



The Methodist Church

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Dear Friends,

It is nearly here! On September 1st, we will all become part of a new Circuit: The East Cumbria Methodist Circuit. It is formed from the merger of the Penrith Circuit and the Kirkoswald and Alston Moor Circuit. We have been working quite closely together for a while already, and there are existing links, friendships, and family ties between the two Circuits. The new Circuit geographically stretches from Alston to Patterdale, a distance of about 30 miles from end to end.

So, why the change? Why have the two Circuits merged to form one new Circuit? To be honest, some of the drive behind this has been what the Working Group has called “pragmatic necessity”. Over the past decades in both Circuits there has been a gradual decline. Chapels have closed one by one, the number of members has dropped, and so the number of ordained ministers available has become fewer. Only having one ordained minister in a Circuit is not really wise, so joining our resources together across the area makes practical sense.

Methodist Circuits exist to organise resources in order to equip churches for mission and ministry. Here in Cumbria, we are committed to the ecumenical “God for All” strategy and Mission Communities. “God for All” encourages us to: Follow Daily, Care Deeply, Speak Boldly and Tread Gently. So, the aim of the new East Cumbria Circuit will be to help congregations to do those things, working in ecumenical partnership.

The new Circuit will be launched at a service on Sunday, 3rd September at 10.30am at Penrith Methodist Church. There will be no other Methodist services planned across the Circuit that morning, so we can all get together in unity to celebrate the beginning of this new chapter in God’s work amongst us in East Cumbria. Please, make every effort to join us.

During the service we will be asking someone from each congregation to bring a greeting from their church. Then, they will be invited to come forward and light a candle on the table, around a central candle representing the new Circuit and our mission to let Christ’s light shine in our communities. Please let us know as soon as possible who that will be.

After the service, we hope as many people as possible will be able to stay for a “Soup and a Sweet” lunch. Mix with friends that maybe you haven’t seen for a while from right across the new Circuit or take the chance to make some new friends. Find out what God is doing in their part of the world. Please can we ask your congregation to bring some cake or tray bake to share (please avoid uncooked or cream-based items, if possible).

So... make a date in your diary for Sunday 3rd September, to celebrate with us the formation of The East Cumbria Methodist Circuit.

With love in Christ Jesus,

David Milner and Tim Cooke