



The Ecumenical County of Cumbria Reaffirmation of Covenant and Companionship Advent Sunday 2021

Purpose

Advent Sunday 2021 marks the tenth anniversary of the Declaration of the Ecumenical County and the fifth anniversary of the Ecumenical Covenant and Companionship.

In 2021, as members of Christian churches and congregations in Cumbria, we again unite to reaffirm our common desire to work together in our communities in a common mission of witness to God, using all our resources in our various ministries and buildings to testify to our discipleship. We base all our activity on a mutual respect of one another and the firm foundation of an attentive life of prayer, that the way we live may reflect the command of Jesus 'to love one another'.

All the churches and congregations represented in this reaffirmation are mutually committed to these principles. Within this, any churches are welcome, and some are able (for a variety of reasons) to work together in a particular enabling partnership: a Covenant Partnership in Extended Area, or 'CPEA'. A declaration regarding this is set out below, followed by a declaration of support by the companion churches.

A Declaration of Covenant Partnership

**by the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the Salvation Army, and the
United Reformed Church**

With the whole Christian Church, we believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We share a life of faith which is the Spirit's gift, continually received through the Word, the Sacraments and our Christian life together.

We believe that we are being called by God to realise more deeply our common life and mission, to share and respect the distinctive contributions of our traditions, and to bring about closer collaboration in all areas of witness and service.

We commit ourselves and our churches:

- a. to seek out every possible opportunity for joint initiatives, especially God for All, at local and county level in mission to all the people of Cumbria.
- b. to work together to equip both lay and ordained ministry whenever possible, and to share that ministry wherever appropriate.
- c. to continue the work of developing strategies whereby we optimise the use of our church buildings for the benefit of communities throughout the county.

We believe that God has given our four churches a particular opportunity to work together more closely.

On Advent Sunday 2016 we adopted together, and on Advent Sunday 2021 we renewed and adopted again, a Covenant Partnership in Extended Area (CPEA) to allow sharing of ministry as appropriate in view of our traditions.

We also affirm our intention to go on praying and working, with all our fellow Christians, for the visible unity of the Church in the way Christ chooses, so that people may be led to love and serve God more and more.

**A Declaration of Companionship
by the North West Baptist Association, the Church of Scotland,
the Religious Society of Friends, and the Roman Catholic Church**

To the members and representatives of the Church of England, Methodist Church, Salvation Army and United Reformed Church in Cumbria:

- We, the representatives of other member Churches of Churches Together in Cumbria, are delighted to offer you our congratulations on the Declaration of Covenant Partnership signed on Advent Sunday 2016, five years after the first signing ceremony in the Growing Together process, and renewed on Advent Sunday 2021. We again offer you our ongoing companionship as we seek to serve Christ together in the county of Cumbria.
- We recognise with you the particular opportunity afforded to your four churches to work ever more closely together, and commit ourselves to praying for God's blessing on the outworking of this Declaration of Covenant Partnership and to work with you where possible at local and county level in mission to all the people of Cumbria.
- We also affirm our intention to go on praying and working, with all our fellow Christians, for the visible unity of the Church in the way Christ chooses, so that people may be led to love and serve God more and more.

A Prayer for working together

Creator God, we give you thanks for all that has been done in your name in Cumbria.

Redeemer God, we acknowledge our common discipleship following in the ways, words and wisdom of Jesus.

Sustainer God, we place our common futures before you.

Teach us to respect all your people;

Help us to listen to your voice in our communities; and

Show us the way to live in your love for one another.

We ask this in your Holy Name, as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Amen.

Affirmations

The representatives of the Churches named below have affirmed by word or signature their Church's commitment to respect and work together, and acceptance and renewal of the ecumenical partnership or companionship.

We affirm our commitment to respect and work together, and our acceptance and renewal of the ecumenical partnership or companionship.



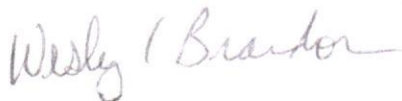
The Revd Andrew Dodd
President, Churches Together in Cumbria



Revd Phil Jump
Regional Minister,
North Western Baptist Association



Rt Revd James Newcome
Bishop of Carlisle, Church of England



Revd Wes Brandon
Church of Scotland




Revd Dr James Tebbutt
Chair of the Cumbria Methodist District



Bill Bewley
Representative of the
Religious Society of Friends in Cumbria

Rt Revd Paul Swarbrick
Bishop of Lancaster,
Roman Catholic Church



Major Dr David Taylor
North West Divisional Leader
of the Salvation Army



Revd Martyn Coe
Coordinator of the Cumbria Partnership
within the North Western Synod of the
United Reformed Church

Advent Sunday, 28th November 2021