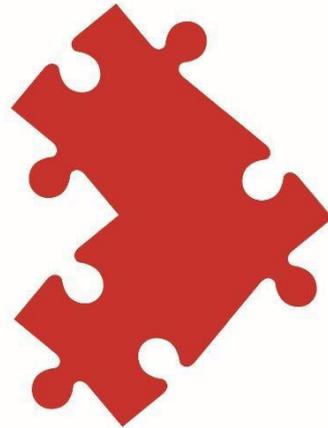


Worship:  
leading &  
preaching



**WORSHIP: LEADING AND PREACHING  
A GUIDE FOR TUTORS AND MENTORS**

Version 1, January 2018

## About this Guide:

This Guide is designed to be an introduction to the roles of Tutor and Mentor for the Worship: Leading & Preaching course. Whilst it is intended as a helpful reference for tutors and mentors, students would be well-advised to read it too, so that they understand what their mentor and tutor can contribute to their learning journey.

It outlines the ethos of the course, introducing concepts like student-led learning, blended learning, theological reflection and portfolio-based assessment. These may be unfamiliar to you or may be applied differently in Worship: Leading & Preaching from other training programmes you are used to.

It provides an outline of the course from the point of view of the tutor and mentor, including its modular structure and the various elements within each module.

It describes the process of building and submitting a portfolio, and especially the role of the tutor in guiding the student through the process and assessing outcomes.

It is designed to be a source of reference for mentors and tutors, which accounts for its bulk. It does not contain everything you might possibly need though, and needs to be read in conjunction with the other course guides, some of which are still in preparation.

## Other Information you may find useful:

- Worship Leading & Preaching: A Guide to Learning\*
- Worship Leading & Preaching: Portfolio Guide\*
- Worship Leading & Preaching: Additional Needs Guide
- Worship: Foundations\*

\* Currently in preparation.

## Changes in this issue:

This is the first issue.

If you find errors or omissions, or statements which contradict information elsewhere, please email [localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk). Your help with keeping the course documents up-to-date is greatly appreciated.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 What is Worship: Leading & Preaching?

Worship: Leading & Preaching (W:L&P) is the approved training pathway for Worship Leaders and Local Preachers in the Methodist Church in Britain. It is designed to encourage students to reflect theologically as they test and exercise their calling. The course material is delivered online in order to make maximum use of different media and learning techniques, and to allow it to be developed and improved over time.

W:L&P provides the theological education which underpins the process of formation of a Worship Leader or Local Preacher. Completing the course and meeting its assessment criteria does not make someone into a Worship Leader or Local Preacher, but should demonstrate to the Local Preachers' Meeting or Church Council that they have gained sufficient competence in theological learning and reflection to undertake the role to which they believe they are called. It is for the Local Preachers' Meeting or Church Council to discern whether the person is called by God to serve in this role.

W:L&P replaces the well-respected Faith & Worship course which has been in use for over 25 years. It seeks to address the need of the contemporary church for competent and enthusiastic leaders and preachers who can practise in a wide diversity of contexts, and inspire the next generation of disciples in their worship and service.

Note that the word "student" is used in this guide as convenient shorthand to refer to Persons on Note and on Trial, and Worship Leaders in training. This course forms only part of the discernment, learning and formation process leading to recognition as a Worship Leader or Local Preacher.

### 1.2 What does a Tutor do?

It is a great privilege to share with someone as they explore the gifts and the calling God has given to them in the service of the Kingdom.

The tutor's role is to act as an accompanist for the student through the study programme which is an essential part of their formation as a Local Preacher or Worship Leader. This involves establishing a relationship of trust with the student and being available as a guide, encourager, supporter and critical friend as the student explores for themselves the delights that theology offers.

It is not necessary for the tutor to be a Local Preacher themselves, although they should be recognised by the appointing LP meeting as possessing a demonstrable competence in theology and the practice of Christian worship. They may for example be a theological educator, or a Lay Preacher or Reader in another denomination.

Tutors may work with students in a single circuit, or across circuits, districts or even regions, depending on local needs and circumstances. It is important that every student has access to a tutor on whose wisdom and insight they can call.

In addition to supporting the student in prayer, the duties of the tutor can be summarised in three parts:

1. The tutor supports and advises the student during the self-paced learning phases of the course, in particular the **Prepare** sections of each Module. What this involves is described in more detail in chapter 2.

2. The tutor is responsible for convening and facilitating the **Explore** sessions in each Module-Section. These constitute the group-work sessions of this blended learning programme. Material is provided for use in these sessions, which are designed to last 90 minutes each. A Worship Leader will attend 12 of these in total, a Local Preacher 24. It is helpful to arrange these sessions well in advance to allow students to prepare adequately, so some degree of organisation is necessary.
3. During the course, the student will be progressively assembling a **Portfolio** as evidence of the understanding and skills they are acquiring. Each item for the portfolio will be discussed with the tutor, who will provide informal feedback and make suggestions. When both the student and the tutor are satisfied that the assessment criteria have been “Met”, the item will be included in the portfolio. When the portfolio is closed and formally submitted, the tutor will append their final comments as the portfolio goes on to moderation.
4. For Local Preachers in training, the tutor provides regular reports of the progress of the student’s studies to their quarterly Local Preachers’ Meeting, liaising as necessary with the Local Preachers’ Secretary. For Worship Leaders, training reports are provided by the tutor on request for the Church Council at the student’s church.

### 1.3 What does a Mentor do?

The mentor’s role is to accompany the student as they develop in understanding and skill as a practitioner. Unlike previous courses, this course requires that the mentor accompanies the student throughout the course, from first receiving a Note to Preach through to recognition as a Worship Leader or Local Preacher.

A mentor for a Local Preacher in training should be a Local Preacher. A mentor for a Worship Leader in training can be a Worship Leader or a Local Preacher.

The mentor’s primary responsibility is to act as an accompanist for the student as they develop as a reflective practitioner in the leading of worship and/or preaching. In some ways this is like the relationship of an expert practitioner with their apprentice. This involves establishing a relationship of trust with student and being available as a guide, encourager, supporter, sounding board and critical friend as the student develops their skill and competence in guiding the people of God into the worship of God. This is a wonderful privilege and a highly rewarding role.

In addition to supporting the student in prayer, the duties of the mentor can be summarised in three parts:

1. The mentor works closely with the Local Preacher or Worship Leader in the early stages of training, sharing the preparation and leadership of worship until they are confident (and competent) to lead worship on their own.
2. The mentor continues to be available to provide advice and guidance to the student on the planning of services, and opportunities for the student to reflect on their experiences of leading worship. The mentor is encouraged to support the student by attending some of their services, and providing thoughtful feedback to the student.

3. The mentor has opportunities to be their student's advocate in places where their practice is under scrutiny. For example, the mentor for a Local Preacher can be a valuable advocate for them in the Local Preachers' Meeting, especially when their tutor is not a member of that meeting.

#### 1.4 Where to find what you need

This guide sometimes refers you to other places where you will find more detailed information. Some of these sources are:

- Guide to Learning
- Guide to Additional Needs
- Guide to Portfolios
- Standing Orders applying to Local Preachers.

All of these, and more useful information including Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs) are available on the Methodist Church website. Look for the "Worship Leading & Preaching" page under "Local Preachers".

#### 1.5 Enrolment on the Worship: Leading & Preaching online course

As a tutor or mentor, you will need to be enrolled onto the Worship: Leading & Preaching course website. The circuit Local Preachers' Secretary instigates this using the Local Preachers Return Form. It may be necessary for you to remind the Local Preachers' Secretary that they need to do this. You will need to provide them with the email address you prefer to use, and the names of the students with whom you are working.

When the Local Preachers' Office receives the form, they will enrol you on the course, and advise you of your login details.

The Discipleship & Ministries Learning Network provides training for tutors and mentors. Your regional DMLN Ministries Development Specialist will be able to advise when training is available in your area. You can find out how to contact your Ministries Development Specialist at <http://www.methodist.org.uk/learning/network-regions>.

Many Districts have a District Local Preachers' Secretary and some also have a District Local Preachers' tutor. Whilst their roles and responsibilities vary, they often have a wider perspective on what is happening in the district, and can be helpful in making contact with other tutors and mentors. Your circuit Local Preachers' Secretary or the Local Preachers' Office will be able to put you in touch with your district officers.

For any further information, don't hesitate to contact the Local Preachers' Office at Methodist Church House on [localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk) or 0207 467 3774.

## **2 STUDENT-LED LEARNING**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Current educational practice emphasises that learning is most effective when students take responsibility for their own learning outcomes. The emphasis has shifted away from a didactic pattern familiar to many, where the tutor is responsible for teaching the student key facts and skills, and the student for demonstrating their mastery of these facts and skills through formal examination.

The model adopted for Worship: Leading & Preaching makes the student responsible for their progress in learning. They are responsible for working through the material at their own pace, and for assembling material for their portfolio as they go. They will take account of the Learning Outcomes for each module, and choose exercises which help them to demonstrate their understanding and skills.

In planning their study, students will need to take account of their tutor and others in their learning group to ensure that their study targets align, and do not interfere with those of others. For example, they will need to ensure that they take account of the timings of “Explore” sessions so that they are adequately prepared. As they come towards portfolio submission, they will need to give their tutor sufficient time for completing the assessment process.

Educational research has clearly shown the wide diversity of preferred learning styles among students. The course is designed to enable people with a wide range of preferences to engage with the material in different ways. The course is also intended to be accessible to those whose working patterns or other responsibilities do not enable them to keep regular appointments for tutorials.

### **2.2 Blended Learning**

Worship: Leading & Preaching is designed to support blended learning. In other words, it combines individual study and reflection with group discussion and practical exercises, and makes use of a wide variety of source materials, many of them delivered online. These materials include text, video and audio materials, some produced specifically for the course, others drawn from a wide range of reputable sources.

The course is supported by a Module Reader, containing extracts from published books and articles held by the Cliff College library. Copyright law requires that this material is only available to those who are enrolled on the course as students or tutors. The Methodist Church pays an annual copyright licence fee on behalf of each student on the course.

Because the course is delivered online, it is designed to be very flexible and adaptable for the changing needs of the church. It contains many options and ideas suitable for people in different places. Over time, the contents will be updated with new material and different learning resources.

Portfolio-based assessment (described in chapter 4) means that students can choose from a wide range of ways to give evidence of progress in their learning journey. They are encouraged to produce items that are relevant to their particular context and calling. The flexibility built into the assessment process means that compiling a

portfolio can seem complicated. There is logic in the way the portfolio fits together, and the Portfolio Guide will help you to understand the requirements and discuss them with your student.

### 2.3 The Tutor's Role

Student-led learning affects the role of the tutor significantly. The tutor is an accompanist on the student's journey of learning. The Tutor is not expected to go through the material page-by-page with the student, still less to teach the material, but to respond to the student's needs as they navigate through the course themselves.

There will be times when the tutor offers guidance and direction, particularly in the early stages, when the student is seeking to understand the structure of the course and its many possibilities, and when the student encounters difficulties with challenging aspects of the course.

Again, in contrast to a traditional teaching role, the tutor is not responsible for ensuring that the student completes all the coursework exercises and background reading in each module – that is the student's responsibility. However, the student may wish to talk through topics or issues that they find particularly challenging, or seek out a different perspective where their assumptions have been challenged.

In addition to the mandatory **Explore** sessions, some students and tutors find that regular meetings work best for them. Others use email and meet occasionally as circumstances permit. It is good practice to set periodic meetings to provide the opportunity for the student to raise concerns and establish a good working relationship with their tutor before the submission deadlines start to loom large.

In summary, the tutor's role includes:

1. Supporting their students in prayer;
2. Being a guide or accompanist to the student by having an overview of the learning journey and being able to assist and guide them;
3. Focussing on the development of their students' theological understanding and skills rather than their skills as a practitioner in leading worship and preaching;
4. Assisting their students in developing their skills in learning and theological reflection and in setting themselves realistic and achievable targets;
5. Ensuring that students are provided with the opportunity to engage with the Explore elements of the course, including facilitating these where required;
6. Assisting their students whilst they are assembling their portfolio, advising them on suitable items to include and providing formative assessment on these items;
7. When the portfolio is complete, providing summative assessment prior to moderation;
8. Reporting to the circuit Local Preachers' Meeting as requested on the progress of the students through the course;

9. Being the point of contact with the regional Ministry Development Specialist in case of external support or guidance being required.

The tutor's role is **NOT** to:

- Teach the course material;
- Monitor their students closely in completion of all the tasks, readings and exercises suggested by the course;
- Impose study programmes and deadlines on students;
- Ensure that the student adopts their theological outlook;
- Worry that the student is not engaging with the course in the way you would.

## 2.4 The Mentor's Role

The mentor is often the person in closest contact with the student, and an important link to the circuit Local Preachers' Meeting, which has oversight of the student's formation.

The mentor provides guidance and encouragement to the student throughout the processes of training. They draw on their knowledge and experience of worship and preaching to encourage and support the student through the practical aspects of their formation. This can be a very rewarding role, and friendships are often forged through this learning journey.

As the student's "travelling companion" for the practical parts of their formation, the mentor does not have a formal role in the student's academic studies, but is available to the student as a sounding-board and "critical friend" through the demands of their formative training. As the student progresses, the content of the conversation is likely to move away from the details of service preparation and delivery, and towards a theological and spiritual exploration of the meaning of worship and preaching in the contexts where they both exercise their ministries.

In the early stages of training, the preparation and leading of worship is shared between the mentor and the student. For On Note Local Preachers, the student will share in some or all of the mentor's planned preaching appointments, progressively taking more responsibility for the various elements of worship. As a Local Preacher is placed On Trial, and acquires their own appointments on the circuit plan, the mentor will continue to support and encourage the student, offering to discuss aspects of service planning or delivery, and discussing feedback received. The mentor will try to attend worship led by the student from time to time to provide support and informed feedback on the student's progress.

For some students and mentors, regular meetings work best, particularly in the early stages of training, others prefer to make contact when the need arises. A good practice is to meet periodically to discuss a specific service in which the student is taking a leading role, either during the preparation or afterwards to review the feedback received. The mentor will be able to advise the student in the choice of services to include in their portfolio and in what evidence to include.

In summary, the mentor's role includes:

1. Supporting the students you are working with in prayer;
2. Working with their students to develop their worship leading (and preaching) skills;
3. Sharing their appointments and working collaboratively with their students in leading worship, including (for Local Preachers on Note), providing opportunity for them to preach;
4. Engaging with their students in ongoing supportive discussion about their developing sense of call to their role;
5. Drawing from their own experience in providing appropriate guidance and support in the preparation and leading of worship, especially in the early stages, but throughout the training process as called upon;
6. Continuing to support their student by attending their services from time to time and providing constructive feedback, including formal feedback requested by the Local Preachers' Meeting;
7. Assisting their students in selecting suitable material to include in their portfolio, and supplying constructive feedback to enable them to reflect on their experience of worship.

The Mentor's role is **NOT** to:

- Turn their student into a clone of themselves, with the same preferences and habits in leading worship;
- Impose their own expectations on the student, in terms of their level of the number of appointments they should offer, the content of their services or anything else;
- Ensure that their student's prayers and sermons sound as if they were written by their mentor;
- Turn a blind eye to areas of practice where the student would benefit from constructive criticism and guidance.

### 3 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

#### 3.1 What is Reflective Practice?

All of us reflect. We think and ponder about life, the world around us and our experiences. At certain times of our lives, events happen that cause us to think deeply and possibly reconsider our assumptions about the way things are.

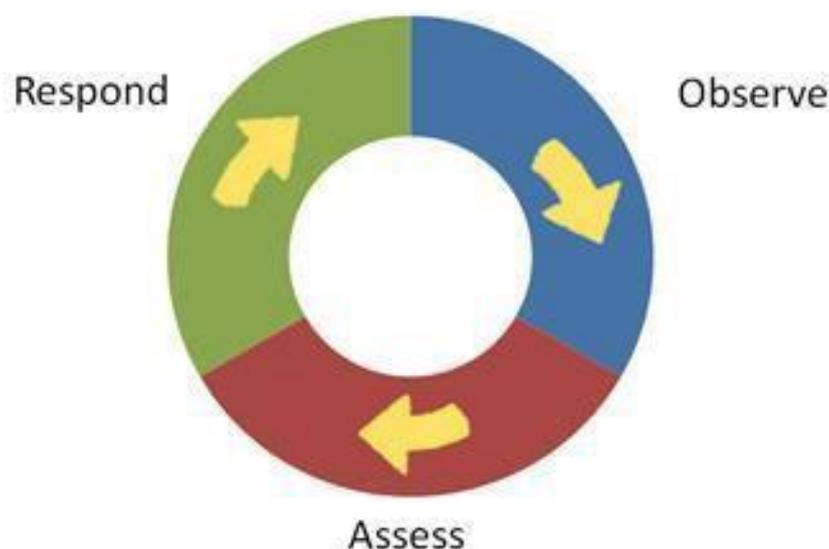
Educators have long understood that we learn most effectively when theory and practice are combined with the opportunity to reflect on what we are learning. We can then refine our understanding, adapt the way we do things, and progressively improve our levels of competence and skill.

Theological reflection is rooted in our ordinary attempts to make sense of our faith, our world and our lives. All of us are already familiar with doing this; it's part of how we make sense of life as Christians. However, studying a course like this presents particular opportunities for theological reflection, and provides a structure to translate our reflecting into improving competence and skill.

Theological reflection is far from a mechanical exercise. You need to be open to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to do it well. The Holy Spirit is the One who sends us out into the world (Luke 24.49), who guides us (Acts 8.29), who shapes our vision (Acts 7.55), and who inspires critical theological engagement with a situation (Acts 3.8).

The process will go best therefore, if you do it prayerfully. Yet it is also a human process that is helped by having an understanding of how its various components fit together to bring about transformation.

The Liberation Theologians of the 1960s and 1970s are credited with rediscovering theological reflection as a way of transforming communities, although the principles go back much further. Out of their work emerged practices such as the Pastoral Cycle, represented by diagrams such as this:



Moving around the cycle, we make our observations and collect evidence from real life and from our own experiences.

We then assess our observations and experience, taking account of other information and experience. As Christians, our assessment will take account of theology, asking such questions as “What does this show me about God and the purposes of God?”

To close the cycle, we consider how we can respond to the insights we have gained, asking such questions as “How does this new insight affect the way I might respond to this situation in the future?”

Some people prefer to refer to a “Pastoral Spiral”, which recognises that we actually move around the reflective cycle many times through our journey of faith, each time learning something new. In the process of learning to be Worship Leaders and Local Preachers, each time we complete the cycle, our competence and skill will be improved, and our awareness of God and of our own calling will be changed.

### 3.2 What Reflective Practice means for the Student

Students will very quickly realise that they are required to reflect on virtually everything they do, and in many cases, record their reflections. Initially this may seem onerous and unnecessary, but eventually it should become second nature.

More guidance on theological reflection will be given in the forthcoming *Learning Guide*, but here are some questions that might help your students to reflect on their portfolio items. Note that these are suggestions to start a thought process, not questions which all demand an answer every time!

- How did you tailor your material for your specific audience/context?
- What worked particularly well, and why?
- What worked less well than you expected? Can you identify any reasons for this?
- Did anything take you by surprise? If so, how did you manage the unexpected situation?
- Did you follow the intended plan, or did you make any changes ‘on the hoof’? Why?
- What feedback did you have from participants? Did it enable them to engage with the theme / worship?
- What have you learned? How have your knowledge and understanding of the theme developed?
- What links did you notice with your previous learning and experience?
- How have your practical skills developed?
- Is there anything you would do differently, in the light of your experience?
- What impact did this have on your own journey as a Christian disciple?

### 3.3 What Reflective Practice means for the Tutor

Because this course is not only student-led course, but based around the principles of reflective learning, the role of the tutor is very different from that on previous courses which have cast the tutor in the role of a teacher. The traditional role of a teacher is to convey information, skills and understanding to the student, which are then assessed through formal examination. The teacher needs to check that the student is doing all their required reading, so that gaps in knowledge can be filled before assessment takes place. The teacher has considerable control over the students' learning experience and the student can sometimes become a passive recipient of education.

The tutor for a student-led course based on reflective learning has a different role. They are there not to impart knowledge, but to encourage their students to seek out knowledge and understanding for themselves, whilst reflecting and developing their competence and skill. The tutor's means of assessing progress is through formative assessment of portfolio items produced progressively through the course, and through conversation as a "critical friend".

This can feel risky for tutors, as compared to previous courses, the tutor has less control over the learning process. A diligent tutor will always be tempted to walk the student through the course material to reassure themselves that the student is making progress. This is not however necessary, or even advisable, unless the students asks for particular advice or guidance.

Evidence also suggests that, despite the concerns of tutors, learners on student-led courses tend to be highly motivated to progress with their learning. Sometimes, the tutor may need to help a student with planning their study, and setting appropriate expectations, but there is generally no need to police the student's learning at a detailed level.

### 3.4 Reflection at the Heart of Worship: Leading & Preaching

The course provides many opportunities for theological reflection. This is deliberate, to encourage students to establish reflective practice at the heart of a process of lifelong learning. Some students will find this tedious, and will need great encouragement to keep practising their reflection. Some students may become frustrated because reflection seems to be too subjective, emotional and intangible and they are seeking to learn hard facts.

The evidence from portfolios submitted to date, suggests that the main reason why portfolios do not meet assessment criteria is that they contain insufficient reflection. Tutors and mentors are advised to work diligently with their students on the practice of reflection. The benefits to the student's future ministry as a Worship Leader or Local Preacher will be enormous, and the process of reflecting together will greatly enhance the student-tutor relationship.

## **4 COURSE STRUCTURE**

### **4.1 Modules**

The course is constructed from eight modules.

Modules 1 to 4 are intended to be studied by both Worship Leaders and Local Preachers in training. Modules 5 to 8 are designed for Local Preachers only.

Students submit a portfolio on completion of Module 4. The portfolios submitted by Worship Leaders and Local Preachers are slightly different, reflecting the different emphasis in their studies. Local Preachers submit a further portfolio on completion of Module 8. Portfolios are discussed further in chapter 6, and in much more detail in the Portfolio Guide.

Each module consists of three module-sections. An overview of the whole course therefore looks like this:

#### **Module 1: Encountering God... groundwork**

- 1.1 Focus on Discernment
- 1.2 Introduction to Theology
- 1.3 Introduction to Reflective Practice

#### **Module 2: Encountering God... in the life of the Church**

- 2.1 Encountering God in the Bible
- 2.2 Encountering God in the Church
- 2.3 Focus on Worship

#### **Module 3: Encountering God... in daily life**

- 3.1 Encountering God for Myself
- 3.2 Encountering God in the World
- 3.3 Focus on Prayer

#### **Module 4: Encountering God... in unexpected places**

- 4.1 Encountering God in Difficult Times
- 4.2 Encountering God through the Eyes and Ears of Others
- 4.3 Reflective practice and Continuing Development

#### **Module 5: Ministry of the Word**

- 5.1 The Bible – a Bird's Eye View
- 5.2 The Bible – Close-up
- 5.3 Focus on Preaching, Part 1

#### **Module 6: Living faith**

- 6.1 A new kind of Kingdom

6.2 Christian Living

6.3 Focus on Preaching, Part 2

### **Module 7: Understanding our story**

7.1 Salvation History and the Life of Christ

7.2 Church History and the Story of Methodism

7.3 Focus on Preaching, Part 3

### **Module 8: Voices from the margins**

8.1 Prophets

8.2 A Liberating Gospel

8.3 Contextuality and Continuing Development

## **4.2 Module-Sections**

Each module-section is designed around a set of Learning Outcomes, which are listed in an appendix to the Portfolio Guide, and online at the start of each module-section.

Students should keep note of the Learning Outcomes as they are studying each module-section to ensure they keep their focus on the main aims of the module-section. Tutors and mentors will find these learning outcomes useful too, in the guidance and advice they give their students regarding priorities for study, and choice of portfolio items.

Note that with portfolio-based assessment, students are not assessed on all of the learning outcomes in the course. However, all the suggestions for portfolio items are linked with at least one learning outcome. The learning outcomes are tabulated in full in the Portfolio Guide.

A module-section contains five elements, each of which is designed for students to use in specific ways.

These five elements are:

**Worship** Each module-section starts, quite appropriately, with an opportunity for the student to ground themselves in worship. Some ideas appropriate to the contents of the module-section are offered.

Students are encouraged to use the worship to ground their learning in God at every stage.

Time: 15mins (guideline)

**Prepare** This element contains the core of the material the student will use to build their knowledge and understanding. The material is designed to be used by students working alone and makes use of a variety of different media, including video and audio, all delivered online.

Reference is also made to the Module Reader, which contains extracts from books and journals held by the Cliff College library which support the subject of the module-section.

Time: 10 hours

**Explore** This element contains material for use in the group sessions facilitated by the tutor. Outlines are provided to stimulate conversation in a group setting, to draw out themes the student will have encountered in the Prepare element, and to encourage thinking about how the student can apply their knowledge and skill in their own context, and in their portfolio.

Whilst the Explore sessions can provide opportunity for students to talk through specific topics with their tutor, the Explore sessions are not designed to enable the tutor to provide detailed coaching on the **Prepare** material, which is designed for self-paced study by the student.

Time: 1½ hours

**Apply & Reflect** This element provides the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their understanding and acquired skills through practice. Some of the exercises, which students undertake themselves, provide ideas for students to use in worship. Others lend themselves to development as portfolio items.

All the exercises are linked to the Learning Outcomes for the module-section, to assist students in choosing what theological themes they want to explore, and which media types they want to try out. Examples of “media types” include short talks, magazine articles, prayer stations, art or video. Note that whilst the **Apply & Reflect** exercises are a good starting point for portfolio items, students are free to invent their own, but must discuss them with their tutor to ensure they satisfy the assessment criteria.

Time: 8½ hours

**Extend** This element contains optional material, to allow students to extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the core syllabus.

The **Extend** elements are the least developed parts of the course so far, and Extend is used as a repository for great material that was not included elsewhere because of the time allowed for study. **Extend** provides some useful resources for Continuing Local Preacher Development.

### 4.3 Time Requirement

Training as a Worship Leader or Local Preacher is a demanding challenge, and requires patience and commitment. The Methodist Church has always placed a high priority on the training and formation of those who lead worship.

Guidelines are provided to help students to regulate the time they spend on the course and to balance it with their other commitments and responsibilities. Note that these times are additional to any time the student spends in preparing and leading worship.

Mentors and tutors have a role to play in helping students to balance their time commitment to the course, particularly where there is a tendency to apply too much effort and time to achieving a standard of excellence which is not called for – portfolios are assessed only as MET or NOT YET MET, and there are no awards for superior achievement.

The total time expectation for a module-section is approximately 20 hours. With three module-sections per module, the time per module is 60 hours, meaning that the total study time for a Worship Leader is 240 hours, for a Local Preacher it is 480 hours in total.

The normal expectation is that students will complete either two or four modules in a year, meaning that a Worship Leader could complete the course in one year, but is more likely to take two. Similarly, a Local Preacher could complete the course in two years, but is more likely to take four.

The following table indicates the typical weekly study time commitment for a student. Almost inevitably, this will increase because students will wish to explore topics in more depth and breadth than strictly necessary, or because they are unfamiliar with academic study.

	Studying Term Time only (38 weeks per annum)	Studying All Year (50 weeks per annum)
Worship Leader (1 year)	6.4 hrs	4.8 hrs
Worship Leader (2 years)	3.2 hrs	2.4 hrs
Local Preacher (2 years)	6.4 hrs	4.8 hrs
Local Preacher (4 years)	3.2 hrs	2.4 hrs

As indicated above, this time commitment excludes any time spent preparing and leading worship in their home context. There is a balance to be found for students between taking sufficient worship leading and/or preaching appointments to enable their development as practitioners, and becoming over-committed so that study time becomes burdensome.

Mentors in particular can help students to strike the best balance of study and practice time. They can also advocate on behalf of their students, especially where there is pressure to take more appointments than advisable because of a local shortage of resources.

These time commitments might at first seem to exclude anyone in full-time employment or with intensive family commitments. This is certainly not the case, and busy people are often very skilled at building in time for study when it is an important priority for them. The course has been designed deliberately to allow study to be fitted in around other responsibilities, so that no one should feel excluded from learning.

For information, although covered in more detail elsewhere, Local Preachers move from On Note to On Trial, at the discretion of the Local Preachers' Meeting, at any stage between modules 1 and 4.

**4.4 Optional Items for Worship Leaders**

In modules 1 to 4 you may notice some of the online text appears in dark blue. This indicates content that is optional for Worship Leaders. The intention is to reduce the study workload for those who do not intend to train as Local Preachers.

## 5 WORKING IN GROUPS

### 5.1 The Explore Sessions

One of the main responsibilities of the tutor in Worship: Leading & Preaching is ensuring that the students have the opportunity to attend an **Explore** session for each module-section. This may mean facilitating the sessions yourself, but there are many different ways that the **Explore** sessions can be provided.

There is great benefit for students to be part of a cohort of students studying together, and tutors are encouraged therefore to find ways of ensuring that their students have access to this group-learning experience.

Options include these:

1. Some circuits can run **Explore** sessions themselves, as they have sufficient students within the circuit to form a viable group for discussion;
2. Some circuits have just one or two students, and would benefit from collaborating with one or more neighbouring circuits to run **Explore** sessions jointly. This requires additional planning on the part of the tutor(s), and requires discipline on the part of the students to complete their **Prepare** material in time;
3. Some districts are proactive in arranging **Explore** sessions with or on behalf of their circuits. These can be evening or weekend sessions and whilst students must often travel further and allow more time, the benefits of meeting in a larger group are considerable;
4. Some regions in the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network (DMLN) organise residential courses where students can engage with **Explore** sessions for several modules together. In addition, residential schools, run by the DMLN, are held at Cliff College each year. These are particularly helpful for students who find themselves studying alone and with no access to a group.

Please note that if students choose to join with **Explore** sessions independently of their tutor, they will still need meaningful contact time with their local tutor. A student who attends **Explore** sessions elsewhere still needs support from a local tutor and mentor.

### 5.2 Skills for Group Facilitation

Ideas and materials for Explore sessions are provided in the Explore element of each module-session. These are designed to be used “out-of-the-box” and are timed to fit into a 90 minute meeting. This does not prevent this material being supplemented or adapted for use with a particular student group, provided the aim of the Explore session is met. In summary, these are to enable students to engage collectively with the themes and learning outcomes of the module-section.

Facilitating a group is different from chairing a meeting, or teaching a class. It is about helping a group to have an efficient and inclusive meeting. The role of a facilitator combines a number of roles and tasks, but everyone present shares the responsibility for ensuring a meeting is well run, productive and participative.

In the context of Worship: Leading and Preaching **Explore** sessions, the tasks of the tutor as facilitator includes the following:

- Helping the group decide on the structure and practicalities for the meeting and keeping to it;
- Keeping the meeting focussed on the discussion in hand;
- Regulating the flow of discussion, ensuring that everyone's voices are heard and no one dominates the discussion;
- Clarifying and summarising particular discussion outcomes, and recording issues that need to be taken up outside the meeting, such as queries to the regional training officer;
- Keeping the meeting to time, ensuring that each exercise is given sufficient time;
- Ensuring everyone is kept informed of arrangements for next time;
- Ensuring that facilities and resources are available for the meeting: a room is booked, refreshments available, any teaching resources or equipment is available etc.

Some of these tasks may well be undertaken by others in the group by agreement – the essence of facilitation is collaboration.

At first sight, a facilitator seems to fill a role similar to that of a traditional chairperson. There are however important differences. A facilitator never “directs” the group without its consent and never imposes their will on the group. Any decisions are made by consensus, and are the responsibility of the group as a whole. A good facilitator stays neutral and reminds the group that the reason for meeting is to enhance the learning journey of all. The success of the meeting is therefore the mutual responsibility of the whole group.

Active listening is a key facilitation skill – without it a facilitator simply can't do his or her job. When we actively listen we suspend our own thought processes and give the speaker our full attention. We make a deliberate effort to understand another person's position and their underlying needs. We simply listen, and we don't just listen with our ears. We also use our body language, eye contact and where appropriate verbal cues – short questions or comments – to help the speaker formulate their thoughts and let them know that they are being listened to.

Active listening helps facilitators in several ways. It helps us to understand how the speaker feels about a subject or situation and the underlying emotions, concerns, and tensions. It allows us to focus on the core issues of a speaker's message. It enables us to hear what the speaker is actually saying to us, and not what we want to hear. It also shows the speaker that we are interested in what they have to say.

For more information on facilitation skills, see <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/>. The material in this section is drawn from their online resources, which are free to use.

## 6 PORTFOLIO-BASED ASSESSMENT

### 6.1 What is the Purpose of a Portfolio?

All assessment of the student's progress with the academic component of Worship: Leading & Preaching is done by means of their portfolio. It provides the tutor with an understanding of their growth in knowledge and skills, and their formation as Worship Leader or Preacher. It also allows them to report with confidence to the Local Preachers' Meeting when called upon to do so.

A portfolio is a record of the student's learning journey, and provides snapshots of their understanding and achievement. When complete, it tells the story of the student's development as a reflective practitioner from their first faltering steps through increasing confidence and maturity.

It is important to remember what a portfolio is not: it is NOT a collection of assignments submitted for marking. In fact you should not find the term "marking" anywhere in the course documentation; if you do, please inform the Local Preachers' office! Instead, portfolios are assessed against criteria which are designed to demonstrate progress in learning. In general, portfolio items are assessed as having "Met" or "Not yet Met" the criteria. The whole portfolio is assessed in the same way, taking account of the assessment of its contents.

Assessing a portfolio differs completely from marking an assignment. It focusses on the student's understanding and theological reflection, and on the evidence of skills developed whilst preparing and leading, worship. The focus is not therefore on writing skills. As strange as it may seem, there are no assessment criteria for punctuation, grammar or spelling!

Portfolios allow flexibility in the materials which can be submitted for assessment. This allows students to produce work relevant to their local context and encourages them to explore new possibilities and develop gifts which could enrich the worship of the church. This comes at the cost of complexity, and portfolios can seem complicated. The Portfolio Guide explains their contents in detail, and also the assessment process.

### 6.2 What is in a Portfolio?

There are five kinds of information in a portfolio, although the details vary between the three portfolio types, Worship Leader, Local Preacher A and Local Preacher B.

#### **Portfolio Cover Sheet**

This identifies the portfolio, provides a checklist of the contents and opportunity to include explanatory notes to assist the assessor and moderator.

#### **Worship Leading Opportunities**

For each service included in the portfolio, a Cover Sheet and a Service Planning Form are required. Also required are materials relating to the service, particularly the parts the students was responsible for, and feedback received from people who attended the service.

#### **Reflections on Worship Attended**

Students are required to include reflections on worship events they have attended led by others.

### **Theological Themes**

These provide the opportunity to explore a range of theological topics using a wide variety of creative media. Each item included has its own Cover Sheet with plenty of opportunity for theological reflection.

### **Other Reflections**

A variety of other opportunities for theological reflection are provided. These encourage students to reflect on their journey so far, their sense of call, and on other acts of worship they have attended.

Note that the words “theological reflection” occur many times when referring to portfolios. Please note (and pass on to your students) that lack of theological reflection is so far the main reason why portfolios are assessed as not yet meeting their assessment criteria. Learning the art of theological reflection is at the heart of this course. This is deliberate as it lays the foundations for lifelong learning as disciples of Jesus whose call is to lead others into the presence of God.

## **6.3 How is a Portfolio built?**

A key part of the tutor’s role is to guide and encourage the student in assembling a portfolio. The tutor should be familiar with the content and structure of the portfolio and the assessment criteria, in order to advise the student well. The Portfolio Guide (soon to be published) is therefore essential reading, and also describes the use of the various forms and cover sheets.

Students are recommended to discuss each item they intend to include in their portfolio with their tutor, who can provide informal feedback and make suggestions. Some Cover Sheets require the tutor to add their comments. When the student and the tutor are both satisfied that the assessment criteria have been “Met”, the item should be included in the portfolio.

Note that a “template” folder is available to assist students with building their portfolio and organising the information they collect. This consists of a small file directory with numbered folders corresponding with the numbering in the Portfolio Guide. The Template can be found on the Methodist Church website at:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/local-preachers-and-worship-leaders/worship-leading-preaching/building-and-submitting-a-portfolio/>

Students should be encouraged to think ahead. Topics for theological themes or worship opportunities may suggest themselves as they read the “Prepare” material. It is never too early to collect items for the portfolio. Tutors should encourage their students to be collecting feedback on services they have conducted or attended early on, if only to avoid the panic of trying to collect such items shortly before a submission deadline.

As stated above, the portfolio is a record of a learning journey. It is not necessary for students to revise items that have already “Met” the assessment criteria and been included in the portfolio. There can be a temptation to try to “improve” early portfolio items to meet the standard later achieved. This temptation should be resisted: the

portfolio provides plenty of opportunities for the student to reflect on earlier work and how they might approach it differently in view of more recently acquired skills.

#### **6.4 Portfolio Assessment**

Assessment on this course is competency-based. Therefore, the essential question asked in assessment is: "Have the required competencies been demonstrated?" Assessment is not about giving a mark for a piece of work, and students receive no grading for their portfolio. At the end of the course, the judgement needs to be made whether or not the student is able to fulfil the responsibilities of a worship leader or local preacher. The assessment that the portfolio has MET the assessment criteria is one of the indicators that the Church Council or Local Preachers' Meeting uses in making this judgement.

Throughout the assessment process, your regional learning and development officer (who is normally a ministry specialist) will be available for advice and support, and can help you to build up your own skills and confidence as an assessor. There may be opportunities to meet with other tutors to compare ideas and best practice, and compare and critique each other's assessments.

##### **Formative Assessment**

This takes place throughout the course, and the tutor has a key role to play. While students are working to prepare pieces of work for their portfolio, they should seek feedback from their tutor. This feedback will be informal, assisting the student with assessing the suitability of an item for inclusion in the portfolio, discussing whether the descriptive and reflective material does justice to the item, and working with the student to determine whether the item satisfies the assessment criteria.

This formative assessment has the primary purpose of assisting students in their learning and development. The tutor should offer to review all of the contents of the portfolio, as all have their place in demonstrating growth in skill and competence. Prompt constructive feedback should be provided to the student on their worship opportunities, and your comments added to the respective Cover Sheet. For other items, such as their reflection on their journey so far, the student may wish to take notes from your discussion to enable them to reflect further.

If a piece of your student's work falls into the NOT YET MET category, the tutor should provide them with objective feedback, and encourage them and help them in their revision of the item, or the choice of an alternative piece of work for their portfolio.

When the tutor and student are satisfied that the item satisfies the relevant assessment criteria, written feedback is provided by the tutor using the appropriate Cover Sheet for the item, which will be supplied by the student. This feedback may include comments about how the item has been developed by the student to move from NOT YET MET to MET. If an item is assessed as NOT YET MET, the student may choose to do further work on the item and ask the tutor to assess it again, or may choose to submit a different item to satisfy the criteria.

Some portfolio items allow for an additional assessment class: EXCELLENTLY MET. This allows tutors to acknowledge an exceptional standard of achievement in formative assessment. However, it carries no weight in the summative assessment, and may in fact indicate that a student is investing more time and effort in their portfolio than is

required. Remember: the portfolio is a record of a learning journey, not a collection of assignments for marking.

### **Summative Assessment**

When the student has completed their portfolio, and the tutor has assessed each item it contains, and confirmed that it has MET its assessment criteria, the portfolio is ready for summative assessment.

At this point, the student needs to do three things:

1. Check that all items required for the portfolio are present and correct, and that all Cover Sheets and other documents are correctly filled in. The Portfolio Cover Sheet provides a useful checklist to ensure everything is included.
2. Upload a copy of the completed portfolio to the Methodist Open Learning website (Moodle). This should make use of the “template” folder provided to assist assessors and moderators to find all the contents of the portfolio and should be “zipped” to reduce its filesize. The uploaded copy becomes the definitive version of the portfolio in case of any future uncertainty.
3. They pass a copy of the completed portfolio to their tutor for final assessment. This can be done by a number of different methods (e.g. memory stick, email, WeTransfer or Dropbox) but the files should be “zipped” like the uploaded copy.

When they receive the completed portfolio, the tutor checks that everything is present and correct, and completes one final form. The Portfolio Assessment & Feedback Form is found on the Methodist Church website at <http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/local-preachers-and-worship-leaders/worship-leading-preaching/building-and-submitting-a-portfolio/>. This form records the outcomes of the summative assessment process and the tutor completes all sections identified for completion by the tutor. This form then accompanies the portfolio through the moderation process.

The form provides an opportunity to record overall comments on the portfolio and on the student’s progress. Note that when moderation is complete, the student will be able to read these comments, so this might influence how you express yourself. When the form is complete, the tutor passes it, together with the completed portfolio, to the nominated regional officer of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network for moderation.

Note that there are only two possible classes of assessment for a completed portfolio, MET and NOT YET MET. Only portfolios which the tutor deems to have MET the criteria should be passed on for moderation.

#### **Note on portfolio deadlines:**

Completed portfolios can be uploaded to the Methodist eLearning system (Moodle) at any time.

However, the moderation process only takes place twice per year. The portfolio deadlines of **31<sup>st</sup> March** and **30<sup>th</sup> September** refer to the start of the moderation process.

To ensure that portfolios are included in the next moderation cycle, students should upload them to Moodle and send them to their tutor well before the deadline, to give the tutor adequate time for their final assessment.

More detail on the assessment of portfolios is available in the Portfolio Guide.

It may be the case that the student's formative assessment reassures the tutor that the student simply needs to do some further work before resubmitting their portfolio, in which case a six month delay will be the worst outcome. It may have already become evident, however, that the student may struggle to achieve the necessary levels of competence for the ministry of worship leader or local preacher. The tutor may need to hold a conversation with the student at this stage, requesting support from the mentor, minister and/or circuit superintendent as appropriate.

## 6.5 Portfolio Moderation

Moderation of portfolios is designed to ensure consistency of assessment across the whole of the Methodist Connexion so that students can know that their work is being assessed fairly. Two stages of moderation are carried out:

### Regional Moderation

Regional moderation is organised by officers of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network. Tutors are responsible for making contact with their regional moderator and ensuring that they pass the completed portfolio and Portfolio Assessment & Feedback Form for moderation.

If you are unsure who your Regional Moderator is, look for "Ministry Development Team" in the "Learning" section of the Methodist Church website here: (<http://www.methodist.org.uk/learning/specialism-teams/ministry-development-team>) or contact the Local Preachers' Office at [localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk).

All completed portfolios are moderated regionally, by a process of sampling – that is, not all parts of a portfolio are initially checked. If concerns are raised, the sample is enlarged until the moderators are happy that they have a clear understanding of the portfolio and its assessment.

If a regional moderator disagrees with the tutor's assessment, in other words they believe the criteria are NOT YET MET, they will refer the portfolio on for Connexional moderation.

The regional moderator may contact the tutor directly if they feel that the level of feedback by the tutor is inadequate to enable moderation, if items are missing from the portfolio, or if they need further clarification.

### Connexional Moderation

When the regional moderation is complete, a sample of the portfolios, plus any that have been specifically identified by the regional moderators, are moderated at a

Connexional level. This is to ensure that assessment criteria are being applied consistently across the regions.

In cases where there is a difference of opinion between the assessor and regional moderator, the decision of the Connexional moderator is final.

### **Results**

As the course is student-led, current educational practice is followed, and students are advised of their assessment class (MET or NOT YET MET) by the Local Preachers' Office through the eLearning system (Moodle). This is done by the end of November (autumn deadline) or May (spring deadline).

Students are asked to advise the outcome of their studies to their tutor, mentor and Local Preachers' Secretary without delay.

The process of moderation may result in a portfolio being reclassified as NOT YET MET. Note that the wording does not imply failure, and keeps open the possibility of meeting the criteria in future. In many cases, to achieve the MET category, some items in the portfolio may need to be revised, missing items added or more commonly, more theological reflection added. The regional officers can provide advice on the process of resubmission, and this need not interrupt the student's progress through the course.

However, NOT YET MET can be a difficult message to convey to the student, who may be assuming all is well because of their initial assessment by their tutor. Great pastoral sensitivity may be required, and the tutor may wish to include the student's mentor in the discussion.

## **6.6 Plagiarism**

If you suspect that a piece of work you are assessing is not wholly the student's own work, or that a source is not correctly referenced, you may have detected a case of plagiarism. A conversation with the student may be sufficient to identify an omitted reference to a quote. You may need to explain the issue of plagiarism and why it is considered unacceptable. Chapter 8 of the Course Handbook explains the issue.

If you suspect plagiarism during your summative assessment of the completed portfolio, please contact the Local Preachers' Office, so that we can run the necessary electronic checks on the portfolio.

We intend to implement automatic plagiarism checking of all portfolios in due course, so that all submissions will be checked to the same standard without relying on the vigilance of assessors.

## **7 ONLINE LEARNING**

### **7.1 Why online learning?**

The prospect of online learning will present no problems to some, but will be daunting to others.

There are several reasons that Worship: Leading & Preaching is provided as an online course:

- It allows the course to be much more flexible and adaptable than a paper-based course in addressing the widely varying needs of the contemporary Methodist Church.
- It allows the use of many different types of media, such as audio and video sources to enhance the learning experience and provide for a wider range of learning preferences.
- It enables the course to be adapted and developed to meet changing needs, as part of an expanding range of learning resources for the whole church.
- It is not economically feasible to produce, administer and deliver a paper-based course given the resources available to the church today.

The majority of students and tutors, once they have gained some experience in using the course, find that they gain confidence and start to enjoy the benefits of online learning. Circuits are encouraged to support those who do not have access to the facilities required to study online, and by making use of IT skills that exist among members of the circuit.

For those who struggle with interacting with computers, please see the Additional Needs Guide, described further in section 7.5 below.

### **7.2 What is Moodle?**

The course makes use of a “Virtual Learning Environment” (VLE) called Moodle. Moodle is widely used by schools, colleges and universities, is used by millions of students worldwide and is recognised as the leading VLE in the world. It is “open-source” rather than commercial software, which makes it affordable for use by the Methodist Church.

The Moodle system is supplied and maintained for us by the University of London Computing Centre, who ensure its availability and security and provide us with regular updates. All of the contents of the course, including the text, videos, book extracts etc. are maintained by the Ministry Development team at Methodist Church House, overseen by a Board of Studies appointed by the Methodist Council.

Using a standard system like Moodle has some drawbacks. We are limited to the functions provided by Moodle. This means that commonly-requested functions like a “search” facility to find key words anywhere in the course, and a “bookmark” facility to enable you to go straight back to where you left off are not available at the moment. As part of the worldwide Moodle user community, we will continue to seek improvements to the Moodle system to improve the experience for system users.

### 7.3 How to Use Moodle

Two introductory videos are available on the Methodist Church website, and on Moodle itself, to assist those, particularly students, who are exploring Worship: Leading & Preaching for the first time. If you are reading this guide on a computer, you can click here to find them:

[Video 1: First Steps](#)

[Video 2: Overview of Website](#)

Otherwise, these can be found on the Methodist Church website or through the Moodle site itself. We recommend that tutors view these and become familiar with the basic operation of the Moodle system. It may differ significantly from online systems you have used before, particularly if you are used to more modern “apps” like Skype or Facebook.

An important thing to remember: whatever you do on W:L&P, you won't be able to break anything, and you can always get back to where you started.

Mentors also are encouraged to gain a basic understanding of how the online course works so that they are aware of the materials their students are using, and the nature of their studies.

You will also find course materials that are useful to you in your ministry. Many sections of the course make excellent material for Continuing Development, and you are encouraged to suggest using the materials with your Local Preachers' Meeting or any other group where theological learning takes place.

Note that tutors, mentors and students receive personal usernames and passwords for W:L&P. This enrolment process is triggered by your circuit Local Preachers' Secretary sending the “Local Preachers' Return Form” to the Local Preachers' office. Personal usernames allow access to the whole of the course, including the module reader, which contains extracts from books and journals held in the Cliff College library. These are subject to annual copyright fees per user, hence the need for students and tutors to have personal accounts on the system.

However, “guest access” is available to the whole course apart from the module reader, and can be used at any time for personal study or use in study groups or meetings. Local Preachers' Meetings are encouraged to make use of the course material as part of their Continuing Local Preacher Development (CLPD) programmes.

To access the course as a guest, use:

Username: **guestaccess**

Password: **guestaccess**

### 7.4 What if I have no access to the internet?

W:L&P is designed to be used online, using a computer or tablet device connected to the internet. This connection may be a broadband connection in the home, or a mobile data connection via a mobile phone contract. Additionally, there are many public spaces (e.g. libraries, community centres and coffee shops) where free internet access is available, and some W:L&P students choose to make use of these facilities.

The fact remains however that there are areas of the country where internet access remains difficult. Where students are experiencing difficulties with internet access, we encourage circuits to explore imaginative solutions: perhaps making internet connections in church or circuit offices available for student use, or providing funding to assist with the cost of home broadband connection. Perhaps the training budget previously used to fund Faith & Worship materials could be used for this purpose.

For students who struggle to watch the online video clips in the course because of very poor internet speeds, a memory stick containing these clips can be obtained from the Local Preachers' Office.

We are often asked whether the complete course can be provided in a printed version. This is not feasible due to the production costs involved which would be over £1,000 per copy. In addition, working from a paper copy does not allow access to the audio and video material in the course. Pages and sections of the course can be printed using the print facilities within Moodle.

## 7.5 Additional Needs

Delivery of the course online enables various opportunities to provide support for people with additional needs. Please see the ***Additional Needs Guide*** for more information about additional needs, and what support may be available.

All students enrolled on the course receive a short questionnaire which allows them to indicate whether they have any additional needs if they wish. Students may choose to share these needs with their tutor and/or mentor, who should appraise themselves of the support that is available. Please note the need to protect the student's confidentiality at all times.

Facilities available within Worship: Leading & Preaching include:

- Audio transcription – all text-based parts of the course can now be “listened to” using commonly available (free) software.
- Visual presentation – various facilities are available to alter text size and colour and optimise contrasts etc.

## **8 DISCERNMENT, FORMATION AND TRAINING**

### **8.1 The Formation of a Local Preacher**

The formal process of training as a Local Preacher starts with a conversation between the candidate and their Superintendent Minister, who is responsible for appraising the candidate of the duties of a Local Preacher (Standing Order 564A) and for issuing a Note to Preach. Responsibility for discerning the call of a Local Preacher lies with the circuit Local Preachers' Meeting. The Local Preachers' Meeting then provides the opportunities for the Local Preacher to develop as a reflective practitioner within a supportive fellowship.

The Standing Orders describing the training and recognition of Local Preachers and Worship Leaders predate the introduction of W:L&P and simply refer to "authorised training courses". These Standing Orders continue to apply to Worship: Leading & Preaching, which is now the only authorised training course for new students.

The flow charts in section 7.3 below show how the requirements of Standing Orders fit with the structure of the course for Local Preachers. The formation of a Local Preacher takes place under the oversight of the Local Preachers' Meeting, which is responsible to their Circuit Meeting for discerning the call and supervising the formation and training of a Local Preacher.

### **8.2 The Formation of a Worship Leader**

Responsibility for discerning the call, and for the formation of a Worship Leader lies with the Church Council, who should draw on the advice of their circuit Local Preachers' Meeting. There are fewer guidelines in Standing Orders relating to Worship Leaders, and local contexts and practices and vary. In case of doubt, the Local Preachers' Office will be able to provide up-to-date guidance and advice.

The process is less complex than that for a Local Preacher, and does not involve designated periods "On Note" and "On Trial", formal interviews and the conduct of Trial Services. It is however necessary for a tutor and a mentor to be appointed to accompany the Worship Leader through their training.

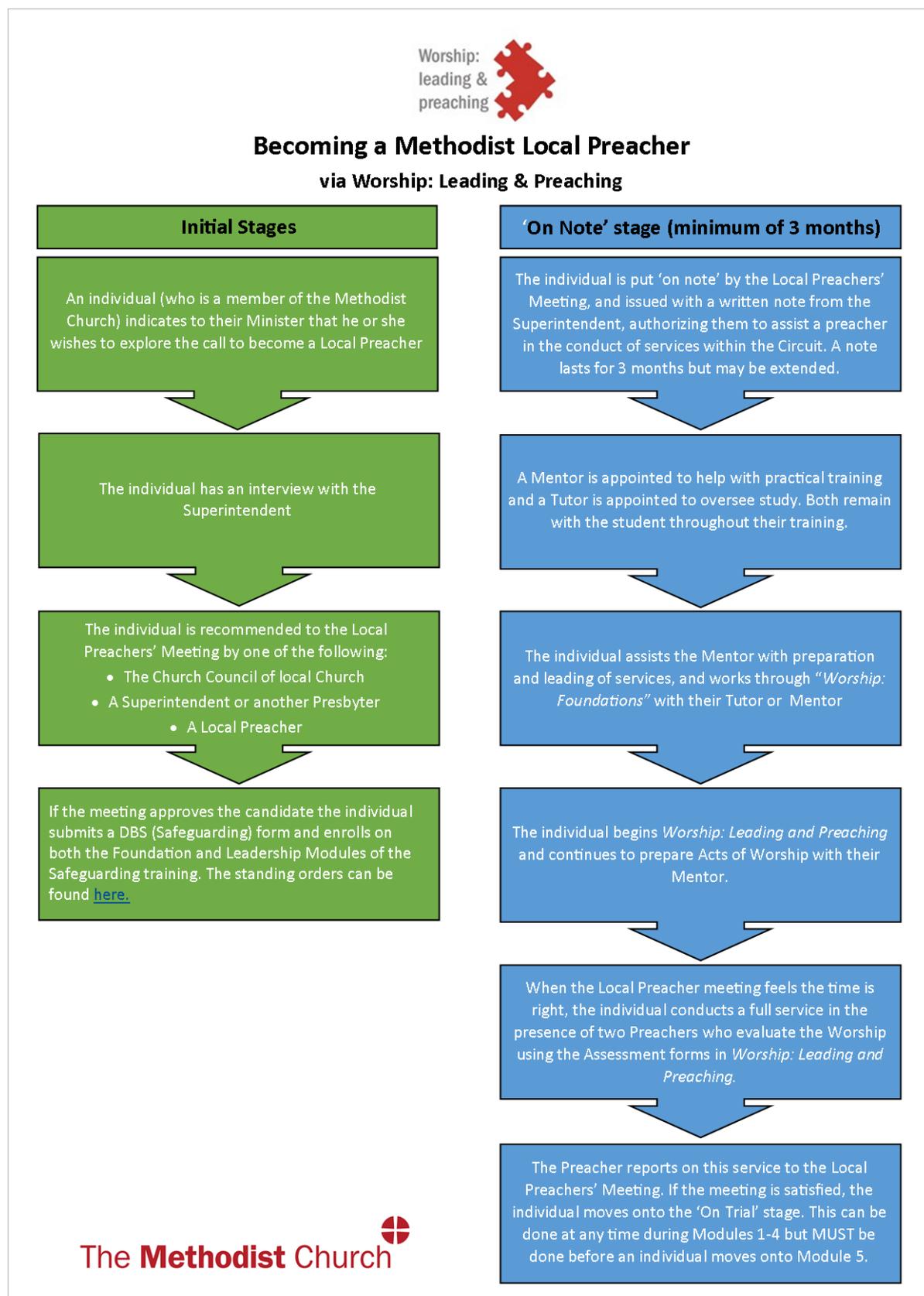
The tutor for a Worship Leader may also be the tutor for Local Preachers, and Worship Leaders in training may be part of a mixed tutorial group of Worship Leaders and Local Preachers and others. The tutor may be based in the Circuit or elsewhere and need not be a Worship Leader or Local Preacher themselves.

The mentor for a Worship Leader need not be a member of the church in which the Worship Leader is training, but should have a good knowledge of the church, be available to work with the student there in the early stages, be present from time to time at worship they lead, and be prepared to accompany them as required at Church Council meetings when their training and development is discussed.

### **8.3 Transferring from Worship Leader to Local Preacher**

From time to time, a student who is training as a Worship Leader senses a call to train as a Local Preacher. The process to transfer to the Local Preacher course is straightforward, but because the "Worship Leader" and "Local Preacher A" portfolios are slightly different, supplementary portfolio items will need to be submitted. Advice should be sought from the Local Preachers' Office, which will be able to guide the student and their tutor and mentor through the process.

8.4 The Process of becoming a Local Preacher





## 8.5 Standing Orders

The processes and procedures of the Methodist Church are governed by Standing Orders contained in the *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*. The following extracts from Standing Orders apply particularly to Local Preachers and Worship Leaders in training.

Note that these extracts are correct at the time of writing (November 2017), but you are recommended to refer to the complete version, which is issued to every Presbyter and Deacon. An electronic version is also available to download at the Methodist Church website: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/governance/cpd/>

### LOCAL PREACHERS

#### 563 Duties and Rights of local preachers.

- (1) Preachers are called of God, to be worthy in character, to lead God's people in worship and to preach the gospel. This places duties on, and gives rights to, local preachers.
- (2) As to worship, it is the duty of local preachers:
  - (i) to lead worship and preach with knowledge, conviction and competence;
  - (ii) to preach nothing at variance with our doctrines ...
  - (iii) to be available for an appropriate number of appointments each quarter ...
  - (iv) to inform the Superintendent of any occasions on which they cannot be available for appointments on the forthcoming circuit plan;
  - (v) to fulfil all appointments given on the circuit plan;
  - (vi) if unable to fulfil an appointment, to arrange for a suitable substitute, informing the Superintendent and a church steward of the Local Church concerned;
  - (vii) to take overall responsibility for an act of worship when appointed on the circuit plan;
  - (viii) to seek to work collaboratively with others in leading worship. ...
- (3) As to fellowship and training, it is the duty of local preachers:
  - (i) to attend the Local Preachers' Meeting on each occasion ...
  - (ii) to continue to develop in their personal spiritual life, in knowledge and understanding, and in preaching and leading worship;
  - (iii) ... to participate in a programme of continuing local preacher development;
  - (iv) to attend a class, housegroup, or similar fellowship group if possible.
- (4) As to membership of the Local Church, it is the duty of local preachers regularly to attend public worship ... and receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ...

#### 564 Candidates.

Those who wish to train to become local preachers must be and remain members.

They must in the first place be recommended to the Local Preachers' Meeting by the Church Council of the Local Church in which they are members, or by a presbyter, presbyteral probationer or local preacher present in the meeting. They should, before the meeting, have shared in an interview with the Superintendent, who should also have consulted as necessary with the candidate's Local Church and the presbyter having pastoral charge of that church in such manner as he or she thinks fit.

#### **564A Persons on Note.**

- (1) Candidates approved by the meeting shall meet the Church's safeguarding requirements and shall then receive from the Superintendent a written note authorising them to assist a preacher in the conduct of services within the Circuit. The Superintendent shall make them aware of the duties placed on local preachers by Standing Order 563.
- (2) ...
- (3) Those on note shall follow a training programme approved by the Methodist Council in accordance with Standing Order 565 below. They shall be required to make a firm commitment to training and study.
- (4) The written note shall be valid for three months and if it is deemed advisable may be renewed for a further such period or periods.
- (5) Every person on note shall have a mentor, who must be a preacher, appointed to give oversight. The mentor, or another preacher, should be in charge of every service in which the person on note takes part and the mentor should continue to give oversight during the period on trial.
- (6) Reports shall be submitted to the Local Preachers' Meeting by the mentor and any other preacher or preachers who have been present at any service in which the person on note has taken part. All formal reports shall use the report form provided by the Connexional Team. Those who are submitting a formal report to the Local Preachers' Meeting shall discuss the report concerned before it is presented to the Local Preachers' Meeting.
- (7) Before persons on note are passed to 'on trial' status by the Local Preachers' Meeting they shall conduct a full service on their own in the presence of two preachers, one of whom may be the mentor. The preachers shall present a report on the service and sermon, on the form provided by the Team, to the meeting. If that report and the report of the local tutor are satisfactory persons on note shall then be advanced by the meeting to the next stage of training, during which they are approved by the meeting to take responsibility for the conduct of worship and preaching and are said to be 'on trial'.

#### **564B Persons on Trial.**

- (1) Before persons on trial are finally admitted as local preachers they shall have not less than one nor ... more than five years on trial.

The Local Preachers' Meeting shall decide each quarter whether each of the persons on trial shall be continued in that status.

(2) ...

(3) ...

- (4) ...
- (5) For at least the first six months of the period on trial services and sermons should be prepared in consultation with the mentor, who should be present at each service and give a report to the Local Preachers' Meeting. Thereafter, and until the final trial service, persons on trial shall each quarter conduct a service in the presence of at least one preacher, and a brief report of this service shall be presented to the next Local Preachers' Meeting.
- (6) All reports of services conducted by persons on trial shall be discussed with the person concerned before being presented to the Local Preachers' Meeting.

#### **564C Local Tutorial Arrangements.**

- (1) Every Local Preachers' Meeting shall appoint a local tutor, who shall oversee the studies of those on note and on trial in the Circuit and, by arrangement, those on note and on trial in any adjoining Circuits. Such appointments shall be notified to the Connexional Team. Every help possible shall be afforded to those on note and on trial in their studies and training.

- (2) ...

#### **566 Admission Procedure.**

- (1) Before persons on trial are recommended for admission as local preachers they must successfully complete two circuit interviews. The first interview shall be held after the person on trial has successfully completed at least half the training programme. The second interview shall be held after the person on trial has successfully completed the entire training programme.

- (2) ...

- (3) For the purposes of the first interview persons on trial:

- (i) shall, during the quarter preceding the interview, conduct a full service in the presence of two preachers and a church steward who is not a local preacher, who shall together prepare a report for the meeting, written on the form provided by the Team;
- (ii) shall have the opportunity to share the story of their Christian experience; their call to preach; and any insights, challenges or difficulties experienced during the period on trial to date.

- (4) For the purposes of the second interview the person on trial:

- (i) shall, during the quarter preceding the interview, conduct a full service in the presence of two preachers (one of whom should under normal circumstances be a presbyter) and a church steward who is not a local preacher, who shall together prepare a report for the meeting, written on the form provided by the Connexional Team;
- (ii) shall have the opportunity to speak of his or her growth in knowledge and understanding of the faith, and maturing of Christian experience;
- (iii) must satisfy the meeting that he or she is faithful to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith and to Methodist doctrinal standards;

- (iv) must assure the meeting that he or she will accept and observe the duties of a local preacher ...
- (5) If, after this second interview, the meeting is satisfied that the person on trial should be admitted as a local preacher it shall so recommend to the Circuit Meeting which, if it agrees, shall approve the person on trial for admission as a local preacher.
- (6) ...

#### **567 Accountability and Review.**

- (1) Local preachers shall be held accountable to the Local Preachers' Meeting for their ministry, their character, their fidelity to doctrine and their fitness for the work ...

### **WORSHIP LEADERS**

Note that whereas Local preachers are directly under the authority of the circuit, Worship Leaders are responsible to their local Church Council. However, the circuit Local Preachers' Meeting also has some responsibilities for worship leaders as is evident in some of the Standing Orders below:

#### **680 Initial procedures.**

Where the appointment of worship leaders is under consideration, the Church Council shall consult the Local Preachers' Meeting of the Circuit and follow Connexional Team guidelines as to the arrangements to be made by the council in relation to ... consideration of the suitability of would-be candidates ...

Persons proposing the acceptance of others as candidates or offering themselves in that capacity shall ensure that the advice of the Local Preachers' Meeting as to their suitability as candidates is obtained for the Church Council. ...

#### **681 Responsibilities of worship leaders.**

- (1) Worship leaders are called of God, to be worthy in character and to assist in leading God's people in worship. This places responsibilities on worship leaders.
- (2) As to worship, it is the responsibility of worship leaders:
  - (i) to help lead worship with knowledge, conviction and competence;
  - (ii) to help lead worship in accordance with our doctrines ...
  - (iii) to be available to help lead worship at times and places agreed with the Superintendent
- (3) As to fellowship and training, it is the responsibility of worship leaders:
  - (i) to continue to develop in knowledge, conviction and competence;
  - (ii) to attend a class, housegroup or similar fellowship group if possible.
- (4) As to membership of the Local Church, it is the responsibility of worship leaders regularly to attend public worship in their Local Church, normally a Methodist church or an approved local ecumenical partnership, and to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

**682 Candidates.**

- (1) Persons offering themselves, or being proposed, to the Church Council must be and remain members. They shall meet the Church's safeguarding requirements before acceptance as candidates.
- (2) Before accepting a person as a candidate the council shall take the advice of the Local Preachers' Meeting as to the applicant's appropriateness for the work.
- (3) Accepted candidates shall enter upon a probationary period, during which they shall follow a training programme ... They shall be required to make a firm commitment to training and study.

**683 Appointment.**

- (1) Reports on the training and probation of candidates shall be made to the Local Preachers' Meeting which shall inform and advise the relevant Church Councils about candidates' progress using Connexional Team guidelines.
- (2) Upon the satisfactory completion of training and probation of a candidate, the Local Preachers' Meeting shall inform the relevant Church Council. The Church Council involved may then appoint the successful candidate as a worship leader within the life of the Local Church for a three year period.
- (3) ...
- (4) ...
- (5) Appointment as a worship leader shall be subject to triennial review by the Local Preachers' Meeting ...

**684 Accountability.**

- (1) Worship leaders shall be held accountable to the Church Council for their ministry, their character, their fidelity to doctrine and their fitness for the work ...

**685 Responsibility for an Act of Worship.**

Worship leaders shall share in the leadership of worship in accordance with the arrangements made by the Church Council ...

At each service in which a worship leader shares the person appointed on the circuit plan of preaching appointments shall retain overall responsibility for the act of worship, but shall seek to work collaboratively with the worship leader appointed to share in that service by the Church Council...