

GUIDANCE AND APPLICATION PACK

COMMUNITY
OF EVANGELISTS

for individuals

An introduction to the Community of Evangelists

What is evangelism?

Our Calling describes evangelism as “making more followers of Jesus Christ”. Simply, evangelism is sharing the good news of the gospel with others – it is a process of invitation and response, which normally takes place in the context of a personal relationship. Evangelism happens through our words, our lives and our prayers and is a joining-in with God’s mission of salvation and reconciliation of all things and all people.

Many of us might think of one particular tradition when we think of evangelism – but there are many ways to be an evangelist. It is a calling broad enough for every single one of us in all our diversity to respond to.

Are some people called to evangelism in a particular way?

All disciples of Jesus are called to listen for, speak of, and live out the good news from their own experience, perspective and relationship with God. While all are called to evangelism, some people have particular spiritual giftings as Evangelists – as we are told in Ephesians 4, verses 11-12: “the gifts [Christ] gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...” (NRSV)

John Wesley used the phrases “ordinary call” and “extraordinary call” to make this distinction. While we all have ordinary callings that we share with others, we will each also have an extraordinary calling for which we are gifted – be it to teaching, pastoring, evangelism, or something else. Wesley saw his own ministry as an Evangelist as the fulfilling of his “extraordinary” calling.

While we may all be called to evangelism through our words, lives and prayers, some have this “extraordinary” calling to a ministry as an Evangelist.

Another way to make the distinction is by saying we are all called to evangelism, but some are called into ministry as an Evangelist; the capital ‘E’ helping us to see that this is something specific about our gifting and vocation.

What does the ministry of an Evangelist look like?

The Methodist Church recognises the Evangelist’s role as both an informal ministry as well as a formal one in which an individual is appointed with differing responsibilities in a variety of situations by local churches, circuits, districts, and ecumenical bodies.¹

In other words, the ministry of an Evangelist will happen differently in different contexts. You might be lay or ordained, paid or unpaid, as part of a team or an individual. Here are some examples:

- You are employed in a role with a specific evangelism remit by a church, circuit or district
- You are in a different ministry role, for example a minister, chaplain or youth leader but you see evangelism as being a central part of your calling to that role
- You run an evangelistic initiative or a project seeking to be more so
- You are not in any formal ministry role, but you live your everyday life with a passion for sharing the gospel.

In the cases where a person is employed and they are a lay person these appointments are made under Standing Order 570 in *Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD)*.

Evangelists always work in partnership with Christian communities, through both new and existing expressions of church. We recognise a calling to evangelism as distinct from a calling to pioneering or church planting or preaching – although there is common ground for each of them.

¹ See: *Evangelism & Evangelists in the Methodist Church* [Conference report from 2002] www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-evangelism-and-evangelists-2002.pdf as well as *The Role and Recognition of Evangelists in the Methodist Church* [Conference report from 2000] www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-role-of-evangelists-2000.pdf

Am I called as an Evangelist?

Maybe you recognise something of an Evangelist in yourself – though you may not feel that it is at all extraordinary! Maybe you feel confident in your ministry as an Evangelist, but isolated. Maybe you would hesitate to call yourself an Evangelist, but you do find yourself having faith conversations or sharing the good news in the places you live and work.

Use the quiz at www.methodist.org.uk/evangelistcommunity/ and the discernment workbook on page 4 to explore whether you might wish to join the Community of Evangelists.

What is the Community of Evangelists?

The Community of Evangelists is a network of ongoing spiritual and practical support for Evangelists or those who are exploring a calling as an Evangelist in the Methodist Church in Britain. This community aims to raise up, challenge, and support theologically diverse Evangelists for our world today.

Being part of the Community does not ‘authorise’ you as an Evangelist in any formal way, but it does affirm and support you in your ministry. Districts and circuits are encouraged to recognise and commission individuals as Evangelists within the life of the Church, as is appropriate for your local context.

Within this network is a specific community for Young Evangelists, aged between 11 and 26 years old. If you’re exploring this option, please visit: www.methodist.org.uk/youngevangelists

What does being part of the Community involve?

Equipping

In your first year of being in the Community, you will be allocated to an ‘Equip Group’ which will meet on a quarterly basis for group coaching with a facilitator. Attending these group coaching sessions is a compulsory part of Community membership. This will help you move from practising evangelism well to faithful intentionality and excellence as an evangelist.

There are also two weekend residentials each year offering spiritual nourishment, reflection, training and development for our ministry in evangelism. The residentials are open only to Community members.

Connecting

Through an optional WhatsApp group, and through quarterly drop-in Zoom meetings for conversation and prayer, you will find mutual support with other Evangelists across the Methodist Church. You will be connected to a wider movement of evangelism and can learn, share and practise together. There will also be an opportunity to invite high quality speakers on themes relevant to evangelism to come along to our sessions to offer input, and the chance for group discussion and questions.

Sept	Oct	Nov	Jan	Feb
Connect A drop-in Zoom for prayer and conversation.	Equip Group coaching.	Residential To resource and develop us in our ministry as Evangelists.	Connect A drop-in Zoom for prayer and conversation.	Equip Group coaching.
March	April	May	June	July
Connect A drop-in Zoom for prayer and conversation.	Equip Group coaching.	Connect A drop-in Zoom for prayer and conversation.	Residential To resource and develop us in our ministry as Evangelists.	Equip Group coaching.

How do I join the Community of Evangelists?

You can sign up to join the Community of Evangelists at any time as there isn't an annual application process. The Community is an ever-growing network of individuals in ministry as Evangelists.

The application process has the following stages:

1

Speak to others about it.

If you're thinking about joining the Community, speak to somebody you know and trust who is in church, circuit or district leadership. To help them with the conversation, direct them to the guidance document for churches which can be accessed here: www.methodist.org.uk/evangelistcommunity. You can also contact Holly Adams, the convenor of the Community, to ask questions or find out more on adamsh@methodistchurch.org.uk

2

Pray and listen to God in discernment.

There is a discernment workbook to help you pray and reflect on page 4.

3

Apply using the form in this pack.

If, after your conversations and your prayers, it feels right to apply, then use the application form on page 6 to join the Community. You will need to ask your referees to fill in their sections.

4

Welcome to the Community!

You will then be welcomed into the Community and invited to start attending events, residential and connect gatherings.

Discernment workbook

You can use the following worksheets to help you discern whether you're exercising a ministry as an Evangelist or called to explore such a ministry.

Give yourself plenty of time to do this – it could be one long sitting or over a few days or weeks. We encourage you to be honest about yourself; there are no right answers. Remember, God is calling you as you are and you don't have to be the finished article or try to be like someone else.

We recommend that once you have answered the questions you take them to a person you know and trust in church leadership. You could discuss what you've written and/or pray with them about this discernment.

Once you've finished the questions, offer your answers to God in prayer, and ask for God's guidance.

You can complete the online quiz at:

www.methodist.org.uk/evangelistcommunity

Or, if you'd rather use paper, consider these fourteen statements and tick the ones which feel most true:

- I find I naturally build relationships and partnerships in my community beyond the church.
- I enjoy finding imaginative ways to communicate the gospel.
- I speak from a living relationship with Jesus Christ.
- I am passionate about encouraging other Christians to share their faith.
- I find myself having faith conversations almost by accident.
- I have offered prayer to friends, family or neighbours who aren't Christians.
- I have journeyed with others as they explore faith and become followers of Jesus.
- I try to challenge the Church when it becomes inward looking.
- Being connected – both to God and to other people – energises me.
- I find it stimulating talking about tricky faith questions with people outside the Church.
- I see God in diversity – I don't want to 'make disciples' that look just like me.
- I look out for, and can respond to, opportunities for evangelism as they arise.
- I seek to connect others with communities of faith.
- I have used the Bible to help others consider how their story intersects with God's story.

Consider the following questions:

In what ways do you consider yourself an evangelist?

In your context, where are your opportunities for evangelism?

Think of a time you had a faith conversation with somebody.
Where do you see God was at work in that conversation?
What was the impact of this conversation?

In what ways do you feel most comfortable talking about Jesus?

Think of a time you shared your faith through your actions.
What did you do?
What was the impact?

When was the last time you felt 'out of your comfort zone'
in an evangelistic experience?
What did you learn about God?
What did you learn about yourself?

When was your last positive experience of sharing your faith?
What gifts or skills did you use to do that?

Application form

We are really pleased that you want to join the Community of Evangelists. Before you begin please make sure you have done the following:

- You have spent some time reflecting on your call to evangelism using the guidance notes found here www.methodist.org.uk/evangelistcommunity
- You have spoken with somebody you know and trust in leadership in your church, circuit or district about joining the Community of Evangelists.
- You have asked your superintendent, circuit steward or district chair to write a few words in support of your application.

If you have any questions about your application, if you need help, or if you find writing or form filling difficult, please contact Holly Adams on 020 7467 5232 or adamsh@methodistchurch.org.uk

Once completed, please send your form to Holly Adams on adamsh@methodistchurch.org.uk. If you would rather send a hard copy, please contact Holly who will advise you of the postal address to use.

Section 1: Your contact details

Name

Date of application

Address

Post code

Email address

Phone number

Church

Circuit

District

Section 2: About you

Are you

Lay or Ordained ?

(Delete as appropriate.)

Are you employed by the Methodist church?

Yes No

(Delete as appropriate.)

If yes, in what role?

Are you 26 years old or younger?

Yes No

(Delete as appropriate.)

Tick which of the following statements feels most accurate:

- I am employed by a church, circuit or district in a role with a specific evangelism remit.
- I see evangelism as being an important part of my ministry in a role with a wider remit.
- I am involved in a particular project or initiative which is evangelistic or is seeking to be more so.
- I am not in any formal role or project, but I have a passion for sharing the gospel in my everyday life.
- I feel called to explore the ways I could use my gifts to practise evangelism more intentionally.

Please tell us more about how this statement applies to you, or if none apply, write a statement that feels more accurate:

Tell us about your ministry as an evangelist – in what ways do you see yourself as an evangelist, what support do you have, and what is the context of your ministry?

The support offered to community members is shaped by their needs. What kinds of support and training would you most value?

Refer to the fourteen statements below from the discernment workbook.

- 1.** I find I naturally build relationships and partnerships in my community beyond the church.
- 2.** I enjoy finding imaginative ways to communicate the gospel.
- 3.** I speak from a living relationship with Jesus Christ.
- 4.** I am passionate about encouraging other Christians to share their faith.
- 5.** I find myself having faith conversations almost by accident.
- 6.** I have offered prayer to friends, family or neighbours who aren't Christians.
- 7.** I have journeyed with others as they explore faith and become followers of Jesus.
- 8.** I try to challenge the Church when it becomes inward looking.
- 9.** Being connected – both to God and to other people – energises me.
- 10.** I find it stimulating talking about tricky faith questions with people outside the Church.

11. I see God in diversity – I don't want to 'make disciples' that look just like me.

12. I look out for, and can respond to, opportunities for evangelism as they arise.

13. I seek to connect others with communities of faith.

14. I have used the Bible to help others consider how their story intersects with God's story.

Which three feel most true for you? (List the numbers.)

Which three feel least true for you? (List the numbers.)

Any other comments?

Section 3: Circuit or District reference

To be completed by a superintendent minister or by the district chair if the ministry is district-based. Before completing this form, referees may find it helpful to refer to the guidance documents accessible here: www.methodist.org.uk/evangelistcommunity

The Community of Evangelists offers support and encouragement amongst a network of people engaged in a ministry of evangelism in local contexts. Joining the Community does not offer formal commissioning or accountability – to this end we wish to ensure that local support and supervision is available and that the involvement in the Community is understood within the local circuit or district.

Name

Role

Superintendent Minister

District Chair

(Delete as appropriate.)

Please share your reflections on this person's gifting, calling and ministry as an evangelist:

Please say how the circuit or district affirms and supervises this person in their ministry:

Please tick the following:

I support this application and will give encouragement and support to the evangelist and their ministry

Signature

(If you are completing this form digitally, an electronic signature is sufficient.)

Date