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### **Statement for the East Mercia Circuit**

Initially: for release to the CLT following SMG3 on January 10<sup>th</sup> 2024

Later: for release to all churches and members, ecumenical colleagues, and employees by decision of the superintendent minister and with the agreement of the CLT.

Statement begins:

“The Stationing Committee has faced unprecedented shortages of presbyters in this connexional year to match to circuits requiring ordained ministry. There has been a particular difficulty matching people of experience, capacity for strategic thinking and change management to 19 critical appointments for Superintendents.

One of these appointments, the Superintendency of the Leicester Trinity Circuit, is in the Northampton District. While declared critical for reasons of size and complexity (it is the largest circuit in the District) in the random allocation of round calls it was called last. There were perhaps 6 or 7 ministers in stationing capable of this appointment and they were all matched well before Leicester Trinity was called. The Leicester Trinity Circuit Superintendency appointment also failed to be matched to in the previous year’s stationing.

The Stationing Committee have therefore approached a number of ministers not due to be in stationing who have the experience and skills to tackle these large and complex superintendencies. They are always able to do this because ministers are stationed annually by the Conference and we must therefore always be prepared to be asked to visit an appointment we were not expecting to go to. This is why I came to be Chair of the Northampton District.

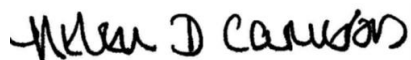
At Stationing Matching Group 2 I was asked by Connexional officers, acting on behalf of the Secretary of the Conference, to contact the Rev’d Andrew Farrington and ask him to produce a stationing profile and make a visit to the Leicester Trinity Circuit. The visit took place a week before Christmas and the circuit indicated that, subject to the agreement of the Stationing Matching Group 3 on January 10<sup>th</sup>, they would like to invite Andrew to become the Superintendent Minister of the Leicester Trinity Circuit from September 2024. Andrew, after a considerable period of prayer and reflection, agreed to this move, subject to the decisions of SMG 3 and in response to the needs of the circuit for leadership.

Andrew was obliged by our disciplines as a Church to follow the request of the Stationing Committee. He was looking forward to the extension of his original appointment to the East Mercia and to settling into his new manse. However, he can see the needs of a staff team

which was 7 in number until a year ago and yet is currently struggling to manage with 2 full time ministers, one part-time minister and with two other presbyters who are/may be retiring on grounds of ill health. It is vital that a Superintendent is appointed now so that a MOCC minister can be stationed to Leicester Trinity for September 2024. Andrew and I will still need to work on how the third ministerial vacancy for September 2024 is covered and we are both facing the difficulty of filling it with realism . In addition to the immediate needs of the Leicester Trinity Circuit there is also work required on re-configuring some of the Leicester and Leicestershire Circuits over the next two years and I expect the Superintendent of the Leicester Trinity Circuit will need to lead on this piece of work.

What has been asked of Andrew and Fiona is immense and I know I can rely on you to offer them your love, support and prayers in their remaining months with you. Clearly the match of the Rev'd Brian Hutton is good news for the Circuit and I expect to be working with Andrew and the CLT on arrangements for superintendency for your circuit for the next 12 months before you can enter stationing matching for a new Superintendent for September 2025.

I understand that you will be disappointed this has proved necessary but we are a connexional church and we must be prepared to share our resources. Rev'd Andrew and Fiona, and all of you are in my prayers and I want to record my very great thanks to the Rev'd Andrew and to Fiona for their generosity and grace.



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