

## Concordat 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

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<b>Status of Paper</b>	Final
<b>Action Required</b>	To endorse the draft statement, and appoint members of a working group to take this forward.
<b>Resolutions</b>	76/1. The Council receives the report. 76/2. The Council endorses the draft statement at paragraph 10 of this report. 76/3. The Council appoints the members of the group as set out in paragraph 11 to take this work forward.

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	To share with the Council the outcome of the conversations during the Concordat 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary and present a draft statement to the Council.
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## Concordat 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

1. Methodists in Great Britain and in the United States of America adopted a special concordat agreement in 1968 at their respective conferences. That agreement solidified our unique history and Wesleyan heritage and bound us together in a formal connection. The statements of concordat the two churches approved, however, were different, and that has been the topic of conversation since that time.
2. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the concordat, the two churches sent official delegates to a special gathering in London to talk about the concordat and to dream about the future. The event was designed for worship, fellowship and to talk about the past, present and potential future of the concordat relationship.
3. On 10 August 2018 participants gathered at Wesley's Chapel, where we began by worshipping together. The Revd Canon Gareth Powell presided at the eucharist and Bishop Bruce Ough preached the sermon. Following worship we heard a presentation by retired General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, the Revd Dr Robert (Bob) Williams. Dr Williams pointed out the different contexts in the two churches at the time of the concordat adoption, specifically the fact that 1968 was the year the Methodist Church in the US and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged to become The United Methodist Church, so the focus at the General Conference that year was on merger concerns. He also mentioned both the joy of the relationship and the issues between the two churches that have been a part of the concordat since its adoption.
4. On 11 August 2018 the full day was spent at Central Hall Westminster. There were several presentations about the ministries in which our two churches currently engage, including delegate exchanges, Global Mission Fellows, justice ministries, women's ministries, the United Methodist Ecumenical and Interreligious Training (UMEIT): Young Adult Network, welcoming a Methodist Church participant on the United Methodist Connectional Table, and the launching of a new educational exchange centre.
5. During the afternoon the delegations held small group discussions about what they might want to do together moving forward. They were asked to "dream big" and to write down their ideas. The ideas were posted around the room and each participant was asked to put post-it notes on the three ideas they thought were most important. After the banquet that night (held at The Wesley Hotel, where participants were being lodged) the two organizers, Doug Swanney and Jean Hawxhurst, wrote the first draft of a document about possible future directions for the concordat based on the day's conversations. This draft is shared with the Council at the end of this paper.
6. On 12 August the group worshipped together at Central Hall Westminster, and during the service Bishop B Michael Watson and the Revd Canon Gareth Powell signed a statement of continued support of the concordat.
7. After lunch and fellowship together, the event concluded. Several participants from both churches continued on to the Oxford Institute, with plans being made to continue to working toward the perfection of the draft statement and how to proceed.
8. To summarise the statement, it places the work of these delegations in our current context and it suggests the formation of a group to perfect the document in preparation to take it to the churches' respective conferences in 2020. The group will also carry forward the suggestions received from the conversations on 12 August 2018.

9. The Council is asked to endorse the draft statement and to appoint representatives to be part of the group taking this work forward.

**10. Draft Statement - Summary Report to the Delegations of the Methodist Church in Britain and The United Methodist Church**

*The Methodist Church in Britain and The United Methodist Church have a unique relationship born out of our common heritage in the ministries of John and Charles Wesley. While both of us have other important relationships and are a part of the larger Wesleyan Family through the World Methodist Council, we know the particular relationship we share is special. Therefore, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ratification of our concordat, we claim our distinct links anew, hoping to live them out in today's context.*

*To that end, delegations from the Methodist Church in Britain and The United Methodist Church gathered in London August 10-12, 2018 with the purpose of re-claiming our concordat relationship and dreaming for the future. Our time together was productive and concluded by offering several suggestions for moving forward.*

*Foundational to all we do is our common, shared heritage as Wesleyan Christians. We claim a mutual discipleship that leads to our joint and shared mission, as stated in John 17 "so that the world may believe." We claim this as our underpinning, and as we act, we will do so out of the knowledge of who we are together. We will continue to check ourselves in this foundation moving forward, knowing we are healthier and more faithful when we are acting together.*

*To help keep this focus, we will form a group of representatives from each church who will connect together on a regular, continuing basis. This group will consist of no more than 6 representatives from each communion. They will be named by the Methodist Council and the Council of Bishops by the end of November 2018. They will work on the seven particular areas named at this gathering as areas on which we may want to focus together:*

1. *Identifying our purpose and the faith statements expressed in the original concordat,*
2. *Increasing relational ministries,*
3. *Dialoguing around migration and migrant churches,*
4. *Strengthening our common Wesleyan heritage and theology,*
5. *Paying attention to how we share in our relationships with other churches,*
6. *Utilizing better the delegates to each other's conferences,*
7. *Working together for justice.*

*These areas, and the ideas around them shared at this concordat celebration will now be given to the Concordat Committee for their further discernment. They will take the work we have begun in London and give life to it by creating a renewed concordat which will be brought to our respective conferences in 2020 for affirmation and commitment.*

*Even as we commit to renewing the concordat, the good work that is already being done in Christ's name will continue. We will pray for each other. We will support the joint ministries and missions currently being shared, and celebrate the relational work being done. We will continue to take action together in mission evangelism and justice as currently configured. We will be open to instances we can speak together with one voice. We will commit to finding new ways of expressing and building our relationships with one another, as expressed through the current concordat. We will be intentional about inviting representatives to shared learning opportunities. And, we will celebrate the common heritage we share with the whole Methodist family.*

*We, the representatives of the Methodist Church in Britain and The United Methodist Church, offer this statement as our report of the gathering and our commitment to move forward together.*

**11. Proposed Members of the Group**

The Revd Canon Gareth J Powell, Secretary of the Conference  
Mr Doug Swanney, Connexional Secretary  
The Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson, Chair of the Liverpool District  
Mrs Pamela Lavender, Chair of the Stationing Committee  
Ms Rachel Lampard, past Vice-President of the Conference  
Mr Daleep Mukarji, past Vice-President of the Conference

All proposed members were present at the Concordat 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations and understand the context of how this work is moving forward.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**76/1. The Council receives the report.**

**76/2. The Council endorses the draft statement at paragraph 10 of this report.**

**76/3. The Council appoints the members of the group as set out in paragraph 11 to take this work forward.**