



**SOMERSET
CHURCHES
TOGETHER**

Newsletter

No 80

April 2009

www.sctog.org.uk

THE COUNCIL OF SOMERSET CHURCHES TOGETHER

Seeks

- to provide both information and a personal link with local ecumenical groups, Councils of Churches, Churches Together and churches in a local area working together on a more informal basis.
- To encourage and nurture all local ecumenism in the area and to initiate such activity where appropriate.
- To maintain communication with Churches Together in England, the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland and the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement in the wider church and between local ecumenism and the parent denominational bodies.
- To encourage and enable the formation of new Local Ecumenical Partnerships and Local covenants and to be the first source of reference for advice, approval and support.

MEMBERSHIP

The Council has representatives from:- The Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton; The Anglican Diocese of Bath and Wells; The South West Province of the United Reformed Church; The Bristol District of the Methodist Church; The Plymouth and Exeter District of the Methodist Church; The West of England Baptist Association; The South Western Baptist Association; The Religious Society of Friends; the Salvation Army; The Congregational Federation and The Greek Orthodox Church.

THIS NEWSLETTER seeks to keep you in touch with what is going on. The newsletter, or any material in it, may be freely reproduced and distributed in any way you see fit. Contributions for future issues should be sent to the

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TREASURER Mr Tom Dunne, 3 Forester Avenue, Bathwick, Bath BA2 6QD (01225 462981)



AUTUMN FORUM 2009

Locking Castle Church, Bransby Way, Weston-Super-Mare BS24 7BW

**Saturday 17 OCTOBER 2009
10.00 am – 3.30 pm**

Christians Together in a Spiritual Age

Keynote Speakers:

Steve Hollinghurst (Church Army Evangelist and author of 'The Gospel in Contemporary Culture') and David Grosch-Miller (Moderator, South Western Synod of the United Reformed Church)

OPEN TO ALL

Somerset Churches Together Forum.

From January 2009, SCT is changing the way it supports the churches. It will hold two meetings each year that are open to all who are interested in churches of different traditions working together in Somerset and beyond. The meetings will provide a supportive network for local ecumenism among the churches throughout the area. Furthermore information is available from Robin Dixon at sctog@blueyonder.co.uk or on 01225 872903.

COPYDATE FOR THE JULY NEWSLETTER: 10 June 2009. Please send copy to Robin Dixon, County Ecumenical Officer, 25, Claverton Road West, Saltford, Bristol BS31 3AL. e-mail: sctog@blueyonder.co.uk

Travelling Together as One Family

The Grosch-Miller family, as the name might suggest, is something of a hybrid. The Grosch branch is American of German extraction with a flavouring of Swedish. The Millers are as complicated with Scottish, English and Romany roots combining in the North East, or at least they are the roots admitted to by my parents. Like most families, our story is neither as romantic nor as straightforward as we would like. Even the story passed from one generation to another is coloured by the experience of the teller. There are parts of the story quietly forgotten and other parts exaggerated, there are some individuals whose memory is celebrated and others who might as well not have existed for all that they are remembered. Meanwhile this generation of the family is getting on with the job of being who they are, exploring their story, getting married, preparing to go and live and work in South America and paying the mortgage and raising children. They are neither burdened by their past nor feel the need to ignore it. They each must take responsibility for their own lives but know that being part of the family is who they are. The past is the past, the present is now and the future waits to be explored.

The Church can often behave as a dysfunctional family which is more concerned to keep alive the memory of generations long since dead than in allowing the present generation to live their own lives. What makes it worse is when one part of the family believes that they are the ones that have the accurate memory and that other remembered versions of the past can be forgotten. The not surprising truth is that any story that does not seek to hold together all the different threads is partial and incomplete. The blindingly obvious is that the congregations of today must be given the courage and the freedom to discover their own story. They have to be who they are and deal with issues of climate change, economic injustice, deep cynicism and all of the contemporary challenges of being the people of God in the present. Their story will be built upon selected parts of the memory of the past that is the gift of the people of faith that have taught them. That doesn't matter as long as they don't start acting as if they have nothing to learn from others who are on the journey with them. What matters is that we spend more time looking forward than we do looking back.

As a family we still learn from one another, in the home and in the church, not just about how to use new technology but how to be in the world. I am interested in the story of how we got here but much more excited by where we might yet travel to.

David Grosch-Miller, Moderator, South Western Synod of the United Reformed Church

SOMERSET CHURCHES TOGETHER 2008

THE WAY WE WORK

Like its counterparts in most other areas in the country, Somerset Churches Together (SCT) exists to support the growing relationships between the local churches and denominations in Somerset and to help them play an increasing part together in God's mission to the local communities and beyond. This cannot be done, however, if local groups and SCT feel isolated from one another. So, in order to further deepen the mutual relationships between SCT and the Christian community across Somerset, a very important part of the Council's work last year was to create the Somerset Churches Forum which will meet twice every year and replace the SCT Council, now disbanded. Forum members include the six Presidents (the Somerset Church Leaders), the Executive Committee and representatives nominated by the member denominations. In addition, each of the Churches or Christians Together Groups and Local Ecumenical Partnerships across the Somerset area is now entitled to nominate one Forum representative who will be invited to each of the two Forums to be held every year. Both Forums will be open to everyone, not just the official Forum membership. The January Forum will include a short Annual General Meeting followed by a presentation from a Guest Speaker. The October Forum, to be held on a Saturday, will offer a programme and content very similar to SCT's previous Annual Gatherings.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

In 2009, SCT was involved, as in previous years, in a wide range of different kinds of work. It held an Annual Gathering in November which was attended by over one hundred people. It provided representatives for the Forum for Equality and Diversity in Somerset (FEDS) and the Somerset Community Cohesion Forum. It supported the work of the Mental Health Chaplaincy within the Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and continued its links with the Sanctuary Tent at the Glastonbury Festival, Christian Aid and CAFOD.

It continued to support local Churches Together groups through visits from Council members, the newsletter and the website. Awaydays, talks and other support was provided for Churches Together groups in Wellington, Burnham-on-Sea, Bridgwater, Wincanton, Pill and elsewhere. It supported the churches in the development of shared mission strategies on new housing developments in Yeovil and Weston-super-Mare. SCT's Anglican Methodist Covenant Development Group encouraged the growth of the Covenant throughout the year. SCT continued to serve as the Sponsoring Body for all ten Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) in the Somerset area by providing ongoing advice, support and periodic review. All this work and more shows that God's Spirit of unity continues to be very much at work in Somerset. Locally, many people show a huge openness and goodwill towards people of other traditions and are happily engaged with them in creative outreach and imaginative worship. When 'churches together' becomes 'mission together', many sceptics enthusiastically join in.

Robin Dixon

To read the full version of the Annual Report 2008, visit www.sctog.org.uk

linxproject

Walking with young people through School, Community and Church life in South East Somerset.

www.linxproject.com

The Linx Project is an ecumenical Youth Project in South East Somerset. Begun in 1999, the Project has grown significantly and is now firmly established as a Christian presence offering support, guidance and leadership in work with young people in three secondary schools and the local communities of Wincanton, Bruton and Castle Cary. From the seeds of the idea of a band of far-sighted, committed Christians in 1999, the Project has steadily grown and blossomed into a professional, well-known, well-respected Youth Project, employing two full-time, fully qualified youth workers, three student youth workers and a part time administrator. The Project Office has recently moved from Wincanton to Bruton where, thanks to the generosity of Bruton Methodist Church, we have a well-equipped administration centre. This church's willingness to share their building has helped us to significantly reduce our running costs in the long term; there are, it seems, still many ways to give in these straightened financial times.

The work of the Project is wide-reaching and often grows from the contacts and relationships made within the local secondary schools by our Project workers. In each of the schools where our Team work, King Arthur's in Wincanton, Sexey's School in Bruton and Ansford in Castle Cary, pupils enjoy extra support in lessons, know a listening ear is available or a strong shoulder is there to lean or cry on. Assemblies are led as are a range of regular lunchtime clubs and activities, all initiated by the Linx youth workers.

Restorative Justice

Team Leader, Steve Baker, is based at Ansford School in Castle Cary and has been instrumental in developing and implementing Restorative Justice. Restorative Justice encourages students to take responsibility for poor behaviour, explore the effect their behaviour has on others, and work out how to put the situation right. It is an approach that offers an alternative to a purely punitive system of punishment. It engages young people in facing their own behaviour and the needs of others. The



Linx Project youth workers have been at the centre of this work, running restorative meetings between pupils, co-ordinating training for staff, and running assemblies and tutor group work to embed Restorative Justice into the ethos of the school. This kind of youth work resonates with Jesus' command to love our neighbour and ourselves and is a practical outworking of the Christian belief and hope in repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Re-Act Bus coming soon to Wincanton

Already a regular feature of Castle Cary, the Re-Act Bus is soon to come to Wincanton. The Wincanton Co-Ordinator Laura Johns has taken the lead in preparing the ground for several months by doing 'Detached' style youth work; walking round town in the evenings, meeting the young people where they are and building relationships. The arrival of the Re-Act Bus means there will be a base for the young people and youth workers to regularly meet, whatever the weather. The Bus offers the young people hot drinks, toasties, games consoles and, most importantly, Linx youth workers and dedicated volunteers ready to talk and spend time with them. So the Project goes out on the streets to where the young people are. Following Jesus' example, our youth workers go and seek out young people, meeting them where they are; sitting, talking, sharing food and fellowship. So we hope the Re-Act Bus will continue to help us demonstrate the gospel in word and action.

Talk About Faith“Is faith a kind of madness?”

At Sexey's School, Bruton, where Linx worker Patrick Weld holds the post of Spiritual and Pastoral Youth Worker, The Linx Project ran an R.E. Day with Scripture Union. The day on the theme, “Is faith a kind of madness?”, was designed to stimulate thinking about faith and religion amongst Sixth Form students. They were offered a setting where they could ask questions and explore their own ideas and feelings alongside taking into account the perspectives of others. Local churches contributed to the day, providing volunteers to lead small group work in what proved to be a thoroughly thought-provoking day. The day may be over but the conversation, now begun in public, will surely continue. One Linx Trustee who had taken part recalled how a particularly articulate non-Christian sixth-former suggested Christians needed to be clearer about what they believed; less woolly and more direct. A challenge and yet an invitation for us all.

Linx Youth workers are keen to expand and encourage this style of working and would like to see it developed in other schools in our area. Perhaps we could offer support to others who would like to see something similar happen in their area?

Supporting and Encouraging Others

The Linx Project is able to support churches in their youth work. In February we hosted an evening for churches about how to engage with young people, particularly in worship but also within the wider life of the church, through church council meetings and in mission.

We also work to provide events offering opportunities for churches to engage with the young people in their local communities.



Young People Making a Difference



Over the last few years various centres have hosted our Activ8 event, organised and lead by Linx Team workers. Activ8 is an outreach community event, in which we aim to engage young people in community activities, such as gardening, sports afternoons for

children and family fun days. Activ8 is a week long, action-packed community project designed to enable young people to make a positive contribution to their own community; a chance to make a difference where they live.

Such weeks also offer real opportunities for local churches to engage in mission activities. The Linx Project has developed a wealth of experience over the last ten years that makes it well-placed to help equip local churches for outreach, exploring ways to introduce and implement fresh and relevant ideas that engage and appeal to young people in their communities.

Now We Are Ten!

This June sees the Linx Project enter its tenth year. The Trustees and Team are working on a full programme to celebrate and to raise our profile and make our work more widely known. The tenth Anniversary is an opportunity to publicise ourselves with a range of celebrations and events. These are not just for young people but for all those keen to support the excellent, much-needed community-based youth work we can offer.

Planning is still underway but we plan to hold quiz nights through the winter months, and jazz evenings in the summer of 2010. There are plans afoot to.....

- devise and perform a Passion Play in one of our centres for Holy Week 2010,
- put on a series of concerts to celebrate the musical talents of our local youngsters, including primary schools too
- play football tournaments
- offer Christingle services for churches who can't always hold one or where the Linx Project's work could be incorporated
- let off fireworks round the bonfire in November
- toss pancakes in races or at pancake evenings in Lent 2010
- watch recently released films in the school holidays
- parade in carnivals with the Re-Act Bus
- dance at Ceilidhs
- or gently walk between our centres

Please watch the local press for details as they emerge.

Our hope is that the celebrations will raise our profile and much-needed funds. Although those of us involved in the running of the Project know the Linx Project richly blessed so far, today's economic climate means financial pressures are never far away. A successful Project like Linx takes considerable funds to run. Trustees' determination and commitment to employ high quality, fully qualified workers means that salary payments and financial support for our student youth workers eat the lion's share of our expenditure. We rely on grant-awarding bodies as well as a faithful band of regular individual supporters for our income. Our Team Leader and full-time youth worker are both actively engaged in preparing and submitting bids for funds but the very nature of our work with its Christian ethos excludes us from the qualifying criteria of a number of trusts. We are always seeking support to ensure that, now we are ten, the Linx Project can continue to walk with young people through school, community and church life.



ROCK comes to Weston Super Mare!

ROCK is the story of Simon Peter, told in true Roger Jones-style through familiar hymns set to brilliant new musical arrangements, brand new songs, drama, and dance. The World Premiere in November last year kicked off the first of three nationwide tours over 12 months. Weston will be part of the final tour later this year.

Roger will bring his team of musicians, dancers and soloists, including several from the local area, and Churches Together will provide the supporting choir for the Weston-super-Mare performance at The Playhouse Theatre on Sunday October 18, 2009.

We have a talented young choir leader, backing tracks and vocal parts on CDs, a rehearsal schedule starting after Easter, and bags of enthusiasm. All we need is YOU. If you can hold a tune and/or invite others along on the night, please be part of this wonderful opportunity not only to entertain but also to share the Good News that Jesus brought not just to first century Galilee but to 21st century Somerset as well.

Please contact the local Tour Administrator for further details on 01934 513882

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Voluntary contributions are encouraged towards the cost of this quarterly newsletter and other costs incurred by Somerset Churches Together in providing support and assistance to Churches and Christians Together Groups throughout the County. The guideline for your contribution is £5 per worshipping congregation per year within each LEP or Churches/Christians Together Group.

Somerset Churches Together gratefully acknowledges voluntary contributions received during the past twelve months from LEPS, Churches and Christians Together Groups and Church Congregations in: Bath; Backwell; Batheaston; Brean; Bridgwater; Burnham-on-Sea; Castle Cary and Ansford; Chard; Clevedon; Keynsham and Saltford; Langport; Locking Castle; Milborne Port; Minehead; Paulton; Peasedown St John; Portishead; Radstock; Sandford; Shepton Mallet; Somerton; South Petherton; Wellington; Weston-super-Mare; Wincanton; Worle. We also acknowledge with thanks additional contributions received from individual church members.

Several of you have written to tell us how much you value the newsletter and the other links across the county facilitated by Somerset Churches Together. Thank you for supporting this work in a tangible way.

If you wish to make a donation during 2009 please send a cheque payable to **Somerset Churches Together** to **Mr Geoff Starling, West of England Baptist Association (WEBA), The Old Forge, Broom Hill, Stapleton, Bristol, BS16 1D**



SUNDAY CAFÉ IN TIMSBURY

“We never knew church could be so much fun” was just one of the many comments. In October 2008 the four churches in Timsbury (near Bath) organised a week long mission to the village under the banner of Hope4U. One of the events was a concert/entertainment evening held in the local primary school with the evangelist Ian Knox ending the evening, sharing his own experience of what the presence of Jesus in one’s life can do. Hot dogs were then served to all. Amongst other things, three of the local Christian parents had played their guitars and sung pop songs all of which had some Christian message. 90% of those attending were not attached to a church in any way but the children danced with abandon and their parents were only a little more restrained! Smiles and joy were visible and there were none of the serious faces so often seen in church. A Messy Morning for children had also been very popular.

Following this positive reaction and noticing that the successful things in the mission had often involved food, Timsbury Churches Together decided it was the right time to make church more accessible rather than expect people to come into one of the church buildings. And so in February 2009 the Timsbury Sunday Café was born in the local Youth Club building in the centre of the village next to the supermarket. Sunday Café is an opportunity for individuals and whole families to drop in on a Sunday afternoon once a month and enjoy a cup of tea or squash, sandwiches and cake. The Sunday newspapers are there to be read and a number of different craft activities are available relating to that day’s theme. There are pictures on the wall to stimulate thinking about the theme and perhaps a bible verse too, as well as a quiet corner. People can come and go as they please but the afternoon ends with a brief thought for the day for people to take into the week ahead.

Archbishop Rowan recently wrote “Renewal for the Christian community is never simply a matter of doing the same things better, though that is an essential part of it; it’s also about finding what new shapes for our life together are created under the pressure of mission. New wines and new wineskins, you might say; the idea is firmly rooted in the Gospel itself.” When God is doing new things, it is good to join the party and not worry because the new wine may threaten to burst our poor old bottles!

Chris Hare





What's On

4th May - 4th July Peter's Progress. Bishop Peter (Bath & Wells) will walk the bounds of the Diocese. For details of routes, visit www.bw1100.org We hope as many as possible, from any or no faiths, will join the Bishop.

Saturday **20th June**, Wells Cathedral, 6pm, free- Choral Festival . Over 300 singers from about 40 choirs.

Saturday **4th July** - A Day of Celebration for all the family in and around the grounds of Glastonbury Abbey. Free entry. Includes Ecumenical Service at noon, a day of children's activities, workshops, talks, performances and groups, concluding with a historical pageant, concert and a talk from Bishop Stephen Cottrell.

12th September - Old Deanery, headquarters of the diocese, will open its doors and gardens to the public as part of Heritage Open Days 2009

16th September - Anniversary Lecture at Bath Abbey from Mrs. Mary Robinson, former President of the Irish Republic and UN Human Rights Commissioner.

Saturday **19th September** - Sponsored Walk to Wells in aid of the Zambia Link Kit for Kids initiative and The Children's Society. Open to all.

21st September - Anniversary Cricket Match at Taunton's County Ground. A special Clergy XI v President's XI to which everyone is invited.

25th September - Radio 4's Any Questions from Wells. Don't forget to tune in!

Saturday **21st November**, 2.00pm - Songs of Praise at Wells Cathedral, a service to formally bring to a close our year of celebration.

For more details, latest updates, ticket information, and details of local events, visit www.bw1100.org or phone 01749 670777



A Day of Celebration Saturday 4th July 2009

**The major day of celebration for 1100 years of the Diocese of Bath and Wells,
and the end point of Peter's Progress.**

Glastonbury Abbey Grounds (open from 9am)

Free entry, everyone welcome! Come and go as you please

Children's activities 11am - 4pm

Food and drink outlets 11am - 8pm

Ecumenical Service - Noon

Afternoon events 1.45pm – 5.45pm

Music workshops*

Talks

Discussion groups

Dance performances

Bands playing & strolling

Cream teas

Roly the Clown

Culminating in a special historical pageant

Early evening concert 6pm- 8pm

Concluding in an inspirational talk by Bishop Stephen Cottrell

Please bring a chair or rug to sit on during the day

* music workshops must be booked in advance.

“The 1100th anniversary of the Diocese of Bath & Wells provides us with an opportunity to make a public affirmation of the role of the Christian Church in Somerset”

+Peter Bishop of Bath and Wells

Christian Environmentalists Go Regional

As I stand at the highest point of Brean Down, 90 metres above the surrounding Severn Estuary and Somerset coast line, I see a landscape full of question marks and potential for change. The future of Weston's pier may be settled, and perhaps even the Tropicana. But elsewhere in the region there is much to be decided.

What about the Severn tidal energy 'debate'; will it be barrage or lagoon? Or will Hinkley Point that I can see to the south of me have a new nuclear power station to replace the ageing ones standing there now? Will the flight path over my head be twice, three times as busy as Bristol Airport is further expanded? And what about the other side of the estuary; is there really going to be a new M4 motorway skirting the Welsh coast line from the second Severn crossing to beyond Newport?

While there will be other geographical entities in the UK where big developments are being planned, it is hard to imagine one of greater diversity or potential for harnessing the forces of nature than in South West. From hydro-electric power on the Mendips to the tidal power of the Severn. From wave power and wave hub planned for the South West peninsular next year to the harnessing of even more wind energy at Avonmouth. The region is in the forefront of energy renewal.

Given this position, it is good to know that the Christian environment movement is also seeing the region as an entity. One indicator of this is a series of regional conferences being planned by the Christian environmental organisation A Rocha. These carry the strap line *Connecting Locally – A Rocha UK in the regions*. One for Wessex is planned to take place next month in Bath (details below).

But perhaps more significantly was a meeting of six of the region's dioceses in Taunton in March. They met to agree a common approach to a range of environmental topics. The main focus of the meeting hosted by the Diocese of Bath and Wells was to look at working together on energy procurement, production and conservation.

One outcome of the day was the setting up of a working party charged with taking ideas to synods of each of the dioceses in the region with the aim of extending the possibilities for joint action on green issues. What the Anglicans have initiated it would be good to see other denominations or ecumenical groups also take up.

Individual churches throughout the region are getting involved with the fight against climate change, through initiatives such as Eco-congregations which now operates under the A Rocha umbrella. But when it comes to collective action churches are still having to play catch up with the secular world. Which is surprising when one considers how much the Church has to offer.

After all it comes to the task offering hope in place of the despair that so many non-church going people feel. It is hope based on the conviction that God is ultimately in control, a conviction tempered by the fact that, in between times, we have been given the responsibility for taking care of His world and all that inhabits it.

It is a commonly heard defence that as individual Christians and even as individual churches there is little difference we can make. That is not true. But there are greater grounds for hope in the fact that the problem can be, and is beginning to be, tackled at a regional level. Just as Somerset and the surrounding counties have powerful natural resources to generate renewable energy so, through the examples set by groups like A Rocha and the region's dioceses and other networks like Christian Ecology Link, Christians too should be capable collectively of creating the energy for renewal.

Brian Kellock, SCT Sustainability Group.



A ROCHA

Christians in Conservation

A-Rocha meeting in the regions.

Knowing and Serving the Creator where we are.

St Luke's Church Centre, Bath. Saturday 16th May 2009.
10am to 4.30pm [cost £7 including light lunch and tea/coffee]. Further details from Elaine Brown, 64 Queens Avenue, London N3 2NO or e-mail elaine.brown@arocha.org.

NEWS



HOPE 08 – What is Happening Next?

The organisers are keen to encourage local groups to take advantage of the logo and anything else which they produced which helps to facilitate ongoing ecumenical mission initiatives. The website will continue to operate until at

least the end of June 2009. Visit www.hope08.com

Receptive Ecumenism is simple in essence. As we engage with people who belong to churches not our own, we often focus on what gifts our own tradition can add to the ecumenical treasure trove. But receptive ecumenism goes further. Instead of looking at what we can bring, including our strengths, it invites us to look at the gifts and strengths of others, to notice what we can learn and receive from them. Visit www.centreforcatholicstudies.co.uk for more information

One light: one world – Unity and the Scriptures is a free booklet which highlights some scripture passages encouraging our unity and includes an introduction. It is available as a free download at www.cte.org.uk.

Noticeboard

We:networks's website, www.wenetwork.co.uk, has gone live! Are you involved yet? We:networks's vision is to network all Christians and others for positive change in all spheres of life in the West of England (Bristol, Bath and old Avon) and beyond. There are many ways you can get involved. You can send in news and stories, and events for the calendar. You can write your opinions in the discussion forum. The website has Action Zones for all spheres of life across the region: from Arts and Media, to Work and Business, Youth and students, to help you network with others in a similar sphere of life. There are also Directories where you can list your network, project, organisation, business or church and find out who's who. There are even sections for job and volunteering opportunities and more! Have a look at the website! For further details contact Steve Sherwin at steve.sherwin@wenetwork.co.uk or on **01225 400337**.

Calvin Colloquium 1509-1564: The Influence and Legacy of John Calvin for the Religious Traditions of England and Wales. This will be held at St Luke's College, Exeter from 1 to 3 September 2009. The Colloquium intends to tease out the influences of Calvin on the life and witness of the churches of England and Wales. Booking form and details are on-line at www.churches-together.net (follow the Calvin link). Also available from Carole Golden on **020 7529 8132** or carole.golden@cte.org.uk

Royal School of Church Music periodically publishes choir training material under the banner, 'Voice for Life', together with collections/compilations of music for church use. Some of this material is now available for inspection through the Diocesan Resource Centre in the Old Deanery in Wells. For further information, contact **Sue Bloomfield** on **01749 670777**.

Mixed Economy is a new magazine charting the development of the fresh expressions initiative. Packed with articles representing projects all over the country, it features the involvement of Church Army, the Methodist church and the Church of England. It is to be distributed free of charge across the churches. Copies are available via the fresh expressions website or via mixedeconomy@freshexpressions.org.uk

Discovering Celtic Christianity with Sr Elizabeth Rees at the Ammerdown Centre. Spend 1 to 5 June exploring the lives of Celtic Christian saints who lived locally in Somerset and Wales. Sr Elizabeth led a similar course at Ammerdown in 2007 with attendees declaring that 'her knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject was inspiring.' For further details and information about this and other courses at the Ammerdown Centre, visit www.ammerdown.org or phone **01761 433709**.

Environment Sunday is 7 June in 2009. A Rocha has produced materials for Environment/Conservation Sunday for several years. Available at www.arocha.org.uk

Dates for Your Diary

APRIL

5 **Youth Pilgrimage** from Sherborne Abbey to Wells Cathedral
www.bw1100.org

MAY

10 – 16 **Christian Aid Week.** Contact Elizabeth Perry

17 **Not for Sale Sunday** (Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking)
www.chaste.org.uk

JUNE

7 **Environment Sunday.** For a pack of worship materials, visit
www.arocha.org and www.christian-ecology.org.uk

15 – 21 **Refugee Week.** www.refugeeweek.org.uk

19 **Retreat Association Annual Quiet Day.** www.retreats.org.uk

JULY

4 **A Day of Celebration** in and around the grounds of Glastonbury
Abbey as part of the Bath and Wells Diocese 1100 Celebrations.
www.bw1100.org

From the Easter 2009 Greeting from the Presidents of Churches Together in England

Mary Magdalene's encounter with the risen Jesus in the garden opened her eyes to the blessedness and unity of God's will in his risen Son. The Church is called to be a foretaste of that blessed unity in the work of the Lord's disciples for the unity of the Church and the world. It is a source of great joy to us that collaboration and co-operation between Churches and Christian communities across our nation is so rich. Through these encounters we grow together into the fullness of the risen Lord, and discover more of our calling to serve him in the world. And so we encourage ecumenical encounter and witness especially in local communities across the land.

Rowan Williams (Archbishop of Canterbury), Elizabeth Matear (Free Churches Moderator), Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor (Archbishop of Westminster), Nathan Hovhanissian (Bishop, Armenian Orthodox Church)