



Back in January 1991 a covenant was signed as an agreement that local churches in Alresford would unite to “make visible the common mission of our churches to the people of Alresford.”

We also pledged, as churches, to work together whenever possible and this co-operation has led to many new friendships and a sense of cohesion in the Christian community. We have learned from one another, explored new ideas and united to support the initiatives of individual churches.

However the years have passed and, although our core principles and ideals remain the same, we find that interest in shared church activities and also the practical support for events organised by CTIA, have diminished.

At a recent meeting to decide the future of CTIA, we recognised the need to scale back on our list of annual commitments. Some activities were agreed to be essential e.g. the Good Friday Walk of Witness, while others (mostly the social gatherings) are very poorly attended, so need to be curtailed.

Historically, CTIA has struggled to recruit new committee members (maybe because the planning of so many events was an onerous and off-putting prospect!). However, this month we welcome two new colleagues and look forward to their fresh input and the new ideas they bring.

Please consider your role in supporting this inter-church community; in a world with ever more factions and divisions it is indeed a strength to buck the trend and unite. Our covenant motto was that ‘together we are stronger’ and this remains an important truth.

Reflecting upon our decisions regarding the future of CTIA, Lay Pastor Jon Hughes drew up the following interesting analogy:

It is the time of year for many to look forward to brighter days ahead and plan a summer holiday. There will be the initial excitement of deciding when and where to go, making the booking and paying the deposit. There may then be a lull when nothing needs to be done but as the time to go away approaches, preparations need to be made.

Depending on the destination some matters are essential and will require action - will a passport be required and is the current one still valid? Will a visa application need to be made? Will any vaccinations be needed? What level of travel insurance should be taken out?

As the departure approaches, thoughts will turn to what should be packed. If the trip abroad involves air travel, then there will be a weight limit on luggage. If the vacation is a Mediterranean beach holiday in the height of summer, hopefully, an overcoat and lots of warm jumpers will be surplus to requirements!

*The packing is complete, but the suitcase is bulging and difficult to close and lock. After a struggle the suitcase is put on the scales and it is over the limit! The suitcase is re-opened and now the difficult decision **MUST** be made – what is essential to take? What would we like to take and what should be left behind? A difficult decision, but one we have all probably had to make at some time.*

These principles do not just apply to going on holiday but in life as well, as we all juggle with sometimes challenging pressures. We need to ask what is essential? Which things are important and precious? Perhaps more importantly, is there anything that can be let go?

So much to do and so little time to do it. Sometimes, for our own well-being it is essential we take stock and decide what works best moving forward for us, for those we love and those we seek to support.

Your CTIA committee is fully committed to maintaining and developing strong inter-church links. Together we can explore our faith, have fun and expand our social lives. Together we can also continue to offer support and comfort to our wider town community. So let us all work together to strengthen our united Christian community here in Alresford.