

LEATHERHEAD CHURCHES' COVENANT DOCUMENT

All Saints Church of England; St, Mary's and St, Nicholas' Church of England;
Leatherhead Methodist Church; Christ Church (United Reformed),

1. Spiritual Basis

We acknowledge God's revelation in Christ, confessing the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures. We unite in pilgrimage and, in obedience to God's will and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, commit ourselves to seek a deepening of our communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body, and to fulfill his mission to proclaim the gospel by common witness and service in the world; to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are member Churches of Churches Together in Leatherhead. The intention of the Covenant is to recognize the relationship already existing between us and to develop it further, as God's Spirit guides us. In no way is it intended that we become an exclusive group of churches, but rather that, within Churches Together in Leatherhead, the future widening of the covenant to include the participation of other member Churches may always be possible.

2. Authority and Administration

We will act as a group of Churches whose autonomy within denominational disciplines is respected. We seek the supervision of the Surrey County Sponsoring Body within Churches Together in England.

We aim to move from local co-operation to mutual commitment in ministry and mission. The common work of the churches will be administered by Churches Together in Leatherhead. When there are particular issues relating only to the covenantal churches, the churches' representatives on Churches Together in Leatherhead and the clergy will decide on appropriate action.

With our partners in Churches Together in Leatherhead we will continually review how, either separately or together, we may best serve the ministry and mission of the Church locally. This may mean that we have to respond to needs in the Church or in the community which we have not yet identified.

3. Mission and Service

We are committed to working with Churches Together in Leatherhead towards a deeper sharing in personal and public witness; in the promotion of the faith; in caring for people in the Leatherhead area; in co-operation with, and participation in, local voluntary and statutory bodies.

Along with our commitments as members of Churches Together in Leatherhead, we commit ourselves to continue to share in common work with children and young people, and, as finances allow, in jointly employing a Youth Worker,

4. Ministry, membership and worship

(A) We respect and acknowledge one another's ordained ministries and the ordained ministers commit themselves to a shared life of prayer, study and fellowship.

(B) We mutually accept each other's membership of Christ's Body, on the basis of the baptism of the members of the participating Churches.

(C) Services of the Word, prayer and teaching are central to the life of our Churches, and, as fully as our disciplines allow, we commit ourselves to sharing in the ministry of the Word by both ordained and lay ministers.

(D) The covenanting Churches have a sufficient communion of faith in the celebration of Confirmation, Admission to Membership and to Holy Communion for them to seek to develop a sharing in the preparation of their people for these rites or sacraments. This may be expressed through mutual Eucharistic hospitality (communicant members being welcome to receive the sacrament at each other's services), and shared Baptisms and Confirmations.

Any of the appointed Ministers of these Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed Churches may be invited to preside at the Celebration of Holy Communion in any of these Churches [Anglican Ecumenical Canons B43 and B44].

(E) We will continue to encourage united Sunday and weekday worship in each other's Churches, and also mutual visitation of each other's services of worship.

(F) We agree that, prior to the making of full-time appointments to the lay or ordained ministries within any of the participating Churches, in accordance with denominational rules of the Church in question, full mutual consultation with the other Covenanting Churches will be held, including that with the appropriate Church Leader.

(G) We will plan mutual prayer, study, teaching and training to enable increased sharing and participation by our members.

5. Review

We undertake to review the life and service of the Covenanted Churches after FIVE YEARS, at which time proposals for modification to the terms of the Covenant may be considered.