

Rural Ministry

Welcome to this special edition newsletter on rural mission which we are doing to support the launch of the new book *Discipling Presence*. This book has been written by an ecumenical group, with contributions from numerous Methodists including Richard Teal the Chair of Cumbria District and edited by Nigel Pimlott from the DMLN (East Central Team). However there are many other resources available to support rural churches, and The Methodist Church funds a Connexional officer and is integral to Germinate (the Arthur Rank Centre).

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Discipling Presence

As the new workbook *Discipling Presence* is published, we wanted to take this time to share with you information about that and some other resources for rural ministry.

The book is a follow on from *Presence*, a very well respected book which is now many years old. The new *Discipling Presence* is a really accessible, well designed, relevant book. In each section of the workbook there are stories from current rural contexts, a bible story, and three things to have a go at. Making this more than something just to read, but something to equip us to move forward as we are a Christian presence enabling people to become disciples of Jesus.

We have 50 free copies of this book in the region which we are sending to all District Rural Secretaries, and then if you would like a copy please get in touch with [Alison Ransome](#).

Some who have already looked at this book are saying that the content is applicable in contexts other than rural too – some seaside contexts and some edge of town places too.

[Click here](#) to find the book on the Methodist Publishing website.

Rural Mission Sunday - 18 July 2018

This year 300 churches signed up with Germinate (ARC) and we think others also focused on the theme of welcome too. The theme for 2018 is Growing Together and will focus on ministry that is ecumenical and inter-generational.

Germinate Groups - Leading Communities

Germinate Groups is for rural multi-church groups such as a circuit or section of a circuit. Each group identifies four to six people from across the group who could be lay and ordained but not necessarily in official positions. This group then joins with others for creative and interactive training, and time and space to work together to develop their church strategy and mission.

The material is written for an ecumenical learning community as there is much value from different church traditions learning from each other and strengthening local working relationships. A learning community could be a single denomination but we would strongly encourage those initiating a programme to invite other denominations in the area to participate.

What's the programme?

Participants commit to four two-day gatherings, and a final day for review and commissioning, over the course of the two year programme. There is a high ratio of group work to input, so the sharing of good practice and experience is given priority. This enables new ideas and plans to be considered.

Each of the four gatherings has a broad theme: journey, leadership, discipleship and mission. Within each of these, the material considers:

- * Our story and vision: what is our story so far? What are the joys and challenges? Where are we going? What new chapters are we writing?
- * Our context: how has the world and our community changed? What are the implications for us?
- * Our people: who has God given us today, and how do we nurture them?
- * Our structures: what structures and systems do we have? What works well, what could work better? What needs to change?

Each session includes an exercise to help the groups envision the future to which God is calling them, and identify the key decisions and turning points. An action plan then sets out key steps for the next six months. We recommend the appointment of an accompanier for each group to visit between sessions and facilitate a review of progress.

Cost

The cost is just £250 per year for two years for the whole learning community (i.e. between four and eight multi-church groups, so probably less than £20 per church). This includes full facilitator training, all materials (participant booklet, slides, speaker notes and facilitator guide), telephone support and oversight. You will need to provide the facilitators, venue and arrange refreshments.

[Click here](#) for information.

Germinate Leadership

Act soon! This year's course starts in October.

The programme combines reflection on leadership theory and theology with practical insights into leadership. Alongside theological reflection on the nature of leadership in ministry, participants will engage with broader leadership issues including conflict resolution, team building and group dynamics, and the importance of deepening emotional intelligence.

The 18-month programme includes two residential, contact days, a leadership style review, mentoring and work shadowing.

A variety of learning styles are used and teaching incorporates wisdom and experience drawn from secular and church leadership spheres. The programme builds on lay and ordained ministry experience within all denominational settings.

Over the course of the programme, participants are required to assemble a portfolio of learning and a leadership development plan setting out ongoing development goals.

These form the basis for a Professional Dialogue with two external leaders at the programme's conclusion. After completion, contact is maintained through a developing Alumni network.

The cost is approximately £3,000 per person and there is a bursary available for five people. Please contact [Elizabeth Clark](#) the Methodist URC Rural Officer for more information.

Open Welcome - Using Rural Churches

There will be more on this soon on both the Germinate website and The Methodist Church website. In the meantime, [check out](#) what is already there.

Country Way

And finally, if you don't already get [Country Way](#) magazine, we do recommend you sign up for that. It is a genuinely excellent magazine; well designed, great content and lots of ideas to steal!

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Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5JR 020 7486 5502 (Help Desk) www.methodist.org.uk

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