



## **Protocol for Worship Planning**

All worship is offered by us to God in response to God's love expressed through Jesus Christ. Worship is corporate and inclusive, and is led by those recognised and authorised within the Church who have the gifts, calling, training, and support to facilitate the best worship we can offer to God.

## **Role of Churches in Worship Planning**

Churches wishing to play an active role in worship planning should agree, at Church Council, a small team of individuals (often the stewards in smaller churches). This team is responsible for ensuring that the whole church is considered when worship is planned.

All arrangements for worship must be made with the involvement of the minister who has pastoral oversight. This minister will usually be the person who communicates arrangements to the Circuit Plan Maker.

The purpose of these arrangements is to:

- Facilitate creative and appropriate worship in each church
- Enable those with worship-leading gifts to develop them in response to God's call
- Ensure the best use of worship resources across the circuit

In remembering that Methodism is a broad, justice-seeking, and inclusive church, these arrangements are not intended to allow churches to remain narrow in their theological approach or to invite only preachers they like!

## **Planning Process and Timescales**

All worship planning must be carried out well in advance so that requests are submitted before the deadlines for plan making.

Churches may approach Local Preachers (LPs) or other accredited preachers to request that a service be taken at a particular church by a particular preacher on a specific date. Both the church and the preacher must agree to this arrangement before it is entered into the Chrestos plan-making system. It is not for the Circuit Plan Maker to make arrangements for the local church.

The Chrestos system includes a function to confirm that requests have been agreed. Using the Chrestos system is preferable to separate emails to the Circuit Plan Maker.

Whilst the Circuit Plan Maker will make every effort to meet requests, this may not always be possible.

As has been the policy for some years now, it is by definition the responsibility of the local church to fill an LA and we reiterate that circuit local preachers should not be asked to cover LA services since they have not been available on Chrestos for that appointment. We owe a duty to them to balance the burden on them. It is the responsibility therefore of churches locally to manage the service or invite an accredited preacher from elsewhere who has satisfied the compliance requirements set out in this protocol.

## **Eligibility to Lead Worship or Preach**

Preachers and worship leaders in Methodist churches must fall into one of the following categories:

- Qualified and active Local Preachers or ministers within Methodism, with up-to-date Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training, Unconscious bias training, a current DBS and up-to-date Advanced Safeguarding Training
- Qualified and approved Worship Leaders, approved by their local Church Council and having completed the Circuit-approved Worship Leader training course
- Individuals from either of the above categories who are in training or testing a call, with the permission of the Superintendent
- Ministers of another denomination who hold Authorised or Recognised and Regarded Status within the Methodist Connexion
- Recognised preachers of another denomination that is part of Churches Together in England or Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
- People of good standing within the Methodist Church

People recognised by a local church as possibly having a call to preach or to lead worship, including those with clearly discerned gifts, should be encouraged to participate in leading worship. This must be done in consultation with the superintendent minister and is subject to full compliance with Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD) requirements, including safeguarding, EDI, and unconscious bias training, as well as holding a current DBS.

No preacher or worship leader without compliance will be included on the plan.

Preachers marked with an asterisk (\*) on the plan, Worship Leaders without up-to-date training or recognition status, and any other individuals invited to lead worship or preach may do so only with the explicit permission of the Superintendent.

## **Standards of Communication**

All communication relating to worship planning is expected to be courteous and gracious. Aggressive or rude communication or behaviour will be addressed appropriately.

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**Rev Rob Hilton** – Superintendent  
**Rev Donna Broadbent-Kelly** – Circuit Plan Maker  
**Mr Ian White** – Secretary of the Preachers' Meeting

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