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Churches Together in Cumbria

December 2025/
January 2026 Newsletter

Actively Promoting God's Love for Everyone



A view of the Lakeland Fells from Orton Scar, with thanks to Kevin Huggett.

Do you have a photograph of a Cumbrian landscape from your local area to share? Please send it to admin@churchestogethercumbria.org.uk for it to be included

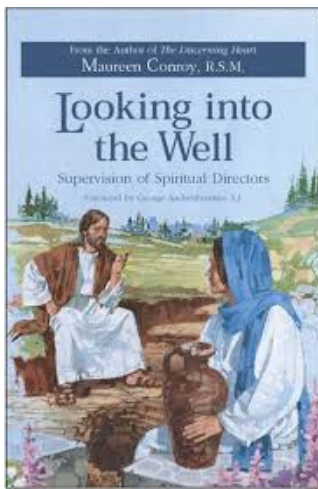
in a future edition of the newsletter. Thank you in advance.

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Deadline for February Newsletter submissions: 23rd January 2026

CESG Annual Network Day



The Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group met for our annual resource day at Rydal Hall on October 24th to further develop our practice of peer supervision, in the service of our spiritual directees.

The day was spent exploring how to best prepare for supervision. We reflected on what kinds of interior movements (eg joy, irritation, sadness, peace) we as spiritual directors had experienced whilst directing. By exploring a wide range of emotional movements and counter movements, we worked together to raise our

awareness of the underlying reasons for the reactions we may have during a session. Without awareness, these responses could interfere with the director's capacity to stay fully present to the directee's experience in the spiritual direction session.

After a demonstration of the theory explored through Maureen Conroy's book, 'Looking into the Well', we spent the afternoon working in threes to practice peer supervision. The day helped participants to have a clearer appreciation of the value and purpose of supervision and a model to work with.

All spiritual directors on the network must engage in supervision and the CESG is committed to best practice to safeguard directees.

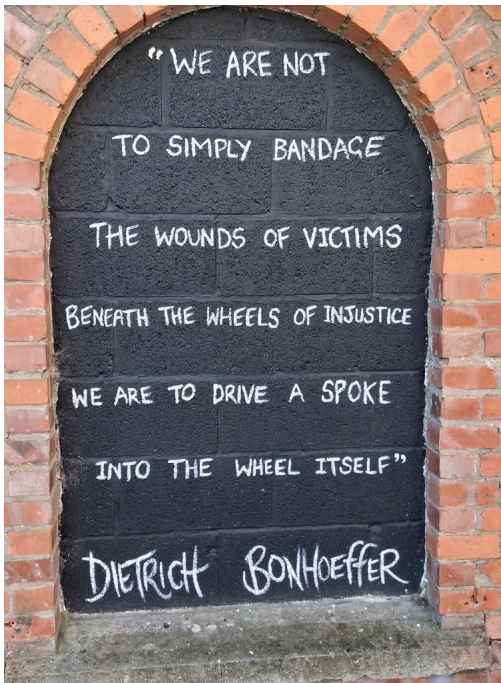
Joanne Maybury



Modern Slavery Project - Jo Phillips Visits Cumberland Quakers

Thanks to Bill Bewley for inviting me to come to speak to the Cumberland Area Quaker Meeting about modern slavery and exploitation in our region. The denomination has a long history of abolitionist action, which continues to this day. I received a very warm welcome and engagement with the issue. It's no surprise that Christians





care deeply about this issue, as the Bible has much to say about it and it is undeniably something very close to God's heart.

Jo Phillips

Community Social Action Team,
Modern Slavery Project Lead

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland's annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place from 18-25th January 2026.

"The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026 extends an invitation to draw upon this shared Christian heritage and to delve more deeply into our fellowship in Christ, which unites Christians worldwide."

(Churches Together in Britain and Ireland)

For more information and for prayer resources on this years theme - One Body, One Spirit - please visit <https://ctbi.org.uk/resources/week-of-prayer-for-christian-u...>

Please let us know what you're up to!

Could you share something of the life and work of your Churches Together group to inform, inspire or encourage other groups around the county? If so, we would love to hear from you. We aim to share a couple of articles a month - it could be a brief mention of some new shared ministry that's gone well (c150 words), or a longer reflection on how ecumenical work is going in your area (c300) and we would like at least one photograph, please.

Please send your contribution to Lois Sparling from our Community Social Action Team at community.chaplain.gmc@gmail.com. Thank you.

Holiday Kids Club at St Mary's Westfield Churches Together in Workington

Volunteers from St Mary's on the Hill, Harrington, Western Fells Methodist Circuit and Christ the Good Shepherd, Workington all pitched in to help Rev Sharon Murphy and her team run their Holiday Kids Club for three days during the October half-term holiday this Autumn.

Over fifty children, aged 4-11 took part and many parents and carers stayed to join in or help their children as well and all enjoyed the hot meal at the end of every day. There were games, challenges and craft on the theme of light. The enthusiasm of the children was lovely to see as they sang and joined in the actions to 'My Lighthouse', 'Our God is a great big God' and 'Jesus' love is very wonderful.'

On the second day, Thursday, the Monday@4 puppet group led the worship. This group of children have been working together to perform stories and song in different

church contexts. It was great to have them join us. And the last day of Kids Club ended with a treasure hunt in the dark in church illuminated only by glow sticks.

A question asked time and again was: "When's the **next** kids club?" The answer: "Wait and see!"

Rev Sharon Murphy, Pioneer Priest in Charge,

St Mary's Westfield, Workington

World Day of Prayer

Gathering in Cumbria to prepare

About ten years ago a couple of women here in Cumbria decided to offer our county as a more local place for the Preparation Day for the Women's World Day of Prayer (as it was then), instead of organisers having to travel greater distances to neighbouring counties.

On 21 October this year, Rev Mary Elliot and Hazel Scott Bowes once again organised such a day for representative groups from churches from different parts of Cumbria at Langwathby. We met Margaret Clark and Audrey Ecclestone, two members of the WDP National Committee, and they guided us through the material prepared by the women of Nigeria for next year's service.

A very lively, informative and challenging day was enjoyed by all. WDP resources were available including a thoughtful Bible study and songs reflecting the theme of 'I will give you rest... Come', including a traditional Igbo chorus accompanied by drumming. As usual, the talented Helen Armstrong was our musician and Kathryn and Lizzie from Alston provided delicious refreshments throughout the day to supplement our packed lunches.

It was very encouraging to welcome women from a variety of church traditions who had never attended such a preparation day before. We all went away feeling better equipped and enthusiastic about organising own local World Day of Prayer services next year on 6 March.

If you're involved in setting up a service for WDP 2027 please consider joining us for our next preparation day in 2026. The date has yet to be arranged, but please contact

Anna Chaplaincy

Keeping warm and keeping an eye out for our older folk this winter.

As the temperatures begin to plummet and snow is seen on the fell tops of the Cumbrian mountains, there will be many older people who are struggling to keep warm, with expensive fuel bills and houses that are difficult to heat.

As Anna chaplains we will come across these older folk in their homes and it is always important to keep a good eye out for them as the minus temperatures begin to set in.

Age UK have many good tips for the elderly to help keep them warm. They recommend ensuring that they eat regularly and have plenty of hot cups of tea or coffee throughout the day. If a flask is left for an older person who can no longer move about, then these people are particularly at risk of hypothermia. Suggest leaving a second flask next to them, so that they can keep up their warm drinks. A hot water bottle in a fleecy cover is also a good idea but ensure it isn't too hot to scald someone. A heated over-blanket is also good at keeping someone warm, as long as they can turn it off if they get too hot.

Putting glazing tape on the windows to prevent draughts or applying for grants for more insulation will help keep the bills down and the heat in.

Chair exercises are also a way of keeping the circulation moving around the body and keeping warm.

A nice thick, fleece or blanket on someone's lap also helps if someone is sitting for a long period of time.

If the ground is icy outside, then encourage them to stay indoors. Many elderly people each year end up in Accident and Emergency due to falls on ice.

Warm soups are good for keeping warm and keeping nutrition up.

Encourage the older person to keep a supply of essential medicines in the house in case they can't get out. Over the counter items like cold and flu medicines can also be helpful.

But most of all, if you have an elderly neighbour, keep an eye out for them to check that they are safe in the cold temperatures.

Sam Pester Anna Chaplaincy Lead Cumbria



For any enquiries about Anna Chaplaincy in Cumbria do get in touch at ac@churchestogethercumbria.org.uk

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook for ongoing news.

[Anna Chaplaincy Cumbria Facebook Page](#)

Churches Together Annual Gathering 2026 - a date for your diaries!

The Annual Gathering 2026 will be on **Thursday 4th June** at **St Michael's Church, Falcon Place, Workington**. Further details of the event and how to book your place will be made available early next year, but please do put this date into your new diaries now!

St Michael's Church is within easy walking distance of bus and rail links, and also has parking available on site. There is step free access throughout the building and an accessible toilet for those who require it.

A Sonnet for Epiphany

by Malcolm Guite

It might have been just someone else's story,
Some chosen people get a special king.
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,
We don't belong, it doesn't mean a thing.
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,
A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars.
They did not know his name but still they sought him,
They came from elsewhere but still they found;
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.

Malcolm Guite

<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/2022/01/06/a-sonnet-for-e...>

Carols in Cumbria

This year's God for All Christmas campaign is about to launch at carolsincumbria.com, with a digital radio advert and social media activity running from 1–25 December to help people across Cumbria find a local carol service.

The radio advert will be played on Heart and Smooth across Cumbria, with additional digital advertising on Facebook and Instagram. On the website, people will be able to browse carol services, view them on a map, and filter by keywords such as

“candlelight”, “traditional” or “outdoor”. Each service will have its own page, which can be found on Google and can link back to a church website or Facebook page. Last year, the Carols in Cumbria website had over 5,000 visitors, more than 350 services listed, and almost 100 people registered their details to attend a carol service. Many churches reported seeing new people as a result. All advertising directs the public to the Carols in Cumbria website, where they can search for nearby services. A further benefit is that the services will appear in Google results, so anyone searching for a local carol service is more likely to see their nearest options near the top of the page. **To get your church's carol services listed on the site, please contact:**
Rob Humphreys – robert.humphreys@carlislediocese.org.uk

As Christians, we are called to seek justice and challenge injustice. But making that a regular part of church life isn't always easy. To help, Christian Aid and Church Action on Poverty have jointly launched the "26 in 26" project: an interactive poster with 26 ideas for churches to try next year. It includes suggestions for new prayer, reflection or worship materials; ideas for engaging with community groups; and ways to speak up about topical issues effectively and justly. Posters are free to order, from <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/justchurch/>

Single Friendly Church Network Christmas Resources

Christmas can be one of the hardest times of year for single people. Our research suggests 70% of single people find at least some aspects of Christmas difficult. Some find the focus on families challenging, while 43% say the week between Christmas and New Year is a lonely time.

However, **80% of single Christians tell us that they enjoy carol services!** We encourage churches to provide something for everyone in their Christmas

calendar this year, and make a special effort to ensure carol services are welcoming towards people coming alone.

We have lots of practical ideas and resources for churches at Christmas, all based on research. Check out our Single Friendly Guide to Christmas Services and our whole range of Christmas resources.

<https://www.singlefriendlychurch.com/news-and-resources/a-si...>

<https://www.singlefriendlychurch.com/christmas>

Spiritual Accompaniment

You, Me and God - journeying together

For further information contact

Ruth Lee

e: sd.cesg@gmail.com

t: 01768 898604

w: cesg.org.uk

Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group

CTiC and Safeguarding

Churches Together in Cumbria (CTiC) are grateful to the Diocese for agreeing that Jo Van Lachterop, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, will be available to provide advice and support for safeguarding concerns and queries to the end of the year. This includes all who come under CTiC's umbrella:

a. the Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group (CESG) network - both directors and directees.

b. Anna Chaplaincy

In the event of a Safeguarding concern, Jo can be contacted on:
safeguarding.adviser@carlisle-diocese.org.uk or on 07458 016884.

CTiC Trustees and Staff

Our Trustees:

Revd Kath Dodd - CTiC Treasurer - kath.dodd@btinternet.com

Revd Derek Lacey - Community Social Action Team

Bill Bewley - Church Leaders Representative

Paul Burden - Churches Together Group Representative

Revd Alistair Smeaton

Our Staff:

Samantha Pester - Anna Chaplaincy Lead - ac@churchestogethercumbria.org.uk

Charlotte Lait - Admin Support - admin@churchestogethercumbria.org.uk
(Please use this email address for general enquiries.)

Community Social Action Team:

Revd Jonny Gios - jgios@me.com

Jo Phillips - jo@churchestogethercumbria.org.uk

Lois Sparling - community.chaplain.gmc@gmail.com

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