



CT-eNews

September 2020

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Season of Creation and Climate Sunday

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Prisons Week - 11 to 17 October

Neighbour Sunday - Sunday 18 October

Day of Prayer for the Media – Sunday 1 November

Retirement and CTE vacancy: *After many years of faithful service to the Christian community, Bishop Joe Aldred, CTE's Principal Officer for Pentecostal, Charismatic and Multi-cultural Relations, will be retiring from his role at the end of October. CTE's advertisement for this role has now been released and is available on page 12 below.*



Reflection of the Month: Education Sunday

His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London and CTE President shares our reflection of the month for September 2020...

We have all received one kind of education or another and have all had our opinions about that education. We have often complained, grumbled, and sometimes even thought whether it was relevant to us at all. What has become undeniably apparent over the past months however is the incredible importance of education, educators, and all those who support them, and the significant impact it has had on our lives.

Over these challenging months we have all seen the world differently and have undoubtedly learned very differently. We may have been deprived of classrooms and lecture rooms, but we have been provided with means of learning at every turn and through daily encounters. We have learned what it means to be vulnerable. We have learned what it means to be supported and supportive, and in many cases we have learned what it means to be a community and a people of God.

We have learned not only to rely on ourselves but to rely on others and on God's generous gifts, which can often be taken for granted. We have learned to be appreciative and observant of that which we may not have otherwise even considered.

At the time of being deprived of classrooms and lecture rooms however we have also learned the value of those settings and of the educators, support staff, and administrators who make education possible. Alongside healthcare professionals, teachers, teacher's aides, school administrators and all those who enable our educational institutions to function have been looked upon in a different light. Teachers who were once unrecognised and unappreciated are now seen for the 'superheroes' and 'essential workers' that they really are, and for the love and faithfulness for those they teach, and for the pivotal role they play.

We will, by the grace of God, emerge from this pandemic, and go onto whatever normality looks like beyond this; but as we do, I urge you to not forget the invaluable lessons we have acquired along the journey. We must not forget that even in the greatest sorrow and challenge, God has not left us, and we must recognise that there are many around us who have worked tirelessly to ensure that we were cared for through this experience and have prepared us to the best of their ability for what lies ahead.

At this time, we give thanks for our teachers and teaching assistants, our education administrators and all those who ensure that our schools and teaching institutions are open for our children and our young people. We pray that God rewards their commitment and faithfulness.

On 18 November 2017, His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos was enthroned as the first Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London. His Eminence specialises in youth ministry and initiatives relating to advocacy, international religious freedom and development work.



Education Sunday 2020: A learning people in a time of change

Education Sunday is a national day of prayer and celebration for everyone in the world of education. It takes place this year on **Sunday 13 September**.



This year Education Sunday takes place at a time when many children, young people and staff have been away from schools, colleges and universities and have been working in different ways. Churches, too, have had to learn and adapt, whilst still maintaining a pattern of worship. This is a time to think about what we have learnt about ourselves, about our communities and about God.

An [introduction to the 2020 theme](#) has been written by Barbara Easton, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference 2021-22 and Head of Service, Methodist Academies and Schools Trust.

The Bible passages for 2020 are:

Exodus 14.19-31
Psalm 114
Romans 14.1-12
Matthew 18.21-35

For the first time on Education Sunday, we are able to bring you an inter-generational service, [hosted on YouTube](#). This service for all ages has been produced by the United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work national team and friends, on behalf of Churches Together in England. It will [premiere on YouTube on Education Sunday](#) and will remain active for viewing after that date.

These following resources are also available [on the Education Sunday page](#):

- All Age Worship outline
- Act of Worship and resource sheet
- KS1 and KS2 assembly
- Sixth Form assembly
- Prayers
- Praying as a Family
- Songs and Hymns
- Sermon Notes
- Education Sunday logos and a publicity style guide

The [Centre for Chaplaincy in Education](#) is also holding its virtual Commissioning Service for school and college chaplains on Sunday 13 September. Everyone is welcome [to book a place online](#).

CTE Presidents call all churches to address racial injustice in church life and wider society

Issued 28 July 2020

Presidents of Churches Together in England, named below, with the support of the Fourth Presidency Group, have issued a statement calling on churches to travel together on the journey of racial justice, addressing injustices both within our church life and in wider society. They write...



We as Presidents of Churches Together in England have responded to the killing of George Floyd in the United States, and the widespread call for real change to combat racial injustice in our world, above all in our own country. We have spent time over the past few weeks listening to voices of people from the black community, especially the younger generation. This has been a deeply moving experience and illustrated powerfully the many profound changes of heart and actions that need to be made. The attitude that regards black people – and indeed other people of ethnic minorities – as inferior is evil and mars our common humanity. We challenge this unreservedly, recognising the constant experiences of racism, including micro aggression, which black people face.

We believe that churches have a significant role to play in combating racial injustice. If we are to be effective in doing so, we must look at ourselves.

We are painfully aware of the racism that blights the life of our churches. We are intent upon a process of identifying racial injustice within our churches – current and historic – repenting of it and taking action to effect real change. This includes the potential for discriminatory behaviour in the way that we make church appointments, which we know can happen at the conscious or unconscious level. We want to ensure that these processes are just and demonstrate the so often neglected gospel truth of Colossians 3:11 “there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all”. In this verse Paul makes it clear that racial injustice and discrimination is not only profoundly unjust and an affront to God but also the very denial of Christ who reached out to all human beings.

Some Member Churches of Churches Together in England have already embarked upon this journey of tackling racial injustice. The Church of England plans a new action group, and among the Free Churches work by the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, together with Baptists Together is already under way, as is also true for the Catholic Church. The Pentecostal Forum has long held this issue in its view, as have the Orthodox Churches.

We call upon all churches to travel together on this journey of racial justice so that together, as one community of churches in England, we may reach out in love and respect to one another in pursuit of our common witness.

An area of great concern to us as Presidents is the relationship between the black community and the criminal justice system. We will therefore be facilitating conversations between young black women and men and senior members of the police service. We are also seeking to engage both the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice in further considering the day-to-day experience of many young black people in England.

We encourage all churches throughout England to do all they can to build trust and improve accountability between black communities, the police, civic bodies and wider community groups. In particular we call upon groupings of Church Leaders throughout the nation to reach out to their black colleagues in church leadership who are currently absent from their membership, making more inclusive ecumenical leadership. Our desire is that these groups will create spaces for those in authority to listen, as we have, to the powerful testimony of young black women and men as a step towards greater social cohesion.

We see these issues as matters of gospel and faith for all who follow Jesus Christ, the one who calls every nation and people to the justice of the Kingdom of God.

Presidents of Churches Together in England:

Archbishop Justin Welby, The Archbishop of Canterbury
Cardinal Vincent Nichols, The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster
Revd Dr Hugh Osgood, The Free Churches Moderator
His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London and CTE President for the Orthodox Churches
Pastor Agu Irukwu, head of Redeemed Christian Church of God UK and CTE Pentecostal President

The Fourth Presidency Group comprises Lutheran, Quaker and The Church of Scotland (English Presbytery) Member Churches.

[Read this statement on our website...](#)

A pilgrimage together, hand-in-hand: CTE celebrates 30 years

On 1 September 2020, Churches Together in England (CTE) celebrated the 30th anniversary of its formation. Here CTE's General Secretary, Rev Dr Paul Goodliff, reflects on the last 30 years, while looking ahead to the many opportunities for churches to worship, serve and witness together into the future...

In the late 1980s there was a growing conviction that the existing ecumenical body, The British Council of Churches, was no longer effective. Its work was often ignored by its member churches, and a major weakness was the status of the Catholic Church as an observer only. In 1985 during his visit to Glasgow, Pope St John Paul II, observing that the whole Christian community are 'pilgrims on earth', asked "can we not make that pilgrimage together, hand-in-hand?" So was born the metaphor for a new kind of ecumenism – one that would fully embrace the Catholic Church (and over the years since its birth in 1990, many more churches) – becoming churches together in pilgrimage.

The transition process

[On our CTE website](#) you can read the story of the process that enabled The British Council of Churches to transition to the new ecumenical instruments in the four nations of these islands — Irish, Welsh, Scots and English, together with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (then The Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland).

My reflection here highlights the key conference that brought this process to its conclusion.

In September 1987, churches from across these islands gathered at Swanwick, Derbyshire, and made the decision to form the new instruments. The question remained, however: would the Catholic Church join?

It hung in the balance until Cardinal Basil Hume spoke of his experience of the unity at Swanwick as a gift of God in abundance and recommended to his fellow Catholic delegates that they commit to the new ecumenical instruments.

A fresh era of ecumenical endeavour was born, and perhaps we have grown so used to these ways of working together that we forget how momentous a decision that was thirty years ago.

This momentous occasion in 1987 is commemorated at The Hayes Christian Conference Centre in Swanwick today, with the symbol of a Pilgrim's Shell displayed alongside an inscription from [the Swanwick Declaration](#).

As we journey together on the pilgrimage towards the unity that Christ prayed for, this anniversary reminds us how far we have come – and how much further we have to travel.



The last 30 years

Over the last thirty years, CTE's national church membership has almost doubled, with many Pentecostal churches joining in more recent times. At its birth in 1990 there were three Orthodox churches in membership, now there are nine; there were six Pentecostal churches or networks in 1990, now there are eighteen, and absent in 1990 were any of the New Churches, but now we have three in membership. [A full list of our 50 Member Churches can be found on our website.](#)

This growth in membership has stretched CTE to a very broad representation of the character of English Christianity, matched by our growing number of Bodies in Association (organisations who work ecumenically) – [now standing at more than 50.](#)

But that is only half the story. With local Churches Together groups in villages, towns and cities across the country giving on-the-ground expression to ecumenical life, supported by fifty-five [Intermediate Bodies](#) working at a county (or sometimes city) level, the DNA of the pilgrimage model runs through every level.

Yes, we disagree about many theological and ethical concerns – that is the fruit of a thousand years of church history – but our deeper conviction is that what we share in Christ is infinitely greater than the things we disagree on. The call to unity rings continually from the Spirit and the words of Jesus in Scripture, reflected in CTE’s strapline: ‘One in Christ Jesus, engaged in God’s mission, empowered by the Spirit’.

As we celebrate thirty years of ecumenical life in England, the best birthday gift we can give to each other is a renewal of the commitments made by twenty churches at [CTE’s inaugural service](#) in St George’s Cathedral, Southwark, on 1 September 1990. May we deepen the commitment to journey in pilgrimage together as fifty Member Churches, whatever the challenges along the way; to renew the ecumenical life at county level, and in every local gathering of churches in villages, towns and cities across the land.

The churches might be facing unprecedented challenges in a world in crisis, but the many ecumenical opportunities for proclaiming the gospel, serving wider society and witnessing to the ‘faith once given’ are there to be grasped. Let’s do so together as Christians in England, as St John Paul II said, “hand-in-hand.”

Rev Dr Paul Goodliff
General Secretary, Churches Together in England

[*Read this story on our website...*](#)

“Thirty years have flown by, at least by my recollections...”

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of CTE, reflects on the last 30 years since CTE was founded:

How well I remember being part of the Catholic delegation at the Swanwick Conference in September 1987. I thank Dr Goodliff for his account of aspects of that meeting. I recall that on the evening before Cardinal Hume spoke, in a definitive way, he gathered all the Catholic delegates together and pondered with us on what he was going to say.

Before that Swanwick meeting, there had been three national meetings, in England, Scotland and Wales, which showed how different the situations were in each of the three nations. I think that helped to clarify the intention that our ecumenical journey needed expression, ‘instruments’, at a national level as well as at a British and Irish level.

The journey was one of departing from the steadfast work of the British Council of Churches, to a pattern of work which emphasised not so much the collective voice as a dedication to enable the churches themselves to work together, respecting difference as well as seeking commonality.

As Paul says [in his reflection](#), one of the great features of the last thirty years is the rapid expansion of Christian communities and traditions within our country, now reflected in the [membership of CTE](#). I rejoice in this broadening of cooperation.



Nowhere has it been more evident in the splendid leadership given to us all in CTE by the Black-led churches in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd. That is such an important moment and one in which the 'historic' churches in this country owe much to our fellow Christians.

The challenges facing our country at this critical time have, I believe, deepened the practical ecumenical cooperation which exists in so many places. Responses to need, to isolation, to hunger quickly bring together neighbouring churches in common effort. There is nothing remarkable about this anymore. It is simply a fact of life and a strong witness to the fruitfulness of faith in Jesus Christ.

In 1987 one of the principal points made by Cardinal Hume was that we would never 'negotiate' our way to deeper and fully Christian unity. He was convinced that such unity would come only as a gift and it would come when we were on our knees in prayer. This emphasis on the utter centrality of Jesus as our living Lord and Master is as relevant today as it was thirty years ago. In fact, it is more relevant in an age which is more reluctant to step beyond the immediate and the pragmatic. But Jesus is the one thing we have to offer to our country and we do that best together.

I thank God for the life of faith in Jesus, the Eternal Word made flesh, and for the richness of witness given to his Name. I pray that we will continue to live this faith together and be courageous in exploring the secure truths which flow from that faith and which alone give life its firm and true foundations.

+Vincent Nichols

[Read this story on our website...](#)

Further anniversary reflections

"The more united we are, the stronger we become" – Bishop Esme Beswick, one of CTE's Presidents from 2002-2006, [reflects on 50 years of ministry and her involvement in the foundation of CTE...](#)



Bringing Christians together in shared prayer, witness and service in their communities: The Ecumenical Mission Officer for Staffordshire and the Potteries, Robert Mountford, [on how churches work together on a more local level...](#)



Covid webinars from the Society of Ecumenical Studies

The Society for Ecumenical Studies is holding a series of three webinars to discussing the response of the Churches to the situation created by the current pandemic.



The spiritual health of the nation Tuesday 15 September from 6 to 7.30 pm

Covid has been a time of huge upheaval and an opportunity for soul-searching. What are we learning as individuals and as society?

The speakers are Roger Dawson, Ann Morisy and John Swinton. Dominic Robinson will be in the chair.

The webinar will include a short time for discussion in randomly allocated small groups.

[Find more details and how to book a ticket...](#)

Communion in the light of COVID-19: Shining a light on different views of Eucharist

John Bradbury, Sarah Parvis and Matthew Cheung Salisbury shared their perspectives and responded to questions from the Zoom audience.

[Watch the video from the 16 July webinar...](#)

Covid-19 and the World Church

What can we learn from each other and share together across ecclesial and geographical boundaries during these unprecedented times? The speakers were Jooseop Keum, Elena Narinskaya, Moses Owusu-Sekyere and Philip Vinod Peacock. Victoria Turner was in the chair.

[Watch the video of the 19 August webinar...](#)

CTE Coronavirus Hub

If you are looking for guidance, resources or inspiration for your church during this difficult time, then visit our Coronavirus Hub at cte.org.uk/coronavirus.

Local church fellowship offers drive-in worship

Church buildings in Bishop Auckland may be closed due to the coronavirus; the drive-in however, is open.

Each Sunday afternoon in August, the Fellowship of Christian Churches in this County Durham town are putting on ecumenical services in a town centre car park.

"The inspiration came to me from the Irish Methodist tradition of 'field meetings,' said Rev John Purdy, a minister on the Bishop Auckland and Shildon Circuit. "Each summer, when I was in the West of Ireland, I would be preaching in the open air, from the back of a tractor."



Rev John suggested the idea of an outdoor service to other church leaders in the town, who immediately responded positively. Support has also come from the Mayor and local politicians, who smoothed the way to getting the necessary permissions to use the car park. Local businesses have also joined in, such as the family-run haulage firm that supplies the lorry trailer, which acts as the platform for the service.

Seventy cars can join the service each Sunday. Places need to be booked in advance. If tickets are sold out, there is still the opportunity to listen to the service on the [local independent radio station Bishop FM](#). You can also 'listen again' on the station's website.

Four or five different churches are represented every week during the worship, which comprises of prayers, readings and an address. A different member of the clergy preaches each week and [local Christian group Ichthus Music](#) provides the music.

"These drive-in services were able to come about because we've built up great relationships amongst the ministers and key lay people in the community's churches," says Rev John. "We've been meeting regularly, praying and sharing food together over the last five years."

[Follow the Bishop Auckland Fellowship of Christian Churches on Facebook.](#)

[Read this story on our website...](#)

Holiday at Home on the phone

Throughout August, a new series of reflections on the Daily Hope phone line gave thousands of older people who were still staying at home the opportunity to use their imaginations to take them off to the sea or the countryside...

In normal times, many churches across the country offer 'Holiday at Home' type sessions in person for older people who are not able to go on holiday. These happen a range of formats, which for some might include a day trip to the seaside.



Faith in Later Life, alongside Connections at Holy Trinity, Claygate, worked together to prepare a series of seven reflections for the free Daily Hope telephone service. The new series launched on Saturday 1 August 2020, with the sounds of seagulls, birdsong, and even an ice cream van!

There was a different theme each day of the week, with each session containing a poem, reflection, bible verse and a prayer of thanksgiving.

A taster of Holiday at Home on the Phone [is available on the Church of England SoundCloud page.](#)

More than 200,000 calls have now been made to the free telephone service since it launched, totalling nearly 2.5 million minutes. Many of those ringing in are repeat callers, accessing a range of services.

Don't forget to ring 0800 804 8044 to access encouragement through the Daily Hope phone line.

[Read this story on our website...](#)

Job Opportunities:

Principal Officer for Pentecostal, Charismatic and Multi-cultural Relations, Churches Together in England (lay or ordained)

Churches Together in England (CTE) is seeking to appoint an able and inspiring person to lead its work with Pentecostals, Charismatics and multiculturalism.

- Full time/Flexible over 5/6 days per week including weekends/evenings, travel
- Home based, accessible to London

The ideal candidate will

- be an able communicator both written and spoken
- be skilled at brokering and developing relationships
- have ecumenical experience, especially with Pentecostal and Charismatic churches
- take responsibility for racial justice work
- share in the responsibilities of the staff team

Closing date 30 October

[For further information, including an application pack see our website](#)



Secretary for Healthcare Chaplaincy, Free Churches Group

The Free Churches Group are looking for a Secretary for Healthcare Chaplaincy (working part-time) to provide leadership in this field. At this time of unprecedented change, it is an opportunity to strengthen how we engage in healthcare chaplaincy.

3 years fixed term contract, part-time (3 days per week, worked flexibly)

Closing date 21 September

[For full details view this job advert on our website...](#)

County Ecumenical Officer, Churches Together in Somerset

Churches Together in Somerset is seeking to appoint a new County Ecumenical Officer to work with church leaders, churches and other appropriate groups across the region of Somerset, BaNES and North Somerset from March 2021.

Part time (8 hours a week)

Closing date 30 October

[For full details view this job advert on our website...](#)

And finally...

Season of Creation and Climate Sunday

The [World Council of Churches has shared news](#) of church leaders and lay people joining climate justice marches in London.

Churches have also begun celebrating #ClimateSunday, with one of our national Member Churches – the Baptist Union - launching [the Baptist Union Environment Network](#) (also on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)).



Find out more about Climate Sunday from CTBI at ctbi.org.uk/climate-sunday

Calling all aspiring Christian writers - The Upper Room writing competition 2020

The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) – one of CTE's Bodies in Association – is offering aspiring writers the opportunity to see their work in print in The Upper Room. Published in 35 languages The Upper Room is unique in that its readers are its writers.

Go to brfonline.org.uk/urwritingcompetition for full details on how to enter, plus terms and conditions, sample reflections and tips to get your started. The deadline is midnight on 31 Oct 2020. [Email Eley](#) for more information.



Prisons Week - 11 to 17 October

For more than forty years, Prisons Week has prepared prayer literature to enable the Christian community to pray for the needs of all those affected by prisons. Find more information and prayer resources at prisonswEEK.org

Neighbour Sunday - Sunday 18 October

Neighbour Sunday is a partnership between the [Neighbourhood Prayer Network](#) (a CTE Body in Association) and [Faith in Later Life](#). It took place for the first time in 2019.

A toolkit to help local churches and individuals to build community and pray for their neighbours is being developed. All the downloadable resources will be free and available from Friday 19 September.

Day of Prayer for the Media – Sunday 1 November

[Christians in Media](#) are encouraging church leaders to set aside time in their meeting on the 1 November to pray for your local, regional, national and social media: to pray for those in your congregation who work in, and with, media.

[*Get inspiration from video prayers from their guest contributors*](#)

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