

Resources for Local Preachers' Sunday

Introduction

We praise God for all that the Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust is doing now to help Local Preachers in need

We trust God for all that is to come through LWPT.

We give thanks to God for 156 Years of Service of LPMA

Background Information

What was the Methodist Local Preachers Mutual Aid Association?

LPMA was a "mutual" charity set up by Local Preachers in the mid-1800s to help any Local Preacher who needed help. This voluntary Association run by Local Preachers helped Local Preacher widows and dependents as well, when need arose.

Why change?

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" is one way of looking at things. But imagine how a caterpillar grows until it has stored up enough energy to form a chrysalis, so that it can transform itself into a beautiful butterfly. LPMA has gone through such a transformation. The new Trust will transform the work of LPMA into something much more beneficial and worthwhile. As we continue to seek God's guidance, something beautiful will evolve.

The Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust (LWPT) will face the challenges of the future with the help of its Friends

We envisage having one place where all Local Preachers can receive the practical and emotional support, fellowship, education, care and love which has previously come from the LP Office and LPMA. The new trust has taken over the work of LPMA, and expanded its vision to encompass all who assist in our worship – the Ministers, Preachers and other leaders of worship who all support our faith and enhance our experience of coming near to God. In the future, as ecumenical partnerships are forged, we hope that the Lay Preachers and Readers of other denominations will also be encouraged to become involved. Every one of our churches will be invited to support this new venture as generously as they previously supported LPMA, as Friends of LWPT. Anyone who makes a donation will be regarded as a Friend of LWPT. "Friends" implies goodwill, friendship and fellowship. Friends will put their trust in the caring ability of LWPT. LWPT will trust the Friends to make the vision a reality by generating income for the work. Friends of LWPT will be encouraged to meet locally and share in fellowship and activities that should be fun. There are fantastic opportunities to tell how we transform the lives of those preachers & leaders of worship in need and so, through raising awareness, raise funds for those who might need extra help

- to make ends meet at home,
- to buy the materials for study of new courses in worship, preaching and leading our congregations in prayer or music,
- to obtain the state benefits to which they are entitled,
- to enable people to continue to live in our four "Westerley" homes, or in appropriate care homes near to where they live.

What exciting times of promise and hope we live in! The new trust will do everything that LPMA already does, but for many more people in imaginative new ways. This mutual trust will enable us to make our services come even more alive so that God will become a real friend through our encounters Sunday by Sunday in Church!

The Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust will reflect our new inclusiveness. Jesus has entrusted us with the Gospel. We continue to put our **trust** in Jesus as seek a new way forward. **The new Trust** is asking the Methodist People **to trust them** with their money. The Charity Commission has a rigorous checking procedure to ensure that the new **Trustees** operate within the fresh guidelines we have set up and we are devising ways to make those Trustees accountable to the people they will benefit, as well as to our new Friends. So we can **trust** LWPT to spend the money we give wisely, to help the needy people we are supporting and to fulfil the objects of the new organisation.

Meditation The God Who Moves Us On by Lois Morton.

You are a God of movement.

You came from the Glory of Heaven to share in the life of humankind. You gave your life to become the Saviour of the world. Your death was overcome in the Glory of the Resurrection and You again returned to the Glory of Heaven.

We, your people are called to movement.

You bring us to birth and enable us to grow to adulthood. You call us to a life of faith and constantly ask us to explore what this means.

Our work for You has to also develop. Your faithfulness of the past has brought us to the present and you call us now to move on into the future. Although this may mean change, a move forward brings life and new opportunities.

God of movement, enable us to move with You. Take us to places of which we have only dreamed. Bring Your work to its full potential and us at last to Your Eternal Glory.

Resources for worship on Local Preachers' Sundays throughout the year - The Caring Church

Bible readings and Notes.

Isaiah 6, vv. 1-9a. Whom shall I send?

In his vision, Isaiah recognised his own unworthiness as he saw the Lord's Glory, which to him filled the whole temple. Isaiah's feelings mirror those of many of us when the call comes, "Whom shall I send?" He recognised a society that is very much like our own – seriously flawed. Through the symbolism of his time, Isaiah is reassured and feels cleansed in God's sight. Recognising the call, the answer came, "Here I am, send me." Following the response, the action is needed – Go and tell. This is the call to all of us, 'Go and tell the Good News'.

Psalm 146 (HAP 885) Praise the Lord O my soul.

God's care for the people of His Creation.

Mark 6, vv. 30 – 44. Care for those within and without.

The disciples had been sent out two by two to preach to the people and when they returned to Jesus, they were exhilarated by what they had done – driving out demons and healing. Such great interest had been aroused that they had no time to eat and they were under stress. They were also upset by the news of the death of John the Baptist. Tempers were fraying and they were at the end of their tether. Jesus recognised this and took compassion on them, suggesting that they go off to a place of solitude to rest. He recognises our vulnerability as well and does not demand more than we can give. Christians must be sure that what they are doing is what God wants and not what their own pride demands.

Jesus also shows his compassion for the crowd of outsiders who met them on the other side of the lake. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd and began to teach them and later to feed them. We need to see that it is not only those in the inner circuit for whom God cares but the entire world.

1 Corinthians 12, vv. 12-31. The Caring Members.

We have here a famous word picture of the unity of the Church. Paul considers the way in which the individual members of the human body work together in such an amazing fashion and suggests that the church with its great diversity of people and organisation has a similar unity. Plato said that we do not say, "My finger has a pain," but "I have a pain in my finger." What the "I" is to the body, so Jesus is to the church – the unifying factor. In v. 27 Paul says, "You are the body of Christ"; from this tremendous thought we can realise that it is we that have to undertake his works of compassion and care and to tell of his wonderful love. There is a great need for all Christians to support each other in times of suffering and sorrow, as well as times of joy and success. LPMA now works closely with the Methodist and WRU Churches and is endeavouring to carry out such commitment.

Adapted from the L.P. Sunday leaflet 2004 produced by LPMA and the LP Office

Lighting a Candle & Prayer

What is the significance of doing this?

1. Lighting a candle is a prayer – a visible reminder of God's light and hope for those who are sad or are unwell, as well as for the people whose prayers are of joy and praise and thankfulness.
2. Lighting a candle is a parable - In burning itself out it gives light to others. Jesus, who gave himself for others, calls us to give ourselves.
3. Lighting a candle is a symbol - the flame gives light and warmth and shows love and hope. We believe that through Jesus, God will bring us light in our lives.

O Heavenly father, we pray for the light of Jesus in our own lives: we ask you, Lord, for your light and your blessing for our journey. Illuminate our lives and surround us with your glory that we may reflect your light wherever we travel. Like the candle we have lit, which in giving of its light it gives of itself, may we give ourselves in your service, Amen.

Collect for Local Preachers' Sunday

O Loving Father, whose Son Jesus Christ asked his disciples to pray about any situation, speak to our people that they may hear your call to preach and be ready to train by prayer and study. We ask that our preachers and leaders of worship may continue to give without charge, the blessings they have received without cost, through our Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

(Adapted from the L.P. Sunday leaflet in 2004)

A prayer of Intercession for all Leaders of Worship

Lord, bless Your Church around the world and especially here in _____. Gracious God, your church is made up of your people. So, may we all be led by Your Spirit, filled by Your Grace, committed to Your Will and devoted to Your Service. May we find the words to say to all who ask to know the hope we have within us. As we seek to come closer to our fellow Christians in other denominations, may we find the things that unite us. As we work and worship together, so may we grow ever more close to each other so that those outside our church will see that we are one in owning your son, Jesus, as our Lord.

We pray for our ministers, who lead our communities in our family life. Bless them in their ministries to us as they bring leadership and vision to their congregations, as they preach the good news of your love from the pulpit and in their lives and as they bring their pastoral gifts before you, caring for each one of their flock.

We ask you to bless our Local Preachers who lead your people in worship Sunday by Sunday. They devote so much time to their training, often in the evenings and at weekends, finding time around their paid employment. Once accepted as fully trained and committed, they give a lifetime of service to you for no payment except that they are fulfilling their Call to Preach your Gospel. Encourage them and inspire them in their lives. Help them to keep themselves fresh in their calling by diligent prayer and study.

Lord, we remember so many others who are also called to lead worship and those who help our preachers and ministers. We also pray for all who teach our young people and support the church through being good stewards, or visiting those at home. As we each have our different gifts, so there is something that each one of us can offer and we praise you, Lord, for this privilege. Thank you for asking us to help you.

We all need support in our lives. So, loving God, we thank you for the work of the Local Preachers' Office as it encourages our preachers and supports the work of continuing our Personal Development as Preachers in the form of Training Opportunities, Study Days and Work Shops. We praise you that it continues to help us to recruit new people to continue your work of preaching the Gospel and then seeks to provide up to date materials for study for those Local Preachers in Training.

May the Leaders of Worship and Preachers' Trust gain the Trust of all our Friends, so that others may also find Security, Peace, Contentment and Joy through its activities.

We thank you that our four "Westerley" homes are beacons of light in their Quality of Care, as respect and dignity are shown for each one of our residents. They certainly have a high quality of life offered to them, which enables them to be re-born as they have renewed energy, hope and enthusiasm to resume activities forgotten or abandoned many years ago.

Lord, help us to love you and those around us for the sake of Jesus. Bless those we know personally who need **our** love and **Your** love. Give us the grace, we pray, that by word, action and prayer, we may be for them the light of love they crave. Help us, Father God, to put the Gospel into action and to preach it with our lives. We remember now before You those whom we know and Love.

It may be helpful to have a short time of silent prayer for the needs of the individual

Lord, we need a new spirit and a new confidence as we seek to be Your voice in the communities where we live and work. Help us to understand that we are first of all receivers - empty vessels needing to be filled with Your love. Show us how words are not always needed, but that lives of forgiveness and beauty are more powerful than words. We thank You, Lord, that You are interested in our thoughts and concerns and ask for the Holy Spirit's power to help us to pray, through the name of Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

**A suggestion for an Address to Young People suitable for different ages.
The Water Wheel. (A new way of looking at things.) Barbara Witt.**

I have here some things that are part of a bath set that young children love to use at bath time. I have brought three different items for us to look at.

The first is a solid scoop like a bowl. Could someone demonstrate how we use it? What does it do? It keeps the water to itself. To empty it you have to turn the scoop upside down. It is useful when you want to transfer water to another container.

The second one is a sieve. As soon as you try to put the water inside, it runs out again through the holes. It is useful if you have some sand in the water. When you fill the sieve, the water will run out again and the sand will remain inside and so the two will be separated.

The third one is a water wheel. It looks good on its own, but nothing happens until you pour in some water from the top. When the water fills the buckets, it becomes part of the wheel and the whole wheel starts to turn. Together they are producing enough power to make things happen. Large water wheels were used in mills to turn heavy machinery. That is how corn was ground into flour.

We hear the stories of Jesus from the Bible. How do we react to what we are told? Are we like the scoop?

Do we hold onto the stories of Jesus for ourselves, without thinking about them and what they mean for us?

Or are we like the sieve? Do we let the message that Jesus wants us to hear drain through and run away before we can do anything about it?

If we let ourselves be like the water wheel, then the things that we hear will become part of us. Jesus is a positive force for good. As we share Jesus with our friends and listen to what we learn, then Jesus is able to make things happen in our lives.

LWP Homes are all named Westerley – here are some real stories:

People who need some respite care at one of our Westerleys - Betty's story.

A 99 year old local preacher, blind from birth, lived independently in Local Authority Sheltered Housing. Betty assisted her local church in house group leadership and organised prayer groups etc. and the congregation was most caring to her. But she had been unwell over the winter and decided that she would value a little extra care. Visiting one of our homes for a 2 week holiday confirmed in Betty's mind that this was the best thing she could do – she made a close friendship with another resident, Anne also in her late 90's; Betty was cross with herself that she had not considered the move earlier! Described by the staff as "a lovely lady – one in a million", Betty is well settled. – she leads their devotions regularly and has offered to give a talk to the residents and staff! Anne and Betty have become the life and soul of the social and spiritual life in the home and have encouraged many younger residents to be more active!

A Minister's Widow aged 97 years requested that she could go to our Westerley at Grange over Sands for a 2 weeks' holiday. Still living independently, she said that she felt ready to be pampered! All the members of staff were entranced by her lively mind and lovely gentle nature, telling me that her presence is an absolute delight! In her thankyou letter the lady wrote, "I have had a really wonderful time. I have not heard one single grumble from anyone while I have been here!"

The proof of the pudding must also surely be evident in another Local Preacher who went from Leeds for a respite holiday to one of our "Westerleys" and ended up staying there for good! What better testimonial than that!

People who need help to live on a day-to-day basis at one of our Westerleys - Martha's story.

Martha, at the age of 92, decided that she was now old enough to consider her moving into an LPMA home. And so it was that my wife and I came to visit her shortly after she had settled in. Eager to show us her room, she began to lead the way. Pausing in the corridor, she enquired, "Can you manage the stairs?" We (in our 40's at the time) said we could. How we marvelled as she nimbly strode on up the steps leaving us amazed by the new energy she displayed. Change had certainly brought new enthusiasm and vigour to her life.

Martha had been hospitalised and was very frail before she moved to our Westerley at Woodhall, where she thrived. As we talked to her, we were inspired by the serenity, not just on her face, but also in her whole being. She informed us that she had been asked to lead the devotions for the Local Preachers' meeting, explaining that "God will help me when the time comes." Later on she sent us a copy of her reflections on preparing for this event – two A4 pages of beautiful copper-plate together with an apology that her handwriting wasn't up to scratch that day! I wish I could write as legibly now, never mind when I am over 90! Life in a Westerley had certainly given her new birth into a fulfilled and energetic witness to her Lord!

John and Barbara Witt live in the Leeds District. John is a Local Preacher and a Trustee of the Leaders of Worship and Preachers' Trust (LWPT).

Leaflets and donation envelopes are available from the LWPT Office