

The Covenant Council – Report 2012

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THE COVENANT COUNCIL

The Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland

REPORT OF THE COVENANT COUNCIL TO THE CHURCHES 2012

MEMBERSHIP

Church of Ireland

The Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Bishop of Meath & Kildare (Co-Chair)

Ms Elva Byrne

Very Rev Nigel Dunne

Rev Dr Maurice Elliott

Rev Barry Forde

Rev Canon Virginia Kennerley

Rev Dr Peter Thompson

Mr Cyril McElhinney

Methodist

Rev Winston Graham (Co-Chair)

Rev Donald Ker

Rev Andrew Dougherty (Secretary)

Rev Janet Unsworth

Rev Louise Donald

Ms Gillian Kingston

Dr Fergus O'Ferrall

Mr Nigel Beattie

Signing of the Covenant

This year marks the tenth anniversary since the signing of the Covenant. In particular it will be celebrated as part of the Mission Meeting at the Methodist Conference in Enniskillen on Friday 8th June 2012. There is an open invitation to attend that evening. It is also hoped that further celebrations will take place in Belfast, Cork and Dublin over the coming months.

Local Covenant Partnerships

During the year it has been possible for a few members of the Council to visit some of the Joint Projects. It has been encouraging at first hand to see members from both our churches working together in a spirit of unity and purpose. Just as in the life of all our congregations there are times of difficulty and challenge so this is to be expected too with the Joint Projects. However, where there is an ongoing commitment to Christ and a vision for the Kingdom of God in common life and witness, then signs of growth and renewal can be seen and experienced.

Interchangeability of Ministries

Queen's University of Belfast

Putting the Covenant into effect at the Church of Ireland and Methodist Chaplaincies at Queen's University, Belfast, continues to be very high on the agenda. For some time the Chaplaincies have been working informally together to create a culture of a 'single centre', ministering together across the student residency, through the Hub café, and conducting worship in the Church of the Resurrection. It is hoped that in 2012 these arrangements can be formalised into the following: a Local Covenant Partnership Agreement will be signed, the Church of the Resurrection on campus will be recognised by both denominations as a 'Covenant Church', and a single Covenant Management Group will sit under the authority of both churches to manage the day to day running, vision and mission of the ministry. The expectation is that the arrangements being put in place now will be both foundational and flexible to meet the demands of serving future generations through Queen's Chaplaincy.

Membership

Last year, it was agreed to create the posts of two Student Observers, one nominated by Edgehill Theological College and the other by the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, which are to be renewed after a twelve month period. This year, Mr Rowan Zeelie was nominated by Edgehill and Mr Andrew Campbell was nominated by CITI.