

Remembering Our Call: An Annual Service for Local Preachers

INTRODUCTION

All Christians are called through their Baptism and by the hearing of God's word to ministry and service among the whole people of God and the life of the world. Within the Body of Christ, some are called to the office and ministry of a Local Preacher.

The office of a Local Preacher is a permanent one, to which a person is admitted only once. One of the duties of a Local Preacher is to attend an annual Service of Reaffirmation of their call to preach. This service gives the opportunity for Local Preachers to reflect on their call and to reaffirm their promises, and gives space for testimony or a sharing of local experience.

NOTES

- 1 It is assumed that the context for use of this liturgy is to be the Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting. These meetings take different forms, and are of varying sizes, from Circuit to Circuit. The text offered is a formal text which mirrors the services of Holy Communion used in other contexts and on other occasions. Offering a full and formal text gives greater opportunity and flexibility for its adaption according to local needs.
- 2 This service provides an opportunity for Local Preachers to reflect upon their vocation and to remember and reaffirm the responsibilities they promised to undertake when they were admitted to the office of Local Preacher. Local Preachers who are no longer able, for good reason, to take preaching appointments may continue to share in the Act of Recollection.
- 3 Presbyters are also members of the Local Preachers' Meeting, and in many Circuits Worship Leaders are invited to attend: they are encouraged to support the Local Preachers in celebrating and affirming the ministry of Local Preachers in this service. There are other contexts in which Presbyters and Worship Leaders will celebrate and affirm their own ministry - for Presbyters, at the Presbyteral Session of the Synod and, for Worship Leaders, an act of worship in their Local Church. Currently, Deacons who are Local Preachers will participate in the service as Local Preachers. From 1 September 2020 preaching will become a part of ordained diaconal ministry and all Deacons will become members of the Local Preachers' Meeting, as ministers of the Church. The appropriate context for Deacons to recall and reflect upon their vocation will be the Convocation of the Methodist Diaconal Order.
- 4 Local Preachers should be invited to take part in appropriate sections of the service, such as readings, sermon, intercessions, and the distribution of Holy Communion. During the prayers of intercession, it is particularly appropriate for the Local Preachers' Secretary to read out the names of the Local Preachers in the Circuit, and the names of those Local Preachers who have died during the past year.

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

1. The presiding minister says:

God gives the Word
Great is the company of the preachers.

Young and old,
from all walks of life,
blessed with experience, imagination, compassion
Great is the company of the preachers.

Warmed by the Word within,
Worshipping God in Spirit and Truth
Great is the company of the preachers.

God gives the Word
Great is the company of the preachers.

2. Hymn

3. The presiding minister says:

Sisters and brothers,
we meet to worship God,
to give thanks for the vocation of Local Preachers,
to remember the commitments we have made,
and to reflect upon our life and ministry.

With humility and joy
we recall the gifts that God has given us –
that within the church
and in the world
God has called some to be apostles,
some prophets, evangelists,
some pastors and teachers,
some preachers
to build up the Body of Christ
until all come to the unity of faith and knowledge
in God's Son.

4. Let us pray.

Living God
whose Word became flesh in Jesus
and whose Spirit of Truth speaks into our hearts
all honour and glory and worship belong to you.
As our praises pronounce your wonder
may our lives overflow with love,
that our words and deeds
might tell of your goodness
and declare your infinite grace.
Amen.

5. The presiding minister says:

Holy God, hear us as we confess our sins.

If we have taken too lightly
the call to proclaim your gospel:
Gracious God, forgive us.
Help us to live your Word.

If we have been complacent in our preparation
and forgetful of your people's needs:
Gracious God, forgive us.
Help us to live your Word.

If we have put our own ideas and concerns
before the good news of your love.
Gracious God, forgive us.
Help us to live your Word.

If we have failed to listen
to the promptings of your Spirit.
Gracious God, forgive us.
Help us to live your Word.

If we have not lived
the message we have voiced.

Gracious God, forgive us.
Help us to live your Word.

Silence

May the living God
forgive and renew us,
give us victory over sin
and set us free in Christ.

Amen.

Or

Gracious God
with gratitude and gladness
we hear your promise of liberation:
that in Christ
we are forgiven and set free,
and restored to serve you.
Thanks be to you, Living God!
Amen.

6. This collect, which may be preceded or followed by the collect of the day:

Loving God,
as we rejoice in the ministry of preaching,
let the Gospel of your Son come to us,
not in words alone, but in power and love;
that through our life and witness
the world may believe;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

7. One of the following or the Old Testament reading for the day:

Isaiah 49: 1-5
Jeremiah 1: 1-10
Joel 3: 28b-29
Micah 6: 6-8

One of the following or the Epistle for the day:

1 Corinthians 1: 17-31
2 Corinthians 5: 14-20
Ephesians 4: 7-8, 11-16
Jude 20-25

8. A reading from the Gospel according to...

Hear the Gospel of Christ.
Glory to Christ our Saviour.

One of the following or the Gospel for the day:

Matthew 4: 18-22
Mark 3: 13-19, 31-35
Luke 10: 1-7, 17-20
John 12: 20-26

This is the Gospel of Christ.
Praise to Christ our Lord.

9. Sermon or reflection

10. Hymn

11. There may be testimony from a Local Preacher, or an opportunity to share together experiences of having been encouraged during the ministry of leading worship and preaching.

ACT OF RECOLLECTION

12. The Superintendent Minister addresses the accredited Local Preachers, who are invited to stand:

Sisters and brothers, at the services in which you were admitted as Local Preachers you undertook solemn responsibilities. I invite you now to remember and reaffirm that undertaking.

Do you continue to believe yourself called by God to the office and ministry of a Local Preacher?

Answer: I do so believe.

Will you continue to be faithful in prayer, in the reading and study of the Scriptures, and will you continue to preach nothing contrary to the doctrines of the Methodist Church?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

Will you continue to accept our discipline and work together with your sisters and brothers in the Church?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

Will you continue to make yourself available to lead worship, attend the Local Preachers' Meeting and be committed to ongoing learning and development?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

The Superintendent Minister addresses all those present:

Will you continue to follow the way of Christ, and in all things seek to promote, not your own glory, but the glory of the Lord?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

May the God of all grace continue to uphold you in the service to which you are called.

Amen

13. These or other prayers of intercession:

In faith we pray to God,
who is more ready to hear than we are to ask.

We pray for the people of God
and for the churches we serve.
Rejoicing in our richness and variety,
may we build each other up in love
and be constantly renewed for mission and service.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for the Local Preachers of this Circuit,
[Here the list of Local Preachers may be read, possibly by the Secretary of the meeting.]
Inspired by the Spirit,
may all who preach and lead worship be bold in proclaiming your truth
and faithful in living out their calling.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for those who are exploring a vocation
to lead worship and to preach ...

[Here the names of Local Preachers on Note and On Trial may be read.]

Guided by the Spirit,
may they respond with confidence and faith.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for the sick, the sorrowful and those in particular need ...
Knowing God's healing presence and peace
may they find life in all its fullness.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We remember before God those Local Preachers who have faithfully lived
and who have died in Christian hope, especially ...

*[Here the names of those Local Preachers who have died in the last year may be read,
possibly by the Secretary of the Meeting.]*

Strengthened by their faithful example,
may we follow the way of Christ
and live to God's praise and glory.

Amen.

14. The Lord's Prayer

EITHER

We say together the prayer that Jesus gave
us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who
sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

OR

As our Saviour taught his disciples, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against
us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

15. THE LORD'S SUPPER

16. The Peace

All stand

Christ came and proclaimed peace to those who were far off
and peace to those who were near.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Let us share a sign of Christ's peace with one another.

THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

17. Hymn

18. The bread and wine are brought to the table (or if already on the table are uncovered). The presiding minister takes the bread and wine and prepares them for use.

THE THANKSGIVING

19. All stand. The presiding minister leads the great prayer of thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Expressive God
in the beginning you spoke
and the world came to be;
your life-giving Word
giving birth to all that is –
taking root in our hearts,
etching humanity
with your beauty.

**God we praise you
for your living Word.**

When the time was right
Your Word became flesh
and lived among us,
revealing your face;
making love real
in acts of compassion;
articulating grace
in story and conversation,
setting people free.

**God we praise you
for your liberating Word.**

Still we celebrate that the Spirit
fulfils your promise
and speaks your truth,
loosening tongues
and lifting hearts
to sing your praise.

**God we praise you
for your life-giving Word.**

With your people
in every time and place
we proclaim the eternal hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

On the night before he died,
gathered around a table
in the shadow of the cross,
Jesus had supper with his disciples.
He took bread, gave thanks, broke it,
and gave it to them, saying,
'Take this and eat it.
This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup of wine,
gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,
'Drink from it all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant,
shed for you and for all people
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

Living God, pour out your Holy Spirit,
that these gifts of bread and wine
may be for us the body and blood of Christ.
As we offer ourselves to love and serve you,
strengthen us with your Spirit;
may your Word grow within us,
and the message of your love be proclaimed throughout the world.

**Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory is yours, God most holy,
now and for ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

20. The presiding minister breaks the bread in the sight of the people in silence, or saying:

The bread we break
is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup of blessing for which we give thanks
is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

**Jesus is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.**

Come for all things are now ready.

21. Silence, all seated or kneeling

THE SHARING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

22. The presiding minister, those assisting with the distribution, and the people receive, according to local custom.

23. Words such as the following are said during the distribution:

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**
The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

24. The elements that remain are covered with a white cloth.

PRAYERS AND DISMISSAL

25. Silence

26. Let us pray.

Generous God, you have nourished us with the bread of your presence.
Take us, bless us and send us,
that our lips be touched
with the gentleness of your peace ;
that our hearts burn
with your passion and integrity;
that our lives declare
the good news of your love
for the whole creation,
in the name of Christ,
Amen.

27. Hymn

28. The presiding minister says:

Faithful God
whose Word does not return empty
but accomplishes all that you purpose,
may your blessings
fall like rain to water the earth,
nourishing seed for our food,
and filling us with the abundance of your love,
through Jesus Christ your living Word. **Amen.**

As we feast on your Word of Life
may the blessing of God,
ever three and ever one,
be upon *you/us*, now and always. **Amen.**

29. The presiding minister says:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.