

# Learning Network

Courses and Training 2022-23

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# The Learning Network

The Learning Network is a team of practitioners tasked with equipping circuits to be places of lifelong learning and to fulfil their calling. A mix of lay and ordained staff from a range of professional and ministerial backgrounds, they work with others across the Connexion and ecumenically to respond to the learning needs of the church. We are members of the Connexional team.

This booklet provides information for the 2022-23 Connexional Year of opportunities for learning and development available to anyone in the Connexion. The vast majority of events are free to attend. No dates are provided as they will change but each page includes an email link to the lead person for further information and where possible a link to a booking or landing page that will provide dates and booking information.

This is just some of the work of the Learning Network. To find out more about what is offered in your region, contact your Learning Network Coordinator whose contact details can be found on [page 24](#).

# Additional Needs Webinars

## All Inclusive?

Collaborating with **Urban Saints**, **The Torch Trust** and **MHA** to focus on three areas where the Church can move forward in support and provision for individuals and families with additional needs.

- Children, youth and families with a range of additional needs,
- Those who have sight loss,
- Support for individuals and families with dementia.

The partner organisations will provide up to 20 sessions per year.

An online forum established quarterly for conversation and questions about positive practice and ideas for churches.

Course information will be published on the [Learning Network calendar](#)

For further information please contact [Geoff Bond](#)

Bookings and dates via Eventbrite (each is a separate link):

- [Including autistic young people](#)
- [Supporting children and young people with additional needs](#)
- [Supporting families](#)
- [Making sense of our senses](#)
- [Disability Equality](#)

# Biblical Literacy Development

Manna and Mercy course

Biblical Literacy - Focus on a single book

Biblical Literacy Webinar with Professor Robin Baker

Bible Month

## Manna and Mercy course

The course is a journey through the story of the Bible, structured to deepen people's theological skills; enhance their skills in handling and understanding scripture and enhance participants' relationship with Jesus.

The course takes a social approach seeking to understand first the text as it was intended by the writers and heard by the first recipients.

It would suit everyone seeking a deeper understanding who is willing to be challenged and to grow.

It is offered as nine 2 hour sessions on zoom and will run twice a year.

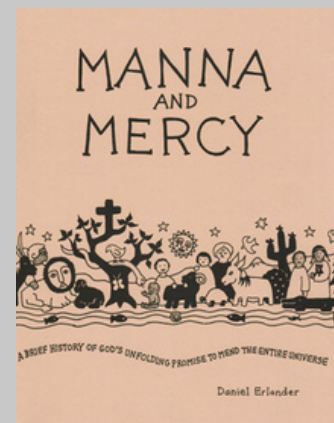
*"Adrian's ability to gently guide us through each chapter completely left me wanting to know more do more and live a fuller Christian life and I know for certain I now, subconsciously go about my daily life in a different way. Looking at things 'through the lens of Jesus' has helps me to understand more."*

*"You did warn us that we might find Manna and Mercy challenging and uncomfortable! Thanks for introducing us to Manna and Mercy, Adrian. I could say I'm enjoying it, but that's the wrong word. I'm very glad to be part of the group."*

*"This is an incredibly powerful way of getting a thematic overview of scripture. I have no doubt that many in our congregations (and in the wider world) would benefit enormously from the material. This not just to significantly aid the reading of scripture but also in thinking through all sorts of modern day issues."*

For further information about the course click [here](#) and [here](#)

For more information about dates contact [Adrian Roux](#)



## **Biblical Literacy: Focus on a single book**

A short tour through one specific bible book, probably one of the minor prophets with an emphasis on being close to the text and finding teachable, preachable points.

This will be a brief study of a book of the bible taking a 'close to the text' and socio-political approach to understand what the author's intention and message. It would suit preachers, teachers and small group leaders because it would provide them with 'content' but equally would be suitable for anyone seeking a more in depth study than they might receive in their circuit.

It will be offered as four 1 hour sessions online.

For further information about dates and booking contact [Adrian Roux](#)

## **Biblical Literacy Webinar with Professor Robin Baker**

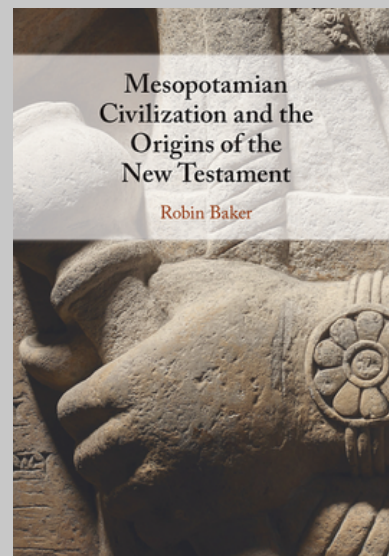
Professor Robin Baker will be talking about Middle Eastern (and particularly Mesopotamian) culture and how that influenced the New Testament and Christian thinking.

It will appeal to those interested in more specialized and niche academic knowledge.

A one off, in the first half of November, probably a hybrid event.

Click here for further information on [Professor Baker](#)

For further information on the event contact [Adrian Roux](#)



# Bible Month



Bible Month is an annual campaign that celebrates scripture by inviting the whole Methodist Connexion to feast on one particular book of the Bible together.

Through a menu of carefully curated resources, training and learning opportunities, churches and circuits are encouraged to taste and see the goodness of an individual text; enjoying some of its unique flavours, considering its origins, appreciating its place alongside the rest of scripture, and savouring the unique contribution it might make to our faithful living and learning today.

The campaign is aimed at developing biblical literacy across the Connexion. Specific input is targeted at a variety of groups: local preachers / worship leaders, CYF workers, small group leaders, and individuals wanting to engage more deeply with the Bible / specific texts.

Primary delivery takes place in March and June.

*From an LP/WL Training Event: "As a Local Preacher it was great to have some much needed insight in preparation for the 'Good News' with fresh and refreshed thoughts. Thank you all."*

*From a Youth Worker Training Event: "This event was great. The concept of lenses was well introduced and demonstrated. The opportunity to actively participate was appreciated. It left me wanting more."*

[www.methodist.org.uk/biblemonth](http://www.methodist.org.uk/biblemonth) is updated regularly as the suite of resources is developed

For further information contact [Michael Wadsworth](#)

# Circuit Stewards Training

Are you a new circuit steward, or have been one for a while and are looking to dive deeper in to your roles & responsibilities and develop your skills and knowledge?

This course introduces new Circuit Stewards to expectations and responsibilities of serving in this area of circuit leadership and will refresh existing Circuit Stewards in their ongoing learning and development.

Each session will offer opportunities to explore ideas and share experiences as well as identify areas for further action, ongoing learning and development particularly in these areas:

Session 1: Calling and Role of the Circuit Steward

Session 2: Distinctively Methodist

Session 3: Positive Working Together

Session 4: Continuing to Learn

Session 5: Mission Planning

Delivered on zoom in five weekly 2 hour sessions. The whole course will be offered twice a year.

*"With the course spread over multiple weeks, it allowed time to read and digest the content of the modules ... and gave me a good idea of what is involved in becoming a Circuit Steward. The course itself was very welcoming and relaxed in its approach, ensuring all areas were covered. Breaking into groups allowed you to meet other people, share and learn."*

For further information contact [Jenna Thorne](#)

For more information and booking click [here](#).

# Exploring your calling

Encounter

RSVP

## Encounter course

Encounter is

- A place to deepen your awareness of God
- An opportunity to reflect on your faith journey
- A supportive small group environment for sharing and learning together
- A place to help you discern your unique calling

It is for adults discerning vocation and ministry (lay or ordained) and seeking to deepen their discipleship. It takes place over eight 2 hour evenings plus two Saturdays, all on zoom

*"Encounter gave me a better understanding of myself  
in relation to God and my life's path"*  
Alison, Lambeth



*"I honestly cannot recommend the programme enough" Deborah*

*"The programme really helped me to discover my "calling", as if it was designed specifically for me. This is because the programme is designed to increase an understanding of God and how we are being called by God. The programme goes stage by stage, e.g. God, Self, Discipleship, Vocation, Ministry, Mission. This is like peeling an onion one layer at a time until you get to the core. If not for this programme, I would still be making excuses for not responding to my calling. I am now on the Worship: Leading & Preaching course to train as a Local Preacher. To God be the Glory" Ruth*

*"Encounter helped shape my journey of calling, it taught me to look within – for the unexpected – and find my path" Phil - London*

*"I've become a steward and come off the 'backbenches' at church – I don't think that would have happened without Encounter. I've also considerably strengthened my prayer life and Bible study." Durham group participant*

For further information contact [Tricia Mitchell](#)

For dates and bookings click [here](#)

# RSVP: Responding to God's Call

What is God's calling for you in a changing world:

Four sessions covering:

- Social justice and vocation;
- The bible and vocation;
- God's calling and my identity;
- Decision making

What is God's  
calling for you in  
a changing  
world?

A vocational exploration course for anyone exploring any type of vocation within the church (lay or ordained) or out in the world.

Come to any or all Saturday morning online sessions

Four stand-alone session, each different – you can attend one or all or something in between.

*"The first 2 sessions have been great. I particularly like the 3 sections: preparatory work, Saturday workshop and follow up work"*

For further information contact [Alison Ransome](#)

For dates and booking information click [here](#)

# Line Management and Lay Employees

Line Management Training

Lay Employee Orientation course

## Line Management Training

Line Management Training is designed for any new or existing line manager.

This one-day offering covers the basics of line management, including key skills, management styles and conflict management.

Participants on this training day will join colleagues from across the Connexion online. Each stand alone session from 10.00 - 15.30 hrs is repeated 6 times per year

*"It was so interesting and helpful, full of interesting content delivered in imaginative and thoughtful way. Best training I have had in my 9 years of being a lay worker."*

Further information from [James Pickin](#)

Book your place [here](#)

## Lay Employee Orientation

A day for new Lay Employees to meet, explore their role, understand Methodism and get to grips with key employment practices and much more!

*"This was such a helpful day as I begin my new role in the Methodist Church."*

One 6 hour day on zoom

Book a place and check dates via [Eventbrite](#)

For further information contact [Rachel McCallam](#)

# Leadership

## Leadership Essentials

### Lay Leadership skills

## Leadership Essentials

A short 4 session, online course for those new to church leadership, those who want to know more about leadership, and/or those who have responsibility, but don't feel like a leader.

Topics covered:

- Servant Leadership
- Knowing who you are as a leader
- Knowing where you're heading as a leader
- Challenge and change in leadership

Four 2 hour sessions offered once a year

For further information contact [Nigel Pimlott](#)

Click [here](#) to book your place.

## Lay Leadership Skills

A day exploring leadership skills for lay people working in the Methodist Church, exploring the themes of:

- Leadership styles
- Leadership skills
- Leading meetings
- Managing volunteers
- Encouraging participation
- Team and group dynamics
- Understanding conflict styles.

A 6 hour day on zoom offered once a year.

*"I've got so much out of this day to take into my leadership role."*

Book your place on [Eventbrite](#)

Further information please contact [Rachel McCallam](#)

# Positive Working Together

Scripture, Spirituality and Conflict  
Growing through Change and Conflict  
Bullying and Harassment

## Scripture, Spirituality and Conflict

Exploring how scripture sheds light on conflict, on managing change, and on the spiritual journey.

Usually 9.30 to 4pm online, offered twice in the 2022-23 Connexional year.



*"The 3 spiritual disciplines were both valuable and added additional depth to the day.  
The day put our work into context  
Thank you for putting it on. It was excellent use of my time."*

For further information contact [Brec Seaton](#)

Click [here](#) for dates and booking information.

# Growing through Change and Conflict

Consider your 'conflict style' and how you respond in difficult or tense situations.

Explore how conflict and tensions escalate in a church context, and begin to consider some tools to de-escalate conflict.

Usually a 9.30am to 4pm day online offered three times in this Connexional year.

*"One of the best pieces of training I have ever done. It has increased my self-awareness immediately"*

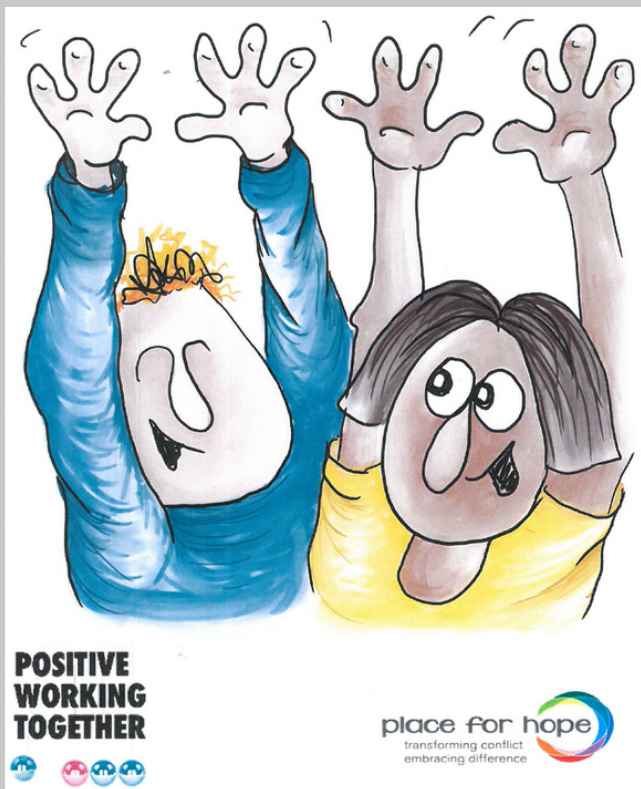
*"Awesome course - one of the best!"*

*"It has given us a clear way to work with conflict"*

*"It has been an excellent day to step back from past conflicts and to recognise where the church was at the time (stuck on the trip step!) and therefore what tools would have been useful at that time. Been a really inspiring"*

For further information contact [Brec Seaton](#)

Click [here](#) for dates and booking information.



## Bullying and Harassment

Explore a basic understanding of bullying and harassing behaviour, and learn some basic techniques to create good practices in ministry that can address negative behaviour.

The workshop may not be suitable for individuals who are in a complaint process.

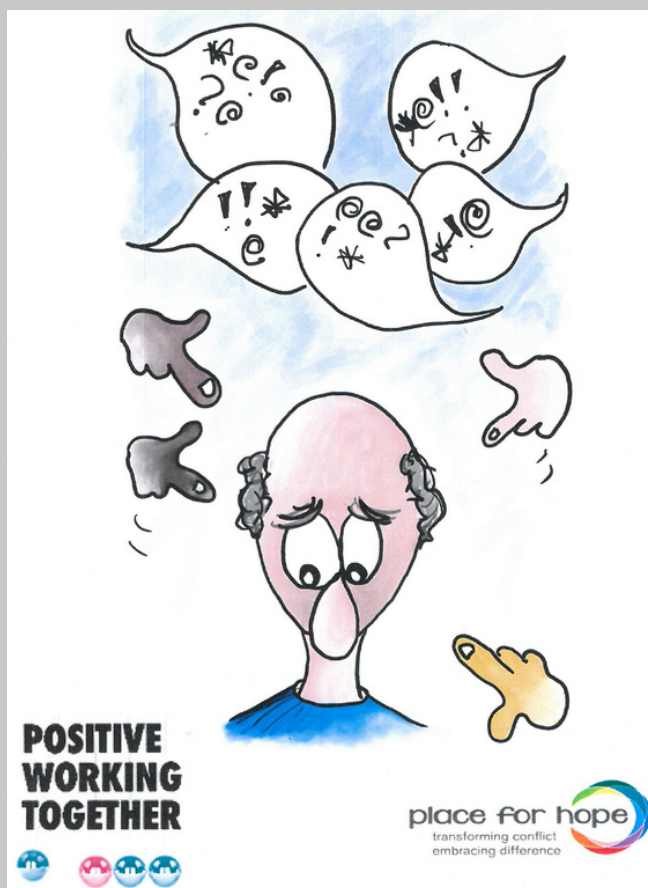
Usually over two sessions eg 9.30am to 12.30pm on zoom. It will be offered twice in this Connexional year

*"Both stimulating and enriching and I have taken some time off today to reflect on what I have learnt."*

*"I felt I was given strategies to help with bullying behaviour"*

For further information contact [Brec Seaton](#)

Click [here](#) for dates and booking information.



# Supervisors and Supervisees

Being a Supervisee Part 1

Being a Supervisee Part 2

Continuing Development of Supervisors

## Being a Supervisee Part 1:

### Essential Skills for New Supervisees

An introduction to the process of Supervision in the Methodist church and the Supervisees role in enabling a fruitful Supervisory experience.

The training takes place in two parts:

Preliminary Learning Tasks taking 40-50 minutes to be completed before a single 3 hour online event via zoom. It will be offered twice at the start of each connexional year.

*"A very well run course and I feel better equipped for when I start my supervision sessions in September. Thank you very much."*

*"Very interesting - I didn't know what to expect. Now I'm looking forward to supervision."*

For further information contact [Alison Ball](#)

Dates and bookings via [Supervisee1 Eventbrite](#)

## Being a Supervisee Part 2:

### Getting the most out of your Supervision sessions

This is for anyone interested in improving their supervision experience. Come along and

- Look at ways to stimulate ideas to bring to supervision
- Refresh your understanding of the purposes and methods of supervision
- Observe and practise skills

This online training takes 3 hours and is offered twice a year at the start of the Connexional year.

*"The trainers covered all the basics and introduced appropriate materials to focus on something more specific. working in pairs was helpful and helped to break the methods used"*

For further information contact [Alison Ball](#)

Dates and bookings via [Supervisee 2 Eventbrite](#)

# Continuing Development of Supervisors



A library of 8 different courses, lasting from 3-8 hours.

Each course is offered twice during the Connexional year.

Here are some examples of what is on offer:

- Using creative methods in reflective supervision
- Working effectively with agreed records in reflective supervision
- Supervision of Supervision
- Additional Models
- Balancing Support and Challenge in Reflective Supervision
- What makes online supervision good?
- Supervising Cross-culturally
- Listening Theologically in Reflective Supervision

For further information contact [Jon White](#)

Dates and booking information can be found [here](#)

# Supporting Rural Churches

## Positively Rural

## Rural Dreaming Beyond

Positively Rural and Rural Dreaming Beyond are two online communities seeking to support those who serve in rural churches and others involved in rural mission. They are open to anyone of any denomination involved in rural ministry, including volunteers, lay workers and clergy. Four meetings a year are offered covering a wide range of topics relevant to rural churches and communities.

## Positively Rural

Positively rural offers four online meetings each Connexional year covering a wide range of topics relevant to rural churches and communities.

For further information contact [Rachel McCallam](#)

## Rural Dreaming Beyond

What is social prescribing, and how can churches and faith groups get involved?  
With the cost of living crisis as it is, are foodbanks the answer? Or is there another way?

We'll be joined by Peter Jones, Chair of Growing Compassionate Communities. Sarah Hulme, Rural officer for the Methodist Church, as well as representatives from Food Hubs from across the Connexion.

For further information contact [James Devenish](#)

Dates and booking information for both can be found [here](#)

# Theological Literacy

Theology Book Club

Theological Reflection in Practice

Thinking Theologically

## Theology Book Club

The Christian tradition is rich with amazing thinkers and activists who have helped us be the kind of Christians we are today. The Learning Network has created a Theology Book Club to give an opportunity for you to hear, explore and engage with these brilliant 'voices' of our tradition.



You don't need to consider yourself a 'theologian', but if you love to explore and think deeply about your faith this might just be for you. Each Connexional year we choose two or three books to explore (but our hope is that you will help us find other books to read in the future).

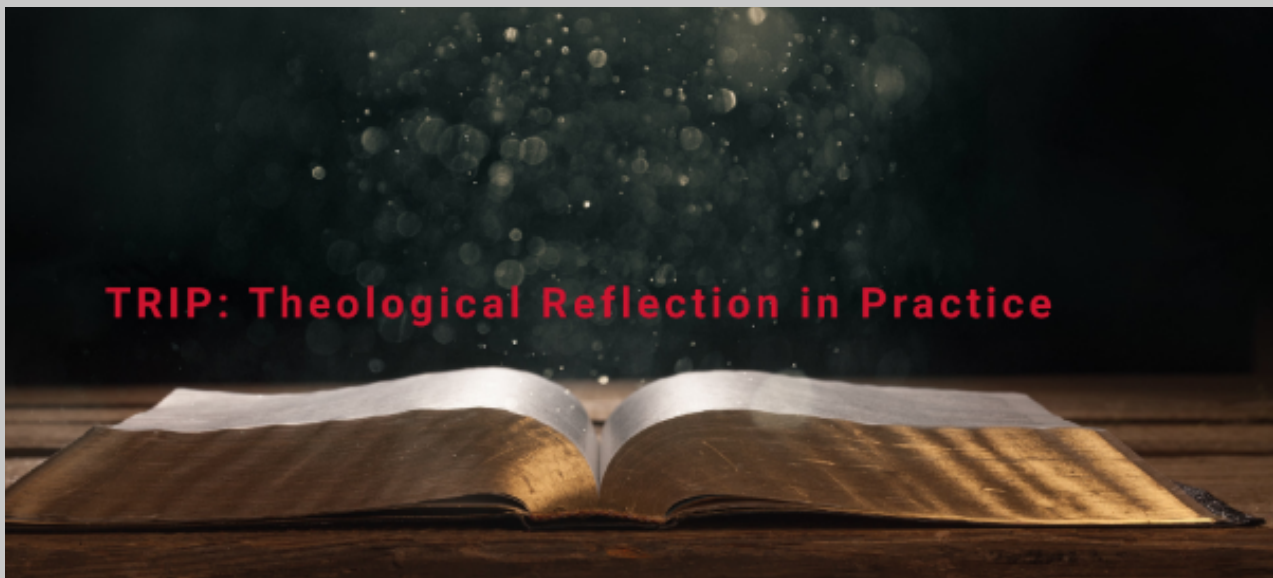
Each book is explored in two 1.5 hour sessions - so 4 sessions if we study 2 books/6 sessions if we study 3 books during each Connexional Year.

*"Having struggled alone in the past to read a few theology books so this approach is something I have been really looking for and am very excited about."*

For further information contact [Simon Sutcliffe](#)

Click [here](#) to book your place.

# Theological Reflection in Practice (TRIP)



We have a gift for you! The Learning Network would like to offer you the opportunity to theologically reflect on various aspects of ministry. This year the sessions will respond to whatever is happening at the time (eg a general election might lead to a session on political theology).

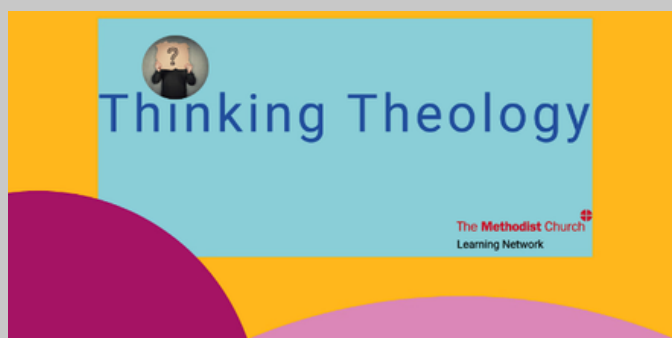
This is open to anyone, but will be particularly useful for those in ministry (lay and ordained) who help to lead churches in mission and ministry. Ministry is an adventures so why don't you join us on a ....TRIP!

*"I just wanted to share something with you which has happened to me since the TRIP session this week. After sharing some of my feelings of a lack of confidence in talking to people directly about life and death questions I received a call from the wife of someone who is approaching end of life and he wondered if I could ring him. I have just had a long, natural conversation with him about his feelings and fears about death and dying . He had lots of questions and we explored possible answers together. Funny how God works eh. Thank you for guiding us through that session."*

For further information contact [Simon Sutcliffe](#)

Click [here](#) to book your place.

# Thinking Theologically



This is an opportunity to think about how we do theology in order that we can help others to 'think theologically'. Each session will be packed with ideas, tips and theories for facilitating theological enquiry with people in our churches. If you lead worship, bible study groups or fellowship groups - this

might be for you.

This year's themes are around Feasts and Festivals - some theological work on the lesser festivals. The online format is three 2 hour sessions, one per term.

*"I think this reflection of Tradition is a very important factor in the changes we are facing within our churches. The material helped me to reach affirmation of my thoughts and reflections at this weekend's Synod" (2021-22 Thinking Theologically participant)*

For further information contact [Simon Sutcliffe](#)

Click [here](#) to book your place.

# Unconscious Bias Training



This training session is suitable for those engaged in the stationing invitation process, as well as all members and leaders of the Methodist Church.

Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control. It happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences.

They have the power to undermine and derail our desire to act justly and fairly towards others including our recruitment, promotion, and openness to new ideas.

A single online 75 minutes session, with some preparatory material and follow up afterwards. It will be offered seven times during the Connexional year.

*"It was useful, relevant, well-handled training"*

For further information contact [Kristie Legg](#)

For dates and booking information click [here](#).

# Worship Leading and Preaching Support

## WPL Support: Tutors and Mentors

Supporting tutors and mentors of WPL 3.0

Up to five 3 hour sessions each Connexional year to opt into and hone your skills as you support your students to become Worship Leaders and Local Preachers confident in serving the Methodist Church. Each session will focus on a different area.

*"The meeting was focussed on the needs of Tutors to enable their students to fulfil the Portfolio requirements. In particular, the need to avoid plagiarism, by quoting sources carefully, and ensuring thorough Theological Reflection." (attendee 2021-22)*

For further information contact [Wendy Allen](#)



## WPL Support: Induction for students

Are you a student of Worship Leading and Preaching course? You might be new or it might be a while since you studied. This course aims to familiarise you with expectations, approaches, opportunities and skills to get the most from the course.

Four 90 minute evenings on zoom, offered twice a year Sept/Oct & Jan/Feb

For further information contact [Wendy Allen](#)

# More Learning and Development

This booklet captures what we are offering to the whole Methodist Connexion, wherever you are located through online delivery.

However, we also provide learning opportunities in regions, districts and circuits. If you have a request or an idea for an event in your region please contact the coordinator using the links below. If you are not sure which region you are in this [page](#) might help.

There are 10 regions, each with a Coordinator and a team of Learning and Development Officers offering a range of ways of learning and developing. It is not all about courses!

Cymru Wales Region, Coordinator [Delyth Davies](#)

Eastern Region, Coordinator [David Friswell](#)

London Region, Coordinator [James Pickin](#)

North East Region, Coordinator [Tricia Mitchell](#)

North West and Mann Region, Coordinator [Alison Ball](#)

Scotland and Shetland Region, Coordinator [Lorraine Darlow](#)

South West Region, Coordinator [Howard Wilson](#)

Southern and Islands Region, Coordinator [Adrian Roux](#)

West Midlands Region, Coordinator [Geoff Bond](#)

Yorkshire Plus Region, Coordinator [Rachel McCallam](#)

The Director of Learning and Development is [Richard Armiger](#)

The Senior administrator of the Learning Network is [Funmi Oyedokun](#)