

	26th April	3rd May	10th May	17th May
10.30	Revd. Teddy Siwila HC	Abigail Day	Hannah Seeley	Abigail Day

YouTube link for this

week: <https://www.youtube.com/live/FmSEuj2Ukao?feature=shared>

Flower Rota	Coffee Rota
26 th April I.M.O. Dave Watton	Lynn and Lynda
3 rd May I.M.O. Mr. & Mrs. H. Hayward	Pauline, John & Terry
10 th May Mrs. P. Porter	Mavis and Joy
17 th May Mrs. A. Love	Lorraine and Margaret

A celebration for the life of Robert (Ches) Chesworth will be held at St. Andrew's Church on Tuesday 5th May at 12.00 p.m. The family would like to ask the congregation to wear brighter colours for this celebration of his life.

Clu and family would like to thank everyone for their cards, flowers and support in this time of mourning.

Presidential Visit on Sunday 10th May to Commemorate Beckminster's Centenary:

All are welcome to join us for morning worship at 10.30am. We are delighted that all churches in the Crossways Hub and St. John's are planning to join us. Following the service there will be an opportunity to enjoy further fellowship together and join in a 'Bring and Share Lunch' in the Church Hall and Coffee Bar. Please note again that all are welcome. Should you wish to participate, please hand your contribution in to the kitchen before the service. Surnames beginning with letters A to M please donate savoury items; surnames N to Z please donate dessert items.

**Circuit Gathering Thursday 14th May 7pm
Fallings Park Methodist Church.**

You are invited to join the Wolverhampton Methodist Circuit as we plan our future. Although this conversation isn't new, we're now at a crucial point. If Methodism is to continue in our area, important decisions must be made. Some bold changes have already begun, but current circumstances demand that we step further outside our comfort zones and move forward with faith.

Beginning with WHO we are:

Our churches share a common purpose: to live out the gospel, serve our communities, and nurture faith. While the context in which we carry out that mission continues to change, the calling itself remains constant. This meeting offers an opportunity to reflect

honestly on our present circumstances and to begin shaping a future that is both sustainable and faithful to our calling.

By working together—ministers, lay leaders, and congregations—we can seek a way forward that honours the gospel imperatives while responding responsibly to the challenges of our time.

Challenges: Property

- As our membership declines and ages, building upkeep has become harder. We lack enough volunteers for property tasks and must hire help. It's worth asking if our buildings are essential or just kept up for lettings.
- Should we use community spaces for worship and service to avoid maintenance?
- Is partnering with another church a better solution than continuing alone?
- Our manses stock needs updating; currently, three ministers lack Methodist manses.

Challenges: Finances

The circuit currently faces an annual deficit of about **£200,000**, with reserves at **£1 million** that will be quickly depleted if losses continue. Reserves are meant for transitional periods but cannot cover ongoing deficits, making it vital to review finances now for long-term stability.

Most spending goes towards ministry staffing—salaries, housing, pensions, and costs for five clergy—as well as administrative support and shared activities for our seventeen congregations. Meanwhile, many churches are under financial strain from rising building maintenance and ministry costs, shrinking congregations, and increasing difficulty in meeting circuit assessments.

Challenge: Staffing

Starting September 2026, there will be 5 ordained ministers (4 Presbyters, 1 Deacon), but Paul and Rosemary plan to finish in August 2027. If approved, the circuit will submit a Superintendent minister profile in September 2026 but can't afford two profiles. If we are matched in the stationing process this means that from September 2027, there will be 4 ordained ministers: 1 Superintendent, 2 Presbyters, and 1 Deacon. Linda finishes in August 2028, reducing numbers further to 3 Presbyters, including the Superintendent.

Reducing minister numbers may help address financial deficits but impacts ministry organization, pastoral care, worship leadership, and local church support. Methodist ministry combines ordained and lay roles, so potential changes could enhance lay leadership, encourage collaboration, and foster innovative ministry approaches.

Challenge: Filling the Plan.

We appreciate our Supernumerary Ministers, Local Preachers, and Worship Leaders who faithfully lead our worship. However, limited resources mean we cannot offer a preacher to lead traditional worship at 10:30 a.m. (or thereabouts) in every building each Sunday, and this style has not attracted new generations. While valuable to current members, declining attendance and energy suggest reducing venues for Sunday morning worship may help gather larger, more vibrant groups and better allocate resources.

With 168 hours in a week, there are many opportunities to offer worship in different ways and times. Exploring how to engage all generations remains an important task.

Challenge: Growing and encouraging our CLT.

Circuit Stewards/Circuit Treasurer

By August 2026, we will have four circuit stewards: Alan Eccles, Lesley Cook, Gabriel Gidi, and Denis Beaumont. We previously benefitted from specialized support in areas like HR. David is stepping down as circuit steward after managing property issues diligently, but there is no property secretary to handle this responsibility. As Treasurer, Rob Turton has repeatedly returned to the role—this pattern needs to end. We must recruit additional circuit stewards.

We have appointed Kerry Dickinson as the new Circuit Safeguarding Officer, who will succeed Sue Crook this summer. For strong leadership over the next five years, we must ask: **Q) What steps do we need to take?**

Is this the time to be radical?

Here is a suggestion for us all to consider – it's not set in stone – but it is a possibility.

AIM: By August 2033 (which will be the 5th year of the new Superintendency) to have 3 worship centres across the circuit. With other local gatherings being recognised as mission centres. All members across the circuit to be members of local house groups/house church/class meetings based on their address, not their previous church. The sale of church buildings be earmarked for the creation of new worship centres.

By August 2033 our aim is to be financially viable with a clear emphasis on mission.

Our model of church being that of: Gathering, refreshing, building up, dispersing and serving.

Finally, the timetable to focus our conversations:

- Tuesday 24th March – The Circuit Meeting is introduced to the programme and reminded of the reasons why change is vital.
- May – A circuit gathering for anyone to attend to share ideas, thoughts etc.
- June Circuit Meeting – Some decisions to be taken regarding the direction of travel.
- September Circuit Meeting – A profile for a Superintendent is agreed.
- By September 2027 – Phase 1 to begin.

A prayer for us to hold as we wait.

O Lord, steady our trembling hands, and set our feet upon the path You have prepared.

Let the shadows that whisper fear find no dwelling in our hearts.

Clothe us in the courage of Your truth, that we may speak with a voice unshaken, even when the winds of doubt rise high.

Make our spirits a flame that will not be quenched, burning with love, steadfast in purpose.

When the challenges of the future presses in with its weight, lift our eyes to the horizon of Your promise. Teach us to walk forward, in the quiet strength of Your presence undaunted, unafraid, and wholly Yours. AMEN.