

NEWSLETTER No 13

Autumn 2017

Welcome!

Welcome to this, the latest of the newsletters from Churches Together in Cheshire. As before I seek to include both news items and notices of ecumenical activities and events that are taking place within Cheshire, and also information relating more widely to the ecumenical scene across the country. .

You will find my contact details at the end of this Newsletter, and if you wish any future edition to include reports of what has been happening in your neck of the woods, or to advertise any forthcoming event I would be pleased to hear from you

Andrew Taylor

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2018

Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power
(*cf. Exodus 15:6*)

The Churches Together in Cheshire service for the Week of Prayer will be held on Sunday, 21st January at Chester Cathedral, when the preacher will be the Archbishop of York, the Rt. Revd. John Sentamu.

All resources for the 2018 Week of Prayer, jointly prepared and published by the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the

CHURCHES TOGETHER
IN CHESHIRE



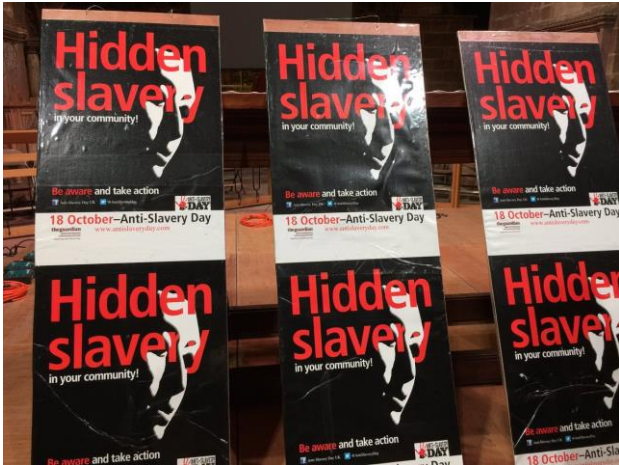
World Council of Churches, is now available at: www.oikoumene.org. or from the website of Churches Together in Great Britain and Ireland

The Churches of the Caribbean have been chosen to draft the material for the 2018 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The contemporary Caribbean is deeply marked by the dehumanizing project of colonial exploitation. Whereas those who brought the Bible to this region used the scriptures to justify their subjugation of a people in bondage, in the hands of the enslaved, it became an inspiration, an assurance that God was on their side, and that God would lead them into freedom.

Today Caribbean Christians of many different traditions see the hand of God active in the ending of enslavement. It is a uniting experience of the saving action of God which brings freedom. For this reason the choice of the song of Moses and Miriam (Ex 15:1-21), as the motif of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2018 was considered a most appropriate one.

Modern Slavery

Slavery is not, of course something confined to the history books two hundred year ago. Modern Slavery, in its many forms, continues around us, all too often unrecognised, and the churches of Cheshire are already contributing to how the issues are addressed within Cheshire.



On September 17th people from across Cheshire joined together at Chester Cathedral to learn of and pray for those caught up in the tragedy of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. The service had been arranged by the Cathedral, Cheshire Anti-Slavery Network and Churches Together in Cheshire.

The Mayors of Cheshire East and Cheshire West, local councillors, the High Sheriff of Cheshire and the Bishop of Chester were present. Caroline Virgo represented the Church of England's national Clewley Initiative. Contributions to the service came from the preacher, Major Kathryn Taylor of the Salvation Army, and readers Stephen Pickett of Frodsham Churches Together, Sandra Murphy, Head of Adult Safeguarding for Cheshire East Council and Susan Taylor, the founder of the

Cheshire Anti-Slavery Network. Music was provided by the Cathedral choir and organist and the music group of Hoole Baptist Church, Chester. Reports were given on: the work of the Anti-Slavery Network by Amy Morris, the Co-ordinator; on the Purple Teardrop Campaign of Soroptimists International by Anne MacDonald; on the Frodsham Churches local initiative by Stephen Pickett and on the Modern Slavery Act's requirements on Ethical Supply Chains by Quintin Lake of the 50eight Consultancy. The congregation had the opportunity to talk further with all the speakers after the service.



On behalf of Churches Together in Cheshire Bishop Peter Forster signed the following statement, a response to the strategy agreed amongst the relevant statutory bodies across the county:

The Church leaders of Cheshire welcome this strategy to fight this evil in our midst and commend those within the churches of Cheshire:

- *To use all appropriate opportunities to promote amongst their congregations and denominations awareness of the signs of modern slavery;*

- *To understand the ways in which concerns can be reported to the relevant statutory bodies;*
- *To ensure that safeguarding guidelines, procedures and training take account of concerns in respect of modern slavery*
- *To explore the development of 'Hubs of Concern' around Cheshire to promote awareness within their local communities;*
- *To explore how the facilities and people of the churches might be offered and used to support those in the process of recovery.*
- *To be mindful of the possibilities of modern slavery at play within the services and goods they buy and to use their decisions and purchasing power to combat this*

Prayers were offered for all those who find themselves victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, for those who are engaged in the trade today, and for all who are working to support victims and eradicate the evil.

Plans are being made for a further event at the Cathedral in the New Year.

Survey of Modern Day Slavery



Soroptimists across the UK are carrying out this survey, with the support of the UK Modern Slavery Training Delivery Group, a part of the UK Government's strategy to combat slavery.

They want to determine the public's perceptions of human trafficking and modern slavery across the UK.

Please Can you help with this survey between -

1st - 7th October

by giving 5minutes of your time to fill in a questionnaire.

The link to the survey can be accessed through - www.sigbi.org/ukpac/survey

Please note: this link will only be active on these dates.

www.sigbi.org/

Buildings for Mission learning programme and free online resources.

The following item is provided by Emily Allen, the Diocesan Church Building Development Officer



A new opportunity has arisen for churches of all denominations to access a special ecumenical learning programme on caring for, managing and enhancing church buildings and halls for furthering mission and ministry.

Additional Historic England funding has enabled the Diocese of Chester to open its learning programme on managing church

buildings to all church denominations and Christian organisations in the geographical area of the Diocese i.e. Cheshire (East and West), Wirral, Stockport, Runcorn and parts of Trafford and High Peaks.

This means all church denominations in the area can access for free:

Online resources relating to caring for, managing and developing church buildings:

[Fundraising Guide](#)
[Buildings for Mission](#)

Please note, some guidance is specific to the Church of England procedures, especially with regard to making changes to buildings, so always check with your denominational body.

A special learning programme is being developed, tailored for ecumenical relevance and where it is practically possible to accommodate more people.

Learning programme- coming next

‘How to Get the Best From Your Church Hall’. This will be held on Monday 16th October 2017 at St John’s Church Centre, Hartford. For more information and to book a place(s), click this [EventBrite](#) link. (Booking is essential)

‘Explorers of Church Building Projects’:

launch programme. A chance to visit a church every two months from Sept 2017 to June 2018, see what they’ve done and learn from their experience. Click on the dates below for more information and to reserve a place- booking is essential:

[Friday 10th November 2017](#), 10am-12pm, St Mary Magdalene’s Church, Ashton upon Mersey- a major re-ordering project in a large urban church

[Tuesday 6th February 2018](#), 10am-12pm, St James’, New Brighton- how the church has undertaken two major repair projects and successfully worked with the Heritage Lottery Fund

[Saturday 29th April 2018](#)- 10am-12pm, St Peter’s Church Hall, Elworth- how to build and manage a new church hall

[Thursday 14th June 2018](#), 10am-12pm, All Hallows, Cheadle- how to make the most of what you have by developing strong community links.

If successful, the programme will be extended until March 2020.

Future training events

The planning for 2018 includes courses on ‘running successful events’ and ‘writing a successful grant application’. Watch this space for more information.

What training topics would you like to see?

To take part in the online survey, please click [Survey](#). Please complete by 30th September 2017.

Small print notices!

1). Due to the finite capacity of the Church Buildings Development Officer, Emily Allen can only provide 1:1 support/respond to enquiries for Anglican churches in the Diocese of Chester, which totals some 300+. 2). Only training courses promoted as part of this specially designed ecumenical learning programme are open to all denominations (unless otherwise stated). 3). That said, the Diocese hopes the online material and learning programme will be of real benefit to all.

Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy



Sharon Mayer, the Lead Chaplain

writes:

The Chaplaincy is becoming very busy with an increasing number of referrals

Calls are coming from a variety of referral methods. A farmer suffering a marriage breakup has been referred by his vet. A land agent has called us to support a family they are about to evict due to end of tenancy on the death of the tenant. A farmer insisted his depressed farm worker phoned us to talk things through. This is encouraging as we are being increasingly valued and recognised within the industry as having a valid part to play. We also receive several calls from the FCN helpline.

There is a sense of capacity being at a limit at the moment with some families not perhaps getting as much input as we would like. As much work is done by phone or email as possible to conserve time and resources. Time is still required in networking with interested and supportive parties which is invaluable but takes time.

We urgently need more volunteers especially those with good farming knowledge who are empathetic and supportive to help shift some of the load.

We need to develop a specific prayer partner group of individuals or churches who can be called upon to pray into specific situations (obviously in a manner

that protects confidentiality) and to support the team. I was very much in need of this a week or so ago when I had some anxiety about our ability to support adequately those 'in our care'. Let us not forget that we are on the front line of some serious situations and it leaves us shattered. Farming and its associated worries is exhausting but so is chaplaincy work. However, there is much to be thankful for in seeing how farming families progress and come through times of trouble.

Final quotes

'I don't want to be needing to call you but I am so glad I can.'

'Thanks to your support, we now feel that we want to give back to another family in need and are doing just that.'

'You give me strength'

Prisons Week



The Prisons Week Prayer

- Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day. Amen.

[Download the Prayer leaflet](http://prisonweek.org/) and more information: <http://prisonweek.org/>

We stand Together

16th November, 2017, 9.30am - 3.30pm
MacDonald Portal Hotel, Tarporley.

This conference aims to bring together people from different faith and non-faith groups. It's an opportunity to come together and explore ways we can all work together for the greater good of community wellbeing.

Hosted by Cheshire Constabulary and facilitated by the charity Redeeming Our Communities (ROC) this informative event, includes a number of key speakers from Cheshire Constabulary, the office of David Keane - Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire and Debra Green OBE - Founder and Director of ROC.

Places are free but are limited by available space. However, some places are still available. You can book in on line at our website www.roc.uk.com under the 'Events' tab.

Good News!

Stitches and Stems Festival 2017

A group of six rural churches in the Wrenbury area in South East Cheshire got together and over last winter busily knitted thousands of small squares which were then stitched together to create a series of

biblical tableaux, each church hosting a different scene, culminating in a weekend festival in July.



Hundreds of visitors toured the six church venues, experiencing what can be achieved when church groups pull (or knit!) together.



If you can relate a similar good news event from your neck of the woods, it would be good to publicise it in the newsletter.

At a recent meeting of local Ecumenical Officers it was agreed that it was important that not only large national and county-wide events and activities were made

known, but that the wonderful efforts made across church traditions in towns and villages in Cheshire were also shared.

If you have good news that you would like others to know about please submit them through the contact details attached at the end of this newsletter.

That they all may be one: Ecumenism in the UK today

Theos is a Christian think tank which believes you can't understand the modern world without understanding religion. We seek to inform the debate about the place of religion in society, challenging ill-informed thinking through our research, events and media comment.

In recent months Theos has been engaged in a far-reaching review of the work of Churches Together in England



The ecumenical movement in England has been on a significant journey over the past few decades. The number of Churches and denominations engaged in the area has grown remarkably, reflecting shifting trends in English Christianity. That, combined with major changes in the ecumenical bodies, and changing perceptions of ecumenism among Churches, has given rise to a complex and vibrant ecumenical scene.

This report provides a snapshot of contemporary ecumenism in England. It tells the story of how ecumenism has changed and describes a movement that is now sitting at a critical juncture as it looks to the future. The report focuses primarily on Churches Together in England, the main ecumenical body operating in England. It identifies the strengths of the organisation and discusses the challenges it now faces.

The report concludes with some suggested possibilities for the future, making some tentative recommendations for Churches Together in England as an organisation. It is our hope that this report will serve to provoke fresh debate about the purpose, focus, and direction of ecumenism as it develops over the coming years.

That they all may be one: Insights into Churches Together in England and contemporary ecumenism by Natan Mladin, Rachel Fidler and Ben Ryan will be published in September 2017.

Next Edition

The next issue of the Newsletter will be in December. If you have any items you would like to be included please send them in by 30th November, 2017.

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