

News

Welcome to our autumn newsletter.

It can be a busy time of year. This year is no exception for Gabriella and me in the Local Preachers' office, as part of Ministries: Vocations & Worship, and our colleagues in the Learning Network. We have received a record 119 portfolios for moderation on the Worship: Leading & Preaching course, that's a 43% increase on the total in spring. This is in addition to the 66 Faith & Worship submissions that the Connexional Assessors received. Statistics don't prove anything, but they do show that God is still calling worship leaders and preachers from amongst us, and that there is a continuing appetite for learning in the church. We celebrate that! Thanks to all who serve faithfully as mentors, tutors, assessors, moderators and encouragers for those who seek to follow their call.



Continuing Development

As local preachers and worship leaders, we are called to be lifelong learners. However, it can be tricky thinking how to fill the "CLPD" slot in the Local Preachers' (and Worship Leaders') Meeting. We are collecting ideas and resources to help, and you will find them on the [Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' page](#) on the Methodist website. The first session plan, **Sharing our Story**, fits well with the current Year of Testimony - more will follow.

Ideas & Resources



Have you, your church or circuit set a date for your Advent Offering service yet? Are you preaching during Advent?

Well, if you're looking for inspiration for your service, the Mission in Britain Fund's 2019 Advent Offering is themed around "Homelessness & Hospitality". The resources are centred on first-hand stories from people with experience of homelessness being helped by the Bristol Methodist Centre.

The downloadable materials will include:

- a Candle Liturgy
- suggested Bible passages, prayers and hymns
- a video, PowerPoint, all-age discussion points and a role play to add an interactive element to your service.

Sign up now [here](#) to receive an email when your free Advent resources are ready to download. Advent starts on **Sunday, 1 December** this year.



Training Day Idea

A new resource for local preacher training days is now available through All We can.

Why not invite Tim Baker or Matt Forsyth from All We Can, who would be happy to lead a interactive session with your group on how social justice is a key part of

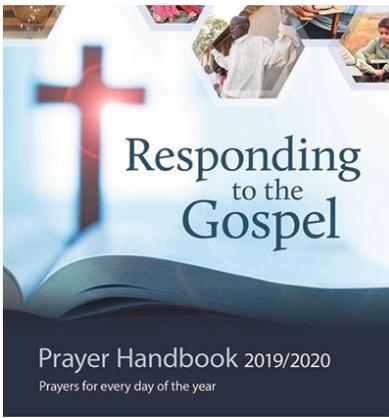
'our calling'.

For more info please contact info@allwecan.org.uk or call +44 (0)20 7467 5132.

New Resources for Local Arrangements

We are delighted to recommend a new series of resources for "Local Arrangement" services, written by Christine Odell. These cover a variety of topics, including a series on "Our Calling". They are free to download from the Methodist website [here](#).





Would you like to contribute to the next Methodist Prayer Handbook?

The theme for the 2020/2021 Prayer Handbook is 'the earth is the LORD'S' (Psalm 24:1). The television series Blue Planet II highlighted the way human activities are having a major effect on the life systems of our world. Climate change, species extinction, polar ice loss, sea-level rise, land and air pollution and

waste disposal are all traced back to aspects of our choices.

Tragically, those most affected are the poor who have contributed least to the problem.

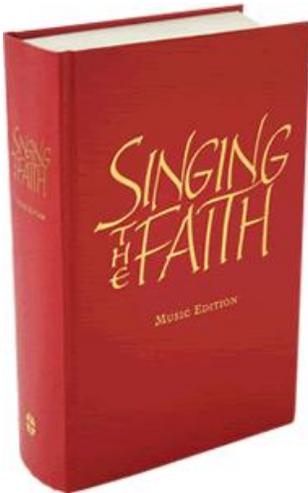
We invite prayers of thanksgiving, penitence, intercession and resolve that, with God's help, we may take responsibility for our actions and, as stewards of God's gift to us, participate in the healing of creation.

Please email your contributions by 13 January 2020 to:

prayerhandbook@methodistchurch.org.uk

Before sending contributions, please read the [submission guidelines](#).

We regret that due to the volume of prayers received not all submissions will be published.



Singing the Faith (StF)

We are pleased to announce that the Singing the Faith Plus website will be upgraded from 1st December 2019! You can access the website by clicking [here](#).

This site is a valuable source of ideas for worship, including suggestions for music based around the readings and themes for the week, and many new hymns and songs unavailable anywhere else.



Subscribe to Andy Fishburne on Youtube !

Andy Fishburne shares wonderful blogs on the lectionary Bible Passages. Subscribe to his [youtube](#) page!





Called to Ordained Ministry?

Is God calling you to be ordained?

Or maybe to another form of ministry?

These helpful postcards unpack the conversation and offers contemplation for all forms of calling. They are also perfect for giving away to anyone you know who might be called to ministry. Available from Methodist Publishing [here](#).

Events

Exploring Ordained Ministry

Do you feel Called to Ordained Ministry? Do you know someone who you think is Called? Has someone told you that you should explore a Call to Ministry?

If so, come along to one of our Exploration Days held at Methodist Church House, London. Attending one of these days does not oblige you to candidate for Ministry so do not feel any pressure. Simply come along and meet others who are wondering whether to test out this Call. Meet members of the Connexional Team who look after the Candidating process and are happy to answer any questions you might have about the process. The event is free but booking is required.

Join us on:

Saturday 29 February 2020 - Methodist Church House, London - [Book here](#)

Saturday 7 March 2020

Renewal and Rebellion
Faith, Economy and Climate



The Riverside Centre, Riverside Court, Derby DE24 8HY

Ticket sales for the [2020 Joint Public Issues Team \(JPIT\) conference](#) are now open.

A chance to look at the big challenges we all face – rethinking economic structures and taking radical steps towards climate justice, and how we can all act – in faith, for people and for planet.

Plenty of food for thought for preachers and all who care about the connection between faith and action.

The CHURCH TIMES
**Festival of
Faith & Literature**
A literary festival with a theological slant

This fascinating event will take place at Bloxham School, Oxfordshire. Contributors include acclaimed novelist and biographer A.N. Wilson, TV historian Suzannah Lipscomb, award-winning broadcaster Cole Moreton, and best-selling novelists Rhidian Brook, Jo Baker, Salley Vickers and Catherine Fox. For more information and bookings, visit the website [here](#).

Worship: Leading & Preaching

Worship:
leading &
preaching 



**A Date to Remember -
31 March 2020**

This is the next closing date for moderation of portfolios. Well before then, you should upload your portfolio to Moodle and provide a copy to your tutor. Your tutor needs to download and complete the Portfolio Assessment Form (from the Methodist website [here](#)), and send it to the Regional Moderator, with a copy to the Local Preachers' Office.

Portfolios can be uploaded on the Moodle site any time from the end of November. Please give your tutor plenty of time to complete their assessment. Note that the deadline is final, and any portfolios received later than 31 March will be deferred to the next moderation period.

Spring School, Summer School and more...

The Spring and Summer Schools at Cliff College are becoming an important part of the provision of training for new Worship Leaders and Local Preachers, particularly

where circuits struggle to provide opportunities for group learning. Some 70 people participated in the two schools last year.

Next year, Spring School will take place at Cliff College from 23rd – 27th March, and Summer School takes place 3rd – 7th August. We will be offering all modules at both events. Download the flyer [here](#). We want to encourage circuits and districts to financially support people to attend as a way of affirming and supporting their developing ministry.

Just recently, we embarked on another new adventure. We spent an intensive weekend with eleven potential local preachers at the start of our new "Worship: Leading & Preaching in a Year" programme. It will be a challenging and intensive year, but we're all excited and raring to go...



Worship: Leading & Preaching on Facebook

Don't forget to like our [Facebook](#) page.

Faith & Worship



Reminders for Faith & Worship Students

The remaining deadlines for submitting portfolios are:

31 March 2020

30 September 2020

31 March 2021

Note that these deadlines are final, and submissions received after the dates will be deferred to the next assessment period.

31 March 2021 is the final submission date for Faith & Worship.

Exegesis 2020

The Exegesis passages for 2020 can be found by clicking [here](#).

A Note to Faith & Worship Tutors

For those tutors who have students completing Unit 15:

Please ensure your students select their Bible reading from that Unit (ie from pages 1-13) and that the sermon is informed by the exegesis of the chosen passage. The whole assignment must be on The Kingdom of God. It might be better to read Part 2 of the Assignment as you are invited to lead worship on the theme ' The Kingdom of God' - Choose a Bible passage on the Kingdom of God from this unit to be read in the service and to be used in the sermon.....

Footnote



Recent Sunday readings have included a series from 2 Timothy. Even if the words weren't written by Paul, the author of this letter certainly gets under Paul's skin. They convey the joy and the angst, the passion and the fragility of a man who has spent himself for Jesus Christ, and is determined that the gospel must continue to be proclaimed. This is a letter for preachers!

The passage that captivated me, as I prepared to preach, was this: *Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David—that is my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. **But the word of God is not chained.*** (2 Tim 2:8-9, NRSV).

The contrast is striking, between Paul, chained in a dank, disgusting cell, and the gospel ranging free. Most of us don't have to suffer persecution or hardship as followers of Jesus, yet sometimes we become disillusioned by how things are in the world, and even in the church. We feel constrained and hampered in our task. Yet the word of God is not chained, its power to transform all of us, and to transform the world around us is unlimited. Jesus Christ is alive: a truth that is as powerful as ever. At times when we might be tempted to lose confidence in the Word and in our calling to proclaim it, Paul's words are there to encourage us, to urge us on in confidence.

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