



# CT-eNews

January 2020

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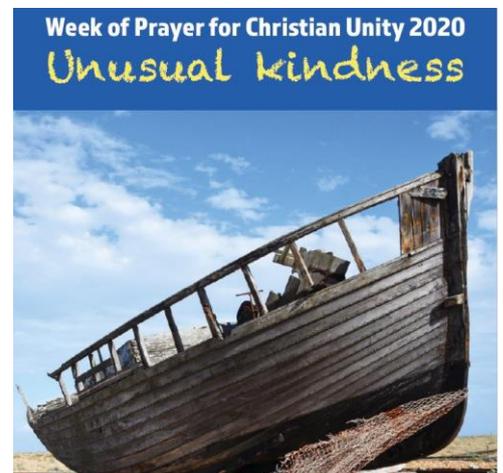
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## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2020

Churches Together groups across the UK are preparing for the Week Prayer for Christian Unity, which begins this Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> and runs until 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

Do remember to use the hashtag [#wpcuwall](#) when tweeting about your events – this means that your tweet will appear on the unity wall at [weekofprayer.org](http://weekofprayer.org)

The booklet and further resources are now available to download from CTBI at [www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer)



## Reflection of the Month: Together really is the better way

*Revd Dr Paul Goodliff, General Secretary of Churches Together in England, shares our Reflection of the Month for January 2020...*



In the week before Christmas a large multi-national corporation, Whirlpool, gave advice to customers who had bought certain washing machines, asking them to either not use some of their models, or run them on a 20 degree cycle, for fear of them catching fire. This came hard on the heels of an earlier recall of tumble dryers from the same company, and accusations of all manner of delays in repairs, and failures in even acknowledging there was a problem.

Delivery drivers, who bring us all those parcels containing items we order from the giants of the online world, complain that they have so many to deliver that they have no time for a break to eat during their gruelling day-long shifts. How the tech-giants handle our personal data has been a cause of litigation, and the self-inflicted disaster that Volkswagen had over the so-called 'Diesel-gate' emissions tampering has yet to fully play out.

It would seem big is not always better.

We live in a globalised world, with big multinationals often having more power than many national governments can effectively contain, and often only the biggest blocs – the USA or the EU for instance – being able to hold them to account.

All of which reminds me that at the heart of humankind's rebellion against its creator is the issue of power and self-determination. Instead of living in humble dependency upon the goodness of God, we want to determine our own lives, and this deep desire 'to do it my way' plays out at every level of human society.

It will come as no surprise to Christians that every aspect of human endeavour is touched by this longing for self-determination, including the desire for political sovereignty visibly widespread around the world. There are even echoes of this within our United Kingdom, as the Scottish National Party seeks a mandate for another referendum on independence.

Meanwhile, the United States is withdrawing from its multilateral commitments to the post-war institutions which sought to bring the nations of the world together – at least in spirit, if not yet in actuality. Populism and nationalism seem to be on the rise as the lived experience of global conflict fades into history rather than memory, and the reality of globalism strikes home.

As an ecumenical, I instinctively want to see ever greater collaboration between churches and a richer sharing of vision and mission, as we face huge challenges in bringing the good news of the kingdom to our nation. And my instincts are similar as we seek to play our part in arguably the greatest challenge to our existence, global warming (I studied geography as an undergraduate and took a module in climatology, so it has long been a personal fascination of mine).

So, you might sense (rightly) that I am an 'internationalist', with a suspicion of claims to national sovereignty that disregard the impact of the globalised economy, the power of multinational corporations, or the rising influence of China and Russia in the changing world order. I believe that we need one another in the church, but also that we need one another throughout the world.

Whether that collaboration is providing clean water for the poorest of the earth, running food banks together, or campaigning for a more urgent and, yes, costly response to climate change than the most recent round of talks in Madrid (COP25) produced, it is a case of better together for the common good. Taking our lead from our good friends and ecumenical partners [at CTBI](#), we pray for this year's round of [UN climate change talks in Glasgow in November \(COP26\)](#), and urge our newly-elected Prime Minister to pay this close attention as he hosts the event.

With the biggest polluters, including the US, China, India and Brazil, still not signed up to tougher global targets on carbon emissions, the challenge is immense. But it remains the case that humanity is 'better together' than apart.

And that brings us back to power and self-determination – the reality of sinfulness, and the need to use the power we have in a godly way, which means power for the other, for their interest before mine.

In this way, both ecumenism and politics are deeply spiritual endeavours, and both have to be real about human sinfulness and the ability of faith to radically challenge claims to power. So, at the start of a new year, can we redouble our commitments to walk together in our pilgrimage of unity, and to seek first the kingdom of God, as Jesus demands? Serving our world and our Lord together really is the better way!

## **Vacancy at CTE: Communications Assistant**

Churches Together in England (CTE) is seeking to appoint a proactive and engaging communications assistant for seven hours per week, on an eight-month fixed term contract.

The role offers the opportunity to be involved in creating digital communications content for CTE's website, Twitter account and e-newsletter, and to play a key role in supporting the delivery of CTE's new website in 2020.

This new role comes during a period of exciting development at CTE, and the successful candidate will report to the Senior Communications and Media Officer.

- Seven hours per week (either two half-days or one full day per week)
- Eight-month fixed term contract
- Home-based, accessible to London
- £12.60 per hour

**An application pack can be downloaded at [cte.org.uk/CommsAssistant](http://cte.org.uk/CommsAssistant)**



The ideal candidate will be an engaging written communicator with strong organisational skills and a positive, proactive attitude. Experience in creating content for websites and/or social media are strongly desirable. The candidate should be a 'self-starter' and confident working remotely, from home.

To arrange an informal conversation about the role, please contact Lucy Olofinjana, Senior Communications and Media Officer, at [website@cte.org.uk](mailto:website@cte.org.uk)

Closing date: 9am on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020

Interview date: Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in Tavistock Square, London

Start date: As soon as possible

*There is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for applicants to be a practising Christian and an active member in good standing of a member church [of CTE](#) or [CTBI](#).*

[Click here for an A4 flyer for this advertisement.](#)

[Visit the job web page at www.cte.org.uk/CommsAssistant](http://www.cte.org.uk/CommsAssistant)

## Young adults meet together monthly to journey in faith

A little over a year ago, a group of young Christian adults began to meet in Liverpool to get to know each other and to celebrate what they have in common through their Christian faith.



A lively, interesting and very happy journey has taken place over the past year as the group has grown together in mutual understanding and a shared vision, with the Gospel at the centre of everything they do.

The group, called 'Churches Together on Merseyside 18+' is made up of members from the Salvation Army, Methodist, Anglican, Pentecostal and Catholic Churches – young men and women from different walks of life, all over the age of eighteen.

On reflection, it is easy to see how the Holy Spirit has been at work, as the young people have been so open to sharing their gifts and talents, in a spirit of collaboration.

Whilst acknowledging the difference in denominational traditions, a deep respect and appreciation of and for each other has developed, and these young people are on a mission to continue to spread the good news.

Since the initial meeting in November 2018, they have worked together to establish a common vision through shared leadership. Members have taken turns in chairing meetings and offer individual perspectives to enlighten each other.

For example, in April 2019, P J and Chloe (Anglican and Methodist) led the group in determining its purpose, and set out their hopes and dreams for the way forward.

Next time, in the month of May, Peter led the group through the Catholic Synod 2020 questions, which sparked a lively exchange of views and ideas. Following this, two members (Sam and Chloe) were pleased to participate in the Catholic Synod meetings, representing the Anglican and Methodist Churches. They were delighted to observe how their input was received and welcomed by Synod 2020 members.

Pentecost Celebrations on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2019 became a particular highlight for the group. They actively took part in the Pilgrimage of Hope (which used to be the 'Two Cathedrals Service' and was inspired by the Pope's visit to the city in 1982). This Pentecost event celebrates the unity between Christians, and is also symbolic of the unity which exists amongst Christians in our city and region. Group members were honoured to have been asked to proclaim some of the readings during the service, and the bonds within the group were strengthened that day.



As the year moved on, relationships have deepened and lots of insights, food, and laughter have been shared along the way.

A need for prayer also emerged, and when it was Liam Mc's turn to chair, he gave a brief talk on Ignatian Spirituality followed by guided prayer in the two main Ignatian forms – the examen, and imaginative contemplation of the Gospel. This was well received by all and deepened the group's sense of spirituality.

During the Summer, the group enjoyed a relaxing walk along the dockside. A friendly chat and refreshments along the way made it a happy social occasion.

More recently, the group decided to dedicate some time to visiting the various denominations, in order to appreciate their work and traditions more fully. In October 2019, the Catholic Chaplaincy of John Moores and Liverpool University warmly welcomed the group at St.Philip Neri Church, led by Liam Mahan and Fr.Neil Ritchie. Fr.Neil traced the history of this beautiful church and explained the symbolism of its sacred spaces. He also demonstrated the use of incense at the request of the other denominations, as they found it fascinating and wanted to know more. November brought us to Childwall Valley Salvation Army, where Bek and friends offered to share their home for the evening, and explained how they live in community to facilitate their Christian outreach. And in December we enjoyed a bring and share Advent social at Quaker House.

The journey continues... a seed has been sown, and with God's grace the group will flourish and produce rich fruit. The young people are keen to welcome others to share in and become part of the journey, and youth workers are also welcome. We are grateful to Taras who has supported us along the way.

If you know any Christians aged between 18 to 30 in the Liverpool area who may be interested, please encourage them to [contact Veronica](#) or [visit our Facebook page](#).

*Veronica McDonnell & Elisabeth Hachmoeller, Churches Together in Merseyside.*

*View this story on our website at [www.cte.org.uk/CTMR18](http://www.cte.org.uk/CTMR18)*

## Melksham churches host annual pilgrimage for local schools



Romans 8:28 says: 'And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose'. As Melksham Family of Churches, we aim to work together as much as possible, and our annual Year 5 Pilgrimage for schools is a wonderful example of this unity.

The idea for the school Pilgrimage came from a former Rector of the Anglican team, who had organised the event in his previous ministry role. The primary aim of the Pilgrimage is to support children in experiencing and understanding the different church traditions and ways of worship. Melksham Family of Churches, in the county of Wiltshire, has been running the Pilgrimage for the past three years, welcoming two schools in 2017 and 2018, and three schools in 2019. The schools involved in the Pilgrimage are not all Church schools, meaning that we are connecting with secular schools on a different faith-based level, which is great!

All schools involved in the Pilgrimage are within walking distance of the four/five churches involved, and a journey plan is issued to the schools in advance. Schools are asked before the Pilgrimage about the school curriculum, which enables us to cover specifics during the day.

Children receive a checklist that includes items such as the cross and crucifix, the font, vestments, altar, lectern and Stations of the Cross. Children and staff can look at the checklist together and ask questions throughout the Pilgrimage.

As churches, we aim to ask the children questions about the physical building, but also how they feel when they enter the church. Have they been in a church before? What do they think the church is used for?

School staff receive information about the individual churches in advance, and we often arrange a walk around the town beforehand, showing the journey route to staff who are unfamiliar with the area.

Year 5 classes are split into smaller groups for the journey, and often split into groups again when spending time in the individual churches (usually 45 minutes in each church). We aim to make the Pilgrimage as engaging as possible and our churches offer children the opportunity to not only explore the church, but also engage in different activities, such as: trying on the vestments, ringing the bells, playing the organ and taking part in a worship song. Many of our churches distribute a church newsletter or event flyers during the day, giving families the opportunity to learn more about the church community in Melksham.

Children bring a packed lunch on the trip and a room is provided in one of the churches for lunchtime. We have learnt over the years that it's so important for the children to 'let off steam' during the day, so each church provides a larger space for children to run around (some even provide ball games!).

As churches, we meet to discuss the Pilgrimage before and after the event. This gives us the opportunity to pray, reflect and feedback together. Schools are contacted after the Pilgrimage and we have received some positive feedback:

*"We have been able to apply what the children learnt on their Pilgrimage to their learning across the curriculum this term"*

*"In each of the churches there was a good balance of listening, doing, looking etc"*

*"The year 5's loved hearing about what church is like for children their age and related to this well. They enjoyed the singing!"*

*"The day was really well organised, and it was great to do the walkaround and meet you in advance"*

*"All of the churches had activities for the children to do which was fantastic!"*

The Pilgrimage is a wonderful opportunity to engage with our local schools, but also supports the schools in covering their curriculum and learning objectives. Over the years, a relationship has been developed between the schools and local Church, and opened doors to engage with the schools on other occasions.

We would love to discuss the Pilgrimage with any other churches who are interested, so please don't hesitate to get in touch for more information at [hannahtarring.cfm@outlook.com](mailto:hannahtarring.cfm@outlook.com)

*Hannah Tarring, Children and Families Coordinator for Melksham Team Ministry, and Anne Doyle, Melksham Family of Churches.*

*Read this story on our website at [www.cte.org.uk/schoolpilgrimage](http://www.cte.org.uk/schoolpilgrimage)*

## **Uniting to connect with other faith groups: Across Woking**



*Cross Cultural Ministry in Woking (Across) brings together Christians from churches in the area, focusing on sharing faith across cultures. CTE's Lucy Olofinjana caught up with Rev Phil Simpson to hear more about their work...*

### **How would you describe the work of Across?**

**Across** sees many churches working together to reach out to the community and connect with people of other faiths. Woking has a large Pakistani Muslim population – in fact Woking's Shah Jehan mosque, built in 1889, is the oldest purpose-built mosque in the country.

Our aim is to reach out with Christ's love, building bridges across the community, with a particular focus on sharing faith across cultures.

We emphasise gentle invitation, building relationships with people of other faiths and being respectful and full of grace. Prayer is also central – every month for past 20

years Christians have gathered to pray on a Friday, the Islamic day of prayer, and every couple of months we host a prayer breakfast.

Each Christmas we hold an International Carol Service, bringing together different cultures to share the story of Jesus' birth through readings and songs in multiple languages. At our recent Carol Service, the theme was 'Seeing Angels', and a local Syrian refugee played his oud instrument beautifully, while a member of Woking People of Faith came and brought greetings from the Muslim community.

### **How have people in the community been impacted?**

We've seen many friendships develop, with Imams, shopkeepers, taxi drivers and local mums to name a few.

At Eid we've taken gifts to the local mosques, and members of the mosque have reciprocated at Christmas time. After the first London Bridge attack, we wanted to stand in solidarity with our Muslim neighbours, so we visited the mosque with little cards saying simply 'You are loved'. These were given to the congregation as they left, with women also giving flowers to the women there. They were so encouraged and invited us all to share a biryani meal with them.

We've also run craft activities for women, and mixed groups such as 'Prophet Stories' and the 'Holy Book Club' which bring people together to talk about stories and texts in the Bible, Qu'ran and Jewish Torah.

In the face of growing Islamophobia, fear and terror, we try and stand with our Muslim neighbours, who also fear the terror. We're also engaging with the Refugee Crisis, with Woking committing to welcome 12 families a year over five years – some of our people have been able to help with simple things like English conversation.

### **How are you helping Christians become more confident in sharing their faith?**

We encourage people that faith-sharing and bridge-building go together.

The [Friendship First course](#) used by Mahabba is very popular, helping Christians overcome fear and reach out in love to their Muslim neighbours. People have said it has helped them feel more confident in engaging with people locally. We also invite people from different faith backgrounds to come and share their story.

Prayer is also key in building people's confidence – we have people of all ages who pray with us regularly, and some of our older prayer-warriors are so passionate, finding opportunities to talk and engage with people of different faiths.

### **What are your top tips when it comes to sharing the gospel with people from different faith backgrounds?**

It sounds so simple, but the most important thing is simply greeting people and smiling. It's about intentionally relating with people and overcoming your fear. We often refer to the passage in John 20, where the disciples were locked in fear in the upper room and Jesus came and breathed his Spirit of peace on them. Then they go out to engage with others.

Eating together is also very important; offering and receiving hospitality is a wonderful

way to relate. In [the Mahabba network](#) we talk a lot about "G&T" – grace and truth. It's about a graceful approach, being deeply rooted in our own faith and sharing truth in an uncompromising manner, but also being profoundly open to other people and listening to them.

### **Why is it so important for Christians from different churches to work together?**

The heart of all we do together is unity, and that is a witness in itself. Some say that different denominations are a witness to the disunity of the church, but I think they allow differences to flourish, and we can then come together in unity – not just representing a better image of the Church, but actually doing stuff together to bless our communities.

None of us can do it on our own. Across Woking is not a one-man-band, it's about churches working together for the good of our community and for the glory of God.

*Find out more about Across on their website, [www.AcrossWoking.org.uk](http://www.AcrossWoking.org.uk)*

*View this story on our website: [www.cte.org.uk/AcrossWoking](http://www.cte.org.uk/AcrossWoking)*

## **Anna Chaplaincy celebrates 10 years supporting older people**

The annual Candlemas Carol Service in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Anna Chaplaincy for Older People. After a modest beginning in Alton, Hampshire, the former broadcaster and Licensed Lay Minister Debbie Thrower has seen her vision for the spiritual care of older people catch hold across the country and across the denominations. There are, to date, 100 specially commissioned Anna Chaplains (or people in equivalent roles) and a wide network of Anna Friends.



Named after the faithful widow Anna, who appears with Simeon in Luke's gospel, Anna Chaplaincy is an ecumenical, community-based network that supports older people and their carers, both in person and through advocacy and training. Anna Chaplaincy is a ministry of The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) and is rooted in the mission of the local church.

As Debbie Thrower explains: 'Our vision is to see an Anna Chaplain in every small- and medium-sized community in the country, and for the Anna Chaplain name to become synonymous with spiritual care for older people.'

Debbie's vision for this work arose from personal experience: "As I accompanied both my parents in their old age and saw how much their faith grew despite the many challenges, it led directly to the work I, and other Anna Chaplains, do now: helping to support men and women in the third, and increasingly fourth, age of greater dependency, often among those living with dementia.

“Thanks to BRF, we’ve grown from one Anna Chaplain, me, in Alton in 2014, to a national network more than 100-strong, plus dozens of Anna Friends – volunteers working with them.”

An essential requirement is that each Anna Chaplain is appointed and authorised by, and accountable to, their local church or group of ‘Churches Together’. The work is managed, supervised and always undergirded by prayer.

When Debbie first started work in Alton, Hampshire, one of the first people she talked to was Bob Weighton. Born on 29 March 1908 and now officially Britain’s oldest man, super-centenarian Bob was happy to share his ideas with Debbie and they have become firm friends. He’s delighted to see how her work has grown:

“I’m remarkably pleased and I rejoice that while I’ve been in Alton this idea of Anna Chaplains has sprung up and is flourishing. Before this Alton was an unknown place and now it’s the centre of all this and I’m very chuffed about that.

“The clergy in the town saw that so many people, like me, were retiring to Alton, and moving into care homes, and they thought they should do something to support them, and they appointed Debbie. Someone in the Methodist church suggested she come and talk to me. I gave her a few ideas and we’ve been friends ever since. It all stems from that, much to my astonishment and exceeding gratitude.”

If you or your church would like to know more about BRF’s Anna Chaplaincy for Older People, please go to [annachaplaincy.org.uk](http://annachaplaincy.org.uk) or email [annachaplaincy@brf.org.uk](mailto:annachaplaincy@brf.org.uk)

You can also browse Anna Chaplaincy’s unique resources for older people, from the daily notes *Bible Reflections for Older People*, to books around later life and dementia, on [brfonline.org.uk](http://brfonline.org.uk)

*The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) is a Body in Association of CTE and CTBI.*

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

## Churches working with police to meet local needs

*Police Inspector Marie Reavey serves in the Norfolk Constabulary, and chairs the Christian Police Association (CPA). Here she shares about the exciting opportunities for churches and police to partner together in their communities...*



The concept of churches working together and supporting the police to help reduce demand and make their communities safer isn’t new. Across the country, churches have worked together for many years delivering Street Angels/Street Pastors, making places safer at night by praying for problems that are bubbling, looking out for vulnerable people and even defusing tense situations. This is probably the most well know example of Churches working together for the good of their community, but there are many more; food banks and winter night shelters are just a couple of examples of churches pooling resources to meet a need.

Jesus wants His Church functioning properly to see His Kingdom come in your community. In Ephesians 4:4 we read that there is one body and one Spirit. In Romans 12:4-5 we are reminded that we are one body in Christ, but the many members have different functions. When we work together, each using our strengths (function) to complement each other, we can achieve so much more and His Kingdom will come.

#FaithAndPolice Together launched in April 2018, and in September 2018 I was seconded to work on this national initiative. I've had the opportunity of speaking with and visiting a variety of projects and initiatives across the country who are working to tackle issues of addiction, youth violence, loneliness and homelessness in their communities.

One of these initiatives is Route 2 Freedom, a small charity which has recently been set up in Ipswich, where five churches in the town are working together to help tackle addiction. Although it is in the early stages, they are already making a difference to individuals in the town who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. [A video about Route 2 Freedom's story is available here.](#)

Faith and Police Together look to develop the collaboration between churches and the police further. We are encouraging churches to:

- think more strategically about the issues and problems in their community, by engaging with their local police and statutory agencies to find out what the real needs are, which are often hidden.
- be praying for those issues and asking God to show them what their part is in helping to tackle them, making sure that our valuable resources and time are used in the most effective and productive way. Do you know how to be praying for the problems and needs in your community?

Additionally, I have been encouraging the police and statutory agencies to think differently about their local churches; to see them as potential partners at the partnership table when looking to tackle some of the key issues and problems in their communities.

Our new [Faith Communities Guide to Engaging with Police](#) is full of ideas, project and case studies to help you engage better with your police, or get more involved in tackling addiction, youth violence, loneliness, homelessness and more.

To download the guide and find out more, visit [www.faithandpolicetogether.org.uk](http://www.faithandpolicetogether.org.uk)

To connect with your local Christian Police, visit [www.cpauk.net](http://www.cpauk.net) and become a friend of CPA.

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

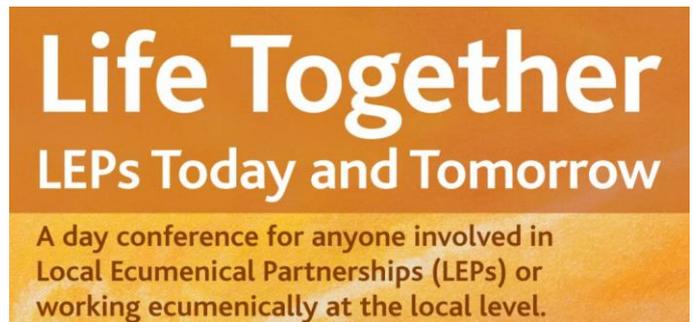
## Day conference on LEPs and local ecumenism

Churches Together in England is collaborating with Westminster College and Wesley House to organise a day conference for those involved in LEPs or working ecumenically at the local level.

It takes place on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June from 10am-4.30pm in Cambridge. The keynote speaker is David Ford, with workshops hosted by National Ecumenical Officers.

[Book your place on the event web page.](#)

[Find more information, including the poster and programme, on our website...](#)

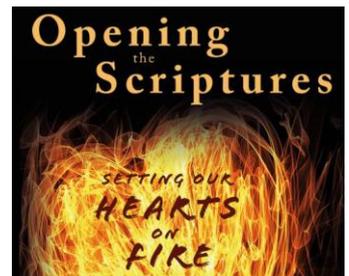


## And finally...

### Lent course from CTBI

This year's Lent course from CTBI is entitled *Opening the scriptures: setting our hearts on fire*. A number of churches in Britain and Ireland are keeping 2020 as 'the Year of the Word' so this course, with its focus on scripture, will be an ideal resource for Lent 2020.

Visit the CTBI website at [www.ctbi.org.uk/lent](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/lent)



### World Day of Prayer: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020

This year's World Day of Prayer takes place on 6th March, with resources available at [www.wwdp.org.uk/2020-free-resources-to-download/](http://www.wwdp.org.uk/2020-free-resources-to-download/)



### National Sports Sunday 2020: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Since 2018, National Sports Sunday has been growing as an opportunity to mobilise Christians to see how they can best serve the community of sport. Put the date in your diary now and visit the website to found out more: [www.nationalsportssunday.org.uk](http://www.nationalsportssunday.org.uk)



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