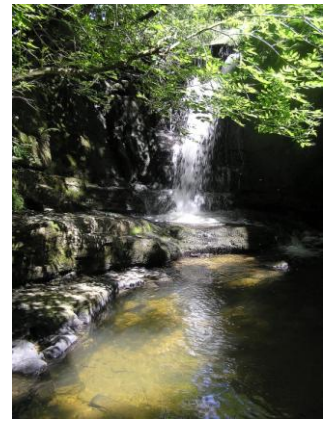


Altrincham Methodist Circuit

Flowing with Life, Moving in God's Power. (A vision for the future)

Altrincham Methodist Circuit has within its six square miles, four churches and a membership of approx 500. The circuit also provides pastoral support for Handsworth, a Methodist Home for the Aged. The circuit currently has two ordained ministers and recently appointed full time Circuit Childrens and Family Worker. As a result of pressures on the Church including decreasing numbers ordained ministers, the circuit has been in conversation with the Sale, Stretford and Wythenshawe Circuits regarding a closer working relationship. It now looks likely that during the next two years that the Sale and Stretford circuits will merge.



The Altrincham Circuit is no different from most other Circuits. Tackling issues such as maintaining Church buildings, decreasing and ageing membership, shortage in available ordained ministers to fill appointments to name but a few.

Doing nothing is not an option

In response, the Circuit Leadership Team, over the past six months, along with representatives from each of the churches, have resolved with God's Grace to develop a vision. After a day spent together in March, a clear picture came through from our conversation, prayer and reflection. It was the image of a river which, flows with life, changes the landscape around it, has life and power in it, is an unrelenting and unstoppable force, makes new paths around old obstacles and flows with a sense of urgency. It is a picture painted in the Old Testament in the book of Ezekiel, where the river flows from the Temple and brings new life where it flows.

As a Leadership Team we then tried to narrow down the river image into a key vision statement that would reflect our hopes and aspirations as a group of Churches, working together through our different congregations. We agreed on,

Flowing with Life, Moving in God's Power.

The next stage of this process is to look at many areas in the life of the Circuit where we would like to flow with life and move in God's power. To identify areas where there are obstacles to growth, and develop those areas where there are opportunities for growth. The image of the river flowing helps us realise that inevitably there is going to be change, the greatest challenge of all is changing our local Church culture from safety and maintenance to growth and mission.

We recognise that there are already many initiatives in the local churches that can be built on to engage with the local community, we also know that if we are to effect the local community of approx 30,000 as a Circuit, we will have to be more courageous as witnesses of Christ. We realise that by working together we can achieve more than by working as individual churches.

Flowing With Life, Moving in God's Power.

Our vision must be simple and easily understood by all. In the next few months we hope and pray that members of all the four Churches will begin to pray about this vision of a river flowing with life and moving in God's power. The Circuit Leadership Team is committed to exploring key areas in the life of the Circuit where this vision can become a reality.

Those areas include develop our vision and strategy for the future, explore agile locations (use of buildings), an audit of the local area around our Churches and also an audit of our congregations, establish Life and Faith (small) Groups across the Circuit. To make these things happen we will need your help over the next few months. The Leadership Team meet again in June to work on this vision.

I have said on many occasions, we are to be a people who live by faith, who are known by love and speak with a voice of hope. *Flowing With Life, Moving in God's Power* is an exciting vision for us today as a Community of Christians in the Altrincham Circuit. The river is the grace and love of God in Christ, it is the power of God's Spirit and we are called by faith to make Christ known in our world today.

God's grace and peace to all

Kevin