

# Newark and Southwell Circuit Vision Team Report

At the request of the Circuit Meeting, for the last six months, a group of representatives from across the circuit has been prayerfully meeting to seek God's will for the future of our circuit. We are aware that we find ourselves at a point of change, a point where the past ways of doing things appear to be unsustainable at the same time as our society is looking to move forward to a new normal.

The team consisted of three circuit stewards (Ann Lyne, Jill Meakin and Stephen Dando), the three ministers (Nathan Falla, Peter Bates and Peter Hibberts) and three church members from around the circuit (Jenny Everett, Jan Wright and David Watson). The Vision Team have been supported by Nigel Pimlott from the Eastern Learning Network Region.

The following is what we have felt God saying so far, which we commend to the Circuit Meeting for prayerful testing. It is not a strategy, it has not been practically considered but has been prayerfully considered. If we do, as a circuit, believe that this (or any part or development of it) is the direction we need to move towards there will be much work to do and it won't happen overnight but would be the product of a great deal of positive working together as a circuit.

## Circuit Purpose

Firstly we felt that it was important to unite around a common circuit purpose which would give a lead to individual churches but allow for individual determination. The following statement presents three areas that we, as a circuit, could invest in to help church communities to achieve the mission God is drawing them into.

The purpose statement that we commend to the circuit is:

**In God's strength, as a family of churches in Newark and Southwell, our circuit encourages, excites and enables people to deepen their faith in Christ, offer it to all and work with communities for transformation.**

In short, our role as a circuit is to **encourage, excite and enable** so that churches **deepen faith, offer faith to all and transform communities.**

## Circuit Values

We also considered the values that underpin our positive working together and commend these values to the circuit as those by which we feel we should minister:

### God focus

**prayerfulness**

**community and belonging**

**boldness and risk taking**

**service**

**Christlikeness and holiness**

**growth**

**humility**

**Inclusion and diversity.**

When we had completed this groundwork we prayed together and asked God to reveal to us fresh ways of working, a transformed shape for the circuit and new ways of achieving these aims. This vision might seem vague and hazy as it is just a vision, it is not a strategy or a road map, it is a possible glimpse of something God might be showing us on the horizon.

## Circuit Vision

We believe that there are some things in our circuit that can be better achieved by **gathering** and some that could be better achieved by **scattering** in order to engage in God's mission in the power of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the **gathering should excite, encourage and enable us when we are scattered** (in every community, family, workplace and church) to fulfil God's mission in the power of God's Holy Spirit.

Gathering together from across the circuit could help us to better reach out in certain specified geographical locations where some of the benefits might include high quality different forms of worship, systematic teaching, a concentration of resources, a reduction of our carbon footprint, and a joyous celebration of God's enabling Spirit to the encouragement of us all.

We believe that when we gather as a circuit it should encourage us as we share what God is doing and what God is capable of; circuit movements should excite us by together feeling strong enough to be ambitious and raise our sights to see what God wants to do with us; and it should enable us by using every resource it has in time, talents and treasures to focus on enabling the church to achieve its aims. The circuit should not be a distraction or a hurdle for church ministry but something that makes it easier, more joyful and more successful.

In imagining how our circuit may be transformed to become what we envision, we felt that we should invest in three areas:

### **Partnering in Mission**

We felt that the circuit should be identifying mission opportunities and mission fields across our area TOGETHER in order to join in mission partnerships. This could mean a mission project in one geographical area of the circuit would pull together like-minded, similarly called and gifted folk to work together regardless of the geographical area that they live in or are a church member in. It could mean that people with a similar calling in evangelism could gather from across the circuit to engage in evangelism in one specific area. Those called to reach out to the community through acts of service (such as a food bank or homeless shelter) could partner with others from across the circuit to identify where the needs are. Those who feel called to identify acts of mission outside our area or abroad could gather folk from across the circuit to engage in this together. In a time where many individual church projects struggle for lack of human resource we can be stronger together.

### **Supporting One Another**

We felt that it was important for folk to live out their discipleship in their most local setting gathering with others in their local area to share their journey together, to pray for one another, share joys and sorrows, support one another practically and encourage one another in our faith. We would encourage churches to draw all members to gather in small groups which may be very different in character from each other and could be shaped by the members in their groups in order to be whatever expression of faith drew them closer to God and closer to one another.

### **Journeying in Discipleship**

We felt that it was important to work together as a circuit to resource churches and pastoral groups to deepen discipleship. This could mean the seeking out, purchasing and distributing of resources for discipleship, holding discipleship gatherings that are open to folk from across the churches; Bible Study groups open for folk across the churches to meet (online or face-to-face) and study together. We could invest in the Local Preachers and small group leaders across the circuit, bringing them together to support one another, share ideas joys and sorrows and create a network of support for one another. We can draw in resources from outside our circuit to invest in our folk and see them flourish in this role.

### **Next Steps**

Our proposal for the next step is for the circuit meeting receive this report and take it back to it's church members to reflect prayerfully and open-mindedly on it and on what God may be saying to us as a circuit.

We propose that we return in the Autumn, at the circuit meeting (or a specially convened gathering of the circuit meeting members) to pray about this together, seek God's will together and discuss the report before deciding how to move forward as a circuit.

### *The Circuit Vision Team:*

*Ann Lyne, Jill Meakin, Stephen Dando, Jenny Everett, Jan Wright, David Watson, Nathan Falla, Peter Bates and Peter Hibberts.*