

Welcome to the December issue of the Churches Together in Lancashire newsletter which comes to with prayers and greetings for Christmas



**From the Ecumenical Facilitator Revd Anton Müller
Churches Together in Lancashire Forum and AGM**

I have been in post for one year and during that time have enjoyed meeting with churches and groups across the county. It is always good to have the invitations to speak or preach at meetings and services and I am already looking forward to visits at both ends of the week of Christian Unity January and to the gathering on **20 January at St Cuthbert's, Fulwood for the Churches Together in Lancashire Forum and AGM.**

The Church Leaders across the denominations will be present along with each of their Denominational Ecumenical Officers. **This will be your opportunity to come together as the whole Church of Christ in Lancashire and to celebrate and affirm who we are. Churches and groups are invited to bring a display of some aspect of their mission and ministry in the communities they serve.** This is your opportunity to encourage and support one another, to celebrate the faith in Christ that unites us and to honour the traditions that in past may have divided us but now represent the richness of our diversity and point to the ecumenical journey in which we all share.

Please contact me at antonmuller@ctlancashire.org.uk if you would like be part of the missions and ministry "marketstall". The Forum will also include the opportunity to celebrate the social justice pledge which Church Leaders or their representatives signed together at The Foxton Centre on 14 October and to hear from Tim Keightley, CEO of The Foxton Centre, who will make a short presentation about the inspiring work of this excellent social action project. During the AGM the new Constitution will be presented under which new member churches and trustees will be welcomed. We begin at 7pm. The AGM will be at 8pm and closing worship will be led by Churches Together in Fulwood and Broughton at 8.30pm.

Silent Night Carols

Christmas is such a fantastic time to demonstrate that visible unity and so I hope that many churches will make their way to the Deepdale Stadium to mark the centenary of the 1914 Christmas Truce. **Churches with Preston North End FC invite you and your congregation to join us for a Silent Night Carols event at The Deepdale Stadium.** It will be a fantastic opportunity to celebrate Christmas together with regular supporters and members of the local community in unique surroundings. Silent Night Carols is on **Monday 8 December from 7.00pm** and will last for about one hour.



Praying for our schools

December began with news on the radio that Nativity Plays in schools and Carol Services in general are in decline. We have an opportunity as Churches across Lancashire to show that the opposite is the case. I have been in a number of schools recently and delighted to discover that the traditional nativity play is alive and well. It is true, however, that many schools have opted for non-religious Christmas events, more likely to feature cowboys, aliens and even lobsters in place of the Mary and Joseph and the Baby Jesus. It so important that we pray for our schools, volunteer to be involved in school support groups, serve as governors and do whatever we can to be a **Christian presence**. To be the Christian presence in the life of our community is the calling we all share as one Church and the gift we have to offer is none other than Jesus, God with us.

Lancashire Sings Christmas



And as for the decline in carol services, the largest carol service in the county will take place in venues across Lancashire on the evening of **18 December**. If you have not registered a venue, there is still time. **Check out the Facebook page "Sing Christmas"** to find out where to go or to register a venue. I shall be at the Lancaster Royal Infirmary which will be one of the link-up venues with Radio Lancashire.

95.5 MHz, 103.9
MHz, 104.5 MHz,
855 MW, 1557 MW,
RDS: BBC LANCS

Cinnamon Network Faith Audit

Following previous reports about the Cinnamon Network I am delighted to announce that the Faith Audit is getting underway. This is a nationwide gathering of information about the work of service to the community.



A number of "Champions" have been identified who will carry out the Audit for different parts of Lancashire during January and February. The national results

will be forwarded to Government before the May elections and provide a witness to what God is doing through the churches in the UK for the healing of the nation.

Check out www.cinnamonnetwork.org.uk



From the Social Justice and Inter Faith Development Officer Helen Boothroyd

The highlight for me of the last month was undoubtedly **Inter Faith Week** (16-22 November). An amazing number of events took place all around Lancashire with hundreds of people participating in total.



Lancashire Forum of Faiths' **Celebration of Faith in Lancashire** at County Hall was a wonderful event, bringing together inter faith groups from all over Lancashire to share



their stories with each other and a wider audience. We watched an inspiring new film about faith across the county and heard the Leader of Lancashire County Council Jennifer Mein talking about the importance for the public sector of partnership with faith communities.

During Inter Faith Week I also had the privilege of taking part in a Faith and Finance event, an Inter Faith Bazaar on Inspiration for Peace and a panel at Cardinal Newman College in Preston on 'Is religion sexist?' - at which I was greatly impressed by the wisdom and perception in the student's questions.

Inter Faith Week in Lancashire 2014
16-22 November




Saturday 15 November
Football Unites, Blackburn
2-5pm: Blackburn Soccaredome, ahfc.org is hosting a festival of football for people of different faiths/organisations and any age/ability. Celebrating unity, peace and respect; fundraising for Children in Need. Team registration info@ahfc.org

Sunday 16 November
Voice of Women in Faith, Preston
1-5pm: St John's Minister, Church Street, Preston, PR1 3BU. Workshop on financial inclusion, homelessness, health/well-being for women of all faiths by invitation; to take part email Sufina.aslam@virgin.net, zamaa@hotmail.co.uk, Sahara.Inpreston@btinternet.com; phone 01772 702090 or 07907 955610.

Sajjad Haider Karim MEP, Burnley
4.30-5pm: Burnley & Pendle Faith Centre, Barden Lane, Burnley, BB11 1JD. Sajjad Haider Karim MEP was born in Blackburn and grew up in Pendle. He was the first British Muslim to be elected to the EU. Sajjad will speak on 'British values', radicalisation and the impact of global issues on interfaith dialogue.

Monday 17 November
Faith Trail Part One, Preston
9am-12.30pm: A tour of different places of worship starting at Vajrawarshi Buddhist temple, West Cliff and including Hindu, Christian and Pagan worship sites. Booking required: Sunaysa: shovawals1@ucan.ac.uk



How to help the homeless this winter

How to Help the Homeless this Winter

We guess that if you are bothering to read this you are the kind of person whose heart goes out to those in need, especially in cold weather or in the period before Christmas.

You may already be wondering whether it is a good idea to give cash or better to offer a cuppa and a sandwich. Might it be better to use your money to buy a copy of the big issue from one of the vendors on the street, as this offers them greater dignity and a better chance to turn around their lives through work and managing their own money?

Organisations which help homeless people are usually very appreciative of gifts of money, food and time to support their work, however sometimes, especially just before Christmas they can be overwhelmed with inappropriate offers of help. Turning up at five 'o' clock on Christmas Eve with half a dozen frozen turkeys, or ringing at short notice to ask if you can volunteer to serve Christmas lunch to the homeless can cause more problems than it helps solve and lead to disappointment all round. So if you want to help please make sure you enquire at least a month in advance.

So here are some suggestions of ways you can offer effective help not just at Christmas but throughout the year.



Donations

We think that your money can be wisely and effectively used if channelled through specialist charities working with the homeless, because they offer high quality and effective support. If you want to raise or give money to such groups locally it will be well used and much appreciated.

If you want to give things instead of money the following items can be particularly useful:

- Non perishable foods (especially items that require a minimum of preparation and cooking and don't need a can opener)
- Toilettries etc.
- Clothing, particularly warm and waterproof outer garments, new underwear and socks)
- Sleeping bags and other bedding - please check first whether the organisation wants to distribute such items.

Volunteering

If you have time to spare on a regular basis many of the projects working with homeless people are glad of unpaid help in befriending and serving homeless people and in background support of their work, throughout the year. Most organisations serving the homeless and vulnerable expect their regular volunteers to attend training courses before you can start work, and in many cases it is necessary to ask for a DBS check on criminal records.

Listening, Learning and Campaigning

Find out about the ministries & services that are available to homeless people locally. Inform yourselves about the lives of homeless people by talking to them and listening to the stories they have to tell. Homelessness has many different causes, and there is no single solution. It's often linked to poverty, family breakdown, domestic violence, alcohol or drug abuse and getting into trouble with the law. The more you understand the lives of homeless people the more you are likely to understand the issues they face.

If you are concerned about homelessness you may want to write to your MP or councillors or get involved with campaigns run by Housing Justice the national voice of Christian action in the field of housing and homelessness or Shelter, who have been leading the struggle against homelessness for many decades.

TOGETHER LANCASHIRE
A joint venture of Anglicans, Methodists and United Reformed Church
Contact Tel: 01254 658914
Email: greg.smith@together-lancashire.org.uk

PTO for local information and contacts

Together Lancashire has produced a generic information resource - **attached here in Publisher** - with ideas of how to donate money and goods, volunteer time and campaign in order to help the homeless this winter. The aim is that these leaflets be printed and distributed widely among the churches in every local area; if possible with information about local food provision and services for the homeless printed on the reverse. If you would like some printed copies for your local churches phone 01254 658914 or email greg.smith@together-lancashire.org.uk. **Please distribute this resource as soon and as widely as possible.**

Christian Aid Christmas appeal



Good news! The UK Government will match every pound we raise, meaning double the difference for people living in poverty.* Be part of the transformation this Christmas.

Here's just a few of the ways your donation could deliver hope this Christmas:

£2.50 from you, doubled by the government, could provide **a day's training for a community health worker.**

£5 from you, doubled by the government, could buy **a blanket to wrap a newborn in.**

£20 from you, doubled by the government, could **support an education group for 50 mothers** for a month.

£100 from you, doubled by the government, could buy **a hospital bed.**

*Donations made to the Christmas appeal between 07/11/14 and 06/02/15 will be matched up to £5 million.

Matching your
donations with



ukaid

CAFOD asks you to write to your MP on climate change



Hundreds of people have already contacted national party leaders asking them to stop climate change from pushing people deeper into poverty. Now CAFOD wants MPs to push party leaders on this and has provided a [guide to help you contact your MP](#) as part of the One Climate, One World campaign.

Church Action on Poverty calls for Poverty Premium to be tackled

Low-income families have to pay an extra £1,300 every year for vital goods and services like food, fuel and finance. Church Action on Poverty is asking Christians to [send an email asking the Government to develop a strategy, in partnership with communities, to tackle this Poverty Premium.](#)

Church support for fairer finance

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Task Group on Responsible Credit and Savings has recently launched [#TOYOURCREDIT](#), a new website to highlight its work and the many other church-based initiatives to promote responsible community finance, debt and money advice and financial education.

The Church Urban Fund has issued a report [Building financial inclusion in our communities](#) highlighting that access to financial services is essential in our society, yet a significant number of people lack access to even the most basic financial products, and showing what churches can do to help address these problems.



Credit unions are one initiative to tackle financial exclusion, but they can only work if a wide variety of people in different financial circumstances join them. Find out if there is a credit union in your area and, if so, consider joining it. It will keep money in the local area and help low-income people in your community stay out of the clutches of high interest lenders.

Lancashire Churches Sponsored Ride and Stride: 12 September 2015



The **National Churches Trust** bike ride and stride is an annual event in many parts of the country, with the aim of raising money for the upkeep of buildings. Riders / striders are sponsored to visit churches across their county; the money raised being divided between the Trust and a church chosen by the rider. It is an opportunity for anyone to get out on their bike, or walk, with friends, family, as a

church group, or alone; to have a nice day cycling - or walking - on quiet roads in the country or town; to visit some interesting churches, including those nearby they might not have visited; and to raise money to help with the upkeep of our local churches.

In 2008, a group of us set up the first such ride in Lancashire, located around Preston and the Fylde. Since then we've increased the number of churches and participants, but not to the extent we hoped for. In other counties this has become a really major event, for example in Suffolk 3000 people and over 700 churches were involved, raising over £140,000. **Success depends on volunteers, and especially on keen cyclists in churches who can mobilise people from their locality.**

Here in Lancashire we have some unique buildings, wonderful cycling countryside, and fantastic cycling routes such as the Lancashire Cycle Way and the 21 mile Guild Wheel Cycle Route around Preston. **This year we'd like to extend the range of the event beyond Preston and the Fylde, and would welcome anyone from churches in Lancashire to get involved.**



in our villages, towns & cities

See the website for more details: www.rideandstrideuk.org/counties/lancashire or contact me: pjlumsden58@gmail.com; mobile 07929 270753. Peter Lumsden

Dates for your Diary

Preston Interfaith Dialogue: 1st Thursday of every month 7-9pm, Preston Quaker Meeting Hall, 189 St Georges Road, PR1 6NQ - See attached jpg poster.

Silent Night Carol Service: 8 December, 7pm, Preston North End FC - See p.1 and attached pdf poster for details.

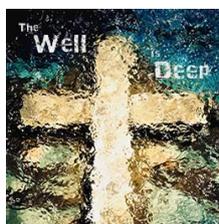
**Carols by Candlelight: Lancashire Christian Police Association:
9 December, 7pm, All Saints Church, Preston - See attached pdf poster.**

Seasonal Traditions and Celebrations - Winter Festivals and Faith in Winter: 15 December, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Lancaster - One of Faith in Lancaster's regular monthly Faithshare inter faith events. Enquiries: info@faithinlancaster.org.uk

Lancashire Sings Christmas: 18 December - See p.2 for details

Carols for Peace: 20 December, 4.30pm, Cenotaph, Preston - Central Methodist Church is asking town centre businesses, shoppers and visitors in Preston "What does peace mean to you?", leading up to this Carols for Peace event in the city centre. See attached pdf poster.

East Meets West Epiphany Party: 10 January - Event of Lancaster's women-only inter faith group. For details or to join the group contact: eastmeetswest@gmail.com; 07767 626891 (Hilary Hopwood, Co-Chair); 07766 253341 (Banu Patel, Co-Chair).



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: 18-25 January 2015
"The Well is Deep": resources and order form available from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland: www.ctbi.org.uk/681

**Churches Together in Lancashire Forum: 20 January, 7-9pm,
St Cuthbert's, Lytham Road, Preston, PR2 3AR - See p.1 for details**

Holocaust Memorial Day: 27 January



Events will take place all around Lancashire to commemorate the Holocaust. Please send details of events in your area so that I can include a resume in/with our January newsletter:
helenboothroyd@ctlancashire.org.uk. E.g. Lancaster events include: diversity tour, Havdalah and culture share, exhibition, inter faith service, candle-lighting commemoration: info@faithinlancaster.org.uk

Church Action on Poverty Sunday: Visions of a Good Society: 15 February
Information at www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday. Plan a service around the theme: www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/resources

Inspire 2015: Loving your neighbour: 7 March, 9.30am-4pm, Runcorn College, Leyland - See attached pdf poster.