**‘Kairos Circuit’: A brief introduction to a proposal**

**for a new 16th Circuit in the Yorkshire North and East District**

**Vision**To create a new non-geographically defined Circuit which provides a District-wide ‘new place for new people’ to be supported in exploring faith, growing in community and following Jesus.

**Why?**

* We recognise that there are significant numbers of people who are spiritually open and seeking but do not find existing church models accessible or attractive.
* We believe that we can develop a fresh model of being Church which is faithful to our Methodist heritage but re-imagined to be effective and relevant in a very different emerging world.

**Theological rationale**

* Taking the Great Commandment of Jesus as fundamental, we look to ensure that the primary focus of attention, activity and prayer is upon Loving God, Loving the World, and Loving Each Other. Through all of this we will both reveal more fully the presence of God and share in the activity of God in the world. These emphases are clearly observed in the developing early Church, for instance in Acts 2:42-47.
* As the pioneer work has developed within the District, and as we now reflect upon the impact of Covid-19, we discern the Holy Spirit prompting us to reach beyond existing structures to create new ways for people to grow as followers of Jesus. There is something here about needing to create ‘new wineskins.’
* We also take heart from the developments in Acts 6:1-7, where the early church recognised that they were neglecting important ministry and therefore appointed others to specific responsibilities so that all that was needed to be done could be fulfilled. This encourages us to be determined to create founding structures which ensure that Governance is done well, and has the effect of releasing as much energy as possible for mission and ministry.

**Methodist constitutional structure**

* “Kairos Circuit” is a single-church Circuit, as set out in SO 511, with, therefore, a combined Circuit Meeting/Church Council. Overall responsibility for the robust and good governance of the whole circuit rests here. We anticipate a relatively small team of Trustees who combine a commitment to the vision with the necessary skills and commitment to ensure that all matters of governance are handled well.
* “Kairos Communities Leadership Team.” (c.f. Stewards/Leadership Team) With delegated authority to shape the growth and development of the mission and ministry of the circuit. The Leadership Team would be made up of some trustees, some Grass Roots Leaders, and some Kairos Community leaders. As far as possible decisions will be delegated, as permitted in SO 551(2), to Grass Roots and Kairos Communities.
* “Grass Roots Groups” (c.f classes) are a primary place of belonging and accountability, operating unde SO 630/1. Within these groups people commit to a way of life and are supported as they flesh out their discipleship. Their involvement within Kairos Communities (below) and/or other parts of the Methodist Church, and indeed beyond the Church spring from and are routinely reflected upon within these groups.
* “Kairos Communities” (internal organisations) arise as a diverse network of missional/spiritual communities. They are an outpouring of response by people to their response to Jesus and the reflections developing within Grass Root Groups. They will also become important places of belonging, and growing in faith.

**Key gathering points:**

* “Grass Roots Groups”: Every person connecting seriously with the Circuit becomes a part of a GRG. These groups meet regularly (probably weekly) – with flexibility about how this might happen: 1:1 catch ups, online or physically. Features of these meetings are food, worship, and reflection upon the way of life.
* “Grass Roots Leaders Gathering”: A monthly gathering to support and encourage the Grass Roots Leaders in their ministry of oversight.
* “Kairos Communities”: a diverse network of missional/spiritual communities. A whole range of offerings: worship, creative arts, activist, community-building.

**Relationship with existing circuits:**

* There are two important commitments which would define the relationship the new Circuit would seek to maintain with existing Circuits:
  + To complement (and not compete with) existing churches and circuits.
  + To bless (and not drain) ongoing work in circuits.
* It may be that some existing members would feel drawn to become part of the reach of the new Circuit, either through a Kairos Community, or a Grass Roots Group, or both. They may still, however, worship/serve/lead within their local church/circuit. As Kairos Communities develop, these would be entirely open to helping and supporting the mission/ministry of existing local churches/circuits.

**What does belonging within the new Circuit look like?**

* We anticipate that most people would initially become involved through a Kairos Community. This would be by being attracted through a shared interest, curiosity, or personal invitation.
* They are then encouraged to become part of a Grass Roots Group where they receive care, community and encouragement to enter into a ‘way of life.’
* Living out their discipleship would happen in a host of different ways. They might worship online, or within an existing local church, or become part of a new Kairos Community worship gathering.
* They might be part of an online bible study group, an existing housegroup, or be part of a new Kairos Community group.
* They might be involved in service and evangelism through something associated with an existing church, or be part of a new Kairos Community project.

**What about property, finance, staffing and membership?**

* It is not anticipated that the circuit would need/want to have its own property. Any physical space required would be rented.
* The aim is for the Circuit to quickly take full responsibility for raising the finances needed to support its ministry, including contributing as appropriate to the District/Connexional assessments.
* The initial staffing will be those leading the existing Pioneer Nursery, hopefully with some increased time available. This will be funded from existing grants and, we anticipate, some further initial grant funding. It is envisaged that no further paid staff will be needed, certainly within the first few years, as the emphasis will be on enabling people to take on lay leadership roles of Kairos Communities and Grass Roots Groups as natural parts of their discipleship.
* As a single-church circuit, all monies raised would be accounted for centrally and distributed by the leadership to support the growth and development of Kairos Communities.
* There would be an ethos of encouraging formal Methodist membership, as appropriate. This would be re-imagined around the way of life, focussing on the intention of following Jesus, and engaging primarily through a Grass Roots Group. Methodist membership does remain a requirement for some key office-holding. However, most of what is proposed can fully embrace those who are members in existing circuit, or members of other communions. It may be that a slightly more open form of membership “friend” or “associate” could develop.

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