

*A pastoral message from the Presidents
to all engaged in the work of Churches Together,
locally, at intermediate level and nationally*

As the feast of Pentecost dawned, we learnt of another appalling terrorist attack in London, the third attack within weeks. It is therefore important that we say clearly alongside our fellow faith leaders that such horrific acts are abhorrent to God and to all people of faith. Life is precious, the gift of God, and it is to be prized.

Our thought and prayers will continue to be with those who have been bereaved and those who are recovering from injuries suffered in those attacks.

Churches Together across the land have been praying in these past weeks for the coming of God's kingdom. In the face of increased terrorist activity those prayers are particularly poignant. The kingdom of God is love, justice and joy, and the gifts of the Spirit given for building it. Even in such acts of darkness, we have caught glimpses of the kingdom in the kindness of strangers to each other, the extraordinary bravery of the emergency services and the dedication and skill of medical teams. We thank God for them.

Part of our vocation as Christians is to stand together with our friends and neighbours of all faiths and none to seek the flourishing of all, and refuse to let violence and hatred deflect us from living compassionately and kindly together. Another part of our vocation is to share in Christ's ministry of forgiveness and reconciliation, to pray for those who hate that they may grow close to the God of mercy and love and be transformed.

In this season of Pentecost we invite all who are part of Churches Together to pray for the gifts of the Spirit so that they may be activists for the love of God, building healing, reconciling and forgiving communities where God's kingdom can grow and all be valued as children of God.

8 June 2017

- *Archbishop Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury*
- *Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster*
- *Revd Dr Hugh Osgood, the Free Churches Moderator*
- *The Revd Canon Billy Kennedy, the President nominated by the New Churches, the Religious Society of Friends (i.e., the Quakers) and the Lutheran and German-speaking Churches*
- *Bishop Angaelos, the President for the Orthodox Churches*
- *Bishop Dr Eric Brown, the Pentecostal President*