

29. Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group

Contact name and details	The Revd Ruth M Gee The Rt Revd Paul Bayes Co-Chairs of the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group
Resolutions	29/1. The Conference receives the Report. 29/2. The Conference extends the appointment of the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group for a further year to August 2021. 29/3. The Conference directs the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group to bring proposals for the continuing support of the Covenant to the Conference in 2021 29/4. The Conference directs the Faith and Order Committee to work with the Faith and Order Commission and others to explore our understanding of organic unity and full visible unity. 29/5. The Conference appoints the Revd Richard J Teal as Co-Chair of the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group.

Summary of content

Subject and aims	To report on the work of the Group during the past year and to propose ongoing work to support the Covenant
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Introduction

- 1 The Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group (JCAMG) has met twice this year, continuing its work of encouraging and enabling both churches to live and grow in their covenant relationship. Significant time has been given to consideration of the response to *Mission and Ministry in Covenant* by the General Synod in July 2019 and subsequent decisions of the Methodist Council. The group continues to advocate the important opportunities for mission already afforded by the Covenant and affirm the work of the Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM) in identifying and sharing these.

Mission and Ministry in Covenant

- 2 The General Synod of the Church of England debated Mission and Ministry in Covenant in July 2019. There was affirmation of the work that had been done and recognition of the priority of engaging together in mission. However, the Synod voted for a more measured time frame than originally proposed for implementation of the proposals and requested the faith and order bodies of both churches to undertake further work drafting texts for the 'formal declaration', the inaugural service or services and the service of welcome of ministers into the other church. The House of Bishops was required to report back on the work done and to bring forward proposals for implementation to the Synod in the next quinquennium (2020-2025). This would begin the legislative process.
- 3 Following the decisions of the General Synod, the Methodist Council, meeting in October 2019, affirmed the work done and the priority of engagement together in mission. The Council did not direct the Faith and Order Committee to undertake additional work at this time but invited it to pause the work, to revisit it once the General Synod has begun the legislative process, and to bring consequent proposals to a future Conference.

- 4 The Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group recognises that these decisions, taken together, mean that work will not, at this time, progress on *Mission and Ministry in Covenant*. However, the commitment to work towards a united, interchangeable ministry remains, as agreed by both churches in the first commitment of the Anglican Methodist Covenant.ⁱ
- 5 It is clear that work needs to continue in response to the first affirmation of the Covenant and in order to enable this in a way that is acceptable to both churches it is proposed that:
- I. the JCAMG continues its work for a further year from September 2020 and brings proposals to the Conference and the General Synod in 2021 about the way in which the Covenant will continue to be supported by the churches.
 - II. the faith and order bodies of the churches are invited to continue to work together and with others to overcome the remaining obstacles to the organic unity of our two churches including exploration of our understanding of organic unity and full visible unity.

Living in Covenant

- 6 The production of a video resource to support conversations around the Covenant had begun but continuing work has been postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic.
- 7 *The Gifts We Receive* consultation took place over two days in June and October 2019. Participants engaged in the methodology of Receptive Ecumenism, to identify and focus on gifts received from the other church and considered how the gifts received can help each church in its life and mission to flourish. The two days were well received, and a toolkit will be available on the Covenant website by the end of June 2020. This can be used flexibly in local situations.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

- 29/1. The Conference received the Report.**
- 29/2. The Conference extended the appointment of the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group for a further year to August 2021.**
- 29/3. The Conference directed the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group to bring proposals for the continuing support of the Covenant to the Conference in 2021.**
- 29/4. The Conference directed the Faith and Order Committee to work with the Faith and Order Commission and others to explore our understanding of organic unity and full visible unity.**
- 29/5. The Conference appointed the Revd Richard J Teal as Co-Chair of the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group.**

Reasoned Statement:

Richard Teal is to be President of the Conference for the year 2020/2021, and has wide experience of working ecumenically, particularly in pioneering a county-wide ecumenical project while Chair of the Cumbria District.

ⁱ We commit ourselves, as a priority, to work to overcome the remaining obstacles to the organic unity of our two churches, on the way to the full visible unity of Christ's Church. In particular, we look forward to the time when the fuller visible unity of our churches makes possible a united, interchangeable ministry. (An Anglican Methodist Covenant 2003)