

Good News

Lancashire West Methodist Circuit

Prayers of the
Day
from
Methodist.org.uk

Eternal God, your steadfast love is as high as the heavens are above the earth and your everlasting arms are underneath us. In Jesus you made your home among us, and you long for us to find our home in you – safe and free from fear.

Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, the one holding all things together, give us liberating confidence to renew our trust in you, seek your will, and choose your paths. Amen.

Leslie Newton, Yorkshire North and East District Chair



Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.

Psalm 62:5

O LORD, where can we go? Who can we turn to except to You. For only You have the word of life. Help us to listen to Your words today.

Our buildings may be closed but we are still here for you

Back in March 2020, that slogan quickly appeared on our website, facebook page, emails. But how true was it? How much has been achieved during lockdown? Have our churches really been open?

23rd March 2020, Boris announced that all church buildings must close and the 'stay at home' message was promoted. Within hours, our staff and members were working on how to open back up again. With Holy Week and Easter fast approaching, it was felt essential that our church community could be connected in such uncertain and yes, scary times.

For Holy Week, beginning Sunday 5th April, our circuit minister, Sue, began sending out, via email, daily reflections – a Bible verse and prayer accompanied by a beautiful picture. These weekday reflections continue even now, 15 months later. They offer hope, share God's love and give an insight into the challenges other

face as we focus with prayer on individual and worldwide issues. If you aren't on the email list, please ask Jayne or Sue and we can arrange it.

Phone Buddy networks were quickly initiated to ensure that everyone stayed connected, particularly those living alone, and those who have not had access to the internet.

Our Circuit Ministers were able to deliver an on-line worship service for Good Friday, followed by one on Easter Sunday. These Sunday circuit services have continued ever since. In the beginning, members of the congregations were asked to contribute. People, who maybe didn't even realise there was a video camera on their phones, began making recordings. Sometimes the piece was shaky and the nerves could be seen but oh, how lovely it was to see our friends and Christian neighbours on screen sharing the word of God.



As the weeks went by, the reliance on the circuit services grew stronger along with the confidence of the contributors. We remained connected to church despite the lockdown. We enjoyed prayers, hymns, music, sermons and worship. We could still sing our favourite hymns and listen to new music too. Viewers as far as Australia and a little closer to home in Somerset sent encouraging messages. Our buildings were closed but our church was still very much open. Our worship services are able to reflect issues of the day. Special themes have included Refugee Sunday, Christian Aid Week, Advent at Christmas, Education Sunday, Water Aid. The opportunity to shine a light on other parts of the world has been so enriching. We've also had services produced entirely by our young people and children.

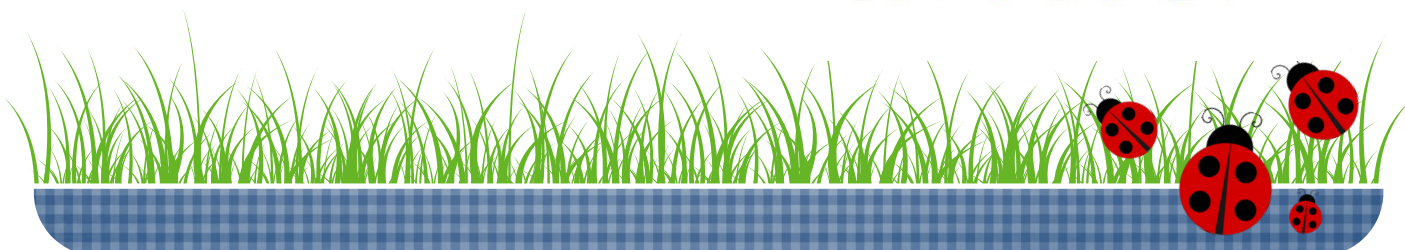
None of this would be possible without the dedication and expertise of our circuit ministry team and volunteers. We are so blessed to have such talented people who are prepared to give up their time and share their gifts for weekly on-line worship. And the good news is, our circuit has committed to continue with the on-line services. We believe this ability to bring worship into people's homes can sit alongside worship in actual church buildings.

But what about those who can't access the internet? Well, some congregation members kindly offered to use their computers to 'burn' the completed worship service to DVD's. These are then hand-delivered to members and also distributed to nursing homes. Subscription was obtained for 'Twilio' to enable us to transmit the service via the telephone. And finally, paper copies of the service are distributed for anyone who prefers to access a printed copy. This weekly dedication to ensure everyone is included in worship, in some format or another, continues today.

Lockdown happened just as the latest edition of West Links was due to go to print. It was full of all the churches plans for the next 3 months – summer fairs, coffee mornings, toddler groups. Everything was cancelled. West Links in its existing format was no longer relevant.

We quickly put our first edition of Good News together. We accepted that these were challenging times and people were undergoing difficult situations but we knew that strength could be found if we pulled together and shared our experiences and 'good news'.

REJOICE
in the Lord
ALWAYS
and again I say
REJOICE





Prayers, bible reflections, articles written by our fellow circuit members came pouring in as we shared the good news of God's love and support and the knowledge that He never leaves us. We continued this weekly for many months.

Good News still continues with an edition published every month now. Contributions are always welcome. It is available to read via email, or on our circuit webpage. For those not connected to the internet, church members have been printing copies of it and hand delivering to homes.

"Zoom, just one look and then my heart went boom" sang Fat Larry's Band in 1982. The Covid 19 pandemic has ensured that the word 'zoom' now has an entirely different place in our vocabulary. The computer software, named Zoom, offers us the ability to connect via our pc's, phones and laptops and meet virtually. The circuit reacted quickly and through the year, the zoom technology has allowed many meet ups, including

Weekly bible studies and prayer fellowship. Organised and run by all our Minister's at different times on different days to ensure as many as possible can attend

Weekly meetings of the Circuit Leadership Team and individual Church Leadership Teams, as they navigate the challenges the on

-going lockdown posed for people and buildings.

Ruth Rushworth, from Emmanuel, led a weekly Meditation session.

Circuit committee meetings – Finance and property & the circuit meeting.

Church Council meetings

Zoom coffee mornings allowing people to just meet and share – you have to bring your own coffee of course! These extend beyond the circuit – the circuit administrator has attended District zoom coffee mornings, meeting with other administrators in the north west for mutual support and ideas.

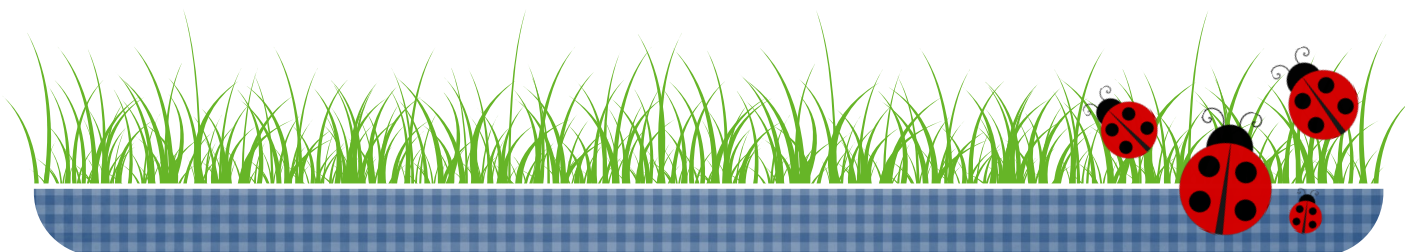
Our Ministers have pre-recorded assemblies ensuring our schools remain connected to our churches.

Zoom Messy Praise for our nursery aged children. A frantic 15 minutes dancing and singing and offering praise to God. A great way to wake up on a Sunday morning!

Zoom Messy Church sessions. Our Circuit has continued to play a key role as part of a National Messy Church/United Reformed Church Partnership.

Messy Youth sessions for our young people attending High School.

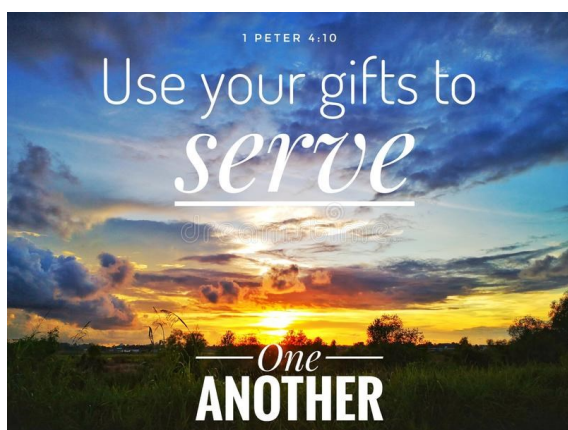
Another remarkable achievement is Love Beyond Our Shores. The circuit's mission group that has been formed during lockdown and has decided to develop two partnerships, one with a Methodist Circuit in Sri Lanka and the other with Mamie Martin Fund supporting schools in Malawi. There was a time in early lockdown that developing a new initiative





would have been unthinkable as we scrambled to adapt to our new circumstances. To be able to meet virtually and set up these partnerships, all from our homes, is fantastic.

One of my fondest memories is logging into the live zoom worship on Christmas Eve led by Michael and Sue. A special, intimate feeling service and it was so lovely to see parents of young children also in attendance. The children tucked up in bed, awaiting Father Christmas, the parents were able to join in worship when previously, they could never have made it to a service in a church building on Christmas Eve. At least not together, anyway.



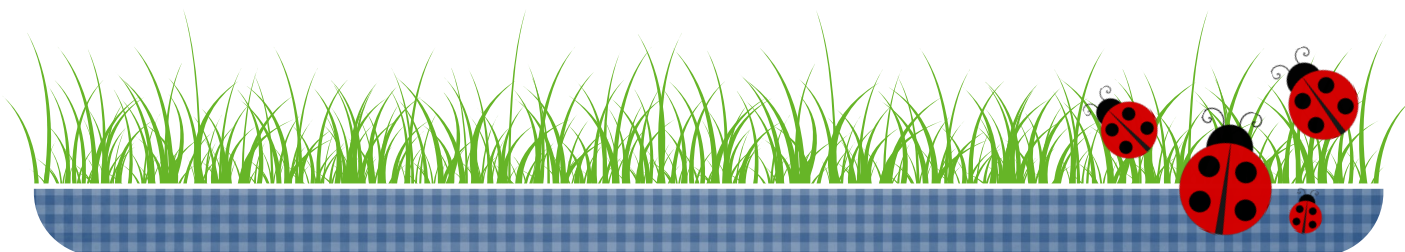
The Circuit Leadership have worked harder than ever. Sales of manses and land have happened despite the restrictions. They have also continued to recruit. Our Circuit Family

and School's worker needed to step down Autumn 2020. The need for the role was still vital, and it was decided to recruit a replacement immediately. In October, Cheryl began working for Lancashire West. In her short time here, she has not let lockdown affect her ability to make a difference. With support from the Ministry team, she has developed the existing Messy Church initiative, sending out creative packs to families ready for the on-line session. She has also developed Messy Vintage for a different age range. Both initiatives are well attended. She has worked closely with our schools and is looking forwards to visiting in-person.

A great achievement was being able to produce a virtual Christmas Hope Journey that was recorded in individual homes, scripts and costumes were sent out, video recordings were stitched together and our primary schools enjoyed the finished result.

It's been a strange year. At times quite frightening and other times very uplifting. Church has continued to be a constant for a lot of people. We've learnt lots of new technology and adapted to the quickly changing circumstances. It's not been easy and we haven't always got it right. One thing that doesn't change though is, as we all know, God's love. He is our anchor. He is the anchor of our soul.

We give thanks for people in the Lancashire West Circuit who have committed themselves to God and His work. We continue to ask for His guidance as we face the future.





What Hope for the future?

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29: 11 - 13)

Many times in our lives we face problems, challenges or fears and we don't know where to turn to find help or guidance; our future seems daunting and uncertain. We battle on, trying to find a way through our anxiety, fear and depression.

At this time especially, we are looking to a brighter future where we can visit family and friends without fear, where we can worship freely as a church and open our doors to all who come. But our future lives are full of uncertainty so that we hardly dare hope that we will be able to return to a 'normal' way of being part of a community.

These verses from Jeremiah have spoken to me personally in the past when life changing circumstances have made the future seem like a dark tunnel, where there is uncertainty or even hopelessness. Through God's Word I have learned that he promises to listen to our prayers, he promises hope for the future and he will be there for us when we call upon him.

Through Jeremiah, God promised the desperate Israelites that he hadn't abandoned them to exile in Babylon forever. He had heard their cries for help and had plans to bring them back to their own land in the future.

Can we trust the Lord today? Entrust him with our hopes and dreams for our future knowing that his plans for us are good and right?

Can we cease speculating and trying to find our own way through or can we call on the Lord in prayer to help us trusting that he is listening?

Can we seek the Lord with all our heart, soul and strength; asking him to be in every situation we face?

Barbara Davies

(Ref Daily reading from 'Our Daily Bread' 26th June 2021)



Methodist Day in Sri Lanka

Each year on the Sunday nearest 29 June special services are held in the Methodist Churches in Sri Lanka to celebrate the landing of the first Methodist missionaries in 1814. The churches are decorated with lots of flowers and after a joyful service a fellowship meal is shared. Sometimes the Sunday School children and young people provide entertainment and may include a quiz.

Those first missionaries were amazing people! Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke had funded the trip himself as the Methodist Church was unable to provide the funds. He was so sure that God was calling him to go to Sri Lanka (Then called Ceylon) that in June 1813 he stated:

"I am now dead to Europe and alive for India. God has said to me, 'Go to Ceylon.' I had rather be set naked on the coast of Ceylon, without clothes and without a friend than not to go there."

A group of nine, including the wives of two of the group, left England on 31 December 1813. The journey took six months during which time, sadly, Thomas Coke died.

They arrived in Galle on the 29 June and by Sunday 3 July were preaching in the local Dutch Reformed Church.

In the first 150 years over 160 ministers went to Sri Lanka and also many women who were involved in education, evangelism and medical matters.

I feel very humble that I, for a very short time, have been part of the longstanding contribution by the Methodist Church in Britain to Sri Lanka.

Anne Baldwin

Mission Partner 2017-2020.



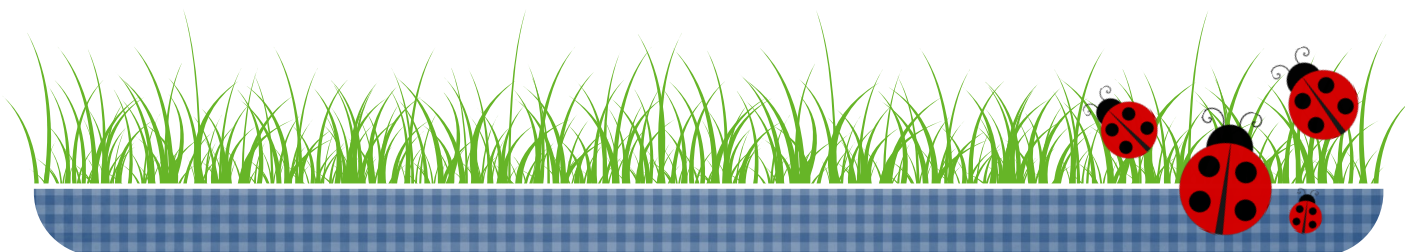
NEWS

The Lancashire West Circuit are developing a partnership with Magampura Mission and Tangelles Church in the south of Sri Lanka.

There is currently a huge spike in Covid cases. Very few vaccinations have been administered. There is a lockdown and, at times, complete curfews. The churches are helping the community with support, tending the sick and food parcels.

Please pray for them.

Once our church group meetings begin again I am very willing to share my experiences and photos of my time in Sri Lanka. Please contact me through the Circuit office. *Anne*



Ordination of Dr Sarah Richardson

On Saturday 24th June, my wife Yvonne and I (and son Jonathan) were at Carlisle Cathedral to witness the ordination of our daughter Sarah as a deacon in the Church of England. The ordination was carried out by the Rt Rev James Newcome, the Bishop of Carlisle, along with 7 other candidates.

Sarah grew up in Burscough and was a member of the Sunday School at Burscough Methodist Church. During that time Sarah became a Christian. Her personal faith developed when she went to the University of Liverpool to study medicine. She graduated in 2009 completing a year long placement at Furness General Hospital in Barrow. It was during this time that she joined St Paul's Church in Barrow. She later chose to apply for a job in Barrow so that she could remain a member of the church, and that is where her journey to ordination began.

Sarah completed her training with Cumbria Christian Learning. Sarah will be a self-supporting minister, as she will continue her role as a partner GP in a very busy practice at Market Street in Dalton-in-Furness 3 days a week. Whilst doing this she will complete her curacy at St Paul's.

Like many other occasions, because of Covid 19, the number of people who could attend the service was limited. Sarah had been asked to give the Gospel reading, so it was delightful to hear her voice ringing out through the ancient building. It was a time of great pride and also humbling to see Sarah take her next step on her Christian journey.

Andrew Richardson



Family and Schools' Worker

July Update: Messy Vintage



Messy Vintage is the most recent Circuit addition to our 'Messy Church' offerings; having started via Zoom in February 2021.

Following its origins seven years ago in the parish of St Peter in Jersey, Messy Vintage has now been incorporated under the 'Messy' umbrella, with the Bible Reading Fellowship publishing the session materials used. All of the branches of Messy are ways of 'doing and being' church; with God's love at their heart, together with creativity, hospitality and celebration. None of them aim to provide ways to 'grow' a Sunday congregation, but instead find new ways of being Church on different days and times of the week, in a creative and interactive format.

I'm aware there has been much discussion around the age-range for Messy Vintage - to answer those questions, I'll quote the session creators...

"(Messy Vintage is) open to all, aspiring to include people of all ages while specifically reaching out to older people...in congregations, the community and in care homes."

So, ALL are welcome!

We currently have Messy Vintage every fortnight via Zoom, with the sessions running on a Monday at 2pm or on a Tuesday at 7.30pm. And just like for our Messy Church families, while we have been running on Zoom; session materials are packed and delivered out so that everyone has any specific items or resources that are needed.



I can't tell you how much I enjoy leading these sessions! They provide a wonderful time together and I feel they often create the atmosphere of sacred space (even over Zoom!) and a much-treasured way of 'being church', with love; friendship; fun; conversation; creativity; story; song; prayer; fellowship; and faith all combined. As one of our members said following our last session, "It's wonderful to have this time to just BE."



Messy Vintage Creativity

There is a theme each time with Bible passages, hymns and prayers; together with a time for conversation, a time for creativity and a time to celebrate.

Here are the themes and some of the creations from sessions we've had to date:



Be Still

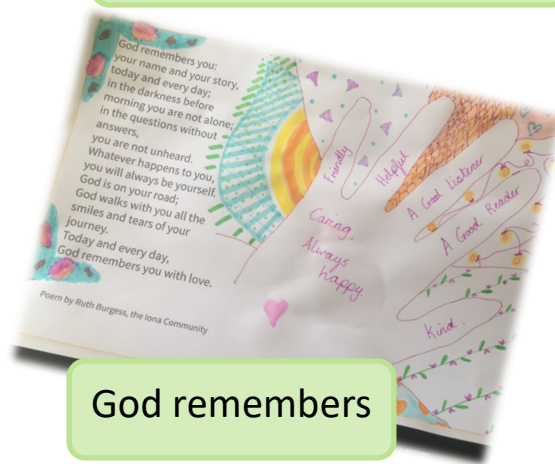


Bringing Friends to Jesus

Grace and Hope

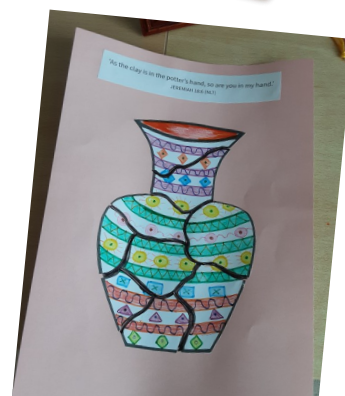


Let your light shine



God remembers

Meeting Jesus in



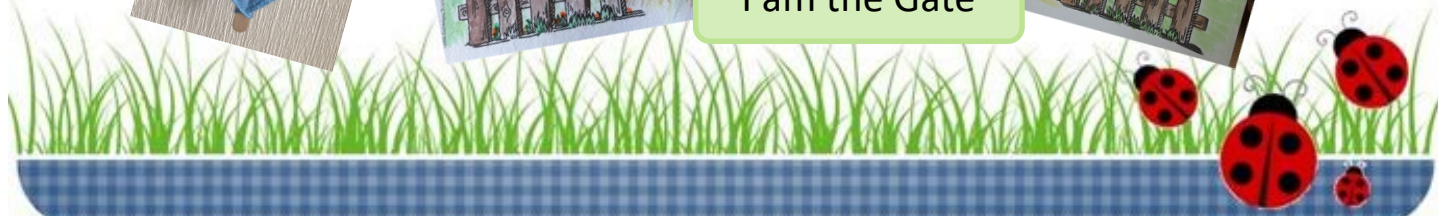
Cracked Pots



Blessings



I am the Gate



CIRCUIT INFORMATION

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Jayne Chard

Circuit Administrator

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Lancashire West Methodist Circuit

Children & Youth—

Messy Praise (nursery/primary age)—Every fortnight, on a Sunday morning at 10.00am, we meet for 15 minutes of singing, dancing & story. Dates tbc.—for details contact rev.sue@guenault.co.uk

Messy Church (nursery/primary age)-Once a month, Saturday afternoons at 4.30pm. **Next One is 17th July**

Messy Youth (for youngsters at High School) Every fortnight, on a Sunday evening 6.00pm via zoom. **18th July**

If you would be interested in taking part, please contact

Cheryl O'Connor

family.schools@lancashirewest.org.uk



Lancashire West Methodist Circuit

Messy Vintage session for the Over-60s (though we are joined by some in the 40-60 age group too!) are held fortnightly on either a Monday afternoon at 2pm or a Tuesday evening at 7.30pm over Zoom for now. Before the session you will receive the resources needed to participate in the creative activity.

Up coming dates

Monday 19th July 2.00pm

Monday 19th July 7.30pm

(please note change to the usual day)

If you would be interested in taking part, please contact

Cheryl O'Connor

family.schools@lancashirewest.org.uk

Stop Press!!!

The new circuit website is up and running.

www.lancashirewest.org.uk

CHURCH SERVICES

* Please note, plan is provisional and subject to change

Burscough Methodist— email: bmc.stewards.2021@gmail.com or phone Debbie: 01704 892452

Mawdesley Methodist—email keithallen73@btinternet.com

Trinity, Skelmersdale—email derekashcroft@tiscali.co.uk or phone Derek on 01695 726494

Upholland Methodist email linda.w@talktalk.net or phone Linda on 01695 622414 & 07956816837

Trinity Methodist Croston- Bookings for test and trace via George Lloyd on 01772 600705

Emmanuel Methodist URC-Bookings for test and trace via Anne Baldwin on 07512 286144

The circuit ministry team will continue to deliver weekly on-line worship services.

See <https://lancashirewest.org.uk/>

*	July 11th	July 18th	July 25th
Burscough Orrell Lane 10.30 HP, CMP, STF, NIV	Janet Walton	Recorded Service	Rev Geoff Farthing S
Croston 10.30 Westhead Rd HP, MP, JP, STF, NIV	Rev Stephen Foster	Rev Sue Guénault FS	Gordon Wareing
Ormskirk 10.30 Derby Street HP, CMP, NIV	-----	-----	Rev Sue Guénault S
Holmeswood 10.30 Holmeswood Road HP, CMP, STF, GNB	Tarleton	o/a	Rev Michael Tindsley S
Mawdesley 10.30 Four Lane Ends HP, MP JP, NIV	Croston	Malcolm Roxburgh	o/a
Tarleton 10.30 Church Road HP, MP, GNB	Rev Michael Tindsley	Rev Stephen Foster	o/a
Trinity, 11.00 High Street STF, GNB,	o/a	Jenny Ashcroft	o/a
Upholland 11.00 Alma Hill STF, GNB, LP	Merle Farthing	Rev Michael Tindsley	o/a
ON- LINE WORSHIP	Rev Michael Tindsley	Rev Michael Tindsley	Emmanuel Live Stream?

HP Hymns & Psalms
MP Mission Praise Combined
CMP Complete Mission Praise
CMP Complete Mission Praise
CMP Complete Mission Praise

CMP Complete Mission Praise
STF Singing the Faith
JP Junior Praise
LP Let's Praise

S = Sacrament/Holy Communion
FS =Family Service o/a =Own Arrangement