

Schedule for the West Swindon and the Lydiards Church Partnership

The LEP

- 1) The Charity:
 - a) gives effect to the local ecumenical partnership **West Swindon and the Lydiards Church Partnership** approved for the Area of Benefit by the Participating Churches;
 - b) comprises the Participating Churches; and
 - c) looks to the Sponsoring Body for support, encouragement and advice.

The Area of Benefit

- 2) The Area of Benefit is the Wiltshire Council parishes of Lydiard Millicent and Lydiard Tregoze, and three Swindon Borough Council wards of Freshbrook and Grange Park; Shaw and Nine Elms; and Toothill and Westlea.

The Participating Churches

- 3) The Participating Denominations are:
 - a) The Church of England;
 - b) The Methodist Church;
 - c) The Baptist Union of Great Britain; and
 - d) The United Reformed Church.
- 4) The Participating Churches are:
 - a) All Saints Lydiard Millicent;
 - b) St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze;
 - c) Toothill Church;
 - d) Holy Trinity Shaw; and
 - e) Westlea Church.
- 5) The Appropriate Authority for each Participating Church is:
 - a) The leadership team of All Saints Lydiard Millicent;
 - b) The leadership team of St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze;
 - c) The members' meeting of Holy Trinity Shaw;
 - d) The church committee of Toothill Church; and
 - e) The members' meeting of Westlea Church;

The Sponsoring Body

- 6) The Sponsoring Body is **Swindon Churches Together**.

Christian Initiation and Belonging

- 7) Baptism shall be administered according to the rite and/or practice of any of the Participating Denominations, or according to a rite approved by **the Participating Denominations through the Sponsoring Body**, and shall be set, in normal circumstances, within an act of congregational worship. A register of baptisms shall be kept.
- 8) All persons involved as candidates or parents in baptism, whether of believers or infants, should proceed with the full knowledge of the options that are available to them. Infant Dedication and Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child shall be among such options, as shall be a service for the Re-Affirmation of Baptismal Faith, as appropriate.
- 9) Preparation for believer's baptism and for confirmation and admission to the full responsibilities and privileges of membership of the LEP shall be undertaken jointly and shall include specific denominational teaching and instruction. Confirmation and reception into membership of the LEP or a transfer and/or extension of membership shall normally be administered at a joint act of worship according to a rite authorised by the Sponsoring Body, and agreed by the confirming ministers.
- 10) Those received into membership of the LEP by joint confirmation in consequence become members of all the Participating Denominations, as well as members of the LEP.
- 11) Those received into membership of the LEP by transfer and extension of membership in consequence become members of all the Participating Denominations which have received them, as well as members of the LEP.
- 12) Baptism of believers will not normally be administered to those who have previously been baptized as infants. If, however, a candidate who has been baptized as an infant holds a strong conviction about being baptized as a believer, the matter should be referred to the ministry team and the appropriate authorities of the Participating Denominations for consideration in the light of nationally agreed policies. Anyone so baptized shall be eligible for membership of the LEP as a Baptist only.
- 13) Membership discipline shall be in accordance with the procedures of the Participating Denominations. Members affiliated to more than one of the Participating Denominations shall be subject to the procedures of only one of them, as agreed by the Sponsoring Body and the appropriate authorities of the Participating Denominations on the proposal of the Trustees. The standing of any such member with the other Participating Denomination(s) to which they are affiliated shall be reviewed by them in the light of the outcome of that procedure.

Worship

- 14) The LEP shall respect the faith and practice of each of the Participating Denominations. Worship shall safeguard and present the doctrines, practices, traditions and developing traditions of each of the Participating Denominations and be conducted in accordance with denominational practices and/or using rites adopted by the Sponsoring Body. A balanced and varied pattern of worship shall be aimed for in order to maximise the riches of each tradition and to enable the congregation to explore and express its ecumenical life and aspiration, while at the same time ensuring that worship is accessible and sustaining for all its members. Ordained priests, ministers or other duly authorised persons shall preside at the Eucharist as permitted by the rules of the relevant Participating Denomination.

- 15) The authorisations of each Participating Denomination apply to that denomination's services.
- 16) All those recognised as communicants by the Participating Denominations may receive the sacrament. In arranging services encouragement shall be given to the participation of the whole congregation, especially Lay/Local Preachers, Readers, and others authorised as leaders of worship or as preachers.

Ministry

- 17) Authorised ministry within the LEP shall be provided by ministers (whether clergy or lay) duly appointed by the Participating Denominations, after consultation with the Sponsoring Body.
- 18) The procedures of the relevant Participating Denominations shall be followed in the appointment/call of ministers. Recognising, however, the importance of continuity, the LEP expects that those responsible for the appointment/call of ministers shall select persons who will respect and develop the ecumenical character of the LEP. To that end, when it is expected that a minister or member of the ministry team serving the LEP may leave, or before any major changes in the responsibility of the minister presently in post are considered, or if additions to the ministry team are being contemplated, the agreed procedure of the Sponsoring Body shall be followed.
- 19) There shall normally be a practice of alternating ministry between the Participating **Free Church** Denominations. **At least one Church of England Minister shall normally be a member of the ministry team.**
- 20) Newly appointed ministers shall be inducted / welcomed at a service at which they, other members of the ministry team, the LEP and representatives of the Sponsoring Body reaffirm the Declaration of Intent.
- 21) All ministers serving the LEP shall seek or be offered appropriate status within all the Participating Churches.
- 22) Remuneration of Ministers shall be in accordance with the practices of the appointing Participating Denomination.

Relationship with the Participating Denominations

- 23) The Trustees shall be the equivalent of:
 - a) the Elders' Meeting in the case of the United Reformed Church;
 - b) the Deacons' Meeting in the case of a Baptist Church; and
 - c) the Methodist Church Council (according to Standing Order 611 of the Methodist Church).
- 24) In the case of the Church of England, care should be taken to ensure that, as far as possible, the membership of the parochial church council is included in the membership of the Trustees.

25) The LEP shall maintain a proper relationship to the appropriate local and regional bodies of the Participating Denominations, fulfilling necessary constitutional requirements. These bodies are:

- a) in the case of the Church of England, the Swindon Deanery and the Diocese of Bristol;
- b) in the case of the Methodist Church, the Upper Thames Circuit;
- c) in the case of the United Reformed Church, the South Western Synod; and
- d) the West of England Baptist Regional Association and the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

26) To that end, meetings of the members of the LEP affiliated to a particular Participating Denomination (as opposed to meetings of the members of the LEP) may be held in order to meet the constitutional requirements of the Participating Denomination concerned.

Buildings

27) The premises of the LEP for which the Partnership has beneficial use, include Holy Trinity Shaw and Toothill Church, both of which are subject to a sharing agreement under the provisions of the Sharing of Church Buildings Act, 1969. The Toothill Manse is a shared building owned by the United Reformed Church, and covered by a Sharing Agreement. In addition the Partnership has use of the buildings at All Saints Lydiard Millicent and St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze which are not subject to a sharing agreement. Westlea church meets in Westlea School and owns a small shed on these premises used to store church materials.

Ongoing development

28) Other churches in or near the Area of Benefit may seek participation in the LEP at any time, subject to the agreement of the appropriate authorities of the Participating Denominations and the Sponsoring Body.

29) The LEP looks to the Sponsoring Body to review its work and witness every seven years, or sooner, with reference to its purpose set out in the Statement of Ecumenical Vision and this Constitution.