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# Welcome to A Methodist Way of Life

This is the first “stopping off” point in the journey of A Methodist Way of Life, where the theme will be “Prayer.”

Whether you are looking at a PDF document or a paper booklet, this is the starting point for exploring the resources.

In this “How to” guide, I will explain everything you need to know:

- How to plan A Methodist Way of Life into your Autumn program
- What resources are available for ministers, local preachers and worship leaders
- How to customise the resources for your specific situation

The resources have been designed with an eye for flexibility across various situations around the circuit. Quite deliberately, they can be tailored and adapted. However, this means that people will need to plan ahead. For this reason, the resources are being made available in mid-July, even though the materials will be used from September to the end of November.

Please read EVERYTHING in this guide carefully, as I will try to cover most eventualities (not all will be relevant to everyone, so please bear with me).

If there is anything else you need to know, then you are welcome to email me at [paulwalker71@me.com](mailto:paulwalker71@me.com).

Meanwhile, enjoy exploring the resources and materials, and I pray that you will find them helpful as we dig deeper into prayer over the next few months. Remember, this guide is designed to assist you in this journey.

*Paul Walker*  
*MWoL Facilitator*

## A Brief Explainer

A Methodist Way of Life has emerged recently as a key discipleship pathway for Methodist Christians. Rooted in John Wesley's ministry, it utilises the metaphor of a journey to help us understand how we grow as followers of Jesus.

This journey consists of 12 practices, each represented by a station along a train journey. Each time we visit a station, we pause on the journey, learn more, explore the theme and allow God's Spirit to instruct us.

Taking the Methodist Way of Life Journey isn't a "quick fix." There are 12 stations, one for each of the "practices." We will spend approximately three months at each station, so we expect our MWOl journey in the Cleveland and Danby Circuit to take around four years.

Theoretically, we could have "boarded the train" at any station in A Methodist Way of Life. Think of it as the Circle line on the London Underground Map!

However, we had to start somewhere—and I decided we'd start with the station of Prayer. From there, we will journey to "Worship", "Noticing", and so on. Don't worry if you have a personal favourite theme. We WILL get there eventually, as we'll visit every station on the journey.

## How to schedule *A Methodist Way of Life* in your church calendar

The materials for the prayer station consist of ten weekly resource packs.

There are thirteen Sundays from the beginning of September through Advent Sunday, which this year is Sunday, December 1st.

This means there are THREE "spare" Sundays during the Autumn when no resources are provided.

1. I assume all churches will want to schedule Harvest Sunday on a Sunday in September or October.
2. Most—if not all—churches will hold a special service on Remembrance Sunday or participate in community acts of Remembrance in their locality.
3. Most churches will have another church-specific Sunday that needs to be slotted into their program—perhaps a Chapel Anniversary, Guest Service, or similar.

For the above reasons, and because two of those scenarios won't be on the same Sunday in every church, it didn't seem sensible to provide materials for every Sunday in those three months.

I suggest that Stewards sketch out an Autumn plan for their Chapel NOW so that plans can be implemented for the successful "roll out" of A Methodist Way of Life. Start with your three non-MWOl Sundays as outlined above. You can then slot the weekly themes (below) into the rest of the Sundays in the order given.

It's vital that Stewards consult with visiting ministers or local preachers well in advance of appointments during this time. Because of the built-in flexibility I have outlined, chapels will likely explore different weekly themes on different Sundays.

For this reason, A Methodist Way of Life will require flexibility and adaptability from BOTH the individual chapels AND those scheduled to take services via the Circuit Plan. Please do not assume that any given Chapel will be covering a specific theme on any given Sunday. As always, consult well in advance!

## What are the weekly themes?

The Prayer "station" comprises ten questions, which research (on Google) tells me are ten of the most common questions people ask about prayer.

1. What is prayer?
2. What did Jesus say about prayer?
3. Is there a "right" way to pray?
4. Does God hear my prayers?
5. Why doesn't God seem to answer my prayer?
6. Can prayer change God's mind about things?
7. Do I need to have faith to pray?
8. What about when I feel like I can't pray?
9. How does forgiveness relate to prayer?
10. How can I keep my prayer life fresh?

You will detect a progression with the themes, and wherever possible, chapels should try to stick to this order, as later themes build on earlier topics.

Having said that, I don't think it's the end of the world if, for example, weeks six and seven get swapped around! But, generally speaking, it will be best to stick to the order set out above.

## What resources are available?

Broadly speaking, each weekly resource pack consists of three collections of materials.

- **Preaching Resources** are for ministers, supernumeraries, and local preachers
- **Worship Resources** for anyone leading worship or preparing a local arrangement service
- **Group Resources** are for those planning midweek groups, fellowship meetings, or cafe-style services.

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

## 1. Preaching Resources

There is a wide range of preachers operating across the circuit. At one end of the spectrum are ministers or supernumeraries with many years of preaching experience. Then, there are local preachers in training or relatively new to the ministry.

As such, some will feel comfortable starting from scratch, whilst others will value some help and assistance.

The preaching resources provided, therefore, should NOT be considered prescriptive in any way. Nobody is trying to teach Grandma how to suck eggs! If you want to "work up" your sermon using your own experience or from existing resources, then that's fine.

However, please stick to the weekly theme and, in fairness to those planning for other weeks in this series, don't "infringe" on other topics from other weeks.

For each week in the station, you will find

- An introduction to the theme
- The key weekly reading, together with suggestions for a second readings
- Engaging with the text—key themes, lessons and applications from the key reading
- Research—a collection of resources, surveys, background information, web links, etc.
- Quotes you can use to pep up your preaching
- Sermon Outline—one example of how you might develop a sermon. Feel free to use it, adapt it or ignore it!

## 2. Worship Resources

Again, I am aware that our circuit's worship planners have a broad range of experience. Some have planned worship for many years in numerous contexts. At the other end of the spectrum are those charged with planning for local arrangements, perhaps for the first time!

To offer maximum flexibility, you will find for each week:

- Hymn and song suggestions both from Singing the Faith and Hymns & Psalms
- Call to Worship
- Opening or Gathering Prayers
- Penitential resources and liturgies
- A newly-written Collect for your theme
- A sample set of Intercessions for use “as is” or adaptation
- Sending Prayer and/or Benedictions

### 3. Group Resources

Not all chapels have midweek small groups, although several do. So, I have provided materials to help develop the Sunday theme beyond the worship service.

Alternatively, many of these resources can be incorporated into Sunday morning worship. This might be especially helpful for those planning a local arrangement and need to find suitable resources for “the sermon slot.” They can also be helpful if you plan Cafe-style worship and require resources for people to use around tables.

With a little imagination, some of these resources can even be adapted for a “normal” Sunday service. Be creative!

In this section, you will find:

- Prayer Activities, including meditations, journal prompts and scripts for reflection.
- Ice Breaker Questions
- Group discussion Questions
- Other Creative Bible Study materials

## Twelve Top Tips for getting the best from these materials

**1. Start Early:** The resources are available from mid-July for use from September to November. Start planning early to ensure a smooth implementation.

**2. Read Everything:** Make sure to read the entire guide as it covers most eventualities. Not everything will be relevant to everyone, but it’s important to be aware of all the information.

**3. Customise:** The resources are designed to be flexible and adaptable to various situations. Feel free to tailor them to your specific needs.

**4. Plan Your Calendar:** Sketch out an Autumn plan for your chapel now. Start with your three non-MWoL Sundays and then slot the weekly themes into the other Sundays in the order given.

**5. Communicate:** Consult with visiting ministers or local preachers well in advance of appointments. Do not assume that any given Chapel will be covering a specific theme on any given Sunday.

**6. Follow the Themes:** Try to stick to the order of the weekly themes, as later themes build on earlier topics. However, swapping around a few weeks is not the end of the world so long as visiting preachers are consulted at an early stage.

**7. Use the Resources:** Each weekly resource pack consists of Preaching, Worship, and Group Resources. Use them according to your needs.

**8. Stick to the Theme:** When preparing sermons, stick to the weekly theme and avoid infringing on other topics from other weeks.

**9. Be Flexible:** A Methodist Way of Life requires flexibility and adaptability from both the individual chapels and those scheduled to take services via the Circuit Plan.

**10. Explore the Journey:** Remember that A Methodist Way of Life is a journey. Each station represents a practice, and we will spend approximately three months there.

**11. Enjoy the Process:** Enjoy exploring the resources and materials. They are designed to assist you in this journey.

**12. Reach out:** If there is anything else you need to know, don't hesitate to email me.

*I hope these tips will be helpful in your journey of A Methodist Way of Life.*