



Churches Together in Cumbria

December 2024/January 2025
Newsletter

Actively Promoting God's Love for Everyone



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Deadline for Newsletter submissions: 2nd to last Friday of the month (24th January 2025)

CTiC Annual Gathering 2025

Date for your Diary: **The CTiC AGM & Annual Gathering** will be held on 7th June 2025, at the Carver Uniting Church, Lake Road, Windermere, LA23 2BY. The gathering will be held from 10am - 3pm.

Our keynote speaker is Doral Heyes: Principal Officer for Ecumenical Development and Relations, Churches Together in England.

Booking information will follow in due course.

Social Action Audit - Results



In May 2024, faith communities across Westmorland & Furness took part in a Social Action Audit. This audit, partly funded by the newly formed council, used an audit tool developed by the Cinnamon Network to gather information on the work that over 100 local churches and faith groups are involved with: from the number of volunteers to the varied work that takes place across our communities. Communities from Alston to Barrow and everywhere in between were included in the audit which captured social action activity in very rural locations as well as populated towns and tourist hotspots.

The audit confirmed that local churches and other faith groups are involved in a wide range of activities including working with families, providing debt advice, coaching people back into work, offering emergency food parcels and providing a safe place to belong and build friendships. The audit also revealed that a lot of the activities are run in partnership with others and that there is a desire for more partnership working.

CTiC are now able to disseminate the results of the audit and to seek feedback on the potential for new initiatives and new partnerships. This will also inform how CTiC focuses its own social responsibility activity in support of local churches in Westmorland and Furness and more generally across Cumbria.

At the end of November, presentations were held in Barrow, Penrith and Kendal. These were attended by over 60 people including faith leaders, police, local MP, NHS staff and local councillors.

If you missed out on these presentations but would like to know the results of the audit and explore the potential that they highlight, then you can:

1. Join our zoom presentation evening – Tuesday 21st January at 7pm.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87492568254?pwd=JExx6CqUv1NTCLwITWbqe9ZQILDCpH.1>

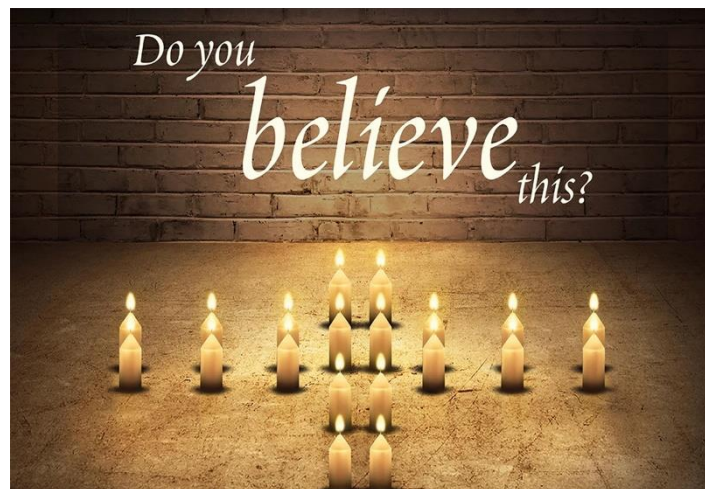
or email Jonny for the link

2. Follow this link to the CTIC

website <https://www.churchestogethercumbria.org.uk/Groups/415185/Soc...>

3. Contact Jonny Gios on jgios@me.com / 07584 052102

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2025



18th - 25th January 2025

For 2025, materials were prepared by the ecumenical community at Bose in Northern Italy.

As we celebrate 1,700 years since the Council of Nicaea, the worship service has at its heart, the Nicene Creed. Reflecting this, the scripture readings for this year focus on belief.

We are invited to reflect on the story of Martha's confession of faith in Jesus as narrated in John 11:17-27. Each is called to sit with Jesus' provocative question to Martha: "Do you believe this?"

Resources

For 2025, we are making the resources available both as downloads and printed versions that can be ordered. Details will be included on the resources page as they become available.

A Window into a Churches Together Group



We invite each CT group to send a short article (max 250 words) for inclusion into the CTIC newsletter. We ask you to feature one aspect of your life and work together, and to choose something that will be inspirational or of particular interest to others, or is especially significant to your group. Please also include a photograph that relates to your article, or to your group. We would like to feature one group per month over the next year or so. At this point you may simply want to choose a month and inform

Dani: danielle@churchestogethercumbria.org.uk which month you have chosen.

The aim is to raise the profile of the CT groups and to encourage each other in the life and work that God has called us to.

Christians Together in Coniston



Christian's Together in Coniston is an affiliation of Christians in and around the village, focussing on what we hold in common, our faith in and love for Jesus, rather than what separates us, including ecclesiastical and theological differences.

In 2024 we ran joint services on each of the four 'fifth Sundays', plus Christmas, and Easter. We also run a weekly Bible Discussion Group, short courses at Advent (four weeks) and Easter-Lent (six weeks), and support the winter monthly community Soup & Dominoes sessions. We cooperate with the Parish Council and others through Love Coniston, including a Food Exchange sited in St Andrews parish church.

Chris Clark, the Children Youth and Community Worker employed through the three churches, assists in both schools with assemblies, clubs and primary-to-secondary transition support. He is a vital part of the Sports and Social Club Youth Club and a school governor (safeguarding). He has started a survey of village residents through Love Coniston to help understand needs and hopes for the village and identify possible actions that could improve village life.

Work in 2025 includes continuing the Bible courses, monthly prayer times for Coniston, Chris, and the congregations, as well as supporting Chris in his survey and responses thereto.

Alex Stewart (chairman, Christians Together in Coniston).

Anna Chaplaincy Good News



'Life before being stuck in this chair'

Christmas edition

I can only say it was like something from Narnia. Alice seemed to be a very unassuming lady in her late 90's, modest and clearly highly educated. Her husband had died when he was only young, and Alice had spent many decades of life on her own. She had never wanted to marry again and instead devoted her life to her work. Vivaldi's Four Seasons played merrily away on her record player in the corner next to her. Something she could reach from her chair that she now sat in all day, apart from when a carer came to help her into bed. A flask of tea made by the carers was on the table, poured into a Royal Albert teacup, "I've always drunk out of china," she said with a smile. "George bought me this as one of the last things he did before he died. It's been stuck together so many times, I'm surprised it still holds tea!"

Apart from the carers coming in four times a day, Alice told me no one came to the house anymore. With no family close by in Cumbria and friends mostly passed away, the walls of the house had become very quiet. "I listen to the

clock tick”, she said. ‘Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick...’ “Sometimes it drives you mad as if it’s reminding me of time and how quickly life goes.”

“I’d offer you a tea”, she said, “but perhaps you could make your own.”

Standing at the back of the room near the old dresser was a life size mouse, intricately made of fabric and each piece delicately sewn together. It stood as tall as a person with a frilly maid’s outfit carefully hand sewn over its stuffed bodice. Handmade glasses sat on its long snout with whiskers that stuck out the sides and it was reading a book, made from pages of an antique book.

I asked in wonder if Alice had made the mouse.

For a moment Alice went happily back in time to the days where her hands weren’t sore with rheumatism, and she could sew. “Oh yes”, she said. “I had the idea to make her and set about it, with bits of old scraps of fabric I had. Friends would bring me bits of theirs too and eventually Molly became a life size mouse and friend.”

I could see how this beautiful, smiling mouse could feel like a friend in a world where you seldom saw anyone and how the kind looking face could cheer you up on a gloomy day.

Every part of the sitting room was piled with pieces of lace, fabric, cloth, tweed, ribbon, sewing thread, rag dolls, patch work bears.

“It’s like being in Narnia”, I said to Alice. She smiled, “It was my life before being stuck in this chair. I was a seamstress.” she said woefully.

“And a remarkable life too”, I said.

Alice has gone on to show a number of ladies how to sew and create magical creatures from bits of old fabric.

by Sam Pester: Anna Chaplaincy Lead Cumbria

Alice’s name has been changed in this article for anonymity. Anna Chaplains walk beside the older person, valuing their life and encouraging their unique life story.



For any enquiries about Anna Chaplaincy in Cumbria do get in touch at ac@churchestogethercumbria.org.uk

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook for ongoing news.

Anna Chaplaincy Cumbria Facebook Page

Christmas Acrostic



Crisp are the leaves as they rattle through the courtyard,

Hoary the grass as it spikes against the light,

Rosy the cheeks of the small, cherubic children,

Icy the wind as it whistles through the night.

Subtle the décor of this thoughtful, young millennium,

Tried and true the carols that the elderly still sing.

Mixed are the feelings of the busy Christmas shoppers,
Ageless the sense of joy the Day will bring,
Soft at first, then loudly, the steeple bells will ring.

by Chrissie Greaves

Advent I: The Sacred Yes



“The Nativity” by Georges de La Tour 1644

John 1:1-18

Her sacred yes became your invitation.
You, whose exuberant yes had
birthed suns and moons and stars
and a bejewelled orb throbbing with life.

Her sacred yes and her song of hope
were all you needed to pour out your yes,
to condense your glory and contain your power.
Here you lie, enshrouded Christ-child.
The Eternal Yes, born of blood.
The Almighty Yes, to die in blood.
The Immortal Yes awaiting our Amen.

by Joanne Maybury

Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group (CESG)



It was a beautiful November Day at Rydal Hall when spiritual directors in the CESG network gathered to reflect specifically on giving spiritual direction to clergy.

The stimulus for the day was the research findings of Rev Lisa Moore Wilson from the United Reformed Church. Reflecting on the book of Pastoral rule written by Pope Gregory in the sixth century, the day was spent exploring the

effectiveness of spiritual practices rooted in Christian Mysticism on combatting the modern-day ills of stress and burnout in clergy. Together we considered how caring for self and caring for others could be balanced well. Embedding private spiritual practices (which developed a minister's personal relationship with God), alongside public service, may help to increase resilience and maintain healthy functioning.

Throughout the day we heard from clergy who had received spiritual direction and how it had helped them through their ministry, and also heard from the experience of those who had supported clergy to develop their own prayer practices. Together we sampled body prayer, walking prayer, silent contemplation as well as considering practices such as Lectio Divina as tools for the spiritual journey. It was Gregory's belief that such practices helped people to slow down, cultivate greater self-awareness, improve resilience and understanding of pastoral issues. The benefits of speaking with a Spiritual Director outside of the parish and having a space to reflect on one's own relationship with God was also considered to be highly valuable.

By Ali Betteridge

CESG Team

Spiritual Accompaniment



You, Me and God - journeying together

For further information contact

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Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group

Exploring Faith Accompaniment

January to May 2025

Blackburn Cathedral Conference Suite

Sponsored by the Anglican Diocese of Blackburn this 10-day foundation-level, non-denominational course seeks to...

- nurture deeper listening to and reflection on the movement of the Holy Spirit to support the growth of faith and discipleship
- draw upon the wisdom and insights of Christian traditions of Spiritual accompaniment and practice
- grow a new generation of faith companions with potential to serve the Church in the contemporary world.
- form the first, stand-alone element of a 2-part formation programme. Part B – will, subject to a process of discernment, be open by invitation to course participants who complete Part A. Information about Part B will be available at the beginning of the Course in January 2025

Please send your name, address, telephone number, email address, brief personal statement & details of a referee to:

The Rev'd Mary Ashton, Warden of Spiritual Directors
spiritualdirection@blackburn.anglican.org

CTiC Trustees and Staff

Our Trustees:

Revd Richard Snow - CTiC Vice President - rector@therainbowparish.org

Revd Kath Dodd - CTiC Treasurer - kath.dodd@btinternet.com

Derek Lacey - Social Responsibility Forum Chair

Bill Bewley - Church Leaders Representative

Paul Burden - Churches Together Group Representative

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