

Reflection of the Month:

'I am with you always' - sharing in God's mission together at Forum 2018



Ruth Gee writes:

I am writing this Reflection as the Moderator of the CTE Forum which will be meeting in Swanwick from September 17-19th 2018. As a Methodist Minister, I live and work in the north east of England and am a passionate ecumenist believing that we are called to realise the gift of unity already given us in Christ. In that light I want to reflect on the Forum opportunity later in the year.

Knowing that the risen Christ is with me and calls me to follow him is at the heart of my life as a Christian. It is a conviction shared with all my brothers and sisters in Christ: a conviction that knows no denominational boundaries. It is in that light that we shall come together later in the year to consider the theme 'I am with you always' and as we shall meet to share what we are learning about God's mission together.

Throughout England, in our local communities Christians are together in God's mission, we are responding to local need. We are engaging with community leaders, working with them, and challenging them. We are engaging with MPs and government, often asking the difficult questions. As churches working together, we are supporting asylum seekers and refugees. We are feeding the hungry and working to alleviate food poverty. We are together in our cities, towns, villages and hamlets. We are together as we develop links with the work of Christians and others across the world. We are together in mission and we know that the risen Christ is with us always; always loving, always calling, always challenging and always offering new life and new hope. The CTE Forum is an opportunity for us to gather in the presence of Christ, to share in worship and fellowship, to be challenged and affirmed in our rich diversity and to learn from one another as we are open to give and receive gifts and to the movement of the Holy Spirit among us in our various ministries.

We will have the opportunity to join workshops on a wide variety of themes, for example: the presence of Christ in communities, in music, in conflict, in faith sharing, in the movement of peoples and in human diversity. We will hear from the Presidents of CTE and engage in conversation with them. We will study scripture, led by people from different traditions in conversation with one another. We will meet in small groups for prayer and conversation. We will laugh together, we will pray together, and we will undoubtedly challenge and support one another. We will be together with one another and together in Christ who is with us always.

It is difficult to describe how exciting it is to be with representatives from at least 45 different Christian churches and traditions. The CTE Forum is a place where this happens and is a place where each one of us can grow in understanding God. I am so aware that my knowledge of God can only ever be a fraction of the reality of the God whose ways are not my ways and whose thoughts are not my thoughts. I am so aware that my understanding of scripture is conditioned by my context and my upbringing. When I have the opportunity of praying, talking and worshipping with Christians from such a wide variety of contexts I am enriched and my understanding grows. It isn't always easy because I am often asked to consider different points of view, to listen carefully to the experience of others and this often changes me but it is change that brings me closer to God.

Please make sure that you encourage representatives to attend and we would especially encourage you to send young people to join with us in this wonderful diverse gathering of Churches Together in England. Pray too, for the Forum and the team as we prepare for this large conference, that we shall all appreciate the other as we are 'together in God's mission', exploring the theme, 'I am with you always'. Thank you.

Revd Ruth M Gee is Chair of the Darlington District of the Methodist Church.

Information re Forum 2018: www.cte.org.uk/forum2018

A guide to understanding A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission

Last year an 'exciting, significant, practical, ecumenical document' came to fruition. *A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission* was published after extensive consultation. This major piece of work marks a change in the understanding of unity work at local level.

The document was approved by Churches Together in England's [Enabling Group](#) which asked for further work to be done. The initial stage of this work has now been completed and *A guide to understanding 'A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission'* has now been published.

The guide stresses that *A New Framework* is a process, a shift in thinking. It liberates possibilities, allowing creativity, self-expression and joyful fulfilment. Properly understood, it is a springboard for innovation and creativity, beginning with what is needed in a situation and encouraging light-touch, yet prudent and appropriate structures.

The *Guide to Understanding* makes explicit what has often been implicit, recognising the missional imperative of unity work at local level: "...deeply rooted in Christian tradition is the idea that we are judged by our fruits: 'If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.' Mission is the fruit of unity and unity the fruit of mission."



- [Read more about A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission](#) and download [the full text](#).
- Download [A guide to understanding 'A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission'](#)
- Download the [Explanatory Note](#)

CTE Admin Assistant (Part-Time)



Churches Together in England (CTE) are seeking to recruit a part-time Administration Assistant to support the team and assist with the smooth running of the office in London WC1H.

Salary: £10.50 per hour

Hours: 2 days per week (10.00am – 5.00pm)

Contract: Funding available until 31 Dec 2018 with an inbuilt financial review

Main responsibilities include:

- General admin duties
- Organising conferences
- Updating CTE website
- Updating CTE database

The successful candidate will have:

- Good verbal and written skills
- Competent IT skills, particularly MS Word and Excel
- Good organisational skills with an eye for detail
- Readiness to develop skills

If you wish to apply for the role of Administration Assistant, information can be viewed as follows;

[Guidance for applicants \(including application process\)](#)

[Copy of the advert](#)

[Role description](#)

[Person specification](#)

[Equality and Diversity monitoring form*](#)

[Application form*](#)

** Please note, you will need to save these forms and click on the button to allow editing.*

Applications are invited from individuals who can sympathise with the aims and ethos of Churches Together in England and who have a good standard of written and spoken English. For any further details please contact Lorraine Shannon on 0207 529 8131 or email: lorraine.shannon@cte.org.uk

Closing date: 12 noon on Friday 23rd March 2018

Interview date: Thursday 12th April 2018

Visiting WCC, the Archbishop of Canterbury's lecture on 'ecumenism of action'

From the WCC website:

During a visit to the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva on 16 February, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby spoke on an "ecumenism of action" as he also congratulated the WCC on its 70th anniversary.

"Bi- and multi-lateral theological dialogue over the course of the twentieth century bore much fruit but at times it could be appear to be akin to diplomatic renegotiation of borders: the barriers to communion still exist but not where we thought they did," said Welby. "The underlying problem with these discussions, however, is that they are what I would call negotiation of the frontiers." The negotiation of the ways in which frontiers are set down, and in which they are crossed, is one of the most difficult aspects of international relations at times of tension, he continued.

"Frontiers imply difference," he explained. "They say that on one side of the frontier there is the 'other'." Ecumenism that looks as though it is about the negotiation of frontiers is an ecumenism that is based on theological foundations of sand, he said. "Indeed, one might argue that it is not based on foundations at all," he said. "Negotiated frontiers start with barriers." One of the great gifts of the ecumenical movement is that it has allowed Christians from different denominations, who might once have kept separate from one another, to get to know one another, Welby reflected.

"There were times before, say, the 1960s, when people of one denomination might never have entered the church building of another," he said. "In England today, and I am sure it is similar in other parts of the world, many congregations are made up of people who started their Christian life in other denominations." The result of this is that traditions, ideas and worship styles from one church are brought into the other, he noted. "The wind of the spirit which has brought such movements into reality, is blowing ever more powerfully," he said. "In many places it is becoming a hurricane."

An ecumenism of action says that faced with evil, we come together in love and show that we are one. "There is a great danger that the ecumenism of action turns into the ecumenism of being useful," he cautioned. "We can easily fall into the trap of believing that if we cannot agree, then we can at least do something together that is nice and useful." But this is massively to understate and to misrepresent the nature of the ecumenism of action, he said. "The world is crying out in need," he said. "We can become too pragmatic about this, forgetting its theological foundations."

The ecumenism of action is also based in this reality that need does not wait for theological agreement, but for the compassion of Christ, he added. "When non-believers meet missionaries who do not agree among themselves, even though they all appeal to Christ, will they be in a position to receive the true message?" he asked. "It is not the case that an ecumenism of action leaves theology outside the room."



One of the genius characteristics of the WCC was, from very early on, to hold together the theological, diaconal and evangelistic ecumenical movements, Welby concluded. "Theological dialogue and discussion brings people closer together and sets up the framework for joint action," he said. "Joint action brings people closer together, and sets up the relationship that enables theological dialogue and discussion."

[Video from the lecture of Archbishop Justin Welby on YouTube.](#)
[Read the notes from the website of the Archbishop of Canterbury](#)

Photo credit: Peter Williams/WCC

Germinate! 2018 conference for rural mission and ministry.

Through key note speakers, case studies and workshops, the 2018 Germinate Conference will explore what it means for rural Christians to do more than belong to their churches and communities. Both inspiring and practical, the day will bring together individuals, churches, agencies and networks involved in rural mission and ministry.



Saturday 13 October 2018: 9.30am-4pm

The Welcome Centre, 47 Parkside, Coventry, CV1 2HG

Keynote speakers

The Rt Revd Dr David Walker, Bishop of Manchester. Bishop David is the President of the Rural Theology Association, Bishop of Manchester and the author of *God's Belongers: How people engage with God today and how the church can help*.

Revd Claire Maxim, CEO, Germinate. Claire is Germinate's new CEO. Formally a rural rector, with a business and engineering background, she brings a wealth and breadth of experience of what it means to belong in and to a variety of contexts.

Workshops

- Open Welcome: using our buildings for mission (Elizabeth Clark)
- What do our buildings say about us? How can we ensure that our church buildings are open and how can we use them to tell the story of faith?
- Rural Fresh Expressions: beginning with listening (Sally Gaze, Simon Mattholie, Pete Atkins)
- How might we rediscover the value of mission as a dialogue, listening to both culture and God, in order to understand what is the good news for our rural communities? In this session Sally Gaze and others share examples of listening in mission to draw some key point of learning to help us missionally engage in our local rural context.
- Making the most of Rural Mission Sunday (Louise Davis) Rural Mission Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate the rural church and encourage opportunities to share faith. This workshop will share both stories and practical tips on how to do it well.

- Effective Church Communications (Jo Swinney, CPO)
- How to communicate successfully with your rural community. Come and explore how to get your message across to the people you want to hear it.
- Shared Ministry: the Cumbria story (Richard Teal, Chair of Cumbria Methodist District)
- How can we really work together and share ordained ministry across denominations? Come and hear about the experiences of the Methodist Church, Church of England and the United Reformed Church in Cumbria and how they to work ecumenically.
- Discerning Gifts: facilitating shared ministry (Matthew Reed, Appreciating Church)
- How can we help members of our congregations to discern their gifts? A team from Appreciating Church will help us to look at discerning and nurturing gifts across congregations.
- Discipleship in Messy Church (Messy Church Team)
- Discover more about building a Christ-centred community with a focus on forming new disciples, deepening discipleship and how Holy Communion can form part of Messy Church.

[Book online by going to our Eventbrite page.](#)

Early bird special offer: £50 until 30 June. £60 until 20 Sep. Full price £70.

For information about any aspect of the Germinate Conference, contact the Germinate office by email (info@germinate.net) or phone (024 7685 3060).

More information about Germinate

2018: <http://germinate.net/training/germinateconference/germinate-conference-2018/>

Information from the previous Germinate

conference: <http://germinate.net/training/germinateconference/>

CofE General Synod welcomes move towards communion with the Methodist Church



From the Church of England website 09/02/2018:

The General Synod has given its welcome to a report containing proposals which could bring the Church of England and the Methodist Church in Great Britain into communion with each other. Members backed a motion welcoming a joint report published last year, which sets out proposals on how clergy from each church could become eligible to serve in the other.

The report, [*Mission and Ministry in Covenant*](#), which was co-written by the two churches' faith and order bodies, also sets out how the Methodist Church could come to have bishops in the historic episcopate. The motion acknowledges that there is further work to do to clarify a number of areas, including how the proposals would be worked out in practice. It also calls on the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission to

update Synod at its next group of sessions in July of this year on this work. But an amendment to the motion speaks of “confident hope” that outstanding issues can be resolved quickly.

Speaking during the debate the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: “I want to support this motion very strongly indeed. “It seems to me that in voting for it we respond to the word of God in the scriptures where there is a clear command to unity in diversity and in responding to this paper positively we respond to the Spirit who is already working in both of our Churches bringing us together.”

Opening the debate, the Bishop of Coventry, The Rt Revd Christopher Cocksworth, Chair of the Church of England's *Faith and Order Commission*, said the proposals would be a step towards “healing a tragic division in the Church of England” when the two churches separated almost 200 years ago. He said: “These proposals concern reconciliation between churches. “The reception of the historic episcopate by the Methodist Church and the Church of England’s declaration – no, celebration, eucharistic celebration – of being ‘in communion’ with the Methodist Church, [would] re-order our relationship and takes us a vital step towards full visible unity.”

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, told Synod: “I believe that the time has come for our two church traditions (Methodism and Anglicanism) to consult the people of God – the Laos, the Laity. “A mute button must be switched off for the sake of the Kingdom of God and the urgent need to re-connect our two Church traditions with England. All has to do with God’s Mission.”

The report builds on the theological convergence established by '[An Anglican-Methodist Covenant](#)', signed in 2003, and the subsequent work of the Covenant's Joint Implementation Commission. In 2014 the General Synod of the Church of England and the Methodist Conference mandated the faith and order bodies to bring forward proposals that would enable the interchangeability of ordained ministries in the two churches.

Overall the voting was as follows:
Bishops: 35 for with two against and no abstentions
Clergy: 131 for, with 23 against and 13 abstentions
Laity: 124 for, with 34 against and 11 abstentions

[Link to the CofE website article](#)

And from the Methodist Church website News item for 9/2/18:

Church of England and Methodist Church to continue exploring closer communion

Following debate at the General Synod, the Church of England’s Faith and Order Commission will now undertake further refinement and clarification on proposals that would see the Church of England and the Methodist Church enter into a relationship of communion and enable an interchange of their presbyteral ministries.

Building on the theological convergence encapsulated in *An Anglican-Methodist Covenant*, signed in 2003, and the work of the Covenant's Joint Implementation

Commission from 2003-2014, acceptance of the proposals would mark a further step on the journey of reconciliation between the two Churches.

After the debate, the Revd Gareth J Powell, Secretary of the Methodist Conference, said: "We are very grateful to the Church of England for this opportunity to address the General Synod and discuss the progress we are making together on the path towards reconciliation and the ordering of our existing ministries in a way that reflects the needs and wishes of both Churches.

"We recognise that these are matters of significance to all within our Churches. As we move forward, we will continue to discern the will of God and deepen our understanding of each other through ongoing dialogue."

The proposals are already available for discussion in both Churches. In light of the further work, and to enable time for proper reflection, it is unlikely that the proposals will be brought to the Methodist Conference for discussion before 2019.

[Link to the Methodist Church website article.](#)

Programme Executive for Spiritual Life & Faith and Order

The WCC is looking for its Programme Executive for Spiritual Life and Faith and Order at 100% who will be responsible for initiating and facilitating reflection and practice on spirituality and common prayer in the WCC fellowship within the present context of new challenges and recent developments in world Christianity and to participate in the study programme of the Commission on Faith and Order with its emphasis on theological reflection and dialogue in the service of the churches' movement towards unity in faith, life and witness.

Further information and the application form can be found at: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/job-openings>



Director of Commission on World Mission & Evangelism

The WCC is looking for its Director of Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, to lead, inspire and direct the work of Mission and Evangelism, sustaining and developing close relationship with CWME and promoting programmatic work conducted within the framework of the World Council of Churches towards the visible unity of church.

Full details including the Application Form can be found at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/job-openings>



'Come Holy Spirit' Ryedale Christian Council conference 14th April



The Ryedale Christian Council was established in 1963 and was one of the earliest 'Churches Together' in the country. The member churches are Roman Catholic, Quakers (The Friends), Methodist and Anglican; we cover a small area of North Yorkshire which embraces the market towns of Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside and the surrounding villages. We seek to promote unity amongst these different traditions.

We organise several different events throughout the year- a Songs of Praise during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; information about Lent Courses, and alternate years we organise Conferences based at Ampleforth Abbey. The theme of the Conferences vary between 'Christian understanding of Muslim Communities'; 'Developing the Faith and Spirituality of young people', and 'Caring in the community - Dementia, Mental Health issues; End of Life Care; Stress'. We host Quiet Days, and provide a Refreshment Tent at our local Show and many other ecumenical activities.

This year we are organising a Conference called 'Come Holy Spirit - a day of discovery and renewal' on Sat. 14th April. Bishop Graham Cray is our keynote speaker, previously Archbishops' Missioner and involved with the Renewal Movement. He succeeded David Watson as Vicar of St Michael le Belfrey, in York. Also contributing to the day are Gill Pennington, a Quaker; Fr. Richard ffield of Ampleforth Abbey and Sister Helen from the Order of the Holy Paraclete in Whitby.

[Download flyer PDF](#)

Thy Kingdom Come 2018

Thy Kingdom Come is a prayer initiative led by the Church of England for evangelisation. It will be held between Ascension and Pentecost, which is Thursday 10th May to Sunday 20th May 2018.



2018 is the third year in which it has been held and it continues to grow, especially in its ecumenical reach of different churches and denominations involved. In particular both the Methodist and Roman Catholic churches have a more formal part to play with some of their own dedicated resources and videos being produced for their national networks. Many other [member churches](#) of Churches Together in England have a national 'Champion' who has been appointed to facilitate communication, advice, resources and networking within their denomination along the lines of the advice from the Archbishop of Canterbury 'pray in your own way'.

The theme and logo *Thy Kingdom Come* is now established in many parts of the world as world networks of churches and denominations in nearly 60 countries are praying at the same time, using the Lord's Prayer with the intention of evangelisation. Resources

are being produced in many different languages.

A key theme for individual Christians who [#pledgetoprayer \(Twitter thread\)](#) is 'Pray for Five'. Christians are praying for five people they know that at least one might become a follower of Jesus. *Thy Kingdom Come* is not prescriptive as to how that might happen and individual churches and groups of churches are encouraged to pray for their own ways of outreach.

Many of the member churches of Churches Together in England have a recognised national 'Champion' who can be a source of information and encouragement. Ask your national church office for the contact or [email](#) Jim Currin at CTE.

Link to the website and resources: <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>

Latest news

[#Pledge to Pray: a counter to encourage commitment](#)

[Taking part as churches, individuals and families](#)

[Roman Catholic link and resources](#)

[Methodist link and resources](#)

[Launch event update and new launch video Jan 2018](#)

JPIT 2018 Conference 'Brave New World?'



What does it mean to be a Christian in the midst of our changing world? How do we live prophetically in a time of political turbulence, social upheaval and climate change?

'Brave New World? Faithful living in a time of change', is an opportunity to discuss challenges, fears and hopes for the future of our communities, nations and world with keynote speakers Stella Creasy MP and Peter Osborne, columnist at the Daily Mail. The day will also include a plenary session entitled 'Subversive Wisdom in a Brave New World' from Sally Foster-Fulton, Head of Christian Aid Scotland, and a new poem from Lucy Berry which will be written throughout the day.

There will be a choice of ten workshops covering the following topics:

- Overcoming Violence
- Conversation Welcome
- Poverty Truth Commissions: experts by experience
- Faith, finance and the climate: how do we invest in a more sustainable future?
- Universal Credit: tackling today's poverty?
- A Brave New World for the young?
- Kingdom before Tribe
- Challenging Hate
- Creating a culture of welcome: church-led responses to migration and refugees
- Worship and Justice (or 'Never pray in a room without windows')

A light lunch and refreshments throughout the day will be provided.

This is a FREE event. However, we estimate that the cost of lunch and refreshments for one person is £10. If you can contribute towards this, or even cover someone else's cost too, there will be an opportunity to donate on the day.

17 March 2018, 10am – 4pm

Methodist Central Hall, Manchester



[Book your ticket here to avoid disappointment](#)

[Read Madalena's blog on why we need to discuss a 'Brave New World'](#)

[Information about the event and workshops on the JPIT website](#)

National New Housing Hub and Conference

Baptist ministers Ali Boulton and Penny Marsh write:

Welcome to the National New Housing Hub!

We have been involved in pioneering in new housing areas for some time and are very aware of the unique opportunities and challenges that this presents and have now set up this national New Housing Hub. It is a network that has been set up in partnership with Fresh Expressions, Churches Together in England and Baptists Together. Our vision is that this hub will connect people in new housing contexts in order to share good practice, ideas, resources, information, support and encouragement.



What this might look like...

- A National Gathering - 28th April 2018, Venue TBC
- Training Opportunities in partnership with others
- Updates on resources, events and relevant national policy
- The emergence of regional hubs

If you have other ideas, please let us know.

National New Housing Hub Conference

28th April 2018, 10am - 4pm

Finchampstead Baptist Church Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead, Berkshire, RG40 4ES

In these times of housing crisis in which building new homes has been defined as a government priority, many cities, towns and villages are experiencing growth through new housing. Our challenge as Christians is how we respond to these new communities with welcome and blessing. The New Housing Hub is a network that has been established to inspire, resource and connect pioneers, churches and individual

Christians across the country and from all church traditions to respond to this challenge and engage with these new communities. This conference is an opportunity to gather together to learn from and with one another, to be resourced and to build relationships, particularly with those from similar contexts and geographic areas, so that together we can make a difference and see God's kingdom come in new communities across our nation.

[More information and to book, please register here](#)

Extra items ... (not on the CTE website)

World Council of Churches praying for the British Isles

The WCC prayer diary for 4th-10th March is for all the nations of the British Isles. Prayer points, suggested prayers, a song and some reflections are collated in the prayer diary link: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/prayer-cycle/ir-uk>

Churches Together in South London Triennial Forum

The triennial CTSL Forum will be held on the theme of 'Community Well-being Together' with CTSL Chair Rev Michaela Youngson, Methodist London Chair of District, and CTSL Vice Chair Bishop Karowei Dorgu, Anglican Bishop of Woolwich on Thursday 22nd March 10.30-3pm at Livability, 6 Mitre Passage, London SE10 0ER nearest tube North Greenwich. <http://www.ctslondon.org.uk/events.htm>

Pastor Agu speaks about prayer, unity and revival

From the mailing of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland we read: Closer relations between UK Church leaders is one sign of the Church revival to come said Pastor Agu Irukwu, Pentecostal President of Churches Together in England (CTE), speaking at the Vineyard Churches National Leaders' Conference. Comparing the current situation to 1 Kings 18:41 (onwards) where Elijah heard the sound of heavy rain and sent his servant seven times to look for a cloud, Pastor Agu said 'people are looking in the wrong places, so they don't see the cloud'. Among other signs, Pastor Agu said he has met and prayed with the leaders of the Orthodox churches as well as the Archbishop of Canterbury, and that some of his church leaders hold regular meetings with Church leaders of other denominations once a month to pray for their community and their city. Read the CTBI piece and watch the video: [link here](#)

National Weekend of Invitation

Learning from hundreds of training workshops and commended by a number of national church leaders, the team that were behind 'Back to Church Sunday' have now developed a new resource focused on a National Weekend of Invitation 15th-17th June 2018. A website explaining the initiative and providing resources was launched at an

event with Methodist, Church of England, Baptist, Vineyard and other church leaders spoke. More information is at: <http://weekendofinvitation.com/>.

And a reminder to book ..

If you are planning to attend the National Theological Conference: A Pentecostal and Charismatic Response to the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, detailed in the February mailing.

[Link for the web page with more information about the conference](#)
[Please register your attendance now via Eventbrite](#)

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