

# Ecumenical NewsBrief

2025



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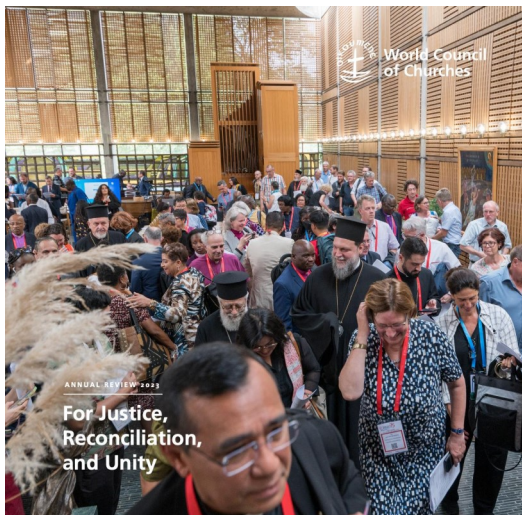
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# News from the World Council of Churches (WCC)



## WCC Annual Review 2023 — For Justice, Reconciliation and Unity

The annual review of the activity of the WCC records many of the activities undertaken by the council during 2023. “The journey of the WCC in



2023 involved many international visits that built bridges, fostered dialogue and created safe spaces in which we can disagree with love, friendship, and civility and keep unity still intact.”

The WCC Annual Review includes a special visual section that commemorates the WCC’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and highlights an unprecedented number of exhibitions that graced the Ecumenical Centre.

Front cover WCC Annual Review 2023. © WCC

“The year 2023 was one of new beginnings: the WCC central committee met in person for the first time since the WCC 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe in September 2022, the WCC commissions newly convened, and we began implementing the WCC Strategic Plan for 2023- 2030 in earnest” wrote WCC General Secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay. To download/view the Annual Review 2023 please follow this [link](#).

## WCC – Resources



The World Council of Churches also provides online access to Bible studies by authors from various denominations about [Advent](#), [Lent](#), [Transfiguration](#), [Easter](#), [Ascension](#), [Pentecost](#), etc. Please note that, additionally, a [search filter](#) allows access to many

other documents and to some publications which can be downloaded.

# 2025

## A year of hopeful events and anniversaries



In a happy coincidence between the liturgical calendars of eastern and western churches, we will all be celebrating **Easter** on the same date: April 20<sup>th</sup> 2025.



### Nicaea 2025

Living the apostolic faith together today: Commemorating 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Ecumenical Council at Nicaea

© WCC

**2025** - marks the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first **Council of Nicaea**, which took place in the year 325. This was the Council that gave us the Nicene Creed which is still recognised today by most churches as a legitimate statement of our Christian faith. For resources, conferences, brochures, reflections on the anniversary of Nicaea from the World Council of Churches, please follow this [link](#).



One of the Ecumenical Reviews, the quarterly journal of the World Council of Churches, focuses on the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025 of the first Ecumenical Council at Nicaea. To find out more, please follow this [link](#)

© Gloria Koymans/WCC

**2025** - also celebrates the **60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abolition of the mutual excommunications** that had previously existed between the Church of Rome and the Church of Constantinople.

**2025** - will be a **Jubilee Year** for the Roman Catholic Church.



There are probably countless ways of celebrating these event, held by many groups and networks. For an international ecumenical event please see page 11.



# Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)



## Racial Justice Sunday 9 February 2025



Racial Justice Sunday is an occasion for Christians in Britain to collectively focus on racial justice. It began in 1995, and generally took place on the second Sunday in September. In 2017, a decision was taken to move the date to the second Sunday in February (a direct swap with Education Sunday, which was then in February). For resources and events please follow this [link](#).

The World Council of Churches offers new anti-racist and anti-bias material for churches and communities. To find out more about the resources available, please follow this [link](#).

© CTBI

## For CTBI resources for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

please see page 6

## Ecumenical Resource: Commentary to the Gospel of the day (according to the lectionary of Bose)

The ecumenical community of Bose in Northern Italy, a community of monks and nuns belonging to different Christian churches produce a commentary to the Gospel of the day which can be accessed by following this link <https://www.monasterodibose.it/prehiera/vangelo-del-giorno> and choosing EN/ Prayer/ Gospel of the day.

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service in Liverpool

This ecumenical service to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place in the Anglican Cathedral at 3pm on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Everyone welcome! Please also see back page of this News-Brief.

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

From 18<sup>th</sup> until 25<sup>th</sup> January the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is being celebrated by many countries around the world.



The Resurrection Church at the Anaphora Institute in Cairo, Egypt.  
Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

For the year 2025, the prayers and reflections for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were prepared by the brothers and sisters of the monastic community of Bose in northern Italy. The resources are jointly published by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches.

This year marks the 1,700th anniversary of the first Christian Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea, near Constantinople in 325 AD. This commemoration provides a unique opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the common faith of Christians, as expressed in the Creed formulated during this Council. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 offers an invitation to draw on this shared heritage and to enter more deeply into the faith that unites all Christians. This year's theme is: **“Do you believe this?” (Jn 11:26)**

Here is a [link](#) to resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 provided by the World Council of Churches.

Here is the [link](#) to the English pamphlet with resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 on the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) website.

## Social media

Show your support for Christian Unity by posting unity messages and details of your events to the CTBI Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Twitter wall – simply add the #wpcuwall hashtag to your Twitter post (note there is a delay before they appear). You can also find updates about the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on Twitter by following the #wpcu2025 hashtag.

## A visit, a phone call & a prayer

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

# News from Churches Together in England (CTE)



## New CTE President



The Fourth Presidency Group of Member Churches have nominated Bishop Paulina Hławiczka-Trotman who has succeeded Dr Anna Krauss as their President for Churches Together in England. In September 2024 Anna Krauss took up the post of Director of the Lutheran World Federation's (LWF) Centre in Wittenberg.

To find out more about Bishop Paulina's appointment, please follow this [link](#).

© CTE

## Thank you to Rowena Loverance



Rowena stepped down as the Chair of the CTE Trustees in October 2024 having led the Board for the last six years.

To read Rowena's reflection on her last six years as CTE chair, please follow this [link](#).

© CTE

## New Chair of Trustees at CTE



Rev Dr Callan Slipper is the new Chair of the CTE Trustees. To find out more about Callan, please follow this [link](#).

After his appointment in October 2024 he was invited to share his reflection in the November edition of the CTe-News. Please follow this [link](#) to read his reflection.

© CTE

# News from Churches Together in England (CTE)



## Current Staff at CTE



*Pictured is the current team at Churches Together in England: from left to right: Sarah Ball, Senior Communications and Media Manager; Bishop Mike Royal, General Secretary; Doral Hayes, Principal Officer for Ecumenical Development and Relations; Lorraine Shannon, Operations Manager; Rev Dr Ben Aldous, Principal Officer for Mission and Evangelism; Ben Cross, Head of Operations; Shermara*

*Fletcher, Principal Officer for Pentecostal, Charismatic and Multi-cultural Relations. ©CTE*

## CTE Enabling Group

CTE Enabling Group brings together CTE's [Member Churches](#), alongside representatives from [Intermediate Bodies](#) and [Charities and Networks in Association](#).

What does the Enabling Group do?



Photo: CTE Enabling Group meeting in the Autumn of 2024

©CTE

Meeting twice a year, the group has the task of nurturing ecumenism in England (encouraging churches to work together) and provides a space for churches to discuss issues of common concern. Please use this [link](#) for a report & videos of the Autumn meeting.

## Young Ecumenists' Fund



The Bill Snelson Young Ecumenists Fund was launched at a meeting of the [Enabling Group](#) and Sam Rigby (pictured bottom left) from Merseyside applied and received a grant.

To find out how more about Sam's experience please go to p 10 ©CTE

## CTE Forum 2025: 17 –19<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Forum is the largest event in the Churches Together in England (CTE) diary and takes place every three years. It is a delegate conference that brings together more than three hundred representatives of CTE's more than 50 national [Member Churches](#), [Intermediate Bodies](#), and 91



different [Charities and Networks in Association](#). CTE's Forum is the broadest representative ecumenical gathering of Christians in England and the next Forum will take place from 17 –19 March 2025.

Members of the music group at the last Forum. ©CTE

The planning group are still finalising the programme. However, there are a range of speakers who have agreed to be present, including Rev Dr Susan Durber, Archbishop Doye Adama, Professor David Wilkinson and Bishop Claion Grandison as well as the six CTE Presidents. There will also be the opportunity to hear about the work of many of CTE's Charities and Networks in Association at the Marketplace and through a broad range of workshops. CTMR is entitled to four places at Forum. Church Leaders have invited people who have not yet experienced Forum to attend.

Please keep this event in you prayers. Thank you.



## Young Ecumenists' Fund cont.



A fund to help young adults – aged 18 to 35 – to experience ecumenism outside England is open again for applications. They can apply to receive finances for an experience of study, pilgrimage, volunteering or any activity that promotes church unity. ©CTE

[This Bill Snelson Young Ecumenists Fund](#) has been set up by Churches Together in England and the Snelson family in memory of Bill Snelson who was General Secretary of Churches Together England from 1997 to 2008.

Sam Rigby (pictured below right) is a recipient of this grant. He heard about it



via the CTMR young adults group. Sam was awarded £608 to visit the World Council of Churches in Geneva and the Chemin Neuf community at Hautcombe Abbey in France. He wrote a diary about his unforgettable experience and it can be accessed [here](#). An [edited down version](#) of his diary was published on the CTE website.

There are two rounds of applications each year and

the next round will open early 2025 with the expected closing date being 31st March 2025. Across two rounds, there is approximately £6,000 available. There are no minimum or maximum amounts for which one can apply.

### Would you like to find out more?

If you are interested in applying for this fund and would like to experience ecumenism outside England, please download [a brief guide](#) to The Bill Snelson Young Ecumenists Fund.





## Charities & Networks in Association with Churches Together in England

### Called to Hope - Italy



In celebration of the 2025 anniversaries and other signs of hope, the Focolare Movement will hold an ecumenical Congress in Castel Gandolfo, near Rome, entitled: Called to Hope.

It will take place from Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March to Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

This ecumenical meeting is open to Christians from all over the world, from all churches. It will be an opportunity to give witness and visibility to the unity of the people of God and to the "dialogue of life".

The meeting will be mainly in-person, though some zoom and/or streaming moments are also planned to facilitate networking with local groups and activities in various parts of the world. To register your interest, please contact Lesley Ellison, [lesley.ellison@focolare.org.uk](mailto:lesley.ellison@focolare.org.uk)

### Called to Hope - UK



2025 is a worldwide opportunity for a new dialogue, a new listening, a new engaging with each other, with new hope in our hearts for a greater unity between ourselves and our churches. Together with friends from various English-speaking countries, we are invited to celebrate our unity, our diversity and an opportunity for dialogue at an ecumenical gathering entitled "Called to Hope".



During the meeting a link up is planned with the Focolare International Ecumenical Congress, which is taking place near to Rome, Italy, at the same time (please see above).

Called to Hope UK will take place at the Focolare Centre for Unity, 69 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6JG, 26<sup>th</sup> March - 29<sup>th</sup> March 2025. To register your interest, please contact Lesley Ellison, [lesley.ellison@focolare.org.uk](mailto:lesley.ellison@focolare.org.uk)



**Charities & Networks in Association with  
Churches Together in England**



# **Focolare Summer Gathering**

**Mariapolis 24 - 27<sup>th</sup> July 2025**



## **Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire**

After a very successful Mariapolis at Harper Adam University in 2024, it will be held in the same place again in 2025. Building on last year's event, we are looking forward to welcoming friends old and new to an experience of gospel life together. With activities for all ages and open to everyone (including families), the Mariapolis provides a space to grow in faith together, through reflection, connection and fun! Full board, self-catering and camping are available. For a report published in ICN on Mariapolis 2024 please follow this [link](#) or visit the Focolare website following this [link](#)

by Helen Copeland



## 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.

### National Ecumenical Officer

National Ecumenical Officers help their own church tradition to work with other churches. [National Ecumenical Officers](#) (NEOs) are key to the support of local ecumenism (churches working together locally).

Our new National Ecumenical Officers are:



Major Paul Robinson, Salvation Army Ecumenical Officer CTE published a reflection on the joys of his ecumenical journey by Major Paul and it can be found [here](#).



Rev Steven Cooper, Connexional Ecumenical Officer (i.e. National Ecumenical Officer) for the Methodist Church in Britain. Steven introduces himself in his new role and shares his experience of ecumenical work [here](#).

### Northern County Ecumenical Officers (NCEOs)

NCEOs continue their tri-annual meetings for mutual support, networking and exchange of ideas. There have been some changes in the Northern Ecumenical Officers team in 2024: Coryn Stehouwer (pictured) our new North East Regional Ecumenical Officer has made a great impact since her recent appointment but will move back to Canada, her country of origin. Elisabeth Hachmoeller is the contact person for Cheshire as they restructure. Currently on the group are: Elisabeth Hachmoeller, Ecumenical Coordinator, Merseyside and contact person for Cheshire, Anton Muller, CEO Lancashire; Peter Colwell, Churches Together in Britain .



In November 2024 the team met in Liverpool and were introduced to Mission in the Economy (MitE), a truly ecumenical endeavour on Merseyside.

# Thy Kingdom Come

## 29<sup>th</sup> May – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2025

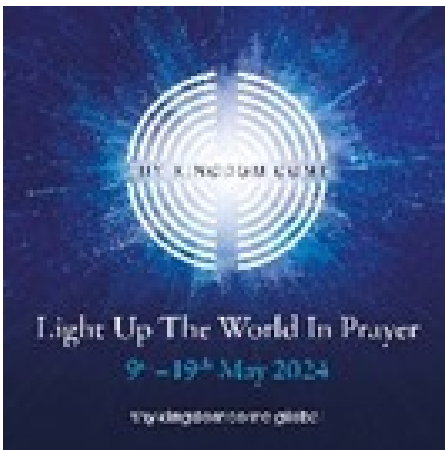
### Light up the World in Prayer

[Thy Kingdom Come](#) (TKC) is a global ecumenical prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus.

Since it began in May 2016, TKC grew from a dream of possibility into a movement which unites more than a million Christians in prayer, in nearly 90% of countries worldwide, across 85 different denominations and traditions- so that friends and family, neighbours and colleagues might come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Every person, household and church are encouraged to pray during the 11 days in their own way.

Specifically, every Christian across the globe is invited to pray that God's Spirit might work in the lives of 5 people who have not responded with their 'Yes' to God's call.



Please use this [link](#) to access a form which allows you to add a star to the map.

# News from Merseyside

## CTMR Church Leaders' Group



CTMR Church Leaders met four times in 2024 and continue to give direction to the work of CTMR. They 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 the annual Pentecost/2 Cathedrals Event. In 2024 they hosted a novel event during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (see pages 18-20).

## Changes to the Church Leaders' Group



In July 2024 Sheryl Anderson retired from being the Chair of Liverpool Methodist District. Church Leaders paid tribute to her at her last meeting with them. The statue of the Good Shepherd was a fitting gift for Sheryl.

The chair of the CTMR Management Council thanked Sheryl for her wisdom, enthusiasm, faithfulness and for being partners in the Gospel together. She will be missed. To read an article about Sheryl scroll to page 15 of the Catholic Pictorial by following this [link](#).

# News from Merseyside

## CTMR Church Leaders' Group cont.



### Changes to the Church Leaders' Group



Sheryl had many farewell service in Merseyside and here is a photo of the service which took place in Crosby in July 2024 and which was attended by Bishop John on behalf of CTMR Church Leaders.



### James Tebbutt

The Revd Dr James Tebbutt was designated by the Methodist Conference to be the District Chair for the NW England District from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024. This is the new District which includes Merseyside.

### Caroline Ainger

Since the new District is huge, the Revd Caroline Ainger has been designated the Deputy Chair and Missional Area Lead for the Liverpool Plus Area. Both are included as members of the Church Leaders' Meeting although not both will attend every time.

**Welcome to Merseyside, James and Caroline!!**



# News from Merseyside

## CTMR Church Leaders' Group cont.



### Retreat

Once a year Church Leaders enjoy a retreat day together. It allows them to deepen their friendships also enjoying a meal together. *(see photo).*

This is what Geoff Felton, URC Mersey Synod Moderator, wrote a few days after their retreat: "On 28<sup>th</sup> November Church Leaders from across



the Mersey region met in Roby for an Advent retreat. The day was led by Lister Tonge and a good number of church leaders met together to spend time seeking God in preparation for Advent and the Christmas season. Advent is a time of waiting and preparation and leaders left feeling both prepared and expectant about the coming days."



*Photo from l to r: Geoff Felton, Moderator URC Mersey Synod; Tani Omideyi, Senior Pastor Temple of Praise, Anfield; John Perumbalath, Bishop of Liverpool, David Taylor, District Commander, Salvation Army North West Division ; Phil Jump, Regional Minister, North West Baptist Association ; Tom Neylon - Auxiliary*

*Bishop of the Archdiocese of Liverpool ; Malcolm McMahon – Archbishop of Liverpool*

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

## CTMR Event



### The first event in Unity Week in a really warm building!

This was the jokey response to a unique way for Churches Together in the Merseyside Region to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Church Leaders had each invited a small group of colleagues involved in ecumenical work and around 40 people gathered at the Margaret Clitheroe Centre, home of our CTMR office, for a programme centred around a shared lunch - deliberately planned to simply provide space for conversations to start, working relationships to deepen and new ideas to spark.

After a brief introduction from CTMR Chair and Baptist Regional Minister, Phil Jump, (pictured) various speakers offered "snapshot presentations" of practical on the ground initiatives made possible through ecumenical co-operation.



This included stories from:

### **Together Liverpool** - seeking to enable local church community action partnerships

James Green, Together Liverpool, Executive Director, Anglican Diocese of Liverpool; Ellen Loudon, Director of Social Justice & Canon Chancellor, Diocese of Liverpool

The **CTMR Social Justice Team** - working ecumenically to support refugee and asylum seekers Phil (pictured above), James, Ellen (pictured here) and Pablo Guidi are part of this team.



# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

## CTMR event cont.

The **Skelmersdale Ecumenical Centre** developing a thriving community centre and beacon of hope through a new approach to ecumenical partnership.



**Hope Wirral**, a growing mission partnership that emerged from the Hope 08 initiative, presented by Phil Dickson

Picture: from left to right: Moira Meeghan, Outreach Worker - The Irenaeus Project, RC Archdiocese Liverpool, Sisters of St Mary of Namur; Phil Dickson, Secretary, Together Wirral Churches Forum; Zac Adeleye, Minister, Serpentine Road Family Church



**Diaspora LEP's** - recounting how churches from across cultures are forming effective partnerships (see Zac Adeleye pictured above)

**Gather UK** – exploring how churches can have a voice in the recently established mayoral Liverpool City Region.



Rev Dr Tani Omideyi, Senior Pastor & Chair of Love & Joy Ministries UK URC Moderator, Revd Geoff Felton, picked up the Week of Prayer theme, drawing participants' attention to the actions of the Good Samaritan in binding up the wounds of a wounded stranger, and investing finance and trust in a possibly unknown innkeeper, in order to provide for a neighbour in need. Participants were invited to pray together as we considered the contemporary challenges that emerge from the Good Samaritan's actions.

The event was brought to a conclusion through an act of shared prayer and commitment to unity led by the Bishop of Liverpool Rt. Revd. Dr John Perumbalath, but not before participants were challenged to write down at least one action they committed to take as a result of being together.

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

## CTMR event cont.

Responses from those who were present indicated that numerous conversations were started and contacts made that have potential to bear significant fruit in the months and years ahead.

A very different gathering perhaps to what we have become used to in our Week of Prayer for Unity, but one that was worthwhile, fruitful and fully in the spirit of this longstanding event.

Pictured: Rita Griffiths, Synod Clerk, United Reformed Church with Andrew Edwards, Bishop's Advisor on Ecumenism, Anglican Diocese of Liverpool & CTMR Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEP) Co-ordinator



### **Some impressions**

"...Thanks for organising such a wonderful gathering."

*Zac, Rev Zacchaeus O. A. Adeleye*

"My reflection is that it was a good day, and I particularly was struck by the stories that are happening around the region. Overall, those I took with me found it a useful and inspiring event. I'd like some press coverage in future. I hope we can do similar in the future."

*Geoff Felton, URC Moderator of the Mersey Synod*

"It was good to see so many from across the Churches. The presentations gave an insight into some of the needs and how the Churches are working in partnerships with each other and with civic authorities to meet them. One of the issues I picked up from the table I was on was that some of the 'new Churches' are struggling to find a building to accommodate them. They haven't the finances."

*Tom Neylon, RC Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Liverpool*

"Thank you very much, it was a good day!"

*Wendy Robertson, Community Missioner, Transforming Lives Together, Diocese of Chester*

"... It was really good overall. Some constructive comments

- a) Timings weren't the best although we did finish on time
- b) At the end it felt unfinished – felt like we needed 'and what now....' session for some blue-sky thinking thoughts on how to work together in the right ways for the right ways for the local churches too."

*Rita Griffiths Synod Clerk, United Reformed Church Mersey Synod*

*All photos ©: Geoff Felton*

## CTMR Church Leaders Invite Local MPs



*Photo: Merseyside MPs and Church Leaders at their lunch time event in 2024*

On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024, senior church leaders representing Churches Together in the Merseyside Region (CTMR) hosted a lunch for Members of Parliament in Liverpool City Region. Lunch was followed by a rich discussion about how to work together to meet the needs of the communities we serve and to effect positive change. A robust and welcome challenge from the MPs was that they would like to hear faith leaders speaking out more frequently and with a sense of urgency about matters of social injustice. Faith leaders were also encouraged, in response to Keir Starmer's commitment to work with faith groups, to proactively engage with the Labour Party. Church Leaders took the opportunity to encourage those MPs who would be standing in the upcoming election to engage with the Hustings that local churches organised and hosted. While recognising the busy life of our Members of Parliament, both in Westminster and their constituencies, Church Leaders were keen that channels of communication remained open and that we fostered collaborative working for the benefit of our city and region. The event was attended by 5 MPs with 2 members of staff and senior leaders from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool and Diocese of Shrewsbury, the Independent Churches, the United Reformed Church, the Methodist Church and the Anglican Diocese of Chester.

By Bishop Julie Conalty



## CTMR Church Leaders and Together Liverpool: 40 years of 'Faith in the City' anniversary— Appointment



2025 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the [Faith in the City report](#) and CTMR in conjunction with Together Liverpool would like to commemorate the publication of this report by examining the effect it has had. They would like to do this by showing how faith-led groups impact on



the Liverpool City Region at present and by looking to the future.

Therefore, CTMR in conjunction with Together Liverpool have made an important appointment to the post of 'Faith in the City - Lead Development Officer'. Francesca (Fran) D'Arcy (*see photo*) who hails from Liverpool has taken up this post at the beginning of December and is mainly working towards an event to take place in November 2025.

More details about the post can be found here: [Faith in the City - Lead Development Officer in Liverpool | Church of England](#).

Fran's role entails:

- # Heightening public and faith community awareness of the historic and ongoing contributions of churches in the Liverpool City Region.
- # Reflection on the impact of "Faith in the City" over the past 40 years, including successes and areas for growth.
- # Developing and promoting a new "Vision for the City" manifesto, outlining future commitments and roles for church and faith communities in civic and political life.
- # Strengthening relationships and dialogue between church leaders and political figures.

Fran will be contacting many people also using the CTMR network and is looking forward to being in touch with you in the near future. Please may we ask you to keep Fran's work in your prayers. Thank you.



## CTMR Civic Reception

A Civic Reception for Leaders of the Borough Councils and Mayors within the Merseyside Region is normally 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.

However due to unforeseen circumstances it could not take place in 2024, but will be hosted again in 2025.



## Liverpool Cologne Church Partnership



Churches Together in the Merseyside Region (CTMR) are still reviewing the way forward for the Liverpool Cologne-Link group. 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 continuing and the exchange will continue in 2025.

## CTMR Church Leaders Joint Statement after Southport Incident on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024



The day after the incident in Southport in July 2024, CTMR Church Leaders offered the following [Joint Statement](#), which was shared via all our regional media channels and also nationwide via Churches Together in England.

### Vigil in Southport



© Image Pixabay

Bishop Tom Neylon reported on the vigil in Southport which was attended by about 1,000 the day after the stabbings on the 30<sup>th</sup> July. Here is what he says:

“We have been deeply touched and saddened by the deaths of Bebe, Elsie and Alice and the injuries suffered by the young girls and 2 adults who attended the dance event in Hart Street Southport, on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> July. We share the shock and grief of their families and friends, and the residents of Southport.

I attended the Vigil on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> July outside The Atkinson, on Lord Street. There were many people of all ages who gathered calmly and

peacefully to pray and reflect on the horrific event that had taken place, just over 24 hours ago. People were accommodating as some were making their way through the crowds to get a better view of the platform where the Mayor of Sefton Cllr June Burns, the Methodist Minister and Chaplain to the Southport and Ormskirk Hospital Trust, the Reverend Martin Abrams and myself were standing during the Vigil.

Martin began by recalling the names of the those who had died, mentioned those who were injured, some seriously, the affected families and those who had come to their aid as police officers, paramedics and hospital staff. There was a regional response to this tragedy. By gathering, I think that those present showed their solidarity with those who are suffering the most and pledged to support them in whatever way possible as they come to terms with the events of Monday 29 July 2024.

*Bishop Tom Neylon*



## **Faith Leaders' call for unity & peace following Southport incidents**

Riots followed after the vigil and on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024, Liverpool's faith leaders came together to call for peace and unity. Here is the [link](#) to the video that was published by Liverpool City Council in two different formats. Also here is the [link](#) to the text of the video.



*L-R: Bishop John Perumbalath; Barry Levene, President of the Merseyside Jewish Representative Council; Imaam Ahmed Ali from the Al-Rahma Mosque and Roman Catholic Bishop Tom Neylon.*

*© Liverpool City Council, Paul Johnstone*

## 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 4 times a year.



## Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEOs)

Denominational Ecumenical Officers from Merseyside continue to meet three or four times a year, sometimes face to face sometimes on zoom. They have begun to link up with Cheshire DEOs. They support and update each other which enables working together more closely.



Allister Versfeld  
Salvation Army



Andrew Edwards  
Church of England



David Goodwin  
Methodist



Ian Smith  
United Reformed Church



Ultan Russell  
Roman Catholic

The Baptist positions is vacant at present.

To get in touch with your DEO, please follow this [link](#).

# Churches Together in the North West Safeguarding Group



The ecumenical safeguarding 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'

The Northwest Churches Safeguarding Leads will meet again soon.

*© Photo: Cheryl Holt from Pixabay (pixabay.com)*



## 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 area.

*© Image: pixabay: rambo 182*

## 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: pixabay: (pixabay.com)*

## LOUDfence Event

The Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool and the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool joined forces for the inaugural Ecumenical LOUDfence Event on

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024.



This initiative aimed to provide a platform for all those affected by abuse, offering healing and support through a visible demonstration of soli-

darity. The event began with a ribbon-tying ceremony outside the Anglican Cathedral at 12:30pm, followed by a Non-Denominational Blessing from Dean of the Anglican Cathedral, The Very Rev Dr Sue Jones.



Participants then embarked on a Walk of Hope along Hope Street, culminating at the Metropolitan Cathedral Plaza. Upon arrival, a Prayer Service led by Archbishop Malcolm McMahon

and a ribbon-tying ceremony allowed attendees to express solidarity with victims and survivors of abuse. Those who wished were encouraged to read the LOUDfence prayer together. Attendees came from around the archdiocese and beyond, with some travelling from as far as West Yorkshire.

This ecumenical event welcomed individuals from diverse backgrounds, inviting survivors, supporters, and community members to stand together against abuse. Attendees were encouraged to tie ribbons and leave messages of support as a visible symbol of support, fostering a network of compassion and understanding.

The subsequent days saw both cathedrals engage in prayer and reflection, offering resources and support for victims and survivors of abuse.

For full article please visit: <https://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/news/loudfence-catholic-and-anglican-churches-stand-together-against-abuse>

Both images ©: Archdiocese of Liverpool



## CTMR Social Justice Group - Supporting Social Action across the Region



The CTMR Social Justice Group continue to meet regularly to help, identify and discern the work of Social Justice in the Merseyside Region.

They share what is happening across the CTMR partner denominations and try to identify ways of working better together.

### 2025: Celebrating Faith in the City

In 2024 the group mainly focused on facilitating the appointment of CTMR's new Faith in the City Anniversary Co-ordinator to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 'Faith in the City' report.

This is to show the social engagement of Churches. The new appointment was made in conjunction with Together Liverpool and with the invaluable support of Tani Omideyi, Senior Pastor Temple of Praise, Anfield at the request of the CTMR Church Leaders group.

The preparation involved a lot of hard work and perseverance. It was a privilege to see how well the group work together. Please see p 22 for

more details about the role.



*From left to right:  
Pablo Guidi, Archdiocese of Liverpool, Social Action Co-ordinator; Ellen Loudon, Director of Social Justice & Canon Chancellor, Diocese of Liverpool, Phil Jump, NW Baptist Regional Minister & "Free Churches" representative; James Green, Together Liverpool, Executive Director*

*By Elisabeth Hachmoeller*

# Chaplaincy multi faith event in HMP Altcourse Prison



© Pixabay, Stephen Barnes

On the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 we held our first Multi-faith event in the chapel HMP Altcourse. Our theme was bringing Hope to our communities with a view of raising the importance of resettlement work. We were pleased to have the support of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayor-ess of Liverpool. As well as some of our senior faith leaders from across the various faith communities of Liverpool, we had over 70 people representing their faith organisations. There was lots of networking going on.

The highlight of the event for me was hearing from an ex-offender who had found faith in prison, turned his life around and is today making a positive contribution to his faith community. He now visits Altcourse prison as an ex-offender. His vision is to inspire, encourage and support other prisoners to make that change. We have had lots very positive feedback from this event and requests to attend the next one.

We value your thoughts and prayers

*By Rev Brian Greenhalgh*

## Ecumenical Service for Peace and 50 Faces of the Holy Land Exhibition

The Ecumenical Service for Peace at Our Lady of the Assumption Church on Nov 6<sup>th</sup> came about by thinking what response we could make as a parish community to the dire situation in the Middle East. The parish decided to host the 50 Faces of the Holy Land Exhibition.



The Exhibition was commissioned to highlight and promote the lives of the people in Israel, Gaza and the Occupied Territories. Stories are told by people of all ages, and experiences; we learn what it is to live in a land that is known by so many to be holy.

The Exhibition has been hosted by the Palace of Westminster and Cathedrals up and down the country. As Our Lady's Church is open every day of the year we thought that we could host this Exhibition and people's response has been amazing.

## Ecumenical Service for Peace and 50 Faces of the Holy Land Exhibition cont.

The church has been visited from people from Leyland, Parbold, North



**50 FACES OF THE HOLY LAND**  
**PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION**

**31st Oct-12th Nov**  
8.30am -1.30pm  
Saturdays 8.30am-5pm

**Our Lady of the Assumption Church**  
Hedegfield Rd, Gateacre, L25 2RW

[www.ourladygateacre.org.uk](http://www.ourladygateacre.org.uk) [www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](http://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk)

Wales and Wallasey as well as by the local residents of Belle Vale, Netherley and Gateacre.

As part of this two-week Exhibition we had noticed that there was an opportunity for Christians to gather together to pray for peace in the Middle East.

The Service was led by Most Rev Malcolm McMahon OP KC\*HS,

Archbishop of Liverpool with Canon Dr Ellen Loudon (Director of Social Justice & Canon Chancellor Diocese of Liverpool) and Canon Mark Madden (Canon of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Advisor to the Holy Land for the Bishops of England & Wales).

Children from local schools sang about peace, people had an opportunity to light a candle for peace and the congregation of 300 reflected on the Word of God together. Importantly people were invited to see what next steps they could take personally or as a community and different opportunities were presented after the Service by the Friends of the Holy Land, Pax Christi, CAFOD and the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

Ecumenism is very close to my heart and so it was wonderful to provide a place and space for Christians to unite in prayer, concern and action.

*By Fr Stephen Pritchard*

# Pentecost Two Cathedrals Ecumenical Celebration 2024 & 2025



## Ecumenical Celebrations 2024

### Building God's Church Together

Pentecost 2024 marked 100 years of Liverpool Cathedral. The 2 Cathedral Pentecost Service was a family friendly event of celebration.

As every year, the Pilgrimage along Hope Street symbolised the Better Together motto so vigorously promoted by Bishop David Sheppard, Revd Dr John Newton, and Archbishop Derek Worlock together with those Catholic, Anglican and Free Church Leaders plus decision makers (lay and ordained) who worked equally hard!

This year it began with a service at the Metropolitan Cathedral with the Dean of the Catholic Co Cathedral of St Mary's of the Isles, Douglas, Isle of Man, Monsignor Canon John Devine OBE preaching. John served for many years as Churches Officer for the Northwest and Pro Chancellor of Liverpool Hope (Liverpool's Anglican-Catholic University). He spoke with passion about the change in Merseyside, the value of receptive ecumenism and the importance of working together. He drew on the outstanding example of Church Alive in Man -citing the strong and united opposition by the Churches to the assisted dying bill going through Tynwald the Manx Parliament and creative interchurch initiatives on safeguarding. For a copy of his sermon please contact of-  
[fice@ctmr.org.uk](mailto:fice@ctmr.org.uk)





# Pentecost Two Cathedrals Ecumenical Celebration 2025 & 2024



## Pentecost 2025 Ecumenical Celebrations, 8 June 2025, 3-5pm – Pilgrims of Hope

The theme for Pentecost 2025 celebrations in Liverpool will reflect the call by the Pope for 2025 to be a year of Jubilee with the title **Pilgrims of Hope**.

With roots originating in the Old Testament, a Year of Jubilee now takes place once in every 25 years, offering each of us an opportunity to re-new our relationship with God, each other, and all of creation. At the heart of this uplifting celebration is the theme of **pilgrimage** – a quest to discover and leave behind all that separates us from God in the hope of finding renewed fulfilment, peace, and joy. For more details as we get closer to Pentecost 2025 please follow this [link](#), call 0151 709 0125 or email: [office@ctmr.org.uk](mailto:office@ctmr.org.uk)

**Please hold this date, Sunday, 8 June 2025, 3-5pm, in your diaries.**

## Ecumenical Celebrations 2024

### Building God's Church Together

The procession moved in groups along Hope Street. Those involved in the signature Another Place organisation did mini-playlets – 1920s residents talking about the new Cathedrals ... another acted as the stonemason building the Anglican Cathedral ...



# Pentecost Two Cathedrals Ecumenical Celebration 2024 & 2025 cont.



*Photo taken at a previous Pentecost event*

while another was a sixties hippy type who spoke of the music of Liverpool but also of the changes caused by those Bishops! People watching this were intrigued and asked questions.

Then arriving at the other end there was music, giant skittles, giant building blocks to build your own Cathedral plus picnics inside and outside the Cathedral to also mark Liverpool Cathedral's 100th anniversary.



Finally, prayers and the blessing was given by three of Churches Together in the Merseyside Region's Church Leaders – Bishop Dr John Perumbalath - Bishop of Liverpool, Archbishop Malcolm McMahon Roman Catholic Archbishop and the Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson (*pictured here on the left*) —then Chair of the Liverpool Methodist District, now retired.

## **Please Tell Us**

We would be delighted to hear about any ecumenical celebrations which you are planning locally for Pentecost 2025.

## 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 sixteen 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: 07515 287013 or by emailing him at: [andrew.edwards@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:andrew.edwards@liverpool.anglican.org)

By Andrew Edwards

## Liverpool Seafarers Centre (LSC)



Liverpool Seafarers Centre is a member of the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA). The association comprises Christian not-for-profit organisations working for the welfare of seafarers around the world. Founded in 1969, ICMA currently represents more than 450 seafarers' centres and 900 chaplains in approximately 125 countries.

### Where it all began



The history of Liverpool Seafarers Centre is dating back to the 19th century and their commitment to seafarers in the maritime industry remains steadfast throughout the years. *Picture: Seafarers Centre: Crew ashore in Liverpool docks*

It was officially established in October 2008, as a result of the merger between the Anglican Mersey Mission to Seafarers and the Catholic Apostleship of the Sea (Liverpool). These organisations recognised the importance of a comprehensive outreach program to better serve the seafaring community.

### A Christmas thanks

Many donations were received for Seafarers' Christmas parcels which reminded these maritime workers that they were not forgotten and that their well-being matters. The Liverpool Seafarers Centre received donations of toiletries, confectionery, hats, gloves, stocking fillers. Businesses also include items of branded merchandise. They aimed to top last year's target of 1000 gift bags which were distributed to visiting seafarers from across the world throughout the month of December. A huge thank you for donations received. To find out more about the Seafarers Centre, please visit their [website](#).



# Support for Asylum Seekers (SAS) Destitution Project - 2024



## Destitution Project Delivery

In 2024 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, Merseyside Refugee Support Network. Refugee Women Connect ended their delivery in January 2024. A big thank you to Alison Moore for liaising over this with CTMR/SAS.

## Faiths4Change

Support from SAS continues to support our work in 2 ways.



We grow, harvest and donate organic vegetables and herbs from the St Michael's in the City Church 'Roots' Garden to the Micah foodbank which operates out of two central Liverpool churches on a weekly basis. The foodbank predominantly supports adult and children Asylum Seekers and Refugees. This year 73% of recipients are Asylum Seekers (1230 households) and 4% Refugees (72 households).

*Aaron (Micah Foodbank Driver)*

Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 we've donated 216kg of vegetables and herbs at a value of £2384.00. An average of 500g per household, 432 households have benefited so far this year.

We've partnered with Myerscough College in an exciting Ministry of Justice programme with the RHS and HMP

Walton. People in prison gain horticulture training, including raising vegetable plug plants for community gardens. In June over 500 young



## Faith4Change cont.



plants from the prison courses were brought to the Roots Garden to grow on, meaning all available



hands were needed to get them in the ground. These plants have provided a fantastic bounty for the food bank, including sweetcorn, kale, courgettes, spring onions and French beans.

*Crystal (Faiths4Change)*

SAS funding enables us to provide individual support to Asylum Seekers. Our long time Asylum Seeker volunteer gained leave to remain and is now settling into a flat, we cover his travel expenses to a community garden which enables him to enjoy social, physical and emotional wellbeing. A newly arrived Asylum Seeker has been supported

with a coat and boots, he had neither.

Annie Merry, Faiths4Change, Autumn 2024

## Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM)

From January 2024, ALM has had to strap itself in and get on with

A poster for a sponsored walk. The top left shows a map of a 90-mile route over 4 days, with a mountain icon and the text 'Yr Wyddfa'. Below the map is a QR code. To the right of the QR code is the text 'Good Luck Mori Erni &amp; Rori'. At the bottom, there are three photos of people. The text 'Sponsored walk 4 Asylum Link Merseyside 13th June' is at the bottom center. The text 'Asylum Link Merseyside' is on the left side of the poster.

things. Financially, we were not looking great through the Christmas period in 2023 but we have since rallied, through a lot of hard work and concentration, to get us where we need to be.

The emptying out of the Asylum System has continued apace, with the rush cause by the fast-track questionnaires, replaced by the new governments accelerated approach, with some receiving a decision days after their interviews, instead of months and years.

Image: YrWyddfa/Snowdon Walk

Of course, despite all the other things: our Snowdon Fundraiser, the production of a film for our Climbing Club,

# Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM) cont.



or even Refugee Week, the story of the year has been the Far-Right Threat, following the dreadful attack in Southport.



The photograph above shows the anti-fascist crowd who gathered to protect ALM against the threat and with over 1000 people packed into Overbury Street, it was quite incredible to feel the warmth and regard that people have for ALM, MRSN and the work that we do.

Following on from that, we've met with the Home Secretary, the Attorney General, the Head of the Charity Commission and the Head of the Lloyds Foundation, all of whom wanted to know how it had affected us and what we intended to do. What the Far-Right didn't expect when





they planned their attack, was that this would give us a platform to approach people at the heart of government or that our story would travel to New York, Oslo, Singapore and other places. People were incredibly supportive and thanks to SAS, CTMR and others, we are still here, despite everything, to care for those




























most in need in our community.

Photo: Wellbeing Activities

## Activities Timetable

Last updated: 01 July 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>13.00</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Board Games Club</b></p>  </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>13.00</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Women's English Class</b></p>  </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>12.30</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Bike Club</b></p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>12.30</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>English Conversation Club</b></p>  </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>12.30</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Gardening Club</b></p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>12.30</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Music Group</b></p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>14.00</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Women's Music Group</b></p>  </div> </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>10.00</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Women's Group</b></p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>13.00</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Women's English Class</b></p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>13.00</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Choir</b></p>  </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>12.00</p> </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Free lunch</b></p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center; flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Table tennis (all day)</b></p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center; flex-grow: 1;">  <p><b>Want to play football?</b> Contact Wendy on 07484 624646</p> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>We also do trips and volunteering events</b></p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>Do you have other interests? Maybe we can help.</b></p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p><b>For more information contact Rory on 07388 813584</b></p> </div> </div>

**For other support from Asylum Link contact 0151 709 1713**

Asylum Link Merseyside, 7 Overbury Street, Liverpool, L7 3HJ

By Ewan Roberts – Manager, Asylum Link Merseyside

## Merseyside Refugee Support Network (MRSN)

### A Case study

#### Context

Since August 2023 we have seen the impact of the Home Office clearing their asylum backlog. When positive decisions have been made “in bulk”, this has resulted in significant levels of refugee homelessness – including street homelessness (rough sleeping) and sofa surfing. Most SAS funds have been used to help refugee clients in an emergency or other destitute situation over the past year. Sometimes we offer emergency funds for food/toiletries when new refugees are destitute in

the gap between leaving the asylum system on grant of leave to remain and the first payment for universal credit benefits or paying for a night or two in a bunk room hostel – when no other housing options are open to them.



The homelessness situation is so bad it has also led us to buying tents, mats and sleeping bags. It feels like a last resort – but often it is the only “solution” where a client is not considered to be in “priority need” with council housing services.

The housing crisis is not unique to Merseyside - the long-standing under-investment in housing nationally has led to insufficient social housing. Social housing is for renting for those unable to buy, politicians have obscured “social housing” needs with “affordable housing”.

Single refugees and couples often find themselves street homeless, if the local authorities do not deem them to be in priority need. This situation is made worse when refugees are reunited with their spouses after a successful family reunion visa application. Many separated by years only to find that they have nowhere to live. It is such a tragedy that this is almost a daily occurrence in the world’s 6<sup>th</sup> richest economy.

A current homeless case involves a Refugee Family Reunion case – a family reunited after many years apart, a family who should have been able to be joyfully reunited. Dad has significant and enduring physical and mental health issues. His daughter, (also with health issues) and wife joined him last summer and in October we are still battling for them and trying to get a housing decision changed in order that this family can be a family together under one roof.

They are only just coping, they are moving around daily sofa-surfing with different people in the local and regional diaspora communities or, on occasion, have no option but to sleep in a tent in the park or the local railway station.

Our casework support continues, and we are working with them to challenge the decisions by a local authority not to house them. The SAS fund allowed us to give them emergency support when they were destitute and not in receipt of benefits.

We will continue to pursue the case and seek legal housing advice going forward. *Seana Roberts, Manager, Merseyside Refugee Support Network*



## Weekly ecumenical prayer group in Southport



© pixabay (Rawpixel)

In Southport there is a weekly ecumenical lay led prayer meeting with about 40-50 attendees. This has been in existence for about 25 years and all the major denominations are represented (Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Salvation Army, Elim etc).

They meet at 7.30am for an hour every Tuesday morning at a different church each month. Specifically, it is to pray for the town as well as national and global issues.

This is a great forum for sharing information, communicating and can act as a catalyst for joint action.

In the month of August we were already timetabled to meet at St Patrick's Church where the funeral of Alice da Silva Aguiar was held who was killed in the Southport attack."



# Dialogue between Faith communities



Merseyside Faith Leaders were hosted at Bishop's Lodge in Woolton on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024. (see image below). Michelle



Kirk from the Fire and Rescue Services Merseyside spoke about the work of fire services and about how faith leaders can cooperate with this institution to ensure that the service it provides is fully inclusive.

James Green presented the work of the Network of Kindness, which is engaged in social action in Merseyside. He invited the faith leaders to join in. The conversation included also reflections on the Ukrainian community in Liverpool and the marking of the second anniversary of the Russian invasion in February.



**On the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024**, the second anniversary of the Russian invasion, a prayer vigil took place at 'St Nick's' Church, Pier Head, Liverpool. (see picture to the left).

**On the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024** Merseyside Faith Leaders met again at Bishop's Lodge (see picture below). This time the Lord Lieutenant and his team attended as did the present and past Vice Chancellors of Liverpool Hope University. The event was very



well attended and provided a great opportunity to share each other's stories and experiences – hopefully more meetings in the future will allow everyone to get to know each other better.

By Rev Dr Taras Khomych

# Papal Knighthood for Prof Gerald Pillay



On the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024 Archbishop Miguel Buendia, Papal Nuncio for England Wales & Scotland, came to Liverpool to bestow a Papal Knighthood on Gerald Pillay, the former Vice Chancellor of Liverpool Hope University.

The service took place at Liverpool Cathedral during Choral Evensong which was a first time that a papal award has been bestowed in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and perhaps in any other Anglican Cathedral in this country in recent times.

All photos © Archdiocese of Liverpool

This is how *Rev Monsignor John Devine OBE* ended his address in *Liverpool Cathedral*: "Liverpool Hope shares the name of the street that links our two cathedrals; the same street down which Pope John Paul II processed with Bishop David and Archbishop Derek on his visit to the city in 1982. Liverpool Hope University is the jewel in the crown of our city's ecumenical endeavour. Today we honour the contribution Professor Gerald Pillay has made not just to the University but to our churches and to the life of our city."

Prof Pillay expressed his "great honour to receive this papal knight-



hood. However, the honour conferred on me is in reality an acknowledgment by the Church of the importance of higher education and especially of the unique, trans-denominational foundation that Liverpool Hope University has become. The coming together of Catholic and Protestant colleges into a unit-

ed university foundation (without denominational control) was a brave educational experiment in ecumenism here in Liverpool, unparalleled anywhere else in Europe." Special thanks to Fr S. Riley (l) & Rev Ph. Anderson (r) (see image to the l; central: Bp John & Archbishop Malcolm; r: Allistair Versfeld (l), Geoff Felton (r) & others)



## CTMR Young Adults' Group



The young adults had a catch up on pancake night in February 2024 which was a joyful occasion. They continue to be supported by Taras (pictured 1st from the right) and Veronica (3rd from the right) and keep in touch mostly via a WhatsApp group.

Veronica, Rebecca and Asish (sitting on the corner on the left) will be part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity event to be hosted by CTMR Church Leaders on 21st January 2025 which focuses on young people. Asish will also be part of a group representing Merseyside on the CTE Forum in March 2025.

By Elisabeth Hachmoeller



## Wirral Activities



Collaboration between the Wirral Faith Sector and Wirral's new Wirral CVS initiative has continued to grow well with Alex Fisher, Together Wirral Churches Asset Based Community Development Project Coordinator, now taking up a new full time role as Faith Development Worker within Wirral CVS.

Having mapped over 100 faith organisations and contacts across the borough through the successful Cinnamon Social Action audit Alex continues to work on a community development pillar within the CVS delivery plan which includes a commitment to:

- ◆ develop infrastructure support with the faith sector
- ◆ help the faith sector receive and share information and develop links with community and voluntary organisations
- ◆ develop a codesigned forum/plan or mechanism supported by WCVS

The audit published in April discovered that faith groups in Wirral play a crucial role in supporting local communities. They engage in a wide range of social action activities, including operating food banks, providing debt advice, and assisting families.



The audit was conducted by the **Cinnamon Network**, a national organization that equips UK churches for social action, and **Together Wirral Churches**. Their objective was to assess the impact of faith-based organizations on communities.



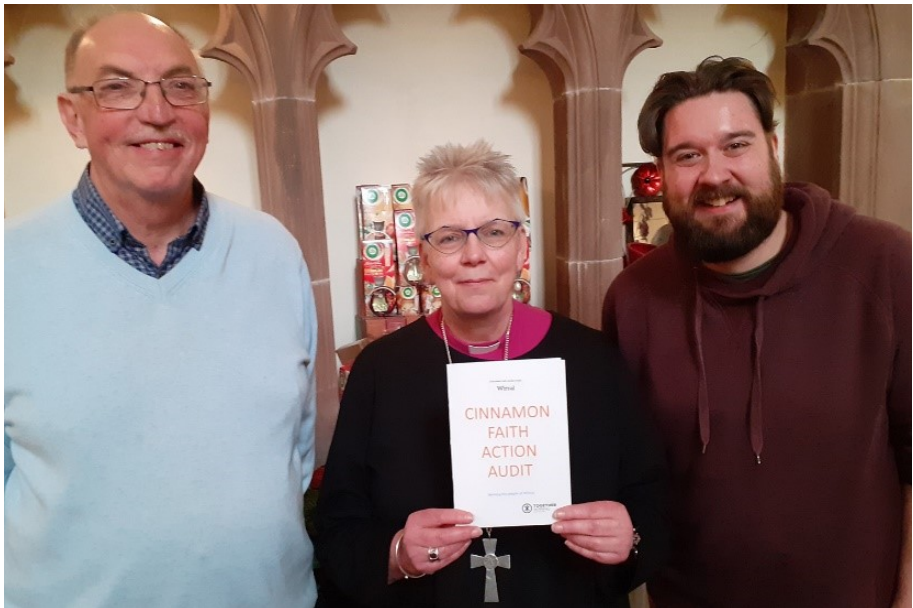
## Wirral Activities cont.



Together, these faith groups delivered **609 activities** to **58,277 beneficiaries**, made possible in part by the support and time contributed by a virtual army of 3,051 volunteers. The estimated financial value provided by the faith groups amounted to over £8 million.

Faith groups contribute to their communities in various ways, including:

- *Community Cohesion*
- *Giving children a good start in life*
- *Reducing social isolation*
- *Supporting families*
- *Help people in financial crisis*
- *Helping people to live healthier lives*



*Bishop Julie (centre) is presented with a copy of the audit by Phil Dickson (l) and Alex Fisher (r) from Together Wirral*

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Wirral continues to enjoy a significant new season of redevelopment around Birkenhead and 'Wirral Waters' the largest urban development scheme outside of London.



## Wirral Activities cont.



The exciting new Bishop's Mission Order 'The Well' continues to go from strength to strength with a community missionary and her family moving into one of the first available residents and the encouraging establishment of an already growing worshipping community seated right in the heart of the new development.



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The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, (l) made a missionary visit to The Well in June to see for himself the progress of the new mission initiative and to meet Wirral Councils Chief Executive Paul Saator (r) at Birkenhead Priory.

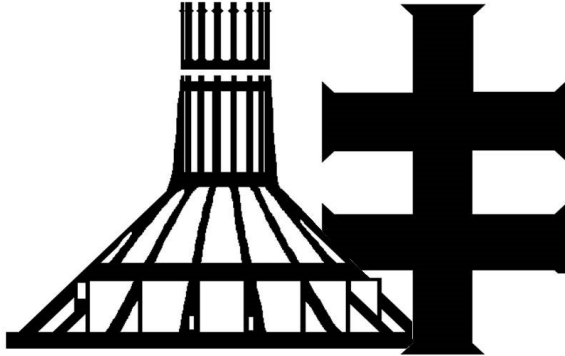
By Phil Dickson

*For further information about the project and the Archbishop of York's visit to the 'The Well', Birkenhead please follow this link <https://youtu.be/40nfmtAu698>*

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Joint Service in Liverpool

**Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup>  
January 2025,  
3pm**

A service to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place in the Anglican Cathedral at 3pm on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025.



Everyone is welcome!

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