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ORDER OF SERVICE

EASTER OFFERING 2019



**LONGER
TABLES,
LOWER
FENCES**



Your local Easter Offering Service is prepared by Methodist Women in Britain on behalf of the World Mission Fund. This act of worship enables the Methodist Church in Britain and Ireland to give to the work of our 65 partner churches overseas.



Methodist Women
in Britain

The **Methodist** Church 
Living generously

Introit/call to worship

StF 581 Come, my table is a meeting place (verse 1, sung by a choir or the congregation)

Welcome

Welcome to this Easter Offering service. This year's theme, '**Longer tables, lower fences**' was inspired by these words: "When you have more than you need, build a longer table, not a higher fence." During this act of worship we shall dedicate the Easter Offering, all of which goes to the World Mission Fund, which is managed by the Methodist Church in Britain. We shall see pictures and hear stories of people throughout the world who are responding to God's call to radical hospitality and outrageous generosity. As we share these stories we ask God to encourage, to challenge and to bless. We ask for the grace and humility to share our daily bread with others, to extend our tables and to break down the barriers that so often divide us.

Hymn

StF 28 Jesus calls us here to meet him

Prayer of adoration and thanksgiving

Let us pray.

Generous God, we gather here to meet you in this place.

We worship you for your greatness, your power and your majesty.

We praise you for your bountiful creation, your generous provision, your relentless love.

We give you thanks for your presence with us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We thank you for the invitation you extend to all of creation to share life together.

Amen.

Hymn

StF 699 God of justice (choral piece or congregational hymn)

– The Easter Offering is collected while music is played –

We say together

God of generosity and hospitality, we ask you to bless this money and those who have given it. May the World Mission Fund and all our Partner Churches enable tables to be lengthened and fences lowered all over your world, and may we ourselves reach out with love and grace in our communities, as we give and receive, from each other and from you. Amen.

Response

In a few moments of quiet reflection, consider how you might respond to the challenge to extend a welcome to others whom you do not know well. After this service, or at another time, there may be an opportunity to share refreshments together. If so, try to talk with someone you have not met before, or whom you do not know very well. Be aware that some people will not be able to move around the venue easily, so some of us may need to move towards them.

Hymn

StF 689 Summoned by the God who made us

Blessing

Let us go out into the world as God's people, committed to lengthening tables and lowering fences, in the name of Christ.
Amen.

Snapshot 1

Longer tables in Britain

Psalm 146

StF 837 (to be read responsively)

Snapshot 2

Longer tables in South Africa

Hymn

StF 409 Let us build a house where love can dwell

Prayer of confession

Lord Jesus Christ, Bread of Life, we come to you and confess that we have not always been generous with the gifts you have given us.

We have often been selfish with our possessions

Lord, forgive us and help us to be more generous

We have often ignored the needs of others

Lord, forgive us and help us to be more generous

We have often resented sharing our time

Lord, forgive us and help us to be more generous

We have not loved others as you have loved us

Lord, forgive us and help us to be more generous

Lord, forgive us for failing to recognise you in our neighbour. Help us to love each other as you have loved us.

In your name we pray. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Please use the words on the screen, or pray in the version or language which you prefer.

Snapshot 3

Longer tables in Bangladesh

Hymn

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

Snapshot 4

Longer tables in Germany

Reading

Isaiah 58:1-12

Snapshot 5

Longer tables in Ethiopia

Reading

John 6:1-13

Reflection

(optional)

Longer tables, lower fences



Prayers of intercession

Gracious God, grant us the help of your Spirit as we bring our prayers of intercession.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, that in faith and unity we may be constantly renewed by your Holy Spirit for mission and service, remembering especially our mission partners.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the peoples of the world and the leaders of nations, that they may seek justice, freedom and peace for all.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who strive to bring relief to people living in hunger and poverty, and to enable each person and community to fulfil their potential. Give empathy and compassion, insight and wisdom.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those among whom we ourselves live and work. Help us to reach out to our neighbours, to listen sensitively to each other and to work together to build peaceful communities.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In you, Father, we are one family on earth and in heaven. Give grace to us, that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.