



NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020

News from West Yorkshire Churches Together

AGM

Our AGM for this year was to take place at St Columbas Church, Headingley, Leeds on 25th March. Regrettably, we had to cancel it and the meeting will be rearranged when possible. In the meantime, our officers are still able to serve a further term under the constitution and will remain in post.

The meeting was intended for members of the WYCT Forum and Denominational Ecumenical Officers but other Churches Together Officers were also invited. The Coordinator's Report is on pages 8 and 9 of this Newsletter.

Receptive Ecumenism

As noted, Greg Ryan's talk was much appreciated at our Autumn meeting. Is the Forum interested in developing the theme further with further talks or discussions? We will raise this at our next meeting.

Callan Slipper, National Ecumenical Officer for the Church of England: quoted from ARCIC (Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission): "Receptive ecumenism is more about self-examination and inner conversion than convincing the other; Anglicans and Roman Catholics can help each other grow in faith, life and witness to Christ if they are open to being transformed by God's grace mediated through each other."



Ecumenical Covenant

AS reported, have located original WYEC documents. The secretary of WYEC had deposited them in the old County Archive- which immediately moved to the brand new Family History centre on Kirkgate, Wakefield. More importantly, I have located various versions of the Ecumenical Covenant, first signed by ten church leaders in the mid-eighties (and including in those days, three Anglican diocesan Bishops and two Methodist Chairs) We hope that we can revive this practice and it will be on the agenda for our next "real" meeting.

Thy Kingdom Come 2020

The Yorkshire West Methodist District has had to cancel the local Pentecost Party on Sunday 31st May 2020.

Thy Kingdom Come is still running- a prayer initiative led by the Church of England for evangelisation from 21st to 31st May.



2020 will be the 5th year in which this has been held and it continues to grow. In particular

both the Methodist and Roman Catholic churches now have a more formal part to play with some of their own dedicated resources and videos being produced for their national networks. The theme and logo Thy Kingdom Come is now established in many parts of the world as world networks of churches and denominations in 85 countries are praying at the same time, using the Lords Prayer with the intention of evangelisation. Resources have been produced in many different languages.

www.thykingdomcome.global



Obituary

We are very sorry to announce that **Eva Pinthus** died on 20th April. She had served for very many years as the Quaker representative on WYEC. A memorial service will be announced when possible



Eva was aged 14 when she arrived in England via a Kindertransport train from Germany in June 1939. A German Jew, she escaped the holocaust in which many of her family died. After the war, working as a Quaker and a pacifist, she often visited East Germany and for 30 years ran projects teaching conflict resolution and working with young people.

The seeds of her faith had been planted in Germany, where the suffering had persuaded her that everyone must have a faith, a belief, to survive. She studied theology at university and then taught in Liverpool, Manchester and Hull before moving to Leeds. She set up the urban education department at Becketts Park college. After taking early retirement in 1981, she devoted herself to voluntary Quaker work and particularly ecumenical relationships. She had represented Quakers on the West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council for many years.

Eva Pinthus has said "As a Christian and a Quaker I believe that there is something of God in everybody. Anything that leads towards dislike and hatred of anyone who is different has to be to the detriment of the country as a whole".



News from CTE



**"We need to keep on praying:
prayer makes a difference"**



WE must keep on Praying say CTE Presidents:

Pastor Agu Irukwu, Chair of RCCG UK and Pentecostal President of Churches Together in England

"Hi, I'm Agu Irukwu, I'm Pentecostal President of Churches Together in England. I really wanted to encourage to keep on praying. Our God in heaven, our Father, He hears our prayers and He has already started answering our prayers and He will answer the prayers that we're praying to Him. That is what the Bible tells us, that we serve a God, we have a Father who hears prayers, our prayers, and who answers our prayers. So please, keep on praying. Be encouraged that our prayers are not in vain. We serve a God who answers prayers. God bless you."

Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London and Orthodox President of Churches Together in England,

"Greetings to all. I'm Archbishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church. The Orthodox President of Church Together in England. And I'm here to thank you for all that you're doing. There are so many opportunities of acts of grace and kindness that we see the churches presenting to the world. But I'm also here to ask you to continue praying for our churches, for our Church, for our nation, for our world, especially as we approach the Feast of Pentecost, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, empowering the Church to change the world. So too, are we here to be that change and that light. God bless you all. As you continue to do what you're doing so wonderfully. Please stay safe, for yourself and for others, out of a sense of Christian love, but also out of a sense of the stewardship over God's wonderful creation. God bless you all and I look forward to seeing you face-to-face once we are all through this time."



Revd Dr Hugh Osgood, The Free Churches Moderator and President of Churches Together in England

"Hello, I'm Hugh Osgood and I'm The Free Churches President of Churches Together in England. I want you to stay safe, I want you to follow the government guidelines but I also want you to pray. On the 22nd of March we as Presidents called for a National Day of Prayer and Action and the take-up was amazing. The hashtag was actually trending second on Twitter that evening. But we need to keep on praying and when we look in Acts chapter 12 we discover that the whole church prayed constantly for Peter's release from prison. And Peter was released and right now we need to be praying constantly to see an end to the Coronavirus pandemic. For wisdom for our politicians and for God's hand on people's lives. Let's keep praying and be assured prayer does make a difference."

Archbishop Justin Welby, The Archbishop of Canterbury and President of Churches Together in England

"Of course we pray, or at least of course we feel we ought to pray. Because quite a lot of us sometimes struggle to know how to pray. We look around in the middle of this pandemic and we see so much to pray for, it can be overwhelming. We pray out of love to a God who is love, whose love has been shown in Jesus, in His death, in His resurrection, in His ascension and in the sending of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit enables us to pray when we don't know how to pray. Even Paul says that in Romans. So even there were moments when he struggled. How do we pray? We pray out of love. What do we long to see? Pray for the whole person, pray for those who are caring for us, pray for those who are suffering, pray for those who are fearful, pray that your fears may be overcome by the love of God. Pray for the unanimity of our society, pray for the future of this world post-virus, post-pandemic. Pray for solutions. There's plenty to pray for. And how we pray is with honesty, with weakness and with love. So let's just pray."

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and President of Churches Together in England

"As one of the Presidents of Churches Together in England, I'm glad to join in this call to remind you of the importance of prayer. This pandemic is terrible, it takes all our resources, all our human resources of courage, of ingenuity, of determination. But it needs prayer as well. It's God's work that we're involved in. And we need the help of God and we need to pray for that continually. Please join me with prayer every day that we get through this pandemic and are kept safe by our good Lord."



About us: WEST YORKSHIRE CHURCHES TOGETHER

WYCT is the county ecumenical or intermediate body for West Yorkshire- the county and those parts which are covered by West Yorkshire Dioceses and Districts.

Our website is at

westyorkshirechurchestogether.com

And our e-mail: westyorkshirect@icloud.com

Twitter: @westyorkshirect

WYCT was three years old on 1st January. The WYCT "Forum" is the successor to the West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council (WYEC) and its Denominational Officers. It meets two or three times a year

Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield, is Convenor or chair
The Deputy Convenor is **Bishop Tony Parry** of the New Testament Church of God.

The Co-ordinator is Deacon Nick Shields

This newsletter is produced by WYCT: contact the Co-ordinator as above. We would be very pleased to receive your news- and photos- to include here- e-mail as above.

The Coordinator is happy to preach/speak on on WYCT or ChristianUnity in general to your church or group.... Contact him at westyorkshirect@icloud.com

NOTE: If you do not at any time wish to receive these mailings, all you need do is e-mail WYCT with as little as "Unsubscribe" in the message or header. If you are representing a body such as a Churches Together, please then nominate someone to take your place. Once again, our list is for WYCT information and contact purposes and is kept safe; it is NEVER passed to any other organisation, company or individual outside WYCT.



LINKS

Yorkshire West Methodist District Website -click [HERE](#)-

& follow the links to the Newsletter

Leeds Anglican Diocese-click [HERE](#)

& follow the links to this month

Leeds Catholic Diocese click [HERE](#)

United Reformed Church Newsletter- click [HERE](#)

Yorkshire Baptist Association-click [HERE](#)

Moravian Church in Yorkshire -click [HERE](#)

Mirfield- events at the Centre and Community- click [HERE](#)

Taize Community click [HERE](#) Evening Prayer from Taize is livestreamed on Facebook every day at 7:30pm BST: details on the website homepage. Taize is closed to "stays" but the churches and the community shop are now open some afternoons.

OTHER LINKS OF INTEREST:

JPIT YORKSHIRE

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) brings a Christian voice and vision to public issues -environment, social justice, politics

It is sponsored by the regional bodies of the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed churches. You can find more on

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk>

LEEDS J&P

The long established Leeds Catholic Justice and Peace Group has a regular newsletter on these issues; Newsletter can be viewed **here**

NATIONAL

Churches Together in England. www.cte.org.uk

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.



Co-ordinator's Report for the AGM

Meetings: This was the year in which we agreed to revise our Constitution. This simplified the appointment of officers and the number of meetings in accordance with proposals in the last report. We intended to hold two Forum meetings in 2019/20. In one we heard from Greg Ryan on the topical subject of Receptive Ecumenism: this was much appreciated and we hope to do more on this topic.

Unfortunately Hinsley Hall was unable to finalise a booking with us in March as we had intended to move next door to meet at St Columba's URC church which looks to be a very promising venue for the future. Our DEO (Denominational Ecumenical Officer) Co-ordinator Glenn Coggins had intended a verbal report and discussion at the meeting so we will save that for safer days. I'm sure he will mention that we do not have enough DEO's, whose job is not only guiding or unravelling Local Ecumenical Partnerships but are appointed by their own Churches to offer advice and resources for local ecumenism within our County Body. Can you help?

I attended national Meetings at Swanwick (CTE) Durham (Property) Westminster (Ecumenism) and High Leigh, Hoddesdon (CTE) I have been asked to be a member of the CTE Enabling Group for Yorkshire. This means that there is work to do and I had arranged to meet the General Secretary of CTE Paul Goodliff in April to discuss how we can improve the representation in Yorkshire. There are five "intermediate bodies" like WYCT in the county.

Jane and I helped welcome in the Churches Pavilion at the Great Yorkshire Show in Harrogate.

I also attended the Diocese of Leeds (A) Consultation on Prayer and Spirituality at Church House Leeds. CTE is still meeting, of course, via Zoom!

Preaching: Representing WYCT, I was invited to preach at the annual Yorkshire District Lovefeast and Communion service of the Moravian Church. In Unity Week I preached at St John the Baptist Wakefield.

Communications: We operate a website and Facebook and Twitter pages. These are important to maintain a presence in the region. I also produce an occasional Newsletter which is e-mailed to church leaders -and all the CT's we can identify!

Other Matters

WYCT is also happy to announce that it facilitated the appointment of Prof Peter Howdle as Chair of the Leeds Universities Chaplaincies Trust.

We should also note with sadness the death of Eva Pinthus who represented the Society Of Friends on WYEC for a number of years.

Administration: Expenditure for the Year amounted to £2004 including staging two conferences for the Forum & DEO's. We are in a healthy financial state.



The Future: Covenants

We have also located original WYEC documents (see above) The last secretary of WYEC had deposited them in the old County Archive just before WYEC closed- and it immediately moved to the brand new Family History centre on Kirkgate, Wakefield where they are being catalogued. More importantly, I have located various versions of the Ecumenical Covenant, first signed by ten church leaders in the mid-eighties (and including then, the three Anglican Bishops and the two Methodist Chairs) Perhaps these still give an idea as to what WYCT- even on limited resources- is about.

People from many churches, including leaders, regularly meet together, pray together or talk together. It is no longer necessary to arrange regular meetings for the sole purposes of meeting, breaking down barriers and knowing others. We even meet by Zoom.

WYCT should always be a networking, co-ordinating organisation, maintaining contacts. The fact that it exists means that it is a sign in West Yorkshire of the Gospel imperative to seek unity. There are now fifty different Christian Churches in England, and some means of communication and connection is essential.

One change in the updated constitution, mentioned last year was to change my title to "Coordinator" which seems more appropriate.

We talk now so much of the "new normal": these are going to be times of change, of new wine and new ways. I hope that Christian unity will deservedly be an essential and logical sign of this normal. Christians must live as a community or communion. Division and the old suspicions and rivalries are of the past.

Nick Shields May 2020