Minutes of an open meeting of Churches Together in Harrogate. Wednesday 13 July 7.30pm

At Wesley Chapel, Oxford Street, Harrogate

Present: Chair: Revd Trevor Dixon, Secretary: Christine Jack; Judith Simpson ( St.Peter’s); Guest Visitor: Revd Brunel James, Ecumenical Officer for the Diocese of Leeds

Apologies: none

Agenda

1. Overview and update: Revd Trevor Dixon (TD) presented an overview and update on the past and current activities of CTiH. There are two occasions each year for an open gathering: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Good Friday. There has been an increasing lack of interest and support for the group, especially since the Covid lockdown. As Treasurer, TD said that there were some monies in the CTiH bank account but did not share any recent Bank Statements or other financial details.
2. The Ecumenical Officer (BJ) then gave an overview of Churches Together groups, based on Churches Together in England as the wider body.
3. The current shape is that of a relational or receptive ecumenism, where the focus is on fostering good relationships between those of different denominations through LEPs, Covenants, and issues around the possibilities of communion with partner churches
4. At the recent meeting of CTE at Swanwick, the energy seemed to be coming from the Black-led Pentecostal churches. Antony Reddie leads here; and the issues focus around racism, unconscious bias, racial justice and equality. Our diversity is to be celebrated.
5. BJ concluded with the observation that in line with the Christian pattern of death and resurrection, there are waves of focus. He felt that this was a time for CTiH to ‘die’; to close and to wait to see what the future holds in this field.
6. The response from the group was that we could focus on shared projects and common causes, such as food banks and other areas of social concern, and caring for the environment as God’s creation. There was a need for ecumenical issues to be shared more widely in congregations. However, energy was lacking, and no one seemed prepared to come forward and take on any of the Officer roles which are necessary for the group to function. Perhaps the number who attended this meeting is an indicator of the general apathy and lack of interest in things ecumenical here in Harrogate.
7. It was decided to close the current local CTiH group. This needs to be done gradually during the course of about one year. It was agreed that any monies could be donated to Mowbray Community Church (MCC) with the proviso that the MCC leadership witnessed at a Good Friday service at the cenotaph in 2023.
8. The Treasurer (TD) will deal with the transfer of funds, in conjunction with the co-signatory,the Secretary (CJ). The Ecumenical Officer (BJ) offered to write a letter to CTiH stating the current situation and agreement of the meeting, which can then be posted on the CTiH webpages, and shared with all the churches.
9. The meeting ended at 9pm