

Chaplaincy Policy – July 2018

1. The chaplaincy policy is developed in the context of the District Mission & Discipleship policy in which there is a statement relating to District Initiatives encouraging Partnership in Chaplaincy. This in particular fits with the District's role to enable mission across circuits and between circuits and to enable what may not be possible for circuits or churches alone. The District has established priorities that include the support of community development, the encouragement of fresh ways of being church, an approach that places people at the centre of our work and is more flexible than traditional patterns and encouraging the capacity to speak of God. All these priorities impact upon our chaplaincy policy.
2. Over and above this are the underlying theological principles that relate to chaplaincy:
 - that the whole of life is God's concern and the division between sacred and secular cannot be sustained;
 - that the church has been called to go to all peoples, not defined solely in terms of different ethnic groupings but in terms of 'people groups' that self-identify by other criteria e.g. employment, health etc; and
 - that mission is characterised more often by the church going than by first expecting people to come to us.
3. Given these principles, the District encourages the circuits as "the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnectedness in the Body of Christ for the purposes of mission..." (SO 500) to develop chaplaincy ministry. Such ministry relates to and sanctifies the whole of life; it identifies groups of people and areas of life where God is already at work in the life of the world; and recognises that the church, as the bearer of good news, has not always joined God in such places. In developing chaplaincy, the District encourages circuits alone or, wherever possible, in co-operation with other circuits or together with ecumenical partners to develop chaplaincy in work-places and at points of community gathering.
4. In support of such chaplaincy, the District will:
 - identify existing chaplaincies within the District and will facilitate the sharing of experience;
 - encourage gatherings of chaplains from across the District for mutual support in roles that can often be very isolating;
 - work with circuits to identify needs and communities that might benefit from a chaplaincy;
 - work with the Discipleship Ministry and Learning Network to provide training for those involved in chaplaincy work;
 - consider the needs of chaplaincy in all decisions on stationing;
 - provide appropriate financial support for innovative chaplaincy projects from the District Advance Fund;
 - initiate and sustain discussions with ecumenical partners to encourage and coordinate chaplaincy work within the boundaries of the district;
 - consider whether chaplaincy initiatives could be linked together e.g. for financial purposes.