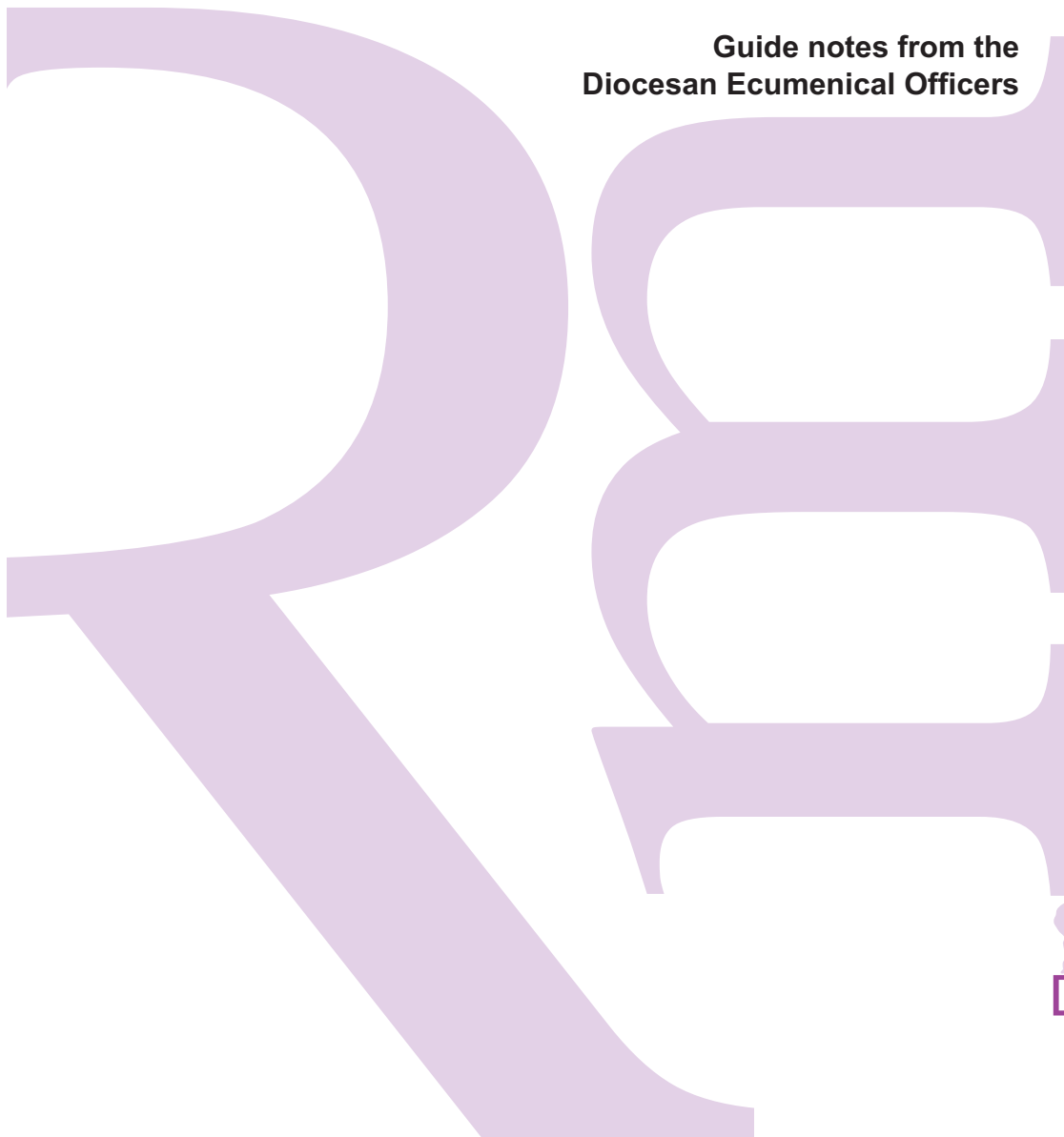


RENEWING
Ministry

Renewing Ministry & Ecumenical Living

Guide notes from the
Diocesan Ecumenical Officers



Diocese
of Derby



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Why is ecumenical living important?

The Unity of the Church is part of God's purpose for his creation. Through the mission and ministry of the Church we receive God's grace and love which enables Christians to seek reconciliation, healing and unity. The mission of God is to create communion (koinonia) in Christ. The Unity of the Church is an important witness to the gospel and an effective sign of God's Kingdom.

The Church of England is committed to growing in common life, where possible, with partner churches, in mission and service on the basis of its ecumenical Canons (B43 and B44). The recent signing of the Anglican/Methodist Covenant is an important step on the road to full visible unity through formal recognition and commitment.

How can Renewing Ministry encourage Ecumenical Living?

As we ask ourselves, "What does it mean to be Church in the 21st Century?" ask as a local Anglican Church community,

- How can we move from "doing ecumenical things" such as participating in a joint Christian Aid Week door to door collection to "doing things ecumenically" (developing our whole work with a sense of partnership).
- How can we serve the local community as Christians together, rather than as a denomination?
- How can the local churches think of "ecumenical" as liberating, enriching and a real sharing of common concerns and opportunities?

Is there a real possibility of sharing together in:

- Responding to local social needs together
 - Sharing worship together
 - Studying together
 - Evangelising together
 - Nurturing together
 - Preparing people for marriage together
 - Doing youth and or children's work together
 - Contacting local schools together
- Look at the opportunities God may be giving you to explore with ecumenical colleagues and congregations ways of sharing in a deeper relationship, of discovering unity not only as a journey's end, but a way of journeying now.

How can we start working ecumenically?

- Undertake an **ecumenical audit of your locality**, including who and where your partners are; local needs in common; how are you working together, how much are you doing separately and why. What does it mean to be the people of God in this place/ for this place?
- **Map out** the resources the churches have locally. Rather than begin something in your own right, can you share in a joint Sunday School? Has a local church something to share with or offer you? **Plan together** for new church or community programmes.
- If your church is the only place of worship in your community, explore the possibility of making the **Ecumenical Declaration of Welcome and Commitment**. If you want to know more about this, contact us.
- **Invite** lay or ordained ministers of other churches to participate in parish worship and share their own traditions. **Explore** ways of sharing worship together. **Pray** together regularly.

We have a vision of sharing mission and ministry ecumenically. What do we do now?

Beginning:

Talk to the **Diocesan Ecumenical Officers**. Their details are at the end of this page. They will listen, advise, guide and suggest as to possible ways forward for you. They have examples of **good practice** within the Country, County and Diocese ecumenical partnerships and projects, and welcome your stories of good practice. Whilst we are seeking that unity which is both God's will and his gift, and explore this already in a variety of ways and situations locally, there is a need to root our ecumenical relationships within a framework of good order and practice, especially when considering sharing worship, ministry or buildings.

The Framework

Every partner church has a framework of rules and definitions which shape their lives and regulate their work. The **Ecumenical Canons** of the Church of England are designed to **encourage ecumenical relationships**.

- **Canon B43** relates to every place of worship in the Church of England, and its provisions enable baptized members of other churches, in good standing, to share worship in the Church of England, if the minister or lay person is authorized to perform a similar task within their own church. The Canon sets out the permissions necessary to extend an invitation. Canon B43 also outlines how Church of England clergy, lay workers or Readers may respond to invitations to share in worship from partner churches.
- **Canon B44** provides the framework for Church of England parishes to formalise a commitment to share together with partner churches in a Local Ecumenical Partnership. The Canon sets out the ways in which 'the bishop of the diocese may enter into an agreement with the appropriate authority of each participating church within the proposed LEP.'

Tell us what you'd like to do and we will do the detailed work with the Canons.

The Way Forward

The journey towards God's Kingdom in partnership with our brothers and sisters leads us in Christ towards communion in faith, life and witness and is the most exciting journey that we will ever make! So contact us for further help:

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The Rural Deans have a list of corresponding Anglican churches/places of worship, Methodist and United Reformed centres for worship within their deanery, which may be of help as you map your mission and ministry area.