

Criteria and Competencies

Competencies for those to be admitted to the office and work of a Local Preacher

Preachers are called by God, to be worthy in character, to lead God's people in worship and to preach the gospel. This places duties and gives rights to local preachers which are laid out in Standing Order 563. The Local Preachers' Meeting will be looking to all its Local Preachers to evidence the following competencies.

1 Vocation (Call and Commitment)

A preacher needs to know and the church needs to be satisfied, that they are called and able to speak of being called by God. This calling is to follow as a disciple, to lead as a preacher of the gospel and to show how both are lived out in their own lives day by day. The Local Preachers' Meeting therefore looks for:

1. The ability to relate their Christian experience
2. The ability to articulate a call from God to be a preacher
3. The ability to narrate their Christian experience and growth within it, with reference to the insights gained, challenges and difficulties experienced in training (SO 566 (3ii))

2. Vocation (Ministry in the MCB)

The office of Local Preacher is particular to the Methodist Church; the call to this office is a call to exercise a responsibility in the leading of worship in a circuit, seeking to connect the people of God to God, and to share in the discipline and fellowship of the Local Preachers' meeting. The privilege of holding this office comes with duties and responsibilities. These are laid out in SO 563. The Local Preachers' Meeting therefore looks for:

1. The capacity to assure the Local Preachers' meeting that they accept and observe the duties of a Local Preacher as described in SO 563 1-4
2. An understanding of lay ministry within the Methodist Church in Britain
3. A demonstrable and enthusiastic commitment to the Methodist Church in a local circuit and a clear articulation of a desire to serve Christ in that context
4. An understanding of the diversity within the Methodist Church and the local circuit

3. Relationship with God

At the heart of a preacher should be an awareness of the love of God and a desire to know more of that love. This will be seen in the preacher's life and ministry. Living in relationship with God can never be just about individual piety but is lived out in the community of the church. The Local Preachers' Meeting therefore looks for:

1. A relationship to God that has the capacity to grow
2. A personal commitment to Christ evidenced by active ministry in the local circuit
3. A regular commitment to attending local worship, receiving Holy Communion and attending class or house group

4. Personality and Character

A Local Preacher by their commitment to discipleship is someone who seeks to live a holy life. Their commitment to following the way of Christ will be demonstrated not only in the way they lead worship but

in the way they live out the call to holiness in their daily life. The Local Preachers' Meeting therefore looks for:

1. The ability to take responsibility for the conduct of public worship
2. A commitment to regular attendance at and participation in the Local Preachers' meeting
3. Personal integrity demonstrated in taking responsibility for all the duties of a Local Preacher
4. Integrity in living as a disciple of Christ

5. Being in Relationship with Others

The call to holiness is a call to social holiness in which faith is demonstrated through the integrity of one's relationships with others within and beyond the life of the church. The Local Preachers' Meeting therefore looks for:

1. The ability to work with diversity inside and outside the church, with respect, amongst other things, to the different gifts of lay and ordained Christians, those from different social or ethnic backgrounds and those who represent a variety of theological understandings
2. Recognition of the fundamental equality of all people before God
3. The acceptance of the discipline of the Church

6. The Church's Ministry in God's World

Local Preachers are called to share in the mission of God; through Christ, God is reconciling the world to God. Local Preachers are therefore expected to view the world through a theological lens, to reflect theologically on what they see, and to speak to a world in need of God's love. We therefore look to Local Preachers to evidence:

1. The ability to see, and to draw the attention of others to, God at work in the world
2. The ability to proclaim the good news of Christ Jesus with conviction and awareness of the local context
3. The ability to lead worship and preach with knowledge, conviction and competence (SO 563 2i)
4. Fidelity to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith and the Methodist doctrinal standards (SO 566 4ii)
5. An awareness of the Global Methodist Church Family
6. An understanding of the ecumenical context of British Methodism.

7. Leadership and Collaboration

The Local Preachers' meeting is one of the ways leadership is demonstrated in circuit life. By taking an active part in this meeting and by their preaching and leading of worship a Local Preacher is expected to offer leadership in collaboration with others for the glory of God. The Local Preachers' Meeting therefore looks for:

1. The capacity to take overall responsibility for an act or worship whilst seeking to work collaboratively (SO 563 2 vii & viii)
2. Commitment to the circuit plan and a willingness to be responsive to the needs of the circuit
3. Appropriate understanding of the status of the Local Preacher within the life of the circuit

8 Learning and Understanding

Being a disciple of Jesus is a journey of discovery upon which we learn new things about ourselves and God. Preachers are committed to continuing to develop their skills and understanding through learning and theological reflection, for the sake both of their own growth as a disciple and to equip themselves for a ministry that serves the needs of those to whom they are sent. The Local Preachers' Meeting therefore looks for:

1. Demonstrable faithfulness in reading and studying the Scriptures
2. Demonstrable commitment to ongoing learning (SO 566(7)) through to a programme of Continuing Local Preacher Development
3. Commitment to ongoing and appropriate training in Safeguarding.
4. Regular attendance and participation in a class / house / fellowship group
5. Knowledge of the doctrinal standards of the MCB including a proven familiarity with Wesley's Sermons
6. A demonstrable commitment to faithful participation in the Local Preachers' Meeting
7. The ability to demonstrate an awareness of contemporary world events and articulate a Christian response

9 Communication

Communication is at the heart of a preacher's ministry. Whilst this is often through words, a Local Preacher should seek to reflect what their whole being is saying about the good news of God. The Local Preachers' Meeting therefore looks for:

1. An ability to lead worship according to recognised liturgical principles
2. A proven ability to preach with knowledge, conviction and competence (SO 563 2 i) in a variety of styles and contexts
3. A proven ability to speak coherently about God, their Christian faith and their discipleship