NORTH WEST ENGLAND METHODIST DISTRICT

Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Communications Guidance for Churches and Circuits

According to the Methodist Church's Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion), being Christian means:

- celebrating God who made each person in God's own image
- being disciples of Jesus who treated each person with dignity
- rejoicing in the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to all people.

We are committed to becoming a Church that prioritises justice and dignity for all, especially those who have previously been excluded, and which stands in active solidarity with them.

Therefore, we should take the following actions in our communications wherever possible:

1) Make text accessible.

- Consider those using tools such as screen readers, those with limited knowledge of the subject matter, a learning disability or those learning English as a second language.
- Write in plain language (including avoiding jargon), don't overuse caps, use an adequate font size, avoid special characters, limit line length
- When on social media, in addition to the above: use camel case for multi-word hashtags, put hashtags and mentions at the end, limit emoji use.
- Microsoft has a built-in accessibility checker within their 'review' panel that can be used when preparing written content on Microsoft apps such as Outlook, Word, PowerPoint and Excel.

2) Don't make assumptions about what people know. For example, in a service you should ensure that any words that you would like people to speak or sing along with, are displayed clearly on a projector screen.

3) Use alt-text, or descriptive image alongside non-written content – convey the content of the image to ensure it is accessible to screen readers.

4) Include closed captions in video content. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube offer an option to do this automatically. Include descriptive transcripts of sights and sounds that are not spoken where necessary.

5) Use inclusive language and showcase a range of perspectives. The Methodist Inclusive Language Guide can be found here.

6) Promote positive inclusion.

7) Highlight topical campaigns but accompany this with content throughout the year – it shouldn't be talked about only on these days.

8) Pay attention to how we talk to each other, ensuring we are at all times courteous, respectful and appropriate, regardless of the channel we are using to communicate.

9) When including links to other websites in communication, ensure the website you're linking to says nothing contrary to the spirit of the JDS Strategy. If it does, but there is still a legitimate reason for linking to it, ensure a disclaimer is written next to the link with the following wording:

   "The Methodist Church have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy called Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity, and does not necessarily agree with everything in this webpage. Further information about the JDS strategy can be found here."

Further information on accessibility can be found through the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, and through The Methodist Church's guidance on how to create accessible resources and accessible verbal and audio-visual communication.

JDS research supported by https://blog.hootsuite.com/inclusive-design-social-media/#9_inclusive_design_tips_for_social_media_managers

Find out more about the Inclusive Methodist Church here.