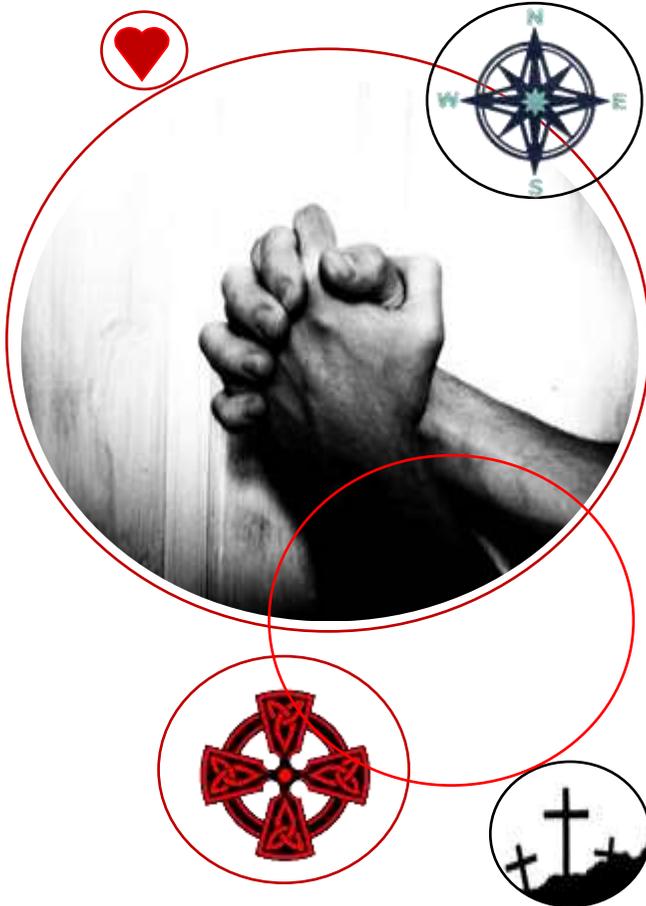


Falmouth and Gwennap Circuit

'Crunch Time' prayer stations



This leaflet includes the text of all the prayer stations used as part of the process for exploring the way forward for churches and circuit.

It is intended to be used either 'on site' on the day, at home to support the process.

It could also be used on other occasions, when exploring how to 'evolve' as a church family in your own church or community.

The Holding Cross

Take the sticks and string from your prayer kit and use them to make a simple cross.

As you wind the string round the wood open your heart, ask God to speak to you.

You may wish to use the following Prayer, called 'Deep Listening':



*God of silence and God of all sound, help me to listen.
Help me to do the deep listening to the sounds of my soul,
waiting to hear your soft voice calling me deeper into you.
Give me attentive ears that begin to separate
the noise from the sounds that are you;
you who have been speaking to me and through me my whole
life, for so long that you can seem like background noise.
Today help me hear you anew.*

Anon.

Keep the cross with you as you engage with the other prayer stations and activities on offer today, asking the Lord to guide and bless you, your church and the circuit. Take the cross with you as you leave and place it somewhere in your home, so you will see it and be reminded you that the future is in God's hands.

Releasing Hidden potential

(At Stithians this is outside, otherwise you need a bowl of water)

Take the flower shape from your kit and a pen.

Ask God to prompt you to recall the things you love and the talents God has given you. We never need to try to be 'someone else', we are all made and valued by God and we each have something to offer. When we are passionate about something people are drawn to that. What gifts/passions do you have? Do/Could you use them in church life?

Write on each petal

- A gift, passion or talent you have that you could share with the church you belong to.
- Something you believe God wants you to do, but which you find difficult.
- Something you feel God requires to happen in your church or in the circuit.
- A gift you know another person has but which they have not been encouraged to use in church life.
- Fold the petals into the centre of the flower like a bud, so what you've written is hidden inside.
- Place it on the water, with the petals upwards, and wait in prayer

The paper flower represents you, or your church, and the water is the Holy Spirit. Watch as the petals slowly open, revealing the gifts and passions hidden inside. Some prayers and longings are answered quickly, and we see the result, while others require us to trust that God holds all things and knowing that we may never see the fruit of the seeds we plant 'unfold'.

Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. Psalm 128:1

The truth remains, no matter how good the idea, if God is not in it, it will fail, but if God is truly in it, no matter how fantastical it may seem, all things are possible. So be bold, dream big, a pray that God will guide the circuit at this time. *"for God all things are possible."* Matthew 19:26b

A Bitter pill to swallow: Breaking down barriers

(At Stithians this is in the chapel, otherwise you need a glass of water)

Take the tablet from your prayer kit,

Just like you can't swallow this tablet whole, some problems can be too big to tackle alone. But we are never truly alone, God is always with us, and our faith enables our church to become a family with whom we can share both our joys and sorrows.

'A problem shared is a problem halved, a joy shared is a joy doubled' Proverb

Our Church family should be a place of support, love, acceptance and forgiveness, this is what God wants for us.

'Two are better than one... if either of them falls, the other will lift up their companion... Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? One may be overpowered, but two can defend themselves. A cord of three is not easily broken.' Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Our Churches, however, are not always perfect. Sometimes people have felt excluded without us even realising it.

Resentment, the need for forgiveness or people feeling unvalued can hold everyone back. Acknowledging this is essential and leads to restoration.

- As you hold the tablet pray for yourself and your church family
- Ask God to enlighten you as to what may be holding the church back, or what might prevent you from moving forwards at this time.
- Seek inspiration to identify old wounds that need healing.
- as you pray for release drop the tablet into the water.

Watch as it dissolves, praying that God will also dissolve any barriers that may be blocking us from moving forward with God.

Welcome Home!

(At Stithians this is in the chapel, otherwise you could use any plant)

Jesus said: I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

So there will be one flock, one shepherd. John 10:16

There is an ancient tradition of tying ribbons to trees near holy wells to invoke blessing for a particular person or situation. In more recent years yellow ribbons have been tied round trees to remember soldiers who are serving overseas, and to welcome them home.

- Take the ribbon from your prayer kit, as you hold it think of those people who used to attend your church, taking time to consider why they no longer can/do.
- Think also of the many who have never been, remembering that God loves them too and wants to be part of their lives.
- Consider what it may take to connect with these people, both those who have left and those who have never been.
- Tie your ribbon on the tree, praying for those people as you tie it

May the Holy Spirit reconnect us with those who have wondered and lead us with open hearts to those who long to know God.

Light in the Darkness

(At Stithians this is in the chapel, otherwise you can use the picture, you will also need a match or lighter)

Take the piece of chain from your prayer kit,

As you hold it think about what chains people today. Some are in prison for committing crime, some are held because of what they believe, some are imprisoned by their own body or mind, whilst others are held back by what society expects of them, perhaps due to age, gender or background. Sometimes we can be held captive by our experiences; indeed many of us have things in our lives that hold us down, things that happened in our past or people who say thoughtless things. Sometimes we don't know we are held back, because we do not know other ways of doing things.



- *Are there worries or problems that weigh you down?*
- *Are there traditions or worries that hold your church back?*
- *Are there things that risk holding the circuit back?*
- *What might it take to bring freedom?*

Hold your chain above the pile of chain and let it go, as you do so, know that God will always help lift your burdens.

Jesus said 'I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will have the light of life and never walk in darkness' John 8:12.

- Take the candle from your prayer kit and light it
- Place it amongst the chain as a sign that you wish to be the Christ Light in your church/community, as we explore the future together.
- Sit with God for a while and notice how even such a tiny light can make a difference wherever it is placed.
- Commit to carry the light with you at all times, remembering that it will shine brightest when the world around you seems darkest.

Letting go of 'self'

(At Stithians this is in the school room, otherwise you need a local map and a paper/fabric heart shape)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. Philippians 2:3-4

Methodism is a 'Connexion', made up of individuals, chapels, circuits and districts. The idea is that those with 'means' support those who do not, sadly, when we are struggling we tend to look inwards, seeking to 'hold on to what we have'. Understanding that 'It's not about me', that we are not the centre of the universe, and that the needs of others are equal to those of ourselves, is essential. It can be hard to see beyond what we have always done and what we want to continue, yet, if we able to look at 'the bigger picture' and share with others we can become more than we thought possible.

The UK has developed a culture of 'I', 'charity starts at home', 'Not in my backyard'. This was not always the case, and is certainly not the case in other cultures. For example, the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, New Zealand have a proverb/saying that translates as "My strength is not as an individual, but that of many". Similarly 'Ubuntu' is an ancient African word meaning 'humanity to others' and representing 'I am what I am because of who we all are', i.e. my identity is wrapped up in the community I belong to – these cultures are based not I but **We**, as is Christianity.

O master Grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled, as to console, To be understood, as to understand, to be loved, as to love with all my soul

Look at a map of our circuit, what do you notice? If you were to place chapels now, based on geography and areas of population, would there be as many and would they be in the same places?

Read the various quotes about the purpose of Church, how do they make you feel? Are there any you particularly agree with, or any that you struggle to accept?

The Church exists primarily for the sake of those who are still outside it. William Temple 1881- 1944

The Church is only the Church when it exists for others... helping and serving. It must tell [people] of every calling what it means to live for Christ, to exist for others. D Bonhoeffer, *Letters and papers from prison.*

"You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go not only to those that need you, but to those that need you most. It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance."

"Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? O be not weary of well doing!"

-John Wesley in conversation with Francis Asbury, Thomas Coke, et al 1784

Take the buttons from your prayer kit.

As you hold them, let one represent yourself, and the others represent people in your church or community and consider:

- We are used to buttons in uniform sets, but that is not the case with people, it is our diversity that makes us fully rounded.
- Whilst a single button may be attractive on its own, like that it does not fulfil its purpose, they are made to hold things together.
- Place your buttons on the heart shape, praying that we learn to recognise the value of each individual, even when their vision seems so different from our own
- Pray that we can work with God to enable each person to be themselves, and that in doing so he will bring our communities closer.

Committed to the Journey

At Stithians this is in the chapel, otherwise you can use the picture)



Sit with the cross for a while and pray for this ‘crunch time’,

- Ask for a glimpse of God’s vision of what could be.
- Ask God to inspire you to see new opportunities rather than threats to what you know.
- Ask for discernment between what type of church ‘I want’ and what God requires us to be.

Take the foot shapes from your prayer kit,

write your name (or initials) on one and place it at the foot of the cross, as a sign you are ready for God to guide your path.

You may choose to write the name(s) of your church, individuals or your community on others, placing them too, knowing that God will be journeying with us, whatever the future holds.

Jesus said,

‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’,

Matthew 28:19

Footprints

One night I had a dream...

I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord,
and across the sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the
sand; One belonged to me, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of my life flashed before us, I
looked back at the footprints in the sand.

I noticed that many times along the path of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.

I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and
saddest times in my life

This really bothered me, and I questioned the Lord
about it.

“Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, You
would walk with me all the way;

But I have noticed that during the most troublesome
times in my life, There is only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why in times when I needed you the
most, you should leave me.

The Lord replied, “My precious, precious child.

I love you, and I would never, never leave you during
your times of trial and suffering.

When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then
that I carried you.

Why 'Crunch Time'?



The world has changed.
At this decisive time.
We must prayerfully adapt and
change in the
ways we worship and
live out our faith.

Reality Check

We need to acknowledge 'where we are'

Pray

We need to take time to listen, as we seek
to follow where God is leading

Share

We each have insights to offer, the more of
us who engage and explore the clearer
the vision that will evolve.

Act

You may well think 'we've done this before
and nothing has changed', this time we
have the opportunity to do something
new.