

Role Pack

Volunteer Solidarity Circle Member

Working towards a fully
inclusive Methodist Church

www.methodist.org.uk/inclusive-mc-strategy



Solidarity Circle Member

Thank you for expressing an interest in this role. It is a volunteer home-based appointment working online through Zoom, for an agreed period of either one, two or three years.

Role Description

Working closely with the Solidarity Circle Coordinator you will:

- Work within the agreed Terms of Reference for the Solidarity Circle.
- Prioritise attending online meetings, advising the coordinator when unable to do so.
- Be an active member of the Solidarity Circle, participating fully in the meetings and working with others on agreed actions. Be prepared to share your personal experience and views on the ways in which the church needs to change.
- Support the ongoing development of the Solidarity Circle within the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity.

Once an applicant is successful and offer has been made, we will ask for your permission to share your contact details with the coordinator who will communicate with you via email (or other methods by negotiation).

Personal Specification

Membership of a Solidarity Circle is open to anyone who is a member of, or in fellowship with, the Methodist Church in Britain.

They will demonstrate:

- Lived experience relevant to the Solidarity Circle that they are expressing an interest in
- Commitment to a change within the church arising from their experience
- A valuing of diversity
- A willingness to work with others, to listen as well as to share
- An ability to use Zoom
- A willingness to advocate for the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity

Solidarity Circles

The Methodist Church is committed to 'Justice, Dignity and Solidarity'. We believe that all people are uniquely made in the image of God, and we aim to live this out in the Church and in our communities.

The Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (2021) committed the Methodist Church to providing support for people who have been marginalised, by creating 'Solidarity Circles' with online meetings. "These will be a way of the Methodist Church supporting people in different diversities of the Church's life through offering regular opportunities to meet, to support one another, and to raise with relevant Church leaders the concerns that need to be addressed."

You can read more about Inclusive Church [here](#) where you will find links to the Conference report (Strategy) and the User Guide to help churches to engage with this work.

Terms of Reference for Solidarity Circles

Solidarity Circles for Disability, LGBT+, Racial Justice and Women were established in September 2023. A new Solidarity Circle for Carers and Rural Communities will be launched in Autumn 2024.

Each Solidarity Circle will work to these Terms of Reference but will augment and adapt them in relation to any specific factors of their area of experience.

Aims:

- a) To offer mutual support for those who share a particular characteristic
- b) To develop understanding of what is positive and negative about their Church experiences
- c) To provide active involvement in any new procedures, processes or training because members are 'Experts by Experience'
- d) To act as partners in the development of theology, liturgy and resources
- e) To be actively involved in proposals for any structural changes affecting the Church's life

The Solidarity Circles:

- f) Must be the responsibility of the Methodist Council, as the institution seeks to listen and to learn, in order for the future of the Methodist Church to be more fully inclusive, in line with the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity
- g) Need to be safe and brave spaces, and so confidentiality must be agreed and maintained, in order for this safety to be ensured. No information should be shared beyond the group unless agreed together
- h) Need to cover a broad range of diversities within that particular life experience in order to help the Church to learn from the full breadth of this human experience
- i) Will actively seek to include younger adults relating to that life experience, and to liaise with the Children, Youth and Families Team about how to hear the voices of children
- j) Will 'have the ear' of Church leaders, through reporting to the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) Committee
- k) Will act as active partners with the Connexional Team, and the Methodist Council, in relation to the work of the Methodist Church, especially in relation to new policy and practice
- l) Will receive a formal response from the JDS Committee, to any queries raised or concerns high-lighted
- m) Will develop their own programme and processes
- n) Will be held online to help with accessibility from across the Connexion, and to enable growth and development of the work

Membership of the Solidarity Circle

- i) The JDS Committee will nominate one person to be a member of each Solidarity Circle and to report back to the Committee
- ii) 13 members will be recruited extra to the coordinator and the JDS-nominated member, to represent a diversity of experience, and where possible to include one person who will relate to the Children, Youth and Families Team, in ensuring the voices of young people are heard
- iii) Recruitment will be through open recruitment via expression of interest
- iv) Members will be appointed for 1, 2 or 3 years (3 years max) and then five new members will be recruited each year (by open recruitment) ensuring a diversity of views and experience are heard

- v) Each member will have a Volunteer Agreement and the coordinator will also sign a Confidentiality Agreement

Timetable for Recruitment

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Closing date for expressions of interest | 7 May 2024 by 9am |
| Successful candidates notified | 17 Jun 2024 |

Disability: Please let us know if you require adjustments making to any aspect of the application process or provide us with any information you feel relevant whilst we consider your expression of interest. If you are selected to join the Solidarity Circle we will ask if you have any access needs or if you require any reasonable adjustments to be made. Please be assured that we will be supportive in discussing reasonable adjustments at all stages of the recruitment process.

Experience, knowledge, skills and abilities: The person specification lists minimum requirements for this role. When shortlisting, the selection panel will only consider information contained in your expression of interest form and assess this against the person specification. They cannot make assumptions about the nature of the work you have done or your experience from a list of job titles so it is important that you demonstrate how you meet the requirements.

References: All role offers are conditional on the receipt of two satisfactory references from those able to comment about your suitability for the role. These should be from people who know you well and not be related to you.

Data Protection: The information you provide on the expression of interest form will be held in the strictest confidence. We process this information in line with our privacy policy. If you succeed in your volunteer application the information will be used in the administration of your volunteering with us. By completing and signing the expression of interest form we assume that you agree to the processing of your personal data as described above in accordance with our [Privacy Notice](#) – see Annex 5.

To apply – To apply, please download the Expression of Interest form or select the Apply button. On your application form, please ensure you have included the following:

Please ensure that you have included a note of the Solidarity circle you are applying to be part of:

- Solidarity Circle for Disability
- Solidarity Circle for LGBT+
- Solidarity Circle for Racial Justice
- Solidarity Circle for Women
- Solidarity Circle for Carers
- Solidarity Circle for Rural Communities

Please indicate your preference of service – **The commitment is for 3 years max.**

- One year / Two years / Three years / Any

Please indicate your usual availability,

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Monday evening | Available/Unavailable |
| Tuesday evening | Available/Unavailable |
| Wednesday evening | Available/Unavailable |
| Thursday evening | Available/Unavailable |
| Saturday daytime | Available/Unavailable |
| Sunday afternoon | Available/Unavailable |
| Sunday evening | Available/Unavailable |
| Any comments: | |

Applications need to be complete and submitted by 9am on 7th May 2024. If you have any questions, please email equality&diversity@methodistchurch.org.uk