

## Update on A Methodist Way of Life (MWoL)

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<b>Resolutions</b>	78/1. The Council receives the report. 78/2. The Council commends the <i>A Methodist Way of Life</i> material for use across the Connexion. 78/3. The Council approves the timeline offered in appendix 2.

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aims</b>	An update on the proposed resources and development timeline for a MWoL, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
<b>Main points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Prior plans</li> <li>• The impact of COVID-19</li> <li>• A way forward – ‘phasing in’ a MWoL</li> </ul>
<b>Background context and relevant documents</b>	MC/20/38 – <i>God For All: The Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth</i>

### Introduction

1. *A Methodist Way of Life* (MWoL) is currently under development. A MWoL will be a major resource for developing pathways for growth in discipleship.
2. A MWoL will offer a means for Methodists and others to respond to God’s love in Jesus Christ through a patterned way of life. It revives a traditional Methodist way of being and becoming disciples, and re-presents it for contemporary discipleship. The commitments of a MWoL are based on the four aspects of *Our Calling* and provide a means to make it a lived reality. Accompanying questions will encourage and challenge participants as they follow this “way” together.
3. This report aims to update the Council on progress in developing a MWoL, especially in light of the effect of the present crisis (COVID-19) on churches’ operations.

### Prior plans

4. Originally, it had been planned that a MWoL would launch in September 2020, with three printed resources being sent out to Circuits with membership tickets at that time. The resources planned for distribution at that time were MWoL commitment cards, A6 explanatory and promotional booklets and ‘Finding the Way’ booklets.

### The impact of COVID-19

5. The current crisis has had a number of effects on plans for a MWoL:
  - a. Methodists are currently unable to congregate in churches, which would have been the primary venue for promoting a MWoL, engaging people with it, and distributing printed resources.
  - b. Personal daily discipleship practices have become of even greater importance, since Methodists are currently unable to congregate for worship, prayer, study or mission.

## **A way forward – ‘phasing in’ a MWoL**

6. It is proposed that a MWoL is not launched in September 2020, but is ‘phased in’, beginning immediately. This would meet the immediate demand (vocalised by District Chairs, Learning Network staff and others) for daily discipleship resources. The ‘phasing in’ would also begin online, rather than in print.
7. It is proposed that the planned printed resources named in point 4 are made available online on the ‘a MWoL’ webpage on the Methodist website in pdf format, and released gradually over the next 3 months. The commitment card is already available.
8. The resources named in point 4 will also be printed and stored by Methodist Publishing in order to distribute strategically as lockdown lifts.
9. There is a number of other resources now being planned, which aim to complement the written resources and address our current situation (eg some short videos on a MWoL from Roger Walton, a webinar on using a MWoL during lockdown, and more). These will be released on the website or distributed by other means as and when they are available.
10. For a full list of planned resources, see appendix 1.
11. For a full timeline of planned activities relating to a MWoL, see appendix 2.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**78/1. The Council receives the report.**

**78/2. The Council commends the *A Methodist Way of Life* material for use across the Connexion.**

**78/3. The Council approves the timeline offered in appendix 2.**

### **Appendix 1 – Planned a MWoL resources**

- A MWoL ‘commitment card’ with the twelve commitments on one side and questions to support the way of life on the other. An English-language version of this has already been produced and can be found here: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/16918/mwol-commitment-card-220420.pdf> Translations of this resource into the other languages used in the Methodist Church in Britain are currently being worked on and will be uploaded to the ‘a MWoL’ webpage in the course of May and June, with Welsh as a priority.
- An A6 explanatory and promotional booklet (available in English and Welsh).
- An A5 ‘Finding the Way’ booklet with information and exercises to support a MWoL (available in English and Welsh).
- A Conversations Cards resource (not available until 2021).
- Three short introductory videos by Roger Walton on the ‘a MWoL’ webpage (the videos are currently being prepared for the online Cliff Festival).
- Advent study materials based on ‘Finding the Way’ booklet to be available to churches as PDFs, as well as other resources for Covenant services.
- Graham Thompson has agreed to lead a group which will write a twelve session preaching series based on the MWoL commitments. The preaching series would complement the desire of the Ministries: Vocations and Worship team for material on a MWoL to be provided for Continuing Local Preacher Development purposes.
- Alison Ball will be working with Roger Walton to produce and present a webinar on a MWoL in a time of lockdown. The webinar will be open to any who are interested in a missional and

discipleship response in the present crisis. Alison sees this as having particular relevance to issues of Methodist identity for people whose identity has been very much tied up with their attendance and other activities in church buildings.

- When the new Methodist app is developed the plan is to include a MWOl element as an important component.

## **Appendix 2 – timeline of planned activities relating to a MWOl**

- **April-May 2020:** A MWOl commitment card to go online. Translations of the card to go on the website as they become available. Fellowship Groups to be informed of this, for those who are eager to engage.
- **May 2020:** Roger Walton and Tony Moodie to consult with Faith & Order committee and Engagement Team about production of Advent and Covenant resources.
- **May 2020:** Planning/writing group for a MWOl preaching series commences work and continues May-October.
- **May/June 2020:** Roger Walton and Tony Moodie to provide information about Advent/Covenant service plans to Superintendents and others for preaching plans.
- **June 2020:** Upload PDFs of MWOl A6 promotional booklet to website.
- **June 2020:** Print copies of MWOl commitment cards and A6 promotional booklets. (Print these in equal quantities as the membership tickets).
- **August 2020:** Upload PDFs of MWOl A5 'Finding the Way' booklet to website. Print 30,000 copies of the 'Finding the Way' booklet – enough for Local Preachers, Worship Leaders, 10-30 copies per circuit and for small group leaders and others who might wish to have them.
- **August 2020:** Copies MWOl card and A6 promotional booklet to be available for distribution together with membership tickets – whenever this happens.
- **October 2020:** Work commences on further MWOl resources (conversation cards) – work continues through to January.
- **Late October 2020:** Preaching series drafts to Faith & Order Committee for scrutiny.
- **November 2020:** Advent resources based on the 'Finding the Way' booklet to be available to churches as PDFs, as well as other resources for Covenant services in January.
- **January 2021:** Churches/Circuits/Districts who have expressed interest are encouraged to engage with a MWOl in conjunction with Covenant services (early Jan). PDFs with suggestions for using MWOl commitment cards and children's activities, possibly with short supporting videos, to be available to churches.
- **January – February 2021:** Preaching Series goes to editorial and design.
- **Late February 2021:** PDFs of Preaching Series uploaded to a MWOl webpage.
- **February – March 2021:** Conversation cards resource drafts go to Faith & Order for review.
- **Late March – April 2021:** Conversation cards resource drafts go for editorial and design
- **May 2021:** Conversation cards go to print.