

# Ecumenical NewsBrief

2023



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# News from the World Council of Churches (WCC)



## New Member Churches

In 2022 the World Council of Churches (WCC) fellowship has grown to 352 member churches in 120 countries. The 2 new member churches are the First African Church Mission (Nigeria) and the Apostolic Faith Mission (South Africa).

## New General Secretary



Congratulations to Rev Prof Dr Jerry Pillay who took up his post as new WCC general secretary on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. He is the ninth general secretary in the WCC's history since the fellowship of churches was founded in 1948. A member of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, Jerry Pillay is from South Africa.

## Outgoing Acting General Secretary



Thank you to Rev Prof Dr Ioan Sauca who is the outgoing acting general secretary. He began serving in that position in April 2020, when the previous general secretary, Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, was appointed as the presiding bishop of the Church of Norway. In his tribute to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI he said on behalf of the WCC that "Benedict was the first pope ...

to have belonged to a committee of the World Council of Churches, as one of the Catholic members of its Faith and Order Commission. Within a short time of Benedict becoming pope, longstanding grievances that had prevented meetings of the Catholic-Orthodox dialogue commission were swept aside....In the one ecumenical movement he constantly affirmed as irreversible the deep involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in ecumenism, especially in responding to the challenging issues for the church in the world."

## New Moderator of WCC Central Committee

Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria was elected by the World Council of Churches central committee as its new moderator.

*Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC*

To listen to World Council of Churches moderator reflecting on the WCC's important journey amid difficult budget decisions please go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AdcpXnf5sU>. He shares how the ecumenical movement is needed now more than ever to bring hope to the world.

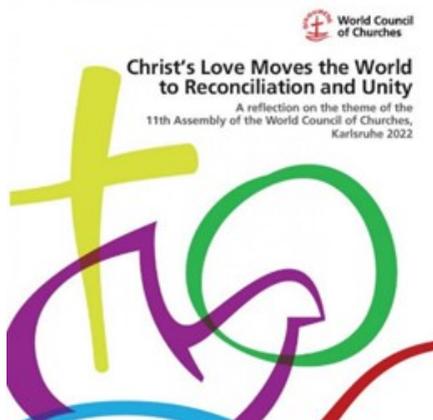


## The 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the WCC

...took place in Karlsruhe, Germany, from the 31<sup>st</sup> August to 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022. It was attended by about 4,000 people representing 345 member Churches.

The diversity in dress, prayer and song was spectacular and people came from many different doctrinal backgrounds. It was a tremendous experience of fellowship and love. Some of our National Ecumenical Officers travelled to Karlsruhe together to a gathering that proved to be a very positive experience. Someone described it as mind-blowing, someone else as a witness of its theme: "Christ's love moves the world towards reconciliation and unity", someone else as an extraordinary learning opportunity.

Members had to cast votes various times and it was remarkable that the voting took place as a process by which consensus was being sought before moving ahead.



In their final message entitled: “A Call to Act Together” delegates said they longed for a wider movement, the reconciliation and unity of all humanity, and indeed of the entire cosmos. To read their entire message please



follow this link: <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/message-of-the-wcc-11th-assembly-a-call-to-act-together>

The Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) website provides a brief overview of some of the plenary sessions, a lot of useful information, access to talks, etc. Please follow this link or copy and paste the following: <https://ctbi.org.uk/wcc-assembly-31-august-8-september-2022/> to access them.

To find more information via the WCC website, please follow this link.

*Photos: Paul Jeffrey/WCC*



The next WCC Assembly will take place in 2030.

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

18–25 January 2023

## Resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and throughout the year 2023

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will draw together churches across the globe to “Do good; seek justice (Isaiah 1:17).” The international resources were jointly prepared and published by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. Resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and throughout the year 2023 can be downloaded [here](#).

### A phone call & a prayer

Why not pick up the phone and contact someone from a different denomination during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity for a catch up. Also, why not consider dedicating each day during this octave to pray for a church of a different denominations in your area.

### Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) Week of Prayer 2023 Resources



“For this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we are guided by the churches of Minneapolis as we seek to explore how the work of Christian unity can contribute to the promotion of racial justice across all levels of society. Through this resource, the CTBI writers’ group has also focussed our attention on the 30th anniversary of the murder of Stephen Lawrence, which we mark in 2023.” Resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2023 prepared by

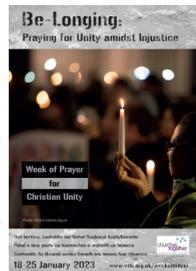


Photo: Mazur/cbcew.org.uk

CTBI can be downloaded following this [link](#). The pamphlet: Be-Longing Praying for Unity amidst Injustice includes daily reflections plus an order of service. (For Joint Ecumenical Service in Liverpool, please see p40). For resources from World Council of Churches, please see above.

# Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)



## Racial Justice Sunday 12 February 2023 Resources

This year, Racial Justice Sunday focuses on marking the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the racist killing of Stephen Lawrence in Eltham, south London on 22 April 1993. It features a powerful foreword by Baroness Doreen Lawrence and a plethora of outstanding material that will enable all to remember, reflect and respond to issues of justice, equality, hope and dignity, especially those emanating from Stephen Lawrence's life, death and legacy. Racial Justice Sunday resources have been published at: <https://ctbi.org.uk/racial-justice-sunday-2023-stephen-lawrence/>

## CTBI/Churches' Refugee Network 'Life Beyond Borders' conference

... took place on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at Liverpool Hope University. This day-long event explored the local, national and international implications of borders on communities, including their impact on the most vulnerable in societies, such as refugees. It was also a forum to bring together an array of organisations, groups and individuals from across Britain and Ireland who are engaged in asylum and refugee work in some capacity, and showcased the great work taking place by both Church and secular groups in this area. Below the speakers and workshop leaders:



From l to r: Revd Dr Sahr Yambasu, Zrinka Bralo, Professor Katy Hayward, Dr Torsten Moritz, Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal OBE, Rt Revd Dr John Perumbalath, Dr Nicola Brady, Richard Reddie and Jonny Clark.

To find out more, including a recording of the main speakers, please visit <https://ctbi.org.uk/life-beyond-borders-8-november-2022/>.

# News from Churches Together in England (CTE)



## New CTE President

Rev Helen Cameron is the Moderator of the Free Churches Group and takes on the role of the CTE president representing those national Member Churches. She succeeds Rev Dr Hugh Osgood as the CTE President for the Free Churches Group.



Photo CTE: Helen signing the CTE Presidents' Covenant at the December Presidents meeting

To find out more about Helen please follow this [link](https://cte.org.uk/new-president-cameron/). Or copy and paste: <https://cte.org.uk/new-president-cameron/> into your browser.

## CTE Presidents urge prayerful support for Ukraine in their Christmas message

Here is an extract of a statement made by the Presidents of Churches Together in England, with the support of the Fourth Presidency Group, on Christmas Eve 2022:

"... we call to mind the suffering of the people of Ukraine this terrible winter as the unjust Russian invasion continues. We urge Christians everywhere to continue to stand in prayerful solidarity with the people and churches of Ukraine and to support them in their hour of need. We also hold in prayer all those displaced and suffering the effects of war and oppression..."



The [full message](#) was signed by the [CTE Presidents](#)

## Farewell to Jenny Bond



Jenny Bond retired from Churches Together in England in October 2022 after 22½ years of exceptional service. Our heartfelt thanks and good wishes go with her.

David Cornick, CTE General Secretary from 2008 to 2018, gave a tribute to Jenny at her farewell event and here are some extracts of what he said: “Jenny’s working heart lay ... in the network of county and other intermediate ecumenical officers ... Jenny fostered, supported and loved those people. She held a network of training, encouragement and conversation. No sooner was a new person in post than Jenny was on the phone, making contact, beginning a friendship. I think it’s probably true that



without Jenny that singularly important part of English ecumenism would have withered on the vine in the ... days of diminished funding. ...But there was more. As staff roles changed, Jenny took on the triennial Forum, and her mastery of spreadsheets and technology found a home. It was organisation down to the final spreadsheet cell. .... The result? Superb Forums, attended by an ever-increasing constituency.”

At the last CTE Forum in 2022 these words were confirmed by those who attended. Jenny received a standing ovation and she was completely overwhelmed by this.



Photos: CTE At the leaving event in Cardinal Vincent Nichols Throne Room

**As Jenny retired, .....**

...Doral Hayes was appointed...



...to the role of Principal Officer for Ecumenical Development and Relations. She started in her new role in September 2022. Doral's focus is to inspire and encourage ecumenical work at a local, intermediate (county or city) and national level.



Doral was Ecumenical Facilitator for Churches Together in Hertfordshire working with both local and regional church leaders to support worship and service together across the county. For the last nine years, Doral has been Executive Development Officer for the Association of Inter-church Families, working in the UK and internationally to support and advocate for interchurch couples and be a voice in the churches for the opportunity they present. Both a former Trustee of Churches Together in England and the former Chair of CTBI/CTE Bodies in Association, Doral is currently a member of the English and Welsh Anglican Roman Catholic Committee and the CTBI Writers Group for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Welcome, Doral!

Photo: CTBI

## Current Staff Team at Churches Together in England



*From left to right: Sarah Ball, Communications and Media Manager; Ben Cross, Head of Operations; Doral Hayes, Principal Officer for Ecumenical Development and Relations; Bishop Mike Royal, General Secretary; Lucy Olofinjana, Senior Communications and Media Manager will be moving on at the end of January following her appointment to the new role of Evangelism Content Manager at London City Mission. Sarah Ball will take on responsibility for CTE Communications (having undertaken this role during Lucy's recent maternity leave); Lorraine Shannon, Operations Manager; Rev Dr Ben Aldous, Principal Officer for Evangelism & Mission; Shermara Fletcher, Principal Officer for Pentecostal, Charismatic and Multi-cultural Relations.*

*The CTE team were delighted that Shermara Fletcher read so eloquently at the Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, representing the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches & Churches Together in England*

## CTE Forum 2022

The Churches Together in England Forum is the broadest representative ecumenical gathering of Christians in England. Taking place every three to four years, it brings together over three hundred representatives of CTE's Member Churches, Intermediate Bodies, Co-ordinating Groups and Bodies in Association.



The design for Forum 2022 *(please see logo above)* was inspired by the Lord's Supper – the round communion wafer symbolising Jesus' body which was broken for a broken world and was designed by Jacky Yomi, the CTE Forum logo winner.

10 people from Merseyside were present at Forum 2022 and some of them are on the photo below with Cardinal Vincent Nichols.



*From left to right: Andrew Edwards (LEP Co-ordinator and Anglican Denominational Officer); Rebecca Richardson (Huyton Deanery Schools and Youth Worker, CofE) and Peter McDonnell (RC) representing the CTMR young adults group; (Cardinal Vincent Nichols); Veronica McDonnell (team member, CTMR young adults group); Elisabeth Hachmoeller (Ecumenical Co-ordinator for CTMR), Sister Moira Ferguson Rev Tony Slingo, RC Parish Priest, Southport*

Others from Merseyside at Forum 2022 were: Yvonne Campbell, Congregational Federation General Secretary; Phil Jump, NW Baptist Regional Minister, representing CTMR Church Leaders; Jenny Sinclair (Founder Director, Together for the Common Good)

CTMR were grateful to have received a free space at Forum in recognition of the variety of contributions given at Forum as household group coordinators, members of a panel (*see image*), staffing a stall on the Market place and leading a workshop.



Forum was a unforgettable event and here is what Rebecca said: “The Churches Together England Forum was an inspirational, enriching and powerful experience for me as a young adult. Such powerful keynotes and panel discussions about Reconciliation and Hope together in our world as one in unity with Christ. It was so lovely to meet so many other young adults from different denominations coming together to share our experience with one another. It was amazing to meet and see so many new people from different denominations and hear from them about their experience of Forum and feeling welcomed and one together. I have loved being a part of this as one together. I really enjoyed the wonderful fellowship together, inspiring conversations and the beautiful worship hearing the love of Christ fill the room as we sang together. Taking away in particular being one together in unity with Christ, being one church together and it’s WHO we follow and not what we follow.”



*Photo: Rebecca Richardson*

# CTE News & Stories

... are available by following this [link](#).



## Dates for your diary from CTE for 2023

- > *Thy Kingdom Come: Online Inspire and Equip on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023* - a one hour online training and information event by CTE and Thy Kingdom Come. More information will be available soon.
- > Story Telling Workshops - a series of three in February both in person and online. Please see the information [here](#).

## Changes among National Ecumenical Officers

A new Church of England National Ecumenical Adviser, The Rev Canon Dr Jeremy Morris (*left*) was appointed last year. He succeeds The



Rev Dr Callan Slipper (*right*) who retired in the Spring of 2022 and remains a CTE Trustee.



To find out more about Jeremy please go to <https://cte.org.uk/cofe-neo-morris/>

Thank you, Callan and welcome Jeremy!

The new National Ecumenical Officer for the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland is Deacon Boniface Carroll.

To find out more about Boniface and his Church, please follow this [link](#)



# Ecumenical Officers



National, County and Denominational Ecumenical Officers in England are in place to encourage, assist, and resource Christian unity in a particular area or network. A key part of their work is to connect, encourage and communicate.

## Northern County Ecumenical Officers (NCEOs)

NCEOs continue their tri-annual meetings for mutual support, networking and exchange of ideas. They are grateful that after a long period of zoom meetings, face-to-face meetings could be resumed. There will also be some changes of Ecumenical Officers in the North in 2023.



*Top row: l to r: Jo Phillips, Ecumenical Social Responsibility Officer, Cumbria; Elisabeth Hachmoeller, Ecumenical Co-ordinator, Merseyside Anton Muller, CEO Lancashire, Middle row l to right: centre: Joanne Thorns, NE Regional Ecumenical Officer; Charlotte Trueman, CEO, Cheshire; Peter Colwell, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland; CTBI, Bottom row: Jenny Bond, CTE*

*NCEOs at Whalley Abbey at their meeting in October 2022.*

The NCEOs are also looking forward to working with Beatrice Smith who was appointed for Greater Manchester.



# Thy Kingdom Come 2023

## Inspire and equip workshops

Getting ready to #PrayTogether in May 2023

Churches Together in England and Thy Kingdom Come (TKC) have joined together to offer two online sessions to help us get ready for May's event. They will introduce the new features of TKC 2023



including the daily themes and a focus on mission with 'Living the Kingdom'.

Each session will be an hour of practical prayer ideas and resources as well as considering how we can engage our local churches as ecumenical partners in prayer. There will also be time for questions and answers.

The sessions take place on Wednesday 25 January 2023 from 10.30-11.30 am and 8-9 pm.

TKC is the worldwide ecumenical prayer movement, which began in 2016. It takes place between Ascension and Pentecost each year – 18 to 28 May 2023 – and invites Christians to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. It started as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England but has grown to involve many other churches.

The joint workshops will be hosted by CTE Principal Officer for Ecumenical Development and Relations, Doral Hayes, and Rev Jean Kerr from Thy Kingdom Come. The same material will be covered in both sessions. Book online by following this [link](#).

# All Ecumenical Officers

## 2 day Conference

### September 2022, Swanwick



The meeting of 80 National, County and Denominational Ecumenical Officers began with a very lively and enthusiastic update by National Ecumenical Officers on the 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Karlsruhe, Germany. Please see pages 4/5 for more information.



Then the new General Secretary of Churches Together in England, Bishop Mike Royal, introduced himself and reflected on “Exciting Church” against a realistic picture of present day challenges. For him ecumenism is the glue for relationships between Churches and it is important to value local grassroots ecumenism. CTE can provide one voice in moments of crisis, in making reparation, can contribute to difficult conversations. CTE also was publicly involved at the Queen’s funeral.      Photos: Meeting room and presentation of one of the workshops.



The results of the three workshops on offer were shared at the end of the conference. The titles were: story telling through rhythm, dance to ‘Jerusalem’ and a drumming workshop.

Further inputs were from: Nicola Brady CTBI General Secretary who emphasised that large scale change can only happen when acting together. She encouraged intentional investment in ecumenism, not shying away from naming our difficulties. Helen Cameron, Moderator of the Free Churches Group and CTE’s Free Church President gave a very honest talk about ‘loving Church’. She emphasised that ecumenism is not an extra, but core to living out the Gospel.

# Anglican and Catholic Bishops' meeting in Liverpool

## With the Church for the World and with Young People



On 1-2 February 2022 Catholic and Anglican bishops gathered in Liverpool for their seventh joint meeting in the past 10 years. These meetings aim to foster spiritual communion; to identify and develop programmes of joint witness and mission in this country, both regionally and nationally, while reflecting on the effectiveness of this expression of spiritual communion; to remain informed about the formal dialogue of ARCIC (Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commissions), etc.

On 1<sup>st</sup> February, after Midday Prayer at the Metropolitan Cathedral, the 28 Anglican and 32 Catholic bishops took part in a 'Fraternal Pilgrimage Walk' along Hope Street. They paused at the Sheppard-Worlock memorial./



*Image from Card Vincent Nichol's Instagram*

*page*

The theme of their 1<sup>st</sup> session was: With the Church for the World – 'Hearing the Holy Spirit through listening to one another: the promise and challenge of synodality.

Included in their 2<sup>nd</sup> session entitled: With Young People - 'how do we communicate effectively with young people: cultural challenges and opportunities' was a presentation of the CTMR Young Adults group.

The Liverpool Archdiocesan Facebook page and the Twitter feed of the 2<sup>nd</sup> February said: "Over the past two days, we've had the pleasure of co-hosting the meeting of Catholic and Anglican Bishops from England and Wales here in Liverpool. It has been a wonderful celebration filled with prayers, faith, friendship and unity."

# News from Merseyside



## CTMR Church Leaders Group

CTMR Church Leaders met 4 times in 2022. They continue to give direction to the work of CTMR. CTMR Church Leaders rotate the chair of their meetings, pray together and share highlights and concerns. Together they host an annual Civic Reception, a lunch for local MPs and a Pentecost event. They also spend a retreat day together. They collaborate in many different ways throughout the year and give a witness of unity.

Our much loved Bishop Paul Bayes retired in February 2022 and we wish him well.

## Welcome to Merseyside Bishop John

Bishop Paul is being succeeded by The Rt Rev Dr John Perumbalath. A big welcome to Bishop John to Merseyside. Bishop John comes to us from the Diocese of Bradwell where he became Bishop in 2018.

To find out more about Bishop John, please follow this [link](#)

Photo: Diocese of Liverpool



## CTMR Church Leaders Invite Local MPs

On the day it was scheduled to take place, the lunch time event for CTMR Church Leaders and Merseyside MPs had to be cancelled. This was due to what everyone woke up to in the news on the 18 March 2022. In their email that morning, one of the MPs described what happened: “My sincere apologies, but I am afraid I am not going to be able to attend the lunch today: the emergency situation that has arisen with P&O Ferries sacking its staff means I will be liaising with the unions and workforce today to try and resolve this situation. I am sorry for the short notice, but I am sure you will understand and I look forward to being able to attend another one in future.” The next MP lunch is schedule to take place in March of this year.

## CTMR Civic Reception 2022

A Civic Reception for Leaders of the Borough Councils and Mayors within the Merseyside Region is hosted annually by CTMR Church Leaders. It is an opportunity for Mayors and Leaders of the Council to network among themselves and with the Church Leaders. Sometimes it is also used to award recognition on civic members of the Region for their contribution to Merseyside and often beyond.

Last year's reception was hosted by the Free Churches and took place at Strawberry Field. The Salvation Army offered a visit to their exhibition and served delicious food in the Strawberry Field café.

Photo: Café at Strawberry Field

It was a wonderful occasion for networking in a warm cordial atmosphere and for some good conversations. The hosts did not miss the opportunity to say thank you to the Civic Leaders for their dedicated service to society.



## CTMR Management Council



The Management group is responsible for ensuring that the charity sets budgets, produces accounts and annual reports, provides governance and compliance oversight to the Church Leaders group. It monitors the working of the charity so that it is safe, legal and appropriate. It ensures that standing responsibilities are met, such as emergency planning, the support of LEPs and good practice in the employment of staff. They meet three times a year. There are some changes.

### Thank You, Jan and Neil & Welcome, Andrew!



Our Treasurer - Mrs Janet Lasham has retired after 7 years of dedicated service. Jan is from the URC. A big thank you to Jan for her continuous support and for going the extra mile, many times.



Welcome to our new Treasurer Mr Andrew Lovelady from the Methodist Church. We are grateful that Andrew agreed to follow Jan and look forward to working with him.



Neil Cunningham, our SAS Co-ordinator and CTMR Trustee, resigned after 10 years of inspiring service. Thank you Neil for your faithfulness and enthusiasm over the years. At present, CTMR are seeking to replace Neil.

## Denominational Ecumenical Officers

Denominational Officers from Merseyside also continue to meet via zoom three times annually for mutual support, updating and to enable working together more closely. To find out who they are, please go the CTMR website or use this [link](#).

## Tributes to Claire Davison RIP



Claire Davidson was a much loved and valued trustee of CTMR, member of the Management Council and for a number of years the Denominational Ecumenical Officer for the Archdiocese of Liverpool. She died on 13 February 2022.

Claire's successor and now Chair of Liverpool Archdiocesan Dialogue and Unity commission and RC Ecumenical Officer, Ultan Russell, pays the following tribute: "I remember Claire from arriving here in Liverpool in 1997 as a vigorous Officer of the predecessor to Churches Together in the Merseyside Region (CTMR) called Merseyside and Region Churches Ecumenical Assembly (MARCEA). The child of a mixed marriage, Claire was committed to ecumenism at all levels and served for over a decade as Chair of the Archdiocesan Ecumenism Commission and trustee of CTMR. She was a member of the Grail and involved strategically in its HQ move from London. She continued for many years to be active in the regular meetings of retired Head Teachers. She was gracious, kind and efficient as a Chair."

Our NW Baptist Regional Minister and current Chair of CTMR Management Council, Phil Jump, remembers Claire with great fondness: "Claire was a wonderful servant of God, who was not afraid of challenging anyone, irrespective of their status and office, in order that our shared desire to make known the message of God's love might be better fulfilled. So often she would battle with her own ill health and limitations in order to serve the causes she loved – anyone who served alongside her knew the high standards she expected from you, yet the high regard in which you were held. We have lost a treasured member of our Christian community – someone I will for ever be grateful to have known as a friend and colleague."

## Memorial Service for Former County Ecumenical Officer, Canon Michael Wolfe

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February at 3.00pm



Michael Wolfe former Merseyside Ecumenical Officer died on January 4<sup>th</sup> 2023 aged 93. There will be a Memorial Evensong on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February at 3.00pm in Liverpool Cathedral and everyone is most welcome.

## CTMR Office Move

At the end of November 2022, the CTMR Office moved to the Margaret Clitherow Centre, Croxteth Drive, Liverpool L17 1AA. Our telephone number remains the same: 0151 709 0125.

A big thank you to the Quakers for their constant support of CTMR over decades, which is very much appreciated. A huge thank you also to the staff at the Quaker Meeting House who have bent over backwards to support CTMR and we will continue to use their premises.



We are very grateful to the Archdiocese who offer CTMR an office space for a peppercorn rent and utility expenses and have given us a warm welcome.

## CTMR Safeguarding Group

Meetings of the ecumenical safeguarding group are being co-ordinated by Linda Locke from the Methodist District. They met in March and October 2022 and will meet again in March 2023.

The group widened the range of the meeting to reflect the large area they cover between them as it is well beyond the Merseyside region. To reflect this they now call themselves 'Churches Together in the North



West Safeguarding Group'

Image by Cheryl Holt from Pixabay (pixabay.com)

## The Fruits of Networking!



I was really honoured to be invited to be an Ecumenical Observer on Synod 2020, and to follow through this process in the Archdiocese since 2019 (and to serve in a similar capacity on the Archdiocesan Commission for Dialogue and Unity). It has given me an appreciation of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan that emerged from this twelve months ago. And this understanding has been a great spring-



board for ecumenical conversations. Here, for me are key features of aspiring to be 'churches together'

- Creativity, resource sharing and discernment together
- Intentional conversations outside our denominational silos
- Identifying who we might talk to about which key issues

The networking that I and others do is all about this. It's happening at a time of great change for us all, of course, which offers, alongside the challenges, opportunities for togetherness in this spirit that can energise us in this time when the Pastoral Plan, Fit for Mission (in the Anglican diocese) and other initiatives are under way in independent churches and in the historic denominations. Here are some of the areas where intentional conversations/action plans have been happening in the past couple of years:

A network of **Welcome Spaces** (a broader description often favoured to 'warm spaces') in the Liverpool City Region is being co-ordinated

on behalf of all the churches by Tani Omideyi from our unity partners, Together for the Harvest working with Bishop Beverley Mason and CTMR Chair Phil Jump.



Two congregations (Methodist and Anglican) making plans to bring together their **worship and mission in their village**, in a tailor-made way for them rather than going down the LEP route.

### Work with **children and families**

Key people in the Catholic, Free Church and Anglican traditions liaising informally about **surplus buildings and newer congregations**.

Communities of Practice are groups of people brought together by a shared social action theme – for those engaged in that area personally, or in a project, or leading an organisation. It's very much for fired-up people of all Christian traditions and beyond.



Anglican initiated but for everyone. Part of the Network of Kindness-  
[www.togetherliverpool.org.uk](http://www.togetherliverpool.org.uk)

Conversations in St Helens and in the North Liverpool/West Derby areas between the RC and CofE Deans for these areas being restructured as part of the Pastoral Plan, and as Fit for Mission pilot deaneries.

So ... where is there an opportunity for creative, energising conversation and action where you are? Put out feelers, take an initiative. And if Elisabeth or I or our denominational colleagues (see CTMR [website](#)) can help or advise we'd be delighted.

By Andrew Edwards [andrew.edwards@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:andrew.edwards@liverpool.anglican.org)

## CTMR Social Justice Group

We recognise that many of our churches are working together locally to support their neighbours and communities through these challenging times. We are pleased to have been able to offer glimpses of this through our “signs of hope” images during our 2021 online Pentecost service. A small working group of Social Responsibility leads continues to meet together, and represent the Christian community on various key stakeholder bodies.



## Many Churches in our various areas...

.....pray for their local churches of different denominations on a rota basis. Why not include a prayer in your services for the local Churches in your are.



Image: Alex Monkhouse eye.of.alex 'instagram page'

## Please Tell Us

We are aware that there will have been countless local ecumenical events throughout the year. We would love to hear from you about any ecumenical initiative at this time. Image from Pixabay (pixabay.com)



## CTMR Facebook Page

CTMR have a Facebook page where various partners can offer invitations and information through the press/communications representatives. Please click [here](#) for the Churches Together in the Merseyside Region Facebook page.



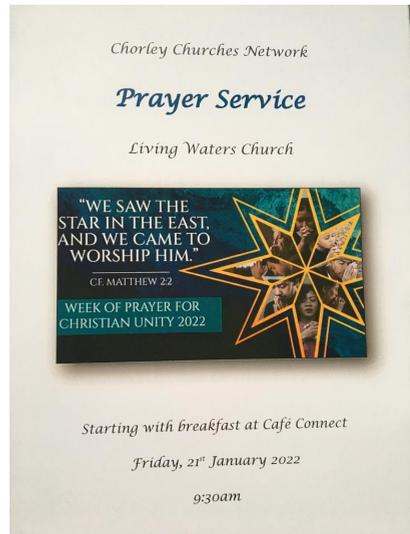


This year again, representatives from all Churches in Bootle were singing Carols in ASDA Bootle. Everyone enjoyed it and even some of the public joined in!

By Patsy Shaw

## Week of prayer for Christian Unity 2022 in Chorley

"We had a lovely service of prayer for Christian unity in Chorley on Friday, with 25 people from 7 different denominations taking part. After breakfast at the Pentecostal church café, we came together for the service which a few of us had prepared together, and many contributed with spontaneous prayers. It was very prayerful and very moving, especially as we all stood up and sang 'In Christ alone my hope is found'. There were many comments of thanks afterwards. When we hear so much about discord in the news, I think it is all the more special to work and pray together in harmony and with the very best intentions for one another at grassroots level. It would be lovely to share some of everybody's local Week of Prayer for Christian Unity experiences."



By Uli Yeomans.

## CT Great Crosby

### Stolen and Replaced

Our Ecumenical Morning Prayers are still being held every Thursday morning. There are two Catholic churches, two Church of England churches and one Methodist church taking part. We also have a rota for which church organises an annual Service for Christian Unity in January and for which church organises the Good Friday Walk of Witness. We have a Council that holds meetings three times a year. The Council consists of leaders from each church; two representatives from each church, a representative from our cafe Crossroads and the organiser of our Welcome-in Scheme. Our Chairman, Mgr Canon John Furnival, is very dedicated to ecumenism - maybe inspired by his time as Secretary to Archbishop Derek Warlock in the 1980s.



Churches Together also install a large crib in Crosby Village each year and arrange and pay for a large poster with Christmas wishes from Churches Together. In 2021 some crib figures were stolen! Money was donated from the churches to buy new figures! Terri Whitaker, Crosby

### Invitation to Share Your Story:

Please contact us at [office@ctmr.org.uk](mailto:office@ctmr.org.uk) to share your ecumenical experience.



### Focolare Mariapolis 27 – 29 May 2023

For the first time after the pandemic the Mariapolis will again take place as a residential gathering in the North West. This ecumenical event is open to everyone. It is for all ages, including families. The preparation team includes Christians of three different denominations. More details and information can be found following this [link](#) where news will be shared as it becomes available.



# Pentecost Two Cathedrals Ecumenical Celebration 2022 & 2023



## Ecumenical Celebrations 2022

This year's event was enhanced by a stunning performance of the two choirs.

It was an excellent party also in honour of the Queens Jubilee. It including great games and a spiritual experience with people praying over others at the same time.

The CTMR Pentecost walk is part of Liverpool city's story; it is recorded in the Liverpool Museum.

The costs of 'In Another Place' were covered thanks to the kind support of 'The Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund



*Photos: top: the two choirs at the Metropolitan Cathedral,; next; the walk, other three photos: at Liverpool Cathedral'.*



# Ecumenical Celebration Liverpool



## Two Cathedrals Walk

**Pentecost Sunday 28 May 2023, 3-5pm**

Initial planning for 2023 is underway and May looks like being a pretty full month as the King's Coronation and Liverpool's hosting of the Euro-vision Song Contest take place over previous weekends. The focus for 2023 will particularly be how people from every nation were brought together at the first Pentecost.



*Photo taken at a previous Pentecost event*

**Please hold this date, Sunday, 28 May 2023, 3 –5pm  
in your diaries.**

For more details as we get closer to Pentecost 2023 please follow this [link](#), call 0151 709 0125 or email: [office@ctmr.org.uk](mailto:office@ctmr.org.uk)

### **Please Tell Us**

We would be delighted to hear about any ecumenical celebrations which you are planning locally at Pentecost 2023.

## Working together more and more? Ready to commit? LEPs and more....

You have a vision for working with other Christians on a new or existing venture, sharing your insights, resources, creativity and prayer. It may be an idea at the planning stage, or an existing venture that has changed. Sooner or later those things that may begin with an informal understanding will benefit from a clearer expression of your commitments. Pitch it right and it will go smoothly. You will be in a good position to recall, review, renew, change direction if need be, or even end well. *Photo: Andrew Edwards*



At what point do you need to put something on paper? What would be appropriate for you? What will strengthen your partnership at this stage?



Who do you need to talk to? Are there others doing something like this? Churches Together in England have created '[A Flexible Framework for local Unity in Mission](#)' which helps with questions like this. Its Toolkit can help you develop the right agreement for your venture.

(Photo: front cover of 'A Flexible Framework for local Unity in Mission' document)

There are nineteen **LEPs (Local Ecumenical Partnerships)** worshipping congregations in our region.

They have a formal written agreement affecting the ministry, congregational life, buildings and/or mission projects of more than one denomination, with authorization by the appropriate denominational authorities and the registration of the agreement with CTMR. More information about LEPs can be found by following this [link](#) to the CTMR website.

LEPs open up opportunities for sharing resources and mission initiatives – they also throw up their own questions and challenges. We're here to offer advice, or point in the direction of others who can.

Please feel free to contact Andrew Edwards, LEP Co-ordinator for CTMR, by calling: 0151 203 9117 or by emailing him at: [andrew.edwards@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:andrew.edwards@liverpool.anglican.org).

By Andrew Edwards

## Liverpool Cologne Church Partnership



During COVID restrictions zoom came to the aid of keeping in touch occasionally.

The most recent visit to Cologne took place in September 2022 with 2 members of the United Reformed Church (URC) including its Moderator, Rev Geoff Felton, as well as the Deans of both Liverpool and the Metropolitan Cathedrals (see image below) taking part. They met



with an ecumenical group, spent time at Cologne Cathedral and took part in an educational programme with worship, fun, learning through conversation, sharing in issues which the Germans are facing, like increasing secularisation, etc. They attended fascinating theology lectures and talked about the environment. People hosted the Liverpool guests in their own homes.



Churches Together in the Merseyside Region (CTMR) are currently

looking ideally for a German speaking person who would coordinate the Liverpool Cologne-Link group on behalf of CTMR. To find out more about the Liverpool Cologne Partnership, please follow this [link](#) to the CTMR website.

The link between the Cathedral Choirs of the two cities is also continuing and the exchange will resume in 2024.

# Support for Asylum Seekers (SAS) Destitution Project - 2022



As mentioned above, in May 2022 Neil Cunningham announced his retirement from SAS and this is an excerpt of what Ewan Roberts from Asylum Link Merseyside, who benefitted from SAS support wrote when he found out:

“Hello Neil – that’s a tough one .... All your help with SAS has been very welcome over the years and some may not appreciate the effort that goes into the bid and report writing, visiting and connecting with the various churches and donors, maintaining the accounts or all the extra work that goes into fighting that particular corner in CTMR .... Thank you for all your hard work: it has made a real difference to the lives of the most vulnerable people in our community.”

Ewan couldn’t have expressed it better and all at CTMR join him to say a huge THANK YOU to Neil.

CTMR are currently exploring how to continue Neil’s wonderful work and will keep you posted.

In the meantime the work of the agencies supported by SAS grants continues:

## **Destitution Project Delivery**

In 2022 SAS partner agencies have continued to provide practical humanitarian and wellbeing support for people seeking asylum and refuge in our local community. Where possible activities and social interaction have been made available in order to support their wellbeing and provide hope for the future.

SAS main partner agencies include Asylum Link Merseyside, Faiths4Change, Refugee Women Connect and Merseyside Refugee Support Network.



Since the new Immigration Bill was announced last year, we have gradually come to terms with what this actually means for those asylum seekers receiving refusals. The situation has become much worse with fewer rights of appeal and the Rwandan debacle. The impact of the changes has still to be felt as relatively few people have been made homeless, with only single figure numbers visiting the centre with eviction or refusal notices. As of April 2022, there were 109,000 asylum seekers waiting for decisions on their initial claims, appeals, or further submissions: a staggering number, but while the decisions are yet to be made, few people are being evicted. This will change radically at some point.

The main issue we have is the lack of support for refused Asylum Seekers.

In 2021/22 up to 51 people collected food/cash each week and they were also able to house between 6-11 people in 2021/2022.

To find out more about the fantastic work Asylum Link are doing, please use the following link: <https://www.asylumlink.org.uk/about/>

For an Asylum Link Diary from April to September 2022 please use this link: <https://www.asylumlink.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-ALM-Diary-Part-10A4.pdf>

Extracts from a report by Ewan Roberts, July 2022

Roots in the City experienced a blooming couple of summer months, starting with a tea party, welcoming a harvest from another garden to add to the food bank harvest and concluding with planning for the Big Green Week.

### What difference does the SAS grant make?

**Kindness.** A small amount of money goes a long way to creating work that has kindness, fairness, and dignity at its core. The regular investment has offered match funding for related food projects and inspired partnership opportunities.

**Fresh food for hungry people.** The grant pays for us to grow food for the parish foodbank, which provides weekly food for 200 people, most are seeking asylum. In 2021 we provided ¼ tonne of fresh organic vegetables and herbs – top quality, locally grown, food at its best - harvested in the morning, taken home in the afternoon.



**Wellbeing for One.** Our long-term volunteer – Caps – applied for asylum 6 years ago and has been volunteering with us since. The grant pays volunteer expenses - Caps was moved out of Liverpool - meaning he has to get the bus to the Roots Garden every week.

**The garden is a social lifeline.** Caps is one of the team, a gardener and grower. His knowledge of growing in Africa inspires us - he grows fantastic corn, squash and other veg. Along with others, Caps goes to the foodbank to talk to others seeking asylum, encouraging them to come to the garden for a little respite.

Extract from a report *by Annie Merry* covering the period June - July 2022.

## Refugee Women Connect, Destitution Fund (DF)



Below is an example from Alison's report about someone receiving support for the period April -June 2022:

### Reason for application:

The service user made a fresh application to Universal Credit (UC) on the 14<sup>th</sup> April and is still waiting to hear back from the medical team. Stopped work due to serious illness (cancer), has been struggling to get food. Does not have food for the weekend.

### Dates for funding during this period

11/5/2022; 7/6/2022; 28/06/2022

### Reason for multiple application

Was very distressed when collecting Destitution Fund (DF). Made UC application, has been given no response, UC was stopped while unwell in hospital. So was happy to receive emergency DF same day (on a Friday). Now living next door to another Service User (SU) ... Has chronic PTSD & suicidal ideation, self-harming, has talked to Mental Health manager about this. ....Was due to receive UC & Employment Support Allowance (ESA).... Has support worker from Citizens Advice Bureau.

Service User informed us that further medical evidence is required in addition to consultant's letter, so both UC and ESA payments delayed again. Consented to being referred to public law solicitor to look at challenging delay.

### Dates for multiple funds received

11/5/2022; 7/6/2022; 28/06/2022

### Total spent for this period

**£200**

Extracts from a report by Alison Moore covering the period April – June 2022

## Merseyside Refugee Support Network (MRSN)



“Since September 2021 MRSN have added emergency house-calls to the list of services as we have had a few highly vulnerable and/or disabled clients who were simply not getting the support required through the mainstream statutory services. ... In several of these cases we were undertaking significant casework and social support including having to help buy food for a malnourished client; make emergency contact with health and social workers about illness and capability, chase benefits, seek intervention from local MPs to escalate cases in relation to benefit and housing delays.



Since late last summer/early August we had the additional work of supporting several Afghan clients who had returned to Afghanistan to rescue immediate and other family members. On their return to the UK with emergency visas we provided emergency crisis support until they could be processed into the statutory system via Liverpool council. A year on they are happily rebuilding their lives in the Liverpool City region.....



In February with the start of the war in Ukraine, it wasn't long before the needs of people seeking sanctuary presented to MRSN in Liverpool. All of the families we are working with have arrived on Family Visas, but this group are not supported by the local authorities... .

Our work has been instrumental in getting local and national services working more closely than ever with additional and exceptional support from the national banks, in particular Lloyds Bank improving access to opening bank accounts. Delays in Universal credit have continued but we hit a record with the Pensions Service with an application turnaround and National Insurance number within less than 2 weeks (the standard time is upwards of 16 weeks)! For further information, please email [info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk](mailto:info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

Extracts from a report by Seána Roberts', covering the period September 2021– June 2022

# Liverpool Seafarers Centre

LSC is an Ecumenical charity, a partnership between Apostleship of the Sea (Liverpool) and The Mersey Mission to Seafarers.

It was voted winner of the Diversity and Inclusion category in the 2022 Mersey Maritime Industry Awards by local, national and international industry members.



Image: Pam Brown and Kinga Davies of LSC (centre) with award host Louise Minchin, far right, and a representative from Chevron, the award sponsor at the award ceremony.

Each year LSC helps 50,000 seafarers from many nations and differing cultures across the world visiting Merseyside ports. Those seafarers typically come from more than 20 countries around the globe, including the Philippines, India, China, Ukraine, Poland, Indonesia and Russia. LSC works to bring them together as seafarers. It offers to all, irrespective of race or creed, a safe and secure place to rest as well as practical and emotional support.

The charity's key work involves visiting vessels to integrate with the crew, offering a listening ear to help combat isolation and loneliness and providing places ashore for seafarers to relax away from their working environment.



At the start of the conflict in Ukraine LSC gave emotional support to scores of ship crew members struggling with the impact of events in Eastern Europe.

The centre has also actively campaigned for a review of seafarer rights arguing that seafarers are too often exploited by the opaqueness of international law and whatever flag state they sail under. It has also called for increased welfare funding for seafarers. To find out more about the Centre, please visit: [www.liverpoolseafarerscentre.org](http://www.liverpoolseafarerscentre.org)

# Dialogue Between Faith Communities



## Faith Leaders' Network



Many churches are already connected with local places of worship for other faiths, but twice a year the Faith Leaders across the City Region meet together for fellowship and to engage with those in civic society who come to us for help and ideas. At the end of November the Bishop of Warrington hosted the meeting when we heard about a number of projects, including a Faith and Dementia Conference, and interfaith Garden and major incident response. If you would like help connecting with those of different faiths in your area then please contact Canon Crispin Pailing [enquiries@livpc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@livpc.co.uk).

by Crispin Pailing

# CTMR Young Adults Group

This January, members of the CTMR Young Adults' group have been invited to talk about their gatherings to a group of students at Liverpool Hope University. Liam (RC) and Rebecca (CofE) are going to share their experience with them. Later on it might also be possible for the group to offer an online presentation as part of a Religious Study programme.



*From l to r: Young adults group representatives at CTE Forum 2022 Peter McDonnell, Veronica McDonnell, Rebecca Richardson, Elisabeth Hachmoeller*

The group was presented to the gathering of Anglican and Catholic Bishops at their national meeting in Liverpool earlier in 2022. (see page 17) Two of the young adults represented CTMR at the Churches Together in England Forum and were part of the 30 people strong young adult delegation. (Please see page 11/12 for more details).

At their last gathering a young person joined them after having searched for young adults in Merseyside on the internet. The group were very pleased to welcome this new person.

The CTMR Young Adults' group keep in touch to catch up and are keen to welcome new people over 18.

If you can think of any young adult looking for other young Christians on Merseyside, please tell them about the group and contact: [veronica@ctmr.org.uk](mailto:veronica@ctmr.org.uk) or call 0151 709 0125.

By Veronica McDonnell and Elisabeth Hachmoeller

# Joint Cathedrals

## Vigil of Prayer for Ukraine



A week after the war in Ukraine began on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022, Christians from around Merseyside gathered on the steps of the Metropolitan Cathedral to pray for peace. The vigil included reflections and music and it was a very moving event.



## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2023

### Two Cathedrals Joint Ecumenical Service



When: Sunday, 22nd January 2023

Time and venue: 3pm at Liverpool Cathedral

You are warmly invited to join Christians from Merseyside for the annual Two Cathedrals Joint Service of Choral Evening Prayer on Sunday, 22nd January @ 3pm. The focus will be on the week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This year it will take place at Liverpool Cathedral.

# Ecumenical Walk of Witness Liverpool City Centre



2pm on Holy Saturday

8 April 2023 from the steps of the Metropolitan Cathedral



*Photo: Holy Saturday Walk of witness in 2022*

Across the country Easter is a time when different denominations walk together both to show our unity and to witness to our shared faith. In Liverpool we do this on Holy Saturday (8 April 2023) so that we walk through the shopping streets on the busiest day of the weekend. We start at 2pm on the steps of the Metropolitan Cathedral and finish at 3pm at St Nicolas Liverpool Parish Church. This year the walk will return to the traditional format (without dramatic vignettes).

Please put the date in your diary and that of your congregation so that as many people as possible can walk with our bishops and church leaders. For more details contact [enquiries@livpc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@livpc.co.uk) By Crispin Pailing

## Wirral Activities...

...involve building inter-church networks, encouraging partnership and forming a strategic perspective between Churches, CT Groups, the Community, Voluntary & Faith sector (CVF), the Council, the NHS etc.

After initially serving as Secretary of Churches Together Wirral for a few years Phil Dickson worked closely with Bishop Keith Sinclair and other regional leaders to replace the previous CTWirral Forum with a new 'Together Wirral Churches Forum'. It endeavours to bring together chairs from individual CT groups and key regional 'Together' ministries reporting and accountable to a quarterly meeting of regional denomination heads hosted since Hope 08 by Bishop Keith and since February 2022 by Bishop Julie Conalty.

Collaboration initiatives with key faith organisations, CVS partners and Wirral council have seen

the recent appointment of a new 'Community Development Worker', establishment of a new Christians Against Poverty Debt Centre, a number of Mental Health First Aid training events (*see image*) for church leaders, more 'Places of Welcome'



across the borough and over fifteen warm places established in local churches.

As part of its National Anti-Violence Tour the 'Knife Angel' sculpture was on display at the Grand Entrance of Birkenhead Park during July 2022. Wirral Churches were asked to provide Chaplaincy support. Captain Samantha Hamilton from Birkenhead Salvation Army and Chair of Birkenhead Churches Together liaised with Wirral Council Officers and took the lead on mobilising a number of chaplains to be in attendance at Birkenhead Park during the Knife Angels visit.

## Wirral Activities (continued)

A Prayer meeting with people from different Churches took place in 2022 for the first time since the pandemic. It was good to pray and worship together. Funding has been secured from the Anglican Diocese for a mission-lead post for Wirral Waters to start at Easter 2023. They will work alongside Peel Holdings and the community. In 2024 there will be a big arts festival engaging Churches of all denominations. There will be more news about this as it becomes available.

## BBC Radio Merseyside

'News from the Pews' is broadcast around 7:30am every Sunday morning. It is the 'what's on' feature for the Day-break programme on BBC Radio Merseyside.

Get in touch with presenter Helen Jones to publicise your ecumenical events giving plenty of notice.

Email: [helen.jones@bbc.co.uk](mailto:helen.jones@bbc.co.uk)



image: BBC Radio Merseyside

## Hope Ecumenical Network



In November 2022 the newly founded [Hope Ecumenical Network](#) held a conference at Liverpool Hope University and laid the ground for new narratives in Christian higher education. For more information please follow this [link](#) article about it.

*Photo: Liverpool Hope University*

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**Ecumenical NewsBrief**  
is published for Churches Together in the Merseyside Region  
(Registered Charity No. 519061)  
by the Ecumenical Co-ordinator: Elisabeth Hachmoeller  
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