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Dear friends

**Statement from Bishop Gregory Cameron, Patron of TCC, and TCC faith leaders:
Democracy needs participation**

The announcement of a snap general election took most of us by surprise. Many of us may share the opinions of Brenda from Bristol, who was asked her thoughts on the calling of the election by a BBC television news reporter, 'Not another one!'

However, while election or referendum fatigue may be understandable, it does not leave any room for disengagement.

Voting is the first and most basic step in democratic involvement. Yet in the 2015 general election, only one in three of those eligible to vote did so, and that was for an election where the result was expected to be close. Media commentary over the last few weeks has suggested that, far from anticipating a close call, some people believe that a landslide is a realistic outcome, particularly in Wales.

A democracy only works well if everyone participates and expresses their political opinion and choice. So, do we all know our political choices and are we going to exercise them?

As faith leaders working with TCC (Trefnu Cymunedol Cymru / Together Creating Communities), we urge you to start conversations about democracy with your family, friends and neighbours. If eligible, have they registered to vote (closing date in May 22nd)? If registered, are they going to turn out on June 8th?

Registering to vote takes about five minutes and people will need their National Insurance number to do so. Registering online can be done at: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Commentators have identified three main themes as to why people do not vote: public distrust in politicians; alienation between those engaged in political processes and the public; and a gap between (public) expectation and what can be delivered.

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has argued that to reduce this democratic gap, we need an authentic and humane politics that 'reacquaints people with control over their communities, shared and realistic values, patience with difference and confidence in their capacity for intelligent negotiation'.



TCCWales

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The way to this is civic engagement, on many levels, in many forms, and that includes participating in community organising, as TCC has been doing in North East Wales for 22 years.

Organising democratic participation starts with people talking to each other and so, we ask you to start such conversations. They are needed now.

Yours sincerely,

Bishop Gregory Cameron, Patron of TCC
Revd Dr Jennie Hurd, Synod Cymru The Methodist Church and Chair of TCC
Revd Tracey Day, Penycae Church of the Nazarene
Dr Farookh Jishi, Wrexham Islamic Cultural Centre
Stephen Moore, Wrexham Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Revd Robert Parry, Capel y Groes, Wrexham
Fr Charles Ramsay, St Mary's Church, Rhyl



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