



Welcome

Vocations Sunday 2024

Welcome to this special edition of the LPWL eNews, to mark Vocations Sunday. We want to encourage you to use this special Sunday to celebrate the way God calls us all to worship and serve, and to reflect on where God may be leading us next.

We all have unique gifts and talents that we bring to the Church, but sometimes it can be challenging to find our place and feel like we are truly making a difference. That's why Vocation Sunday is a great opportunity for us to come together and celebrate the special gifts that we see in each other. It's a time when we can help each other to find a role in which we can truly flourish.

Below, you'll find some ideas and information that might inspire you or those around you to think through some possibilities. If you know someone who has the skills, gifts and potential to do something new, why not use this opportunity to open a conversation with them and offer your support and encouragement? It may be just what they are waiting for!

We want you, as Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, and in all the other roles you do, to know that you are valued and appreciated. Let's use Vocations Sunday to encourage each other and praise God for the unique ways we can all contribute to the life and mission of the Church.

Bob Bartindale & Stefan Carney, Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Team



Vocations Sunday

Vocations Sunday is Sunday 5th May.

It's a great opportunity to celebrate all those who serve faithfully in the life of the Church.

If you are leading worship on that day, you may wish to use the liturgy for 2024, which you can download [here](#).

You could incorporate into the service an act of appreciation and thanksgiving for particular people in the life of the church, such as Stewards, Pastoral Visitors, Property Team etc. etc. as well as Local Preachers and Worship Leaders. The liturgy may be used on any suitable Sunday but if the church is not specifically marking Vocations Sunday, please consult with the Stewards, Minister and/or Worship Consultation first so that they know what you are planning to do. It would be appropriate to advertise in advance so that those who are to be recognised know in advance.

Could you do this?

In your church, there are people who could contribute to leading worship. They have gifts and talents to share, but may not even know the opportunities that exist. Here are three ways you could help people to find a new way of expressing their faith:

1. Invite and include:

Local Arrangements are a fantastic opportunity to get people involved. Most of us respond best to a personal invitation. Perhaps you could ask someone to read a poem that's meaningful for them, or choose a song and introduce it, or say a little about their own life and journey of faith? For some, being asked will be a real privilege and might lead them to think "I can do this!" Don't forget to catch up with them afterwards to chat through how it went. Perhaps a group of you could get together and explore worship leading together?



2. Share the love:

If you're preaching or leading worship, you don't have to do it alone. Why not ask someone to come along with you, perhaps to read the Bible, or lead a prayer, or share a reflection? This may be the start of them starting to think about becoming a **Worship Leader**, and will give them a taste of what it's like to work with a preacher in preparing and leading worship. Don't forget to have a chat with them about the possibilities.

3. Ask the question.



Most people who become Local Preachers say that there was someone who suggested the idea to them first. It often takes someone else to see the potential in all of us. If there is someone you know who you think God might be calling, speak to them. It may be that they've been waiting and praying for someone just like you to confirm their thinking.

Called to Lead Worship? and ***Called to Preach?*** booklets are available from Methodist Publishing [here](#). They provide an outline of what is involved, and might be helpful to give to anyone interested. Why not order a batch for your church or circuit?

For more information on what's involved in training as a **Worship Leader** or **Local Preacher** click on the links, speak to your minister or superintendent, or email us at [**localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk**](mailto:localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk).



Calling all Worship Leaders and Local Preachers

To help us to mark Vocations Sunday, we would like to share the stories of some of our Local Preachers and Worship Leaders. We want to share our rich variety of backgrounds and experiences, discover how we discerned our calling and responded, and about our commitment to the mission and ministry of their church and circuit through the worship we lead.

If you are, or you know of, someone who could inspire others with the story of calling and commitment to being a Local Preacher or Worship Leader, then please email Michael Ivatt in the Communications Team at [**ivattm@methodistchurch.org.uk**](mailto:ivattm@methodistchurch.org.uk). We are aiming to collect stories in written form, or as audio or video recordings to use in encouraging others to consider their calling. We would love to hear from you!

Are you feeling a nudge from God to support a particular community or group of people in their discipleship? Perhaps you want to use your gifts to care for them, or support them in caring for each other? Maybe you want to enable them to

Called to be a Local Lay-Pastor?



flourish in using their gifts to serve each other and the wider community? Local Lay-Pastors are people who are called to serve groups and churches in helping them live out their discipleship and join in the mission of God. They work in collaboration with others in ministry and provide a time-specific and context-based ministry in response to God's love.

If you want to find out more, check out the Local Lay Pastors page [here](#).



Could you be a Young People and Families Evangelist?

Nick, is a Young People and Families Evangelist in the Methodist Church and talks about how his role helps him to live out his vocation of sharing the amazing love of God:

I can't think of a better job than being a Children's worker, in what other job can you play with LEGO, dress as a Roman and wear a pair of pants on your head, all in one day, and all whilst sharing the amazing love of God. For me there is no greater privilege than to journey with a child as they explore their faith, as they discover Jesus and as they grow in their discipleship with him.

You can find out more about Children's, Youth and Family Ministry in the Methodist Church [here](#). You can also visit the #LoveThisCalling playlist on [The Well Learning Hub YouTube channel](#) to see some of the Children's Youth and Family Team talk about their vocation.

What do you think?

Has God given you a gift of creativity, a passion for evangelism or just a lot of opinions about life and church?



Whatever calling you might be exploring, if you're **aged 18-30** and interested in how the church serves you and you serve the church, **this online workshop is perfect for you**. We'll be discussing hot topics like digital discipleship and

designing Christian communities for and by Gen Z, sharing innovative ideas, and sparking engaging conversations. See you there! (And if you can't come, there's a link to a **short survey** so you can share your thoughts)

Not aged 18-30 but wishing you were? Encourage a young adult in your community to join the conversation and invite them to discuss their ideas with you afterwards.

Called to something unexpected?

From Dave James of the Bramhall & Wythenshawe circuit near Manchester:

Do you find it is difficult to discern what God is calling you to do? There are times when I have. Occasionally I have heard the call clearly and that happened to me recently.



For the past couple of years, I have been part of the group that is working towards the formation of the new North West England district. I have discovered that my skills in finance and administration are of value. What came as something of a surprise is that I am really enjoying working as part of the team that is working to achieve this. Although I am a local preacher, this has helped me realise that all my skills are useful in God's service.

Dave James

We all have unique insights, skills and abilities. Like Dave, you might be surprised at how they can be used in your church, circuit or district. If you're interested in exploring new opportunities for using your interests, talents or skills, why not speak to someone in your church or circuit and explore where it might take you? Remember that many roles are can be of fixed duration and flexible to fit around your other responsibilities.

What about being a Circuit Steward?

Are you prayerful yet practical, visionary yet mindful and supportive of others' needs? Then maybe you have a vocation to be a circuit steward. The circuit steward has a vital role in shaping and leading the work of circuits; it's sometimes



described as having a 'panoramic view' of circuit life, with a team of circuit stewards using their gifts to develop the pastoral, spiritual, missional, legal and financial work of the circuit. Could God be calling you, with your unique gifts and experiences, in this time and your place, to be a circuit steward? And might this opportunity to serve allow you to know God in a different way? In **this video**, Andy talks about the call to being a circuit steward and how much fun the role is!

If you sense the call to being a circuit steward, you can find out more **here**. It's really important to say that there are free online webinars giving training for all aspects of being a circuit steward and you would be joining a wonderful group of people across the UK who meet regularly online as part of a community of practice, to support one another and share their thoughts and ideas.

Called to Ordained Ministry?

We recently hosted two online events focused on ordained ministry, one for presbyteral and one for diaconal ministry. The response was overwhelmingly positive!

We are thrilled to announce that we will be hosting another event for those interested in presbyteral ministry on June 8th. If you are curious about exploring ordained ministry in the Methodist Church, we invite you to learn more and sign up **here**. We can't wait to meet you!

Finally, be inspired...

We hope that you have found something to inspire you in this special issue of the eNews for Local Preachers and Worship Leaders. We've looked a selection of different roles in the life of the Church, but the possibilities are endless!

Please look for the opportunities to open the conversation with those in your church and community: "What might God be calling us to do?" "Who might God be calling us to be?" Perhaps Vocations Sunday is the ideal opportunity to open our minds to the possibilities and listen to what God might be asking of us all.

Finally, it's time to hear Paula's story. Paula started training as Local Preacher in London, but then life took an unexpected turn. If we trust in the plan that God has for us, God will guide us to exactly where we need to be...



God Called Me - to Anguilla!

Here's a bit about myself. I am in my 50s, born and raised in South London to Caribbean-born parents. I am a Christian, a mum, nursery teacher, Arsenal supporter (had to get that in!) and a now in training Methodist local preacher.

This journey into local preaching began during lockdown, when I felt 'the nudge' on my heart and spoke to my superintendent minister about it. With the support of my minister, our circuit and local preachers' meeting, I started the Worship Leaders and Preachers' course, whilst beginning to lead worship on my own. At first the responsibility of leading services was daunting but as I began to grown in confidence as a new local preacher, I realised that I had to trust in God's grace and that I needed to be me. How I lead worship, my preaching style and voice, worship music choices, interactivity and exposition of scripture - will be unique to me and I shouldn't try to be a carbon-copy of other preachers or try to fit a certain mould.

Then, in November 2023, I moved with my mum to Anguilla in the Caribbean, the place of my mum's birth. A few years ago, following her diagnosis of dementia, we decided as a family that mum should move back to be near her family and as mum's main carer, I went with her.

On this small Caribbean island of 26 square miles, there are six Methodist churches, all with their own rich Wesleyan heritage and traditions. I am now having to navigate a new context as life in Anguilla is very different to the hustle and bustle of London life.

Sunday worship is very traditional in the churches here and there is still a strong commitment to the liturgical traditions of choir-sung introit; Collect, Epistle and Gospel readings, Hymns, Canticles and Psalms. Like many Methodist churches, there has been a decline in young adults, those in their 20-30s, coming to church. Having seen the success of Café church style worship services and the New Places for New People initiative in London, I am keen to get involved in creative initiatives here in the Anguilla Circuit that will help us to reach out to young adults and indeed anyone who feels that they don't fit in to a traditional church setting.

As my journey continues, I continue to train and develop as a local preacher using the WLP course and to share my expression of Christ in me. My encouragement to other local preachers, wherever God leads you, is to just be you. Led by God's Spirit, with wisdom, humility, grace and sensitivity to each congregation you serve, love out your unique identity in Christ, however that looks or sounds!

Paula O'Connor

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