



## **Introduction**

Welcome to our accessibility guide for all students on the Worship: Leading & Preaching course. This may be particularly useful to those of you who have lived experience of neurodiversity, disability or other additional needs. It can also inform tutors and mentors supporting these students.

## **Rich Diversity**

Over the years, we have had many diverse people study on the course. For some English is an additional language they have learnt. Some have conditions such as dyslexia, or dyspraxia. We have preachers and worship leaders who live with chronic pain, fatigue, sensory impairments and a whole host of other physical or mental health conditions. This should never be a barrier to your call to preach or lead worship.

## **What is disability?**

The Equality Act 2010 (using a definition from previous Disability Discrimination Acts from 1995 and 2006) defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment, which is substantial and has a long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Whilst this is the legal definition which offers additional legal protections to disabled people, it should be remembered that anyone may be temporarily disabled (for example when recovering from a serious illness or accident), which may also require them to need additional support or adjustment.

Many disabled people consider that that their impairments are not the key factor that disables them. Instead, it is a social model, whereby a built environment that is not planned with their needs in mind



disables them, or they are disabled by the attitudes of other people towards them.

### **Made in the image of God**

As we make clear later in the Worship: Leading & Preaching course (Module 8.2), we are not making any assumptions about who and what is 'normal'. In this guide we are simply documenting some different ways of engaging with the course. As the website of the Greenbelt Festival once put it:

Each of us ... reflects the whole image and character of God. If we allow anyone to be excluded, either by accident or thoughtlessness or prejudice, we will see God less clearly. The more we recognise our common humanity, the sharper our image of God will be.

(‘Please Bring a Body’ Greenbelt -reproduced with permission)

Disability is at the heart of our Christian faith. As the disabled theologian, Nancy Eiesland, once pointed out:

The foundation of Christian theology is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet seldom is the resurrected Christ recognised as a deity whose hands, feet, and side bear the marks of profound physical impairment [see Luke 24:36-39]. The resurrected Christ of Christian tradition is a disabled God... If we risk encountering the disabled God, we may apprehend with greater clarity the fullness of God in the distinctiveness and diversity we see around us. (‘Encountering the Disabled God’, The Bible in Transmission, Bible Society, Spring 2004)

### **The purpose of this guide**

This guide’s purpose is to enable students to feel confident and to do well in their local preacher or worship leader training. It describes



various ways in which we offer specific guidance and support to people who may have additional needs. Note that some screens or features may vary from our depictions depending on whether you are accessing the system on a phone, tablet or laptop and based on what browser you use.

### **Initial assessments**

In line with the Methodist Churches Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Strategy, any new student should be assessed for the support they need using the Accessibility Support Needs Guidance

[Accessibility support needs for volunteers and employees - The Methodist Church](#)

It would also be appropriate to complete an Equality Impact Assessment form.

[Equality Impact Assessment - The Methodist Church](#)

Guidance around the use of inclusive language is provided here.

[The Methodist Inclusive Language Guide - The Methodist Church](#)

Although the simplest guidance on this is always to ask people how they wish to be referred to.

If, as part of these initial assessments, it is discerned as not reasonably practicable for the candidate to complete their studies in the usual maximum of 5 years, I would suggest that rather than waiting until that time, an extension is sought immediately to relieve any future pressures. In line with SO564B the necessary application should be

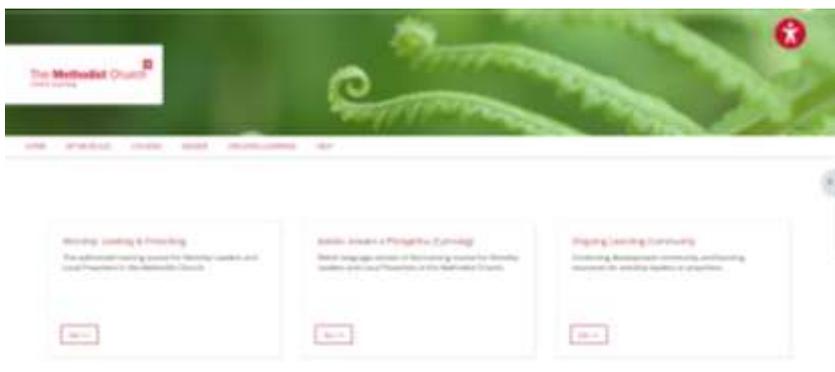


made to the District Policy Committee, with all the accompanying evidence to support this suggestion.

## The new accessibility tool

### How to access Recite Me

Go to the red circle in the top right hand corner of the screen. It contains a stick figure. Click on this. The Recite Me toolbar will then appear at the top of the screen.



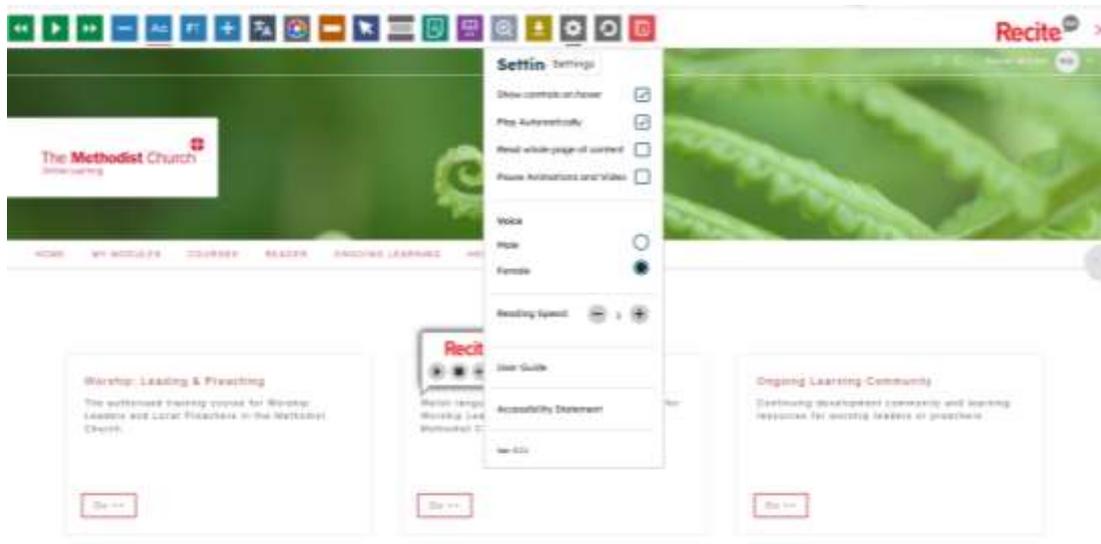
### Speech feature

You will find that the default setting of the tool is for the speech tool to auto-play, so a woman will automatically start reading things out to you as you hover over them. Although a useful tool for those who are visually impaired, this may become irritating or distracting to those who do not need the function.

To disable this feature, or make other changes, go to the icon which looks like a grey square with a white cog in it. This is the settings feature. Clicking on this will bring up a menu of options. Simply click on the ticked box by “Play automatically” and this will stop the woman speaking to you.



If you want to keep the speech feature on but adjust it to your needs, you can also do this here. You can change the voice to a male voice if you prefer (for example the range of your hearing may mean you find it easier to hear a deeper voice) and you can adjust the speed of the person speaking, for example slowing them down, to make it easier for you to follow.



## Screen reader controls



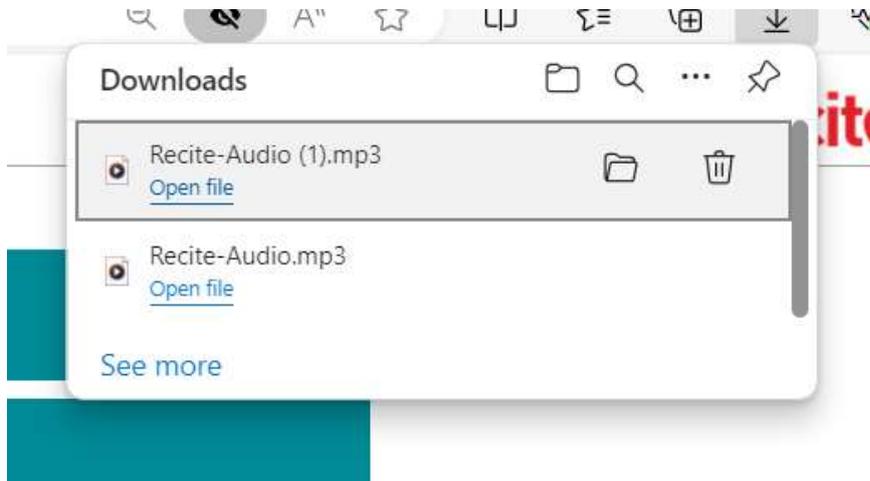
You can also control this feature using the first three icons on the tool bar. The icons will be familiar from other devices or software, so the first one is rewind or previous. It goes back and reads the line prior to



your current one. The triangle/square button acts as a play or stop control for the voice as you require. The third button is a fast forward/next button and moves on to the next line you want reading out.

### **Audio download**

Another option is to use the icon that looks like a downward arrow. With this feature enabled, if you highlight any selection of text and then click on this icon it will create an audio download of just that section of material as an mp3 file. You can then play the audio file and it will just read this section out to you, not everything you do.



### **Styling and customisation of the text**



### **Changing the font**



These buttons again will be quite intuitive to many, so the first one a minus sign makes the text smaller.

The second of these with the two letter a's allows you to change the font style to one which is easier for you to read.

The plus sign makes the text bigger.

## Colour theme

The next icon shows a circle of different coloured pieces. This allows you to change the colour of either the background or the font, to make it easier for people to read the materials.

If we go through this menu in a little more detail.



Dark mode, changes the tool bar to have a black background, rather than a white one.

Monochrome will change the whole screen to shades of grey. This may be useful for a variety of users who simply need things to be clearly defined, or a little less overwhelming. See an example of how this looks below.



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The other options change the colour of the text and background to assist those who find it easier to read with greater contrasts in colour, or who maybe normally use coloured filters when reading.

Here are a couple of examples of how it might look when using these tools.





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## Text mode

The icon with a page of text, removes any formatting features and other items such as video content and just displays the page as pure text.





## Focus tool

The blue icon that says Ft is a tool that helps to focus the text, this is to support learners with conditions such as dyslexia, where it makes certain letters, or syllables in the word bolder to clarify the word. The below image gives an example of what this looks like.



## Reading aids



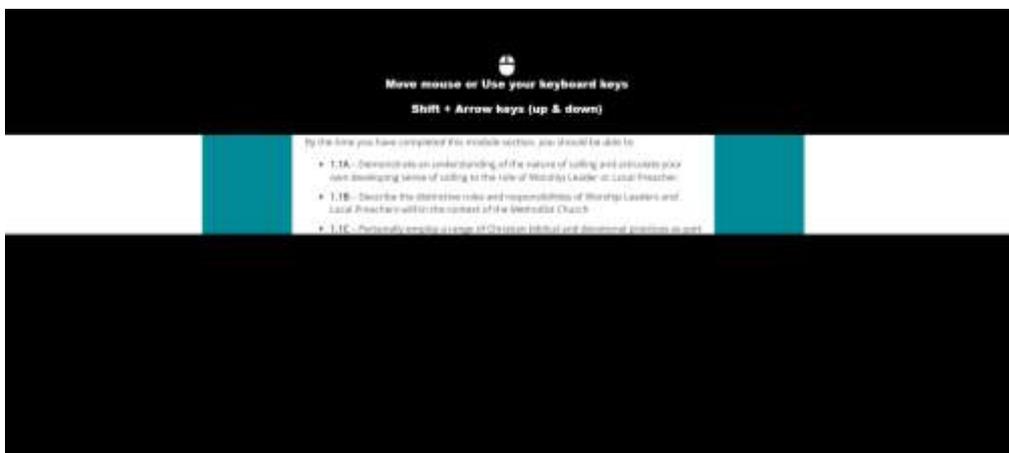
## Ruler and screen mask feature

The icon with a ruler on it enables you to move a ruler down the screen, as you might with a bookmark. This helps you to keep track of where you are and which line you are reading easily. Use the mouse to move the ruler down as you read the page.



## Screen mask

The icon with two grey bars either side of some lines of text, masks the rest of the screen. It looks a bit like you are peering through a letter box. This masking helps you focus just on the current text you are reading.



## Dictionary

The icon with a book and A-Z under it enables a dictionary feature. This is a limited feature, only explaining some words. It may well be better to stick to a paper based dictionary or an online one you are familiar with, but it will help in some instances.



## Margins

The icon with arrows at either side of some text only appears when you are in text mode. This icon allows you to adjust the margins on the screen. This function is similar to the right align, left align, centre align feature in Word.

## Magnifier

The icon with a magnifying glass and a plus sign will enable a magnifying glass for you to view the screen through. You can move the magnifying glass around the screen using the cursor.



## Translation



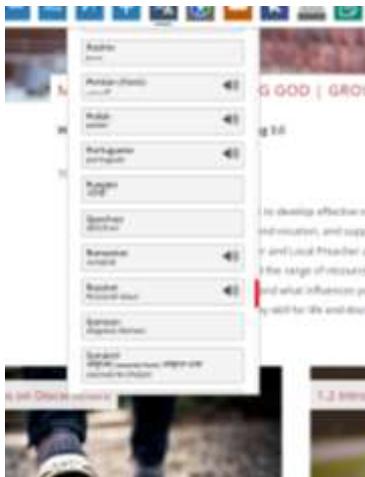
The translation icon (pictured above) can translate the work into a wide variety of languages, but not all. Because this is done



automatically, it may not always be a completely accurate translation of language or particular theological concepts.

Those with a loudspeaker symbol next to them will also read to you in that language, not just translate the written text. However, you may find that this voice speaks in a strange accent or is difficult to follow. If you experience this problem, contact the local preachers office [localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk) as there may be some advice we can give to improve this.

To get to your chosen language, you can scroll down using the small red tab at the side of the list. Alternatively, type the language you are looking for into the search bar.



Scroll using the tab



type in to the search bar

## Controlling your settings

As mentioned at the start the cog symbol brings up the **settings** menu.

The reset icon, with a circular arrow, **resets** all the features back to the original settings.



The icon with pages of paper containing a letter *i* takes you to Recite Me's own **help page**. You will find a simple guide there just stating what each icon does. It will be easier to print off that this full guide. You can access it here [Recite Me User Guide - Recite Me](#).

The blue arrow icon enables you to change the size of the **cursor**. You can also choose whether you want it to be white or black.

## Keyboard alternatives

If you have difficulties using a mouse, the following keyboard commands may be useful.

### Keyboard Shortcuts

**Tab** – to move to the next toolbar button.

**Shift+Tab** – to go backwards

**Spacebar** – to select a button and to change toggles

**ctrl+right** – play next element

**ctrl+left** – Play previous element

**ctrl+alt+p** – play the current element

**ctrl+alt+f** – show font menu



**ctrl+alt+c** – show theme menu

**ctrl+r** – Enable/Disable ruler

**ctrl+d** – Enable/Disable dictionary

**ctrl+l** – Show translation languages

**ctrl+x** – Enable/Disable text-only mode

**ctrl+m** – Show page margin settings

**ctrl+shift+o** – Show/Disable settings menu

**ctrl+s** – Save settings

### **What if I prefer to work on paper, or do not have access to the internet of a computer?**

Remember that all course materials are downloadable as a pdf and could then be printed.

### **Submitting a project or service report form**

Have in mind the project brief before you start studying the module, so you can keep that in mind and take the most relevant parts of the course in, when making notes.

These notes on journaling may help you to take notes.

[Journaling - The Methodist Church](#)



Theological reflection is a key part of the course. Try not to just cut and paste or highlight large areas of work: this is a passive process and often does not help you learn. It is better to try to make notes in your own words.

The meaning of any work you submit needs to be understandable to your tutor and the people who will moderate your work. Be assured though that your assignments will not be penalised for errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar.

Having a good study Bible, Bible Dictionary and Commentary will help with your studies. There should be funds available in your circuit to buy these.

Remember that some online sources are not reliable sources of information. Only use reputable sites. Whether you use books or online materials, always remember to reference any source materials.

There are always alternative methods for completing your assignments. If you can meet the criteria of the project brief in an alternative way that is more accessible to you, then get your tutor to discuss this with your regional moderator or the local preacher's office as it is likely that some negotiation can be made and alternative forms of the work accepted.

If you are unable to submit a typed or handwritten form, or assignment, it would be quite acceptable to record yourself either with video, or just audio having a discussion with your tutor or mentor



and then this recording could be uploaded to the project workspace instead of writing a piece of work.

If you have hand written documents to upload, you can scan it to make a pdf, or simply photograph the work and upload this to the system.

If you are ever in doubt about alternative ways of working, or how you can get support, just ask.

### **Support within Office.**

Several features in Microsoft Office can help with accessibility. These will vary depending on the version you have. There are also apps available that can assist with your studies. There is guidance available on this here [Apps that make life more accessible | Disability charity Scope UK](#)

### **Features in Zoom**

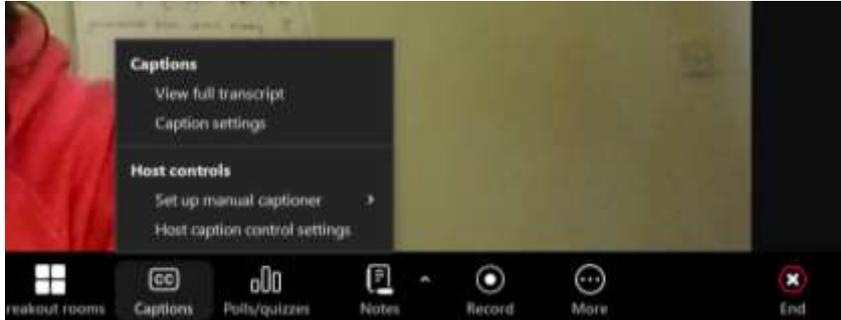
Remember if you are in a zoom meeting with your tutor and/or others you can (this **must** be with their consent) make a recording of it and then refer back to the video or audio later, for points you have forgotten.

It is also possible to get a transcription of the meeting, although it is AI generated and not 100% accurate.



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It is possible to enable closed captions in these meetings.



### Further support is available

The Learning Network provide a Study Skills Course for students and a Further Skills Course for their tutors and mentors. These can be booked via Eventbrite.

You can also get advice and guidance from the solidarity circles, who support groups with protected characteristics. [Solidarity Circles - The Methodist Church](#)