

LEP 10th Anniversary

Celebrating our partnership

“As the partnership shares in worship on Sunday may the Spirit of Pentecost blow mightily through the hearts of all those gathered, and in the words of an old Anglican priest turned Methodist – may all feel their ‘hearts strangely warmed.’”

These words from Deborah Cornish were read at the beginning of our joint communion service on 23 May, which was led by Ross Kennedy.

Similar feelings were expressed when, later that day, we celebrated ten years of fellowship with an Agape meal. The forty present included as our guests:

Canon Val Nellist
(representing Bishop David)

Rev Andrew Letby

Dr Bill Reid (Connexional Liaison
Officer, Methodist Church in Scotland)

Rev Lindsey Sanderson
(Assistant General Secretary, ACTS)

Shirt sleeve order for everyone, because the day turned out to be exceptionally hot!



Everyone appreciated both the fellowship and the three-course meal of soup, main course and sweet, which was interleaved with communion, when we served each other the bread and wine.

Heartfelt thanks are due to all those, from both congregations, who helped in the preparation and serving of food.



This dual focus on food and sacrament was new to some, but was well explained in the following way in the service sheet:

Agape is the New Testament Greek word for ‘Self-giving love’. In the Christian tradition, an ‘Agape’ is also the name for informal meals and times of togetherness and mutual sharing which remind us of all those meals Jesus shared with his friends and the unity that his Spirit continues to give us.

These meanings and associations are especially poignant for us today in Rosyth as we celebrate and give thanks for the close friendship that has developed between our two congregations. This special relationship was formalised ten years ago in the signing of a Covenant between us, marking the beginning of our Local Ecumenical Partnership.

And today, as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of our formal relationship, we also acknowledge and celebrate the many ways in which our congregations and their members work together both formally and informally, and the many friendships that have been formed over the years.

Such partnerships are important in the life of both our churches – both locally and nationally – and provide a valuable testimony to those around us of Christian unity and of a united witness to the Gospel and God’s love.

Were you there?

Our LEP 10th anniversary Agape supper



Malcolm Trew has captured most of those who enjoyed fellowship and food, except of course himself!

From absent friends ...

Dear Sandra

I am delighted to have received an invitation to the Agape marking the 10th anniversary of the ecumenical partnership between Rosyth Methodist and St Margaret's Scottish Episcopal Churches. Unfortunately I am unable to accept as I have other services on that day.

I was pleased to lead worship at Rosyth recently and to find out more about the people and local mission firsthand. I enjoy receiving the magazine too. So I shall be thinking of you on 23rd May and ask that you convey greetings from me personally and from all of the Methodist District. As you celebrate God's provision thus far may you be inspired with the Holy Spirit's energy for His purposes in the days ahead.

Wishing you every blessing

Yours sincerely

Lily

Rev Lily Twist B.Sc, B.Th, PGCE
Chair of the Methodist Synod in Scotland

Dear Sandra

Thank you for the kind invitation to the LEP anniversary service.

The Methodist Plan works far in advance of the invitation, so I regret to say John and I will be unable to join everyone at Rosyth for what, I am sure, will be a joyous occasion.

As we come together with the churches in Ledbury for a Pentecost Celebration that evening, we will remember with love and prayers our friends, both Methodist and Episcopal in Rosyth.

May the power of God's Holy Spirit move among you that evening and always.

Yours in Christ

Deborah and John



10 Years ago

a challenge from Jack Fowell

The first section of the document signed on 14 June 2000 is our covenant to work and worship together as a Local Ecumenical Partnership. Jack's reflection starts by quoting the promise that follows:

"We will seek to deepen our relationship
... by:

- sharing the Methodist Church facilities, including the Church Sanctuary;
- meeting and taking counsel with each other;
- sharing together in acts of worship including Holy Communion;
- sharing together in prayer, fellowship, study and mission.
- working together with Christians and churches in Rosyth and District;
- and supporting projects which will benefit the wider community.

We pledge ourselves to this task in the presence of God".

These were the aims that we, as two separate churches – St Margaret's Scottish Episcopal and Rosyth Methodist – signed in agreement in June 2000.

It is now 10 years on – really? Yes indeed, and, on looking back over those years, it seems to me that we have met some of these aims better than others. So perhaps during the next 10 years?!! we should think about those aims which are not "up to speed".

The Covenant document was read out during the Agape meal, followed by a period of silence for reflection.

If you haven't re-read it recently, why not pause and do so when next you pass it by?

When the Covenant was signed in 2000, Jack Fowell was the Methodist lay signatory, and Adrian Masson the Episcopalian lay signatory. The third of the surviving signatories was David Campbell, and you can find his reflections on page 10.



Rev Lindsey Sanderson, Assistant General Secretary of ACTS, holding the covenant document that she later read out

The Partnership Agreement

some background from Adrian Masson

During the early years following our move from the Naval Community, St Margaret's existence was very tenuous. The invitation from Rosyth Methodist Church to share their building and facilities was warmly appreciated, indeed a lifeline that enabled the majority of St Margaret's congregation to stay together as a worshipping community enjoying the rites and traditions that had been central to our church life in Hilton Road. However lack of a Rector in Dunfermline to fulfil the role of priest-in-charge, and not being formally constituted as Scottish Episcopal Church, meant that our existence was under threat for over two years. With the appointment in 1998 of Hunter Farquarson as Rector of Holy Trinity Church, the opportunity was taken to formalise our place within the Scottish Episcopal community and to review the partnership between St Margaret's and Rosyth Methodist Church.

Credit for the Partnership Agreement that was eventually signed by both churches two years later needs to go to Malcolm Trew who tirelessly scoured Scotland (and beyond!) for examples of local and national agreements that might suit our circumstances.

The beauty of what emerged is its simplicity – it sets out very clearly the key elements of our life together, what we believe and the ways in which we will strive to work more closely. Importantly though it also recognises that we are two distinct churches with different traditions that we sometimes enjoy celebrating uniquely.

Numerically there is no question that St Margaret's is the minor partner in this arrangement and a separate agreement reflects our place as users of the church building. We have been pleased though to have been treated as equal partners and can look back over more than ten years at the many ways in which the two churches have increasingly worked together, supported each other in times of need, developed their worship together and grown strong bonds of friendship between the members of both congregations.

The future may still be a little tenuous, but for entirely different reasons from when we entered into this partnership. However we look back with thanks and delight for what has been achieved within the framework of our joint agreement; we look forward with hope.

Feedback from ACTS, our Sponsoring Body

In her letter of thanks, as well as assuring us of the prayers and best wishes of our Sponsoring Body, Lindsey Sanderson said: "I do hope that within the two congregations you have felt that the Sponsoring Body has been a supportive presence in your work and witness.

"We certainly have appreciated the way in which the Partnership has offered feedback on a number of pieces of work we have been engaged upon, and we have enjoyed welcoming members of the Partnership to various Sponsoring Body events."

Our Local Partnership

A personal reflection by Malcolm Trew

This is a special year for celebrating our Unity in Christ. 100 years ago the first World Missionary Conference was held in Edinburgh. Our recent Agape meal in Rosyth celebrated the signing of a Covenant ten years ago which formally initiated what is still the only Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) between a Scottish Episcopalian congregation and a Methodist one.

My personal ecumenical journey began in August 1959, when after four years theological training in Manchester, I spent three weeks studying at the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. I was one of two Methodists in a group of 18 theological students from the UK. Returning to England as a probationer minister I was immediately caught up in "World Refugee Year" activities which led me to become actively involved throughout my ministry with Christians in other churches through Christian Aid.

I came to Scotland, to Glasgow, in 1969, after ten years' ministry in England. This was a few months before the vote to decide whether the Methodist and Anglican Churches should come together in an act of organic/structural union. If the vote had been in favour, services of reconciliation would have been held in various English cities at which Episcopal hands would be laid on Methodist ministers so that they might receive whatever God wished to impart to them. They might then acquire the necessary degree of acceptability to those who believed that Methodist ordination lacked something vital. I would then have travelled to Carlisle Cathedral to receive whatever additional blessing God wished to impart. I was clear in my mind that this was not re-ordination.

Though Methodist Conference voted in favour, the Anglicans rejected the plan.

During the next few years, a few of my ministerial colleagues became Anglicans and were re-ordained. I decided that I would never enter the Anglican Church 'through the back door' but by the 'front door' when, as I hoped, another attempt was made at reconciliation between our two churches. Unfortunately the goal of organic unity seems further off than ever!

Through the Anglican-Methodist Covenant signed in 2003, the Church of England has a special relationship with the Methodist Church. In some areas co-operation is extensive; Methodist ministers and Anglican priests regularly preach and, more significantly, celebrate Holy Communion in each other's churches.

Alas, in Scotland, ecumenical progress appears to have ground to a halt. I find this deeply disappointing. Though there are hundreds of LEPs in England, in Scotland there are very few. The first was Livingston Ecumenical Parish, established in 1966 as a single parish with members of the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. The second LEP was ours in Rosyth, which began when St Margaret's began to share our building in January 1996.

Our Methodist Congregation includes a number of ex-Presbyterians and the St Margaret's congregation have a number of English C of E members who were automatically regarded as Scottish Episcopalians when their Naval (English chaplaincy) church building was closed. If they had not accepted the invitation to share Methodist premises, some of them might quite happily have become Methodists!

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Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Methodists come from different backgrounds. Their church structures are different. They enjoy different ways of worship and have different ways of understanding and expressing their faith. Some Methodists are uncomfortable with vestments and set orders of service. Likewise, many Scottish Episcopalians are uncomfortable with spontaneous styles of worship, preferring books and service sheets which allow services to proceed unannounced.

Archbishop Rowan Williams wrote in 2007: "Our churches, Anglican and Methodist, remain in many ways divided, between themselves and within themselves."

There are three big divisions within the Christian Church. Firstly there are diverse views regarding the Holy Communion/Eucharist. Roman Catholics will not budge on that, nor will 'High' Anglo-Catholics. This is partly linked to the second division – the validity of our Orders. Because I have not been ordained by a Bishop, my ordination is generally regarded as 'defective' by some Scottish Episcopalians and the High Church wing of the English Anglican Church. Thus, whilst Episcopalian priests can preside at a Methodist communion, Methodist ministers are not allowed to preside at an Episcopalian eucharist. Differences in understanding the nature of the eucharist/communion are really too wide to be bridged.

The third big division of course is the understanding and authority of scripture – thus the Anglican world-wide communion is in real danger of fragmenting over issues such as sexuality.

However, Methodists and Scottish Episcopalians *can* share and enjoy numerous activities together, including worship and fellowship, and each may learn from the other and come to appreciate the differences.

To quote from Clause 4 of our LEP Constitution, "Although each congregation shall remain autonomous, as fellow Christians from different traditions we shall work together as partners in a covenant relationship, remaining flexible and open to future possibilities."

And how closely we have worked together during the past 13 years! In our first year we arranged a joint Alpha course. We now have joint Episcopal Vestry and Methodist Church Council Meetings. Two from St Margaret's now serve on the Property Committee and are active in maintaining and cleaning the premises. One of them has replaced me as Property Secretary. Both churches have shared in providing new furniture for the sanctuary. St Margaret's Traidcraft stall has 'customers' from both congregations. Methodist services now rely on music provided by two Episcopal organists, and some Methodists regularly sing with St Margaret's choir. Sunday@Six has replaced traditional Episcopal Evensong with a mixed programme of different styles of worship. The former Methodist-run Women's Own has become the Wednesday Fellowship, attended by men and women from both congregations, and will have an Episcopalian vice-president next session.

A joint Memorial Book records the passing of friends from both congregations. We now share in producing weekly notices and this joint "Contact". We share meals together, and through our combined activities new friendships are being formed and deepened. As we sung at our Agape meal:

(Christ) bids us build each other up;
And gathered into one,
To our high calling's glorious hope
We hand in hand go on.

LEP 10th Anniversary

Personal reflections from ...

... Fettes College

It is an extraordinary pleasure to be able to contribute something to this edition of Contact to mark this wonderful decade of partnership between the Methodists and Episcopalians of Rosyth.

I, for my part, was fortunate to have been part of that rich lineage of clergy who served the Episcopalians in Rosyth and the surrounding villages. I was doubly fortunate in that for many of the early years of the partnership I was able to have shared in that service with friends from both denominations and congregations.

For me, of course, this good and double fortune was heightened further by being able to work closely with two absolutely splendid ministerial characters and to get to know better a third.

The first, and a man who made the greatest of impacts on me, was of course Dr Gordon Murray CBE. I always say, for it is true, that I learned more that was valuable and enduring about ministering from Gordon than any theological college or bishop. Gordon and his wife Janet came to Rosyth at the same time as I did and from our first meeting – a convivial supper in their home – hours before his induction, I could sense that there was going to be an impressive meeting of minds, in which inevitable differences were not minimised but quite simply worked through in Gordon's amazing manner. I learned from Gordon so much about not taking myself too seriously and about concentrating on the things which matter. His legacy to me of extraordinary hopefulness even in difficult circumstances remains unfaded. His passing from us too soon one of the greatest regrets of my life. His funeral with roof-raising singing an enduring memory. He was, simply, a

colossus, a distinguished, walking, smoking, joyful, laughter-filled colossus. Of such as him is God's Kingdom built on earth.

And then, after a decent time and the shorter service of fellow-Irishman Eddie Curliss, the Methodist people found themselves a new minister – the Cornish Deborah Cornish – not only younger and better looking, but also from a somewhat different theological stable from Gordon. It was a privilege for me to get to know her well and to be able to share many of the early moments of an ordained life with Deborah. Not only her first energetic weeks and months in the congregations and district she served, but also the significant moment of ordination in Murrayfield Parish church on that balmy Sunday afternoon. And it became apparent to me what a lot of energy was required to sustain and enhance the lives of those congregations.

And then always in the background, a faithful and true servant of the people of Rosyth, was Malcolm Trew. He was simply a marvellous support for everything that went on, as was his much-loved and wonderfully talented wife Frieda.

But these are reflections – castings back of the mind to near and dimmer memories of the people with whom I worked from that night we signed the covenant between our two congregations with Bishop Michael and Chairman Adrian until the day I moved across the water to Edinburgh and to a very different context of work. As reflections they are important to me, but not as important as the ways in which, slowly but surely and inevitably, the people of God of the two congregations have grown together, learning to see the things which were vital and those which were extraneous to a fuller life.

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... 'Gwavas Lowena', Ledbury

I grew up in Cornwall believing I knew what Piskeys were, and then I moved to Scotland and found a new breed of them - Scottish Piskies in partnership with the Methodist Church in Rosyth.

It was a joy to be part of this ministry, which included working with an Irishman with a dreadful sense of humour, who thought he could eat the harvest offering whilst I preached. He tried to teach me the foibles of the Scottish Episcopal Church, whilst I tried to share with him the joys and wonders of forward planning, which meant thinking about Christmas during Lent. This just confirmed for David that Methodists really were strange beings from another place.

Tim took up the mantle from David, the advantage being he had some understanding of Methodist ways. It is with regret that we only worked together for a short time, but in that time we developed a good relationship built on our desire to see the partnership develop.

It is through the Scottish Episcopal Church that I got to know Tembu and family, both as ministers learning together and then, before he moved to Goldenacre, he joined us for Messy Church on Sunday mornings.

From social gatherings to meetings for shared worship to maintaining a property, these have been the ways in which that growing together has taken place. And today, with extraordinary thankfulness for being able to play just a little part in it, I send my greetings across the Forth to you all for the continuing journey together.

Rev Dr David Campbell
St Margaret's priest-in-charge 1999-2007



When I think of the partnership it is with happy memories of shared worship throughout the year, Paschal meals, Burns Night, carol singing in Tesco's doorway and so much more. There were get-togethers after Sunday worship when we would consider what we were about as two denominations working together in partnership. It is from meetings such as these that worship on the fourth Sunday in each month took on a new lease of life as Sundays@Six.

Another aspect of this partnership included the friendships forged across the two denominations through a love of music, and a real desire to work together as Christians in Rosyth.

As the partnership moves forward into the next decade, I am sure you will be blessed by the ministry of Deacon Sarah as she joins you in September, and that you will offer her the same support, encouragement and friendship you offered me.

It has been a privilege and joy to be part of this extended and ecumenical church family.

Deborah Cornish
Methodist minister 2004-2009