

Ceredigion Methodist Circuit Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) Statement

The Ceredigion Methodist Circuit recognises that, not only is every person created in God's image, but each person enjoys equal worth and importance within God's family. We will seek to create an environment where every member, friend, or visitor, and all we come into contact with, will be respected, appreciated and welcomed for who they are, with God's radical hospitality and in line with Kingdom values of love, peace, mercy and compassion.

We will foster the abilities and talents of all so that regardless of race or ethnic origin, nationality, gender or pronouns, gender reassignment¹, sexual orientation, family circumstance, social or economic class, age, neurodiversity or disability, all may achieve their full potential within the life and ministry of the churches and the circuit.

We seek to be a fully inclusive church in which all, including people who identify as LGBTQIA+², feel and find the church is a safe and welcoming place and a place where all roles within the life of the church, including leadership and ordained ministry, are open to them.

Both Churches (St Paul's Aberystwyth and St Thomas' Lampeter) of The Ceredigion Circuit are registered to conduct marriages of same sex couples³. As of 2023 they are also registered with Inclusive Church⁴

We integrate our ongoing commitment to equality and inclusion throughout our churches and our worship, such as St Paul's annual observance and memorial service for Transgender Day of Remembrance and Inclusive Church Sunday services for both St Paul's and St Thomas.

We recognise a neurodiversity paradigm, and we understand the autism spectrum to be a result of variations in the human brain and a form of human diversity that should be celebrated and advocated for. We advocate greater acceptance of autistic and neurodiverse behaviours over expecting the imitation of the behaviours of neurotypical (non-autistic) peers.

The Ceredigion Circuit and its churches recognises and will comply with the laws surrounding equality, diversity and inclusion and in line with the Methodist Church's statements.

The Ceredigion Circuit has an appointed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) officer and as of 2023 (as of autumn 2023) have also employed an EDI Outreach and Support Worker. This employed role is to develop the mission, ministry and pastoral support within the Ceredigion Circuit among people who identify as Neurodiverse, LGBTQIA+ and the Pay as you Feel community at St Paul's.

The Ceredigion Circuit commits to best practice in all matters surrounding equality, diversity and inclusion through undertaking available training and updating knowledge.

This policy will apply to all those who seek to use our premises.

The policy will be updated annually. **(Last revision date 15 December 2023)**

Background Notes to the December 2023 Update

1 We recognise that the term '*gender reassignment*', whilst used in legal documentation, is a matter of contention and may not be favoured by members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The above term does not necessarily mean that a person undergoes a medical intervention but can include changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender.

2 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual +

3 The Methodist Church at the 2021 Methodist Conference considered the Report, with its recommendations, **God In Love Unites** (<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/12606/3240-10-amended-marriage-and-relationships-report.pdf>) Welsh version [Conference Agenda 2019 \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/12606/3240-10-amended-marriage-and-relationships-report.pdf)

As a result resolutions were passed by the Methodist Conference ([Conference 2021 Agenda Volume 3 \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/12606/3240-10-amended-marriage-and-relationships-report.pdf)) marking a significant development in our understanding of the nature of human relationships.

This development in our understanding of the nature of human relationships means local churches can now register for same sex marriages as well as marriages between a man and a woman. Our understanding and affirmation of people who cohabit has been made more explicit. A Notice of Motion was passed by the Conference preventing the advocacy and practice of what is referred to as 'conversion therapy' on Methodist premises and by Methodists ([Methodist Conference votes on banning of conversion therapy](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/12606/3240-10-amended-marriage-and-relationships-report.pdf)).

As of 2022 both churches in our circuit are registered to conduct same sex marriages.

Please consult these documents via the links above.

4 Inclusive church is a network of churches, groups and individuals uniting together around a shared vision – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. You can find out more about Inclusive Church on their website www.inclusive-church.org/

Link to St Paul's Inclusive Church Profile: www.inclusive-church.org/place/st-pauls-methodist-centre/

This information is provided out of respect and in fairness to those who are considering whether our premises are suitable for their requirements.

St Paul's Centre Managing Trustees & Ceredigion Circuit EDI Officer

Further Reading:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-church/>

<https://globalinterfaith.lgbt/safeguarding/>

<https://www.inclusive-church.org>