

Mount Charles Methodist Church : Structure and Governance

Mount Charles Methodist Church is part of the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

The Methodist Church of Great Britain acts as a connexion of local churches under the authority of the annual Conference, which operates based on established legal and constitutional guidelines. It's constitution, as outlined in the Constitution Practice and Discipline (CPA), has legally binding laws included in the Deed of Union (1932) and the Methodist Church Act (1976) and doctrinal standards and rules of operation (known as Standing Orders).

The Methodist Church is organised in a methodical way using many of the structures introduced by its founder, John Wesley. However, the Church is quite pragmatic, and is willing to make changes where they seem desirable. Structures are there to enable decision making that takes account of all concerns and views within the Church. No one is given supreme authority - consultation is vital. At the same time, churches cannot simply arrange their own affairs, but have some shared disciplines and ways of working. (source website: www.methodist.org.uk)

See website for Structure diagram of Methodist Church

<https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/Structure-Diagram-2024.pdf>

The Connexion

The British Methodist Connexion is made up of all the districts of Scotland, Wales and England, along with the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands and Shetland. It outlines the theological and legal framework for circuits and local churches.

This sense of being connected makes a difference to how the Methodist Church as a whole is structured. At its heart is an understanding of the Christian community as the 'body of Christ'. Just as a human body contains different limbs and organs that depend on each other, so we should be close and caring enough to feel each other's pain and delight. We should put the good of the whole body before our own individual needs.

The promise of mutual support is a strength of Methodism. If you become a member of the Methodist Church, a pastoral visitor is responsible for visiting you and offering spiritual support, encouragement and challenge. In the Methodist Church decisions are made as openly as possible, giving opportunities for all to contribute. It is important for all views to be heard and taken seriously, especially where Christians disagree.

(source website: www.methodist.org.uk)

The District (Mount Charles Methodist Church is part of the South West Peninsula District)

Each district is made up of one or more circuits. It exists primarily to advance the mission of the Church in a region by providing support for the circuits in line with the connexional priorities.

Each district is led by a District Chair. As well as providing leadership within the district, the chair is a member of the Connexional Leaders' Forum, with an overview of the whole connexion.

The District Synod sets the policy for the district, serving as a link between the Conference and the Connexional Team on the one hand and the circuits and local churches on the other. It has oversight of all

district affairs, formulating and promoting policies, through its various officers and committees to assist the mission of the Church, to give inspiration to the leaders in the circuits and to ensure the interrelation of all aspects of the Church's life throughout the district. The synod may bring matters to the Conference.

The synod meets in representative session at least once each year. They also hold a presbyteral session of the synod for presbyters, which is an opportunity for training as well as for debating issues.

Districts differ in terms of the kind of support they offer to local churches and circuits, but this can often include:

- encouraging connexional priorities
- offering or subsidising training
- giving pastoral care to presbyters, deacons and key lay people
- providing people who represent Methodism to the local media
- having an overview of legal obligations
- organising large initiatives

The Circuit (Mount Charles Methodist Church is part of 16 church communities in the St Austell circuit)

The circuit is normally a group of churches served by a team of ministers. Occasionally there are circuits with only one minister. A minister will have pastoral charge of one or more churches, but will preach and lead worship in different local churches in the circuit, along with local preachers. The arrangements for leading worship in a circuit are drawn up in a quarterly plan.

The circuit is led by the superintendent minister who presides over the circuit staff (both lay and ordained) and the circuit meeting, and with lay and ordained colleagues facilitates and encourages mission throughout the circuit. He or she is also responsible for drawing up the preaching plan and arranging the gathering of information about activities (eg baptisms, weddings, and funerals) and about membership statistics in the circuit.

Responsibility for the direction and policy for the circuit is shared between lay and ordained. Voluntary circuit stewards have responsibility for maintaining, buying and selling circuit property (usually manses), and for the general welfare of the ordained and employed staff in the circuit. There is also a circuit treasurer.

The circuit is the place where new initiatives and changes in the pattern of church life need to happen. This is where the staffing capacity, where closures of chapels are debated, and where fresh expressions of church or new pioneer ministries are launched.

St Austell Methodist Circuit consists of sixteen church communities worshipping in 19 buildings in an area that stretches from the coast at Mevagissey, inland to the China Clay area around the Eden Project, and on towards Newquay at Indian Queens. Website <https://staustellmethodist.co.uk>

The calling of the St Austell Methodist Circuit is to respond to the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ, and live out its discipleship in worship, mission and service to people of all ages and abilities, working with other Christians as much as possible.

Local Church Structure and Governance at Mount Charles Methodist Church

Mount Charles Methodist Church adopts the standard constitution. The church council of members (or Trustees) meets three times a year to discuss, debate and make decisions at a local level with minutes of council meetings posted on the website. (<https://mountcharleschurch.com/>) We have an extensive team of people at Mount Charles who voluntarily serve in a huge range of different roles. We hope that each person feels part of the team here at Mount Charles, as we work together.

As a Local Church Council, each member is a charity trustee. This means that there are a number of duties placed on you under charity law. In England and Wales, the key piece of legislation is the Charities Act 2011.

Mount Charles Methodist Church is not registered with the Charity Commission because their annual income does not exceed £100,000. Such Methodist charities are excepted from registration by virtue of the Charities (Exception from Registration) Regulations 1996 until 31 March 2031. However, even as an excepted charity the Local Church it must comply with charity law.

Our statement of mission and intent is that Mount Charles is a busy Christian community, dedicated to serving Christ in our church and community and serving each other in friendship and love. The weekly notices proclaim 'This Church with the rainbow window exists to reflect the love of God to all people and welcomes them in the name of Jesus'.

Offices held on Church Council 2025 – 2026

Church secretary - Liz Burroughs

Church Treasurer – Chris Sturley

Fire and Health and Safety and Property steward – Eric Foster

Bookings secretary – Liz Foster

Stewards – Liz Bray, Gareth Bray, Di Vivian, Ann Wharmby, Margaret Dabbs

Children and Families Worker and Safeguarding Officer – Laura Mitchell

Pastoral secretary – Annette Tooke

Circuit representatives – Stephen Hatch and Elwyn Morton

Other Trustees – Mavis Cundy, Peter Bray, Paul Wharmby, Mary Lightfoot