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The Methodist Church

High Wycombe Circuit 23/27
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Subject: Update on the Circuit Plan: Introducing Assisted Local Arrangements (ALA)

Dear Friends,

As we approach the summer months and prepare to distribute the new Circuit Plan, you will notice a new designation appearing in several slots: **ALA**, or **Assisted Local Arrangement as well as LA**.

I am writing to explain this development and to encourage you to see it as an opportunity for growth within the worship life of our churches.

Understanding the ALA (Assisted Local Arrangement): The ALA is an evolution of the traditional Local Arrangement (LA). In this model, the local church works with a Worship Leader or Steward to lead the service, while an accredited Local Preacher provides a "worship pack." This includes a recorded sermon or reflection (approximately 8 minutes in length).

We have found this model offers several key benefits:

- **Confidence Building:** It provides a supported pathway for those new to worship leading.
- **Flexibility:** The "pack" provided by the preacher can be used as a foundation. Experienced leaders may choose to source their own hymns and prayers, while those newer to the role can rely more heavily on the provided materials.
- **Growth:** It is a scalable model that adapts to your experience level as you develop your skills as a leader.

Discerning a Calling to Local Preaching: Beyond the logistics of the plan, I want to invite you to join me in a season of intentional encouragement. The journey to becoming a **Local Preacher** is a unique testimony for everyone

Let us be a people who call out the gifts we see in one another. If you see someone with the heart and grace for preaching, please encourage them to explore it. If that person is you, please know that the path is not as mysterious as it may seem. A call to preach is rarely a straight path; it can be a persistent nudge over many years or a sudden moment of clarity, or that nudge from others.

To help de-mystify the process for those who feel led to explore this path, here are the steps that you would need to take:

- **The First Step:** If you would like to explore Local Preaching, please come and speak with me.

- **A 'Note to Preach':** We will then approach the Local Preachers' Meeting to request a 'Note to Preach,' which begins your formal journey of discernment and training.
- **You choose a mentor:** You accompany the Local Preacher of choice to learn key practical aspects of the role while I take you through the academic teaching.
- **Discernment:** This is a period of discernment (working out), both for the person on the journey and the Local Preachers and Worship Leaders meeting (who are the overseers) to decide together if this is what God is calling you to.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." — Joshua 1:9

Thank you for your dedication to the worship life of our Circuit.

Every blessing,

Rev Kate Strange

Superintendent Minister