



Image of the day - Durham Cathedral

Archbishop of Canterbury launches Lambeth Conference prayer journey



The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched a prayer journey for the Lambeth Conference, the global meeting of Anglican bishops due to be held in 2022.

The 15th Lambeth Conference was supposed to be held in Canterbury, Kent, last year but was postponed because of the pandemic.

The conference is now planned for the summer of 2022.

The prayer journey launched today is intended to help the Anglican Communion prepare for the gathering by praying for issues affecting the world, like Covid-19, the climate crisis, poverty and economic injustice.

A range of prayers have been contributed by Anglican bishops, clergy and laity focusing on the themes of hope,

proclaiming the Good News, responding to the pandemic, the planet, peace, justice and poverty.

In a video message launching the journey, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said: "Journeying together, we must forge a new vision of Anglicanism that is equipped to respond to the needs of a 21st century world, a much-changed world - changed by crisis and by the advances of science.

"And we must invite the wider Anglican world to share wisdom and insights with us along the way."

He continued: "In such difficult times – and with our world facing such challenges – we need to listen to God, to be alert to the needs of the world and to love one another as we share our prayers and our needs."

Scotland General Assembly 2021 will be held online

The Church of Scotland General Assembly for 2021 will be held online for a second year. The annual event will begin on 22 May with commissioners and other attendees joining together remotely from across Scotland and around the world.

Rev Dr George Whyte, Principal Clerk for the Church said:

"We regret that we cannot join together in person as usual given the uncertainty about the Covid restrictions that may still be necessary this spring. However we intend to make our online experience as good as it possibly can be."



The Assembly Building, Edinburgh

In ordinary times the event brings around 800 commissioners and visitors to Edinburgh to debate on Church matters and the issues of the day.

Details of the 2021 General Assembly are still being finalised and more information will be released in the coming months.

Pope Francis admits women to ministries of lector and acolyte

In the motu proprio “*Spiritus Domini*,” issued on Jan. 11, the pope changed canon 230 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law to read: “Lay people who have the age and skills determined by decree of the Episcopal Conference, they can be permanently assumed, through the established liturgical rite, to the ministries of lectors and of acolytes; however this

contribution does not give them the right to support or to remuneration by the Church.”

Prior to this change, the law formerly said that “lay men who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.”

The roles of lector and acolyte are publicly recognized ministries instituted by the Church. The roles were once considered “minor orders” in the tradition of the Church and were changed to ministries by Pope Paul VI. According to Church law, “before anyone is promoted to the permanent or transitional diaconate, he is required to have received the ministries of lector and acolyte.”

Pope Francis wrote a letter to Cardinal Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, explaining his decision to admit women to the ministries of lector and acolyte.

In this letter, the pope highlighted the distinction between “‘established’ (or ‘lay’) ministries and ‘ordained’ ministries,” and expressed hope that opening these lay ministries to women might “better manifest the common baptismal dignity of the members of the People of God.”

He said: “The Apostle Paul distinguishes between gifts of grace-charisms (‘charismata’) and services (‘diakonai’ – ‘ministry [cf. Rom 12, 4ff and 1 Cor 12, 12ff]). According to the tradition of the Church, the various forms that charisms take when they are publicly recognized and are made available to the community and its mission in a stable form



are called ministries,” the pope wrote in the letter published Jan. 11.

“In some cases the ministry has its origin in a specific sacrament, Holy Orders: these are the ‘ordained’ ministries, the bishop, the presbyter, the deacon. In other cases the ministry is entrusted, with a liturgical act of the bishop, to a person who has received Baptism and Confirmation and in whom specific charisms are recognized, after an adequate journey of preparation: we then speak of ‘instituted’ ministries.”

The pope noted that there is “an ever greater urgency today to rediscover the co-responsibility of all the baptized in the Church, and especially the mission of the laity.”

He said that the 2019 Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazonian region “signaled the need to think about ‘new paths for ecclesial ministeriality,’ not only for the Amazonian

Church, but for the whole Church, in the variety of situations.”

“It is urgent that they be promoted and confer ministries on men and women ... It is the Church of baptized men and women that we must consolidate by promoting ministry and, above all, awareness of baptismal dignity,” Pope Francis said, quoting the synod’s final document.



Round Tower, Antrim

Pope Paul VI abolished the minor orders (and the subdiaconate) and established the ministries of lector and acolyte in the motu proprio, “*Ministeria quaedam*,” issued in 1972.

“The Acolyte is established to help the Deacon and to minister to the Priest. It is therefore his duty to take care of the service of the altar, to help the Deacon and the Priest in liturgical actions, especially in the celebration of the Holy Mass,” Paul VI wrote.

Potential responsibilities for an acolyte include distribute Holy Communion as extraordinary minister if such ministers are not present, publicly exposing the Sacrament of the Eucharist for adoration by the faithful in extraordinary circumstances, and “the instruction of the other faithful, who, on a temporary basis, help the deacon and the priest in liturgical services by carrying the missal, cross, candles, etc.”

“The Acolyte, destined in a special way to the service of the altar, learns all those notions concerning divine public worship and strives to understand its intimate and spiritual meaning: in this way he can offer himself, every day, completely to God and be, in the temple, an example to all for his serious and respectful behavior, and also to have a sincere love for the mystical body of Christ, or people of God, and especially for the weak and the sick,” “Ministeria quaedam” says.

In this decree, Paul VI wrote that the lector is “instituted for the office, proper to him, of reading the word of God in the liturgical assembly.”

“The Reader, feeling the responsibility of the office received, should do all he can and make use of the appropriate means to acquire every day more fully the sweet and lively love and the knowledge of Sacred Scripture, in order to become a more perfect disciple of the Lord,” it says.

Pope Francis said in his letter that it would be up to local bishops’ conferences to establish appropriate criteria for the discernment and preparation of candidates for the ministries of lector and acolyte in their territories.

“Offering lay people of both sexes the possibility of accessing the ministry of the Acolyte and the Lector, by virtue of their participation in the baptismal priesthood, will increase the recognition, also through a liturgical act (institution), of the precious contribution that many lay people, even women, offer to the life and mission of the Church,” Pope Francis said.

C of I Youth Leaders bursary fund available

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of Disestablishment and to support Church of Ireland ministry in the future, the Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) has created a bursary fund to significantly encourage the number of young people undertaking mission and training experiences that would benefit ministry in the Church of Ireland.

This fund provides individual young people with small, but significant, bursaries to enable them to apply for teams, training, and placements that might otherwise have been financially challenging. This is an Ireland-wide project that we hope will support many young people over a period of three years.

CIYD will be accepting applications to their popular funding scheme for young leaders for 2021. The closing date for the first applicants will be Monday, 25th January 2021. CIYD states, “We understand that it may be difficult for anyone to plan ahead very far at this time in terms of team opportunities, internships and courses etc. but please do remember that the Young Leaders Fund exists to support Church of Ireland young people and to grow their faith



development and skills.” For any further enquiries, please email

[simon@ciyd.org]

An application form is available on C of I site.

Please post to Young Leaders in Ministry Fund, CIYD, Church of Ireland House, 61–67 Donegall Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 2QH or email to:

[admin@ciyd.org

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

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If your application is successful, CIYD will be in contact with you regarding bank transfer procedures to your organisation.

Holy Trinity Rathmines and Discovery Gospel Choir team up for international worship conference

On Friday 8 January 2021, Holy Trinity Rathmines hosted a Service of the Word with music from Discovery Gospel Choir in a major online global worship conference. You can watch the service at -

<https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2021/01/11/holy-trinity-rathmines-and-discovery>

The Service was one of 20 Services from countries all over the world, which feature as part of the month-long online Calvin Symposium on Worship.

The conference focuses on key topics and themes in worship and the Christian life. The online experience is designed for all kinds of learners: students, academics, artists, musicians, priests, pastors, preachers, scholars, teachers, worship leaders and planners, and all interested worshipers around the world.

The Service which took place at Holy Trinity Rathmines Church was led by the Revd Rob Jones, with music from Discovery Gospel Choir and prayers from The Haven

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Community. The sermon was preached by CITI ordinand Philip McKinley.

The free online Symposium on Worship offers 20 livestream worship services and 20 webinar sessions from January 6 to 26 as well as on-demand content that allows participants access materials at their own pace and time. Currently 4,700 worldwide delegates are registered for the Symposium.

For further information follow [#wsymp21](#) on Twitter and register at <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/worship-at-holy-trinity-rathmines-church-in-dublin-ireland/>



Titanic, Belfast

Mother and Baby Homes final report will be a day of reckoning

The commission's harrowing findings, to be published this week, will unveil a shameful chapter in Ireland's history,

Ireland will face another profound reckoning on its shameful past this week when the final report of the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation is published.

The commission was established by the government in 2015 in the wake of claims that the bodies of up to 800 babies and children may have been interred in an unmarked mass grave in the Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home, located in Tuam, Co Galway.

In 2014, a local amateur historian, Catherine Corless, published an article documenting the deaths of 796 babies and toddlers at the home during its decades of operation.

There were death certificates for 796 infants, but no burial records — which raised fears of a mass grave in Tuam, whose ancient name derives from a Latin term for "burial mound".

Following widespread reports on the work of Corless, there were calls nationally and internationally for an investigation of the site, and for an inquiry into all such Mother and Baby Homes.

The commission's terms of reference were eventually extended to include 14 other homes, as well as a representative sample of State-operated County Homes, selected as fulfilling a function similar to the Mother and Baby Homes, run by religious orders.

The commission was originally scheduled to submit its final report in February 2018, but, given the complexity of the task and for other reasons, sought and was granted extensions on three occasions.

The Cabinet is due to approve the commission's final report on Tuesday.

It has been reported that, so harrowing are its findings, that counselling will be offered to former residents when they are shown the report before publication on Tuesday.

Then in the Dáil on Wednesday, the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin will issue a State apology to those affected by what is, by any standard, a shameful chapter in Ireland's social history.

In relation to the touchstone issues which have arisen in the five years since the commission was established, it is possible that the Cabinet will discuss, "as an absolute priority", changing the Adoption and Tracing Bill to allow people access to information on their biological mothers.

In this regard, the commission report is said to note criticism of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency established in 2014, but states that the criticism was unfair and that it is the law that needs to be changed.

The Minister for Children and Equality, Roderic O'Gorman, will look to bring legalisation to the Dáil "within the first six months of this year" on the adoption and tracing issue. The Department of Children will also be asked to chair an inter-departmental group to look at the issues around a Restorative Recognition Scheme — or redress for survivors of the homes.

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, has said that all victims/survivors must obtain an effective remedy including appropriate compensation, official apologies, restitution, satisfaction and rehabilitative services.

Leaving aside these key issues, the publication of the Mother and Baby Homes report will be the latest in a growing collection of official documents related to the complicated relationship between the church and State, and the deeply damaging effect that relationship has had on children and women, in particular.

Another was the Magdalene Commission report, which estimated that well over 10,000 girls and women spent time in laundries; that the State was involved in imprisoning more than a quarter of them, and funded and held laundry service contracts with institutions which they acknowledged, even at the time, relied on forced unpaid labour.

Then there was the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, commonly known as the Ryan Commission, the remit of which was to investigate all forms of child abuse in Irish institutions for children.

That commission published testimony which demonstrated beyond doubt that many such children were treated like prison inmates and slaves rather than people with legal rights and human potential; that some religious officials encouraged ritual beatings and consistently shielded their orders amid a "culture of self-serving secrecy"; and that government inspectors failed to stop these abuses.

Among the more extreme findings were of child abuse, beatings and rapes, children subjected to naked beatings in

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public, being forced into sex acts, and subjected to beatings after failed rape attempts.

The child abuse scandal has been described by some as Ireland's Holocaust.

The Mother and Baby Homes report will now take its place alongside these other official records of what really went on in Ireland.

Opinion - “We are Trump’s army. We are God’s army.”

By the Very Rev’d Nathan LeRud, Dean of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Portland, Oregon

America doesn’t need another statement decrying the actions that occurred in the Capitol building this week—we have words abundant, from politicians, pastors, prophets, and pundits of every stripe.

In the context of the last four years, Wednesday’s events – an attempt at an armed takeover of one of the core institutions of American democracy – shouldn’t come as a surprise. In one sense, and particularly for many Americans who don’t happen to be of European descent, the events that occurred this week are simply the latest example of a litany of horrors that began in 1619 when the first slave ship landed on North American shores. Because let’s be clear: this is white supremacy at work.

Let me speak directly to my fellow Christians: it’s not enough for well-meaning Christian people of either (or neither!) political party to cluck their tongues, long for a more peaceful day, wonder “why we can’t all just get along”



**Very Rev'd
Nathan LeRud**

as Jesus intended, and go about our business. And to my colleagues in the clergy (and to myself): it's not enough for Christian preachers and pastors to get up into our pulpits on Sunday, preach a barn-burning fire-and-brimstone sermon denouncing the

evils of white supremacy and white nationalism (or let's call it what it is: Christian nationalism) and then sit down while our progressive members shout "Amen!" and feel like finally the Church is saying something. "Saying something" has gotten us nowhere.

So let me be as clear as I can, for those who are wondering where the Church stands on issues of terrorism, fear, and racially-motivated abuses of power, and for members of the larger public who may be listening in to hear what we have to say right now about Jesus (you know, that guy whose

name was invoked on Wednesday on the signs, tattoos, and lips of many of the so-called “revolutionaries”): Christian Nationalism is a perversion, an infection, and an illegitimate hijacking of the Christian faith, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and the life, ministry and ongoing witness of Jesus Christ in the world.

I made a sacred promise at my ordination to the priesthood to uphold all these things, and it would be dereliction of duty and of my vows not to denounce Christian Nationalism in the strongest possible terms, not to stand against it with every fibre of my being. The very fact that the name of my Saviour is being invoked by those who pledge allegiance to a reality TV star who refuses to let go of his office is a desecration of that Holy Name.

That desecration has been going on for a long time in this nation. President Trump is a symptom, not a cause: focusing this moment on him and his manoeuvres is precisely what he wants, and risks dulling each of us to the real danger we are in and blinding us to its true source. Many Christians (I count myself among them) have tended to try to get along with our “right-wing” siblings of varying stripes. They are not our enemies, easily dismissed as “crazy people” out there who take to the streets and wield the signs—they are our fathers and mothers, our grandparents, our crazy Uncle Bills, our police officers, our Sunday School teachers and our friends.

Many of us grew up in homes that taught some soft—and often unwitting—version of this form of popular Christianity: the belief that Christianity is the “one true religion” of America, that God has a plan for this nation, and that that plan involves the policies and politics of the so-called

religious right: whether that's abortion, same-sex marriage, or an unshakable faith in American capitalism. Ex-Right Wingers like me know that this belief system lies at the heart of much of what we were taught about what it means to be a Christian, and in many ways, an American. Many of us are working to disentangle what it means to be white with what it means to follow Jesus – and we know that what happened on Wednesday in the Capitol Building is not an aberration or the actions of a few rotten apples from an ultimately healthy bushel. These so-called “Bible-believing Christians” are doing exactly what their churches have trained them to do. We know this because many of us were trained the same way. I certainly was.

I intend to repent and to make amends to those whom Christianity has hurt as a result of these toxic beliefs. Some of those individuals harmed by toxic Christianity are the very ones who invaded the Capitol Building on Wednesday. But all of us have been damaged by these pernicious teachings – perpetrators and victims of violence alike. And I want to go on record: people of faith—whether that's faith in God, faith in Jesus Christ, or simply faith in American Democracy—should be alarmed, unsettled, angry, and vigilant in the months (and probably years) to come as this newest version of American heresy raises its head and gains traction. Our resistance cannot be passive, it must be active – and compassionate.

Our tradition is being stolen from us and handed to a lynch mob. Christian Nationalism is a cancer on the American soul, and if those who gathered at the President's rally are to be believed, “this is the beginning of the second American Revolution.” I do not believe that to be the case – but I take the threat seriously, because I recognise where it comes

from. I know that the only thing that will prevent further violence, insurrection, and chaos is if individuals and communities of faith stand up and refuse to let our traditions, our scriptures, our beliefs, and our families be further desecrated by the evil being practiced and preached in the name of Jesus Christ.

—The Very Rev'd Nathan LeRud. Courtesy The Episcopal Cafe

Pointers for prayer

Today we pray for the USA. We pray for stable democracy and an end to divisions in the USA as a new president is inaugurated this month.

Today we pray for teachers and students. As the new term starts, schools have faced a lack of clarity over reopening which has made it more difficult to plan appropriate education for students and has left teachers and support staff without clear guidance.

Today we pray for disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. As Iran have accelerated their nuclear programme and with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons about to come into force, we pray for constructive relationships between nations.

As we begin a new year that none of us would have imagined this time last January, we pray for God to give a sense of purpose and faith that he has good plans for us, however the year unfolds.

We pray today for all who are facing the new year alone, having lost loved ones recently. We ask that God will give

them hope for the future, and show us how we can come alongside them with comfort and companionship.

Today we pray for people who will be homeless in 2021. As we look towards the new year, people experiencing homelessness will once again be faced with a new set of distinct challenges.

Today we pray for COP26. The global climate conference, rescheduled from 2020, will be taking place in Glasgow in 2021. We pray for ambition and action from world leaders on climate change, and pray that those already affected by climate chaos would be kept safe.

Speaking to the soul

One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him. Afterward the LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is

Abel?” “I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?”

Genesis 4:8-9 NLT

This is the world’s first murder. How terrible that so early in this Holy Book, the Bible, we have to confront such an appalling evil. If you have ever known a family that has experienced a murder you will know the awful impact that it has for years to come on everyone concerned. It isn’t clear why Cain’s offering to the Lord was unacceptable but he is furious about it, and determined to do away with his brother.

After the murder God caught up with Cain and his response to God was a bizarre one. “Am I my brother’s guardian?” he

asks. The translation that you may be more familiar with is “Am I my brother’s keeper?” although I quite like the Living Bible paraphrase of, “How should I know? Am I supposed to keep track of him wherever he goes?” Whichever version you choose, it is a crazy response. God’s reply might well have been, “No, Cain, you don’t need to know everything about your brother and everywhere he goes, but that doesn’t mean you can kill him.” God tells Cain that Abel’s blood had cried out to him from the ground, and Cain would now be cursed for his terrible crime.

It is true that we are not responsible for knowing everything about the people around us. But we do have responsibilities. We cannot push them around or get rid of them because they happen to get in our way. We have the responsibility to act honourably, lovingly and thoughtfully towards them. We cannot live in a way that just suits us and our own selfish agenda. We need to reflect deeply on the lives of those around us and think of how we can encourage, strengthen and enable them to be the best that they can be.

QUESTION

What are your responsibilities towards the main people in your life?

PRAYER

Lord, forgive me when I act selfishly towards those around me. Help me to act responsibly and lovingly towards the people that you have put in my life. Amen.



