

Welcome

Greetings and welcome from the Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB), who have planned and written this service.

Monetary collections made through the sharing of this service across the country will support the work of Mission Partners and the churches they serve in many parts of the world; and it will contribute to emergency funds that enable the Methodist Church in Britain, in collaboration with the Methodist Church in Ireland, to support our global Partner Churches and organisations as they respond to crises when they occur.

This service has been primarily co-ordinated by Maggie Woods (MWiB Co-Chair South).

Thoughts on the Theme

“But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-
failing stream!”

(Amos 5:24, NIV)

The theme of the service stems from an awareness that justice is not static, but instead rolls forward gathering momentum across generations. Justice can never be declared as ‘done’. Instead, justice inspires more justice from generation to generation. The stories, given in the Order of Service, tell of positive ways that individuals have addressed issues of justice.

As Methodists, confronting injustice is part of our way of life as we long for God’s justice in the world (methodist.org.uk/SocialJustice).

Preparing for the Service

- Arrange for Easter Offering envelopes to be distributed. Please send them to each church in your circuit during Lent.
- Each church and circuit treasurer should have a copy of the guidelines/finance

instructions, which are included in these notes.

- A3 posters to advertise your service are available from Methodist Publishing (methodistpublishing.org.uk/features/easter-offering-2024). You can add the details for your own service. A4 posters can be downloaded from the Methodist Women in Britain website (mwib.org.uk).
- The Forum Representative for your district would love to hear from you about your service, so that they can help to make others aware of where services are happening in your locality.
- The prayers printed in the service have responses for the congregation shown in bold type. They are included in the Order of Service and PowerPoint presentation provided. Please add any concerns of your locality or community to the prayers of intercession.
- If you have a local story that fits the theme, you may want to substitute it for one of the printed stories to add impact to the service.
- The stories featured in the Order of Service, a PowerPoint presentation and a poster are available to download from methodist.org.uk/EasterOffering

You can photocopy any part of this service that you need.

Everything you need should be included in these notes. We hope you will enjoy preparing for and sharing in the service.

Reflection on the Reading

After the reading of Luke 18:1-8, you may wish to invite a speaker to reflect on the theme of the service, give people the opportunity to reflect quietly while some music is played, or use the following reflection:

This parable reminds us that justice doesn't always come easily. We are reassured that God is passionate about justice and that our struggles don't go unnoticed.

God's way will win through in the end. Our challenge is to be like the widow – persisting, picking ourselves up and trying again.

The story also suggests that it's okay to achieve a just outcome even if we cannot change the hearts of the unjust. The judge here does not suddenly become a good person, but he wants a quiet life.

In our own striving to 'do justice' (Micah 6:8) we might come up against powers that remain corrupt, self-serving or apathetic. We'd like to change them, but the emphasis here is that we change the story for the people who are their victims.

Luke tells us that this story about persistence in seeking justice is actually a parable about persistence in seeking God in prayer.

'The seed of justice'

You may wish to dramatise the reading of 'The seed of justice'. This could be done as follows:

- Verse 1: spoken by one person.
- Verse 2: one person joined by a second person.
- Verse 3: the two persons are joined by a few others, holding their phones aloft.
- Verse 4: Others join with a microphone/ loudhailer and banners/protest placards, others raise their hands in prayer.
- All disperse to the four corners of the room chanting 'The seed of justice'.

Activities

You may like to consider holding a workshop day to encompass the range of activities suggested as well as the service itself.

Activities could include:

- Running a fair trade table at your service, or a fair trade fair at your church. The Fairtrade Foundation offer a range of resources for running an event, visit fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved for more information.
- Creating a paper chain of justice prayers. Download from methodist.org.uk/EasterOffering or photocopy them from this booklet.
- Holding a 'Question Time' debate on a justice theme. Consider how to best discuss local justice initiatives, as well as national or global issues.
- For the young (and the young at heart) a marble run game can be used to reflect on how our justice-seeking actions can have a rolling impact. Discuss justice-seeking actions we can take as part of Messy Church or as a prayer station.

Hymns and Copyright

Hymns in the Order of Service are from *Singing the Faith (StF)*, but you may wish to use different ones, especially if you use a different hymn book.

Alternative hymns you may wish to use include:

Where can we find you Lord Jesus our Master? *StF* 672

God weeps at Love withheld
StF 700

All hymns included in the PowerPoint presentation come with an indication of copyright status.

If you intend to print the words to any hymns still in copyright, please add your own Church Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) and/or One License numbers to the final slide at the end of the presentation.

Finance/Gift Aid

Please read through and ensure these instructions are passed to your church treasurer, Gift Aid secretary and, importantly, the circuit MWiB treasurer. Instructions for collecting Gift Aid and sending in donations using the Easter Offering collection envelopes can be downloaded as a separate sheet from the Methodist Church website:

methodist.org.uk/GiftAid

These instructions apply to individual church collections. However, we recognise that most Easter Offering services are held as circuit-wide dedication services, in which case local churches may take a separate collection, with donations being received by circuit officers. In keeping with the HMRC guidance with respect to best practices on handling and banking donations, we recommend the following options for collecting and sending in donations using the Easter Offering collection envelopes. Local Methodist churches are able to claim Gift Aid on their Easter Offering, either by using our Gift Aid Bureau Service or directly from HMRC. Gift Aid may also be claimed through a third party, if the following conditions are met:

1. Local churches bank these donations into their accounts.
2. Local churches forward the Gift Aid money to the World Mission Fund. This advice to Methodist churches for claiming Gift Aid on their Easter Offering is therefore based on the understanding that local churches have exercised their discretion to set up a fund to support the World Mission Fund. HMRC guidelines on church collections and Gift Aid are available on the gov.uk website via bit.ly/churchcollections

OPTION 1A

Collecting donations AND Gift Aid

In the same way that other special collections are received (for example All We Can, MHA or Christian Aid) please ask your church officers (Gift Aid secretaries or equivalent) to collect the sealed and completed Easter Offering collection envelopes (with cash/cheque donations enclosed) received from their congregation. The envelopes should then be opened and the total sum handed to the church treasurer (or equivalent) to pay the donations into the church bank account.

If the church has received and banked the donations into the church bank account, the church officers are to keep the empty Easter Offering collection envelopes for audit purposes and include banked donations on their church's Gift Aid claim form that is submitted to the Gift Aid Bureau Service.* These envelopes should NOT be sent to the Finance Department at Methodist Church House unless your church is unable to claim Gift Aid (see Option 2).

Each church should keep these envelopes for six years, in line with Gift Aid record-keeping requirements. We would encourage all churches to adopt this option where possible in order to claim Gift Aid on donations.

*The Gift Aid Bureau Service of The Methodist Church processes Gift Aid claims for about 4,000 churches every year, reclaiming about £10m from HRMC on behalf of those churches. Once processed, the Bureau Service will transfer the relevant Gift Aid rebate to each church.

OPTION 1B

Sending in donations to the World Mission Fund

Once a church has collected and banked their donations into the church bank account, they can then do one of the following:

- The church treasurer can write a cheque, made payable to 'Methodist Church World Mission Fund' for the total amount donated (a further cheque will need to be sent when the Gift Aid amount is refunded). The cheque for donations made can then be brought (or sent) to the MWiB Treasurer at the circuit-wide Easter Offering dedication service. All cheques should then be collected by circuit MWiB treasurers and banked using the 'O2' paying-in books.
- If churches cannot get in touch with their circuit MWiB treasurer, cheques may be sent to the Finance Department at Methodist Church House with a covering letter indicating the circuit's name and ID number, so that those donations can be properly attributed.
- Alternatively, the total donation can be paid by BACS transfer directly into the World Mission Fund account using the following information:

Sort code: 40-02-06

Account number: 70951706

If making a payment using this method, be sure to include your circuit reference followed by 02. For example circuit number 18/9 would use the reference 180902.

If there is space, please also include your circuit name. This information ensures that your donation is attributed to the correct circuit.

OPTION 2

If the church is unable to claim Gift Aid through the Gift Aid Bureau Service, or if cheques have already been made payable to the World Mission Fund, then follow the instructions below:

- Collecting donations

Church officers (Gift Aid secretaries or equivalent) collect the sealed and

completed Easter Offering collection envelopes (with cash/cheque donations enclosed) received from their congregation.

- Sending in donations

The donations (cheques/cash) and Gift Aid envelopes should be sent to the circuit MWiB treasurer, who will then bank the donations using the 'O2' paying-in book and send envelopes to the Finance Department at Methodist Church House, with a covering letter stating the donations banked, circuit name, circuit ID number and the date they were banked.

If churches cannot get in touch with their circuit MWiB treasurer, they can send donations and envelopes directly to the Finance Department at Methodist Church House.

Note: If you choose to follow this option, churches cannot claim Gift Aid as they have not banked donations into their own accounts. In both cases, any cheques should be made payable to 'Methodist Church World Mission Fund' and not 'MWiB' and should not be sent to Methodist Women in Britain.

For more information about claiming Gift Aid, Gift Aid rules, and frequently asked questions on Gift Aid, please contact your church Gift Aid secretary. Please do not send the Finance Office cash donations by post. Deposit cash into your church account and send in a cheque or transfer by BACS for the same amount payable to the 'World Mission Fund'.

To find out more about the Church's world mission visit:

methodist.org.uk/global-relationships



My prayer for justice



My prayer for justice



My prayer for justice



My prayer for justice





My prayer for justice



My prayer for justice



My prayer for justice



My prayer for justice





Methodist Women in Britain

for women, for justice, for Christ

mwib.org.uk

The **Methodist** Church 

methodist.org.uk/global-relationships

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