



Resurrection: Common Ground and Bond of Unity

We call the relationship between our three congregations "Common Ground" and part of the reason for working together as we do is to identify what we do have in common.

The core of our Common Ground relationship is the worship offered by a small group of us on the fourth Sunday of each month. Sadly it is usually a very small group. It's often (though not always) made up predominantly of members of the host Church and it attracts 'those who like that sort of thing' or who feel a commitment to drawing Christians closer together. We have tried a range of different ways of attracting more members of our congregations to come but, so far, without much success. Nevertheless, one of the most important things about 'Common Ground' is that it actually happens. Every month Christians of different traditions gather to worship together and that has to be a positive thing. I came to 'Common Ground' rather late but was glad to find it happening and glad to be part of it.

The idea of calling it 'Common Ground' tells us a bit about its ethos. In one of the Parishes I formerly worked in we shared in similar monthly united worship but in that case the worship we offered was distinctive of our particular denominational traditions. That way we learnt about each other and experienced a bit of what the other traditions valued. Our approach in Bromley is different. We aim to do what we can do together; to seek what it is that we can hold in common, and that too is a valuable part of ecumenism.

I suppose there is no ground which is more importantly common for Christians than the death and resurrection of Jesus. These are the foundational events of our faith; they are the events by which God brings us salvation and calls us to offer the world his good news. The Resurrection in particular is about bringing Christians together. On Good Friday, as Jesus was arrested and tried and eventually crucified the Gospel writers tell us that his disciples scattered in all directions. By contrast, John tells us that on Easter day they were all gathered together and it was when they were together that the risen Christ appeared amongst them; shared his peace with them and breathed on them the gift of his Holy Spirit. He gave them authority to forgive or retain sins and he sent them out, just as his Father had sent him. So began the life and mission of the Church. Jesus gathered his disciples during his earthly ministry; they were scattered by his death and then they were drawn securely together again by his resurrection; they were empowered and they were sent out.

This year we shall celebrate the bond of the resurrection experience by joining together to celebrate Easter. Our evening worship on Easter Day will be a united celebration of this most common of grounds. Do come and be joined to your brothers and sisters by the resurrection as those first disciples were.

Michael Camp

**COMMON
GROUND**

In this edition Michael Camp writes our leading article. It also appears in the magazines of Bromley Methodist Church & Bromley URC