



CT-eNews

February 2020

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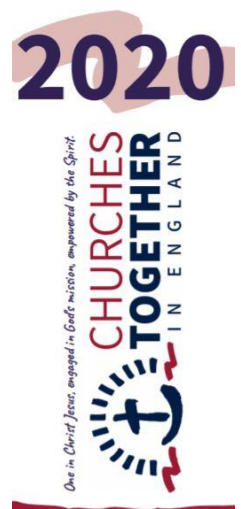
Year of prayer for climate justice

National Sports Sunday 2020: 17th May 2020

New CTE leaflet now available

The 2020 CTE tri-fold leaflet is a useful resource, including a list of our Member Churches, staff details, highlights from 2019 and planned projects for 2020. [It is now available as a pdf on our website.](#)

Printed copies are now available and can be requested by [emailing Lorraine](#) and confirming the number you would like and the postal address for delivery.



Reflection of the Month: We are family

Lucy Olofinjana, our Senior Communications and Media Officer here at CTE, shares our [Reflection of the Month](#) for February 2020...



'How pleasant it is when God's people dwell together in unity'. These words from Psalm 133 sum up my experience of building friendships and collaborating with Christians from across the diversity of the church family.

I've had the privilege of seeing God's church at work in so many ways – being dedicated as a child in the Ichthus charismatic church, growing up and coming to a faith of my own in a local Baptist church, being part of a local ecumenical planning group for Soul in the City in my teens, being married to a Baptist minister (from a Pentecostal and African-Initiated-Church background), and working for the Salvation Army, the Evangelical Alliance and now Churches Together in England.

At the heart of the church unity I've experienced has always been a love for God and a sense of family – as well as a true desire to see our world impacted for good and people find peace, freedom and joy from the one true source, Jesus.

But for me, what sums up the true unity of God's family is a simple bowl of bolognese.

It happened one summer's day, when I travelled up to Chester to explore with local church leaders how they can work together to make Jesus known in their place. Using the [Talking Jesus research](#) as a springboard, we had some fascinating, honest and practical conversations, thinking about how the people around us respond to hearing about Jesus, and how churches in the area might collaborate further in making Jesus known.

Afterwards we were welcomed back to the home of a family from one of the churches. There we had the opportunity of [filming their story](#) – hearing how, together with the family next-door, they opened their homes to local people, giving them the chance to build friendships and also to build a relationship with Jesus Christ. The story of how they helped one lady find peace and hope in Jesus, after the tragic loss of her young daughter, brought us to tears.

And then we shared a bowl of bolognese.

Simple enough. But also so profound.

It was in that kitchen, sharing food and fellowship with complete 'strangers', that I really understood what being part of God's family was all about.

Because the thing was, we didn't feel like strangers.

We *felt* like family.

No, ***we were family.***

What united us wasn't location or blood, our football team or hobbies. We were united in our shared identity as God's children. And it felt so natural to spend time together – like we'd known each other for years.

Being involved in local ministry in south-east London, I've seen the power and potential of God's people coming together in unity. After all, we can achieve so much more together than we can apart – as Ecclesiastes 4 tells us, 'a three-fold cord is not easily broken'.

And so often that unity is rooted in prayer – joining with other Christians to pray together for the places where we live, work and worship. Kneeling together before our father in heaven, we see the foolishness of focusing on those details which divide us, and the joy and power which comes when we focus on seeing God's 'kingdom come, (His) will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'.

Of course, unity isn't always an easy journey. I've seen fellow Christians saddened and wounded by the pain of not being heard as they seek to share their heart's-cry about the reality which their part of the body is experiencing.

Through all this I've learnt the importance of living out Paul's words from 1 Corinthians 12, 'If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness'.

Let's seek to make this a reality as we go about life as part of God's family. Let's 'rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn' (Romans 12:15) – being real and honest with one another, and truly being there for each other, in the good times and the bad.

Because, after all, we are family.

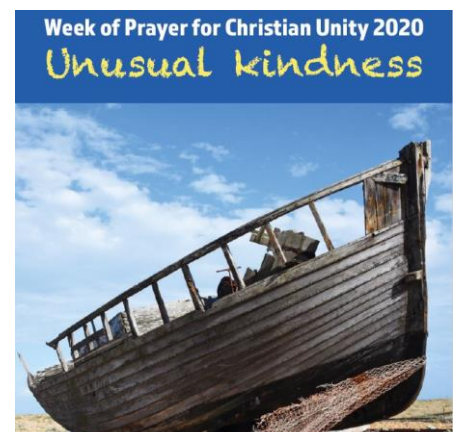
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2020

Groups of churches across the nation came together to celebrate the Week Prayer for Christian Unity from 18th to 25th January 2020.

Thanks to everyone who shared photos and tweeted [#wpcuwall](https://twitter.com/#wpcuwall) to share your events!

Find out what happened across the country via CTBI's unity wall at weekofprayer.org

You can also access the photos we've collated from services across England [via our web page](#).



WPCU marked in Chester Cathedral

Hear how churches in Cheshire celebrated the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity...

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a significant part of the life of Churches Together in Cheshire. Churches and Churches Together groups in the county have been active in their commitment to Christian service, in relation to Food Banks, Street Pastors and Street Angels, night shelters, social provision for the young, the elderly, the lonely and those struggling with issues of mental health, and for Churches Together in Cheshire, their sponsorship of the Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy. However, it is essential they are balanced with and supported by these times of both individual and collective prayer.



Churches Together in Cheshire has for some years alternated its Week of Prayer service between Chester Cathedral and being hosted by one of the Churches Together groups in the county. This year the service was at the Cathedral, and it followed the form of the Ecumenical Service that had been prepared by the Churches of Malta, and focused on the account of Paul's shipwreck on that island.

The service was attended by a broad spread of church leaders, the trustees of Churches Together in Cheshire, who led the different elements of the service. The readings were voiced by our County Ecumenical Officer and the Denominational Ecumenical Officers from the Chester Diocese, the Methodist Church, the Salvation Army and the Shrewsbury Roman Catholic Diocese. The preacher was Lord David Alton of Liverpool, and also in attendance was Fiona Bruce, one of the county's MPs, though in her capacity as a Lay Canon of the Cathedral.

As suggested in the service material, children from Wrenbury Primary School, in one of the villages in Cheshire, contributed by providing both visual and sound effects to accompany the readings – long strips of cloth, spread across the front of the Cathedral, were waved to create waves, whilst percussion instruments replicated rain, thunder and lightning. Later in the service the children processed down the aisle of the nave carrying specially designed oars, which were then brought together to form a large Maltese Cross which stood at the front of the Cathedral. The children fulfilled their roles impeccably. For most it was their first visit to the Cathedral, but careful preparation by the school staff ensured their performance was wonderful.



Lord Alton in his address focused on the story that the readings had provided, and reflected on what that shipwreck might teach us about ourselves, our contemporary

society and our faith; particularly how faith can both help make sense of and give strength for the shipwrecks in our own lives and relationships. Learning from that could give confidence for the challenge of passing faith on to future generations.

Response to the service has been extremely positive. For some, the sight of church leaders from across the denominations and church traditions leading worship together has been heartening and encouraging. For the children involved, and their parents – a full coachload came from Wrenbury – the experience of being part of worship in such a historic setting will be with them for a very long time. Others have spoken of the excellent address from Lord Alton, which is [now available on the Cathedral website](#).

As well as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, we look forward to praying together at Pentecost during 'Thy Kingdom Come', which the church leaders of Cheshire are commending as an important and complementary occasion for local ecumenical initiatives.

Revd Andrew Taylor is County Ecumenical Development Officer for Churches Together in Cheshire

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

New ecumenical community helping young people connect with Jesus

CTE's Lucy Olofinjana speaks to Jamie Cutteridge, hearing more about With's vision to build a Christian community in Norfolk for young people...



'With' was recently established by a group of Christian youth workers with a vision to establish the UK's first bespoke ecumenical Christian community serving young people. Their vision is to create a space for young people to encounter Jesus, grow in their faith and build resilience.

They've recently been given an incredible, historic convent in rural Norfolk, which has been home to Christian community, prayer and service for more than 150 years. Hundreds of organisations applied for the opportunity to take on the convent buildings and their nine acres of land, and this group were chosen, with their vision to reimagine what prayer and service looks like in this place, focusing on young people.

1. Where did this vision come from, and why do you think you were chosen to take over the convent?

It came from a small group of us, from a variety of church backgrounds, who have all been involved in youth work and the wellbeing of youth workers over many years.

We think we were probably chosen because we had a vision to carry on the work of prayer and service which the sisters of All Hallows Ditchingham had been engaged in for more than 150 years, and to reimagine that work among young people in the twenty-first century.

2. Why is it important for you that the centre is ecumenical?

Although All Hallows Ditchingham was an Anglican convent, from the very start we've talked about this being an ecumenical centre, open to people from all church traditions. We're working to make sure our Council of Reference is diverse, and it already includes Catholic, Anglican, Free Church and Pentecostal representation.

As youth workers we're used to working together with people from a variety of backgrounds, and the fact is that many young people don't see denominations as important, they just see the Church and Jesus.

3. How are you hoping young people will be impacted by the centre?

Ultimately, we want this to be a place where young people can connect and be with Jesus. But our dream is that this is not just a place where young people can go and have an experience, but that they're able to take things away with them which become ongoing practices in their everyday lives.

We're also looking to develop an app to allow young people to journey with what's going on at the site wherever they are.

4. How are you hoping youth leaders will be impacted?

If I'm honest, during my time in youth ministry I was often bad at prioritising prayer, and I think others experience the same struggles. If we can do something towards encouraging youth workers to pray, whether in a traditional or contemporary style, we see that as a good thing.

5. Why would you say it's so important for Christians from different churches to work together?

Ultimately there is only one Church.

Being diverse and doing things in different ways is beautiful and glorious, and we hope that With will be a place where we can be different and love one another's differences, while still working together.

Being different shouldn't mean that we don't do things together – we need to be able to acknowledge each other's diversity of traditions and expressions and function together in unity.

6. How do you think we can encourage young people to engage in ecumenism?

Young people need to see it modelled, showing them that the Church is not about our separate ghettos, but about opening up to work together.

7. How can churches and individuals get involved with your project?

At the heart of this new idea is the eternal power of prayer, and we hope that you will want to join our journey by bringing With before God **in your prayers**.

You can also **join our mailing list** for updates at www.bewith.community/

On our website you'll also find details of how to **give** towards refurbishing the buildings we've been given.

And if you feel strongly about meeting the spiritual needs of young Christians, and are inspired by what you have read so far, why not **come and see the site** and envision with us the nourishing, life-changing place it could become? If you'd like to arrange a visit or find out how else you can support us or be part of the reimagining of All Hallows, please email hello@bewith.community.

"The plans for All Hallows Ditchingham are amongst some of the most exciting proposals I have heard since I have been Archbishop. I commend the faith, the risk, the sacrifice and the tenacity of the team. And I can't wait to see this community up and praying. I commend this step of faith for the sake of the renewal of the church and the glory of God."

Archbishop Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and one of CTE's Presidents

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

Making evangelism easier: newly launched web resource

Revd Ben Aldous, Principal Officer for Evangelism and Mission here at CTE, shares about an exciting new website which provides comprehensive answers to questions about the Christian faith, and gives visitors the opportunity to ask their own questions to a real-life Christian...

New site seeks to answer people's questions

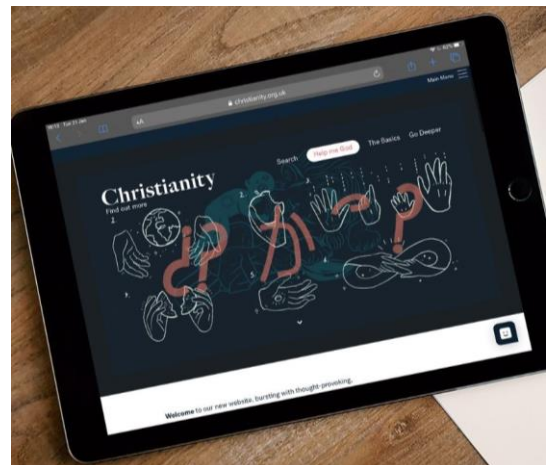
One of the privileges of my role at CTE is supporting and encouraging the work of the Christian Enquiry Agency (CEA) as a Trustee.

This week, on Tuesday 11th February 2020, I spent time at the House of Lords with 50 others from across the ecumenical landscape, celebrating the launch of CEA's website www.Christianity.org.uk.

This website is the go-to place to find answers about the Christian faith from a non-partisan perspective, and visitors to the site can engage in meaningful conversations online with a real Christian using the conversation feature.

The site also contains content about many aspects of the Christian faith, beautiful imagery, specially commissioned artwork, and up-to-date answers to the kinds of questions about spirituality and identity that people are asking.

CEA has been running since the late 1980s, with a wide range of denominations supporting the charity. Over the last few years the CEA team have been re-imagining their primary tool, www.Christianity.org.uk, seeking to make the easiest evangelism *even easier* than ever. And, what's more, the site is completely free to link to from church websites and materials.



Impacted lives

There are so many encouraging stories of people through the years who have been helped in their journey towards God through an online conversation with someone in the CEA team. We allow people to take the lead and ask the questions they really want to. Some conversations have gone on for years! In a post-Christendom world, where people are increasingly hesitant to walk through the door of a church, this allows them the chance to be in contact with Christians in a virtual but very meaningful way.

It was good to see people from all sorts of churches and charities gathered at the launch, as comedian Andy Kind introduced the site and regaled us with stories. Baroness Maeve Sherlock graciously hosted us, and we had the opportunity to see the website in action.



Dr. Bex Lewis, Senior Lecturer in Digital Marketing at Manchester Metropolitan University, says:

"The questions that people search for online change over time. According to Google Trends, searches such as 'who am I?', 'purpose', 'gender' and 'mental health' have all increased in the UK in the past 10 years. The website www.Christianity.org.uk is aiming to bring God's hope to a space on the internet that is currently populated with mostly secular answers."

Often, in times of desperation, people will type "God help me" into a search engine. The Christianity website has particular sections which deal with the type of questions people maybe asking.

The easiest evangelism ever

CEA are offering this website as a gift to the wider Church.

Why not use it on the bottom of your church or Churches Together website, or on your church or organisation's literature?

In a world where Google search can bring up increasingly weird or 'fake' news, this website offers a vast array of articles that are well written and researched and help people navigate the big questions of faith, introducing people to the person and story of Jesus.

So why not take a look yourself, let other Christians know about this resource, and also share the site with those you know who might have questions about faith which you're not sure you could answer.

Visit the site at www.Christianity.org.uk

Visit their web page ['Use our URL'](#) to find out how to embed a link to the website on your site.

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

The God Who Speaks: A Scripture Revolution

Fleur Dorrell, Catholic Scripture Engagement Manager, shares more about the new campaign between the Catholic Church in England and Wales and Bible Society.



*We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life. **1 John 1: 1***

A Scripture revolution is unfolding through a unique partnership between the Catholic Church in England and Wales and Bible Society. This campaign is focused on creative and inclusive ways to engage with the Bible, because the Bible is as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago.

Encounters with Christ

Our campaign is a creative model for any Church group or community to focus on the Bible in a sustained way and is primarily based on enabling encounters with Christ. We want to make Christ visible and prominent through opening the Scriptures to everyone we meet. We want to share what we have heard, seen, looked at and touched regarding the Word made flesh and the word of God. To do this we need to work with every level of our Church structures so that there are no barriers to engaging with the Bible.

For Catholics, the Bible is more than the collection of its books; it is the Word made flesh in Christ. The Bible is not self-sufficient or self-determined, it is a gift of which our Church is its curator and interpreter. The Sacred Scriptures are foundational to the life and teachings of the Church, in the daily Mass and Divine Office, the celebration of the Sacraments and rituals, in the lives of the Saints, and in the Church's traditions, culture and heritage.

This wealth of inter-connections between the Bible and the living out of our faith are easily adapted into other faith groups. We contextualise the Bible according to where we live and we utilise all our faith resources to share the Gospel in all places and with all people.

Why is it called 'The God Who Speaks'?

We're not *just* disciples of an inherited faith – God always speaks to us in the present tense. Faith is handed down, but it is not second-hand. This is what Scripture is about – listening to God in the present tense. When we create opportunities and spaces for people to experience God in the present tense, then they meet Christ in their hearts.

We therefore, have a responsibility to share the Bible in the public domain – to let God speak in all places and at all times. Whether on the bus, at the community table, in the office, school, or at home with the family.¹

¹ Verbum Domini, 2010

How are other church traditions getting involved?

[CTBI have just created a new Lent resource](#) which highlights our 'Year of the Word' and is in support of our campaign, and is entitled: *Opening the Scriptures*.

Ipswich Churches Together are hosting an event to support The God who Speaks on 7th March – [Enjoy the Bible: Sensing the Sacred through Art and Music](#) at the St Nicholas Centre, Ipswich.

Portsmouth Catholic diocese and Portsmouth Anglican diocese are coming together to host a Scripture Tour at Winchester Cathedral between 26-27th September, with a variety of ecumenical workshops, events and worship, as well as the showing of our commissioned artwork by artist Pete Codling.

Why now?

2020 is the 1,600th anniversary of the death of St Jerome – our most important Biblical scholar who translated the Bible from the Hebrew and the Greek into Latin. It's also the 10th Anniversary of Pope Benedict's Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (The Word of the Lord) in which he proposes giving everyone access to Scripture as a democratic imperative; our Bishops are, therefore, responding to this Papal invitation.

How does this campaign work?

We have three themes for dioceses to focus on:

- a) **Celebrating God's Word** – enriching our worshipping and spiritual community.
- b) **Sharing God's Word** – enriching our evangelisation, proclamation and formation.
- c) **Living God's Word** – enriching our social action and outreach.

We offer a sustained collaboration between all 22 Catholic dioceses and Bible Society in shaping education, evangelisation, creative arts and social action. By enabling subsidiarity models, each diocese is equipped to make the campaign their own. With grants and training to support dioceses; a Scripture Tour and Roadshow; an official artist; National Gallery videos of Biblical paintings; St Jerome and the Lion toys; and a variety of inclusive resources and formats available through our website, we invite everyone to engage with the Scriptures at grassroots level. We want to increase Bible confidence so that we can move from passive membership to active discipleship within our faith and church life.

New Apostolic Letter on the Bible

Pope Francis has just issued a new Apostolic Letter on the Bible – *Aperuit Illis*, in which he says: *"The relationship between the Risen Lord, the community of believers and sacred Scripture is essential to our identity as Christians. Without the Lord who opens our minds to them, it is impossible to understand the Scriptures in depth. Yet the*

The word of God given to us makes us not only hearers, but also heralds so that we share in Christ's mission and are empowered by the Holy Spirit. [91]. The word that we receive is meant for all; it cannot be kept to ourselves. Since it is true, it belongs to everyone. [92]

contrary is equally true: without the Scriptures, the events of the mission of Jesus and of his Church in this world would remain incomprehensible."

When?

This campaign takes place between 30th September 2019 and 31st December 2020.

Email Fleur Dorrell at fleur.dorrell@biblesociety.org.uk to receive our free campaign brochure.

Find out more on The God Who Speaks website, godwhospeaks.uk

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

CTE conference to encourage collaboration in missional disciple-making

Our CTE conference *[Discipling the whole Church to reach the whole nation: Learning to be missionary disciples together](#)* is now just five weeks away (taking place from 23rd-24th March 2020). We are thrilled that over 60 leaders have booked in to come together and reflect on the intersect between mission and discipleship, drawn from a range of our Member Churches, Christian charities, youth agencies and Bodies in Association.



An often neglected, and vital, element in effective mission is the calibre of discipleship. This consultation therefore seeks to not only explore mission strategies for the transformation of communities, and the means of effective evangelistic work, but also to see how we might strengthen the means of discipling Christians, so that they are confident and courageous witnesses to Christ. We hope to come together to share on the pilgrimage of what Pope Francis calls being 'missionary disciples'.

We are delighted that Revd Dr Joel Edwards has agreed to be our keynote speaker and help us reflect upon the intersects between mission, evangelism and discipleship. Joel is a writer and broadcaster, and was formerly General Director of the Evangelical Alliance (1997-2008) and International Director for Micah Challenge (2009-2014).

To enable us to hear from as many different churches and organisations during our time together we will be using a PechaKucha style of presentation. PechaKucha (a Japanese word meaning 'chit chat') is a storytelling format, where a presenter shows 20 slides, with 20 seconds of commentary per slide (6 minutes and 40 seconds total). We hope to hear around 25 different presentations during our gathering, as well as creating space to reflect, talk, share best practice and consider future collaboration.

Please pray for us as we gather, listen and find ways to be better at working as one.

Revd Ben Aldous, Principal Officer for Evangelism and Mission here at CTE.

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

Thy Kingdom Come church workshops around the country

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement which invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. This year it's taking place from 21st-31st May 2020.

The Thy Kingdom Come team are offering [free two-hour interactive workshops](#) called Inspire and Enable events, giving you an opportunity to find out more about how churches in your area can get involved, and receive free sample resources.



Last year saw a great response to these events, so in 2020 the team are keen invite people from any church to attend one of more than 20 workshops around the country, where you'll also receive free sample resources.

Please visit the website to find an event near you this February and March: thykingdomcome.global/stories/2020-inspire-equip-events

To help make sure they have enough sample resources for everyone, please do **book in advance** using the contact details provided for the event you wish to attend.

For further information or assistance please contact Jean Kerr, Inspire and Enable trainer, on either 07791503123 or jean.kerr@lambethpalace.org.uk

Access prayer resources

There are so many different ways to get involved. Take a look at the Thy Kingdom Come resources page to find out more: thykingdomcome.global/resources

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

And finally...

Churches speak on Brexit day

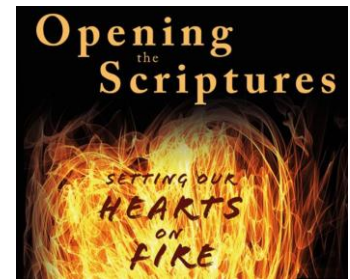
As the UK prepared to leave the European Union on Friday 31st January 2020, a number of our Member Churches and other Christian organisations issued statements and prayers. These were collated by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and can be [found on their web page](#).



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



World Day of Prayer: 6th 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/



Rural Ministries Regional Conferences

Many view the rural church as small and inconsequential, but come and explore how exponential growth can be seen where you are, through a focus on making disciples who make disciples, who in turn make disciples. Through four interactive sessions we will see how we can positively impact those around us in our rural communities.



[Click here for full details and booking.](#)

Year of prayer for climate justice

In 2020 Christian Aid is unleashing a year of non-stop prayer for climate justice. You and your church can join together with people around the world to bow our heads and lift our voices to build a better world. [Find out more...](#)



National Sports Sunday 2020: 17th 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



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