



Belonging

Including children and young people with additional needs

A one-day live-streamed conference
Thursday 13 September 2018
9.30am-2.30pm



Welcome to Belonging

A warm welcome to Belonging. We're so pleased you are able to join us. This live-streamed conference will be an exciting opportunity to explore some of the information and issues surrounding accessible ministry with children and young people with additional needs. Throughout the day, there will be opportunities to reflect theologically on the concept of belonging, as well as to gain valuable practical advice. There will be chance to listen, reflect and discuss. We hope that you will feel challenged, resourced, supported and encouraged in your work as you engage with the event.

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This guide contains all the information you need to make the most of what is on offer. It includes the timings of the day and details of sessions, along with the questions for reflection and discussion.

Streaming: You can watch the live stream via the Belonging webpage (methodist.org.uk/belongingconference) or through the Methodist Church Facebook page. Accessing it via the Belonging webpage will give you a better viewing experience as you will be able to follow the Twitter feed alongside the video. On Facebook, to be notified that the video stream has gone live, you will need to follow the Methodist Church's page and turn on 'notifications' in the newsfeed. Try refreshing the page if you have any streaming issues on the day.

Engaging via social media:

As well as watching the e-conference live, there will be ways to engage with its content on social media, including via Facebook Chat and Twitter (follow [@childrenyouth](https://twitter.com/childrenyouth) on Twitter to see conference tweets and use the hashtag [#BConf18](https://twitter.com/childrenyouth) in any you send). Joining in on social media will help you to feel connected to all those watching across the country, and it's an interesting way to learn other people's thoughts and reactions.

Please do share photos of where you are watching the conference, as well as your reflections on the topics discussed and points raised.



Meet the presenting team

Gail Adcock

Gail Adcock is Family Ministry Development Officer working in the Methodist Connexional Team. She has forged a career in supporting children and families, alongside shaping work, ministry and practice in the church and beyond. Her background is in primary-school teaching and local church-based ministry. Gail's book – a guide to family ministry – is to be published later this year.

Mark Arnold

Mark Arnold is the Additional Needs Ministry Director at Urban Saints and Co-founder of the Additional Needs Alliance, a vibrant and fast-growing online community. Mark is a Churches for All and Living Fully Network partner, a member of the Council for Disabled Children, and writes a monthly additional needs column for *Premier Youth* and *Children's Work* magazine. He blogs as the national award winning *The Additional Needs Blogfather*.

Kay Morgan Gurr

Kay Morgan Gurr is Chair of the Children Matter network, Co-founder of the Additional Needs Alliance and part of the Evangelical Alliance council. She is on the council of reference for Home for Good. Previously, Kay was a paediatric nurse specialising in additional needs.

Pete Winmill

With 15-plus years' experience of working people with additional needs, Pete and Christine Winmill founded Count Everyone, in 2017 to support local churches in welcoming people with learning disabilities. They offer training and advice, as well as leading volunteer teams at Christian festivals. Their simple (not childish) programmes follow the event theme through teaching, worship, drama, friendship and fun.

Our thanks to: Rachel Matthews, Jo Yair, Meg Prowting, Lynn McCann and Melissa Simmonds; PH Production Services Ltd for live streaming and technical support; King Street Studios CIC for hosting the event, and to all who have contributed in any way to making the conference happen.



Disclaimer: The views expressed in the presentations are those of the author(s) or presenter(s) and are offered as a contribution to the life and work of the Church. They do not necessarily represent the theology of the Methodist Church of Britain or the statements of the Methodist Conference.

Worship

The conference will open and close with a period of worship. Please feel free to join in. You may like to allocate a table, or specific area, as a focal point for worship. You could enhance this with objects, pictures or words that take on significance for you as you engage with the conference.

We will be focusing on Romans 12, particularly verses 4-6. Readings will be taken from *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*. You may find it helpful to have a Bible available during the worship times.

“ In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we’re talking about is Christ’s body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn’t amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvellously functioning parts in Christ’s body, let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren’t. ”

Romans 12:4-8 *The Message* (MSG)



PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY

9.00am – Test screen available so you can check your equipment

9.15am – Opening worship

9.30am – Conference starts

Session 1:

Introduction to belonging *Gail Adcock*

Session 2:

Additional needs and disabilities in 2018 *Kay Morgan Gurr*

10.30am – Coffee break

Session 3:

Belonging – the cry of every heart *Pete Winmill*

Session 4:

Good practice, good advice
Lightning talks

12.20pm – LUNCH

1.00pm – Afternoon sessions begin

Session 5:

What is our vision of 'belonging for all'? *Mark Arnold*
Lightning talks

Session 6:

Live panel discussion
Closing worship

2.30pm – Conference ends



Session

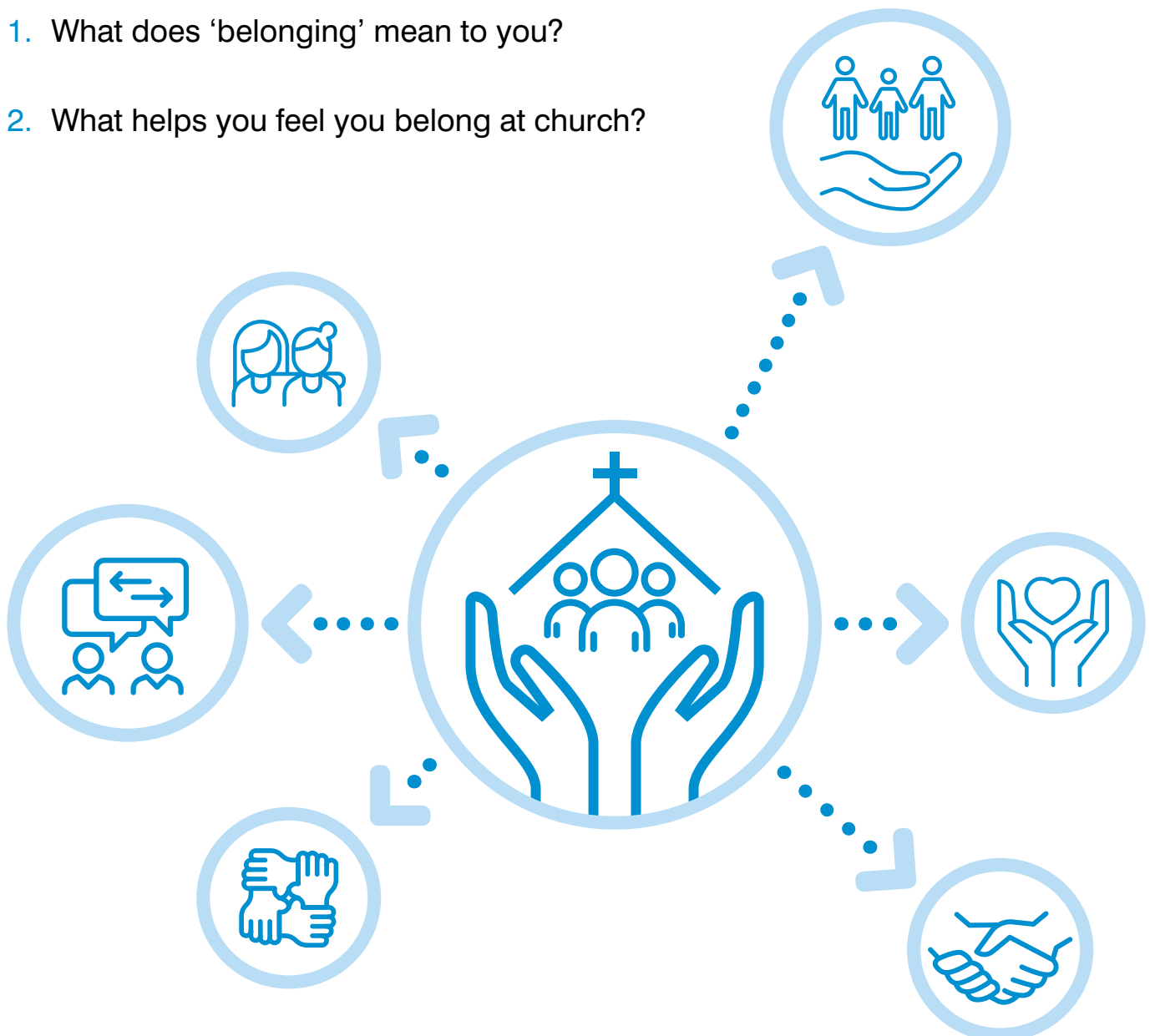
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Introduction to belonging

In this session there will be a short video where children and young people reflect upon the concept of belonging.

Questions for reflection/discussion

1. What does 'belonging' mean to you?
2. What helps you feel you belong at church?



Session 2

Additional needs and disabilities in 2018

The landscape of additional needs has shifted hugely in the past 25 years, and is set to change further in light of soaring abortion rates for detectable disability. Opinions around disability differ, ebb and flow, and what we describe as an additional need varies. The pressure on families is intense. The church today needs a revelation in order to keep up with changes and a revolution to adapt to these.

.....> Questions for reflection/discussion

1. UK statistics show that 1 in 5 people has a disability and the figure for children is 1 in 20 (although some now believe that 1 in 10 would be a more accurate figure). Is this proportion reflected in our churches?

2. With genetic conditions such as Down's Syndrome and Spina bifida now seen as disorders to eradicate, how are disabilities and additional needs viewed in your church: as problems or potential?



3. Reports of hate crimes targeting children with additional needs have surged in recent years, according to police figures. It is difficult for families to find a safe place of acceptance. Looking beyond the boundaries of our church, how can we play our part in combating this trend?

Session 3

Belonging – the cry of every heart

Deep down, we all desire to be accepted and to belong. We may not know or acknowledge it but it's there. At the heart of our conference today is the word 'belonging'. The Bible has much to say about who we are and who our creator, God, is. This talk will explore Bible verses encouraging us to take a refreshing new look at how we see ourselves and others.



Questions for reflection/discussion

You may find it helpful to have read these verses before reflecting on the questions:

- Genesis 1:27 (Made in the image of God)
- Psalm 139:14 (Fearfully and wonderfully made)
- Matthew 22:37-39 (Love your neighbour as you love yourself)
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 (One body, many parts)

1. What thoughts go through your mind as you look in the mirror each morning? Is how we view ourselves important? How are you challenged to view yourself in the light of the Bible passages?
2. How does the teaching in the Bible passages affect how we view others?
3. The passage from Corinthians speaks of parts of the body being perceived as 'weaker'. Do you think some people are perceived as 'weaker' in society and in the church? Why is this so?
4. What challenges have been raised for you, or your church, from this talk?

Session 4

Good practice, good advice

Our short films capture church and community gathering at Charing Cross Methodist Church (www.thecrossbirkenhead.com) in Birkenhead. A church with a strong inclusive ethos, it welcomes people of all abilities to a host of different groups and activities taking place during the week where everyone is able to join in. We hear from those taking part about their experiences there, as well as from leaders who are committed to creating a community within which all can belong.



Questions for reflection/discussion

Reflecting upon the videos you have watched:

- What stood out for you?
- What factors seem key to helping create a sense of belonging and involvement?
- What principles or ideas could you apply in your own church or setting?

Use this space to note down anything of interest or that you plan to follow up.

Session continued...

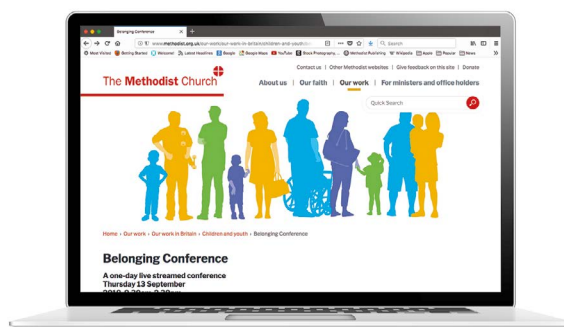
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Lightning talks

There is a choice of two-minute 'lightning talks' to watch, each containing some top tips to help you in your work:

- Enabling all young people to serve in their church and community.
- Gospel stories: We mustn't forget to be inclusive in our methods and language as we share the big story of the Bible.
- Equipping your church for belonging by supporting and championing all additional needs.
- Together we belong: exploring faith with families who have children with additional needs, through holiday clubs, support groups and care for the family materials.
- Using visuals to support key messages and teaching points.
- Working with young people with autism.
- Making what you do inclusive.

Please check our website for more details of our lightning talks
(www.methodist.org.uk/belongingconference)



Session 5

What is our vision of 'belonging for all'?

Having contemplated the current state of the nation regarding 'belonging for all', as well as the theology of belonging, what might the future look like if we enable everyone to belong in our church communities? What could belonging mean for everyone, whether or not they have additional needs? What are the next steps to make this a reality? This session explores these issues, aiming to equip, enable and inspire us to create belonging for all in our own settings.



Questions for reflection/discussion

1. What does *your* vision of 'belonging for all' look like for *your* church?
2. What are the next steps that you need to take to make this a reality?
3. Who else do *you* need to engage with to be successful?
4. Why is this important for *you*?



Next steps

We hope you have found the conference inspiring and informative and that it has challenged you to take further steps towards including children and young people with additional needs. You may wish to follow up your insights with practical actions over the subsequent weeks and months.



Suggested commitments – **10 ways to be a church that is a place of belonging** – are provided on page 17. Please take some time to explore these statements and to consider the following:

- Which do you think is the most important statement?
- Is there anything missing?
- Are there any statements with which you disagree?
- Choose one statement that you need to work on as a church. What three things do you need to do to action that statement?
- Could you write your own charter for your church, outlining what it will commit to doing? How could you involve children, young people and families with additional needs in writing a charter for your church?

Use this space to respond to the questions raised in **Next steps**

10 ways for your church to be a place of belonging

What should church be like for children, young people and young adults with additional needs and disabilities? We asked some young people for their insights and, drawing on their thoughts and those of others, have come up with 10 ways for churches to be inclusive and to promote belonging for all:

At church, we will

1. value and respect *everyone* equally; we are *all* made in God's image
2. invite *everyone* to come; we won't leave anyone out
3. welcome *everyone* in love; Jesus calls us *all* to love each other
4. create a safe and comfortable environment where *everyone* belongs
5. proactively ensure that *everyone* is supported to take part in *all* that we do
6. be friends, knowing *each other*, and missing *each other* when we're not there
7. build a church community where *everyone* is accepted for who they are
8. communicate in ways that *everyone* can understand and follow
9. use the gifts and abilities of *all*; Jesus called us *all* to serve
10. learn to follow God, grow in our faith and to serve Him, *together*.