



A word from the Chair: The Revd Richard Church

Dear Friends

The cause of Christian Unity is never more urgent than it is today as we look out on a world divided by factionalism and economic inequality and prejudice in its many different guises.

It is therefore with pleasure that I commend to you the work of Churches Together in Lancashire as we welcome the Revd Anton Müller, Ecumenical Facilitator and Ms Helen Boothroyd, Social Justice / Inter Faith Development Officer respectively.

Anton and Helen are resources for the churches of Lancashire and are resourced by us all so please use their expertise and invite them to come and see what you are doing to promote the Kingdom of God in your parishes and neighbourhoods.

Our task is to promote the Christian life of Lancashire seeking to incorporate as many different expressions of Christian community as possible. So please send us your news for inclusion in future editions of this newsletter; distribute our newsletter widely through your networks, and put us in contact with local Churches Together or other ecumenical groups in your area so that we might all benefit from the diversity of the Church in Lancashire.

Yours in Christ

Richard Church



Photo: Jenny Bond

The Commissioning of Anton Müller and Helen Boothroyd at St Anthony of Padua, Preston, January 22nd 2014



Jenny Bond CTE Training & Resourcing, The Rt Revd Julian Henderson, Bishop of Blackburn; The Revd Paul Davies, Chair of Lancashire District; Ms Helen Boothroyd, Social Justice and Inter Faith Development; The Revd Kevin Huggett, Anglican Chaplain, Univ of Lancaster; The Revd Richard Church, Moderator of NW Synod; Fr Peter Draper, Parish Priest, St Anthony of Padua; The Revd Anton Müller, Ecumenical Facilitator; The Revd Mike Hartley, DEO Blackburn; Maggie McSherry, Lancaster Diocese Faith and Justice Commission
Photo Courtesy of Lancashire Evening Post

To contribute to this newsletter email: antonmuller@ctlancashire.org.uk or helenboothroyd@ctlancashire.org.uk

A word from the Ecumenical Facilitator, The Revd Anton Müller



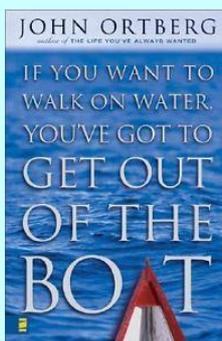
I am delighted to have been appointed to the position of Ecumenical Facilitator for Churches Together in Lancaster. I have been in post since December 9th 2013 and during the last three months I have had the privilege and pleasure of meeting with church leaders across the Christian denominations in Lancashire.

I am an Anglican priest with a very ecumenical mix of background and experience. I started out many years ago as a teacher of RE, Music and Drama in Sunderland after graduating from Durham University. This was followed by five years developing the education and visitor programme for Rochester Cathedral in Kent and dabbling in lay training for the Diocese of Rochester. It was a wonderful mission opportunity to present the Christian story to the 300,000 visitors and 20,000 school children each year.

It was no less an ecumenical venture as the one in which I find myself now. It was important that as a Christian organisation we were visible and active in the lives of those around us, that we were aware of the needs of the community and did our part to contribute to the growth and well-being of that community. *It was important to remember our primary role as servant.*

The same is true of every church organisation and how important it is that as churches we pool our resources in the service of community. This does not mean that we lose or dumb down our distinctive identities, rather our distinctiveness and our diversity is something to celebrate. Our priority as Churches Together is not about finding ways of sharing worship in order to express our unity but it is about finding ways of sharing our distinctive resources, our gifts, our talents, our time, our money, our prayers, our buildings, our lands - not for the benefit of one another, but for the benefit of the communities we are called to serve.

In this time of economic downturn and with falling roles facing many churches it is tempting to batten down the hatches, to weather the storms, to protect preserve and keep our resources to ourselves. But that is not what we are called to do or to be.



John Ortberg wrote "If you want to walk on water you have get out of the boat". As churches we are indeed being asked to walk on water in response to Christ's calling upon us. It is a tough calling but it is a calling to enter into the lives of the peoples around us and many of those lives are 'all at sea'. We can either cling to the wreckage of our own sinking ships or we can become the life-rafs that bring those who are lost, who are struggling, who lonely, who are down and out, into places of safety and refuge.

(Ortberg, J., 2003, Zondervan, 0-310-25056-0)



In my various roles I have witnessed both kinds of churches, the sinking ships and the life-rafts. Both are with us here in Lancashire and the challenge of this new and exciting role is facilitate those conversations and to make those introductions that will enable sinking ships to become life-boats.

I have already witnessed fantastic life-saving work in Longton and in Lancaster. These are churches who are walking on water to bring hope to the communities that God has called them to serve. Such is the impact of what God is doing through them that they receive and respond to referrals directly from the police and social services. They demonstrate what it means to be church and they trust in God for the resources they need to carry out His work.

More recently I enjoyed attending and witnessing the licensing of Matt Allen who has begun a new ministry with his wife Naomi and their baby son Ben, with the Trinity Community Church, an Anglican-Baptist partnership serving the community of Accrington.



During the next three months I look forward to meeting with the group of Denominational Ecumenical Officers. I was delighted to learn recently of the appointment of Fr Chris Loughran and look forward to the appointment of a Baptist representative to complete the team.

Forthcoming events and activities:

Lancashire Sings Christmas returns this year on December 18th - *watch this space!* There are plans for an annual 6th Form Conference bringing young adults from across the County to hear what the church has to say on key issues in science, politics, welfare, death and dying, health and well-being. There are plans for an Annual Lecture Programme "The Spirit of Ecumenism" inviting to senior church leaders to address ecumenical and inter-faith gatherings.

The Churches Together in Lancashire Website (www.ctlancashire.org.uk) is undergoing a face lift. In the meantime please find and friend us on FACEBOOK and post what you are doing through Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

Featured right: Church Leaders gathered on March 25th to discuss and plan the work and activities of Churches Together in Lancashire (Paul Davies, Lancashire Methodist District; Terry Brain RC Bishop of Salford; Pat Golding Quaker; Tim Presswood NW Baptist Association; Richard Church, Moderator, NW Synod; John Goddard, Anglican Bishop of Burnley; Geoff Pearson, Anglican Bishop of Lancaster



After five years with Rochester Cathedral Anton went to work as the Education and Training Officer for CMS in the UK. This led to his calling to ordained ministry and ordination in Canterbury where he served his curacy in Folkestone combined with a chaplaincy role at South Kent College, the Sea Cadets and the Folkestone and Hythe branch of the Royal British Legion. Latterly Anton as enjoyed ministry as a hospital and hospice chaplain and spiritual care co-ordinator. Anton is married to Sue, a hospice nurse; together they enjoy walking and sailing in the Lake District and spending time with family.

A word from the Social Justice and Inter Faith Development Officer

Helen Boothroyd



I write this after just under a month in post as CTL's Social Justice and Inter Faith Development Officer. Inter faith and social justice form a natural pairing. George MacLeod, founder of the Iona Community, famously said that it is a demanding common task that builds community. Members of different faith communities often find that in working together to undertake practical social action for the good of their wider community and getting involved together in public policy and social justice issues that they naturally talk and share together and build up greater mutual understanding and respect.

I have been working as the Social Responsibility Development Officer for Churches Together in Cumbria (20 hours a week) for many years and I am delighted to have the opportunity to undertake similar work on social action, social justice and public policy across Lancashire. I hope that the cross-fertilisation that can result from my doing this work across Cumbria and Lancashire will bring benefit in both.

There is lots of wonderful work taking place around Lancashire in inter faith activity and faith community action for social justice. I have spent much of my first month in the job meeting some of the key people engaged in this work, which I have found very inspiring. I think it is really important in developing this role to first listen, learn and look; to find out about the exciting inter faith, social action and social justice work that churches, church-based organisations and inter faith partnerships all around the county are doing.

I would be very glad of invitations to come and meet with Inter Faith Forums, Churches Together Groups and LEPs, and social action projects around the county, and to talk with you about ways in which I can support you in inter faith engagement and action on social issues: helenboothroyd@ctlancashire.org.uk; 07503 931196.

Christian Muslim Encounters in Lancashire launch event



On 10 March I attended the launch meeting in Blackburn of a new project 'Christian Muslim Encounters in Lancashire'; supported by a number of partners, including Churches Together in Lancashire, it brings together grass-roots inter faith practitioners with academics working in this field to provide resources to promote dialogue and action between Christians and Muslims.

PHOTO: Maulana Ismaeel Nakhuda (LCM Manager), Bishop Julian Henderson, Mayor Salim Mulla, Anderson Jeremiah (Lancaster University) & Ali Amla (Global Village) — with Ismaeel Nakhuda, Bishop Julian Henderson, Anderson Jeremiah and Ali Amla.



The Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Revd Julian Henderson, and the Manager of the Lancashire Council of Mosques, Maulana Ismaeel Nakhuda, spoke on 'Why do we need dialogue?' Maulana Ismaeel Nakhuda identified the need to challenge economic inequality as a pressing issue on which the Christian and Muslim faith communities in Lancashire need to work together at the present time. A lively question and discussion session followed.

End Hunger Fast

On Friday 4 April I will be joining many thousands of other people in a day of fasting as part of the End Hunger Fast campaign: <http://endhungerfast.co.uk>. (The End Hunger Fast is supported by the Trussell Trust, Church Action on Poverty and other Christian organisations.)



This campaign aims to draw the attention of the Government to the rapid growth of hunger in our country. Over half a million people have used food banks in the past year. 5,500 people were admitted to hospital for malnutrition in 2013. More than half of all people who have turned to food banks have been referred as a direct result of welfare benefit delays or sanctions.

Food prices have risen over 30% in the last five years; much higher than the increase in the National Minimum Wage. We need a Living Wage for all. Churches and other faith communities have been setting up and running food banks to help those who would otherwise go hungry. Our faith also calls us to speak out to highlight the scandal that food banks are required at all in Twenty-First Century Britain; the seventh richest nation in the world.

National and regional church leaders have led the way, speaking out against the causes of hunger; our own Chair of Churches Together in Lancashire, Revd Richard Church, is among those church leaders who signed the well-publicised letter to the Daily Mirror on 19 February and has been participating in the End Hunger Fast during Lent.

Many of you have signed up to join the day of fasting on 4 April. If you have not, please consider doing so - on this or another day in Lent. Write to your MP and to Iain Duncan Smith explaining why you are participating. If you do not feel you can fast, please consider supporting those that are doing so and addressing the problem of hunger in our communities by:

1. Making a donation to Church Action on Poverty to help people who are going hungry to tell their story. <https://www.buzzbnk.org/ProjectDetails.aspx?projectId=160> Church Action on Poverty is working with MPs of all parties to organise an independent Parliamentary inquiry into the causes of food poverty and to make sure that politicians understand the terrible reality of hunger in the UK.
2. Making a donation of cash, food or volunteer time to your local food bank.



Time to Scrap Trident: an evening with Bruce Kent: 28 April, Preston

Lancaster Diocesan Faith & Justice Commission has organised this event on Monday 28 April at 7pm at St Wilfrid's Parish Centre: 1 Winckley Square, Preston, PR1 3JJ. How does our Faith guide us on nuclear weapons? For more information: lfjc@talktalk.net; 01524 383081.



What happens when you die? 1 May: Brierfield

Inter faith dialogue event organised by Building Bridges in Burnley on Thursday 1 May at 7pm at Pendleside Hospice, Brierfield, Burnley, BB10 2LW.

Radical Compassion: Mark Yaconelli: 11 May, Preston

St. George's Church from 11am on Sunday 11 May. Ideal for ministers, organisational leaders, social justice activists, teachers, parents, and anyone who seeks practical training in compassionate living. Develop skills for self-compassion. Learn how to identify and transform difficult emotions. Develop techniques for relating to colleagues, clients, friends, family members, and even enemies with genuine compassion. Understand how to participate in social actions that confront injustice from a grounded place of truth rather than reactive anger. Cost: £25, including food and refreshments. For more information and to book a place, contact Andrew Pratt: andrewpratt1@btinternet.com; 07971 733971.

European and local elections: 22 May

Resources for churches at: <http://ecumenicalvoices2014.eu>, www.jointpublicissues.org.uk (from April), www.churchofengland.org/our-views/international-affairs/european-affairs/parliamentary-elections.aspx www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Home/News/COMECE-Statement

Loaves & Fishes Celebration around Morecambe Bay: 7-15 June

A partnership project between Blackburn Diocese Environment Group, CAFOD Lancaster, Churches Together in Cumbria Environment Group, Churches Together in Lancashire and Lancaster Diocesan Faith & Justice Commission. Coastal faith communities and schools around the Bay are invited to arrange a 'Loaves & Fishes' meal during the week to share fish, seafood and bread in a shore-side picnic, school meal or church hall party. To register your interest email loavesfishes2014@yahoo.co.uk



Faith and Climate Change: an evening with Alistair MacIntosh: 12 June, Lancaster.

The author of *Hell and High Water: Climate Change, Hope and the Human Condition* will speak at this evening event in central Lancaster on Thursday 12 June, followed by discussion, refreshments and networking. Save the date; more detail to follow in subsequent newsletters.