

Circuit, in Methodism, in the Christian faith, in God's story of love. We are doing what people of faith have always done in order to best be about the work God has given us. We do so standing on the shoulders of spiritual giants.

Hear, discuss and discern...

- How might we, as Sheffield Methodist Circuit, come to a shared understanding of God's mission for us at this time?
- How best, at this time, might we organize ourselves to join in with God's mission?
- From our experience, scripture and history, are there lessons we could learn (without judgement or guilt)? Are there things that we might want to remember and rediscover?
- What can we put in place to help us
 - **Plan** what we need to do next and understand how and why we're doing it
 - **Do** what we agreed to do and to know when we've done it
 - **Review** what we've done and be clear about what our next step needs to be (backing to planning...)
- How might we help each other know that that we all have a role in God's mission and encourage each other in our different but complimentary roles?

Final Prayer:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2 -)

God of all, help us remember faith is a journey not a sprint.

We are not alone, we help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

Best of all you are with us. The journey itself is yours.

It is already and eternally complete. We've just gone fishing and are coming home.

Help us therefore, to fish when, where and how you tell us,

even when we feel we've done that before,

because you are the Lord of new beginnings and unexpected results.

When our fishing is done for this day,

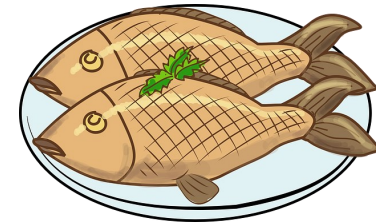
may we share food for the journey and strength for the soul

in the harbour of mutual care and your everlasting love. **Amen.**

This weeks study and prayers written by Revd James Morley, a member of MVT

What do I do with all these fish?

Session 6: Organisation



Casting the Net: John 21: 1-6

21 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he showed himself in this way. ²Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin,^[a] Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

Holy Habits: Acts 2: 42-47

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds^[b] to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home^[c] and ate their food with glad and generous^[d] hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

What do I do with all these fish?

I've never been fishing, but I have cooked some very large salmon for a lot of people, so I know that after you have caught your fish, you need to do many things before you can share the fish in a meal. You inspect the net and throw back anything you did not mean to catch. You wash the fish, you remove the scales, and you prepare it for cooking. In this Bible Study we will be looking at the key readings from the "Casting the Net" document through the lens of the responses (fish?) we received from the "Casting the Net Process", along with our circuit Mission Priorities. We hope you will join us on this journey.

The study can be used as part of your individual devotions, as a group in your housegroup or church, or by joining in the sessions online.

Opening Prayer

God of past, present and future,
thankyou that we are part of Sheffield Methodist Circuit for this time.
May the spirit of grace and possibility fill us as we confer, hear and discern.
May we be how you need us to be for this time
because this is the day that the Lord has made.
The Lord who covers our past pain, our present anxiety and our future hope
with the tears and blood of resurrection and renewal.
As many members of Christ's one body, may we
celebrate and encourage the God-given gifts of others.
In thankfulness for the good news of life and love we experience,
may we freely offer who we are and what we bring
to the banquet of heaven on earth.
As we do, so shall we hear Jesus say: "You have done a beautiful thing". **Amen.**

Starting question

Think of a time you've planned and organised something. How did you plan and organise? Did you plan and organise?!? How was your experience? What did you learn from it?

"What you want to do is..."

Best-selling media lists contain many products telling you how to be and do all you want to be or do and how to be and do it faster, bigger and better. E.g. "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" (Stephen R Covey); "7 Steps to Accelerated Success" (John L. Fitzgerald); or "7 Steps to Success" (Brian Tracey"). You may get excited at the prospect of some "blue-sky thinking"; you may feel non-plussed at "pushing the envelope"; you may think all this fast-track improvement is at best something that

should be gladly given to Caesar or at worst is something that's just pure snake oil. The reality is the Church, District, Circuit, local congregations and us as individual disciples need some structure or organizational plan. At the very least we might want to know where we fit in and how we contribute to our shared commission from Christ (Matthew 28: 18-20). It might also be helpful to know we're playing our part alongside fellow-disciples and encouragers with shared values about what we're all doing and why we're doing it. Having a way of knowing when we've taken another step along the road is also useful so that: (a) we know we've done it; (b) we can rest if we need to and; (c) we can make sure our next step is in the right direction

"We just need a bit of W.W.J.D."?

- Can you think of examples of "What Would Jesus Do" in terms of organisation? E.g. The Good Shepherd (John 10: 11-18); being directive at the feeding miracles (Matthew 14: 16); telling the disciples, as experienced fishermen, to cast the net on the right side (John 21: 6)
- Do we need different approaches in different contexts?
- Can you think of different examples of organisation within the Bible? E.g. patriarchs and matriarchs; families; tribes; nations; prophets; monarchs; judges.
- What works well and not so well in these examples?
- What organizational examples might the first apostles and early Christian communities give us? E.g. Meeting together for worship and hospitality; sharing resources and making sure there was enough to go round (Acts 2: 44-46). Being part of a bigger body - different gifts and roles but working together; interconnected and interdependent (1 Corinthians 12: 12-31).

"Remembering our Roots"

John Wesley had some serious organizational skills (thanks in no small part to his mum). Or maybe he was a bit of a workaholic or control freak? Whatever your perspective, from the structured days of the Holy Club at university to the Methodist Societies across the UK, John Wesley applied method to Christian life and put in place models for people to be able to grow in grace and holiness through mutual spiritual accountability, worship and access to education and support.

Yet Methodism has been on a continued journey of reorganising in response to different times and needs. There have been different expressions of Methodism. Some of those came together and reorganized. Districts and Circuits have also changed shape and size.

Perhaps we can be encouraged that, as we think about how best to organize Sheffield Methodist Circuit at this time, this isn't the first time it's happened—in this