project to reorder the inside of the church building, but also new times or ways of worshipping too. All this is explored below.





Mission Action Plan – some notes

Below you will find the Mission Action Plan developed over the course of several meetings, and agreed by the Church Council on the date displayed on 20th February 2024.






Some notes may help to interpret what follows

- 1) two priorities were identified under each of the ‘Our Calling’ headings. A reminder of Our Calling and the four headings can be found in Appendix 2.
- 2) Each priority also comes with graphics which indicate which part(s) of A Methodist Way of Life individuals and the church can be encouraged to explore within the works that unfold.
- 3) The timescales for the works here below are intentionally short-medium term. This is a response to the enthusiasm and need to move swiftly on our next stage of seeking clarity, collecting knowledge, and broadly discerning exactly what the big changes we’re called to might be. The short timescales mean that by the time this document is reviewed in Autumn 2024, it will be in need of significant updating so that the next set of priorities and actions can be agreed.







Priority	Actions	People	Timescale	Signs of fruitfulness
<p>Our Calling commitment: WORSHIP</p> <p>Engaging with young people and families in worship</p> 	<p>Reinstating parade services for uniformed organisations</p> <p>Building links with the local schools and working with those communities to offer worship that is accessible to young people and families</p>	<p>Minister and Stewards</p> <p>Those involved in leading worship</p>	<p>6 Months</p> <p>12 Months</p>	<p>Regular worship opportunities with school and uniformed organisations, and building of relationships</p> <p>Seeing more young people engage with worship in our space or with our people</p> <p>More families joining our worshipping community</p>
<p>Our Calling commitment: WORSHIP</p> <p>Exploring different times and days for worship</p> 	<p>Speak with our congregation, uniformed organisation, school, Missional Generation, community groups about possible different times and how that would help/hinder them in engaging with worship.</p> <p>Consult with church congregation, Local Preachers and CLT about findings.</p>	<p>Minister, stewards, those involved in leading worship, volunteers from church to help with communications</p>	<p>6 months</p> <p>8 months</p>	<p>More people being able to attend and engage in worship</p> <p>Some relief on circuit plan if other times and days mean fewer clashes on Sunday mornings at 10:30am</p>





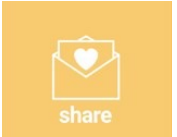


Priority	Actions	People	Timescale	Signs of fruitfulness
<p>Our Calling commitment: LEARNING AND CARING</p> <p>Reducing our impact on the environment</p>   	<p>Undertake an environmental impact audit and make a plan to respond to the feedback</p> <p>Register for Eco Church</p> <p>Explore and imbed Sustainable Floristry</p>	<p>Property and Finance Team</p> <p>Stewards</p> <p>Dr Clare Coleman</p>	<p>3 months</p> <p>3 months</p> <p>12 months</p>	<p>Environmental impact audit results provide us with next steps to reducing environmental impact.</p> <p>Eco church bronze award attained after following steps of the scheme</p> <p>Flower ministry to have smaller environmental impact and sustainable floristry shared with and picked up by others.</p>
<p>Our Calling commitment: LEARNING AND CARING</p> <p>Developing the children's area within church</p>  	<p>Take time to assess the transept and adapt to the needs of our children, including acquiring suitable furniture and resources</p>	<p>Stewards, Minister and Junior Church Staff</p>	<p>3 months</p>	<p>Junior church able to welcome more children in</p> <p>Longer term, a welcoming space encouraging more people with young children to come to church.</p>



Priority	Actions	People	Timescale	Signs of fruitfulness
<p>Our Calling commitment: SERVICE</p> <p>Serve the community by hosting youth work</p>  	<p>Renovate the basement to enable the hosting of Christian youth work (offices and youth drop in centre) in partnership with Missional Generation</p>	<p>Property and Finance Team</p> <p>Working with Missional Generation</p>	<p>within 12 months (probably within 8 if funding falls into place)</p>	<p>Young people using the building and perhaps attending worship.</p> <p>Increased self-worth in young people.</p> <p>Growth in the numbers accessing the youth work through word of mouth.</p>
<p>Our Calling commitment: SERVICE</p> <p>Create more usable space within our property, especially exploring reordering our church building</p>  	<p>Gain professional advice from District Missional Property Enabler, and feasibility studies</p> <p>Work with partners, both Christian partners and those within the community, to identify needs and possible working partnerships</p>	<p>Property and Finance Team (with additional help from suitable identified, people with passion for this)</p> <p>Partners in the community</p> <p>Working with District Missional Property Enabler and others as possible</p>	<p>Within 6 months for initial investigation, to include two church councils.</p> <p>Aiming to start a project following that within 18 months</p>	<p>More people encountering the love of God because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we've created a place of real and accessible welcome - the Church has a raised profile within the community. <p>Increased rental income which ensures future for this space</p>



Priority	Actions	People	Timescale	Signs of fruitfulness
<p>Our Calling commitment: EVANGELISM</p> <p>Develop our communications strategy</p>   	<p>Work on visible communications within the Church Hall</p> <p>Revisit Communications leaflet</p> <p>Train people to update the website and Facebook page</p>	<p>Those co-ordinating church events in the hall</p> <p>Mrs Amanda Brow</p> <p>Dr Paul Coleman, Facebook access users, with help from District Digital Church Enabler</p>	<p>within 6 months</p>	<p>More people knowing about our worshipping life and other church events</p> <p>Increased enquiries about and attendance at worship and other events</p>
<p>Our Calling commitment: EVANGELISM</p> <p>Develop a clear evangelism strategy</p>  	<p>Work with other churches in the area, other Methodist churches and LCI to share and learn from good practice</p> <p>Build closer relationship with Connecting Cross Gates</p> <p>Create a plan!</p>	<p>Minister, Stewards and others interested in Evangelism</p>	<p>Work to start within 3 months, working towards a strategy within 12 months</p>	<p>More confidence in our congregation in sharing the gospel</p> <p>More people knowing about Jesus in our community</p> <p>More people wanting to worship with us</p>



Concluding Remarks and Prayer

At the meeting where this Mission Action Plan was first drafted, we revisited the fact that even a decade ago there were talks about some big changes happening at Cross Gates Methodist Church. Perhaps at that time, the appetite wasn't really there from the congregation to embrace those big changes.

Things have developed since then, and it was a privilege to witness the depth of the conversations and the commitment to seeking and achieving new good things in this place.

For my part, I am hugely grateful to the people of Cross Gates Methodist Church for their faith, determination and readiness to start stepping out into something new with God. I pray now that the partners we know we need will be excited to go into the next phase with us, and that we will find God gives us all the resources of energy and time and patience to enable the identified actions to go forward.

With great hope and excitement to see what God is doing next in Cross Gates, I will conclude with the prayer first shared with those engaged in Blue Sky thinking in 2014, when Rev'd Fran Rhys was Minister. May it be a prayer we pray with confidence and in readiness for God to surprise us all!

Rev'd Becki Stennett

God of great wide blue skies
You have a future with hope for us,
the Cross Gates Methodist part of Christ's body.
Help us to discern this vision and be open to it,
Help us nudge each other forward
to realise this vision for your church in your world,
step by step,
putting our faith in You and one another.
Amen.





Introductory paragraph from Rev Becki Stennett

Re: Cross Gates response to Way Ahead paper.

To the members of the CLT

Prior to having the church-wide conversation about the 'Way Ahead' paper at Cross Gates Methodist Church, I took time to tell the attendees that I came to pastoral charge of their church expecting that we would need to have a conversation about the church's eventual end of life care, or at least to be selling one of their two buildings.

In the short time that I have been Minister at Cross Gates, it has become apparent to me through prayer, discernment and getting to know the community, that neither end of life or sale of building is appropriate in this case. The Methodist Church at Cross Gates is uniquely situated in a place where there is great potential for growth, not necessarily just in terms of increased numbers in the Methodist Church at traditional services, but for growth in the various and numerous ways in which the church community already works to serve the people of Cross Gates, and indeed, in and through new ventures with other Christian partners in the area, to see the growth of the kingdom in a range of new ways.

It is my firm suggestion that Cross Gates is considered a place of mission priority within the circuit. While it's well understood that this may not come with much financial support, given our current work on the circuit budget, I am hopeful that the Circuit Leadership Team and the Circuit Meeting might consider the strategic position and the willingness of the current Cross Gates Methodist Church congregation to embrace some significant change, as you will see below, as significant factors in in deciding lending the voice of support to the church in this place as we seek funding, guidance and expert advice from further afield in making a Christian centre fit for the years to come in this community that so needs it.

We are meeting again soon, the leaders within the Church and I, to further this work on reflecting on the way ahead, and intend to finalise a mission plan to be agreed at our church council in early February. It is my fervent hope that this, alongside the informal conversations had, and the demonstrable move towards change in the attitude of the congregation, should put the CLT in mind to give priority to Cross Gates in terms of the grants and resources being made available by the District and indeed hopefully soon the Connexional Team for environmental studies, building scheme ideas and funding.

I offer this to the CLT not lightly, but with a strong sense that God is calling us not just to maintain a Methodist presence in Cross Gates, but to be a church and circuit which enables flourishing through various Christian groups in that place, and the growing of God's kingdom as we work in new and exciting ways to show God's love in Cross Gates.

Rev'd Becki

Appendix 1 - Response to 'The Way Ahead'



The Way Ahead Document

Whole Church Meeting Responses from Cross Gates Church

As Stewards we are confident most people who attend Cross Gates Church received the 'Way Ahead' document either by email or hard copy. We felt it was important that everyone had the opportunity to read the document and give their feedback. The open meeting at the beginning of January was very well attended and very constructive.

The document was a 'wake up call' for some of our Congregation, many of whom thought the Church building would last their life time. For the first time they have begun to realise the problems we are having may mean perhaps it will not and major changes will be required. Most of our congregation are elderly and can no longer take on the 'roles' in church that they had undertaken several times already in their younger days. All our key roles are currently filled, but several of them by the same people and though this may continue for the medium term unless new people join there will be problems after that. To put our membership (107) into context we have in the last 5 years had 29 deaths, we have 9 members over 90 and 34 over 80. Many are finding it increasingly difficult to get to church every week and distribution of Worship at Home sheets is crucial to maintain contact.

Despite the age profile of the congregation our Church runs a number of important outreach activities including weekly coffee morning, tots and guests, table top sales, repair café and more. We also host uniformed groups, activities run by Connecting Cross Gates and a cancer support group as well as many ad hoc activities. Even people who do not attend worship, see us as their local church and it holds a special place in their hearts.

The worrying financial situation of our Church had been spelt out at all recent Church Council meetings and people have begun to realise that our funds will not meet the expensive structural repairs that require attention in our old buildings (both the hall and Church itself) These include the Church roof, the unreliable heating system, the lift and the poor internal plasterwork and decorations. The assessment and rising utility bills are further increasing our difficulties. However, it is some comfort for us to know that our lettings income (from the Hall and offices) currently covers all its running costs and we are looking to increase this income if possible.

We are all proud of the fact that our church buildings are in a prime position on a busy road in a busy suburb of East Leeds and the location alone offers many opportunities for connecting with the local community and for the mission of the Church. Cross Gates is a transport hub, so people from other small communities can access our facilities, meaning our reach goes beyond the local neighbourhood. Many citizens of Crossgates who do not worship regularly but

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who attend church for special services or enter the Church and Church Hall to attend one of the many activities that take place, would be devastated, if we could not continue to serve the community, through lack of funds. The venue is set to become more important as the Local Authority are selling Cross Gates Library and so depriving the community of the only publicly owned facility in the area. Cross Gates itself is expanding, with thousands of new houses being constructed.

Following the first open meeting a greater number of people than we expected expressed that the Church Building needed to be used for something else as well as worship. We know we must 'change' and even the most elderly present were enthusiastic about the idea of 'carving up' the Church Building to create more space for community and/or some income generation activities. Most did not want the Church building to close, but some suggested that we worship in the Church Hall permanently. Many were encouraged by the number of Circuit Mission Projects. It is fair to say that the congregation are ready to embrace change and want the Church to thrive and grow in this location. The cost of change may well be beyond our congregation but there was a feeling that Cross Gates Church deserves support from the wider Church.

A suggestion made and already actioned by Rev. Becki this year is to rent out our huge cellar to a team called 'Missional Generation' who she had heard were looking for a new place to base their work. The huge cellar and adjoining rooms are currently being cleared and hopefully preparation will start soon to make the area fit for this team to use as their base. Rev. Becki may speak more about this team of people and their plans. They are currently renting rooms in the church until the cellar is ready.

We are looking forward to a smaller core group meeting on 10th February when we will continue discussing the document and the possibilities that were aired by the congregation.

Also attached are the notes from our first Whole Church Meeting.

Barbara Lloyd, Senior Steward, Cross Gates Methodist church

Appendix 1



Whole Church Meeting held on Sunday 7th January 2023 after Morning Worship
There were 37 members of the congregation of the present and Revd Becki Stennett.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the 'CLT Discussion Paper on Long Term Strategy – The Way Ahead'.

BS thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She said that although she hadn't been our Minister for long, she had been impressed by everyone and felt it was important to have such a prominent Christian presence in Cross Gates. She told everyone that the group 'Missional Generation' will be moving into our Church building and paying rent to us. Initially they will use space in the main building, but longer term will take up occupation of the basement although this space needs a lot of work first. The group will provide Christian youth work in the area. This collaboration prompts us to consider what other partners we could work with. The congregation were divided into seven groups and asked to discuss as many of the points under 3.2 of the paper as possible:

A – IS IT SENSIBLE TO HAVE A BUILDING? Do a thorough cost/benefit analysis of whether it is sensible to have a building.

Could you achieve much of what you do in a different building?

- If we reduced to one building then yes, otherwise no.
- Already are to some extent eg services in the Hall. The Church is not used to its full potential. Our central position is vital to continue. The organ should go.
- The youth of Cross Gates need somewhere to go.
- We have a very prominent site for mission and the location is accessible to people.
- Better use of Church building? Mezzanine floor? Split the Church? Cost?
- Clear the Church pews and replace with chairs to make use of floor. Who would replace chairs etc each time for services?

Could you hire a building?

- No, unless we stopped doing a lot of the things we do.
- We shouldn't need to – just make better use of ours.
- Feel we need to own the building and need to be seen.

What would continuing as a Church but without owning a building release and enable?

- Release of financial cost, repairs on an elderly building. Run the risk of losing existing congregation.
- N/A!
- Would need to set up all gear, instruments each week. Drawbacks of this including loss of control and rent being hiked.

If you are to continue with your current building(s), how will you reduce its carbon footprint? Is there a realistic financial plan in place to make progress with this in the next 10 years?

- Would need to change building (Church) to a small/lower space.
- We need to alter the Church (height), think about the heating, insulation.
- Could we have solar panels on the roof?
- Needs lots of investment to insulate the spaces by adding false ceilings etc.

If your Church has more than one building, consider whether you need to continue with all your buildings. Could one or more be leased or sold?

- Yes

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- Part of Church could be leased but keep a worship space. Partition worship space, get partners to rent space.
- We don't need two buildings. Some thought we could sell the Church building others preferred keeping the Church building and putting in a first floor to make a Church Hall space.
- Could the library buy the Church Hall and move?
- Yes, could sell one and keep the other one and refurbish it with the sale income.
- Eg the building could become MHA flats with worship in smaller space.
- Yes sensible because no other suitable venue in Cross Gates.
- Sell Church building?
- Lose car park?
- Youth group/organisation – use the basement every day? Cost of refurbishing the basement? Sustainable?
- Problem is the size of premises. Church demolished and 2 storey building erected with approximately half for Church use and half for other uses ie shop, offices, flats. Dependent on planning and area allowed by planning dept for building. Church Hall to remain Church property. (M. Teal)

How does your current building(s) fit into your Church's annual budget? Is annual giving paying for the building? Is the rental income from the building helping your Church to pay the circuit assessment? What could be the result of deliberately changing your Church's financial model?

- Annual giving pays for the assessment. Rental income pays for upkeep of both buildings including gas, electricity, repairs and running costs. Changing the Church's financial model would not work the other way round for us.
- First stage – all to realise we are going to need outside help and funds to continue.

B1 – HOW ARE YOUR VOLUNTEER ROLES COVERED? Consider carefully the way that volunteers hold offices in your Church.

Do you have enough people to hold the key roles necessary for a Church Council to fulfil its legal responsibilities as the trustee body. These include:

Secretary - yes

Treasurer - yes

Stewards – 3 + 1. Same people doing multiple roles. Nobody to replace them on a regular rota.

Safeguarding Officer - yes

GDPR contact - yes

People to take practical responsibility for the property, including maintenance, health and safety etc (Churches use various terms for these property roles) – yes

- We do have people now to do these jobs but do not have too many people coming up behind as back up.
- Yes currently and probably medium term (5 – 10 years max) but it is an issue longer term.
- The property means there is a lot of responsibility for a few key people and fewer people than previously so a lot of activities no longer take place.
- There is probably not enough people to do all that is necessary. The number of volunteers does limit what we can do.
- Yes at the moment for office holders, but what is the long term plan for replacing them? Succession plan, thoughts?

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Do you have enough people to do all that is necessary, what is the plan to resolve this? If your Church cannot resolve this, how could other Churches be asked to help? How could Churches seek mutual support?

- Attend the Church Councils? Share property ideas, odd job men etc
- Churches in Circuit could work together to make jobs easier and spread responsibility.
- Could we have joint services and other groups (eg Ladies, Mens) together?
- We have an ageing congregation.
- Would a rota across other Churches work?
- How we approach, attract new members? More youth focussed!
- Current job/office holders do too much!

B2 – HOW ARE YOUR VOLUNTEER ROLES COVERED? Consider carefully the way that volunteers hold offices in your Church.

What new patterns of leadership might your Church try in order to help the Church keep healthy and grow and be less reliant on presbyteral ministry as the circuit reduces the size of the staff team. For example you could consider: Stewards and/or worship leaders taking a larger role in leading worship every week.

- Already are covering gaps but no one other than current ones spring to mind.
- Could we look at sharing more eg one Minister writes the service and it is delivered by local people from our congregation in our Church.

Is there someone who might be called to the role of local lay pastor, to exercise pastoral ministry on behalf of the Church?

- Not sure we have anyone who can fill this role.
- Sounds like it should be a paid role.

What new ways of working could your pastoral team consider? How do you support the housebound? How do you support people experiencing illness or other crises? How do you support people who are new to the congregation and/or new to faith?

- We have a pastoral secretary and a group of pastoral visitors and can be called upon to visit those who are ill. The problem is that a lot of visitors are elderly and there is nobody willing to take over from them.
- Worship at Home
- Cynthia does an amazing job but few visits take place now

How is your Church engaging with local communities? Could people be given specific roles for this?

- We engage with local communities – Churches Together, Foodbank.
- Lack of young people under 60 years. Partnerships?
- Coffee morning, Connecting Crossgates, Uniforms, Repair Café, greeting in Church, groups (3)
- Coffee mornings, Connecting Crossgates. We all try to engage with community but don't have anyone who could take a specific role.
- Tots, Table Top sales, coffee morning, Christmas Fair.
- Could we put up permanent, professional looking messages in the Church Hall and coffee lounge eg 'Come and join us at 10.30am each Sunday'.

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Do you have role descriptions for people holding office in your Church? The circuit will be supporting Churches with templates for these in the near future, but they will need to be adapted and adopted by each Church – what fruits could come from this review of role descriptions?

- Yes we do have role descriptions for those holding office eg Church Treasurer, Safeguarding Officer, Property Steward.
- We do have some job descriptions but could we review them to streamline the jobs and how they are done.

C – HOW ARE YOU BEING CHURCH IN THE COMMUNITY? How are you being Church in the community, supporting those in need and sharing faith with people?

How do people know about your Christian activities

How are people from beyond the congregation invited into conversation with you?

How do people who come to events or gatherings, or who visit your building, know about the Christian life of the Church?

How do you offer to support people, practically and with prayer?

What opportunities do you have for people to learn more about following Jesus?

- Church noticeboard
- Newsletters (in coffee morning)
- Churches Together events
- Monday coffee mornings regularly
- Leeds 15 Churches Together
- Advertised on Leeds East Church events
- Carols on steps
- Table Top sales
- Schools use Church at Christmas
- Crib service
- Harvest festival
- Repair café once a month
- Lent and Advent courses
- Bible Study
- People come to coffee mornings and meet other people from Church and invite friends or acquaintances to come too
- Slimming World hire rooms
- Posters, word of mouth, social media
- Procession of Witness
- Foodbank
- Tenants and renters can see publicity about Christian activities on noticeboards
- Able-bodied people busy with community work within our own Church or admin jobs. Outreach now less than previously.
- If we could have Becki full time for three years we could triple our congregation eg more mission, services at different times and different days.
- We need better, more professional looking signage at the front of Church.
- Could we rejuvenate uniformed organisations in our building?
- Could we do a 'messy church' again? Need more helpers. Providing food was important.

Appendix 1



- Lifts to Church important.
- Friendship and fellowship important.
- Could we have a midweek, evening service. This could be a circuit wide thing but held in Cross Gates. Could it be 'modern', all age, youth focussed.
- Fellowship, Foodbanks, Warm Space.
- Junior Church, Uniformed groups?.
- Leaflets, some face to face.
- Higher profile in local schools – visits, leaflets etc
- Website?
- Fun days reintroduced in holidays but who helps/ leader?
- We don't invite people from beyond the congregation into conversation very well.

D – WHAT ABOUT MISSION? How is your Church supporting the circuit mission priorities?

Increasing Missional Readiness – how is your Church planning realistically and practically for the future?

Regarding finance, property and lay officers?

Growing Christians, Growing Churches – how are you intentionally planning for your congregation to grow in discipleship and to grow numbers?

New places for New People – can you identify a place or situation, beyond existing Church life, in which God could be calling your Church or the circuit, to begin something new?

Church at the Margins – how is your Church contributing to the circuit mission projects? Do you have people who are offering time at Meeting Point, Moortown Repair Café or the WYDAN shelter? How are they able to bring news back to the Church? How could other people be encouraged to get involved? Are you able to contribute financially to these projects?

- One challenge is not much involvement between members and the existing users of the building.
- New partnerships – secular community groups eg things important for Cross Gates such as AA, Slimming World, Connecting Crossgates, MHA, Local Council?
- Missional Generation. Existing scouts, guides, squirrels, use of building.
- Congregation is either elderly, people who hold key offices at Cross Gates or people who still work therefore have no spare time for circuit projects.
- We currently do not have prayer meetings or bible study.
- Churches Together, Leeds 15 are trying to do something.
- We were one of the first Churches to offer Church as a shelter (WYDAN).
- Many members volunteer at Cross Gates Good Neighbours and South & East Leeds Foodbank.

The meeting concluded with a moment of quiet reflection and a prayer.

Appendix 1

Appendix 2 – 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

Our Calling

The **Methodist Church** 

It does this through:



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



Appendix 3 – A Methodist Way of Life

			
Pray We pray daily	Challenge We challenge injustice	Tell We tell of the love of God	Care We care for ourselves and those around us
			
Worship We worship with others regularly	Flourish We care for creation and all God's gifts	Live We live in a way that draws people to Jesus	Learn We learn more about our faith
			
Notice We notice God in Scripture, and the world	Serve We will help people in our communities and beyond	Share We share our faith	Open We practise hospitality and generosity

