

Report given to CTiW AGM on 22 January 2018 by the Chairman, Rev'd Dr Ruth Gouldbourne

I want to start by saying welcome, and saying a huge thank you to the Salvation Army for hosting us tonight, and to all those who have come to speak and to put out stalls; and to everybody for being here.

Our year has focussed around our three areas of activity; education and getting to know one another; worship and social action.

We pursue our first aim largely through MTN and have joined to it this year JTN – inviting people to join in regular events at various churches. This has taken us to St Saviour Pimlico, to All Souls and will take us to Mount St. If you would like to be part of this in any way, please let us know. In 2017, we added to this the specific events linked to the commemoration of the Reformation – various of our churches were involved in Reformation 500, with exhibitions, lecture, concerts and other events – and it was good to be able to share in these. Rosa, our admin officer is great at passing news on among our churches both through our newsletter which she is responsible for editing and sending out, and through the database which she uses to share invitations and items of interest among churches.

Our second aim regularly invites us to worship together, and we do this on Advent Sunday at SJP, and on Pentecost, this year at Hinde St. We also shared in the Cross on Victoria St.

Our third aim involves us in the prison ministry which we will hear about later in the meeting, and as well as the actual visiting of prisons which is great work, also in praying together in prisons week. The resources that are produced for that are significant, - and if you haven't used them before, can I recommend that you look out for them later in the year; prisons week is in October – and see how they might best serve you.

Our theme for the AGM usually reflects a social concern, and this year our eco theme is precisely that – and we have highlighted other eco themes through the newsletter. We have also hosted a round table for churches who are concerned in supporting and working well with rough sleepers, and have started to produce material for good practice in being welcoming congregations for various different groups with particular needs.

The exec has, as always gone through various changes, and we have had to say goodbye to Graham Mizon from Salvation Army who moved to Manchester. We have been glad to welcome Caroline and Richard Mingay who have replaced him here onto the exec, - and we express our sympathies to them, as they cannot be with us this evening because of family bereavement. Ray Crocker having taken a leave of absence for a year is now not returning to the exec, and Deborah Colvin who replaced him – and who has been particularly helpful in setting up tonight's meeting, has also had to withdraw. Philip Majcher from Crown Court has told us he must stand down due to other demands, though we hope there may be somebody else from Crown Court to join us. David Mannarino, our treasurer was returned by work to the USA rather more suddenly than we had anticipated, which did disrupt our financial management again – we have a new treasurer, Andreea Gherman, whom we are delighted to welcome and whom you will hear from in a moment. She joined the exec in November, so is just getting to grips with things – and with David being in another country, the handover was more complex than one would ideally like. In the process of managing that change, our reminders of payment of membership donation were not sent out – we are grateful to those churches who have gone ahead and paid anyway – thank you! There will be a reminder sent out as we start this New Year after the AGM. I will be saying more about the exec later in the meeting, but I wanted at this point to express thanks to Ray, to Graham, to David and to Deborah, and to welcome Richard and Caroline, and Andreea.

Our activity as an exec inside, as you might say, has been largely shaped by working on the new constitution, for which we owe a great debt of gratitude to our exec member John Plummer, who will present it to you shortly, and Philip Cotterell, who acted as consultant. This will be presented to you shortly; we did not want a new constitution, but we had lost – physically lost – the previous one, so we took the opportunity to bring it up to date in line with Churches Together in England models. This has been a long task, but one that, I trust, has been useful and will stand us in good stead.

It has been a worthwhile year. Ecumenism is not the burning issue it was half a generation ago – which may be for the best of reasons that we now have a measure of unity and community that was a long way off thirty years ago. But such a move has its impact on levels of enthusiasm and commitment; if we've got this more or

less sorted, aren't there things we might better put our energy into. This is an attitude that is around, and it has its impact on our life together, and particularly on how we organise it. I believe passionately that we have come a long way – and suspect that we have further and unexpected ways still to go. I think that our work together – getting to know and understand one another better; sharing in prayer and worship and taking on challenging social issues still matters. The Kingdom has not yet come in its fullness; we are still called to seek it, and to explore it. Thank you for being here tonight to take part in this expression, and thank you to all of those who do various things during the year to keep those glimpses coming.