

Dear Friends and Colleagues

I trust you have had a blessed Christmas and wish you a Happy New Year!

As we move into 2023 I thought it would be helpful to drop you a line to bring a number of things to your attention. The first group relate directly to us as ministers (in different ways), the latter to our churches and ministry. Please do forgive me for such a long email, but as you will see there are some interesting things to share with you.

If you are a Superintendent

You will want to know that bookings for the 2023 Supers' Conference open on 12 January 2023 at 12 noon. Details will be sent directly to you but just in case they go astray details can be found [here](#).

If you are expecting to become a new superintendent in 2023

Either through the stationing process or by taking on the role in your current station you should plan to join the new Supers' induction. Details can be found [here](#). Please note new Supers are invited to the Supers' Conference too.

In you are in years 4-5, 10-12 or 28-30 years of travel and Voices of Identity

We provide specific (fully funded) reflective spaces for you. More details can be found [here](#).

Throughout the year the Ministries team host a series of online gatherings for those reflecting on their ministry through particular lenses. It's a project called Voices of Identity and it allows ministers who have the same or similar experiences of ministry to come together and talk about the joy and complexities arising as a result. So far ministers have gathered from the following groups. Ministers who are single, serving here having been ordained in other contexts, under 35, ministers who happen to have a disability

Our upcoming events are scheduled to cover Ministers serving in appointments outside a traditional circuit context and Ministers with young families. Please keep an eye on advertising through Signpost for ministry and a little more about the project can be found [here](#).

If you are in your final station

You might like to start thinking about taking up a place on the retirement course and at the housing and Pensions webinars. We encourage you to do this sooner rather than later. Details can be found [here](#).

Date for your diary: Curious about Leadership

Responding to feedback from the superintendents conference a leadership learning day is planned at Cliff College on Thursday May 11, 2023. Reflecting on leadership values and skills is an important part of initial formation, probationer studies and induction for new superintendents and District Chairs. There are also opportunities for those in lay and ordained ministry to engage in leadership training and courses offered through the Learning Network, the Evangelism and Growth Team, Cliff College and the Queen's Foundation. It will be possible to attend on site as well as engage online and is open to all in the life of the Church who would like to reflect together on the role of leadership in our current structures and as we plan for the future. There will time to listen to practitioners and scholars and to then reflect on how their thinking can be applied or adapted for the many contexts in which we find ourselves. Please do save the date and encourage colleagues, staff and leadership teams to consider attending. Further details will be confirmed in due course.

Enabling other people's Vocation

In the recent research about candidating for ordained Ministry and perceived barriers to it, one clear piece of evidence was supportive ministers are key. The more we can model good practice and encourage others the more people might consider God's call, be it to lay or ordained ministries. At

the most recent Exploring Ordained Ministry event, in response to the evaluation question 'how did you hear about this event?' over half respondents said their minister told them about it. People we know and trust encouraging us to explore our responses to what might be a call from God is crucial, and we hope that Vocations Sunday can play its part in that.

6. How did you hear about this event?

[More Details](#)

● Social media	1
● Website	7
● Minister told me about it	11
● Other	2



There are resources available on the website, for all who are discerning God's call to them at any time, and you can shortcut to the vocations pages using [Vocations \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://Vocations.methodist.org.uk). The next exploration day is the 18 March more details can be found [here](#).

Vocations Sunday is 7 May 2023

Vocations Sunday is on the first Sunday in May. This means that it falls between Easter and Pentecost. However, this year it so happens that it is the weekend of the coronation of King Charles III and is now a bank holiday weekend.

Please can you add Vocations Sunday to the Plan for the first Sunday in May as an annual pattern, and if for some reason something locally, or indeed an additional bank holiday, makes this unwise, then please do feel you can move it if necessary. But please do have a Vocations Sunday.

The Connexional Team offer [resources for Vocation Sunday](#), and there is an archive of previous resources, and in due course there will be lectionary based material for 2023 online too.

Some important information for anyone in your church who might be considering Candidating for the Ordained Ministry

If anyone is considering candidating for ordained ministry or has even just begun thinking about the idea, they are now able to apply through the new candidating processes. In the process the Methodist Church is providing significant resources to enable a person to discern how God is calling them – before they decide to candidate.

This means that anyone considering candidating needs to apply between January 10 and April 30 2023. Please take note of these dates because they are earlier than those in the previous process. They apply first for Discerning Ordained Vocation (DOV1) and if they wish to continue to candidate for ordained ministry, they then start DOV2 in September.

All potential candidates must apply for DOV1 before they can apply for DOV2.

If anyone misses the April 30 date, they will be able to join 'Explore' in September 2023, or they could wait and apply for DOV1 between January and April 2024.

Guidance and information is on the website [here](#).

Accompanying those on the Discernment Journey

We continue to look for people who have the [gifts and graces to accompany others](#) on a vocational journey. More details on becoming an accompanist can be found [here](#). We encourage you to encourage others to consider applying or maybe this is for you?

Details on EDI training for Local Preachers

Will be sent to Local Preachers Secretaries in the coming weeks – a copy of this email will be placed on the [Signpost for Ministry](#) for your information.

Local Lay Pastors

Updates on the website [here](#).

In collaboration with the Ministries Team, Cliff College has developed a suite of training units to equip new and existing Local Lay Pastors. The units cover essential knowledge and competencies for effective mission and ministry in the contemporary context, and are ideal for those with little or no previous theological training, as well as to offer professional development to those who have been 'on the job' for a while. The Foundations for Mission and Ministry programme is 6 units, studied over 2 years (one per term), and includes foundational learning in theological reflection, pastoral practice, leadership, Methodist identity and spirituality. Further standalone units are also available to extend learning in specific areas for Local Lay Pastors and other lay and ordained ministers. Each unit is £360, and leads to an accredited award from the University of Manchester. In partnership with the Ministries Team, the cost per unit is reduced for those active in Methodist roles to just £200. Each unit is studied online over 10 weeks, with one shared study day that can be joined online, or in person at Cliff College. Contact Cliff College for further information, to apply for the programme, or to talk about bespoke training pathways for lay roles in your Circuit. For more information see [this](#) page.

Encouraging Local Preachers

Local Preachers' Meetings can be wonderful opportunities for worship, sharing and learning. But they may not be. New Year might be an opportunity for reimagining how these meetings work to encourage and empower the worship leaders and local preachers in your circuit. There are some ideas on [this](#) page together with a growing range of session plans for Continuing Local Preacher Development

As ever it's a busy time in ministries – to try and help you keep up to date we post information [here](#) please do look back to see if you missed anything during the busy Advent period

Paul Wood

For and behalf of the Ministries Team