

In these circumstances, many Christians from other traditions see it as their vocation to worship at the parish church - so that they can be part of the total community of Christian people bearing witness in that locality.

Others will join them simply because their own church is too far away or transport to reach it is not available on a Sunday morning.

Both groups will maintain their membership in the nearest church in their own tradition.

Either way the Church of England would wish to honour the rich and diverse spiritual treasures these people bring into their local parish church. Here is 'ecumenical partnership' by default!

It is good when a local parish church is able to acknowledge the relationship that these people continue to have with their church in their own tradition - and when it can agree with the authorities of these churches that it will cherish their members as part of its own fellowship.

A Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome and Commitment*, overseen by 'Churches Together' county-wide, makes public this commitment to pastoral care and is a means by which even the most isolated parishes can experience what it is to be part of the wider Church of Christ.

* Full details from your County or Diocesan Ecumenical Officer

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Council for Christian Unity

2007

Courtesies!

Guidelines for clergy and parish congregations when relating to Christians of other traditions

1. Welcoming individual Christians

2. Hospitality to other congregations
3. Inviting ministers to share in worship
4. Responding to invitations from elsewhere
5. Methodists and Moravians - special friends

From the Preface to the Declaration of Assent made by every priest
- Canon C15:

“The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church ...”

From Canon A8 Of Schisms:

“... it is the duty of clergy and people to do their utmost not only to avoid occasions of strife but also to seek in penitence and brotherly charity to heal such divisions.”

1. Welcoming individual Christians from other traditions

At Church of England services

Anyone is welcome to attend a Church of England service of public worship.

Christians from other traditions are especially welcome to take part - including, for example, being invited by the incumbent to read scripture.

These Christians are also welcome to receive the bread and wine at a Church of England service of Holy Communion; but they should be baptised and entitled to receive Holy Communion in their own Church. Their Church also needs to preach a Trinitarian faith. (Canon B15A)

The Church of England respects the fact that for some Christians, the discipline of their own Church prevents them from receiving Holy Communion in at Church of England service. However, they are welcome to come forward at the time of communion for a prayer.

In the life of a Church of England parish

Christians from other traditions who choose to worship regularly in a parish congregation may become more fully integrated into the life of the parish by joining the Church Electoral Roll.

On the application form to join the Church Electoral Roll, they will acknowledge their own tradition and 'declare themselves *also* to be members of the Church of England' on the basis that they have worshipped at the Church of England church for at least the last six months.

Once listed on the Church Electoral Roll, they may offer themselves for election to the Parochial Church Council and Deanery Synod, and from there to Diocesan Synod or even General Synod.

Those from other traditions who regularly receive Holy Communion and look set to continue should invited to consider Confirmation by the bishop - unless they have already been confirmed in an episcopal Church - but there is no requirement that they should say 'yes'.

The Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome and Commitment

In many places, especially in rural areas, the Church of England parish church is the only church in the area.