

Ecumenical networks

A 'network' is a recognisable grouping of people, often geographically separated, who share an activity or interest and who benefit from contact with one another. An ecumenical network typically begins when people who have met at a conference, on a training course or while on retreat exchange addresses and telephone numbers so that they can stay in touch. Alternatively, a group of people with a common interest may agree to form a network to promote this interest more widely.

Networks vary in numbers, nature and purpose, depending on their origins. Usually they start informally; they may remain informal, but to encourage easier networking with growing numbers many later become organised, agreeing a formal structure and appointing a management group.

Who are they?

The networks listed here are Christian groupings in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, involved in some way with retreats and spiritual support. They are ecumenical in that although their origin might be within a particular denomination, they are open to people from other denominations and traditions.

These networks provide contact, activity, support and in some cases training for their members. Most arrange meetings and many provide a newsletter or some other form of regular communication. Some networks cover a whole country, some a particular region, while other are intended for a local area only.

What do they do?

Many people around who are engaged in retreat work and spiritual support feel isolated. They may wish to make contact with others for a number of reasons. For example, they may be seeking spiritual accompaniment or supervision for themselves, they may want to work with others to initiate activities in their locality; they may want to continue to learn, or to be kept informed; they may want to meet others with shared interests. They may be unaware of the number of networks that exist, some of which may even be close to where they live. This leaflet is for people such as these; and perhaps it will lead to meetings between people in a given locality, and in time new networks may emerge.



Which networks are included in this list?

The Retreat Association is itself a network, as are its member groups. The definition above includes many different 'structures'. As well as organisations specifically set up to provide links between people, the list includes national organisations, groups that organise regular training courses, groups that provide a specific service, prayer groups, and supervision groups.

List of networks

Below are listed some of the known ecumenical networks around the country, with a few words about each network's nature and purpose.

The list is not exhaustive and networks are developing all the time. Readers are invited to inform the Retreat Association of other networks that fulfil the criteria given above: these will be added to future editions of this leaflet.

Bristol Spirituality Network

An informal network promoting Open Door Retreats, Weeks /Months of Guided Prayer etc. Contact: 0117 9686823, info@bristolspiritualitynetwork.org.uk www.briggles.plus.com/BSN

Christian Life Community (CLC)

National Ignatian Lay Organisation for groups.

Contact: CLC, Mount St Jesuit Centre, 114 Mount Street London W1K 3AH, admin@mountstreet.info www.pathwaystogod.org

Epiphany Group

An ecumenical network of men and women across Scotland who have trained in and practise Ignatian Spirituality.

Contact: Co-ordinator, cathybackett@gmail.com www.epiphanygroup.org.uk

Julian Meetings

Silent contemplative prayer groups which offer the opportunity to explore praying silently in the way that is natural for each individual.

Contact: JM Co-ordinator: Deidre Morris, www.julianmeetings.net

Llysfasi Spirituality Workshop

A national network for people who have completed one or more Llysfasi spirituality workshops.

Contact: Sr MaryRose Fitzsimmons HHS, maryrosefitzsimmons@btinternet.com www.llyfasi-spirituality-workshop.org.uk

Manresa Link

A network of people in contact with Manresa House in Birmingham.

Contact: www.manresalink.org.uk

Salford Prayer Guides Team

For people engaged in providing weeks of guided prayer in the greater Manchester area.

Contact: Mary Nono, 0161 980 6776.

SPIDIR

An informal network of people practising or interested in the ministry of Spiritual Direction.

Contact: www.spidir.org.uk

Spiritual Exercises Network

A national network for people to promote the Spiritual Exercises.

Contact: Margaret Sheldon, 4 James Bradford Almshouses, Butler's Green Road, Hayward's Heath, Sussex RH16 4BD admin@spiritualexercisesnetwork.uk