

Faith Covenant handbook

Overview and terminology for different faith groups
in Westmorland and Furness

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For further information on religious festivals, there are a selection of websites that provide details on special days and celebrations on the RE Hubs website here: [RE Calendars](#)

Bahá'í Faith

Overview

The Bahá'í Faith is a global religion founded in the nineteenth century by Bahá'u'lláh. Its central teachings include the unity of humanity, the equality of women and men, the harmony of science and religion, and the belief that all major religions come from the same divine source.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Bahá'í Faith	A global religion founded by Bahá'u'lláh in the nineteenth century, centred on the unity of humanity, the oneness of God and the harmony of religion and science.
Bahá'u'lláh	Founder of the Bahá'í Faith and regarded by Bahá'ís as the latest in a line of divine messengers.
The Báb	Herald of Bahá'u'lláh whose teachings prepared the way for the Bahá'í Faith.
'Abdu'l-Bahá	Son of Bahá'u'lláh and authorised interpreter of his teachings.
Shoghi Effendi	Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith from 1921 to 1957 who guided its global development.
Universal House of Justice (UHJ)	The international governing council of the Bahá'í Faith, elected every five years.
National Spiritual Assembly (NSA)	National elected governing body responsible for coordinating Bahá'í activities within a country.
Local Spiritual Assembly (LSA)	Local elected governing body responsible for the affairs of a Bahá'í community.
Consultation	Prayerful, respectful and collaborative decision-making process used in Bahá'í communities.
Bahá'í Community	Local, national or international body of Bahá'ís working together in worship, service and administration.
Mashriqu'l-Adhkár	Bahá'í House of Worship, open to people of all faiths and backgrounds for prayer and reflection.
Nineteen Day Feast	Regular community gathering held every nineteen days for worship, consultation and fellowship.
Ridván	The most important Bahá'í festival, commemorating Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of his mission.

Term	Meaning
Naw-Rúz	Bahá'í New Year, celebrated at the spring equinox and marking the end of the annual fast.
Ayyám-i-Há	Intercalary days devoted to hospitality, charity, gift-giving and preparation for the annual fast.
The Fast	Nineteen-day period of fasting from sunrise to sunset observed by eligible adult Bahá'ís each year.
Holy Days	Sacred festivals and commemorations during which Bahá'ís may suspend work and attend gatherings.
Unity of Humanity	Central Bahá'í teaching that all people belong to one human family.
Oneness of God	Belief that there is one God, known through successive divine messengers.
Oneness of Religion	Belief that the world's major religions come from the same divine source and are part of a progressive revelation.
Progressive Revelation	Teaching that God reveals guidance to humanity through a series of messengers across history.
Manifestation of God	Term used for divine messengers such as Abraham, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.
Service	The principle of contributing to the wellbeing of individuals, communities and society.
Devotional Gathering	Informal meeting for prayer, reflection and spiritual discussion, open to all.
Children's Classes	Educational activities that nurture spiritual and moral development in children.
Junior Youth Groups	Programmes designed to support the intellectual, spiritual and social development of young adolescents.
Study Circles	Small groups that study Bahá'í writings and explore ways of serving their communities.
Equality of Women and Men	Fundamental Bahá'í principle affirming the equal worth and importance of women and men.
Harmony of Science and Religion	Bahá'í teaching that scientific and religious knowledge should complement one another.
Independent Investigation of Truth	Principle encouraging individuals to seek truth for themselves rather than relying solely on tradition or authority.
Bahá'í Writings	Sacred texts and authoritative writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi.

Buddhism

Overview

Buddhism is a world religion and philosophy based on the teachings of the Buddha. It focuses on understanding and overcoming suffering through ethical living, meditation, mindfulness and the development of wisdom and compassion.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Buddhism	A world religion and philosophy based on the teachings of the Buddha, focused on overcoming suffering and attaining enlightenment.
Buddha	"The Enlightened One." Usually refers to Siddhartha Gautama/Siddhattha Gotama, the founder of Buddhism.
Dharma (Dhamma)	The teachings of the Buddha and the truth about the nature of existence.
Sangha	The community of Buddhist monks, nuns and/or practitioners.
Karma (Kamma)	Actions and their consequences; intentional actions are believed to shape future experiences.
Nirvana (Nibbana)	Enlightenment; liberation from suffering, craving and the cycle of rebirth.
Meditation (Bhavana)	Core spiritual practice involving the cultivation of the mind through reflection, concentration and awareness.
Mindfulness (Sati)	Awareness of the present moment with clarity and attention.
Bodhisattva (Bodhisatta)	One committed to helping others achieve enlightenment; in some traditions, a future Buddha.
Vesak	Major Buddhist festival commemorating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing away.
Temple	Buddhist place of worship, meditation and community gathering.
Monastery	Residence and community for Buddhist monks and nuns.
Bhikkhu	Fully ordained Buddhist monk.
Bhikkhuni	Fully ordained Buddhist nun.
The Four Noble Truths	The Buddha's central teaching explaining suffering, its causes, its cessation and the path to its end.
The Noble Eightfold Path	Practical guide to ethical living, mental discipline and wisdom leading to enlightenment.
Rebirth	The continuation of existence through successive lives, influenced by karma.

Term	Meaning
Samsara	The cycle of birth, death and rebirth from which Buddhists seek liberation.
Compassion (Karuna)	A core Buddhist virtue involving concern for the wellbeing of others.
Loving-Kindness (Metta)	Practice of developing goodwill, friendliness and care towards all beings.
Wisdom (Prajna/Paññā)	Insight into the true nature of reality and existence.
Zen	A school of Buddhism that emphasises meditation and direct experience.
Theravada	One of the major Buddhist traditions, prevalent in Sri Lanka and much of Southeast Asia.
Mahayana	One of the major Buddhist traditions, emphasising the Bodhisattva ideal and widespread across East Asia.
Vajrayana	Buddhist tradition associated particularly with Tibet, incorporating specialised practices and rituals.
Tripitaka (Tipitaka)	The principal collection of Buddhist scriptures, particularly important in the Theravada tradition.
Precepts	Ethical guidelines followed by Buddhists, including commitments not to harm, steal, misuse senses, lie or misuse intoxicants.
Refuge	The act of committing oneself to the Three Jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma/Dhamma and the Sangha.
Three Jewels (Three Refuges)	The Buddha, the Dharma/Dhamma and the Sangha, which form the foundation of Buddhist faith and practice.
Chanting	Recitation of teachings, prayers or verses used in worship and meditation.
Merit	Positive spiritual benefit acquired through ethical conduct, generosity and religious practice.
Stupa	A Buddhist monument or shrine containing relics or commemorating significant events.
Lotus	Important Buddhist symbol representing purity, spiritual awakening and enlightenment.
Uposatha	Regular observance day (based on the full, new and half-moon days of the lunar calendar) devoted to meditation, ethical reflection and religious practice.
Dana	The practice of generosity and giving, regarded as a fundamental Buddhist virtue.

Christian - Anglican (Church of England)

Overview

The Church of England is the established Christian church in England and part of the worldwide Anglican Communion. It combines Catholic and Protestant traditions and emphasises scripture, worship, pastoral care and service to communities.

Terminology

Term/Acronym	Meaning
Anglican Communion (AC)	Worldwide family of churches in the Anglican tradition, including the Church of England.
Archbishop	Senior bishop responsible for a province of the Church of England.
Bishop	Oversees clergy and churches within a diocese.
Canon	Senior clergy title, often associated with a cathedral or awarded as an honorary distinction.
Cathedral	Principal church of a diocese and seat of the bishop.
Churchwarden	Elected lay officer responsible for supporting the parish and church governance.
Common Worship (CW)	The Church of England's main collection of contemporary worship services and liturgies.
Curate	Newly ordained priest serving under an experienced minister.
Deanery	Group of neighbouring parishes.
Diocese	Geographic area under the care of a bishop.
Eucharist	Holy Communion celebrating the Last Supper.
Evensong	Traditional evening service, usually sung.
General Synod (GS)	National legislative and decision-making body of the Church of England.
Holy Communion (HC)	Sharing bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus.
Incumbent	Priest with legal responsibility for a parish or benefice.
Licensed Lay Minister (LLM)	Lay person licensed to preach, teach and support worship. Formerly known as a Reader.
Living in Love and Faith (LLF)	Church of England programme exploring identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

Term/Acronym	Meaning
Parish	The historical area served by a church that allows everyone, regardless of faith or practice, to access that church, including legal rights relating to baptism, marriage and burial where applicable. This principle is embedded in the laws and culture of England.
Parochial Church Council (PCC)	The governing body of a parish, working with the clergy on mission, ministry and administration.
Priest-in-Charge (PiC)	Priest responsible for a parish without being the legal incumbent.
Rector	Parish priest (historically appointed differently from a vicar).
Safeguarding Officer (PSO)	Parish volunteer responsible for supporting safeguarding practice locally.
Synod	Decision-making assembly of the Church at parish, diocesan or national level.
Vicar	Priest responsible for a parish.
Benefice	One or more parishes served together by the same clergy team or incumbent.
Book of Common Prayer (BCP)	Historic 1662 prayer book that continues to shape Anglican worship and doctrine.
Morning Prayer (MP)	Daily service of prayer, readings and worship held in the morning.
Evening Prayer (EP)	Daily service of prayer, readings and worship held in the evening.
Dean	Senior priest responsible for leading a cathedral.
Archdeacon	Senior clergy person who supports the bishop and oversees clergy and parishes within part of a diocese.
PTO (Permission to Officiate)	Authorisation allowing retired or other clergy to exercise ministry in a diocese.
APCM	Annual Parochial Church Meeting, where parishioners receive reports and elect church officers.

Christian - Christian Science

Overview

Christian Science is a Christian religious movement founded by Mary Baker Eddy in the nineteenth century. It emphasises spiritual understanding, prayer and the belief that God's healing power can bring physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Christian Science	A Christian religious movement founded in the nineteenth century by Mary Baker Eddy, emphasising prayer, spiritual understanding and healing.
Mary Baker Eddy	Founder of Christian Science and author of its primary teachings.
Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures	Foundational text by Mary Baker Eddy, used alongside the Bible for study and worship. Often referred to simply as <i>Science and Health</i> .
The Bible	Christian Science's primary sacred text, interpreted alongside <i>Science and Health</i> .
The Mother Church	The First Church of Christ, Scientist, headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.
Church of Christ, Scientist	Local Christian Science congregation.
Branch Church	Local Christian Science church affiliated with The Mother Church.
Reading Room	Public place for study, information, prayer and access to Christian Science literature.
Practitioner	Person offering prayer-based spiritual healing and spiritual support.
Christian Science Nurse	Individual who provides practical care consistent with Christian Science beliefs.
Lesson-Sermon	Weekly Bible lesson read during Sunday services, consisting of passages from the Bible and <i>Science and Health</i> .
First Reader	Lay person elected to lead worship services and read passages from <i>Science and Health</i> .
Second Reader	Lay person who reads Bible passages during services.
Sunday Service	Main weekly worship service featuring hymns, prayer and the Lesson-Sermon.

Term	Meaning
Wednesday Testimony Meeting	Midweek service including readings and personal testimonies of healing and spiritual growth.
Prayer-Based Healing	Central Christian Science practice of seeking healing through prayer and spiritual understanding.
Healing	The belief that spiritual truth and prayer can bring physical, emotional and moral healing.
Testimony	Personal account of healing or spiritual growth shared during services or in publications.
Journal	<i>The Christian Science Journal</i> , a periodical containing articles, testimonies and information about Christian Science practice.
Sentinel	<i>The Christian Science Sentinel</i> , a weekly publication featuring spiritual articles and testimonies.
Monitor	<i>The Christian Science Monitor</i> , an international news organisation founded by Mary Baker Eddy.
Board of Lectureship	Organisation providing public talks and educational lectures about Christian Science.
Sunday School	Religious education classes for children and young people.
Reader	Elected lay member who conducts services by reading from the Bible and <i>Science and Health</i> .
Church Manual	The governing document written by Mary Baker Eddy that outlines the organisation and practice of Christian Science.
Divine Mind	Christian Science term for God as the infinite source of intelligence, wisdom and reality.
Spiritual Reality	Core belief that ultimate reality is spiritual rather than material.
Demonstration	The practical application of spiritual understanding, often referring to healing or overcoming challenges through prayer.
Truth, Life and Love	Key terms used in Christian Science to describe God and divine reality.
Metaphysical Healing	Healing achieved through prayer, spiritual insight and understanding of God's nature.
Membership	Individuals who belong to a local branch church and/or The Mother Church.
By-Law	Rule contained within the <i>Church Manual</i> governing Christian Science practice and organisation.
Clergy	Christian Science has no ordained clergy; worship is led by elected lay Readers.

Christian - Free Churches

Overview

Free Churches are Protestant Christian denominations that operate independently of state control and include Baptist, Congregational, Evangelical, Pentecostal and many independent churches. They typically emphasise the authority of the Bible, personal faith, worship, evangelism and community engagement.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Free Church	A Christian church that operates independently of state control and is not part of the Church of England.
Pastor	Church leader or minister responsible for preaching, pastoral care and spiritual leadership.
Minister	Spiritual leader of a congregation, often responsible for worship, teaching and pastoral care.
Elder	Spiritual leader assisting the pastor through governance, teaching and pastoral oversight.
Deacon	Leader responsible for practical service, administration and supporting the ministry of the church.
Believer's Baptism	Baptism following a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ.
Baptism	Christian rite of initiation involving water as a symbol of faith, repentance and new life.
Communion	Sharing bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus. Also known as the Lord's Supper.
Lord's Supper	Alternative term for Communion, commemorating Jesus' final meal with his disciples.
Worship Leader	Person leading sung worship during church services.
Home Group	Small group meeting in homes for Bible study, prayer and fellowship.
Evangelism	Sharing the Christian faith and message of the gospel with others.
Charismatic	Emphasis on the gifts and work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and believer.
Pentecostal	Christian tradition emphasising the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts and personal conversion.
Evangelical	Christian tradition emphasising the authority of the Bible, personal faith and sharing the gospel.

Term	Meaning
Congregation	Community of people who gather for worship and church life.
Fellowship	Relationships and mutual support among Christians.
Conversion	Personal commitment to follow Jesus Christ.
Born Again	Term describing a personal experience of spiritual renewal and faith in Christ.
Gospel	The message of Jesus Christ and God's offer of salvation.
Scripture	The Bible, regarded as the authoritative word of God.
Sermon	Teaching or preaching based on the Bible.
Testimony	Personal account of faith, conversion or spiritual experience.
Prayer Meeting	Gathering focused on prayer and worship.
Youth Group	Church-organised activities and fellowship for young people.
Sunday School	Christian education for children and young people.
Mission	Activities focused on sharing faith and serving local or global communities.
Missionary	Person sent to share the Christian faith and support communities, often internationally.
Holy Spirit	Third person of the Trinity, understood as God's presence and power active in the world.
Spiritual Gifts	Abilities believed to be given by the Holy Spirit for serving God and others.
Speaking in Tongues	Practice, common in some Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, of prayer or worship in a spiritual language.
Healing Ministry	Prayer and pastoral support for physical, emotional or spiritual wellbeing.
Church Membership	Formal commitment to a local church community.
Trustees	Individuals with legal responsibility for the governance and finances of a church charity.
Church Meeting	Congregational gathering where church members discuss and make decisions.
Denomination	Group of churches sharing a common tradition, beliefs and governance structure.
Independent Church	Church that governs itself and is not formally part of a larger denomination.
Covenant	A commitment made between believers and God, or among church members.

Term	Meaning
Discipleship	The lifelong process of learning and living according to the teachings of Jesus.
Grace	God's freely given love and favour towards humanity.
Salvation	Reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus Christ.
Praise and Worship	Contemporary style of music and worship commonly used in Free Church traditions.

Christian - Methodist

Overview

Methodism is a Christian tradition that emerged from the eighteenth-century revival movement led by John Wesley. It emphasises God's grace, personal faith, social justice, practical service and discipleship, alongside a strong sense of connection between churches.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Methodism	A Christian tradition that grew from the eighteenth-century revival movement led by John and Charles Wesley within the Church of England.
Connexion	The Methodist Church across Britain, emphasising the interconnected nature of Methodist churches and ministries.
Circuit	Group of Methodist churches served together by ministers and lay leaders.
District	Regional grouping of circuits within the Methodist Church.
Superintendent Minister	Minister responsible for leading a Circuit and supporting its churches and ministers.
Presbyter	Ordained minister authorised to preside at Holy Communion, preach, teach and provide pastoral leadership.
Deacon	Ordained minister with a ministry of service, pastoral care and community engagement.
Local Preacher	Accredited lay person authorised to preach and lead worship services.
Steward	Lay leader responsible for governance, administration and supporting the church's mission.
Church Council	Governing body of a local church responsible for decision-making and oversight.
Circuit Meeting	Main decision-making body of a Methodist Circuit.
Methodist Conference	The governing body of the Methodist Church in Britain, meeting annually to make decisions on policy, doctrine and governance.
President of the Conference	Elected representative and leader of the Methodist Conference for one year.
Vice-President of the Conference	Elected representative who serves alongside the President, often a lay person.
Church Steward	Elected lay officer who supports worship, pastoral care and church administration.

Term	Meaning
Circuit Steward	Lay leader who supports governance and leadership across a Circuit.
Covenant Service	Annual service of dedication, commitment and renewal of faith.
Love Feast	Shared meal or gathering involving worship, testimony, prayer and fellowship.
Holy Communion	Sharing bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus Christ.
Worship	Gathered praise, prayer, preaching and reflection.
Sermon	Teaching or preaching based on the Bible.
Hymns	An important feature of Methodist worship, many written by Charles Wesley.
Class Meeting	Historic small group for mutual support, discipleship and spiritual growth.
Pastoral Visitor	Lay person appointed to support church members through pastoral care and regular contact.
Pastoral Care	Practical, emotional and spiritual support offered within the church community.
Discipleship	Lifelong process of learning and living according to the teachings of Jesus.
Mission	Service and outreach aimed at sharing faith and supporting communities.
Evangelism	Sharing the Christian message through word and action.
Social Justice	Strong Methodist emphasis on addressing poverty, inequality and injustice.
Connexionalism	Principle that Methodist churches are connected and accountable to one another rather than operating independently.
John Wesley	Anglican priest and principal founder of the Methodist movement.
Charles Wesley	Co-founder of Methodism and prolific hymn writer.
Grace	God's freely given love and favour toward humanity, a central Methodist teaching.
Sanctification	Growth in holiness and Christ-like living through God's grace.
Prevenient Grace	Methodist belief that God's grace is active in people's lives before they become aware of it.
Membership	Formal commitment to a Methodist church community.
Methodist Church in Britain	The main Methodist denomination across England, Wales and Scotland.
Local Church	Individual Methodist congregation within a Circuit.
Ecumenical Partnership	Cooperation between Methodist churches and other Christian denominations in worship, mission and community life.

Christian - Roman Catholic

Overview

The Roman Catholic Church is the world's largest Christian denomination, led by the Pope and centred on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Catholic life is characterised by worship through the Mass, participation in the sacraments, prayer, community and service to others.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Roman Catholic Church (RC)	The world's largest Christian denomination, led by the Pope and centred on the teachings of Jesus Christ as understood through Scripture and Church tradition.
RC	Abbreviation for Roman Catholic.
Pope	Worldwide leader of the Roman Catholic Church and Bishop of Rome.
Cardinal	Senior church leader who advises the Pope and may participate in the election of a new Pope.
Archbishop	Senior bishop overseeing a province made up of several dioceses.
Bishop	Oversees a diocese and provides spiritual, pastoral and administrative leadership.
Diocese	Geographical area under the care of a bishop.
Parish	Local Catholic community served by a parish priest.
Parish Priest	Priest responsible for the pastoral care and leadership of a parish.
Priest	Ordained minister authorised to celebrate the sacraments and provide pastoral care.
Deacon	Ordained minister called to service, ministry and outreach; may baptise, preach and officiate at weddings and funerals.
Mass	Central act of Catholic worship.
Eucharist	Holy Communion; the sacrament commemorating the Last Supper and understood as the real presence of Christ.
Holy Communion	Receiving consecrated bread and wine during Mass.
Sacrament	Sacred rite instituted by Christ through which Catholics believe God's grace is received.
Seven Sacraments	Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage and Holy Orders.
Baptism	Sacrament of initiation into the Christian faith.

Term	Meaning
Confirmation	Sacrament strengthening a person's commitment to the faith through the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Confession / Reconciliation	Sacrament of forgiveness and reconciliation with God and the Church.
First Holy Communion	Celebration marking a person's first reception of the Eucharist.
Holy Orders	Sacrament through which bishops, priests and deacons are ordained.
Anointing of the Sick	Sacrament offering spiritual strength, comfort and healing during illness or old age.
Catechism	Official teaching of the Catholic Church.
Catechist	Person who teaches and explains the Catholic faith.
Rosary	Set of prayers using beads, focusing on key events in the lives of Jesus and Mary.
Hail Mary	Traditional Catholic prayer asking for the intercession of Mary.
Virgin Mary	Mother of Jesus, honoured by Catholics as a model of faith and discipleship.
Saint	Holy person officially recognised by the Church for exemplary Christian life.
Patron Saint	Saint regarded as a special protector of a person, place, profession or cause.
Canonisation	Official process by which a person is recognised as a saint.
Vatican City	Independent city-state in Rome that serves as the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church.
The Holy See	Central governing authority of the Roman Catholic Church, led by the Pope.
Cathedral	Principal church of a diocese and seat of the bishop.
Archdiocese	A major diocese led by an archbishop.
Religious Order	Community whose members follow a particular spiritual tradition, such as Benedictines, Dominicans or Franciscans.
Monk	Member of a religious community dedicated to prayer and communal life.
Nun	Woman belonging to a religious order devoted to prayer and service.
Chaplain	Priest or minister providing pastoral care in settings such as hospitals, schools, prisons or the armed forces.
Lent	Forty-day period of prayer, fasting and preparation before Easter.
Ash Wednesday	Beginning of Lent, marked by the sign of ashes on the forehead.
Holy Week	Week leading up to Easter, commemorating the final days of Jesus' life.

Term	Meaning
Good Friday	Commemoration of the crucifixion of Jesus.
Easter	Celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
Christmas	Celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.
Advent	Season of preparation before Christmas.
Corpus Christi	Feast celebrating the Eucharist and the real presence of Christ.
Pilgrimage	Journey to a place of religious significance for prayer and spiritual renewal.
Canon Law	The legal framework governing the Roman Catholic Church.
Magisterium	The Church's teaching authority, exercised by the Pope and bishops.

Hinduism

Overview

Hinduism is one of the world's oldest religions, originating in India and encompassing a diverse range of beliefs, traditions and practices. It emphasises spiritual growth, living ethically, fulfilment of duty (dharma), and the journey towards liberation (moksha).

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Hinduism	One of the world's oldest religions, encompassing diverse beliefs, practices and traditions.
Hindu	A follower of Hinduism.
Brahman	The ultimate reality or universal divine principle.
Atman	The eternal self or soul.
Dharma	Moral duty, righteous living and religious responsibility.
Karma	Actions and their consequences.
Samsara	Cycle of birth, death and rebirth.
Moksha	Liberation from the cycle of rebirth.
Puja	Act of worship involving prayer, offerings and devotion.
Mandir	Hindu place of worship (temple).
Murti	Sacred image or representation of a deity.
Vedas	Ancient sacred scriptures of Hinduism.
Bhagavad Gita	Influential Hindu scripture exploring duty, devotion and spiritual wisdom.
Ramayana	Epic narrative describing the life of Lord Rama.
Mahabharata	Major Hindu epic containing the Bhagavad Gita.
Guru	Spiritual teacher or guide.
Yoga	Spiritual, mental and physical discipline.
Ahimsa	Principle of non-violence.
Diwali	Festival of Lights celebrating the triumph of good over evil.
Holi	Festival of Colours celebrating spring and renewal.
Navratri	Festival honouring the Divine Feminine.
Lakshmi	Goddess associated with prosperity and wellbeing.

Term	Meaning
Vishnu	Deity associated with preservation and protection.
Shiva	Deity associated with transformation and renewal.
Brahma	Deity associated with creation.
Prasad	Blessed food shared after worship.

Humanism

Overview

Humanism is a non-religious life stance that emphasises reason, compassion, ethics and human responsibility. Humanists seek meaning and fulfilment through human experience, evidence and concern for the wellbeing of others, rather than through religious belief.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Humanism	Non-religious worldview based on reason, compassion and human welfare.
Humanist	Person who follows a humanist worldview.
Reason	Use of evidence, critical thinking and inquiry to understand the world.
Ethics	Moral principles based on human wellbeing rather than divine authority.
Human Rights	Fundamental rights and freedoms belonging to all people.
Equality	Principle that all people deserve equal dignity and respect.
Human Dignity	Intrinsic worth of every person.
Compassion	Concern for the wellbeing of others.
Secularism	Principle that the state should remain neutral regarding religion and belief.
Scientific Method	Evidence-based approach to understanding reality.
Critical Thinking	Careful evaluation of evidence and claims.
Celebrant	Person trained to conduct humanist ceremonies.
Humanist Ceremony	Non-religious ceremony marking life events such as weddings or funerals.
Humanists UK	National charity representing humanists in the United Kingdom.
Freedom of Belief	Right to hold or change religious and non-religious beliefs.
Shared Humanity	Humanist belief in common human responsibility and cooperation.

Islam

Overview

Islam is a monotheistic faith followed by more than a billion people worldwide. Muslims believe in one God (Allah) and follow the teachings revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, expressed through worship, prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Islam	A monotheistic faith centred on submission to God (Allah) and following the teachings revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.
Allah	Arabic word for God.
Muslim	Person who follows Islam.
Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)	The final prophet in Islam through whom the Qur'an was revealed. "PBUH" means "Peace Be Upon Him."
Qur'an	Holy book of Islam, believed to be the word of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.
Hadith	Sayings, actions and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.
Sunnah	The example and practices of the Prophet Muhammad that guide Muslim life.
Mosque (Masjid)	Place of worship.
Imam	Prayer leader or religious teacher.
Salah (Salat)	Five daily prayers performed by Muslims.
Jumu'ah	Friday congregational prayer, held shortly after midday.
Wudu	Ritual washing before prayer.
Ramadan	Month of fasting, prayer and spiritual reflection.
Sawm	Fasting, particularly during Ramadan; one of the Five Pillars of Islam.
Eid al-Fitr	Festival marking the end of Ramadan.
Eid al-Adha	Festival of Sacrifice, commemorating Prophet Ibrahim's devotion to God.
Hajj	Pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca), required once in a lifetime for those who are able.
Umrah	Minor pilgrimage to Makkah that may be undertaken at any time of year.

Term	Meaning
Ka'bah	Sacred structure in Makkah towards which Muslims face when praying.
Ummah	Worldwide Muslim community.
Halal	Permitted according to Islamic law.
Haram	Forbidden according to Islamic law.
Shariah	Islamic ethical and legal framework derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah.
Zakat	Obligatory charitable giving; one of the Five Pillars of Islam.
Sadaqah	Voluntary charity and acts of generosity.
Shahadah	Declaration of faith: affirming belief in one God and Muhammad as His messenger.
Five Pillars of Islam	The foundation of Muslim practice: Shahadah, Salah, Zakat, Sawm and Hajj.
Dua	Personal prayer or supplication to God.
Dhikr	Remembrance of God through prayer and recitation.
Makkah (Mecca)	Islam's holiest city and birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad.
Madinah (Medina)	City where the Prophet Muhammad established the first Muslim community.
Islamic New Year	Beginning of the Islamic lunar calendar.
Ashura	Important day of remembrance observed by Muslims, particularly significant in the Shi'a tradition.
Hijab	Head covering worn by some Muslim women as an expression of faith and modesty.
Modesty (Haya)	Islamic principle encouraging humility, dignity and respectful conduct.
Ablution Facilities	Facilities used for ritual washing (wudu) before prayer.
Qiblah	Direction of the Ka'bah in Makkah that Muslims face during prayer.
Insha'Allah	"God willing." Often used when speaking about future plans.
Alhamdulillah	"Praise be to God." Used to express gratitude.
Assalamu Alaikum	"Peace be upon you." Traditional Muslim greeting.
Wa Alaikum Assalam	"And upon you be peace." Traditional response to the greeting.
Jazak Allah Khair	"May God reward you with goodness." Expression of thanks and appreciation.
Bismillah	"In the name of God." Commonly said before beginning a task or activity.

Judaism

Overview

Judaism is one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions and is centred on the covenant between God and the Jewish people. It encompasses religious beliefs, cultural traditions and a shared heritage rooted in the Torah and Jewish law and practice.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Judaism	One of the world's oldest monotheistic religions, centred on the covenant between God and the Jewish people.
Jewish	A follower of Judaism or member of the Jewish people.
Rabbi	Jewish religious teacher and leader.
Synagogue	Jewish place of worship, study and community gathering.
Torah	The first five books of the Hebrew Bible and the central sacred text of Judaism.
Tanakh	The Hebrew Bible, comprising the Torah, Prophets and Writings.
Talmud	Collection of rabbinic teachings, discussions and interpretations of Jewish law and tradition.
Shabbat	Weekly day of rest from Friday evening to Saturday evening.
Kosher	Food prepared according to Jewish dietary laws.
Kashrut	The system of Jewish dietary laws governing what foods may be eaten and how they are prepared.
Kippah (Yarmulke)	Skullcap worn by many Jewish men, and some women, as a sign of reverence and awareness of God.
Mezuzah	Small case containing scripture fixed to a doorpost.
Bar Mitzvah	Coming-of-age ceremony for a Jewish boy, typically at age 13.
Bat Mitzvah	Coming-of-age ceremony for a Jewish girl, typically at age 12 or 13 depending on tradition.
Passover (Pesach)	Festival commemorating the Exodus from Egypt.
Rosh Hashanah	Jewish New Year.
Yom Kippur	Day of Atonement, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar.
Sukkot	Festival of Booths, commemorating the Israelites' journey through the wilderness.

Term	Meaning
Hanukkah	Festival of Lights celebrating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.
Minyan	Quorum of ten adults required for certain communal prayers.
Shema	Central declaration of Jewish faith affirming the oneness of God.
Siddur	Jewish prayer book used in daily and festival services.
Ark (Aron Kodesh)	Sacred cabinet in a synagogue where Torah scrolls are kept.
Torah Scroll	Handwritten scroll containing the Torah, used in synagogue worship.
Bimah	Raised platform from which the Torah is read.
Cantor (Chazzan)	Person who leads prayers and musical worship in the synagogue.
Rabbinic Judaism	The mainstream form of Judaism based on rabbinic teachings and interpretation of Jewish law.
Mitzvah	A commandment or good deed.
613 Commandments	Traditional count of the commandments found within the Torah.
Covenant	Sacred relationship between God and the Jewish people.
Tzedakah	Charitable giving and social justice, regarded as a religious obligation.
Tikkun Olam	"Repairing the world"; the principle of contributing to a more just and compassionate society.
Brit Milah	Covenant ceremony involving circumcision of a Jewish male infant.
Shiva	Seven-day mourning period observed following the death of a close family member.
Yahrzeit	Annual remembrance of the anniversary of a person's death.
High Holy Days	The period including Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
Purim	Festival commemorating the events described in the Book of Esther.
Simchat Torah	Festival celebrating the completion and restarting of the annual Torah reading cycle.
Jewish Calendar	Lunar-solar calendar used to determine religious festivals and observances.
Israel	Land of historical, religious and cultural significance within Judaism.
Jerusalem	Judaism's holiest city and site of the ancient Temples.
Orthodox Judaism	Tradition emphasising adherence to traditional Jewish law and practice.
Reform Judaism	Progressive movement emphasising adaptation of Jewish practice to contemporary life.

Term	Meaning
Liberal Judaism	Progressive form of Judaism prominent in the UK, emphasising equality, inclusion and evolving practice.
Conservative / Masorti Judaism	Movement seeking to balance traditional observance with modern scholarship and contemporary life.
Hebrew	Traditional language of Jewish scripture, prayer and worship.
Shalom	Hebrew word meaning "peace"; commonly used as a greeting and farewell.

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Overview

Quakers are a Christian-rooted faith community that emphasises direct spiritual experience, equality, peace, simplicity, truth and sustainability. Worship is often centred on shared silence and collective discernment rather than formal liturgy or creeds.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Quakers (Religious Society of Friends)	A Christian-rooted faith community emphasising direct experience of God, equality, peace, simplicity and truth.
Friend	Member of the Religious Society of Friends.
Meeting for Worship	Main act of worship, usually held in silence, during which participants listen and reflect inwardly.
Meeting House	Place of worship used by Quakers.
Local Meeting	Local Quaker congregation and worshipping community.
Area Meeting	Regional Quaker body responsible for governance, membership and support of Local Meetings.
Britain Yearly Meeting	The national body bringing together Quakers in Britain.
Yearly Meeting	National assembly of Quakers which meets to discern policy and direction.
Clerk	Facilitator of meetings responsible for helping the group reach and record decisions.
Elder	Person overseeing the spiritual life of the Meeting and supporting the quality and depth of Meeting for Worship.
Pastoral Friend (formerly Overseer)	Friend who helps support the pastoral care and wellbeing of members and attenders.
Minute	Agreed written record of decisions and discernment reached during a meeting.
Discernment	Prayerful and reflective decision-making process seeking guidance from God or the Spirit.
Sense of the Meeting	A shared understanding reached through collective discernment rather than voting.
Testimonies	Values including Peace, Equality, Simplicity, Truth and Sustainability, reflected in Quaker life and action.

Term	Meaning
Peace Testimony	Commitment to non-violence, reconciliation and peaceful resolution of conflict.
Equality Testimony	Belief that every person has equal worth and dignity.
Simplicity	Living with integrity and avoiding unnecessary excess.
Truth	Commitment to honesty, authenticity and integrity in all aspects of life.
Sustainability	Commitment to stewardship of the environment and responsible living.
That of God in Everyone	Quaker belief that every person has inherent spiritual worth and value.
Ministry	Spoken contribution offered during Meeting for Worship when someone feels spiritually led to speak.
Gathered Meeting	A Meeting for Worship experienced as having a deep sense of spiritual unity and shared presence.
Attender	Person who regularly participates in Quaker worship but is not formally a member.
Membership	Formal commitment to the Religious Society of Friends.
Advices and Queries	Collection of reflective questions and guidance used by Quakers for spiritual growth and discernment.
Book of Discipline	Collection of Quaker procedures, practices and expressions of faith. In Britain this is known as <i>Quaker Faith and Practice</i> .
Quaker Faith and Practice	The principal book describing Quaker belief, organisation and experience in Britain.
Witness	Living out Quaker values through personal conduct, service and social action.
Concern	An issue or cause that a Quaker feels spiritually called to support or address.
Meeting for Worship for Business	Quaker business meeting conducted through worshipful discernment rather than debate and voting.
Children's Meeting	Activities and spiritual learning opportunities for children and young people.
Outreach	Activities that help others learn about Quaker faith, values and worship.
Chaplaincy	Spiritual care and support provided by Quakers in educational, healthcare, prison or community settings.

Term	Meaning
Silent Worship	Characteristic Quaker practice of communal silence for prayer, reflection and openness to spiritual guidance.
Non-Creedal	Quakers generally do not require adherence to a formal creed or statement of belief.
Conscientious Objection	Refusal to participate in military service or violence based on moral or religious conviction, historically associated with Quakers.

Sikhism

Overview

Sikhism is a monotheistic faith founded in the Punjab region of South Asia by Guru Nanak and developed through the teachings of ten Gurus. It emphasises equality, service, honest living, remembrance of God and community.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Sikhism	Monotheistic religion founded by Guru Nanak in the fifteenth century.
Sikh	Follower of Sikhism.
Guru Nanak	Founder of Sikhism and first of the ten Sikh Gurus.
Guru Granth Sahib	Sikhism's holy scripture and eternal Guru.
Gurdwara	Sikh place of worship.
Langar	Free community meal open to everyone regardless of background.
Waheguru	Sikh term for God.
Khalsa	Community of initiated Sikhs established by Guru Gobind Singh.
Amrit	Sacred nectar used during Sikh initiation.
Amrit Sanchar	Sikh initiation ceremony into the Khalsa.
Seva	Selfless service to others.
Simran	Prayerful remembrance of God.
Kirtan	Singing of hymns from Sikh scriptures.
Panj Pyare	The Five Beloved Ones, first members of the Khalsa.
Five Ks	Articles of faith worn by initiated Sikhs: Kesh, Kara, Kanga, Kachera and Kirpan.
Kesh	Uncut hair.
Kara	Steel bracelet representing commitment to Sikh values.
Kanga	Wooden comb representing discipline and cleanliness.
Kachera	Special undergarment symbolising self-control.
Kirpan	Ceremonial article symbolising justice and protection.
Anand Karaj	Sikh marriage ceremony.
Vaisakhi	Festival commemorating the formation of the Khalsa.

Term	Meaning
Akal Takht	Highest temporal authority in Sikhism.
Nishan Sahib	Sikh flag displayed outside Gurdwaras.

Unitarian

Overview

Unitarians are a liberal faith community that encourages individuals to explore spiritual, ethical and philosophical questions freely. Unitarianism values freedom of belief, inclusive communities, social justice and respect for diverse religious and non-religious perspectives.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
Unitarianism	Liberal faith tradition emphasising freedom of belief and individual conscience.
Unitarian	Member of a Unitarian congregation or faith community.
Chapel	Common term for a Unitarian place of worship.
Minister	Spiritual leader of a Unitarian congregation.
Congregation	Local community of Unitarians.
General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches	National representative body for British Unitarians.
Free Christian	Term reflecting openness to diverse Christian beliefs.
Freedom of Belief	Principle that individuals should arrive at their own religious or philosophical convictions.
Freedom of Conscience	Respect for individuals' moral and spiritual decision-making.
Inclusive Community	Welcoming people from diverse religious and non-religious backgrounds.
Worship	Gathering for reflection, readings, hymns, discussion, prayer and meditation.
Spiritual Exploration	Personal search for meaning, purpose and truth.
Social Justice	Commitment to equality, human rights, community wellbeing, and the environment.
Interfaith Dialogue	Engagement and cooperation with people of different faiths and beliefs.
Celebrant	Person who leads ceremonies and life-event celebrations.
Meditation	Reflective or contemplative practice used by many Unitarians.
Lay Leader	Congregation member helping lead worship or community activities.

Term	Meaning
Chalice	The flaming chalice is a symbol of Unitarianism around the world.
Chalice Lighting	Words spoken at the beginning of a gathering for worship as a candle is lit in a chalice or stemmed goblet.
Benediction	Short closing words in the form of a blessing spoken at the end of a gathering for worship.

United Reform Church (URC)

Overview

The United Reformed Church (URC) is a Protestant Christian denomination formed in 1972 through the union of Congregational and Presbyterian traditions. It emphasises shared leadership, community, social justice, ecumenical partnership and local church participation.

Terminology

Term	Meaning
United Reformed Church (URC)	Protestant denomination formed from Congregational and Presbyterian traditions.
Minister	Ordained leader responsible for worship, pastoral care and teaching.
Elder	Elected lay leader sharing responsibility for church leadership and governance.
Church Meeting	Main decision-making body of a local URC congregation.
Synod	Regional governing body within the URC.
General Assembly	National governing body of the URC.
Moderator	Minister elected to lead and represent a Synod or Assembly.
Pastoral Care	Spiritual, emotional and practical support provided by church members.
Communion	Sharing bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus Christ.
Baptism	Sacrament welcoming an individual into the Christian community.
Ecumenism	Commitment to cooperation between Christian churches.
Church Secretary	Lay officer responsible for administration and records.
Mission	Church outreach and service in local communities.
Elders' Meeting	Group responsible for leadership of the local church.
Messy Church	Informal worship programme involving families and children.
Moderator's Pastoral Letter	Communication from regional or national church leadership.
Covenant Partnership	Formal partnership with other Christian denominations.

Westmorland and Furness Council

Overview

This section outlines useful terms for the Westmorland and Furness Council.

Terminology - Governance and Leadership

Term	Definition
Council	The elected local authority responsible for delivering local services and representing residents.
Councillor (Member)	An elected representative who makes decisions, scrutinises services, and represents constituents.
Leader of the Council	Political leader of the authority, usually elected by councillors.
Mayor	Depending on the authority, may be a ceremonial figure or an elected executive leader.
Cabinet	Group of senior councillors responsible for executive decision-making.
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet member responsible for a specific area, such as housing or finance.
Full Council	Meeting of all elected councillors.
Overview and Scrutiny	Function that reviews decisions, policies, and performance, and holds the executive to account.
Chief Executive (CE)	Most senior officer in the council, responsible for overall management.
Monitoring Officer (MO)	Statutory officer responsible for legal and ethical governance.
Section 151 Officer (S151)	Statutory Chief Finance Officer responsible for proper financial administration.
Head of Paid Service (HoPS)	Statutory officer responsible for workforce organisation and management.

Terminology - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Term	Definition
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010
PCP	Provision, Criterion or Practice (used when assessing indirect discrimination)

Term	Definition
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
Protected Characteristics	The nine characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010
WRES	Workforce Race Equality Standard (more common in NHS settings, but sometimes referenced)
Reasonable Adjustment	Changes made to reduce barriers experienced by disabled people