

Remembering Our Call: An Annual Service for Local Preachers

INTRODUCTION

All Christians are called through their Baptism and by the hearing of God's word to ministry and service among the whole people of God and the life of the world. Within the Body of Christ, some are called to the office and ministry of a Local Preacher.

The office of a Local Preacher is a permanent one, to which a person is admitted only once. One of the duties of a Local Preacher is to attend an annual Service of Reaffirmation of their call to preach. This service gives the opportunity for Local Preachers to reflect on their call and to reaffirm their promises.

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

1. The presiding minister says:

God gives the Word
And great is the company of preachers who bear the good news.

Young and old,
from all walks of life,
blessed with experience, imagination, compassion

Warmed by the Word within,
Worshipping God in Spirit and Truth

God gives the Word
And great is the company of preachers who bear the good news.

2. The presiding minister says:

Sisters and brothers,
we meet to worship God,
to give thanks for the vocation of Local Preachers,
to remember with them the commitments they have made,
and to reflect upon their life and ministry.

With humility and joy
we recall the gifts that God has given us –
that within the Church
and in the world
God has called some to be apostles,
some prophets and evangelists,
some pastors and teachers,
some preachers
to build up the Body of Christ
until all come to the unity of faith and knowledge
in God's Son.

3. Let us pray.

Living God
whose Word became flesh in Jesus
and whose Spirit of Truth speaks into our hearts
all honour and glory and worship belong to you.
As our praises pronounce your wonder
may our lives overflow with love,
that our words and deeds
might tell of your goodness
and declare your infinite grace.

Amen.

4. The presiding minister says:

Holy God, hear us as we confess our sins.

If we have taken too lightly
the call to proclaim your gospel:
Gracious God, forgive us.

If we have been complacent in our preparation
and forgetful of your people's needs:
Gracious God, forgive us.

If we have put our own ideas and concerns
before the good news of your love.
Gracious God, forgive us.

If we have failed to listen
to the promptings of your Spirit.
Gracious God, forgive us.

If we have not lived
the message we have voiced.
Gracious God, forgive us.

Silence

Jesus says:
Your sins are forgiven.

Gracious God
with gratitude and gladness
we hear your promise of liberation:
that in Christ
we are forgiven and set free,
and restored to serve you.
Thanks be to you, Living God!
Amen.

5. This collect

Loving God,
as we rejoice in the ministry of preaching,
let the Gospel of your Son come to us,
not in words alone, but in power and love;
that through our life and witness
the world may believe;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

John 12: 20-26

6. Hymn 364 (Singing the Faith) O for a thousand tongues to sing

My great Redeemer's praise

<https://youtu.be/4O9kw3cILpg>

7. Sermon or reflection

ACT OF RECOLLECTION

8. The Superintendent Minister addresses the accredited Local Preachers

Sisters and brothers, at the services in which you were admitted as Local Preachers you undertook solemn responsibilities. I invite you now to remember and reaffirm that undertaking.

Do you continue to believe yourself called by God to the office and ministry of a Local Preacher?

Answer: I do so believe.

Will you continue to be faithful in prayer, in the reading and study of the Scriptures, and will you continue to preach nothing contrary to the doctrines of the Methodist Church?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

Will you continue to accept our discipline and work together with your sisters and brothers in the Church?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

Will you continue to make yourself available to lead worship, attend the Local Preachers' Meeting and be committed to ongoing learning and development?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

The Superintendent Minister addresses all those present:

Will you continue to follow the way of Christ, and in all things seek to promote, not your own glory, but the glory of the Lord?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

May the God of all grace continue to uphold you in the service to which you are called.

Amen

9. These or other prayers of intercession:

In faith we pray to God,
who is more ready to hear than we are to ask.

We pray for the people of God
and for the churches we serve.
Rejoicing in our richness and variety,
may we build each other up in love
and be constantly renewed for mission and service.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for the Local Preachers of this Circuit,
Inspired by the Spirit,
may all who preach and lead worship be bold in proclaiming your truth
and faithful in living out their calling.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for those who are exploring a vocation
to lead worship and to preach
Guided by the Spirit,
may they respond with confidence and faith.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for the sick, the sorrowful and those in particular need
Knowing God's healing presence and peace
may they find life in all its fullness.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We remember before God those Local Preachers who have faithfully lived
and who have died in Christian hope.
Strengthened by their faithful example,
may we follow the way of Christ
and live to God's praise and glory.

Amen.

10. The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught his disciples, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against
us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

THE THANKSGIVING

Expressive God
in the beginning you spoke
and the world came to be;
your life-giving Word
giving birth to all that is –
taking root in our hearts,
etching humanity
with your beauty.
God we praise you
for your living Word.

When the time was right
Your Word became flesh
and lived among us,
revealing your face;
making love real

in acts of compassion;
articulating grace
in story and conversation,
setting people free.
God we praise you
for your liberating Word.

Still we celebrate that the Spirit
fulfils your promise
and speaks your truth,
loosening tongues
and lifting hearts
to sing your praise.
God we praise you
for your life-giving Word.

And so we offer ourselves to love and serve you,
strengthen us with your Spirit;
may your Word grow within us,
and the message of your love be proclaimed throughout the world.

Take us, bless us and send us,
that our lips be touched
with the gentleness of your peace;
that our hearts burn
with your passion and integrity;
that our lives declare
the good news of your love
for the whole creation,
in the name of Christ,
Amen.

11. Hymn 345 (Singing the Faith) And can it be

<https://youtu.be/VnSyRLRHQro>

12. The presiding minister says:

Faithful God
whose Word does not return empty
but accomplishes all that you purpose,
may your blessings
fall like rain to water the earth,
nourishing seed for our food,
and filling us with the abundance of your love,
through Jesus Christ your living Word. **Amen.**

As we feast on your Word of Life
may the blessing of God,
ever three and ever one,
be upon us now and always. **Amen.**

13. The presiding minister says:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.