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Fundraising  
The Methodist Church  
25 Marylebone Road  
London NW1 5JR.  
Email: [missionfunding@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:missionfunding@methodistchurch.org.uk)

For more information on the work of World Church Relationships, please contact:

Methodist Church House  
Tel: 020 7486 5502  
Email: [enquiries@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@methodistchurch.org.uk)  
Website: [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)



The **Methodist** Church 

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# EASTER OFFERING 2017

# Shine like Stars

## ORDER OF SERVICE

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## Call to worship

If you look down, you see the earth; if you look up, you may see the horizon and the sun or the stars; if you look back, you see what might have been; if you look forward, you see what can be. But just for now...

...come and be present.

**All: Jesus, we are here for you.**

**Hymn: StF 27 Jesu tawa pano verses 1 and 2** (remain seated)

Jesu, tawa pano;  
Jesu, tawa pano;  
Jesu, tawa pano;  
tawa pano, mu zita renyu.

Jesus, we are here;  
Jesus, we are here;  
Jesus, we are here;  
we are here for you.

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## Welcome and introduction

Welcome to this act of worship, in which we shall dedicate our Easter Offering and hear stories of how the World Mission Fund supports God's mission in different parts of the world. The stories are told by members of the World Church Relationships Team. Each one is about an NMA, a national in mission appointment. An NMA is someone who is working in their own country, appointed by our Partner Church in that nation but funded by the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain. Each NMA is working in a difficult and challenging environment, but in Paul's words to the Philippians, "shines like a star" to bring the light of the risen Christ into that situation.

We light a candle as a symbol of the power of Christ's light to break down the barriers of darkness and bring hope into a needy world.

— *A large candle is lit* —

**Hymn: StF 106 God, whose almighty word** (John Marriott, 1780-1825)

## A prayer for the work of God's mission in your own locality

...

Risen Christ, into the darkness of local needs,

**All: Let your light shine.**

**In the name of Christ, Amen.**

**Offering and dedication** (Offerings are brought forward)

**All stand**

**Leader:** God of love, who gave us your Son so that the world might have hope,

**All: We bring our love offering today for your blessing.**

**Take our gifts, our prayers and our daily lives and use all in your service.**

**May each discover your light where it is needed most.**

**In the name of Christ, Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: StF 411 May the God of hope go with us every day**

**Blessing**

The LORD bless you and keep you;  
The LORD make His face shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you;  
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,  
And give you peace.  
(Numbers 6:24-26)



— *A choir could sing as people leave* —

**Acknowledgements:** Call to worship used with permission from the Community of Hopeweavers.  
[www.hopeweavers.co.uk](http://www.hopeweavers.co.uk)

Words to StF 706 *Longing for light, we wait in darkness* reproduced with permission from Decani Music Ltd.

## Prayers of intercession

God of love and light, we pray for those who shine the light of your love into dark places.

We pray for the ongoing mission work throughout the world enabled by the World Mission Fund; for the World Church Relationships Team as they build relationships with the Partner Churches and respond to requests for prayer, practical and financial support.

Risen Christ, into the darkness of a world in great need,

### **All: Let your light shine.**

We pray for the work of the Revd Maria do Carmo Moreira Lima among young offenders in Brazil, thanking you for the pastoral care she is able to offer to them and their families. We ask that you will bless her efforts to improve living conditions and treatment of young people in the young offenders' institutions in Rio de Janeiro.

Risen Christ, into the darkness of imprisonment,

### **All: Let your light shine.**

We pray for the work of Joanna Akyeampong in Ghana, thanking you for her creative witness and commitment. We ask that you will bless this initiative as it seeks to bring hope and opportunity to vulnerable girls and street children.

Risen Christ, into the darkness of homelessness and hopelessness,

### **All: Let your light shine.**

We pray for the work of Jennifer Jag Jivan at the Christian Study Centre in Rawalpindi in Pakistan, thanking you for her passion to use dialogue to bring understanding. We pray that this work of peace-building among people of different faiths will bear fruit.

Risen Christ, into the darkness of division and conflict,

### **All: Let your light shine.**

## Prayers

Creator God, who brought light out of darkness and made the sun, moon and stars to shine in the sky; who formed the earth and seas and all that is in them; and who knows each one of us by name;

we come before you with hearts full of wonder and gratitude.

### **All: We come to worship you.**

Lord Jesus Christ, who came into our damaged world to bring healing and hope; who offered your life as a sacrifice of love; and, through the grace of forgiveness, opened the way to restore our relationship with God;

we long to receive the light of your love today.

### **All: We come to praise you.**

Holy Spirit of God, who reveals to us the truth about Jesus Christ and shines the light of God's grace into our hearts; who encourages us to step out in faith and place our trust in the one true God;

we acknowledge our need of you.

### **All: We come to adore you.**

— *We join in the prayer of confession* —

**We confess that we do not always choose to be people of the light.**

**So often, we try to hide in the shadows hoping our failings will not be noticed.**

**We fail to accept the light of Christ into our hearts and there is darkness within us.**

**We fail to reflect the light of Christ into the world.**

**Lord, be gracious to us.**

**God, forgive us.**

**Christ, renew us.**

Hear the good news. Jesus has overcome the power of darkness, despair and death. Through his resurrection, we have hope.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**



## The Lord's Prayer

**Epistle Reading:** Philippians 2:1-15

**Hymn:** *StF 706 Longing for light, we wait in darkness*

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,

light for the world to see.

*Christ, be our light!*

*Shine in our hearts.*

*Shine through the darkness.*

*Christ, be our light!*

*Shine in your Church gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us.

Make us your living voice.

Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,  
shared until all are fed.

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.

Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others,  
walls made of living stone.

Many the gifts, many the people,  
many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,  
making your kingdom come.

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**Gospel reading:** Matthew 5:13-16

**Story 1:** Sandra Lopez tells how the Revd Maria do Carmo Moreira Lima works with young offenders in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

— *A candle is lit* —

**Hymn:** *StF 59 Lord, the light of your love is shining*

**Story 2:** Bunmi Olayisade tells the story of Joanna Akyeampong, working with female school drop-outs and street children in Ghana.

— *A candle is lit* —

— *Choir Item (optional)* —

**Story 3:** Steve Pearce describes the peace-building work of Jennifer Jag Jivan, an NMA in Pakistan.

— *A candle is lit* —

**Hymn:** *StF 397 The Spirit lives to set us free*

— *Short reflection on the theme (optional)* —

**Creative activity:** Prayers or pledges are written on paper stars, which are then brought to the front as music plays.

