



## ALL CHANGE...

There have been a few changes in the team over the last few months:

Firstly, we welcome a new Administrator to the Ministries Team. Stefan Carney will be providing support on all things relating to Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, including Worship: Leading and Preaching. He can be contacted at the usual address: [localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk).

I asked Stefan to introduce himself. He also provided a picture of himself wearing a silly hat:

"In my spare time I enjoy baking but not cooking, getting together with friends for an evening of board games but never Monopoly, and all things Arthuriana (that's all things about King Arthur - Ed). In terms of my career so far I've worked in many varied roles, including welding the bottom of broken skips back together, assisting a Member of Parliament and assessing peoples' hearing as an Audiologist.

The common thread I can pick out from all of the jobs I've had is that I've always enjoyed helping people so if you think there's anything that I can do, please don't hesitate to get in contact - no matter how big or small the issue!" - Stefan Carney



Secondly, an introduction to Richard Armiger. Richard already leads the Learning Network, and is now responsible for the Ministries, Vocations and Worship Team too. Over to you, Richard...

"I started in the new role of Head of Ministries and Learning at the start of the connexional year and I am really excited about the opportunities that will emerge from bringing together the work of the Ministries, Vocations and Worship team and the Learning Network team into one overall team. You will hopefully not be surprised, as a Local Preacher myself, that I am passionate about how we encourage, support and resource worship within the life of the church. I am so thankful for all you do as Local Preachers and Worship Leaders in enabling worship across the connexion.

Worship is at the heart of all we do in our ministry and mission and therefore the work you do, in leading God's people in worship week by week is such a vital part of the life of the church. I realise there are many joys and challenges in planning, preparing and leading worship. In all of this I personally recognise the importance of finding opportunities for refreshing and developing our worship leading and preaching individually and collectively within our churches, circuits and districts. I therefore would like to thank Bob in particular for the work he does in producing our LPWL E-News which offers a wide range of ideas, prompts and resources for encouraging and equipping all of us as worship leaders and local preachers.



One of the resources that I find myself returning to from time to time is a book by the artist Mary Fleeson, 'Life Journey - A call to Christ-centred Living'. The book is illustrated with her wonderful artwork and has a number of reflections, activities and prayers throughout. I offer this prayer which comes at the end of the section 'A Call to Follow':"

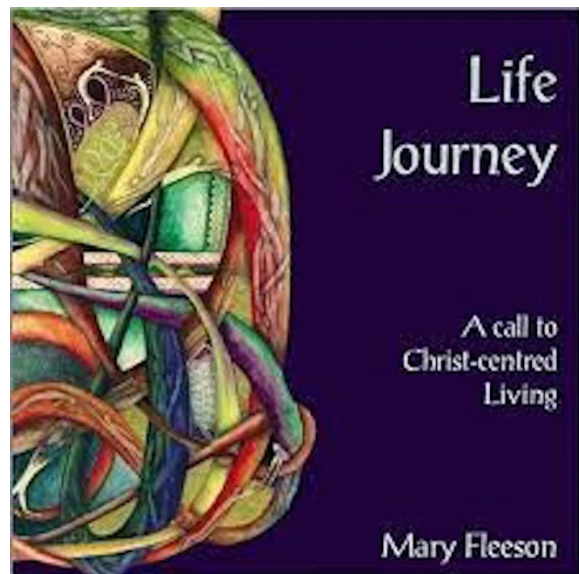
As I follow You today Lord,  
let me, Your creation  
discover how to be creative.

As I follow You today Lord,  
let me, Your child  
begin to understand how I am precious.

As I follow You today Lord,  
let me, Your new saint  
learning sacrifice and wisdom.

As I follow You today Lord,  
let me, Your beloved  
accept love from others  
and give love in return.'  
Amen

Richard Armiger  
Head of Ministries & Learning



## Events

## Artificial Intelligence, Genuine Care

An online course presented by the Faraday Institute.

Five evening sessions with expert speakers: four of them (22 Nov, 24 Jan, 13 Mar, 1 May) online, one (21 Feb) in person in Cambridge.

Cost £75 for all five sessions.



Topics will focus on how this Technology affects Humanity, Hope, Care, Worship and our understanding of Salvation.

More information and booking details from the Faraday Institute [here](#).

**LET'S END  
POVERTY** 



The Methodist Church are involved in founding **Let's End Poverty**.

As individuals and communities, we know what it's like to be part of the ongoing struggle against poverty. We understand what causes it. We can help to solve it. But we can't do it on our own.

We need our political leaders to step up, take responsibility and take action.

Come together to explore how churches can be part of speaking out.

How can we show that we stand for a future where everyone has enough to eat, has a good quality of life and is able to wake up each morning with hope?

Join us to hear from movement builders and church members who are leading the way, and reflect on how you can help to build momentum for change:

**Tuesday 27th February 7-8pm: Let's End Poverty.**

Click [here](#) to book your place.

**whole  hearted**

**12 to 14 January 2024, Yarnfield Park, Stone, Staffordshire**

The Evangelism and Growth team would like to gather people who have a sense of the hopeful future that the Holy Spirit is leading us to.

At **Whole Hearted** we will spend time seeking God, discerning vision, engaging in strategic planning and workshopping knotty problems.

Places (including accommodation and food) are fully funded but a deposit is required when booking (returned in full after the weekend to all who attend).

To book, click [here](#).

If you need help paying the deposit please contact us [here](#).

## For your Diary...

The A. S. Peake Memorial Trust presents:

### **Ephesians and Christian Community: Unity, Maturity and Truth among the People of God.**

A Bible learning event for preachers, church leaders, ministers, and all with an interest in connecting study of the Bible with contemporary church life.

Key-note speaker: **Dr Andrew Boakye**, Lecturer in Religions and Theology, University of Manchester

**Saturday 9th March** 09:30 for 10:00 until 15:45

Methodist Central Hall, Manchester

For further information and to register your interest, contact the Manchester & Stockport district [here](#).

**Reflect**  
Methodist spirituality

### **Local Preachers' Retreat 2024**

19th – 21st April at the Ammerdown Centre near Bath.

A silent retreat with plenty of space for quiet reflection. Led by Bob Bartindale, Connexional Officer for Worship & Local Preachers

### **Oh, how I love your law...?**

As Christians who emphasise God's love and grace, how can God's Law be at the centre of our faith?

We shall reflect on law and grace, and on Jesus coming to "fulfil the Law".

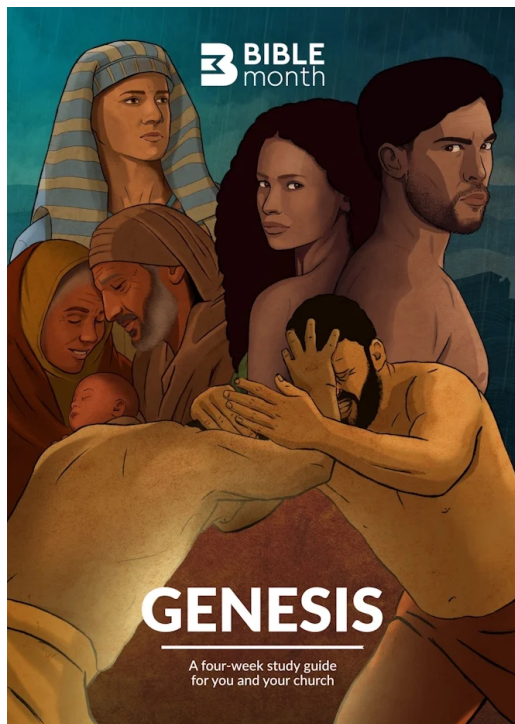
There will be time to consider how this might affect our discipleship and calling as Worship Leaders and Local Preachers.

The cost for the weekend (accommodation and full board) is £250.



Booking forms can be downloaded on the [CLPD webpage](#) or on the Reflect webpage [here](#).

## Ideas & Resources



### Bible Month 2024 - Genesis

Open the Bible and Genesis is the first book you find. It's the foundation on which the whole of scripture is built. It sets the scene for all that happens afterwards, and asks some big questions: Who is God? How can we possibly know God? Does God care? Yet for preachers, it's sometimes hard to know how to preach from Genesis with integrity and faith.

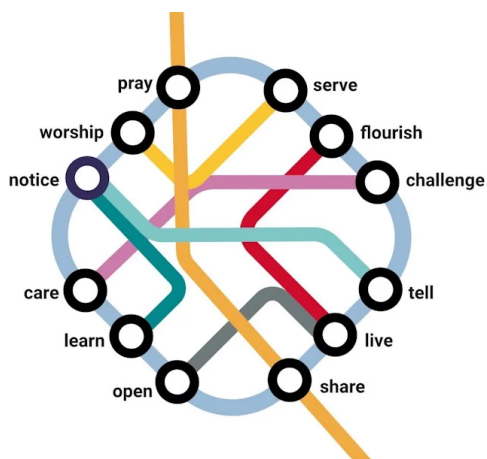
We have explored the climax of the story of salvation in Revelation, now it's back to the beginning to rediscover the roots of our faith. The Bible Month booklet and resources will be available in January, and many other resources and events are planned.

Keep an eye on the Bible Month page [here](#).

### Methodist Worship Book - digital services

The project to provide services in digital form for use in worship continues. The Publishing Team are pleased to report that the Admission, Commissioning and Welcome services are now available, as well as the services of Morning, Afternoon, and Evening Prayer and service for Holy Week.

They can all be downloaded from the [Singing the Faith Plus website](#).



### A Methodist Way of Life New resources for Local Preachers & Worship Leaders

Whether you've been a Methodist for fifty years, you're supporting a community of disciples, or you want to explore A Methodist Way of Life with spiritual seekers, our new [webpages](#) and resources have something for you.

There is a fresh model for the discipleship journey, activities and interactive resources and stories to encourage individuals and communities to engage with the twelve commitments of A Methodist Way of Life and starter guides which are especially helpful for local preachers and worship leaders. You can find these [here](#).

Look out for an updated series of service outlines in the New Year.



When the 2021 Conference adopted The Theology of Safeguarding report, they recognised that we all need to think through how the Bible and our faith underpin safeguarding.

A set of resources are about to be published, consisting of a four-session study guide with short films, activities and questions for discussion and reflection. There is also a Reader's and Facilitator's Guide.

These help us to look at our Christian calling which offers a welcome to all, whilst ensuring that our worship and wider church life is safe for everyone.

When the study guide was piloted earlier this year, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

*It was thought provoking and challenging in a good way.*

*...an automatic response [is] to see anything related to safeguarding as heavy going but this wasn't.*

*...we want to take the learning from whole course forward to help us to be more responsive to the challenges we face in making the church a safe place for all.*

The Study Guide and other materials can be found [here](#).



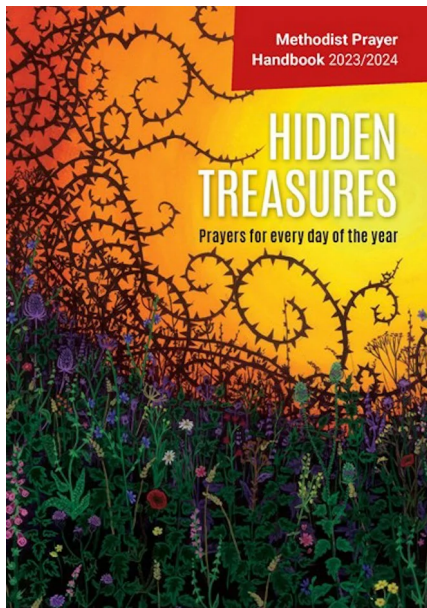
Last winter, as their sabbatical project, Jill and Andrew Baker spent time reflecting on the theme of **Winter Light**, the result being a set of resources for use by churches and individuals.

There are 10 short PowerPoint presentations for the 10 Sundays from

Advent Sunday 2023 through to Candlemas 2024 (3rd Dec 2023 – 4th Feb 2024). Each presentation lasts about 5 minutes and includes a short video introducing the theme, using a few verses from the Epistle to the Hebrews, one verse of a hymn

and a prayer, all illustrated with images from the Scottish Highlands. The presentations begin with a brief verse and response which, during the weeks of Advent, includes the lighting of Advent candles.

A variety of additional materials, including a winter hymn are available, copyright free. All can be found at, and downloaded from on the Winter Light page [here](#).



## Methodist Prayer Handbook 2023/2024 - Hidden Treasures

Prayers for each day of the month, together with a set of suggested readings for each day of the year, which are also the basis for the daily **Word in Time** reflections.

year.

Order your copy now from **Methodist Publishing**.

How do you currently use the Prayer Handbook?

How would you like to use the Prayer Handbook in future?

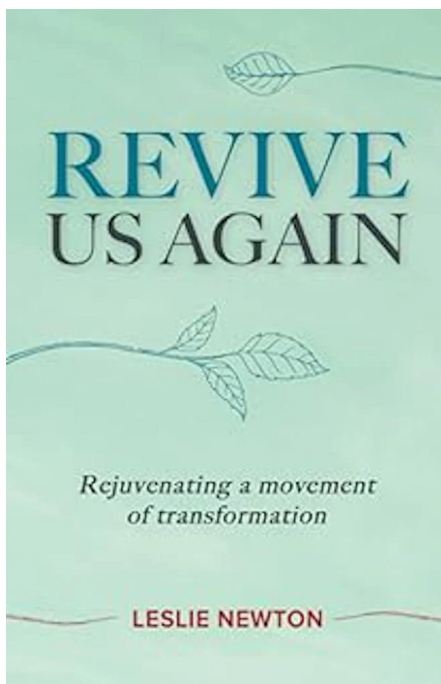
Could you take 10 minutes to complete a **short survey** of six questions? Submission deadline is Thursday 30 November.

We need your prayers!

The theme of the 2024/2025 Methodist Prayer Handbook is: **Praise and Protest**.

Contributions of prayers are invited for this issue by 8th January 2024.

Prayers should be no longer than 120 words. Guidelines on the theme and instructions on how to submit prayers can find be found [here](#).



## Revive us Again

A new book from Revd Leslie Newton, currently Chair of the Yorkshire North & East District. Revive Us Again explores how the founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley, achieved extraordinary impact across the United Kingdom and beyond.

An invitation to be inspired by Wesley's message and methods and see how, by reclaiming these treasures, Methodism and the wider church may once again transform society.

*A hope-filled invitation to rediscover the richness and vibrancy of the early Methodist movement. - Deacon Eunice Attwood*

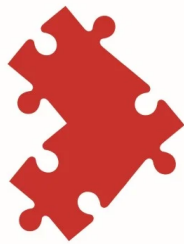
*It's impossible to resist the infectious enthusiasm for God and the Methodist movement in this engaging book. - Rachel Lampard MBE*

Available from **Methodist Book Centre** and other good bookshops, £9.99.

An apology: in the last issue, introducing the Index to the Lectionary, which is now available on the Singing the Faith Plus website, I mistakenly referred to its creator Dudley Coates as Revd. Apologies for the error, which was all mine. Ed.

## Learning & Development

Worship:  
leading &  
preaching



### WLP Training Opportunities

A range of online training opportunities for Students, Tutors and Mentors are available. Information and booking links can be found on the **WLP Training page**.

### WLP Developments

Moodle (the platform on which the WLP website is built) is provided for us by the Church of England. Recently, two significant upgrades have taken place. Firstly, the server computers on which the site runs were changed. More recently the Moodle software has been upgraded to the latest version.

You may notice some visual changes, mainly that the navigation menus are now on the left and the "Show/Hide Block" buttons have gone. There are now semi-circular "tabs" which allow you to show and hide the menus at the left and right sides of the screen. I hope you like the changes.

Also there is a new version of Module 2 containing updated and refreshed content. If you're starting Module 2, please use the new version. If you're already working through Module 2, you can continue with the old version which will be available until Easter 2024.

### Hot Tip for Students:

Starting a new project can be daunting. You may have a number of ideas and not know what direction to go with your exploration.

Don't be afraid to ask your Tutor's guidance and suggestions early. You could outline your various ideas and have a conversation with them.

Remember, each project is for you to show that you have engaged with the topic, reflected on it, and can communicate what you've learned.

Your tutor is looking for signs of your growth and development.

The moderators are looking for evidence that you and your tutor have engaged in helpful dialogue as you've been studying.



# Footnote



As Advent approaches the nights are closing in and the temperature is plummeting. Lighting Advent candles week by week seems an appropriate response – we need light, and the flickering of a candle provides a seed of hope and promise. The world around us seems especially dark this year. The conflicts, crises and suffering of so many seem very close and hope seems very fragile. Perhaps it was in a time like this that Isaiah the prophet wrote these words: ... the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned (Isaiah 9:2).

I wonder how Isaiah understood those words? For Matthew, who quotes them in his gospel, they had a fresh meaning. He saw that this light, promised in darkness, had come. The light of Christ, shining into the lives of people like his own, had completely changed his perspective. The darkness was still there – persecution and poverty still oppressed many and Christians themselves were on the run. But a light had appeared, and where there's light, there's hope.

Perhaps our job as preachers is to hold that light, so that people can catch a glimmer of hope. To hold the light and encourage people to move toward it, and seek out the things of God. To hold the light so that people can still see possibilities, even in days of trouble, and persevere. To hold the light, so that people remember that they don't need to hang onto every word of crisis they hear through news channels or social media, and can look towards the One who ...was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:4-5).

There's a lot of darkness around at the moment. But the light has dawned – let us be guided by that light as we travel on.

Every blessing for the season of Advent.

*Bob Bartindale - Officer for Worship and Local Preachers.*

[unsubscribe](#)

[Subscribe to other newsletters from the Methodist Church](#)

[Change your email details](#)

Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5JR 020 7486 5502

[www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

Registered charity no. 1132208