

Churches Together in South London - media release

Senior church leaders gather in South London

Tuesday 23 January 2018

Senior church leaders gathered to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at Southwark Cathedral.



left-right:

Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark, Most Rev Paul Hendricks
London Baptist Association Team Leader, Rev Phil Barnard
Greek Orthodox, Very Rev Archimandrite Christodoulos Persopoulos of St. Mary's Cathedral, Camberwell
Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, Archbishop Angaelos
Churches Together in South London, Claire Crowley
Methodist London District Chair, Rev Dr Jongikaya Zihle
Power of the Living Word Ministries International, Rt Rev Dr Donnett Thomas
Apostolic Pastoral Congress, Deputy-Director & Greater London Regional Bishop, Rt Rev Moses Owusu-Sekyere
London Quakers, Fred Ashmore
Anglican Bishop of Southwark, Most Rev Christopher Chessun
Power of the Living Word Ministries International, Bishop's Chaplain, Rev Alison Trethewey
Newer Free Churches, Roger and Faith Forster of Ichthus Christian Fellowship
United Reformed Church Moderator, Southern Synod, Rev Nicola Furley-Smith

Meeting together at the invitation of Churches Together in South London (CTSL), these leaders witness to the friendship and shared purposes of South London's churches. Roger and Faith Forster offered a reflection at the invitation of Reverend Michaela Youngson, Chair of CTSL, and spoke about building bridges not walls, inspired by Pope Francis. Drawing on the theme of liberation for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Roger and Faith reflected on Exodus 15 and Ephesians 2, reading Luci Shaw's poem "Step on it" that finishes:

"You built
one Bridge to us
Solid enough, long
enough, strong enough
to stand all tides for all time,
linking
the unlinkable."

Bishop Christopher invited the leaders to share plans for 2018 and many common areas emerged, including CTSL's upcoming Forum on 22 March at Livability in North Greenwich, which will take forward initiatives to tackle knife crime in the capital. It is a powerful witness to fellowship between denominations to see this large group of Christian leaders joining together to pray, reflect, discuss and eat together at a time when unity and partnership is crucial for our city and world.



Photo of South London by Bill Green www.bill-green.co.uk

Churches Together in South London (CTSL) represents over 50 local ecumenical networks across 10 London boroughs south of the River Thames, and is one of 49 intermediary bodies around the country for Churches Together in England. You can find your nearest local network on www.ctslondon.org.uk.

To follow more stories of ecumenical work and witness by the churches in London, including projects tackling climate change, the refugee response, and homelessness, follow CTSL on facebook at www.facebook.com/CTSouthLondon and on twitter @[CTSouthLondon](https://twitter.com/CTSouthLondon).

Twitter hashtags:

#wpcuwall #wpcu2018

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For images and further information, contact Claire Crowley at CTSL on claire@ctslondon.org.uk or 07517 117 982, or see <https://www.facebook.com/CTSouthLondon> <https://twitter.com/CTSouthLondon>

You may like to contact others present in the photograph for further details on the reflection and occasion.

Quotes

The call to unity cannot be headed without accepting the need to break down barriers. Ecumenical leaders within CTSL acknowledged, through gathering together in this week of Prayer for Christian Unity; that God is ministering unity to us all. It was an affirming time of prayer and reflection where together, we sought to yield to this call for unity. A coming together that sought to build anew, together, to being a true dwelling of God in each other, for each other and for all who recognise their need for God's comforting peace and presence.

Rev Dr Jongikaya Zihle

Chair, London Methodist District

Particularly, encouraged by the thought that, regardless of our different church traditions, affiliations and doctrinal emphasis, we're still "fitted together" and "growing together".

Bishop Moses Owusu-Sekyere

Deputy-Director & Greater London Regional Bishop, Apostolic Pastoral Congress

Running through my head for a good deal of the Reflection was Quaker Advice 6: 'Do you work gladly with other religious groups in the pursuit of common goals? While remaining faithful to Quaker insights, try to enter imaginatively into the life and witness of other communities of faith, creating together the bonds of friendship'. And then part of Advice 12: 'Receive the vocal ministry of others in a tender and creative spirit. Reach for the meaning deep within it, recognising that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be so for others'. Quaker worship is different in form, but the same spirit moves us. I felt it strongly yesterday.

Fred Ashmore

Clerk, London Quakers