

NEWSLETTER No7

Spring 2016

Welcome!

Welcome to this, the latest of the newsletters from Churches Together in Cheshire. As before I seek to include both news items and notices of ecumenical activities and events that are taking place within Cheshire, and also information relating more widely to the ecumenical scene across the country. .

In this newsletter we note some of the events of recent months and look ahead to significant events of the next three months. Please see the items in this newsletter relating to these matters.

You will find my contact details at the end of this Newsletter, and if you wish any future edition to include reports of what has been happening in your neck of the woods, or to advertise any forthcoming event I would be pleased to hear from you

Andrew Taylor

Agricultural Chaplaincy

Churches Together in Cheshire is the formal sponsor of the Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy, and all involved with the Chaplaincy were delighted when it was announced that Canon Keith Ineson, the leader and founder of the Chaplaincy had been awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen's New Years Honours List.

CHURCHES TOGETHER
IN CHESHIRE



Keith set the Chaplaincy up 16 years ago, and has grown it and the team of Assistant Chaplains since that time, so that it is widely regarded as a model to be followed in other parts of the country.



Keith will be retiring as the Chaplaincy Team Leader in September, and steps are being taken to recruit his successor.

As the work of the Chaplaincy has grown so has its need to continue to recruit additional Assistant Chaplains, each of whom gives half a day a week, providing pastoral and practical help to the farming community. This growing workload has to be supported by increased fundraising.

The Chaplaincy is currently one of those organisations shortlisted for ITV's 'Peoples Project' scheme, whereby projects from each of the ITV regions can be voted for by the public to receive funding of up to £25,000. Keith writes:

“We have been arranging lunches for a group of farmers who suffer with depression. These lunches are very informal and all that is expected of those involved is that they come out and enjoy a good meal and each other’s company

We want to expand the lunches around the county and have applied to People Project for the funding

Please control and click on this link <http://www.itv.com/news/granada/2016-02-29/the-peoples-projects-is-launched/> and then vote FOR US on <http://itv.com/thepeoplesprojects> . You don’t have to be in the Granada area to vote !!!!”

Salt of the Earth



On 4th February at Catalyst, Lord Andrew Green spoke to a full Seminar room on the topic “Immigration and Asylum: how much can we handle?” An emotive topic was carefully addressed, followed by thoughtful questions and discussion

‘Salt Sunday’ will be on 8th May, marked by an event at the Lion Saltworks at Northwich, from 2.00-5.00 pm. The afternoon will include demonstrations of salt production and a time of worship to be

led by Rt. Revd. Keith Sinclair, the Bishop of Birkenhead.

Other Network events planned in 2016 include:

Thursday, 7th July

“How can I improve my workplace relationships?”

Speaker: Charles Hipplesley (London Institute of Contemporary Christianity)
Venue: United Utilities, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere Business Park, Great Sankey, Warrington WA5 3LP
Time: 10am - 1pm

Thursday 17th November

“Are Faith and Science in Conflict”

Speakers: John Weaver
Venue: Solvay Interox, Baronet Works, Baronet Road, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 6HA
Time: 11am - 1pm

As usual representatives of the Network will be found in the Church Tent at the Royal Cheshire Show on 22nd and 23rd June.

For more information visit the website: www.saltoftheearthnetwork.net.

Ecumenical Officers’ Group

Revd. Murray George, who has been the United Reformed Church’s DEO for the past two and a half years, has stood down from that position in order to give more attention to other responsibilities he carries within the Mersey Synod. He will be

replaced by Revd. Ian Smith, who until last year was the Ecumenical Officer for Merseyside, and has recently been inducted as the Minister of Christ Church URC at Port Sunlight.

We welcome Ian to the group, knowing that he will bring valuable experiences and insights from his previous role, and wish Murray well in his continuing ministries.



Revd. Ian Smith

Christian Aid



Save a life with a sausage sarnie.....

Fond of a fry up? Partial to pancakes? If you share Jesus' heart for people living in extreme poverty, why not join us with a Big Brekkie fundraiser this Christian Aid Week (15-21 May). Jesus calls us to love our

neighbours – and not just the people who live next door or down the street.

Take Morsheda, a young mother of four living in Bangladesh. She has no land, few assets and no savings. And no matter how hard she works, she can't escape the floods that constantly threaten to destroy her home. Answer God's call to end poverty; put the kettle on. Morsheda is our neighbour. And there's no better way to start loving our global neighbours than by getting friends, colleagues and next door neighbours together and serving them breakfast.

The money you raise could help change Morsheda's life. Just £250 is enough to flood-proof Morsheda's home, raising it eight foot on an earth plinth so that she has a safe place to rebuild. It could also buy a goat, seeds and a wormery to produce compost, giving her a long-term income.

So bring your community together and get cracking. It's really easy to host a Big Brekkie, and whether you're hosting one at work, at home or with your church, your pack has everything you need.

[Sign up for your free pack](#) – and make sure breakfast really is the most important meal of the day.

If you need any support with your Christian Aid Week fundraising please contact Helen Howe on 01925 573769 or email hhowe@christian-aid.org



COMMEMORATING 'REFORMATION 1517' IN ENGLAND

A Statement from the Presidents of Churches Together in England who represent the Western traditions of the Church

Setting the tone

As Presidents of Churches Together in England we encourage all churches in England to mark the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 with sensitivity as we acknowledge our unity in Christ. We have learnt over the past century that unity is achieved by walking together, and we have grown in communion, friendship, reconciliation and healing. During this anniversary we want to be able to listen to the truth that is in each other, to hear our different stories, and build bridges of deeper understanding and respect.

Speaking at the Inauguration Eucharist of the General Synod of the Church of England in November 2015, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher to the Papal Household, said, 'The Christian world is preparing to celebrate the fifth centenary of the Protestant Reformation. It is vital for the whole Church that this opportunity is not wasted by people remaining prisoners of the past, trying to establish each other's rights and wrongs. Rather, let us take a qualitative leap forward. The situation has changed dramatically since then. We need to start again with the person of Jesus, humbly helping our contemporaries to experience a personal encounter with Him...Justification by faith, for example, ought to be preached by the whole Church

– and with more vigour than ever. Not in opposition to good works – the issue is already settled – but rather in opposition to the claim of people today that they can save themselves thanks to their science, technology or man-made spirituality, without the need for a redeemer coming from outside humanity.'



Martin Luther

Setting the scene

The course of the English reformation was long and complicated, whereas in most of what is now Germany and Switzerland it was sharp and short. That means that the anniversary of Martin Luther's 95 theses on 31st October 1517 is but one date in a long English history which lasted from Henry VIII's break with Rome in 1532-36 to the Restoration Settlement of 1662. As religious wars convulsed Europe, Protestant and Catholic reformers alike sought with integrity and faithfulness to bring the church closer to the will of Christ. As they did so they lent shape to what became modern Europe. During England's long reformation, streams of Christian life that we now call Catholic, Anglican and dissenting, were all present,

and have been shaped by what they experienced.

We acknowledge with sorrow that during the years of the English reformation our ancestors in the faith inflicted unspeakable violence on each other. We rejoice, however, that by the grace of God we have learnt to look at that history through the eyes of each other's martyrs, to appreciate their integrity, courage and self-sacrifice, and above all their faithful witness to God. As we commemorate the 500th anniversary, we want therefore to acknowledge both the good that came out of this period of our history, and also the pain inflicted and the scars that remain.

We therefore urge the churches in England to keep this anniversary together in the spirit of five 'Rs'

- **Rejoicing** – because of the joy in the gospel which we share, and because what we have in common is greater than that which divides; and that God is patient with our divisions, that we are coming back together and can learn from each other.
- **Remembering** – because all three streams of the Reformation have their witnesses and one church's celebration could be another's painful memory; and yet all believed they acted in the cause of the gospel of Jesus Christ for their time.
- **Reforming** – because the Church needs always to grow closer to Christ, and therefore closer to all who proclaim him Lord, and it is by

the mutual witness of faith that we will approach the unity for which Christ prayed for his followers.

- **Repenting** – because the splintering of our unity led us to formulate stereotypes and prejudices about each other's traditions which have too often diverted our attention from our calling as witnesses together to the mercy of God in proclamation and service to the world.
- **Reconciling** – because the call to oneness in Christ begins from the perspective of unity not division, strengthening what is held in common, even though the differences are more easily seen and experienced.

In national and local events, whether together or separately, we pray that our churches may honour each other and give thanks for our growing friendship and fellowship in the Gospel.

An Unlikely Alliance

Jeff Gould, The Minister at Dean Row, Wilmslow and Hale Barns Unitarian and Free Churches writes:

Ecumenism manifests itself in many ways. It was my honour to have experienced a unique event that has given me hope for future co-operation and dialogue amongst traditions that hold very different views of Scripture, focus on doctrines that potentially divide Christians and worship in contrasting styles. The Anglican Parish

Church of All Saints', Hale Barns, the Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel in Hale Barns and the Seventh-Day Adventist congregation that meets in the Ringway Life Building, adjacent to the Manchester International Airport united on Sunday, 11 October 2015 to commemorate 500 years of Christian worship on the site that features in each congregation's history and identity.

What had been the chapel of ease at Ringway, in the parish of Bowdon, Cheshire was the home of a congregation that became Presbyterian through the course of the English Civil War and the period following the 1662 Act of Uniformity. This anomaly was possible, owing to the dissenting sympathies of the landlords, but when the lord of the manor changed, so did the sentiments towards the occupying congregation. In an effort to curry favour with the Crown and to demonstrate his loyalist allegiance, the new lord expelled the congregation. So it was that in 1723 the Presbyterians of Ringway Chapel crossed the Cheshire fields and erected a meeting-house on a plot of land in the village of Hale Barns that was purchased for the sum of £5 (a good deal less expensive than property would command in that community today!).



That chapel survives and continues to house a faithful congregation that is in membership of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (the denomination that resulted from the evolution of several dissenting traditions, of whom the English Presbyterians were but one).

The Church of England erected a Mission Church in Hale Barns in 1883 in order to respond to the needs of the growing population. The original building was replaced by a modern structure in 1967, which currently serves the needs of the Anglican community that worships there. The chapel in Ringway had been opened in 1515, and was followed by another chapel in about the year 1730. That building was in turn replaced by the Ringway Church of St. Mary in 1895. That church was declared redundant in 1970, but remained under the auspices of the Diocese of Chester until 1997, when the building was sold to a commercial firm. The cemetery remained the responsibility of the parish church of Hale Barns, and continues to receive interments.

In the process of searching for a building that would meet the needs of a growing Seventh-Day Adventist congregation that draws members from the South Manchester/North Cheshire area, the former church at Ringway was found to have the potential to return to its original use as a place of worship. The Ringway Life Building (as it was by then known), was purchased in 2010 by the Adventists, who now hold their regular Saturday morning Bible study and acts of worship

on a site that has hosted Christian worship since 1515.

It was thought appropriate to honour this important landmark by holding a united act of worship that would involve all three congregations that could claim a relationship to the site at Ringway. On the afternoon of Sunday, 11 October 2015, members of all three communities met first at the parish church of All Saints', then moved to the Unitarian Chapel, and ended their 'peripatetic devotions' with a final service at the Ringway church. The spirit that was present in the planning meetings was one of genuine Christian unity, whilst the distinct integrity of each separate tradition was maintained. The day of commemoration was splendidly sunny and mild, which seemed to match the expressions of those who led in the worship and attended the three-fold services. A touch of historical veracity was added by the presence of some of the Adventists, who dressed in Puritan costume! The quality of the fellowship and the abundance of refreshments that graced the social hour at the end of the day's celebrations spoke of 'unity with diversity'.

Whilst the day of united worship was a remarkable achievement in its own right, two marvellous by-products of the occasion have resulted. The members of all three congregations were so moved by the sense of shared values and faith they experienced that they have committed themselves to working intentionally with the other congregations in future efforts and to hold occasional united acts of worship. A moving resolution of the former exclusion and division has also been

borne out of the occasion, as the Unitarian Chapel has agreed to serve as a temporary home to the Adventists, whilst their building undergoes significant re-ordering and refurbishment. Almost 300 years after one congregation was expelled from the Ringway site, the current congregation of that building will be welcomed into the chapel that resulted from that act of dismissal. Nothing could demonstrate the fruits of ecumenism better to this clergyman, who wept tears of joy and thanksgiving at the united acts of worship last autumn. It felt as if it were a tangible answer to our Lord's prayer, 'that they all might be one.' If Adventists, Anglicans and Unitarians can work and worship together, ecumenism has the potential to achieve even greater things.

Pause for Hope



An ecumenical service for all those who have been affected by cancer; an opportunity to gather and offer prayers, to find comfort.

Sunday, 5th June at 3.00 pm at St. Columba's Church, Plas Newton Lane, Chester. CH2 1SA

Modern Slavery



Stop Modern Slavery

The government has identified 18th October each year to be marked as Anti-Slavery Day. The church leaders of Churches Together in Cheshire have endorsed the proposal that this time be recognised across the churches of the county. Therefore, church representatives, working with the Co-ordinator of the Cheshire Anti-Slavery Network are working to prepare material that might be used within churches of any denomination to raise awareness of the issue of Modern Slavery as it exists within our midst.

This will be launched at an introductory event to be held on Tuesday, 7th June at Church House, Daresbury, to which all who think they might wish to use the material, or to learn more about Modern Slavery, are invited.

Further details, including information on how to book your place at the event will be circulated shortly, but please note the date.

It is appreciated that Church calendars, not least in the autumn weeks, can become

crowded. The material will be suitable for use at other times and in a variety of settings.

Easter....

...approaches and many churches and groups will be planning local acts of witness. We pray for all those occasions when the Good News of Easter can be shared. Any pictures received could be included in the...

Next Edition

The next issue of the Newsletter will be in June. If you have any items you would like to be included please send them in by 31st May, 2016.

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