

News

Welcome to our first issue of 2023. I hope you will find plenty here to inspire your prayers, reflection and preparation for worship and preaching in this new year. We start with some thoughts from **Laurence Wareing**, who as well as being a freelance writer, is the Editor of Singing of the Faith Plus.



If you've ever undertaken the kind of media training where you receive tips on responding to an interviewer in front of a camera, you may have learned this unsettling piece of information: that perhaps only seven per cent of the impact you make will arise from your actual words. The rest will come from things like tone of your voice and visual engagement. In other words, our verbal arguments aren't as memorable as we think they are. I often think of this when I'm preparing a sermon.

However, with this knowledge comes opportunity: to make the most of those other resources also available to us. In the case of an interview, our appearance and tone of voice; in the case of worship, those elements that engage the full range of our senses and which can reinforce our speech.

Singing hymns and songs is one facet of worship that engages many of our senses, physical and emotional – and, crucially, links words to a memorable melody. The singing experience can really enhance the flow and journey of worship, which makes choosing the words we sing an important task. What do we want them to say that reflects our core theme? Will the music remain in our heads and recall, if not the exact words, then at least the thrust of a song's message?

These are questions we ask when assessing **new hymns** for publication on Singing the Faith Plus, and when providing suggestions to accompany special Sundays or, for example, **Bible Month resources**. Do look out for ideas to accompany this year's focus on the book of Revelation. StF+ encourages us to take time with all aspects of our worship, hymns in particular. Not least because – I suggest, a little nervously – many in our congregations are more likely to remember what they sang on Sunday than what they heard from the pulpit.



Events



Do you have an interest in global relationships and mission across the world?

Join for us for a time of storytelling where we will hear from Mission Partners and about the most recent work of the World Mission Fund at the **Radiate Webinar**.

Wednesday 8 February, 2023 at either **1-2pm or 7-8pm** via Zoom. Book your place now by clicking [here](#). For more information about the global relationships of the The Methodist Church click [here](#).

Reflect

Methodist spirituality

A Retreat for Local Preachers

There are a few places left on our retreat for Local Preachers which takes place at Whalley Abbey from Friday 17th to Sunday 19th March 2023.

We will be led by **Barbara Easton**, former Vice President of Conference and long-standing Local Preacher, on the theme of **Wells in the Wilderness**.

Silence will be kept from Friday night to Sunday lunch time, with short inputs of around 20 minutes, providing ample time for private reflection in the peaceful stillness of the presence of God.



Whalley Abbey is near Clitheroe (Lancashire) and is convenient for rail and motorway links. The cost for the weekend (accommodation and full board) is £220. More details and booking form can be found at the Reflect website [here](#).



Faith on the Frontline

Worship is just one context in which we celebrate the Christian good news. Many of us hesitate to do this elsewhere. How can we best live, tell and share faith in our vibrant, diverse world?

If you are aged 18-30, **Frontline** is a place you can meet with other young adults to ask questions, share learning and bring challenges. Our gathering takes place this year on 11-12 March at Cliff College in Derbyshire. Whatever your experience or confidence level, you are welcome. Find out more [here](#).



The Community for Spiritual Formation

Through a programme of worship, teaching, silence and reflection based on a Benedictine monastic pattern, we aim to create transformative space for people to be in communion with God, self, others, and creation for the sake of the world.

All are welcome to the events outlined below, more details are available on the [Community website](#).

Saturday 18th March 2023: Online day 'Discovering a spirituality for today' facilitated by Ruth Harvey, leader of the Iona Community.

Tuesday 18th – Friday 21st July 2023: Three Day Community 'Who are you? Living a Godly life' facilitated by Sam Wells, vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, author and broadcaster.

SPECTRUM

HEARTFELT WORSHIP : Spectrum Conference 2023

DATE: Monday May 15th to Wednesday May 17th 2023

SPEAKERS: Rev Jan Berry (Author and former principal of Luther King House, Manchester) & Tim Baker (Local Preacher, *All We Can* Churches and Volunteers Manager and Contributor to Twelve Baskets)

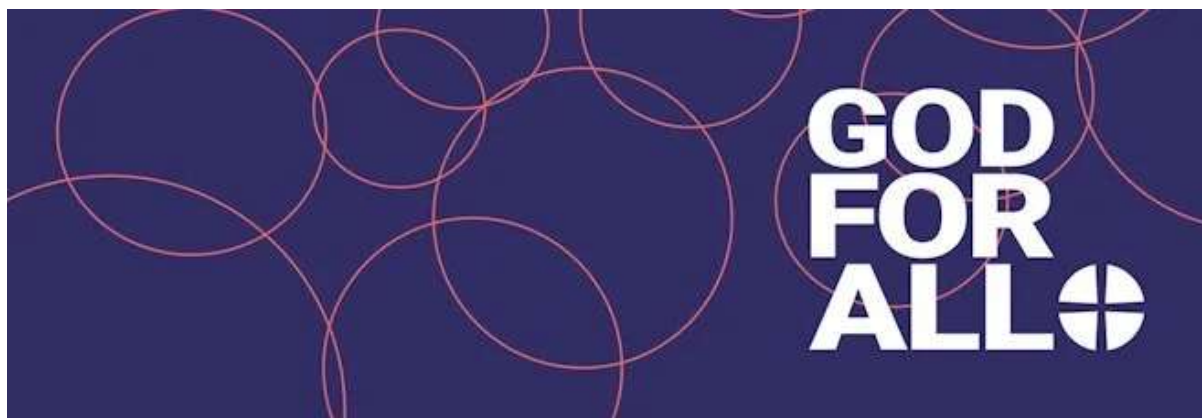
VENUE: The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire, DE55 1AU

COST: £180 full board (subsidised)

To book or for further information contact Pat Anning on 01788 570616 or email: patricia.anning@hotmail.co.uk.

If you believe that the Church consists of people of all ages, races, genders, abilities and opinions, in which shared faith and experience demonstrates itself

practically in the world, then SPECTRUM could be for you. Membership costs just £10 per year - you can find out more on the [**SPECTRUM website**](#).



Four fantastic training opportunities for people who are passionate about evangelism and growth:

Social Justice and Evangelism. This series develops our commitment to be a growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, inclusive Church. Next event: Health inequalities and the gospel 7 February. For more details and to book your place, click [**here**](#).

Church Planting Intensive. A fully funded course for those planting New Places for New People (NPNP). Takes place from 17th - 19th March, 30 places are available. To book your place, click [**here**](#).

Community Organising. Two courses, 31st March - 2nd April and 20th - 22nd October, at Cliff College. For people beginning a New Place for New People. For more details and to book your place, click [**here**](#).

Beginning a Church at the Margins. A three-session interactive online course in June/July 2023. Space to think about connecting and becoming a new Christian community amongst and led by people experiencing poverty. More information and bookings [**here**](#).

Ideas & Resources



30 Days with Revelation? Really?

Have you ever wondered how to make sense of the book of Revelation? And then, how to explain its meaning and purpose to others? Here's a resource that aims to bring alive this crucial and life-affirming book.

It's designed to provide churches, small groups and individual Christians with a way into this complicated, apocalyptic book with its wild imagery and promise of salvation - the last words of the Bible.

It's a great place to start your Bible study of Revelation and to explore how you might preach from this remarkable and fascinating book which connects the whole biblical story together.

To find out more and order copies, click [here](#).

The Learning Network will be providing a wide range of events and resources during the year to support your exploration of Revelation. Check the Bible Month page on the Methodist website [here](#).



Hear stories of the Methodist community offering welcome, hospitality and support to people who are displaced, forced to migrate and seeking a new life.

Easter Offering is prepared by Methodist Women in Britain and raises funds for the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain. Find out more [here](#).



John Wesley often asked: ***What is the state of the work of God in this place?***

Here is a new set of ideas and resources designed to put God at the heart of our meeting, discussing and deciding. Originally written by Edel McLean of the Learning Network and now available online, these simple outlines suggest how we can embed scripture, prayer and worship in our meetings to allow us to better listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us as a Church, and what we need to hear. Explore the resources [here](#).

SINGING THE FAITH PLUS

The [STF+ website](#) contains a wealth of ideas and resources for those leading worship and preaching. The suggested music for each Sunday of the lectionary can be very helpful in planning worship. There are a wide range of new, unpublished hymns for use in worship, many of which are directly relevant to topical themes and events and set to familiar tunes. Whilst STF+ is centred around music and hymnody, there is much else to explore. For example, those preparing worship for a Local Arrangement may find the range of resources available [here](#) useful.



LWPT

The Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust was created to support worship leaders and preachers to develop their ministries.

Given the tight financial squeeze we all face, LWPT have increased their **Scholarship Grants**. If you are planning to take on some further studies at a recognised learning institution, please apply to LWPT's Vocational Grant programme for a tuition grant of up to £2,000 and book/resources grants of up to £500. Click [here](#) to apply.

The very popular annual **LWPT DIARY**, containing the Methodist calendar for 2023 is now available. To order your copy click [here](#).



Small Groups

Here's Abi Jarvis' eighth (and last) Top Tip for small groups. Last but certainly not least...

Pray - pray for the group before you start.

Pray as you begin, that you would all learn from each other, grow closer to God, and become more like Jesus.

Pray at the end for each other's needs, as expressed during the meeting. Pray for people who aren't there. Pray that you would go out into the world, changed

because of the time you've spent together. You can never pray too much - but make sure that everyone also leaves each meeting ready to put your faith into action.

(Abi Jarvis is Discipleship and Faith Formation Officer in the Evangelism & Growth Team)

Learning & Development

Worship:
leading &
preaching



Be encouraged...

I hope this New Year finds you full of hope. There are over 900 people currently following a call from God to train as Local Preachers or Worship Leaders. This gives the whole Church much reason for hope - worship, and listening and responding to God's Word are central to who we are and what we do as God's people.



Summer School at Cliff College

Monday 31st July-Friday 4th August 2023

Summer School provides the opportunity to do the Explore sessions for two full modules of Worship: Leading & Preaching in one intensive week at Cliff College.

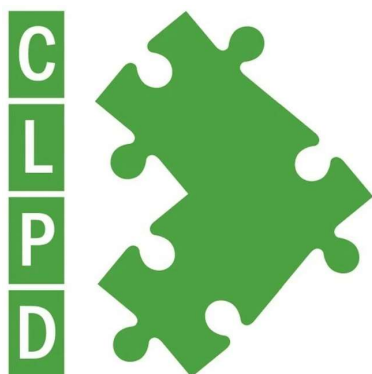
You need to have completed the **Learn** parts of your chosen two modules before attending, as you will be asked to reflect and share from your learning from these in your group at Summer School. We do not teach the WLP course at Summer School but learn from each other. For more details and a booking link, click [here](#).

Explore Online

Explore Online is running on **four weekends** in 2022-23. Each weekend starts on Friday evening at around 7pm, and runs through to Saturday afternoon (around 3pm).

During the weekend, the three Explore sessions for one complete module will be held. Each of the eight modules will be covered once during the year, so a student starting the course in September would be able to complete the Explore sessions for all eight modules in two years. Note that you still need a local Tutor and Mentor to support you during the course, and must have completed the online Learn material before doing Explore Online for that module. We don't teach the WLP course at Explore Online, we have the opportunity to share our insights and learn from each other. Sessions are interactive and every one is unique, which is why we don't record them.

More information and booking links are on the Explore Together webpage [here](#).



How is your **Continuing LP Development** going? Our collection of ready-made session plans for use in the Local Preachers' Meeting continues to grow. The latest addition is a fascinating session by Dr Ruth Bancewicz of the Faraday Institute, which connects churches with the scientific community. Her session asks why Christians should care about the natural world and what the Bible says about care for creation.

Visit and bookmark the CLPD page [here](#).

Online Training opportunities

WLP Online Induction

All new WLP3 Students, their Tutors and Mentors are invited on enrolment to a 90-minute online induction session, providing an overview of the course and an introduction to the course website.



For more information and details of forthcoming sessions (generally monthly, alternating between Friday afternoons and Wednesday evenings) there is a link on the WLP3 webpage, or click [here](#).

Introduction to WLP for LP Secretaries, Mentors & Tutors

A 90-minute Zoom session for those supporting students on the Worship: Leading & Preaching course, or who are considering these roles. The session includes a short introduction to the course with breakout groups looking at the roles of Tutor, Mentor and LP Secretary. Six sessions are planned for 2023 and dates and their details and booking links will be posted on the LP Secretaries' webpage [here](#).

Further Skills for Tutors & Mentors

Five separate reflective sessions with shared wisdom from experienced practitioners in adult education. Sessions are booked separately and tutors and mentors are welcome to come to one, some or all. All sessions will include case studies or worked examples.

Future sessions planned are:

18/3/23: Giving constructive feedback

13/5/23: Who am I? Knowing yourself in your role

1/7/23: Building supportive LP Meetings

All of these sessions can be booked on Eventbrite [here](#).

Hot Tip for students: *The **Learn** material contains a lot of things for you to read, watch and reflect on. We recommend that you spend 10 hours on **Learn** in each module-section. You might not be able to cover everything in that time, so focus your attention on things that relate to the Learning Outcomes and to your Project - you can come back to other material later. You can also download anything from the Module Reader to your computer to read and/or print anytime: click "Reader" on the "Resources" menu, choose the module you want, then scroll down and click the "Download Folder" button.*

Footnote



Counting our Blessings

The recent wave of industrial action among rail workers, nurses and teachers to name but three had me think – where would we be without them? Certainly, on the days when ambulance staff have been on strike I have stepped out into the world more cautiously. Each of these workers is a blessing to us – and we should, I believe, give thanks for their calling to serve and reward them for their efforts.

This reminded me of another often forgotten group of people whom we Methodists rely on week by week. That of course is the Local Preacher! We can of course count how many Local Preachers we have listed in our records – but it is much harder to record what blessings they, you, are with the wider church. Too often our preachers are taken for granted until of course they are not there.

As a Methodist people we rely on Local Preachers to study the scripture and reflect how they relate to God's world today. To pray for the communities they lead in worship, to offer support and challenge. To speak of God's love when the world is ready to hear it – and when it is busy doing other things. We know that Covid-19 hit our Local Preacher community hard, leaving some to question their call to this particular ministry.

For some it has been difficult to get back into the rhythm of worship preparation, others have felt called to stop preaching and maybe do something else. So today, I want to give thanks to God and count the Methodist Church's blessing for all of you who hold the office of a Local Preacher.

Thank you for you do, for the church, for the world and most of all for God.

Revd Paul Wood, Director of the Ministries Team

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