

WLP 2.0 Release Note

Changes to the online course from July 2019



Background and Summary

Version 2.0 represents the first major revision of the Worship: Leading & Preaching website since the course was introduced in 2015-16. We have evaluated user feedback received to date to produce a refreshed website which addresses many of the comments and suggestions made by users since the course was introduced.

Developments in the **Moodle** Virtual Learning Environment, the platform we use for the website, have allowed us to introduce new features such as searching and bookmarking. The expertise of an experienced Moodle Developer and Theological Educator, Simon Davies, have allowed us to develop new approaches to presenting the learning material.

This document describes the major changes which have been included at this revision.

Access and Navigation

Key changes are:

1. The page design has been changed to make better use of screen area and to maximize use of graphics and colour. The design aims to improve the user experience on the wide range of devices now in use, including tablets and smartphones.
2. The structure of the home page and landing pages for each module and module-section has been rationalised to ease navigation around the course for both students and those accessing selected material for continuing development.
3. Access is now provided to all parts of all sections within module from the module landing page. Drop-down menus for each module-section allow easy navigation around the module from a single page, and menu items are colour-coded (see below) to assist visual recognition.
4. A simple book-marking facility is now provided within the **Worship** and **Prepare** parts. On returning to a part previously viewed, the user is prompted with the question "Do you want to return to the page you last viewed?" Answering **Yes** returns the user to that page.
5. Printing of course contents is now simpler. At the foot of every module-section "Introduction" page, there is a **Print Options** link that allow you to print any combination of the parts of a module-section in one operation. This facility also allows you to save the material as a PDF file for use offline if there is no internet connection available.
6. A basic search facility has been introduced, allowing users to search for key topics or themes. Currently, this can only be used to find key words in Prepare headings, but its scope will be progressively extended.

Contents

The contents of the course remain substantially the same, with some exceptions, detailed below.

1. Some of the contents of the **Worship** parts have been updated, and all now follow a standard format, with material arranged under headings **Begin, Read, Reflect** and **Pray**.
2. The contents of **Prepare** parts remain substantially the same, but has been rearranged into blocks of material of a more consistent length. The decimal numbering (e.g. 1.2.3, 1.2.4 etc.) has been replaced by letters (e.g. A, B, C). As a by-product of this change, printing now uses much less paper as much of the previous white space has been removed. Prepare material now employs the Moodle “lesson” container rather than “book” as previously.
3. In some cases, the order of **Prepare** material has been adjusted to allow for a more logical flow of learning, and to allow collection of material into more logical blocks. A chart mapping the relationship between the previous decimal numbering of Prepare material into the new lettered blocks is included in Appendix A of this document.
4. The **Explore** and **Apply & Reflect** parts remain substantially the same, but the layout has been changed to improve navigation.
5. The **Extend** material, which supplemented the core material for those wishing to take their studies further, has been temporarily removed. This will reappear in due course as a library of material for further study.
6. The four parts of each module-section are now colour-coded across each section for ease of navigation, viz: **Worship** – ORANGE, **Prepare** – GREEN, **Explore** – BLUE, **Apply & Reflect** – PURPLE. These colours are also used on the borders of activity blocks to help visual recognition.
7. All references to the **Course Handbook** have now been removed. This document is superseded by the four course “Guides”, all of which may be downloaded as PDF files for viewing and printing from the Methodist Church website. Buttons to access these are on the right-hand side bar on every page of the course. The previous versions of the course forms are no longer available, although they will be accepted in portfolios uploaded by 30th September 2019 as previously advised. Current forms are all on the Methodist Church website at www.methodistchurch.org.uk/wlp.
8. The Learning Outcomes of each module-section are now prominently listed on the Introduction page to each module-section, allowing students to refer to these easily as they plan and prioritise how to spend their study time.
9. The detailed timings have been removed from most parts of the course, as these were perceived as unhelpfully prescriptive. Indicative times have been retained for specific exercises and for blocks of **Prepare** material to assist students to plan their work. Attention is drawn to the suggested overall times for each part described in the Guide to Learning.

Supporting Functions

The following changes to ancillary functions have been made:

1. Module forums (*sic.*) have been removed. Their use was sporadic, and generated little dialogue with other users. They were not monitored by the Course Administrator, which caused anxiety for users who posted requests for help and never received replies. Instead, a “Contact Course Administrator” button has been added for queries and fault reporting. The use of standard social media will be promoted for user interaction.
2. The previous complicated mechanism for feedback has been replaced by a single feedback questionnaire to be completed by each student at the time of portfolio upload. This will enable students to comment on their experience of studying each four-module block.
3. The Moodle messaging service has been disabled. Relatively few people used this facility, mainly to ask questions or report problems with the site. This method of contacting the Local Preachers’ office is inefficient, as Moodle does not pass on the senders’ email address, resulting in an extra process before queries can be answered. A link has been provided instead to email the LP office direct to report problems and queries. We hope to encourage use of social media for conversations within the student community.

We hope that these changes will make learning easier and more fun, and remove some barriers from the path of those wishing to develop their calling as Worship Leaders and Local Preachers.

Work on further improving the course continues, and our next targets are:

1. Simplification of the portfolio upload process, to incorporate automatic originality checking of portfolio contents and online moderation.
2. Elimination of Word and PDF cover sheets, targeted towards ensuring compatibility for users of different proprietary devices. Apple devices in particular present a technological challenge as they do not support the XML code used in Word forms.
3. Comprehensive revision of course content, to maximize use of mixed media and the best of contemporary theological resources.
4. Development of WLP as a resource bank for Continuing Local Preacher Development, including integration with Common Award Hub to allow access to thousands of quality resources on theology, worship and preaching.

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