

# **West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership**

## **Holy Trinity + St Mary's + Toothill + Westlea**

# ***Welcome***

To this Partnership Meeting to consider  
**New Beginnings**  
with our local denominational leaders



# ***Welcome friends***

**To this Partnership Open Meeting to consider**

## **New Beginnings**

**with our local denominational leaders**



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# *Welcome to our guests*

**Revd Christopher Bryan  
Archdeacon of Malmesbury  
Church of England**



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# *Welcome to our guests*

**Red Shirlyn Toppin**  
**Superintendant Minister Upper Thames Circuit**  
**Deputy Chair of the Bristol District**  
**Methodist Church**



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# ***Welcome to our guests***

**Revd Gerald England**

**Minister Emmanuel Church Haydon Wick**

**Synod Pastoral Adviser for Swindon and the Wiltshire United Area**

**United Reformed Church**



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# *Welcome to our guests*

**Christopher  
Shirlyn  
Gerald**



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**Partnership Open Meeting**

**New Beginnings**

# **Agenda**

**You should have a copy**

**If you don't please raise your hand and we will get one to you**



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# Opening devotion

**Prayer  
Reading**



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# Prayer

**We remain seated**

**We pray the first part of the prayer together  
(The words will be on the screen)**

**I will lead us in the second part of the prayer**



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**Creator God, maker and sustainer of all that is,  
we praise and worship You.**

**We humble ourselves as we become more aware of  
Your presence in us, and our presence in You, now.**

**You are welcome here.**

**We thank You that You have called us  
to be co-workers with You,  
in building Your Kingdom in  
West Swindon and beyond.**

**Amen.**



# Prayer



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# Prayer



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# Reading

**Psalm 44: 1-8**

**Read for us by friends from each of our four churches**



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**We have heard it with our ears, O God;  
our ancestors have told us  
what You did in their days,  
in days long ago.**



**With Your hand You drove out the nations  
and planted our ancestors;  
You crushed the peoples  
and made our ancestors flourish.**



**It was not by their sword that they won the land,  
nor did their arm bring them victory;  
it was Your right hand, Your arm,  
and the light of Your face, for You loved them.  
You are my King and my God,  
who decrees victories for Jacob.**





**Through You we push back our enemies;  
through Your name we trample our foes.  
I put no trust in my bow,  
my sword does not bring me victory;**



**but You give us victory over our enemies,  
You put our adversaries to shame.  
In God we make our boast all day long,  
and we will praise Your name forever.**

**Amen.**



# **Denominational leaders share with us in turn**

**The background – How have we got here**

**The current situation – Their perspective**

**The future – Their vision for our futures**



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# Christopher

**The background – How have we got here**

**The current situation – Their perspective**

**The future – Their vision for our futures**



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A large, solid orange oval shape that serves as the background for the text.

West Swindon SCLEP

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# To celebrate

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- Christian witness in these urban villages
- Service to diverse communities
- Buildings which welcome
- Active schools ministry
- An example of Christians working together



# What is an SCLEP?

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- One structure (amongst many options) which enables a collaboration between denominations to serve the Kingdom of God





# What is an SCLEP?

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- One **structure** (amongst many options) which enables a collaboration between denominations to serve the Kingdom of God
- Many different ways of being ecumenical





# What is an SCLEP?

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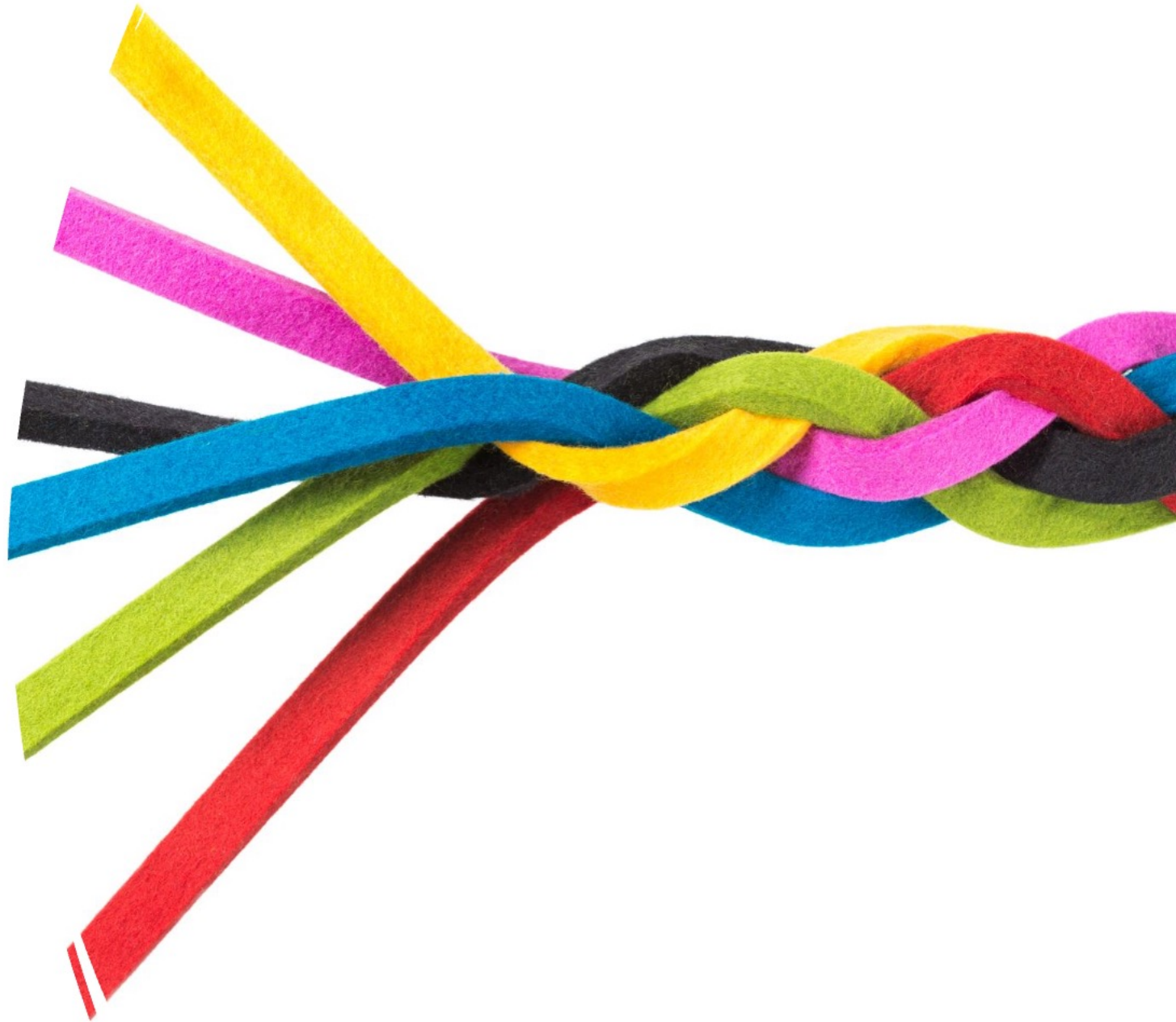
- One structure (amongst many options) which enables a collaboration **between denominations** to serve the Kingdom of God
- Not itself a denomination, or a separate tradition. Rather, a partnership between denominations, expressed within one congregation



# What is an SCLEP?

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- One structure (amongst many options) which enables a collaboration between denominations to **serve the Kingdom of God**
- To enable mission and ministry – ***meant to make it easier***






# A good idea in its time

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- Into new housing estates, where a combined Christian witness was needed
- Where each denomination provided a minister, who worked as part of a team
- In a culture which wanted representation and sophisticated rules to govern meetings
- And yet did not have Policies on Safeguarding, Health and Safety etc
- In a society where there was more volunteer time

A large orange circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge. It contains the text 'What has changed? Why now?' in white.

## What has changed? Why now?

- Denominations unable to resource paid ministry – no longer Baptist/URC paid ministry, Methodists likely to withdraw within a couple of years. Anglican are able to fund next incumbent.
  - Yet ministers and SCLEP have to fulfil requirements from all four denominations, including financial contributions, duplication
  - Less volunteer time to manage this
  - Culture is more informally collaborative
  - Likely to be very difficult to recruit next Anglican incumbent to an SCLEP
- 
- A series of four yellow dashed line segments are arranged in a curved, upward-pointing arc in the bottom right corner of the slide.





# A future pattern?

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- A new ***structure***
- A denominational alignment – consistent practice on policies, finance, ministry
- An ecumenical culture – the best of what you are. Worship, care, collaboration, mission, licensed preachers
- Church of England committed to replacing Clive when he retires; to continue Diocese of Bristol ownership of Lydiard Tregoze and Shaw
- Work alongside ecumenical partners, in a light touch structure

## Next steps

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Discerning if dissolving the SCLEP is Christ's will for us

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Praying about what the future might look like

---

Discussing and deciding as much as possible before writing legalities

---

Researching technical info e.g. buildings ownership and resolving

---

Setting up a formal / legal process

---

Final vote to conclude SCLEP

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# Shirlyn

**The background – How have we got here**

**The current situation – Their perspective**

**The future – Their vision for our futures**



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# Gerald

**The background – How have we got here**

**The current situation – Their perspective**

**The future – Their vision for our futures**



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# Questions from all our churches



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# Questions from all our churches



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# Questions from all our churches

**Why dissolve the SCLEP, and why now?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**What are the timescales for any wider consultation/information/permissions?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**Will there need to be a Baptist members meeting  
to authorise the plans?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**When exactly will the Partnership dissolve?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**When will changes take place?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**What are your plans for our parish (CofE),  
and churches (Meth, URC, Bap)?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**In originally establishing the LEP, the Partnership Churches and the 4 denominations made a Covenant, headlining :**

- We exist in order to BE the People of God and EXTEND the Kingdom of God throughout West Swindon and the Lydiards.**
- There are also 5 specific commitments within the Covenant, which many people in all our churches value.**

**1/2**



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# Questions from all our churches

**What specific advice does each Denomination now offer to the Churches, to rebuild and develop these commitments for a sustainable future?**

2/2



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# Questions from all our churches

**After the ending of the SCLEP in 2025, what other forms of Church association should we consider in West Swindon – Churches Together, or any others?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**The 4 churches that remain have a significant amount of work to reorganise under their chosen denomination. However denominational choices come with support (and standard templates for charity etc) The choice also comes with limitations of clergy appointment, acceptance of ministry from other denominations, use of the building etc. Westlea seems to have more flexibility, but in some of our scenarios more work to do.**

**1/2**



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# Questions from all our churches

**We want to know what discretion and flexibility the leaders will apply, in perpetuity, or for 20 years, or for 5 years?**

**2/2**



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# Questions from all our churches

**At which time, if any, will we have to take up  
new membership?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**Will the only new membership be  
for the Church of England?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**Do you have to be a member to have a role in Church  
such as Church Warden, Secretary, Treasurer,  
Committee Member?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**What other regulations need to change?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**What timescales do you envisage for answers to our queries here today?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**Will preachers from other denominations  
be able to lead?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**Will ministers be able to maintain our rich tradition of celebrating communion in different styles, sometimes referred to as Free Church Communion?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**What support will the denominations give during any transition, particularly with the increased administrative burden of unravelling the current structure and creating new ones?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**What about safeguarding?**

**This will all come under the Church of England. Various Partnership responsibilities need unpicking in this way – e.g. trusteeship, gift aid, etc.**



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# Questions from all our churches

**What's the opinion of Sponsoring Body  
about dissolution?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**Have you considered sharing agreements on the two shared buildings?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**If the partnership is dissolved would the Methodists  
take Toothill into the circuit and run it  
as a Methodist Church?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**Toothill are are looking forward to welcoming a new  
part time Methodist Minister in September,  
will that still go ahead?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**We currently have a financial commitment to all the denominational bodies, when will that cease?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**What happens about Westlea?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**How many churches will Clive's replacement  
have to be responsible for?**

**Will there still be 4 churches going forward?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**What happens when Clive leaves?  
Is there any possibility of someone working alongside  
Clive in his final year to help prepare  
for the new arrangements.**



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# Questions from all our churches

**Will West Swindon remain one parish?**



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# Questions from all our churches

**Should we take the opportunity to demolish Shaw and Toothill and build one eco friendly building?**



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# Questions from the floor



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# Next steps

## The way forward

### Next steps

Discerning if dissolving the SCLEP is Christ's will for us

Praying about what the future might look like

Discussing and deciding as much as possible before writing legalities

Researching technical info e.g. buildings ownership and resolving

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# Next steps

## The way forward

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# **Next steps**

## **The way forward**

**Pray + Reflect + Discuss + Hold church meetings**  
**Look at the future possibilities**

**Partnership Meeting 7.30pm October 18<sup>th</sup> at Toothill**  
**Planning meeting 7.30pm November 22 at Holy Trinity Shaw**

**Meanwhile the Partnership Executive will be meeting monthly  
and working with the Partnership Council to maintain progress**



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# **Next steps**

## **The way forward**

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# Thank you to our guests

**Christopher  
Shirlyn  
Gerald**



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# Thank you friends

**Holy Trinity + St Mary's + Toothill + Westlea**



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# **Closing devotion**

**A moment of silent prayer**

**Lord's Prayer**

**Song – Build your Kingdom here**

**Blessing**



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# A moment of silent prayer



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**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be Your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**



**Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are Yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**



The background is an abstract composition of warm, textured colors. A large, semi-transparent red shape, resembling a stylized sun or a large drop, is positioned on the left side, partially overlapping a bright yellow area. The overall palette consists of various shades of yellow, orange, and red, with a grainy, painterly texture.

# **Song**

**Build your Kingdom here**

**By Rend Collective**



# Blessing

**Reverend Gerald England**



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**Awake the kingdom seed in us  
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ  
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope  
Holy Spirit, come invade us now  
Build Your kingdom here we pray**