

Conference Business Digest: A report for local churches about the business of the 2025 Methodist Conference



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The 2025 Methodist Conference, held at Telford International Centre:
Presbyteral Session 26-27 June; Representative Session 28 June – 2 July.

methodist.org.uk/conference

The Conference is the governing body of the Methodist Church in Great Britain and meets annually to discuss matters affecting the life of the Church, the nations and the world.

Induction of the President and Vice-President for 2025/2026

On Saturday 28 June, the Revd Richard Andrew was elected and inducted as President of the Conference, and Mr Matthew Forsyth as Vice-President. They shared their theme of 'Our Story, Our Song' in their addresses to the Conference.

You can read both addresses in full here:
methodist.org.uk/about/structure-and-governance/the-methodist-conference/conference-2025/presidency/president-and-vice-president-2025-26/

Reception into Full Connexion and Ordination Services

New presbyters and deacons were ordained on Sunday 29 June 2025.

During the Sunday worship, 21 presbyters and three deacons were received into Full Connexion with the Conference, along with five presbyters by transfer, and two presbyters by reinstatement.

Having been received into Full Connexion on Sunday morning, those presbyters and deacons not already ordained travelled to churches around the region with their families and friends for the ordination services.

Connexional Council

Following the changes to the governance structure of the Church which took effect in September 2024, the Connexional Council is charged with responsibility for the general control and management of the connexional administration of the Methodist Church. The Council presented reports from the Ministries, Mission, and Resourcing Committees, along with other matters of report or for decision.

Revising the Methodist Worship Book

The Conference agreed to begin a process of revising the Church's authorised liturgies. This decision sets in motion a major project to equip the Church with new and revised liturgical resources, available in a wide variety of formats, including digital and printed versions. The first stage of the process is to consider the style and language to be used in the resources, in order to enable the Church's worship to be as inclusive as possible, in line with the Conference's commitments in its strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity. Should the 2026 Conference adopt the report, the expectation is that the first new liturgies to be commended for experimental use will be brought to the Conference of 2028 and formally authorised in 2030.

Healing Ministry and Neurodiversity

In response to a particular request made through a notice of motion in 2022, the report from the Faith and Order Committee highlights the importance of being reflective and sometimes self-critical in relation to healing prayer, both for the person praying and the person being prayed for. The Conference adopted pastoral guidance for responding to such requests for prayer, and asked for further work to consider how the church might express appropriate repentance for the past exclusion of neurodivergent people in the life of the church and to explore how the church might be more inclusive of neurodivergent people, as well as ways to address ableism in the Church. The Conference also directed consideration of more resources relating to healing ministry in general.

Stationing Review

The report of the Stationing Review Group asserted the need for significant changes in the processes governing the stationing of ministers within the Methodist Church. The recommendations arose from a comprehensive review of existing practices. The report was received by the Conference but it referred the proposals for a new process for matching presbyters with circuit appointments to the Ministries Committee, directing that a further report be brought to the 2026 Conference.

Part 11 Standing Orders

Following the Conference's decisions in 2024 to adopt new processes for complaints and discipline procedures, the Conference adopted the Standing Orders to give effect to that. The report set out some points of clarification which had arisen in the drafting of the Standing Orders.

3Generate and the Voices of Children and Young People

The Youth President's report considered how the voices of the young people are calling for the Church to be more accessible for those who are neurodiverse or unfamiliar with Church culture.

The Conference urged Circuit Local Preachers' Meetings to consider how they can involve children

and young people in the planning and execution of acts of worship and recommended that Circuits and Districts bring together dispersed youth populations, especially in rural communities for activity-based sessions.

Methodist Forces Board

The Conference received a report from the Methodist Forces Board highlighting the work of those who minister to the members of His Majesty's armed forces throughout the UK and around the world. The Conference directed the Faith and Order Committee, in consultation with the Forces Board, the Joint Public Issues Team, and others to create theological and pastoral resources to support the Methodist people at this time of conflict and insecurity, in the light of the reports and public statements of the Church on matters of war and peace.

Assisted Dying

The Conference noted the current public debate regarding assisted dying, arising from the introduction of a Private Members' Bill on the subject. The Conference last adopted a formal statement on euthanasia in 1974, and a debate in the 2015 Conference led to a decision by the Council to make resources available to enable churches to respond to those facing decisions about end-of-life. Mindful of this, the Conference directed that a task group be established to review the Conference's position with regard to assisted dying and to report not later than 2028.

Hope in God's Future

The Conference received an update on *Hope in God's Future* from the Director of Environmental Engagement, Dr Hamish Leese. Dr Leese told the Conference that the 2011 Statement has served its purpose well but was in need of revisiting and developing to acknowledge the changes in scientific and theological understanding. The Conference agreed that a steering group be appointed to review and update the text by 2027. The Conference heard that more resources will be created to encourage churches to carry on the work to aspire to achieve net zero by 2030.

Presbyteral Session

The Conference adopted a report from the Presbyteral Session which had directed the Secretary of the Conference to draw together a working party to review the role and purpose of the Session and to report no later than 2027.

Budget

The Conference adopted the connexional central services budget for 2025/2026 and approved a new funding model for the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes.

A justice-seeking Church: conferring on justice priorities

The Conference spent time conferring on justice for people seeking asylum and refuge. This involved listening to the realities and experiences of people who have experienced seeking asylum and those who have been alongside them. The Conference was invited to listen, pray and confer, to discern together the call of God in this area of work.

Memorials

Memorials are requests from Circuit Meetings and District Synods to the Conference. They play a vital part in enabling the Conference to hear and to respond to concerns from across the Connexion. This year, the Conference considered and replied to 22 memorials on topics including cuts to the UK aid budget, the housing crisis, Israel/Palestine and the Tent of Nations, Christian Zionism, TMCP processes, safeguarding, training requirements, local preacher and worship leader training, ministerial development review, resourcing

administration, and the *Don't Buy Into Occupation* report. The Conference also considered a District Resolution, brought by three Districts, which was concerned with ministerial wellbeing. The Conference affirmed its commitment to the wellbeing of all its ministers, and directed the Ministries Committee to work with others to bring forward proposals to assess and address high stress levels among ministers.

President and Vice-President designated for 2026/2027

The Conference designated the Revd Mark Slaney to be President and Caroline Stead to be Vice-President of the Conference 2026/2027.

Appointments

The Conference made a number of appointments and reappointments, including:

the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler as Secretary of the Conference for a further five years from 1 September 2026;

the Revd Conrad Hicks as Chair for the South East District from 1 September 2025;

the Revd Dr Rachel Deigh as Chair for the West Midlands District from 1 September 2025;

the Revd Faith Nyota as Chair for the London District from 1 September 2025;

the Revd Rachel Bending as Chair for the Channel Islands District (in addition to the Southampton District) from 1 September 2026.

Future dates of the Conference

The Methodist Conference will meet in Telford from 25 June – 1 July 2026.


The Methodist Church

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