**Preparation guide for services**

Biblical Preparation (with thanks to Rev Dr Sally Douglas for her suggestions)

Find out the readings suggested for the relevant service. Before you begin considering each passage, take a moment to be still and listen to the voice of God. The prayer of listening is central to hearing the heart of God and beginning this process. Try to put aside the way you may have heard each passage used and preached on in the past. Follow the instructions below for each passage on their own before moving to the next passage. Don’t worry if you can’t do all the questions. They are but a guide to help with your reflection.

Commentaries are also useful resources; some are even available on-line. Use them after first looking at the passage. Below is a range of links to a variety of Bible study resources and links web sites.

1) Read each passage slowly and carefully several times. It may help to read each one aloud at least once.

2) Record your questions about each passage.

3) Make a note of the style of writing of each passage e.g. is it poetry, humorous, instructive, a healing story, is there hyperbole or exaggeration, is there repetition, etc.

4) Have a look at the passages before and after each one. Note what happens in each and are there common thoughts or ideas?

5) Particularly in the Gospels, are there parallel or similar stories told in either that book or others.  Note how these stories are used, especially similarities and differences to this one.

6) Note any common themes between the passages. How are they similar and/or different?

7) Are their other Biblical passages that have links to any of these passages, either as quotes, references and/or similar points and themes addressed?