



CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORK

THE COVENANT

1. This Covenant is an agreement between the partners responsible for the United Reformed Church Church-Related Community Work ministry in a particular situation.

2. The partners are:

- (i) The Church-in-Community which has requested CRCW ministry.
- (ii) The Synod which has requested CRCW ministry.
- (iii) The Church-Related Community Work Minister
- (iv) The CRCW Programme Sub-Committee, a sub-committee of the Ministries Committee of the United Reformed Church.

3. We, the partners, agree that:

Our commitment to Church-Related Community Work arises out of:

- Our faith in God, whose love for all people and whose desire for justice and peace was demonstrated in the giving of his Son to live among us in the world.
- Our belief that we are called to share that love and to work for justice and peace with all people.

And that:

- Church-Related Community Work is about change, in society, in the church, in groups and in individuals; it is about the process by which change is brought about.
- it is about the relationship of community work to the whole ministry of God's people.

4. THE CHANGES WE SEEK TO BRING ABOUT

- (i) Church-Related Community Work is built on a vision of the Church as an agent of social change. This implies repentance and a call for renewal within the total life of the church as a way of working for change in society. We aim to develop our work in the context of the search for justice and peace throughout creation.
- (ii) Church-Related Community Work is centred on an awareness of the Gospel as it illuminates everyday conflicts and struggles. It is fed by an understanding of the inexhaustible truth of God that draws us into the battle with structural, as well as personal, sin, and into political action.
- (iii) Church-Related Community Work brings fundamental challenges to existing church congregations. Engaging with the community opens us to the possibility of hearing good news from those around us, especially from oppressed and marginalised people, allowing that good news to enter our own community life.
- (iv) All community development work aims to tackle the causes of prejudice and discrimination and to build local structures where power is justly shared; we work to fight discrimination against others (whether because of race, nationality, belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender, disability, age, class, or any other reason) within ourselves, our organisations and wider society.
- (v) All community development work seeks to bring about the sharing of power with the powerless in local communities. As we undertake community development work we need to understand both our vulnerability and our power, so that, in dialogue, we can help to make power and resources, including decision-making, available to the wider community.
- (vi) Church-Related Community Work is one way for the church to share in God's mission. It recognises the Gospel where it is being lived out by people and communities, even though they themselves may not use the name of God.

5. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 'PROCESS'

A Church-Related Community Work minister will work in accordance with the following principles:

- (i) Community development is undertaken in partnership with communities and their groupings, seeking to enable people, groups and communities to develop according to their own needs, wishes and strengths, where this serves the common good.
- (ii) Community development starts with people's experience as they tell it, going on to develop self-help and mutual aid, activating each group's own resources, including leadership, and helping them to identify, acquire and use resources from outside.

- (iii) Community development is a process of learning by doing, so that, together, people develop skills to achieve their shared objectives and to reflect on what they are doing.
- (iv) Community development is a process which encourages the building of participatory, democratic structures, encouraging groups and organisations to work together to achieve greater effectiveness over a wider area.

Church-Related Community Work seeks to employ these community development processes within the life of the church itself as well as in the local neighbourhood.

6. MINISTRY

- (i) Church-Related Community Work is part of the ministry of the whole people of God and it is exercised by Church-Related Community Work ministers, ministers of Word and Sacraments elders and congregations.
- (ii) A Church-Related Community Work minister is called by God, trained and commissioned to a specific situation (the Church-in-Community project) and recognised by the wider Church.
- (iii) A Church-Related Community Work minister's task is to enable the Church-in-Community to engage with community development in the neighbourhood, to reflect on and develop that work, and to develop community development work goals and processes within its own life - its order, outreach, worship, spirituality, theology and mission.

7. RELATIONSHIPS

- (i) All partners to The CRCW Covenant are encouraged to maintain regular contact with each other in order to support and develop CRCW ministry.
- (ii) The Church-in-Community will be expected to submit regular reports to the CRCW Programme Sub -Committee and Synod, as laid out in the CRCW Handbook.
- (iii) The CRCW Programme Sub-Committee will maintain contact with situations where a CRCW post is vacant.

8. WHAT THE CHURCH-IN-COMMUNITY WILL DO

- (i) The Church-in-Community will, with the CRCW minister, seek to develop its commitment to community development in its life, order, outreach, worship, theology and mission.
- (ii) The Church-in-Community will receive regular visits from representatives of the CRCW Programme Sub-Committee.

- (iii) The Church-in-Community will seek opportunities to further its own education and learning about community development.
- (iv) The Church-in-Community will adhere to the agreed Terms of Settlement for the CRCW minister, as required by the URC's Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration.
- (v) The Church-in-Community will appoint a Local Steering Group. This Group will:
 - oversee the community development work before, during and after the period of service of the CRCW minister.
 - develop the direction of this work in consultation with the CRCW minister and reflect theologically on what is proposed and what transpires.
 - ensure that this work is appropriate to local needs, wishes and strengths.
 - ensure that the work is based on community development principles.
 - If necessary, negotiate a way forward when there are conflicting demands between the church and other community groups.
- (vi) The Church-in-Community will enable the CRCW minister to be involved with the wider mission initiatives of the Synod and wider church.

9. WHAT THE CRCW MINISTER WILL DO

- (i) The CRCW minister will encourage the Church-in-Community to apply community development principles.
- (ii) The CRCW minister will normally work in partnership with the minister(s) of Word & Sacraments, elders and congregation(s) of the Church-in-Community.
- (iii) The CRCW minister will help to promote a community development approach in the local and wider church
- (iv) The CRCW minister will keep up-to-date with developments regarding CRCW ministry and fully participate with CRCW ministers' gatherings and generally be involved with wider mission initiatives of the Synod and the CRCW ministry (while acknowledging that it should not disproportionately impinge upon local responsibilities).
- (v) The CRCW minister will adhere to the agreed Terms of Settlement as required by the URC Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration.

10. WHAT THE SYNOD WILL DO

- (i) The Synod will be fully involved with the calling, commissioning, induction and pastoral support of the CRCW minister and to ensure that the requirements of the URC Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration will be met by the Church-in-Community and Synod. The Terms of Settlement Agreement should be negotiated with the CRCW minister, seeking advice from the CRCW Programme Sub-Committee if necessary.
- (ii) The Synod will be asked to appoint two or three people with knowledge of community development to undertake the 1st Term Review and, if appropriate, the 2nd Term Review and to submit a timely report to the CRCW Programme Sub-Committee.
- (iii) Synods should exercise effective duties of care, oversight and responsibility for a CRCW minister.

11. WHAT THE CRCW PROGRAMME SUB-COMMITTEE WILL DO

The CRCW Programme Sub-Committee is a Sub-Committee of the Ministries Committee through which it will be accountable to the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church.

- (i) The CRCW Programme Sub-Committee will advise on and approve CRCW ministries and will maintain contact, reviewing the work and considering requests for further Terms.
- (ii) The CRCW Programme Sub-Committee is responsible for ensuring that there is appropriate support for CRCW ministers throughout their ministry
- (iii) The CRCW Programme Sub-Committee will advise the URC Education and Learning Committee on matters pertaining to initial and continuing ministerial education for CRCW ministers.
- (iv) The CRCW Programme Sub-Committee will support individual CRCW ministers in their ministry and CRCW students in training and encourage the longer-term development of their ministries.
- (v) The CRCW Programme Sub-Committee will advocate CRCW ministry throughout the wider church.



The
United
Reformed
Church



*Creating Change in Communities
& the Church*

CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORK THE COVENANT

Signature.....

Date.....

Name
(The Church-Related Community Work Minister)

Signature.....

Date.....

Name
(For the Church-in-Community)

Signature.....

Date.....

Name
(For the Synod)

Signature.....

Date.....

Name
(For the CRCW Programme Sub-Committee)