

*The Methodist Church of Southern Africa*  
**Doctrine, Ethics and Worship Committee**

## **Guidelines on the Christian Calendar and Christian Holy Days**

### **Introduction**

*The Christian Calendar and Holy Days tell the story of God in human life in Jesus Christ*  
The Christian understanding of God and the experience of personal and social redemption and renewal through Jesus Christ are shaped by participating, by means of liturgy and worship, in the story of God's coming into human life in Jesus Christ.

Each event in the story of God's coming into human life in Jesus Christ contributes to God's renewal of humanity, but no single event is complete in itself, as each event leads to the next. When people experience these events as one continuous story throughout the year and the story is repeated year after year, individuals and communities develop mature, balanced and living faith in God and renewal through Jesus Christ.

### **The story of God's coming into human life in Jesus Christ**

*The story that the Christian Calendar and Holy Days tells*

The story of God's coming into human life in Jesus Christ begins with the promise of renewal and the call to repentance. It continues with the birth of the Christ Child amidst humble humanity and his presentation to all humanity.

Jesus Christ is baptized among people who long for and expect a Messiah to bring personal and social redemption and renewal. After defining his mission and the manner of his ministry through prayer and fasting, Jesus speaks and acts among them. Each word and deed signifies the reconciling, healing and renewing qualities of the coming reign of God. Jesus meets growing resistance, motivated by hatred, prejudice, self-interest and fear, with love that contradicts hatred, prejudice, self-interest and fear. He goes to his death on a cross not only at the hands of people motivated by hatred, prejudice, self-interest and fear, but also for them and forgiving them.

He and his love are not overcome by death, but raised to new life among people who follow him. Having triumphed over death, his influence ascends boundlessly, filling all things. He empowers those who receive him with the Spirit that raised him from death and gives them new life.

By the power of the Spirit they become a new community of love whose words and deeds signify the reconciling, healing and renewing qualities of the coming reign of God. As new members are added to their number from different races, cultures and social classes, new communities form in various localities. The new Christian community of love learns and grows in understanding, maturity, discipline and organization under the Spirit inspired guidance of apostles and teachers. They remain motivated by the vision of the reconciling, healing and renewing qualities of the coming reign of God in which all things are made new.

### **Ministers, Local Preachers and the Christian Calendar and Christian Holy Days**

*The responsibilities of Ministers, Deacons and Preachers*

Over the centuries the Christian Church has developed the Christian Calendar to enable Christians to re-live, in a continuous way, the events of the story of God's coming into human life in Jesus Christ.

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Ministers, Deacons and Preachers have a special responsibility to be observant of the Christian Calendar in their ordering of the ongoing worship and liturgical practice of Circuits and Societies. Special attention is to be given to the “Holy Days.” Ministers in pastoral charge of Societies and Circuits should be present and lead at services on Holy Days in the Societies and Circuits where they have pastoral charge, as far as possible.

Where local circumstances make it necessary that services on Holy Days be conducted by Deacons, Local Preachers or other duly authorised persons, such Deacons, Local Preachers or duly authorised persons must be fully conversant with the meaning and intention of the Holy Day and its place in the Christian Calendar.

## **The Christian Calendar**

### *The Seasons of the Christian Calendar*

The Christian Calendar Year is divided into Seasons which are series of weeks during which one or more “Holy Days” may occur. The Seasons of the Christian Calendar, and therefore the Christian Year, begin with the Advent season.

Preaching and teaching in Sunday worship services from the beginning of Advent to Trinity Sunday recalls the Advent, Birth, Baptism, Ministry, Transfiguration, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ. Preaching is principally based on the Gospels, while not ignoring readings from the Epistles and the Old Testament.

## **The Advent Season**

Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (25<sup>th</sup> December). Advent marks the beginning of the Christian Calendar year.

The word “Advent” means “coming” and refers to the way God comes among people to bring redemption, renewal and transformation. Each of the four Sundays of the Advent season are “Holy Days” and speak of God’s coming among people in Jesus Christ, calling them to respond with expectancy and repentance.

*The first Sunday of Advent (Advent 1)* calls people to constantly expect the end of the old order of corruption, hatred, prejudice, self-interest and fear and the beginning of the reconciling, healing and renewing qualities of the coming reign of God by pointing to the second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of time.

*The second Sunday of Advent (Advent 2)* describes John the Baptist’s call to people to prepare the way for the coming Messiah in their lifetime by being cleansed in a baptism of repentance.

*The third Sunday of Advent (Advent 3)* tells that the Messiah whom John the Baptist promised is Jesus of Nazareth and calls people to look to Jesus for redemption, renewal and transformation.

*The fourth Sunday of Advent (Advent 4)* tells of the promise by an angel to Mary and Joseph that their child will save people from their sins, bringing down the mighty and lifting up the lowly. Advent 4 calls people to review their attitudes to power and poverty as they welcome the Christ child.

## The Christmas Season

The season of Christmas begins on 25<sup>th</sup> December.

The Christmas season tells the story of the birth of Jesus Christ and calls people to worship the Christ child as “God with us” and the expression of the Word of God in the midst of human life.

Christmas Day is the Holy Day of the Christmas season. The Christmas season includes one Sunday after Christmas when Christmas falls on a Sunday, Monday or Tuesday and two Sundays after Christmas when Christmas falls on a Wednesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday.

*Christmas Day* describes the birth of Jesus Christ and declares that he is the expression of the Word of God in the midst of human life and calls people to receive him in love.

*The first Sunday after Christmas* describes Jesus’ humble beginning among the poor and the initiation of Jesus into the community of Israel and calls people to recognise Jesus as present in the midst of their economic and cultural lives.

*The Holy Name of Jesus.* In many traditions the 1<sup>st</sup> January, or the Sunday closest to 1<sup>st</sup> January, recalls that the Christ child was named “Jesus” eight days after his birth (Luke 2: 21). On this day Christians are called to reverence the holy name “Jesus”.

*The second Sunday after Christmas* describes how some people recognised the significance of Jesus’ birth and were transformed (“became children of God”), while others did not. People are called to welcome Jesus Christ as the expression of God’s presence in human life.

## The Season of Epiphany

The Season of Epiphany begins on 6<sup>th</sup> January.

Epiphany is a Holy Day. When Epiphany (6<sup>th</sup> January) falls on a weekday, the previous Sunday is celebrated as Epiphany and replaces the second Sunday after Christmas. “Epiphany” means “revealing” and refers to the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of people of all races and cultures, represented by the visit of the Magi (the “Three Wise Men”). People of all races and cultures are called to recognise the universal and unifying love of Jesus Christ for all people.

The subsequent Sundays of the season of Epiphany reveal more about Jesus, in his baptism, calling people to follow him, struggling with temptation, teaching, healing, confronting demonic powers and working miracles. During the season of Epiphany people learn to know Jesus in many different ways.

*The first Sunday after Epiphany (also called the First Sunday in Ordinary time)* celebrates the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and the affirmation of Jesus as the beloved Son of God. People are called to celebrate Jesus’ identification with them, by his baptism, in their longing for redemption, renewal and transformation. The celebration of the Baptism of Jesus is widely recognised as a Holy Day because it marks a defining event in the story of Jesus.

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*The Sundays after Epiphany (the Season of Epiphany) are also referred to as "Ordinary time." Ordinary time is a period in which no particular Holy Day is observed, but in the Season of Epiphany Ordinary time continues to tell the story of significant incidents in the life and work of Jesus.*

*The second Sunday after Epiphany or The second Sunday in Ordinary time tells the story of the calling of Jesus' first disciples. In some years Jesus' changing of water into wine at Cana in Galilee is described.*

*The third Sunday after Epiphany or The third Sunday in Ordinary time tells the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and the beginning of his ministry in Galilee.*

*The fourth Sunday after Epiphany\* or the fourth Sunday in Ordinary time describes Jesus' teaching and mastery over demonic powers.*

*The fifth Sunday after Epiphany\* or the fifth Sunday in Ordinary time describes Jesus' teaching, healing and miracles.*

*The sixth Sunday after Epiphany\* or the sixth Sunday in Ordinary time describes Jesus' teaching, healing and miracles.*

*The seventh Sunday after Epiphany \*or the seventh Sunday in Ordinary time describes Jesus' teaching and healing.*

*The eighth Sunday after Epiphany\* or the eighth Sunday in Ordinary time describes Jesus' teaching and healing.*

\*Unless it is the Sunday before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, in which case it is replaced by the celebration of The Transfiguration of Jesus and the Sundays in Lent.

## The Transfiguration of Jesus.

The Transfiguration of Jesus is celebrated on the Sunday before Lent begins.

The Transfiguration of Jesus is the culmination of the season of Epiphany, during which the revelation of Jesus Christ to the world has been made.

The Methodist, Anglican and Lutheran Churches, among others, tell the story of the Transfiguration on the Sunday before Lent while Catholic traditions celebrate the Transfiguration on the 6<sup>th</sup> August. In all traditions, the celebration of the Transfiguration is a Holy Day.

The Transfiguration recalls the event in which Jesus took three of his disciples up a high mountain where the disciples saw him in the company of Moses and Elijah, with his face shining like the sun and his clothes dazzling white. The Transfiguration proclaims the Christian belief that the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament are brought together in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Transfiguration also marks the beginning of Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem to face rejection and death (see Luke 9: 51).

## The Season of Lent.

The Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is forty days before Easter, not including the six Sundays in Lent. The Sundays in Lent are observed as celebratory days in expectation of the Resurrection (Easter). Lent ends on Holy Saturday, the day after Good Friday. Ash Wednesday and the Sundays in Lent are Holy Days.

During Lent Christians are called to remember Jesus' forty days of fasting in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry in Galilee and Judea. In Lent Christians are also

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called to prepare for the events of Holy Week, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter by setting aside special times for prayer, self-reflection and penitence, giving to the poor, self-discipline and fasting.

*Ash Wednesday* recalls Jesus' instructions concerning giving to the poor, prayer, fasting and right values in Matthew 6: 1-21. A Service of Holy Communion which may include a Ceremony of Ashes is appropriate. In the Ceremony of Ashes the sign of the cross made with ash is placed on the foreheads of worshippers as a mark of repentance.

*The first Sunday in Lent* tells the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and calls people to prayer, self-reflection and penitence, giving to the poor, self-discipline and fasting.

*The second Sunday in Lent* provides for reflection on the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection for people's renewal.

*The third Sunday in Lent* provides for reflection on repentance and renewal.

*The fourth Sunday in Lent* provides for reflection on receiving new insight and the unconditional love of God

*The fifth Sunday in Lent; the beginning of "Passiontide"*. This Sunday prepares people to understand more fully the death and resurrection of Jesus and their own death and resurrection because of Jesus. The fifth Sunday in Lent also marks the beginning of "The Passion", or "Passiontide", a season within the Season of Lent that focuses more closely on the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ for people's redemption and transformation. Passiontide culminates on Easter Day.

## Holy Week

*Holy Week* recalls the seven days between Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and the day of his entombment in the Garden of Gethsemane. Worship Services or prayer and reflection in community are appropriate in Societies on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in Holy Week. In many traditions, Wednesday in Holy Week recalls the plot by Judas to betray Jesus.

*The sixth Sunday in Lent, also known as Palm Sunday*, recalls Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and calls people to acclaim him as Lord, while recognising the costliness of Jesus' passion. Palm Sunday is a Holy Day.

*Maundy Thursday* recalls the Last Supper that Jesus' shared with his disciples and the institution of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Jesus' washing of his disciple's feet and exhortation to his followers to do the same and the giving of the "New Commandment"- "that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 13: 34).

The word "Maundy" is derived from the Latin word "mandatum" which means "that which has been commanded". That which has been commanded is:

- Christians should celebrate Holy Communion in remembrance of Jesus Christ
- Christians should serve others, as symbolized in the washing of feet
- Christians should love in the same way that Jesus loves

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Societies appropriately observe Maundy Thursday with a Service of Holy Communion which may include any or all of the following elements:

- The Washing of Feet
- The Gospel of the Watch
- A Service of Light and Darkness (“A Service of Shadows” or “Tenebrae” service)
- The Stripping of the Communion Table
- Prayer Vigil.

*Good Friday* recalls the crucifixion of Jesus. Services do not include Holy Communion, but may include:

- The Reading of the Passion Narrative
- The Reproaches (“My people, what have I done to you?”)
- Intercessions (prayer for others)
- A three hour service recalling the seven sentences (or “words”) spoken by Jesus from the cross may be held during “*the hours of darkness*” between twelve noon and three o’clock in the afternoon (see Mark 15: 33 and Luke 23: 44).

*Holy Saturday* Holy Saturday recalls the entombment of Jesus.

Based on Acts 2: 27; Ephesians 4: 9; 1 Peter 3: 18 – 20; 1 Peter 4: 6, and the article in the Apostle’s Creed: “He descended to the dead”, some ancient traditions observe “The Harrowing of Hell” on Holy Saturday. In a service observing “The Harrowing of Hell” Jesus is proclaimed to have descended to the realm of the dead, disarmed the power of evil and proclaimed the gospel to those who died before receiving it.

Services on Holy Saturday may include:

- *A Memorial Service* for those who have died.
- *The Easter Vigil*, beginning after sunset and ending before sunrise on Easter morning. The Easter Vigil is an ancient tradition of the Christian Church, during which Christians eagerly await the Resurrection.
- *The Service of Light* during which an Easter Candle is lit, signifying the Resurrection. The Easter candle is then lit in all services during the fifty days of the Easter season (Easter to Pentecost) and at baptisms and funerals.
- *The Reaffirmation of Baptism* during which worshippers are reminded of the grace of God in Jesus Christ which they received by the Holy Spirit at their baptism and their consequent incorporation into the community of the Church. Worshippers are called to reaffirm the beliefs and commitments made at their baptism.

The season of Lent ends at midnight on Holy Saturday.

## The Easter Season

The Easter Season begins on Easter Sunday, which falls on the first Sunday after the full moon following the March equinox. Easter Sunday recalls the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Christians are called to celebrate Jesus’ victory over sin and death and “a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” (1 Peter 1: 3) Easter Sunday, often referred to as “The first Sunday of Easter”, is a Holy Day.

The Easter Season continues for fifty days, up to and including the day of Pentecost. All Sundays in the Easter Season are widely, but not universally, regarded as Holy Days. However, Ascension Day (the Thursday following the fifth Sunday after Easter), Ascension

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Sunday (the Sunday following Ascension Day) and Pentecost are universally regarded as Holy Days.

Services on Easter Sunday may include:

- *The Paschal Greeting*. The Paschal Greeting is a custom in which, on Easter Sunday, Christians greet each other with the words: “The Lord is risen!” The reply is “He is risen indeed.” In some traditions Christians kiss each other on both cheeks in the Paschal Greeting. Services on Easter Sunday may begin with the Paschal greeting.
- *A Sunrise Service* which may include Holy Communion
- *Baptism*. From earliest times it has been regarded as appropriate for baptism to take place on Easter Sunday
- *The Reaffirmation of Baptism*, where this has not taken place on Holy Saturday
- *Confirmation and Reception into Membership* may be included in Easter Sunday Services
- *Holy Communion*

*The second and third Sunday of Easter (the first Sunday after Easter and the second Sunday after Easter)* recall the risen Jesus’ appearances to his disciples.

*The fourth to the sixth Sunday of Easter (the third to the fifth Sunday after Easter)* describe the implications of the resurrection of Jesus for all people.

## Ascension

The Ascension of Jesus Christ is celebrated on the Thursday after the sixth Sunday of Easter (the fifth Sunday after Easter.) The Ascension recalls Matthew 28: 16 – 20; Mark 16: 19 – 20; Luke 24: 50 – 53 and Acts 1: 6 – 11. The Ascension of Jesus Christ is a high point in the Easter Season and is a Holy Day.

Ascension Day is celebrated appropriately with services of worship which include Holy Communion. The reciting of *The Song of Christ’s Glory* (Philippians 2: 6 – 11) is appropriate on Ascension Day. *The Song of Christ’s Glory*, combined with Ephesians 4: 7 – 10 and Colossians 1: 15 – 20 expresses the spirit and meaning of The Ascension of Jesus Christ.

The Ascension of Jesus Christ is the last of the six defining events in the gospel accounts of the life of Jesus: Birth, Baptism, Transfiguration, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. The Ascension completes the story of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ with his glorification and places him “at the right hand of the Father” (Nicene and Apostle’s Creeds). The Ascension of Jesus Christ includes “The Great Commission” (Matthew 28: 18 – 20).

*Ascension Sunday (the seventh Sunday of Easter, the sixth Sunday after Easter)* recalls Jesus’ “High Priestly Prayer” in John 17. On Ascension Sunday Christians are called to pay special attention to Jesus’ prayer for Christian unity.

## Pentecost

Pentecost is celebrated fifty days after Easter and marks the end of the Easter Season. Pentecost is a Holy Day.

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Pentecost, in the Christian faith, recalls the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 2: 1 – 47. Pentecost coincides with the Jewish festival of Shavuot, which commemorates the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. The relationship between the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is described in 2 Corinthians 3: 4 – 11.

Pentecost is traditionally regarded as “the birthday of the Christian Church” and the beginning of its mission.

Pentecost is appropriately celebrated with services which include Holy Communion and may include Baptism and Confirmation and Reception into Membership.

## Trinity Sunday

Trinity Sunday is celebrated on the Sunday after Pentecost. Trinity Sunday is a Holy Day.

Trinity Sunday is a celebration of the Church’s experience of and belief in one God in three Persons and the unity of the Three Persons in the Trinity. The celebration of the Trinity provides for a summary of the saving events recalled by Christian worshippers through the Christian Calendar since the beginning of the Advent Season.

The reading of the Athanasian Creed (the “Quicumque Vult”) is an ancient tradition observed on Trinity Sunday. The Athanasian Creed describes Christian belief in the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity.

## Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi (meaning: “The Body of Christ”), also known as “The Commemoration of the Holy Communion”, is celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

Corpus Christi, or The Commemoration of the Holy Communion, celebrates the Christian experience of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Communion and Holy Communion as a means of grace. In many traditions on the day of Corpus Christi Holy Communion is celebrated outside the walls of a church building, often in a public place and in the midst of people’s working lives, a tradition made possible by the fact that Corpus Christi is on a Thursday, during the normal working week.

Corpus Christi provides an opportunity for teaching concerning the meaning of Holy Communion, guest services and making the grace of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion accessible to people who are excluded from the Christian community.

## Ordinary Time

*Ordinary time* is a period in which no particular Holy Day is observed. During the period of Ordinary time following Trinity Sunday until All Saints Day (1<sup>st</sup> November) preaching and teaching in Sunday worship services recalls the ongoing life and growth of the Church and is principally based on the New Testament Epistles, while not ignoring readings from the Gospels and the Old Testament.

## All Saints Day

All Saints Day falls on the 1<sup>st</sup> November.

All Saints Day celebrates the fellowship of the Christian Church “militant and triumphant.” The Christian Church is one community of those presently alive on Earth and those who have died and are in the immediate presence of God, as reflected in Hebrews 12: 1.



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All Saints Day has particular relevance in Africa, where the sense of continued fellowship with those who have gone before us is especially real.

All Saints Day is appropriately celebrated with memorial services and services of thanksgiving for the lives and witness of those who have inspired others in faith, good works, the pursuit of justice and mercy and with a vision of the reconciling, healing and renewing qualities of the coming reign of God in which all things are made new.

## Christ the King (Reign of Christ Sunday)

The celebration of Christ the King, also called “Reign of Christ Sunday,” falls on the last Sunday of the Christian Calendar, the Sunday before Advent 1, between the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup> November,

Matthew 25: 31 – 46, Luke 23: 33 – 43 and John 18: 33 – 37 express the spirit of “Christ the King” or “Reign of Christ Sunday”.

Christ the King/ “The Reign of Christ Sunday” concludes the Christian Calendar year with the declaration of the Christian belief that the reign of Christ supercedes all others powers.

On Christ the King/ “The Reign of Christ Sunday” the Church reminds those having political or any other power that their power is not absolute and that they are accountable for their use of it.

On Christ the King/”The Reign of Christ Sunday” Christians are reminded that their loyalty to the reign of Christ supercedes their loyalty to nation, race, culture, clan, denominational or political affiliation and any other claim on their allegiance.

## Other occasional festivals and Holy Days

### Covenant

Covenant Services are held annually on a date determined by Circuits and Societies, preferably close to the start of the secular calendar year. Covenant Services are regarded as having the importance of Holy Days.

The purpose of the Covenant Service is set out in “The Methodist Worship Book”<sup>1</sup>:

*God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation, chosen to bear witness to his steadfast love by finding delight in the Law.*

*The covenant was renewed in Jesus Christ our Lord, in his life, work, death and resurrection. In him all people may be set free from sin and its power, and united in love and obedience.*

*In this covenant God promises us new life in Christ. For our part we promise to live no longer for ourselves but for God.*

*We meet, therefore, as generations have met before us, to renew the covenant which bound them and binds us to God.*

Covenant Services include the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

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<sup>1</sup> Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, England 1999, page 285.

## Aldersgate

Aldersgate falls on the 24<sup>th</sup> May.

Aldersgate may be celebrated on the Sunday before 24<sup>th</sup> May and be called “Aldersgate Sunday”.

Aldersgate celebrates the founder of Methodism John Wesley’s experience of “the warmed heart” in Aldersgate Street, London on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 1738 and the beginning of the Wesleyan Revival which led to the founding of the Methodist Church worldwide. Aldersgate also celebrates the life and work of Charles Wesley, the brother of John and writer of many hymns valued by Methodists and the wider Christian Church.

Christians within the Methodist tradition are called to show the following in their lives, attitudes, work and the practice of their life of faith and membership of the Methodist Church:

### Methodist Ethos<sup>2</sup>

*As the law of love is the law of Christ for all his disciples, the spirit and practice of Christian love is an indispensable condition of faithful membership in the Methodist Church. The spiritual and ethical ideal of this fellowship has always been, and still is, that its members should constantly seek to be made perfect in love – ‘pure love filling the heart and governing all words and actions’...*

### The Methodist Rule of Life<sup>3</sup>

- *Doing no harm, avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is more generally practised...*
- *Doing good by being merciful after one’s own power, doing good of every possible sort to the bodies of people as well as to their souls and, as far as possible, to all...*
- *Attending upon all the ordinances of God. These include public worship of God, observance of the Lord’s Supper, maintenance of Christian community, private prayer, reading the Scriptures, and habits of self-discipline...*

Aldersgate is celebrated in a worship service, not necessarily including the Sacrament of Holy Communion

## Harvest Thanksgivings/Festivals of Work

Harvest Thanksgivings/Festivals of Work are held annually on a date determined by Circuits and Societies.

In Societies and Circuits in areas associated with particular agricultural harvests, Harvest Thanksgivings should coincide with the harvest of crops particular to those areas.

In Circuits and Societies located in areas that are primarily commercial and industrial a Festival of Work may take place on a date determined locally. Sundays closest to Worker’s

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<sup>2</sup> The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, *Laws and Discipline* 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, page 25 paragraph 3.3.

<sup>3</sup> The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, *Laws and Discipline* 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, page 25-26 paragraph 3.4. – 3.5.3.

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Day (widely observed internationally on 1<sup>st</sup> May) or the end of the financial year for most economic activities (31<sup>st</sup> March) are recommended, except when these date coincide with Christian Holy Days in the Christian Calendar.

In Harvest Thanksgivings/Festivals of Work Christians are called to give thanks to God for the fruitfulness they have enjoyed, celebrate the dignity of their work as co-creators with God, honour the role of workers and commit themselves to excellence in the performance of their work and to environmentally sustainable and socially responsible work.

Harvest Thanksgiving/Festivals of Work should include donations for the relief of suffering, hunger, unemployment and poverty.

## Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Sunday falls on the Sunday closest to the 11<sup>th</sup> November.

The date of Remembrance Sunday recalls the date of the armistice that ended the First World War.

Remembrance Sunday is a day of remembrance of all who have died in any and all armed conflict. The purposes of Remembrance Sunday are to:

- Reverently remember those who have died in armed conflict
- Observe Remembrance Sunday as a day of penitence for all people's complicity in armed conflict
- Observe it as a day of reflection and commitment to the promotion of justice and peace and an end to all war-making.

A call to observe the purposes of Remembrance Sunday should be included in normal worship services. Participation in civil services marking Remembrance Day is appropriate, provided that the purposes of Remembrance Sunday are upheld in such services.

## Church Anniversaries

Church Anniversaries may take place on, or close to, the anniversaries of the founding of local Circuits and Societies or the anniversaries of the opening of church buildings.

Church Anniversaries in local Circuits and Societies recall the founding and specific missional purposes of Circuits and Societies. Church Anniversaries include thanksgiving to God for the faithfulness of the founding members and succeeding generations of members of the Circuit or Society. Members of Circuits and Societies are called to support and sustain the ongoing life, witness and specific missional purposes of their Circuits and Societies.

## National and International Days

### National Public Holidays

Recognition should be given in worship services to the national public holidays of the countries within the Connexion of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, namely Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho.

### International Days

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As far as possible and relevant to the specific missions of local Circuits and Societies, recognition should be given to International Days in worship services. United Nations appointed International Days are listed on the following web page:

[www.un.org/en/events/observances/days.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/days.shtml)

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