



An open letter from Churches in Britain to Churches in member states of the European Union

24 January 2020

Dear sisters and brothers

At 11pm GMT on Friday the 31st of January 2020, the United Kingdom will no longer be a member of the European Union. The UK is leaving the EU, but we are not leaving Europe.

Our Churches have contributed to and been enriched by the Christian tradition in Europe for centuries. The early evangelists to these islands came with the Roman empire. They were followed by the missions of St Augustine of Canterbury (who came originally from what is now Italy) and St Columba of Iona (from what is now Ireland). The faith of Christians in these islands has from the earliest days had its roots in the European Church. The impact of the Reformation in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands has contributed significantly to the Churches, societies and nations of our islands, an impact that is still felt to this day. We have congregations of our Churches in many cities in Europe and we maintain close fellowship with partner Churches across our continent. We are, and will always be, European Churches, as part of the worldwide church.

The diminishing of political ties and accountability will not affect or impede our commitment to our partners in other parts of Europe. We will continue to play a full and active part in European ecumenical organisations and we will support our congregations and partners in other parts of Europe.

Our Churches will continue to promote the values we share with you, to promote peace and protect human rights and dignity.

We will continue to pursue the concerns we share with you, to ensure the welfare of all citizens and that our Governments are held to account for issues about security, freedom and the sharing of prosperity.

We will continue to work with you on the great challenges of our time; how European nations respond to forced migration, and how we adapt and respond to the climate crisis.

We will continue to remain committed to the principles of solidarity, that have bound us together for many years and to which we must hold fast in a time of increasing xenophobia, religious discrimination, wealth inequality and national self-interest.

We have appreciated your support and interest in our situation in recent years, and we ask you to stay with us as we learn what our future holds, and how we can work together to offer hope and reconciliation to all our communities as we seek to follow Jesus in our everyday living.

Please pray for us, as we will pray for you.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:1-6

Yours in Christ

Revd Dr Barbara Glasson and Professor Clive Marsh, President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

Revd David Mayne, Moderator of Council, Baptist Union of Great Britain

The Right Revd Colin Sinclair, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

Revd Nigel Uden and Mr Derek Estill, Moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church