

# Global Relationships

## Worship Resource

The following outline order of worship can be adapted for the local congregation as appropriate. Suggestions are made for hymns which provide variety from the World Church, as well as reflecting the spoken words.

Some prayers are given, but please use also the prayers at the beginning of the *Methodist Prayer Handbook 2025/2026* (pages 4-6) and the specific prayers for the day of the month on which worship is taking place. The QR codes on these pages link to webpages, which may provide up-to-date requests for prayer, as well as current news stories.

Particularly if used as a Local Arrangement service, a number of people could be involved in reading different parts of the script.

Two reflections are provided, written by the President and Vice-President of the Conference, inspired by their visits to World Church Partners. PowerPoint has been created to display images, and the slide numbers are given in square brackets, ie [Slide 8]. Slides 7 and 19 should be displayed at the introduction of the World Church Story sections. The PowerPoint can be downloaded from [methodist.org.uk/GlobalRelationshipsResources](https://methodist.org.uk/GlobalRelationshipsResources)

### Call to Worship

“Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.  
Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.”  
(Psalm 100:1-2)

We come together to worship God, remembering that we are part of the World Church, knowing that our story is part of a greater story, and recognising that as we lift our songs of praise we do so as part of a chorus of never-ending praise. Let us worship God.

### Suggested Hymn

*Singing the Faith 4*                      *Father in heaven*  
Or  
*Singing the Faith 335*                  *Rejoice, the Lord is king*

## Prayers

Loving God, we present to you a new song of gratitude and adoration for your everlasting love and salvation. We, along with all of your creation, honour you and your wondrous deeds and unwavering faithfulness. Our lives overflow with joy and hope as we declare your salvation and exalt your Holy Name, Lord.

May we spread the word of your greatness and majesty, proclaiming your glory across the nations, showcasing your remarkable works and beautiful acts among all people.

Lord, please help us to live each day with a spirit of gratitude, recognising your hand in every blessing and trusting you in every moment. May our lives be a testament to your grace, and may our actions reflect the joy and peace that you have given us. In your name, we pray. Amen.

*(Lafolafoga Tagatanuu, Methodist Church in Samoa)*

Father God, we seek for our stories of faith to honour your name and so we draw near to you now praying, **Father forgive.**

For the times in our lives when our words have not uttered kindness, **Father forgive.**

For the times in our lives when we have not penned a story of forgiveness, **Father forgive.**

For the times in our lives when we have failed to listen to the stories of our neighbours, wherever they may be in the world, **Father forgive.**

For the times in our lives when we have failed to show a compassionate response to the stories of others, **Father forgive.**

For the times in our lives when we have judged others without trying to understand their stories, **Father forgive.**

May we be guided by your Holy Spirit and rest in the knowledge that as we confess the sins of our hearts to you now, we find full forgiveness.

*Congregation to pray individually in the silence.*

As we bring these personal confessions to you this morning, we pray for your guidance so that each of our stories of faith may glorify your name. **Amen.**

## Gospel

Matthew 13:44-53

## Response to the Gospel

*Singing the Faith* 753      Glory to God

### Children's Worship Activity: Treasure Hunt

Find the treasure to make the story. Full resource can be found at [methodist.org.uk/GlobalRelationshipsResources](https://methodist.org.uk/GlobalRelationshipsResources)

**Resources:** Images reflecting the life of Jesus. Use one of the sets of images provided, source some of your own or use a combination of the two.

**Pre-worship preparation:** Hide your chosen images around the church or building where you meet. You could roll and tie each image up beforehand. If you have an online congregation, you could display the activity sheet found in 'Children's Treasure Hunt Resources' or send it out electronically.

**Delivery:** Gather the children to the front and explain that there are seven pieces of 'treasure' hidden around the church or hall. Their job is to find them, bring them to the front and put the pieces into the correct order to tell a story (the story of Jesus' life).

**Summary:** Jesus has a remarkable story which unites Christians all around the world. Though we often hear parts of his story at Christmas and Easter, whatever the time of year, it is good to reflect on how the life of Jesus impacts our stories today both here in the UK and around the world.

**Optional reflection question for wider congregation:** Where do you see Jesus' life story impacting yours today?

**Prayer:**

*(This could be read by a child from the congregation.)*

Dear Lord,

We thank you for the life and ministry of Jesus which brings all Christians together no matter where they live in the world.

May Christians everywhere continue to be inspired by the life story of Jesus so that their lives might reflect his ways and teachings.

Amen.

## World Church Story – A Visit to Hong Kong

### *Reflection by Matt Forsyth, Vice-President of the Conference*

**[Slide 8]** Stories and songs shape who we are. If you look closely at the places and spaces around you, the stories of the past are evident. The same can be said for Hong Kong. **[Slide 9]** A closer look at the International Methodist Church reveals the bricks from the old missionary hall. Look even closer, and you notice that the building lacks a front door. **[Slide 10]** Why? So that the building can be an open, welcoming space for all.

Each of the stories and songs reminds us of where we have come from and inspires us toward where we are going. This year, the Methodist Church in Britain calls us to reflect on Our Story, Our Song, while the Hong Kong Methodist Church, for its 50th anniversary, invites us to Follow Our Roots of Faith and Co-Create New Chapters. These themes are deeply connected (it feels like this is more Holy Spirit inspired than human) – our faith journey is a story still unfolding, a song still being sung.

Psalm 96 begins with the words: “Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.” This call is both a celebration of God’s faithfulness in our past and an invitation to participate in the new things we are to be expectant for.

As we remember our roots, we recognise the story that shapes us. **[Slide 11]** Every faith community stands on the shoulders of those who came before. The history of the Methodist Church, from the Wesley’s movement to the growth of Methodist churches in Hong Kong and beyond, is a testimony of God’s enduring faithfulness.

Psalm 96 reminds us: “Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples” (v3). Just as past generations proclaimed God’s glory through mission and service, we are called to honour their legacy – not by standing still but by living out the gospel in our time. **[Slide 12]** This was true of North Point Methodist Church, which has remodelled and rebuilt its church building four times. Each time, it has done so because of the faithfulness of those who have come before it.

**[Slide 13]** Singing a new song is evidence that we are growing and adapting in faith. What is true for a British context is true for our siblings in Hong Kong. Faith is not static; it grows as we encounter new challenges and opportunities.

There are many challenges in Hong Kong, but they may be more similar to our British context than you might think. The challenge of an ageing membership, the decline in youth attendance and the shifting culture of the

Church all feel like similar issues to many of us. Nevertheless, Psalm 96 does not tell us to repeat an old song but to sing a new one. This does not mean forgetting our past, but rather allowing our roots to nourish fresh expressions of faith.

In Hong Kong, the Methodist Church has grown by adapting to new realities – whether through social ministries, outreach, or supporting communities in changing times. Our story continues as we discern how to co-create new chapters with God, responding to today’s needs with faithfulness and creativity.

**[Slide 14]** One example is the Well midweek coffee outreach run by the Hong Kong Methodist International Church. By offering training to adults of all abilities, this inclusive space offers a chance to connect to an adapting context and help share the good news of the gospel.

In the Church we learn and grow together. Psalm 96 is communal – it calls upon all the earth to sing. Faith is not a solo journey but a shared experience. “Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it” (v11).

**[Slide 15]** We are part of a larger body across different Methodist communities, whether in the UK, Hong Kong, or elsewhere. By sharing our experiences, learning from one another, and supporting each other, we embody what it means to be the Church. Leaning into this shared global partnership is an opportunity not to be missed, as we write the next chapter of our story together.

**[Slide 16]** We are reminded that God is still at work as we reflect on Our Story, Our Song. Our roots in faith give us strength, but they also empower us to co-create – to step forward in courage, trusting that God is leading us into a new season. Psalm 96 closes with a vision of God’s reign: “For He comes, He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His truth” (v13).

This is our hope: God’s story is not finished, and we are invited to be part of it. May we sing our song boldly, embrace our roots, and step forward in faith together. Amen.

## Suggested Hymn

*Singing the Faith* 548      Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine  
Or  
*Singing the Faith* 323      I will sing the wondrous story

## Optional Questions for Reflection/Sharing

*(If discussion questions are included, consider whether time is given for the congregation to consider them, or whether they are used by the minister or local preacher as the basis for reflections.)*

- How is 'your story' reflected in 'your song'?
- What is a favourite hymn of yours, and how is the fact that you like it connected to the story of your own experiences?

## Old Testament Reading

1 Chronicles 12:22-23, 32, 38-40

## World Church Story – A Visit to Zambia

*Reflection by The Revd Richard Andrew, President of the Conference*

“...of Issachar, those who had understanding of the times,  
to know what Israel ought to do...”

(1 Chronicles 12:32) *[Slide 20]*

*[Slide 21]* We make sense of our lives by the stories we choose to tell about ourselves. Part of the success of TV programmes like Who do you think you are? lies in the reminder that the past holds up a mirror to our lives, helping us find orientation and direction as we step into the future.

Stories make meaning and the stories and names we venerate from the past tell us something about what we value in the present. The choice of text may seem unusual, perhaps even a little obscure. However, it is the text which lies behind the current mission priority of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) – ‘understanding the times and what to do’. *[Slide 22]*

Earlier this year, the Revd Richard Andrew travelled with his wife and Andrew Ashdown, Partnership Co-ordinator for Africa, to take part in the 60th anniversary celebrations of the UCZ which was formed on 16 January 1965, a month or so after Zambia announced its independence from Britain. The anniversary service took place on the Mindolo campus, near Kitwe in the Copperbelt region, close to the church in which the original unification agreement was signed, which brought together a number of historic denominational and missionary society strands, including the Methodist Church. The theme of the anniversary service was ‘Changing the Narrative’, drawing upon the rich story of the UCZ both before and after unification, and rooted in its mission priority, ‘understanding the times and what to do.’

The 'chronicles' in Scripture are one example of the way in which the Bible attempts to locate Israel's present experience within a wider story horizon, directing the history of the nation to a particular future, (in this case probably the Temple and its worship), which is held to be central to its identity.

In chapter 12, the Chronicler, largely indirectly, recounts the story of David, from his struggles with Saul through to the beginnings of his kingship, by naming those who were with him or joined him at various points in his journey. It is a rich but ambiguous history. The text presents to us people who are companions to David from the very beginning and others who realign themselves as power shifts from one king to another – it was ever thus.

Within this, those who join from the tribe of Issachar are prized above all for their wisdom in discerning the times and how Israel ought to respond. The chapter ends with three days of great feasting which some commentators see as one of the images picked up later in the idea of the messianic banquet.

Reading the text together whilst experiencing the story and example of the UCZ – as limited as it was – highlighted three things to Richard.

**[Slide 23]** The first thing was the question of how to live with a complex history. At the end of a long week, the team had an early start and a gruelling journey over pothole-laden dirt roads to the UCZ church in Mwandi, a rural area in the south of Zambia, nestled by the Zambesi River, close to the Namibian border. Fatigue soon turned to joy, even rapture, as they processed into the church accompanied by the singing and dancing of five choirs. It was like the sound of angels, as close as it is possible to come in this life to the sound of the heavenly choir. The choirs sang songs of hope and expectation, of trust in God's providence, and of longed for redemption.

It turns out that Mwandi was the place where David Livingstone first stepped onto Zambian land having crossed the river from Namibia before canoeing further down the river to 'discover' the Victoria Falls. The word 'discover' illuminates the ambiguity of our national and religious history. The presence of Christian faith in Zambia is something that is greatly treasured yet we cannot ignore the impact of the culture of domination and oppression that brought it, echoes of which can still be seen in the continuing exploitation of Zambian mineral and rare metal wealth by other nations. How do we deal with a complex and ambiguous history? Of course, the first thing we do is bring it into the light so that the truth can be told. No one is served by not facing the truth.

**[Slide 24]** We also celebrate those bits of history that tell a better story, as the UCZ did in its 60th anniversary service as it honoured its saints in the liturgy, welcoming their contributions alongside a “...steadfast commitment to a future rooted in grace and love.” We can choose how and what we celebrate, what we will chronicle and allow to shape our future story. More than this though, a complex history is contextualised and redeemed by having better songs to sing – songs which remind us of redemption, hope and a future of grace and love for which we long.

The second thing that was highlighted was the interplay of local and national. The UCZ is the largest Protestant Church in Zambia with some three million members. That puts the Methodist Church in Britain into perspective! Because of its size and presence, the UCZ exercises a ministry and mission that is both local and national, witnessed in the presence of government ministers at the 60th anniversary celebrations and the recording of much of the service for television.

Yet the UCZ, alongside its national profile, has made a conscious decision to ‘understand the times’ by identifying the local as the primary context for its outreach. It has significantly decentralised its resources. **[Slide 25]** This manifests itself in myriad ways from buying motorbikes for a community to enable local outreach, to projects aimed at supporting those with disabilities, projects aimed at overcoming environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change, and to medical care in marginalised communities and practical education to support those working in agriculture.

1 Chronicles 12 tells the story of a pivotal moment in the formation of a nation. The example of the UCZ speaks to us of the significance of the Church in witnessing to the gospel by contributing to the common good both locally and nationally in acts of love, compassion and service.

And finally, the feasting and celebration! 1 Chronicles 12 ends with the story of a feast. We are to imagine from the text that this was a sumptuous feast in which warring tribes had been brought together in celebration and an experience of communal hospitality. We have parallels to some parts of this, of course, in our own experiences of jubilee celebrations. But our experience of life in Christ points us to something more. **[Slide 26]**

On Richard’s final day in Zambia, he was invited by the Synod Bishop, Bishop Festus Chulu, to meet with his team at the UCZ headquarters in Lusaka. In the afternoon, Bishop Chulu invited the team to share in a traditional Zambian banquet. It was a conscious reminder not just of the hospitality that had been received in so many places in Zambia but also that together we are part of a much larger story, one in which in Christ we are no longer strangers but one people.

In many of the meetings and experience of worship, a refrain, followed by three claps, would begin, 'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, you are welcome here.' They were indeed.

## Suggested Hymn

*Singing the Faith* 409      Let us build a house where love can dwell

Or

*Singing the Faith* 681      Community of Christ

## Prayers of Intercession

We come now to our prayers of intercession. After each bidding there will be a short time of silence and:

- (Either) then we will sing *Singing the Faith* 750: Kyrie eleison (Ukrainian Russian Orthodox traditional chant)
- (Or) then in response to the words, "Lord, have mercy" please respond with, "Lord, have mercy."

Loving God, Lord of our stories and our songs, individual, local, national and international, we give thanks for the Body of Christ which is your Church, and bring before you the many places and situations that are on our hearts and minds now that are in need of your touch today. (*Silence, hymn or response*)

We give thanks for all those who will tell your story with confidence today, all those who preach your word from the pulpit and who tell their friends and neighbours of your love. We bring before you people whose voices are not heard, people who are marginalised, and people who are not free to sing your praises because of oppression and persecution, people for whom witnessing to you is an act of great courage. (*Silence, hymn or response*)

We give thanks for all who sing with joy today, but recognise that for many the song is one of lament, of fear, of pain, of discouragement. We pray for anyone experiencing poverty, natural disaster, war – the situations making the news headlines now, and the situations that have dropped out of the world's attention, but known to you. (*Silence, hymn or response*)

We give thanks for the World Church of which we are one small part, and we pray especially today for (please refer to the appropriate Day in the Prayer Handbook). (*Silence, hymn or response*)

We give thanks for this church, and those who have kept the faith and sung your praises here over the years. We pray for this congregation, especially the people among us who have a special need to feel your presence, and who are on our hearts and minds today. (*Silence, hymn or response*)

We pray for ourselves, giving thanks for our own stories and the assurance of your love and presence with us. We ask for your help to be grateful for our roots in the faith, and to grow, adapt and learn so that we can sing a new song as you show us the next step of faith. (*Silence, hymn or response*)

**Amen.**

## Offering for the World Mission Fund

You may wish to show the short video available at [methodist.org.uk/for-churches/global-relationships](https://methodist.org.uk/for-churches/global-relationships)

## Prayer

Lord God who gives everything to us and to all your people everywhere, we bring these tokens of our gratitude and ask you to take our gifts and ourselves for the service of your kingdom, that your Church worldwide may tell the story of your love and sing songs of praise to you. Amen.

## Suggested Hymn

*Singing the Faith* 484      We will walk with God

Or

*Singing the Faith* 410      Lord, your church on earth is seeking

## Blessing

(*Said or sung*)

*Singing the Faith* 774      The peace of the earth be with you

If you would like to request this resource in an alternative format, please contact us to discuss your needs at [publishing@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:publishing@methodistchurch.org.uk)

Published by the Methodist Church in Great Britain. Registered charity number 1132208  
© Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes 2025