

Northampton District Synod Report

Probationer Ministers 2023-24

We are blessed to have four Probationer Ministers serving in the Northampton District.

Revd James Patterson is a second-year probationary presbyter in the Amersham Circuit where he has pastoral responsibility for three churches with a total membership of a little under one hundred.

Revd Philip Robinson is a second-year probationary presbyter in the Banbury Circuit where he has pastoral responsibility for six rural churches and one town centre church.

Revd Dr Samantha Gillard is a first-year probationer presbyter in the Northampton circuit. Northampton has adopted a multi-site approach and Samantha has pastoral care of three worship centres.

Revd Rachael Prince is a first-year probationer presbyter in the High Wycombe circuit. Rachael has pastoral care of four semi-rural small congregations each with its own identity.

Circuits support their Probationers and play a key role in encouraging their Formation in Ministry, as well as providing reports on their progress. They continue with appropriate academic studies. The District provides ongoing pastoral support, opportunities to meet and share together, and a Probationers retreat to help them as they grow in the role.

The District works with three other Districts to assess Probationers' progress via a joint District Probationers' Committee. This assesses whether they are, 'adequately formed in the being and role of a Methodist presbyter or deacon'; 'appropriately able to act as a representative person'; and 'adequately able to perform the tasks of a presbyter or deacon'.

The unanimous recommendation of the DPC was that James and Phil should be recommended to be received into full connexion and ordained at the Methodist Conference of 2024, and that Samantha and Rachael should proceed to a second (and we expect, final) year on probation.

These recommendations were endorsed at the Presbyteral Session of Synod and submitted to MCPOC (the Connexional Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee).