



## Welcome

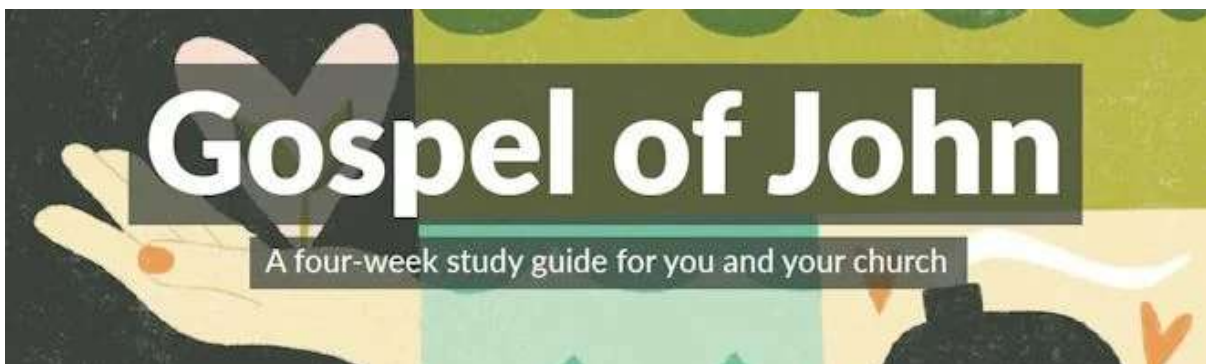
It's the season of Advent, a time of waiting and expectation, and perhaps also of mixed emotions about what the future might hold. The picture above, taken at Liverpool Pier Head last weekend, prompts me to wonder what hopes and dreams those people carry, as they go their separate ways and their shadows lengthen. Advent is a time of hope, whatever might be happening around us. As those who lead worship, we point the way to the coming Saviour, the One in whom all hope is found.

I hope this Advent season will be a time of hope for you, and that you will be encouraged by the possibilities that God has for us for this year and the next...

## Ideas & Resources



**The time has come to reveal the subject of Bible Month 2025. It's the...**



That's all we can reveal for now, except that the resource booklet will contain:

- Preacher-friendly sermon notes by David Ford, guiding your thoughts through John's rich theology.
- Small group discussion guides by Andy Fishburne to foster meaningful conversations.
- All-age interactive resources by Gail Adcock, helping to engage everyone in exploring the gospel.
- Reflections on John 20 by Charmaine Yip, offering fresh perspectives on the resurrection.

Order now at the [\*\*Bible Month website\*\*](#) and be the first to receive it in January 2025.



The training day will be online, but you may want to organise a local hub, so you can watch together in your circuit or district. More info in the New Year.



**Roots for Churches podcast**

The Roots for Churches podcast launched earlier this year to support and equip church leaders and preachers. So far, expert guests have explored 18 thought-provoking topics, such as intercultural worship, disability language and theology, how churches can support young people's mental health, and viewing the Middle East conflict through the lens of Scripture.

In the latest episode, ***Blue Christmas***, Melanie from Roots sits down with Odele Harding of Central Church Edinburgh to discuss their Blue Christmas service; together they explore sensitive engagement with bereavement, the intentional use of language, and the power of offering a supportive community for people at various stages of their grief journey.

Watch episodes on YouTube go to [youtube.com/@rootsforchurches](https://www.youtube.com/@rootsforchurches) or listen at [rootsforchurches.podbean.com](https://rootsforchurches.podbean.com).



Have you seen The Methodist Church's Christmas short film yet? It's been created to help people to Hush the Noise and join in the love song of the angels this Christmas. There's also a webpage where people can sign up for daily mindfulness moments during the 12 days of Christmas - material written for anyone, whether they are familiar with church or not: [Hush the Noise webpage](#). Feel free to share on social media and to use it wherever people gather in this Advent season.

There are also Advent resources including ideas for services from Advent through to Epiphany on the [Advent resources webpage](#).





## Best of Preach

A special edition, taking some of the best articles, interviews, book reviews and practical preaching advice from the first 10 issues of Preach.

We have only skimmed the thickest cream from the top of an archive of material found in issues Winter 2014 to Spring 2017.

Request yours via this link:

**FREE Best of Preach**

Why not consider subscribing to **Preach**?

Four quality magazines a year for £39 (print and digital) or £30 (digital only).

Reduced rates are available for those in training: put Worship: Leading & Preaching as your course and Methodist Church as the training institution.

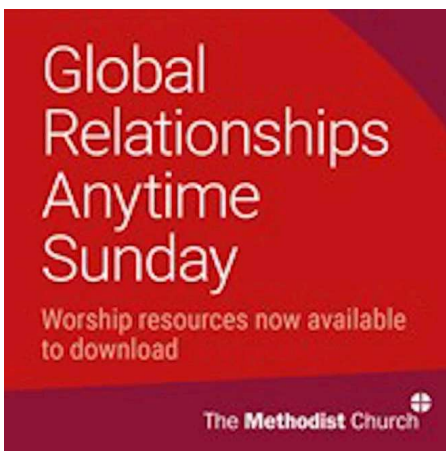


Earlier this year, when the Methodist website was relaunched, the treasury of resources which were previously in Singing the Faith Plus became part of the Resources Hub. This caused confusion to many worship leaders and preachers who use these resources regularly. Your concerns and feedback have been heard, and following a broad consultation process, the revision of both layout and features of the Methodist Resource Hub is well underway.

Changes are being made in two stages. There is now a view-by-month calendar similar to the one we had on Singing the Faith Plus, where you can easily browse by date to find hymn suggestions. Website-only hymns are now included alongside StF hymns in search results and listings

An improved search facility that returns results by 'Most relevant' rather than 'Most recent'. You can now enter the number of a hymn and it will come up at the top of the search results.

The next stage will include a new 'Daily page' accessed via the view-by-month calendar, which has the Prayer for the Day, Word in Time and other content for that day, as well as the hymn suggestions for Sundays and other special days. Here are links to the **Worship Calendar** and the **Resource Hub home page**, where you will be able to find all of the information previously found on Singing the Faith Plus. Please explore and bookmark the pages you find most useful.



## Explore Praise and Protest with the World Church

We are part of the global Methodist community. To help us connect with the worldwide Methodist family, there is a fantastic selection of worship resources available for you to download:

### **Global Relationships Resources**

Choose from multiple stories from around the world, all-age worship ideas and ready-made PowerPoints presentations. All the ideas you need to create a flexible, Anytime Sunday service which encourages us to consider how we can be a justice-seeking Church across all communities.



## New Places for New People

God is calling ordinary people everywhere to start new forms of church. Could God be calling you to shape a vision for a **New Place for New People?**

Watch **this film** to see how pioneer teams are already making this happen:

- a new Christian community in a Plymouth hair salon
- a network of small gatherings in Liverpool
- a reimagined church in a rural Devon village

Prepare to be inspired! Could you help to inspire others by sharing these good news stories in the worship you lead, as you encourage people to pray for, and become part of God's mission?

If you're a leader or pioneer and curious to learn more, join our 60-minute online conversations about starting a New Place for New People in your Circuit.

Check the **New Places for New People webpage** to find out more.

# Events



## WLP Explore Weekends are here!

Learning together as leaders of worship and preachers is vital! Since the demise of WLP Summer School at Cliff, we've been looking for a way to get people to together for learning and fellowship around the **WLP Explore** sessions.

**WLP Explore Weekends** will offer the opportunity to do the three Explore sessions for one module over a Saturday & Sunday away. The events will be quarterly, and we'll be moving around the connexion, hosted by different circuits and districts each time.

There will be **no cost** for attending each event, but attendees will need to organise their own travel and accommodation - information will be available shortly. As always, we encourage circuits and districts to support students with travel and accommodation costs.

Alongside the Explore sessions for students, there will be a programme of continuing learning for all Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, showcasing the Worship: Leading & Preaching material. We'll join in worship with the local church on the Sunday.

Our very first event will be on **Saturday/Sunday 15th/16th February 2025**, hosted by the **Colchester Circuit** in Essex. Colchester is a fascinating historic city, the venue is convenient for public transport, and there are reasonably-priced hotels nearby. We will be offering Explore sessions for **Modules 1 and 5** on this first weekend, but you can only do one module per weekend.

More details will appear soon on the **[WLP Explore page on the Methodist website](#)**, together with booking information. Please pass this information around to anyone, anywhere, who might be interested. Please contact us at [localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk) for more information.



## Seeking Good Fruit

A retreat for Local Preachers  
led by Michael and Isabel King  
2-4 May 2025

We will be thinking about all the good things that God is wanting to share with each one of us: what does such awareness mean for our wholeness, as we live alongside others?

The retreat will consist of sessions of input followed by times of silence for private reflection in the peaceful stillness of the presence of God.

At the **Community of St Mary the Virgin**, an Anglican community of nuns near **Wantage, Oxfordshire**.

More information and booking form are on the **[Reflect website](#)**.

## CREATING INCLUSIVE WORSHIP THROUGH DRAMA

A Justice, Diversity and Solidarity Workshop event for worship leaders, preachers and anyone involved in creating or leading worship.

**Putney Methodist Church,  
Saturday 11th January 10am-4pm**

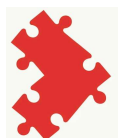
Experienced and professional dramatists will support and encourage you in bringing to life your worship ideas.

Though drama we'll be looking at:

- Liturgy without words
- EDI as the basis for worship
- Being inclusive
- Using humour
- How to create drama without too much drama
- What about Local Arrangements?

NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED,  
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

**[Book via Eventbrite here](#)**



# Training & Development



# Worship: Leading & Preaching

## For Local Preachers' Secretaries...

### Website Information

We are gradually updating the pages on the Methodist website to make them more accessible. Most of the information relating to Local Preachers' (Worship Leaders' and Preachers') Meetings can now be found under the heading of **Meeting Together**. You can either find this by clicking on **For Churches -> Ministries -> Local Preachers and Worship Leaders -> Meeting Together**. The shortcode [www.methodist.org.uk/lpsecretaries](http://www.methodist.org.uk/lpsecretaries) still works.

We suggest you bookmark this page as you should find most of what you need here, including the full set of Frequently-Asked Questions that were created by attendees of the first few Drop-In sessions.

### Drop-In Sessions

These online sessions are now a regular feature, and all who are Local Preachers' Secretaries or who are considering taking on the role, or help out at the Local Preachers' Meeting are welcome to come along whether or not you have been to one of these before. We do ask you to book in advance though, and the booking link can be found on the [Local Preachers' Secretaries' page](#).



### ReciteMe

A new symbol has appeared on the Worship: Leading & Preaching website site, like the one on the left.

Clicking this opens the **ReciteMe** toolbar which provides a new set of accessibility tools to help you to use the course website:



The buttons allow you to alter screen brightness, contrast, font types and sizes and many other things. There is a text-to-speech facility, which is automatically ON when you open the tool. This can be switched off by clicking the Settings button (the cog symbol). A User Guide can be found by clicking the button at the furthest right of the toolbar.

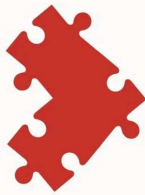
We will be updating the Additional Needs Guide for WLP shortly. In the meantime, the old Moodle ATbar functions will still be there, but you are encouraged to try using ReciteMe and let us know your carefully-considered comments at [localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk).

ReciteMe also has instant translation facilities. If you wish to access the course in your preferred language, please try it. We would value your comments on how the



text and speech translation works in your chosen language.

Worship:  
leading &  
preaching



## WLP Information & Training Opportunities

We have also refreshed the webpages for **Worship: Leading & Preaching**. You can still find them at [www.methodist.org.uk/wlp](http://www.methodist.org.uk/wlp).

The **Training and Events** tab is the place to look for Online Inductions, Study Skills and Training for Tutors and Mentors.

The **WLP Explore** tab is for Explore Online and the new Explore Weekends.



## Footnote

I love Advent as a preacher. Not only do I get to choose from all the great Advent hymns, but also to preach from some of the great passages from the prophets that seem to be ignored for the rest of the year. This year, the 3rd Sunday of Advent brings Zephaniah 3, the only time we hear from this extraordinary prophet in the course of most lectionary years.

Zephaniah spends most of his book proclaiming judgement on all that has gone wrong in his beloved country of Judah, but also in the whole world:

*On that day I will punish all who avoid stepping on the threshold, who fill the temple of their gods with violence and deceit.*

All seems hopelessly lost: what hope is left? There are many people at this time of darkness, for many reasons, who are feeling hopeless. Some of them are hiding behind brave faces in our communities, and in church. Some are just hiding.

Zephaniah doesn't stop there though. Like all true prophets, he sees above and beyond. Because violence and deceit will not have the last word. God is here for the people, for the whole world God loves:

*The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.*

*He will take great delight in you;*

*in his love he will no longer rebuke you,*

*but will rejoice over you with singing.” (Zeph 3:17, NIV).*

Let us hold hope high, and encourage God's people. Not just with the distracting fun and frivolity of the approaching season, although there is a place for laughter

and song. But also with the strong and dependable hope of God's coming  
Messiah:

Come, thou long-expected Jesus  
born to set thy people free,  
from our fears and sins release us  
let us find our rest in thee.  
*(Charles Wesley, Singing the Faith 169)*

*With every blessing for Advent and Christmas,  
Bob Bartindale  
Officer for Worship & Local Preachers*

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