

This week I will be sharing with other church ministers from across the county in a gathering of Churches Together in Surrey – this is one of the aspects of my role as an Assistant District Chair in our South East District of the Methodist Church that sits alongside my ministry in our Circuit.

We will meet together, prayer together, reflect together, discuss together, eat together and, above all – BE together. The group comprises of representatives from the United Reformed, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist Churches and we enjoy this annual gathering and the time and space this affords us. We will gain from being together and this enriches us on a personal level but also resources our individual ministries, as well as encouraging our corporate life together as fellow disciples of Christ in our little corner of God’s big wide world.

I’ve always appreciated my opportunities to share with ‘fellow disciples’ in my journey of faith; from the poignant sharing of the Act of Remembrance around the war memorial in our local village, enjoying the ecumenical aspects of Boys’ Brigade band competitions between the local churches in our area, through into ministerial training with friends from the URC and Church of England and then opportunities to serve in circuit appointments where staff teams have been a joyful blend of various denominations.

Now my role continues to bring me into a variety of shared church situations – from our own diverse staff team here in Wey Valley, the Circuits that I support across my section of the District and other opportunities to work with Churches Together and Christians Together groups both locally and further afield.

Jesus prayed to God, in John 17, that his followers “may be one, as we are one” (John 17:11 – NRSV) because he knew that he would soon be leaving those that had travelled the earth with him and they would need each other to carry on his work, ministry and life and that there ‘togetherness’ would speak volumes, in itself, of the faith they professed.

There are so many challenges that we face today, as Christians but more generally in our world, in God’s world; places of pain and suffering, conflicts and inequality, historic injustices and new ones being uncovered, damage to our planet as well as damage to our souls. It can all seem completely overwhelming and we might often feel inadequate and therefore bewildered into inaction.

Perhaps remembering that we are part of something bigger, with the richness and diversity of our shared faith, with all its different emphases and insights, that we have each other as fellow disciples and can speak with combined voices of our 'Good News' and Kingdom Hope – then maybe that unity is strengthened, our voices can be amplified and TOGETHER we can be encouraged to become a greater resource for the in-breaking of God's kingdom where we are.

Maybe today, this week, or some time soon, each one of us would find out something more, something new about another Christian denomination, local church or individual person of faith that we are aware of or know personally – growing that sense of 'unity in Christ' that the world might believe!

Be well; be one – for God is with us!

Sam.

GOOD NEWS STUFF!

Interested in all things 'ecumenical'? Perhaps take a look at some of the interesting material available on the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland web pages:

[CTBI – more together less apart](#)

Or – ever heard of JPIT? It's the 'Joint Public Issues Team' of the Baptist Union, Methodist Church and URC, take a look here:

[Joint Public Issues Team \(jpit.uk\)](#)

Need a reflective break as Lent begins? How about trying one of these video meditations from Taketime?

[Lent Videos RCL Year A on Vimeo](#)